The Transformation of the *Zakkōko* (Groups of Miscellaneous Artisans) and the Dissolution of the Office of Weapon Manufacture

FURUTA Kazufumi

In this paper, I will focus on *zakkōko* 雑工戸, groups of miscellaneous artisans descended from the *shinabe* 品部 and *zakko* 雑戸, groups of skilled workers in the Nara period. Through an examination of the changes in their management and recruitment, I will clarify the context that led to the integration of the Office of Weapon Manufacture into the Bureau of Military Storehouses in the eighth year of the Kanpyō era (896).

Scholars have developed mutually incompatible understandings of this process. On one hand, it is thought that the *zakkōko*, made up of *zakko* who were involved in military affairs, was maintained until the *Engishiki* because the *ritsuryō* state had a strong interest in them; on the other hand, some think they were not made to serve in the Bureau of Military Storehouses and ended up producing weapons in the provinces as tribute. In this way, because there was only a vague understanding of the *zakkōko* on which the Office of Weapon Manufacture was based, scholars have been unable to provide a clear answer to the question of why the Office of Weapon Manufacture was dissolved and incorporated into the Bureau of Military Storehouses.

I think there are two reasons for this. First, article 31 on the *zakkōko* from the “Procedures for the Bureau of Military Storehouses” in the *Engishiki* has not been properly analyzed; and second, the activities of Office of Weapon Manufacture up until incorporation into the Bureau of Military Storehouses have not been sufficiently examined. Therefore, in this paper I will offer a corrective to these shortcomings by outlining the change in the relationship between the Office of Weapon Manufacture and the *zakkōko*, and by investigating the reasons that brought to the dissolution of the Office of Weapon Manufacture.

From an analysis of the “Procedures for the Bureau of Military Storehouses” in the *Engishiki* it can be noted that there is no mention of the fact that the *zakkōko* would be engaged in the production of weapon in the provinces, and it is specified that, as it was also previously done, craftsmen would be made to serve in the center.

Concerning the Office of Weapon Manufacture in the eighth and ninth centuries, I have corroborated the results of previous research by showing that its central function lay in the reproduction of manufacturing techniques for military supplies. In addition, the historical sources that
record the activities of the Office of Weapon Manufacture show that the technical training within the office and its management of the zakkôko were in decline in the ninth century.

As a result, the Office of Weapon Manufacture relinquished control over the zakkôko, and on the backdrop of the growth of the labor force in the capital and of the increase of people involved in handcraft manufacture in the central provinces, it switched to a system in which technicians and manpower would be hired as necessary. Thus, the Office of Weapon Manufacture, which since the emanation of the Taihô codes had been in charge of administering the zakkôko, was dissolved, and its function as a place of production was inherited by the Bureau of Military Storehouses.

Key Words: Zakkôko 雑工戸, Groups of Miscellaneous Artisans, the Office of Weapon Manufacture, the Bureau of Military Storehouses, the Engishiki, the labor force.