Basic Study on Oharidadera and Taikoji Temples

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The abandoned temple of Okuyama (Okuyama Kumedera Temple) located at Okuyama in Asuka Village, Nara Prefecture is considered to be an old temple founded in the 620s or 630s, and identified with the Oharidadera Temple found in bibliographical sources of olden times. However, with regard to the circumstances of the foundation of the Oharidadera Temple, to date, no firmly established theory has been formed. In this paper by rereading historical materials relating to ancient times through to the medieval period, the following conclusions were obtained.

1. Oharidadera Temple in Asuka was the leading convent in the late 7th century, and even in the 8th century the temple had a close relation with the Imperial Family. It was confirmed that concurrently with the relocation of the capital to Heijyo-kyo, the temple was moved to the northern outskirts of Heijyo-kyo, and the new temple was also called Oharidadera.

2. The Taikoji Temple in Nara, mentioned in historical materials covering the Heian period and later, in view of its geographical position, can be assumed to be the same as the Heijyo Oharidadera Temple. It would be reasonable to consider that Oharidadera Temple had the Buddhist name, Taikoji, since before the relocation of the capital to Heijyo-kyo.

3. Private estates owned by Taikoji Temple in Yamato Province, mentioned in the Kanyo Ruijusho collection, were systematically arranged in locations convenient for overland transportation on the Nakatsu-Michi road and water transport on the Yamato River; against this background a strong administrative and financial power can be inferred. These private estates can be considered to have been presented soon after the foundation of Oharidadera Temple, and one point to note is that their locations correspond to the distribution of eaves tiles used for the abandoned temple of Okuyama.

4. The Oharidadera Temple can be presumed to belong to the Oharida no Miya Palace, which was founded on the death of Empress Suiko, and in this context the temple can be assessed as a precedent of Kudara-daiji Temple, the first chokugan-ji (temple built at the order of the emperor) of Japan.

Key words: Old temple, private estates in old times, eaves tile, abandoned temple of Okuyama, Empress Suiko