Formation Process of Local Bases in the 7th Century: With a Focus on the Tokai Region

SUZUKI Kazunao

With a focus on the analysis of the Tokai Region, the transition of local bases in the 7th century was surveyed by classifying the relations among the genealogical record of chieftains in the Kofun period, as seen by the transition of prominent kofun (ancient burial mounds), old temples built in the late 7th century, and the local administrative divisions at that time, such as provinces, counties, and those villages consisting of 50 households. It is fair to say that the areas under the influence of a prominent social class, which can be imagined from the construction of kofun and old temples, mostly conform to the local administrative divisions established under the ritsuryo codes of that time; however, some areas show a partial inconsistency, which indicates the circumstances of local reorganization in the 7th century.

The area over which the tomb of a leading chieftain exerted influence, as shown by large-scale keyhole-shaped kofun, and the distribution of core temples built from the mid to late 7th century show a relatively satisfactory correspondence to the provinces governed by kuni no miyatsuko (regional administrators); however, they do not exactly match with the provinces and counties stipulated under the ritsuryo codes. In addition, the kofun built during the terminal stage of the Kofun period in the 7th century showed striking local differences and individuality, which demonstrated the difficulty in employing them as materials to comprehensively reconstruct the level of local organization.

Organization into the administrative divisions under the ritsuryo codes was associated with development of government roads and the establishment of domains at that time, and gradual progress was made throughout the late 7th century. A significant landmark was the establishment of the early counties during the rule of Emperor Kotoku, and their transition to the late counties linked with a project to fix the provincial borders, which was enforced from 683 to 685; it can be assumed that this project rejected much of the local organization established in the Kofun period, and that the reorganization of areas by domain was promoted on a large scale.

Key words: keyhole-shaped kofun, kofun at the terminal stage, old temples, Kori no Miyake (county office), provincial capital