The Construction Technologies of the Keyhole-shaped Tumuli in the Yeongsan River Basin

IM Jina

In this paper, I examined the construction technologies of the keyhole-shaped tumuli in the Yeongsan River basin. First, I conducted a basic analysis of the keyhole-shaped tumuli construction process and the technologies used from the perspective of the locations and the basic process (land preparations), the planning of the construction, the technologies of the construction, and the correlation between the embankments of the tumuli and the construction of the burial facilities along with the external facilities (fukiishi—stones covering the slopes of tumuli, surrounding embankments, and cylindrical earthenware).

Next, I examined the characteristics of the construction technologies of the keyhole-shaped tumuli by comparing their contents. The result shows that, while there are various ways to level the land, the ratio of the lengths of tumuli to the diameters of the posterior circles is 7:4 in the majority of the cases. Moreover, I was able to roughly divide the tumuli into type A and type B according to the forms of the front and the surrounding moats.

As for the correlation between the embankments and the stone rooms, I can confirm that there is a design intention to construct a stone room (an empress room) in the center of the mound in all the cases.

On the other hand, it is possible to have two types of setting in terms of elevation surfaces: the type that prioritizes a stone room and the eclectic type. Additionally, they share a common feature, which is to build embankments along the outer line of the mound in the construction (the embankment/mound method). However, there are differences in the cross-section shapes and the heights of embankments.

In fact, some of these construction technologies are also found in the traditional tumuli in the area. It is highly possible that when constructing the keyhole-shaped tumuli, only the keyhole shape (and its planning) was introduced, and the locally used traditional method was firmly kept in the actual construction technologies of tumuli. In that sense, we can assume that the group that built the keyhole-shaped tumuli was active in the same historical context with the group that built the traditional tumuli around them.

Key words: Yeongsan River basin, keyhole-shaped tumuli, the construction technologies of tumuli, design, embankment/mound