

Kin Groups in Kinai District during the Yayoi Period

HARUNARI, Hideji

One characteristic of the burial rules in Kinai District during the Yayoi Period was the construction of square tomb mounds. At the Uryūdo Site in Osaka constructed during the Middle Yayoi Period, wooden coffins of men and women were sometimes placed parallel to one another. If these were coffins of husband and wife, it proves that households based on a relatively strong tie between husband and wife were established. This tendency, rather indistinct, is also displayed in the Ikegami Site in Osaka, constructed during the early Yayoi Period.

Meanwhile, at the Kusaka Site in Osaka and the Shigasato Site in Shiga Prefecture, both constructed during the late Jōmon Period, the parallel placement of men and women is not found; accordingly, the strong tie between husband and wife must have appeared with the coming of the peasant society of the Yayoi Period.

As it was needless to say that either the husband or wife had come from different kin groups, a new form of union not structured by kin must have appeared. Marriage must have been restricted to a certain district such as Southern Osaka. On the contrary there are exceptions, such as the Uryūdo Site where the person buried came from Northern Osaka and this shows that marriage in that period could have existed regardless of this endogamic rule. In that case there must have been a conscious intention to distinguish outsiders from others by changing the style and material of their coffins. However, this was still a big change as during the late Jōmon Period even when marriage took place in a restricted district, it was a custom to extract the teeth of outsiders and a postmortem custom to distinguish their burial places from others.

Although it is difficult to trace the tendency of post marital residence during this period, it is certain that patrilocal residence was common. In Kinai during the late Jōmon Period, matrilineal or ambilineal residence was common; therefore, the change of residence patterns must have been due to the coming of the peasant society.

The superiority of men in matters of burial rules is already to be found in the middle Yayoi Period. Thus, this change must have a close relation to the formation of a society that established the social superiority of men.

Three tombs in No. 2 tomb mound at the Uryūdo Site had been constructed by cutting former grave pits. When the symbolic meaning of this act is considered, patrilineal kin groups must have been in the process of formation.