Conversion of the Characters for Mizuho-no-kuni and the Principle of Governance

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It is understood that the different characters for "Mizu" used in "Toyoashihara no Mizuho-no-kuni" in the Kojiki and in the Nihon Shoki are synonyms and that both combinations of the two Japanese characters for "Mizuho" are "words that mean abundant rice". However, recent research has pointed out that the consciousness of the past in the Nihon Shoki emphasizes a connection to the present, whereas the consciousness of the past in the Kojiki is concerned with matters that are not linked to the present. With this in mind, a simple study by the author has yielded the hypothesis that the "Toyoashihara no Mizuho-no-kuni" that appears in the Kojiki has the meaning of "a land of abundant water with vast reed beds". In the Nihon Shoki, "Mizuho" refers either to "land of abundant water" or "land of abundant ripening ears of rice" depending on which combination of characters is used.

In the Kojiki "Toyoashihara no Mizuho-no-kuni" is written with the character for water, which has no relation to ears of rice, while the Nihon Shoki uses a character with the meaning "auspicious", which is closely related to ears of rice. As a medium that tells of state rule by the emperor, the Kojiki shows no concern for agriculture, whereas the Nihon Shoki is closely related to matters associated with agriculture. However, the existence or otherwise of agrarian fundamentalism is no reason for using a different character. The Nihon Shoki bases the legitimacy of rule of the people by the emperor in the giving of the land to Ninigi-no-mikoto by the Amatsu-Kami, the heavenly gods. However, for the Nihon Shoki, which contains no discussion of the people, to demonstrate a relationship between the emperor and the "interests of the people" it was necessary for the place of imperial rule from the outset to be "Toyoashihara no Mizuho-no-kuni" written with the character for auspicious.

Key words: Kojiki, Nihon Shoki, consciousness of the past, legitimacy of rule