

## The Late Stage of the Kofun 古墳 Era in the Kinai 畿内 Area

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The present paper reexamines the late Kofun 古墳 (literally “Old Tumuli”) era as well as the late-stage tombs in the Kinai. It is proposed that (1) the present chronology of the late-stage tombs requires revision and modification to start from an earlier date, (2) the late Kofun era can be divided into three stages up to the marked decline in the tombs of the nobles including the daiōryō 大王陵 (literally “great kings mausoleum”) and gunshūfun 群集墳 (dense concentrations of tomb mounds).

Three stages are marked in which the tombs of the ruling class changed their appearance and function. The first stage is marked in the late sixth century, when large hōfun 方墳 (square tombs) or enpun 円墳 (circular tombs) were built instead of zenpōkōenfun 前方後円墳 (key hole shape tombs). The second stage is marked in the mid-seventh century when the daiōryō became octagonal in shape. During the third stage, in the later seventh century, tombs built by the ruling families became less frequent, and finally disappeared.

The key hole shape symbolized the confederation of the ruling families that constituted the Yamato political unity; the first stage marks the disregard for this symbol by the Yamato leader and also by other families. The emergence of the octagonal daiōryō reflected the intention of the Yamato leader to establish a superior status among the ruling families in the Kinai area. Although this is true, the chamber of the octagonal daiōryō was just the same as those of the powerful families of the Kinai; this resemblance indicates that the consciousness and mechanism underlying the construction of tombs that were formed during the period when tribal confederation took place, were still influential. It was not until the third stage that the head of the Yamato State and his family could indicate their superiority by the design of the tomb.

Meanwhile, the disappearance of group tombs took place in the first and third quarter of the seventh century and thus ended their historical role. During the second stage, the construction of mounds with high knolls ceased. This shows the disregard by the newly formed state toward adopting familial ties as a dominating principle in the construction of tombs: the disregard for the old system in which powerful fa-

families dominated the lower classes through familial ties. This event is related to the state policy that stressed domination on an individual level in the process of the reorganization of the lower classes.