Baekje and Honam Seen from the Perspective of Construction Techniques of Corridor-Type Stone Chambers: Tomb Groups of the Ungjin Period

Baekje and Yeongsan River Basin

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This paper takes, as material, the *yokoana-shiki sekishitsu* or corridor-type stone chambers and presents one aspect of the relationship between various groups of Baekje and Honam region (Jeolla province centered on the Yeongsan river basin) during the Three-Kingdom Period of the Korean Peninsula. Specifically, the aim was to infer trends in the inheritance of tomb methods and worker trends based on the similarities and differences (in the inheritance of techniques) observed in the construction techniques of the corridor-type stone chambers in both regions. The tombs of the Honam region from the late 5th to the early 6th century showed diverse aspects, with various burial facilities built including kamekan (earthenware jar-coffins or burial urns), pit-type sekkaku (stone surrounding wooden coffins), and corridor-type stone chambers. These were in burial mounds of various shapes including trapezoidal, circular, and large key-hole shaped forms. This was a transitional period between the development of the burial system (*shukobo* or burial mound surrounded by a moat) of the Mahan confederacy and the proliferation of the standardized corridor-type stone chambers of the Shihi period Baekje. One can observe that the cultural influences of the various regions spread to this area at a time when the indigenous tomb system was changing to the Baekje system of burial. One of the burial systems in this period includes the corridor-type stone chambers considered to have been influenced by Baekje. If we analyze the construction techniques of the corridor-type stone chambers thought to be related to the central power of the Baekje region during this period, one can see a correlation between the methods of stone processing, usage, the process of construction, space setting, and the frequency of use of the stone materials, from among the different kofun groups. It is, therefore, possible to ascertain the construction techniques as well as the genealogy of the groups that maintained them. Assuming that the tomb construction group that possessed these conventional techniques is the “Kingdom Group,” it is possible to estimate the range of their activities from the distribution of the stone chambers constructed using similar techniques. If we compare the corridor-type stone chambers built using techniques of the Kingdom Group and the stone chambers of the Honam region, no direct relation is observed in the construction techniques and the methods of using stone materials, although the shape and rough structure are familiar. Therefore, the corridor-type stone chambers of the Honam region assumed to be of the [Baekje system] [Ungjin system] cannot be
said to be constructed in relation to the central power of Baekje. On the other hand, in the west coast region of Baekje, stone chambers similar to those in the Honam region regarding construction and techniques are present. As a result, there is a possibility for a relationship with a particular regional group of Baekje.

Key words: Honam region, corridor-type stone chambers, space setting, kingdom tomb group, indices of usage of stone materials