

Kofun Period

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Japanese archaeology defines the period of about 350 years from the middle third century A.D. to the seventh century A.D. as the Kofun period. During this period about 160,000 mounded tombs (kofun) were constructed in an extensive area of the Japanese archipelago from southern Tohoku to southern Kyushu. Fiscal 2014 continued to see accumulation of massive studies mainly based on mounded graves called kofun, after which this historical period was named. Topics of the studies were varied: reexamination of dating and relative chronology, construction processes of grave mounds and burial facilities, examination of the location and scenery of mounded tombs, identification of those buried in the tombs such as female chiefs and primordial government officials, typology of burial equipment and clay figurines (haniwa) aligned on mounds, external negotiation with eastern Asia, settlement dynamics, handcrafting and subsistence, reconstruction of rituals, and so on.

One of the characteristics of Kofun study this fiscal year was the completion of a publication of all ten volumes of the series *Kofun Jidai no Kokogaku* (Kofun Period Archaeology) (Doseisha), edited by ICHINOSE Kazuo, FUKUNAGA Shinya, and HOJO Yoshitaka. Coming twenty years after the publication of *Kofun Jidai no Kenkyu* (Kofun Period Study) (Yuzankaku) in the 1990s, this series enabled us to grasp the research situation of Kofun period study in the early 21st century. If overseas readers are interested to learn about the Kofun period in Japanese, this book is highly recommended along with *Koza Nihon no Kokogaku: Kofun Jidai Jo/Ge* (a two volume set of Lectures on Japanese Archaeology, Kofun Period) (HIROSE Kazuo and WADA Seigo, Aoki Shoten), and *Kofun Jidai Kenkyu no Genjo to Kadai Jo/Ge* (a two volume set on States and Issues of Kofun Period Study) (HABUTA Yoshiyuki and KAMEDA Shuichi ed., Doseisha). During the past twenty years, Kofun period study showed further segmentation and details are becoming clearer, but each of the books above has a generalized view of the Kofun period in the beginning. One path Kofun period study should take in the next 10 to 20 years is the process of integrating individual studies on features and artifacts that are minutely segmented.

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Furthermore, the importance of international transmission and international comparison is becoming more evident in Kofun period study in recent years. Of course profound achievements at various attempts have been already made, mostly in eastern Asia. However, new developments are being made towards the West, such as a publication by MIZOGUCHI Koji, *The Archaeology of Japan: From the Earliest Rice Farming Villages to the Rise of the State* in 2013, and symposiums and sessions that were held by Japanese Kofun period scholars at the 76th annual meeting of Society for American Archaeology held in the U.S. in the spring of 2014, as well as The 6th Worldwide SEAA (Society for East Asian Archaeology) Conference in Mongolia in the summer of 2014. A report on Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Kakenhi), *Kofun Period in the Early 21st Century: Toward a Comprehensive Overview and Its Internationalization* (representative FUKUNAGA Shinya, Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University) contains an overview of the comprehensive historic view of the Kofun period and various theses for international audiences. Also, Volume 9 of *Kofun Jidai no Kokogaku* (Archaeology of the Kofun Period) (Doseisha) contains an evaluation of the Kofun Period from the viewpoints of international scholars who studied each region of the world in which mounded graves and monuments were constructed, such as South Korea (Park Chong-su), China (Huang Xiaofen), Egypt (TAKAMIYA Izumi), western Europe (Laurent Nespoulous), North America (SASAKI Kenichi), and the Andes (SEKI Yuji). This volume also contains an international comparative study.

Thus, 2014 saw generalization of the Kofun period study and new departures.