A Study on the Special Pedestal of the Mukogimi Series of Ancient Kibi Region in the Late Yayoi Period

HARUNARI Hideji

The special pedestal pottery developed in the Kibi Region in the latter half of the Late Yayoi Period can be divided into four periods: the first-, early-, middle-, and late-period pedestals. Among them, the middle-period pedestals were grouped as the Nishiyama series, which is split into the Nishiyama and Uehara types, whereas the late-period pedestals are classified into three series: the Miyayama, Mukogimi, and Yatojiyama series.

The Mukogimi series was developed in the following order: the Yabe-Minamimukai, Nishie II, Nishie III, and Mukogimi types. Although the same types of special pedestals were excavated in different parts of the Kibi Region, the analysis of their clay indicates that they are unlikely to have been produced in and distributed from a specific site but likely to have been made by producers moving one place to another within a specific area.

The special pedestals of Yabe-Minamimukai type (the oldest type of the Mukogimi series) and those of Yatojiyama type from the Yatojiyama series were unearthed only in the Ashimorigawa Area. The special pedestals of the Yatojiyama series are shaped in the same way of those of Mukogimi type and decorated with the pattern of Uehara type from the Nishiyama series, which indicates that this series may have been established after the Mukōgimi series. The Mukōgimi and Yatojiyama series are likely to have been created in the Ashimorigawa Area. On the other hand, the Miyayama series is considered to have been established in the eastern part of Soja Area because the special pedestals of Yanagitsu and Miyayama types from the Miyayama series were only found there. Cylindrical haniwa sculptures are also considered to have been born in the Ashimorigawa Area because the cylindrical haniwa sculptures of the oldest type of the Totsuki series were excavated there and because they typologically originated from the special pedestals of Yatojiyama type.

Early- and middle-period special pedestals were found in the large mound burials of the Tatetsuki and the Koikui Shrine, respectively, both of which were located in the Ashimorigawa Area; however, in the late period, when special pedestals were divided into two series, large mound burials were no longer created. The last large mound burials were Yatojiyama Mound Burial in the Ashimorigawa Area and Miyayama Mound Burial in the east part of the Soja Area. The powerful clans that had used special pedestals as symbolic tools for ritual integration in Bicchu may have been split into two,
one moving to the east and the other to the west, before the Mukogimi and Miyayama series were established.

As strongly indicated by the fact that special pedestals of the last type of the Miyayama series and cylindrical haniwa sculptures of the early type of the Totsuki series were later erected on extra-large keyhole tombs, such as Hashihaka Tumulus and Nishitonozuka Tumulus in the Yamato Region, the culture of keyhole tombs was established integrating the symbols of the Kibi group and those who had worshipped it.

Key words: Late Yayoi Period, Bicchu, special pedestal, Mukogimi series, Miyayama series, Yatojiyama series