The Sovereignty of Himiko and Court Tributes: The Gongsun Government and the Wei Court

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss the relationship between the fundamental nature of Himiko's sovereignty and court tributes and the Gongsun government and Wei court.

Given that the Gongsun clan were around from the time when Himiko's sovereignty and court tributes began, it is necessary to take into account the complex situation in East Asian surrounding the Gongsun-shi when considering Himiko's political position. We can conclude that the Cefeng system practiced by the Gongsun clan was an official system if we attach importance to the Cefeng system of the Gongsun as the entrusting of "overseas affairs" to the Gongsun by the late Han emperors who regarded the Liaodong region as a faraway land and documents that state that Cao Cao (Wei Wudi) also spared land on the north coast, gave it to the Gongsun clan and promised to give them the right to govern it for generations.

It follows, therefore, that Himiko's tributes to the Gongsun clan were official and that they were passed on to the Wei court as well. It is assumed that the title "Queen of Wa" given to Himiko, who lived at the same time as the Gongsun, was basically continued and became Qinweiwowang (Wa ruler friendly to Wei). It is possible that the three royal titles of different status given to Himiko that appear in the Wajinden were chosen and used according to the stage of the relationship that Himiko had with the Gongsun clan and the Wei court.

Meanwhile, it has been substantiated that diplomatic relations between the Gongsun clan and the Wu court became active after March 232, and though they were suspended these relations continued until the demise of the Wu court. In order to be able to bring sophisticated cultural objects, as typified by the Zhongping era sword and the triangular-rimmed, deity and beast mirror, into Wa, it was necessary for Wa to maintain good relations with the Gongsun clan. We may assume, therefore, that it was against this backdrop that Wa had an indirect relationship with the Wu court.

Keywords: Himiko, Sovereignty, Gongsun clan, Wei, Cefeng system