Points to Be Examined to Elucidate the Royal Regime of Wa and the History of the Wa State

KISHIMOTO Naofumi

This paper suggests points to be examined to give a clearer picture of the royal regime of Wa and the history of the Wa state.

This discussion starts with an overview of what is known about the formation of the Yamato state and the Wa state. Examining the installation of Queen Himiko as a representative ruler after the Great Rebellion of Wa, this paper suggests that her queenship of Wa was established by endorsement given by the kings who had joined the war when they signed a cease-fire agreement. It is worth noting that the state was unified not by armed force but by peaceful inclusion. Toyo, the second queen of Wa, also took the throne in the same way, which firmly established the queenship where a royal princess with divine power was installed as a ruler of Wa. In this royal regime, a deified queen was crowned as the monarch of Wa, along with a secular king.

The Wa state expanded its influence over the entire Japanese Archipelago during the early Kofun period in the late third century. It should be noted not only that its burial system spread at a phenomenal rate but also that it was an epoch when the archipelago was strongly homogenized along with a shift in the style of housing and pottery used on a daily basis.

This paper also presents author’s views on the following epoch-making events. In the era of the Saki polity, the Wa state dispatched its armed forces overseas. Against this backdrop, Homudawake from the Saki polity was sent to Kawachi to put it under their direct control. He usurped the throne as well. Then, the mid-Kofun period saw the sudden rise and fall of chief lineages. The author suggests that this should be considered as a result of a coup by a rival lineage of the Saki polity. This coup regime of the Kawachi polity also experienced a change in leadership when Emperor Ingyö took the throne. At the end of the Kawachi Polity, its last emperor, Yüryaku, bequeathed his throne to a non-hereditary king, Keitai. After the death of Emperor Keitai, a conflict arose between Emperors Ankan and Kinmei, which resulted in the coexistence of two dynasties. This paper also refers to the prosperity of the royal family and the abolition of keyhole tombs in the reign of Emperor Kinmei.

Moreover, this paper chronologically organized the tombs of the kings of Wa during the era of the Kawachi polity as well as examines the occupants of these tombs. It is suggested that the coexistence of divine and secular rulers can give a clue to this analysis as well as the elucidation of the political
changes in the Wa state. This paper also draws attention to the reigns of Emperors Ingyô and Ankan. Furthermore, the author indicates that the Ōe system, which emerged in the sixth century, was a legacy of coexistence of two monarchs. This royal regime in the Kofun period was handed down in different forms until the Asuka period. It is desirable that the above-mentioned points will be further analyzed through archaeological and historical textual studies to elucidate the history of the Wa state.

Key words: Royal regime of Wa, Wa state, keyhole tomb, royal polity administered by divine and secular rulers, Ōe system