

Kofun Period

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Kofun period study in fiscal 2017 saw accumulation of research results in more fields than any other year; and many efforts were made on joint research and to pursue images of the society and the period based on accumulated knowledge. Also, it was a year that made us aware of a connection to the present society such as the decision to register Okinoshima site in Fukuoka Prefecture as a World Heritage site. Individual theses and books/excavation reports should be referred to the main article in Japanese, and trends of the Kofun period study will be overviewed here.

Interest is being gathered especially on formation of the nation, regarding images of the Kofun period society and the era. However, in case of examining the Kofun period from the viewpoint of state formation, there is a difference between the explanation of nation formation processes between researchers who focus on Early Kofun (3rd to 4th centuries AD) and who stress Late and Final Kofun (6th to 7th centuries AD). Specifically, the difference is in the direction of understanding the period from Late Yayoi to the former half of the Kofun period in a framework of chiefdom society and the direction of understanding the period as an early nation. Both standpoints are presently coexisting.

Also, discussions were active in relation with natural disasters: volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. The former is the problem of disaster history such as the disaster struck human bones excavated from Kanai-Higashiura site in Gunma Prefecture, and the latter is related to the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake that caused collapse of and damage to some mounded tombs. As for the relationship between modern society and Kofun period study, active discussions were exchanged on the significance of Okinoshima sites in Fukuoka Prefecture as the sites were officially registered as World Heritage sites along with related sites, as well as mounded tombs including Mozu-Furuichi mounded tombs which were nominated as domestic candidates for World Heritage status. As for research methods, three-dimensional measurement and laser measurement are often used in research and study in recent years, and they are applied widely from mounds of mounded tomb, to entire sites, to artifacts.

As for research themes, trends of fiscal 2017 were discussion on external exchanges, relationship with the Korean Peninsula, and migrants, as well as study on settlement sites

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and production. Significant discussion topics remained unchanged such as excavated artifacts from the Korean Peninsula, tombs like stone piled mounds (tsumiishizuka), movement of migrants seen from settlement sites, or so-called Wa-lineage artifacts from the southern Korean Peninsula and the construction background of a keyhole-shaped mounded tomb in the Yeongsan river basin. As for pottery/earthenware study, there were especially many conferences and featured articles on *Sue*-wares and *haniwa*, aspects of which were organized nationally. As for chronology and dating of mounded tombs, reexamination of burial equipment was conducted for the chronology of Middle Kofun mounded tombs, and a common understanding is almost being achieved including actual dating. On the other hand, discussion still continues on dating of *Sue*-ware and horizontal stone chambers in Final Kofun/Asuka period in the 7th century AD.

On mounded tomb study, interests are high in recent years on construction technology of mounded tombs. As for burial facilities, study on horizontal stone chambers is active. Study is also active on burial equipment, and especially development of the study of iron armor (especially *tanko*) was outstanding. Due to analysis using X-ray, CT, and three-dimensional measurements, the possibility to reconstruct manufacturing techniques and production systems is emerging. As for bronze mirror study, aspects of production/distribution of Chinese and domestic mirrors were organized in each period from Early to Middle/Late Kofun, contributing to form images of the period along with results on other burial equipment.

Although the international information dispatch seems less compared to the last fiscal year with WAC-8, continuous development in the future is expected.