With focus on Kamitsukeno Province (the present-day Gunma Prefecture), one of the Eastern Provinces (the present-day Kantō region), this article examines the different stages of regional development and social transformation in the Kofun period. In the first half of the early Kofun period, large-scale mass immigration from the western Tōkai region promoted large-scale wetland development in the Kantō region and the construction of an inland water transportation network connecting the Kinai and Inland Kantō regions. The Yayoi people who had originally inhabited the area were resettled, and chiefs who had achieved higher agricultural productivity built large-scale keyhole tombs with a quadrangular or round rear portion.

In the second half of the early Kofun period and the beginning of the middle Kofun period, the largest chief tomb was built to the same design standards as the Saki Tumulus Group. This implies an alliance between its occupant and the Saki royal authority in Yamato. At the same time, chiefs selected their representative and brought about half of the land area of Kamitsukeno Province under his control, mainly for two purposes: (1) constructing a region-wide water transportation network linking multiple rivers and (2) getting hold of regional transportation hubs. Moreover, a large residence was built for the representative chief, serving as a symbol of group consensus building.

In the first half of the middle Kofun period, Ota Tenjinyama Tumulus, the largest keyhole tomb in the Eastern Provinces, was constructed. This tumulus implies an alliance between its occupant and the royal authority that built the Furuichi Tumulus Cluster in Kawachi. The reason for the emergence of such large keyhole tombs is considered because a diplomatic and military leader was appointed for inter-state interactions and overseas expansion in response to the request from the Yamato polity around that time, while documents imported from the Korean Peninsula were introduced into the Eastern Provinces. In the second half of the middle Kofun period, Chinese and Korean immigrants and their technologies eliminated the need for chiefs to select their representative. The chief of each water system organized a group of Chinese and/or Korean immigrants to activate the regional economy.

In the reign of Emperor Keitai in the late Kofun period, Nanakoshiyama Tumulus, the largest tomb in the Eastern Provinces, was constructed. After the decline of the lineage that built the
tomb, multiple medium-scale keyhole tombs were constructed simultaneously. By examining the
development of these archaeological sites and reviewing historical written sources, such as stele texts, 
*Nihon Shoki* ( Chronicle of Japan ), and *Man'yōshū* ( the earliest extant anthology of Japanese poetry ),
this article analyzes the establishment of miyake (estates designated by the Yamato Court for rice 
production) and the dynamics of regional development. This article also examines the Musashi-
no-Kuninomiyaitsuko War as well as the actual state of Midono-miyake and Sano-miyake and their 
relationships with Kamitsukeno-kuninomiyaitsuko (Provincial Governor of Kamitsukeno)

Key words: Mass immigration, lowland development, water transportation hub, military leader, 
imported technology, miyake, kuninomiyaitsuko