Baekje Three Manuals as “Chronicles of Japan” Compilation Historical Materials

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This article reviews and briefly examines the history of research on the three books of Baekje: Kudara Honki (Original Records of Baekje), Kudara Ki (Records of Baekje), and Kudara Shinsen (the New Selection of Baekje). Taking various arguments into consideration, this article indicates that the three books consisted of old and new elements because they were born out of a dilemma; they were based on the original books written from the self-centered viewpoint of Baekje but edited by Baekje exiles as historical materials for the compilation of Nihon Shoki (the Chronicles of Japan) in a favorable manner for Japan in the beginning of the eighth century. The editors of Nihon Shoki altered the times of events by modifying the Chinese zodiac calendar when using Kudara Ki to write a legend of the origin of Japan; however, as typically represented by inconsistency of the name of Japan, such as called “Kikoku” in Kudara Ki, “(Oh-)yamato” in Kudara Shinsen, and “Nihon” in Kudara Honki, it is considered that in principle, the quotations in the notes of Nihon Shoki from the three books were hardly embellished. All of the three books were history books dated with imperial era names and the Chinese zodiac calendar system and were aimed to delineate the background of the family and profession of each Baekje clan surviving after the fall of their dynasty. In Kudara Ki, the ideal of King Song Myong period, in the sixth century, described by Kudara Honki was mirrored in the King Chogo period, and historical legitimacy was explained to Japan from the viewpoint of Baekje with an eye on its northern enemy, Goguryeo. At first, Kudara Honki was written to describe the history of the dynastic ancestors of the Kudara-no-Konikishi clan exiled from Baekje. Then, Kudara Ki was created for the purpose of providing historical legitimacy to the domination of Mimana, as well as depicting exchanges between Baekje and Wakoku (Japan). Last, Kudara Shinsen was compiled to summarize the common perspective of numerous Baekje clans who claimed the collateral descent of the Baekje Dynasty by detailing the eras from ⑦ King Biyu to ⑪ King Muryeong, whose lineage had not been clear. Though the three books were edited one by one, they were systematically compiled for the same purpose. Inconsistencies in expression among the three books were corrected from the viewpoint of compatibility with Nihon Shoki by using terms to describe the diplomatic relationships at the times of events more clearly. In particular, the word “Kikoku” was used to describe the relationship between Baekje and Wakoku not as a tributary or completely equal relationship but as the “third slanted
relationship.

Our former article indicated that a variety of groups fighting against Baekje were collectively called as the “Japanese Mimana Government” and argued that *Nihon Shoki* had incorporated the perspective of Baekje that was inconsistent with that of the editors of the chronicle. This is considered because the perspective regarding the Japanese Mimana Government was affected by the insistence derived from the original materials of *Kudara Honki*, which was compiled from the self-centered viewpoint of Baekje.

Key words: *Nihon Shoki (the Chronicles of Japan)*, Three books of Baekje, Kikoku, Nihon, Slanted relationships