Production, Power and Ideology in the Yayoi Period

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The aim of this paper is to understand the cultural and social process of Yayoi culture in west Japan and the southern part of east Japan as the dialectic interactive process between the following three dimensions, production dimension including population (production), social relationships dimension (power) and world view dimension (ideology). Based on the author's previous studies, the author described the production dimension as the changes of subsistence system and population by the analysis of agricultural remains and by the demographical analysis of settlement sites, described the social relationship dimension as the changes of social relationships both within and outside local communities by the analyses of stone and iron tools distribution and settlement pattern. And the world view dimension was described as the change of view of the relation between nature and human by the analysis of drawings on ceramics and bronze objects.

The study's findings reveal that during Yayoi period, which was a natural and historical environment unique to west Japan and the southern part of east Japan, development of subsistence systems centered on wet rice cultivation, rapid and continuous population increases, development of large settlements and settlement complexes corresponding to local communities, and the formation of a world view, which were based on a linear sense of time and non-egalitarian view of world that sought to control part of nature with water (rice paddies), evolved while interacting with one another.

In the study of settlement site complexes, the author focused on the formation of reciprocal communities and the process of the development of relationships among communities while taking the system of material production, including population, into consideration. This study revealed that there existed cases where egalitarian relationships were sought among settlements and local communities, and cases of the formation of a well-defined center. Broadly speaking, the settlements complexes, which were egalitarian oriented, came first mainly in Middle Yayoi, and then the formation of a center occurred mainly in Late Yayoi along with increased production forces and external dependence of necessaries in particular iron tools. Overlaying this with the analysis of drawings revealed that in Middle Yayoi, a time when there were egalitarian oriented settlements complexes widely, there was a tendency to portray the human world equally. By Late Yayoi, by

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which time most regions were oriented toward the formation of a center, there had been a shift to a world view that accepted inequality in the human world, as seen in appearance of mound burials and the extended reproduction of large bronze ceremonial goods.

By looking at the dialectic interaction between material production dimension, social relationships dimension, and world view dimension of Yayoi culture in this way, we are presented with a new interpretation regarding the cultural and social process in Yayoi period and the shift to Keyhole-shaped mounded tomb period.

Key words: Yayoi culture, population, subsistence, social relationships, world view