The Viewpoint of History of Foreign Relations of the Gaya Nations

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This paper examines a number of recent points of contention and research perspectives related to the restoration and reconstruction of the history of the foreign relations of the Gaya states by means of a systematic study of 1) the characteristics of their foreign relations; 2) materials on their foreign relations; 3) details of their foreign relations; and 4) the historical sequence of their foreign relations from the perspectives of relations among the states of Gaya and the foreign relations of these Gaya states.

The foreign relations of the Gaya states were pursued out of the interests of the states concerned and followed a dual structure in that there was interaction between the various Gaya states and there was interaction between these states and the three Korean kingdoms, China, and the Wa state. In the case of the former, which is the theory of a Gaya federation that views Gaya as a kind of single fatalistic community, all explanations on social development stage theory and relations among the various Gaya states must be sublated. As for the second, like the Mimana Nihon-fu theory with the absence of Mimana and according to which Wa and Paekche are viewed as having been the center, the perspective that regards the various Gaya states as having a heteronomous existence must be sublated.

As for the former, it is being challenged on account of the perspective of a reconstruction of the history of the Gaya states and by the establishment of research topics by recent scholarship on Korea. In the case of the latter, the Mimana Nihon-fu is viewed as a diplomatic mission that was dispatched by Yamato, whose diplomatic activities are interpreted as having been efforts undertaken in the interests of the Gaya states which, under the control of the Anra King, were attempting to maintain their independence as states while caught between Paekche and Silla. The most important aspect in research into the history of the foreign relations of the Gaya states is the study of the theory of the autonomous development of the Gaya states and the actual interests of the countries with which they had contact.