**Japan’s Connection to Korea (Part III): A Series of Three Essays**

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1. KING KONJI WAS WA KING KOH

Introduction

In a previous article I argued that King Konji was Wa king Kohin the middle of the fifth century A.D.1 Here we elaborate upon this thesis with additional evidence from Nihongi, Samguk Sagi, and the Sung Chinese chronicle from that period, and will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Was King Konji a brother of Paekche king Gaero?

2. Was “Konji” his original Paekche name?

3. What is the significance of King Konji’s title Joah-heyeon, “left-

wise lord”?

4. Under what circumstances did Mata become Paekche king

Dongseong?

5. Why was King Konji enshrined at Asukabe Shinto shrine?

Was King Konji a brother of Paekche king Gaero?

Samguk Sagi records King Munju as the son of King Gaero, King Dongseong as the son of King Konji, and King Muryong as the son of King Dongseong. It added a note that King Munju could be King Gaero’s uncle on his mother’s side. The Chinese Sung chronicle, on the other hand,records the name of King Munju as Moh-Doh with the family name Moh while King Muryong has the family name Yea The family relation as recorded in Samguk Sagi therefore seems inconsistent. [page 48]

In Nihongi, King Konji is recorded as King Gaero’s brother in the entry for King Yuryaku’s reign in 461 A.D.: “Lord Kasuri [Gaero] of Paekche intimated to his young brother,Lord Koniki [Konji] saying: ‘Do thou go to Wa, and serve the Emperor.’ Lord Koniki answered and said: ‘I pray thee give me one of thy consorts, and then I will take this mission.’ Lord Kasuri accordingly took one of nis consorts who was pregnant and having given her in marriage to Lord Konki, said: ‘If she should be delivered on the journey, I pray thee place (the child) on board a ship, and cause it to be at once sent back to this country.’ The pregnant consort gave birth to a child on the island of Kakara in Tsukushi. Upon this Lord Koniki straightaway took a snip and sent Lord Shima [i.e. the child] to his country (in 461 A.D.). He became King Muryong. The people of Paekche call this island Chudo (Master Island).”

We note here a few remarkable facts such as the date of birth, 461, for Lord Shima, or the future King Muryong as the son of King Gaero. All these facts were confirmed by the funerary inscription in the tomb of King Muryong at Gongju. It is also worth considering why the lady, nine months pregnant, risked her life embarking on an arduous journey to Wa Japan. There are two possible reasons. First, her parents in Wa Japan were both near death and she wanted to visit them for the last time. Second, one is the urgent political and military circumstance facing King Gaero and his country Paekche. Paekche was laid in ruins by the invading Koguryo army in 396 and was thereafter under threat from it. Perhaps King Gaero wanted his son to be born in Wa Japan and raised there in safety. We now know that King Gaero once ruled Wa Japan as Lord Sai, and he felt security by entrusting his young prince to his own brother Lord Koniki, who ruled Wa Japan as King Koh.2 These considerations lead us to believe that Wa king Koh was Lord Koniki, the younger brother of King Gaero.

Was “Konji” his original Paekche name?

The names of several Paekche kings are mentioned in Nihongi, for example “Toki” for King Jeonji, “Kasuri” for King Gaero, “Koniki” for King Konji, “Mata” for King Dongseong, and “Shime” for King Muryong. With regard to Toki, Ryu Ryeol argues that Jeonji (腆支) stands for Toki or Teoki, which is the original name.3 Among the Huns in the north of [page 49] China, there was a post with a name Toki, which means wisdom. Or following the example of the name Tagari in the Inariyama sword inscription, it could mean a head person. In any case, Toki stayed in Wa Japan allegedly as a hostage for eight years before returning to Paekche in 405 to ascend the throne as King Jeonji.

The second name Kasuri for King Gaero4 in the above list is intriguing. According to our findings, Kasuri stayed in Wa Japan from at least 443,when he sent a mission to Sung China, until 445, when he returned home to become Paekche king Gaero. His stay in Wa Japan as lord was how his original Paekche name was remembered and recorded there. The Idu rendition of his name, “Gaero,” may have been derived from the first and last syllables of his name, “ka” and “ri,” following the custom of making the names of kings with two Chinese characters. Samguk Sagi records his name at a younger age as “Kei-si,” which likely was taken from the first two syllables of his name, “ka” and “su.” At any rate King Gaero must have stayed in Wa Japan, for his original name Kasuri came to be recorded in Nihongi.

Now we have to deal with the name of Lord Konji recorded as Koniki in Nihongi. In Paekche usage, Koni Orugu stands for the mother of a king, where Koni-ki means “grand” and Orugu means “queen.”5 Koni-ki thus could mean a grandparent. This Koniki’s son Mata became King Dongseong in 479, while his nephew Lord Shima became Wa king Bu around 477 and returned to Paekche to become King Muryong.

That Koniki’s brother was Wa king Sai, as recorded in the Sung chronicle, and later became Paekche king Gaero, while his nephew became Wa king Bu and later Paekche king Muryong, makes it plausible that Koniki himself was also for a time Wa king Koh, in accordance with the Paekche tradition of the succession of kings.

What is the significance of King Konji’s title “left-wise lord”? 6

According to the chronicle of Sung China, King Gaero’s request for the title of Jeong-ro general for left-wise-lord Yeo Konji was granted in 458. We note here that the title left-wise-lord was one conferred upon Konji by King Gaero. To understand the significance of this title, we have to refer to the political institution of the Huns, the nomadic horse riding people to the north. The king of the Huns7 had territory under his [page 50] direct rule with ministers, while outlying territory to the left of his central land was ruled through the “left-wise lord,” while territory to the right of his land was ruled through the “right-wise lord.” Paekche arose together with Koguryo from the kingdom of Buyeo, which shared a nomadic tradition with the Huns. So we believe Paekche shared some of the political institutions of the Huns. Thus the appointment of Lord Konji as the “left-wise king” signifies that he was the ruler of feudal land or Tamro of Paekche in Wa Japan, which lies to the left of Paekche.

The Sung chronicle records that Crown Prince Koh of late Wa king Sai sent a tributary mission some time after 451. And in 458, the appointment of Lord Konji as the left-wise king of Paekche immediately after King Gaero ascended the throne of Paekche in 455. This series of events suggests that Lord Konji or Koniki became the ruler of Wa Japan as successor to his brother King Gaero, the Lord Kasuri referred to in Nihongi.

Under what circumstances did Mata become King Dongseong?

By 458 King Konji had already been appointed as the left-wise king, ranking only second to the great King Gaero and indicating he was the ruler of Tamro of Paekche or Wa Japan. This Tamro occupied a limited area called Kawachi in the vicinity of present-day Osaka. In 461, King Konji was entrusted to raise his brother King Gaero’s son, born on Kyushu. Nihongi records that King Konji or Koniki already had five children of his own. In 478, Paekche was overrun by the invading Koguryo army, which put to death the whole royal family, including King Gaero, the crown prince, and the king’s mother. King Gaero’s uncle Moto thereupon took over and moved the capital from Wirye to Komanaru (Gongju), only to be assassinated two years later. His son was murdered by 479. By this time Lord Sama became Wa king Bu, succeeding his late uncle, Wa king Koh.

Although Samguk Sagi records that Lord Konji died as a minister in Paekche in 479, this is unlikely since he was the highest ranking person next to Gaero only to become a minister. When the Paekche throne became vacant in 479, Lord Sima or Wa king Bu was only nineteen and probably his court advised him to send his older cousin Mata to become the king of Paekche.

According to the Sung chronicle, both Wa king Koh and Wa king Bu[page 51] requested the title “regent general”(使持節都督) for Wa, Paekche, Silla, Imna, Kara, Jinhan and Mahan. This suggests their desire for the entitlement to rule these lands in case Paekche was overthrown. Now that we know both kings became Paekche monarchs later in their lives, we may perhaps better understand the above request in the political situation facing Paekche. Paekche had been under constant threat from Koguryo, and risked being overthrown. So in the worst case, Paekche might come under the rule of Koguryo and they wanted to retain the claim for the lands of the above mentioned seven countries, which were under the rule of Paekche. For the same reason, Wa Japan perhaps insisted upon the legitimacy of their royal ciaim by urging the succession of Crown Prince Koh or Koniki. This in turn suggests that Lord Sima was the brother of Lord KoniKi.

Why was King Konji enshrined at Asukabe Shrine?

It is known that many Shinto shrines were built to provide religious rituals to commemorate the enshrined ancestors and other sprits near the burial grounds of the deceased ancestors at the beginning. The descendants of King Konji or Koniki maintained the tradition by building Asukabe Shinto shrine at Habikino City to commemorate their ancestor King Konji. It was once a large and important shrine. But now, as the result of a decision made by the Meiji government in the late nineteenth century for obscure reasons, it stands dilapidated and without even a Shinto priest in charge.

The area surrounding Asukabe Shrine attests to the prosperity and power of the Asukabe families, with numerous Paekche style side-opening tombs in the vicinity. In fact the Asukabe prospered in this area between the sixth and ninth centuries, until they moved away. This is known not only from the evidence of the tombs, but also from documents. They have built also a family temple Johrin on the Aska hill nearby. There are many well-known personages listed as Konji’s descendants in the new compilation of family registration of 815. An example is Asukabe no Miyatsuko, listed as a descendant of King Koniki, the son of Paekche king Biyu. Incidentally we note that since King Gaero is also a son of King Biyu, Gaero and Konji or Koniki are brothers as recorded in Nihongi. In the records of Nihonji, Asukabe and Kudara or[page 52] Paekche are used almost synonymously.

Another well-known descendant of the Asukabe is Tanabe Fuhito. “Fuhito” refers to a class of scribes among the descendants of this Paekche family. One of the more famous scribes is the legendary Wani who,according to Nihongi, introduced Chinese characters and texts into Japan. The descendants of Wani and Tanabe prospered in the Furichi area, which includes Habikino City. They were collectively called “Fuhitobe of Kawachi,” and exercised great political and economic power.

Conclusion

Paekche was under constant threat from its powerful neighbor Koguryo to the north. Perhaps this is one reason why King Gaero sent his pregnant consort to Wa Japan, his feudal land, where she gave birth to Prince Shima, the fixture King Muryong. As we examined, King Konji, also referred to as Koniki, turned out to be the brother of King Gaero. Since the Sung chronicle records that King Konji had the feudal title of the “left-wise king” as appointed by Paekche, we may conclude that King Konji was Wa king Koh. This same chronicle and Nihongi also provide clues that Wa king Sai (later King Gaero) was succeeded by Wa king Koh (Koniki, the brother of King Gaero), and that Wa king Koh was succeeded by Wa king Bu (later King Muryong).

The Asukabe Shimto shrine stands to this day, witness to the glory of the Asukabe clan, which served later for centuries as hereditary scribes for Japan in the Kawachi area, the homeland of Wa Japan, which was ruled by Paekche feudal lords.

2. WA KING SAI BECAME PAEKCHE KING GAERO

Introduction

Many studies have been made of the state epistle sent by Wa king Bu to Sung China in 478 A.D. and its implications for understanding the history of Paekche and Wa Japan. Soh Jin-chol has suggested that Wa king Bu was the son of Great King Gaero, and became King Muryong upon his return to Paekche in 502 A.D,8 Since the chronicle of Sung China recorded that Wa king Bu was the son of Wa king Sai, it may [page 53] additionally be argued that Wa king Sai became Paekche king Gaero, to be consistent with the statement that Sai/Gaero was Bu’s father.

In this essay the following evidence will be examined to support this contention:

1. The phrase “feudal land”(封國) in the epistle of Wa king Bu.

2. The phrase “my late father Sai”(亡孝濟) in the epistle.

3. The phrase “Ancestor Su” in King Gaero’s state epistle to Wei China.

“Feudal Land”

The first phrase in Wa king Bu’s epistle is “feudal land”. The reason for using it may have been simply that Wa Japan was a tamro, or feudal land,of Paekche. The epistle mentions Jo Nyeh, which is often interpreted as one word meaning “ancestor,”9 but may be more properly understood as “ancestor Nyeh.”

In an earlier article I suggested that Jo Nyeh referred to the Paekche’s feudal lord of the tamro at Koma, near present-day Kongju in Korea’s Chungcheong province.10 He was a member of the powerful aristocratic family of Paekche and an in-law of the royal family. Facing a massive attack by the Koguryo army led by the famous King Gwanggaeto in 396 AD., he fled to Japan and established a new Kingdom called Yamato in what is today the Kinki region on the island of Honshu. However, we didn’t know how he managed to arm, supply, and transport his army until our new interpretation of the Inariyama sword with inscriptions of the names of eight generations. In this new interpretation, we found that Lord Dasagi was ruling the area called Dasagi near present-day Hadong in Korea. The vicinity of Dasagi provided a convenient port of departure. Being the lord of Dasagi, one of Paekche’s tamro, he was able to provide all the needed logistics and he must have joined forced with Jin Nyeh in his scheme for the war of conquest in Wa Japan.

There still exists a legend that the Koguryo army in 396 passed through Balgumi port near Dasagi on the way to invade Wa Japan.11 It is likely that this legend refers to the Paekche army of Lord Dasagi and Jin Nyeh going to Wa Japan. Jin Nyeh could have secured ships, horses, food and drink and other supplies, enough for them to invade and wage war in Wa Japan, thanks to Lord Dasagi being in control of the area of[page 54] departure on the southern coast. Furthermore, this provided an occasion for the military family of the Inariyama sword to join Jin Nyeh on his way to Wa Japan and occupy the new territory for Paekche in the Saitama region just north of Tokyo, where the Inariyama tumulus is located

Ho was appointed as the lord of Kasabara by Paekche after two generations in Wa Japan. Ho’s ancestors all allegedly served Paekche and addressed Gaero as the great king bypassing Wa king. Ho’s and Jin Nyeh’s ancestors were lords under Paekche, ruling tamros in Paekche. This points to the fact that Wa kings were their equal under Paekche. A Wa king therefore was a tamro lord under Paekche, which explains why Wa king Bu referred to his land as a “feudal land” in his epistle to Sung China. The land of his father Wa King Sai was also a feudal land.

The presence of Wa king Sai in Kinki, Wa Japan, probably facilitated his contact with Ho’s family and their activities in the northeastern part of Wa Japan. By the time Wa king Sai returned to Paekche to become king on 455, the Ho family referred to in the Inariyama sword inscription conquered the Kasabara area near present-day Tokyo. Eventually Ho was appointed as the Hoekgeo, or lord, of the Kasabara territory by Paekche king Gaero. It is explicitly stated in the I. T. sword inscription that Ho and his ancestors served Paekche for generations in disregard of Wa kings Sai, Koh, and Bu, who ruled the Kinki region near Osaka and quite close to Ho’s land near Tokyo. This suggests that Wa king Bu’s land was part of Paekche as stated in his epistle, as was the land of Wa king Sai, whose father King Biyu of Paekche must have appointed him Wa king.

Eventually Ho was appointed as Hoekgeo or feudal lord of the Kasabara region in recognition of the unflagging loyalty of his family towards Paekche for eight generations, as proudly declared in the inscription on the Inariyama sword. There is no way that Ho’s family could have served Wa kings for eight generations, since the Wa state was established only since the end of the fourth century A. D.

“Late Father Sai” 12

It is known that Wa kings sent emissaries to Sung China as follows:

■ Wa king Sai sent missions in 421 and 425.

■ Wa king Jin sent a mission in 438. [page 55]

■ Wa king Sai sent missions in 443 and 451.

■ Crown Prince Koh, of late Wa king Sai, sent missions in an unknown year.

■ A Wa king sent a mission in 460.

■ Koh’s brother Bu became Wa king to succeed the late King Koh, and a mission was sent in an unknown year.

■ A Wa king sent a mission in 477.

■ Wa king Bu sent a mission in 478.

From these records it can be inferred that Jin was a brother of San, and Koh and Bu the sons of Sai. The relationship between Jin and Sai remains unknown.

The phrase “Mang-go-Sai” in the epistle of King Bu is commonly interpreted as “late father Sai.” Soh Jin-chol suggests an alternate translation of “unless Paekche falls” on the grounds that traditional etiquette required that a dead father’s name may not be explicitly mentioned to an emperor.13 In any case, it is clear from the Sung chronicle that Wa king Sai, or Jeh, was the father of Wa king Bu. Since we know Wa king Bu to be the son of King Gaero, it seems incompatible with the Chinese record that Bu was a son of Sai or Jeh. However, Samguk Sagi records that Gaero became king of Paekche in 455, while Wa king Sai according to Chinese records must have died some time between 451 and 460. This would seem to suggest that Wa king Bu was the son of King Gaero as well as Wa king Sai, since Wa king Sai became King Gaero upon his return to Paekche, just as Wa king Bu became King Muryong upon his return.

There are three pieces of evidence that support this idea. First, Nihongi records that King Gaero was called Kasuri-no-Kishi, where Kasuri is the proper Paekche name, while Gaero is the Idu transcription of Kari, a shortened version.14 “Kishi” is a Paekche word meaning king. This can be inferred from other examples such as the Idu name Jeonji for Toki, Konji for Konki, and Sama for Sema. All of these members of the Paekche royal family lived in Wa Japan for some time. This record indicates that King Gaero also stayed in Wa Japan.

Second, in 461, the king sent his lady, who was nearly nine months pregnant, to Wa Japan along with the king’s brother Konji. As had often happened in the past, a pregnant woman was sent to her own home to [page 56] give birth. Most likely this was the case with Gaero’s lady, who had her family in Japan and most likely they were married in Japan.

Finally, it may be noticed that the Chinese chronicle does not record the relation between Wa king Jin and Wa king Sai, and there was a change in their family name from Jin to Yeo for kings. So we suspect there was some political upheaval in the succession of the throne. Someone in the direct line of Paekche’s royal family must have taken over as ruler of Wa after King Jin. At the time Biyu was the king of Paekche, whose son was Gaero.

There is one hitch in this argument. The Sung chronicle records that Wa king Sai died and the crown prince sent a state epistle some time between 451 and 460. Since King Gaero ascended the Paekche throne in 455,his former position as Wa king Sai must have ceased before that year. Perhaps this fact misled the recorder in the Sung chronicle to assume that King Sai had died.

“Ancestor Su”15

In 472 A.D., King Gaero of Paekche sent an epistle to Wei China requesting military assistance in the event of war against Koguryo. The first sentence in this epistle states the historical connection between Paekche and Koguryo, sharing as they did a common founding king and a close relationship in their early years.

According to Samguk Sagi, both Koguryo and Paekche had common roots at Puyeo, an ancient country in the northeastern part of China. The founding king Jumong of Koguryo was recorded as having been born from an egg laid by the daughter of Habaeck, the water goddess, and seeded by the sun spirit. Jumong was raised in the court of King Keumwa of Puyeo. He became a famed archer and a wise man, and as a result earned the jealousy of several Puyeo princes. Suspecting their intrigue against him, Jumong fled to Biryu to found a new kingdom, Koguryo, in 37 B.C. He remarried here and had two sons, Biryu and Onjo. Jumong’s son from his first marriage at Puyeo subsequently joined him in his new kingdom. This prompted Onjo and Biryu to move south to Wire in the vicinity of present-day Seoul to establish a kingdom of their own, Paekche, in 18 A.D. This is how Koguryo and Paekche came to have a common ancestor, King Dongmyong or Jumong, and why both [page 57] maintained ancestral shrines to him. This close relationship, however, was eventually severed by conflicts and territorial disputes.

One of the most important clashes between Koguryo and Paekche is related in the passage of the epistle involving Jo Su, or Ancestor Su, who was King Geunchogo of Paekche, who inflicted a mortal blow to a Koguryo king. We note here that the idiomatic phrase Jo Nyeh is mentioned in Wa king Bu’s epistle as the phrase Jo Su in King Gaero’s epistle. This is why Nyeh is interpreted as referring to a personal name. The letter describes the hostility between the two countries, including a battle at Pyongyang in which Koguryo king Gogugwon was killed. Koguryo, bent on revenging the death of their kin, ,assaulted Paekche in 396, capturing its capital city and 58 of its fortresses. Paekche survived the attack, but continued to fight off the aggressive Koguryo from then on. Koguryo moved her capital from Jiban on the Yalu River to Pyongyang in 427. This urgent situation prompted Gaero to send his epistle to Wei China in 472 seeking military support, which the Chinese declined to send. We note here common sentiments of hostility against Koguryo in the letters of both Gaero and Bu. Since Wa Japan had no common border with Koguryo, this hostility against Koguryo can be understood only in the context of the relationship between the royal families of Paekche and Wa Japan.

Conclusion

By studying the contents of Wa king Bu’s epistle, particularly phrases like “feudal land” and “late father Sai,” it may be concluded that Wa king Bu’s father was Wa king Sai, who later became Paekche king Gaero. King Gaero’s epistle also reveals a strong hostility towards Koguryo in common with the sentiments expressed in King Bu’s epistle. It may be suggested that these sentiments could be aroused only because Bu’s father was Paekche king Gaero, formerly Wa king Sai. In fact four kings of Paekche, Jeonji, Gaero, Dongseong, and Muryong, lived in Japan for some time and later become Paekche kings. No wonder Paekche is called Kudara, “great land” in both ancient and contemporary Japanese.

[page 58]

3. KING NAMJEH OF THE SUDAHACHIMAN MIRROR WAS A PAEKCHE LORD

Introduction

In 1834 a Japanese farmer unearthed a bronze mirror in a field in Wakayama prefecture and gave it to the Sudahachiman Shrine for safekeeping. It was later designated a national treasure and is now at Tokyo National Museum. The mirror bears an inscription which has proved to be a valuable source in the study of the history of the Paekche kingdom of Korea and Wa Japan. According to Fukuyama the inscription reads:

癸未年八月日十大王年男弟王在意柴沙加宮時

斯麻念長壽遣開中費直穢人今州利二人等

取百上同二百旱作此鏡 16

This article will examine the significance of the following keywords in this inscription:

1. Daewang nyeon (大王年), “Great King Year”

2. King Namjeh (男弟) or Ooto

3. Oshisag (意柴沙加)

4. Sama (斯麻)

5. Gaigung Bichi (開中費直)

6. “Man of Yeh” (穢人)

Daewang Nyeon (大王年), “Great King Year”

“Great king” is a literal translation of the Korean daewang, meaning an overlord who commands feudal lords. This expression daewang is also inscribed on the Inariyama sword, where the “great king” referred to Gaero of Paekche as huaka or overlord.17 The owner Ho of this Inariyama sword proclaimed in the inscription that he and his seven ancestors served King Gaero and his kingdom for more than two hundred years, evidently ignoring the Wa Japan court, while five ancestors served Paekche as military lords in the Kara region of Korea, and the last three generations served her in the Saitama region of Japan.

Since the sword was forged in 471 A.D., and Yamato Wa Japan was [page 59] established around 397, it was impossible for these ancestors to have served Wa Japan for at least two hundred years. Since we know that Kings Gaero and Muryong of Paekche served respectively as Wa kings Sai and Bu, it is likely that the expression “great king” referred to on the bronze mirror is King Muryong. The mirror was most probably made in 503, since Sama of the inscription became Paekche king Muryong, abdicating the throne to a member of his royal family in Wa Japan upon his return to Paekche in 501.

King Namjeh or Ooto

Many of the members of the Paekche royal family who stayed in Wa Japan had Paekche names as well as two-character Chinese names, as recorded in Nihongi and Samguk Sagi. Examples are Jeonji for Toki, Gaero for Kasuri, Konji for Koniki, Muryong for Sama, and Namjeh, the name used for O-Oto in Nihongi. It has been suggested by some that Namjeh is the Idu transcription of O-Oto or “male-brother”, while others claim it was a ruler’s title as in the case of the male ruler as the political partner of Shaman ruler Hiniko of the Wa state in the third century.18 In any case,King Namjeh or O-Oto is unanimously identified with King Keitai. Since Paekche king Muryong was Wa king Bu, Ooto or King Keitai must have been a member of the Paekche royal family.

King Konji, who was Wa king Koh, is recorded to have had five sons by 461 in Japan and his second son Mata became Paekche king Dongseong. So one of his sons could be well qualified as the successor of Wa king Bu who went to Paekche in 501 to assume the throne. Actually King Muryong had a son Saga in Wa Japan who died young, but not before having a son Pobsa, the ancestor of the Yamato clan as recorded in the compilation of the family registry in the year 812.

Oshisaga(意柴沙加)

This palace name still remains as the place name Osaga in Sakurai city, Nara. One of the sons of King Bitatsu (reigned 572-585 A.D.) was named “Oshisaga no Hikohito Ohime”, which included the place name Oshisaga. This prince, a great grandson of King O-oto or Keitai, had a son who became King Joh-mei (629-641) and was buried in the Oshisaga Mausoleum. These facts indicate that this royal family thrived [page 60] with the homestead at Oshisaga for a long time from earlier than 503 to 641. But Nihongi describes O-oto as having moved around for twenty years prior to settling down at the above-mentioned palace.

Sama(斯麻)

The epitaph found in King Muryong’s tomb bears the name Sama, matching the records in Nihongi. The records tell us the story of Sama being born on an island offshore from Kyushu in 601. As we found, Sama was raised in Wa Japan and served as its king for over twenty years until he returned to Paekche to ascend the throne. Sama or King Bu of Wa Japan sent a state epistle to Sung China in 478. Analyzing the sentence in the letter that his father and brother died suddenly and kept three years mourning period and now he is ready with army to revenge their deaths at the hands of Koguryo army, which sacked the Paekche’s capital at Wirye near Seoul in 475, Soh Jin-chol deduced that Wa king Bu must be none other than Sama, the son of King Gaero.19

In 479, King Samgeun of Paekche was assassinated and the second son Mata of the late King Koh (Konji) returned to Paekche to become King Dongseong, who was a cousin of King Bu or Sama. After marvelous achievement as a king, Dongseong was also assassinated. This time Wa king Bu returned to Paekche to become King Muryong, making Paekche stronger and more prosperous than ever before, with control over 22 tamros or territories. Now it was time for some other royal family members of Paekche in Wa Japan to succeed the vacated throne. So it was O-oto, or King Keitai, who must have been one of Sama’s cousins.

Kaijung Bichi (開中費直)

This is an intriguing word. The last ideogram “jik” (直) turns out to be equivalent to “chi” (値) or value, which can be translated as “atahi” in Japanese. This word “bi-chi” is replaced by “bi” alone and later by “chi” (直), which is read “atai”.20

Now Atai becomes a kabane or clan title. This clan now enjoyed the prerogative of political power directly related to royalty and handled finance and its related documents. It is interesting to note that readings or writings of ideograms evolve in a peculiarly Japanese style unlike Korean Idu. An example would be Dai Wa (大倭), which was the name [page 61] originally used to represent Wa Japan. The ideogram Wa (倭) was replaced by another Wa (和) and later the word Dai Wa (大和) was read as Yamato, the original place name of Wa Japan’s territory. Soon Wa (倭) or Wa (和) was read as Yamato. It now became common practice to read many ideograms by seemingly arbitrary Japanese sounds.

As to the first word Kaijung, it is generally understood to represent the place name Kawachi written as 河內. In the time of Wa Japan in the fifth,sixth, and seventh centuries, Kawachi in the Osaka region was the political, military, and economic power base of the country. This is well documented not only in various historical records but also by abundant archeological finds, including numerous ancient tombs related to the Paekche people which dot the Kawachi countryside.

“Man of Yeh” (穢人)

The Yeh people had an interesting history of migration. Their migration began with the establishment of the Changhai commandery in northeastern China after their acknowledgment of Han Chinese suzerainty in 128 A.D. Some of these people must have moved to the Pyongyang area since a seal was found in the area bearing the title of Lord Yeh at Bu Country of Lolang Commandery. Another seal, bearing the title of Yeh chief of hundred households of Jinsolseon, was later found near Yongil in Kyongsang province.

A stele from 524 was found near Bongpyong village, Ulchin county, bearing an inscription that a campaign by Silla was directed against the rebellious Yeh people.21 It so happens that one of the most prosperous groups of settlers from the Korean peninsula to Wa Japan were called the Hata people, whose original home is believed to have been at Patara near Ulchin. Perhaps these Hata people also belonged to the Yeh clan, since Patara and Bongpyong are in the same region.

These Yeh people fled heavy taxation and political oppression to establish a new home in Japan. Both Paekche and the Yeh had conflicts with Silla, which may be why they could coexist so well in Kawachi in Wa Japan. Versed in the high culture of China since early in their history, the Yeh were skilled not only in the use of Chinese ideograms, but also in agriculture, sericulture, and metallurgy. This is how these Yeh people, including the Hata clan, in collaboration with Paekche royalty in Wa[page 62] Japan, became prosperous and powerful in Kawachi.

Probably Kawachi Atai was familiar with bronze metallurgy as well and this is why he was sent to make the bronze mirror. This bronze mirror is found to have been modeled after another mirror excavated from another tomb in Yao city, Osakae.22 Kimi Shuri (今州利) seems a com-mon Paekche name, as there are several similar names recorded in Nihongi. Finally, we may present our translation of the inscription on the Hachiman bronze mirror:

In the year 503, as a grand king, I, Sama, have dispatched Kimi Shuri of the Kawachi Atai clan and two others to fabricate this bronze mirror with two hundred fine chips of bronze for the longevity of King Ooto.

Conclusion

By understanding these six keywords, we reach the following conclusion with regard to the inscription on the Shitahachiman bronze mirror We conclude that Sama, the Great King of Paekche, ordered this bronze mirror made for King Namjeh, who had ascended the throne of Wa Japan, succeeding Sama. We conjecture the Oshisaga palace of Ooto to be the place where Sama was raised in Kawachi. We believe Ooto is a cousin of Sama, in consideration of the strict tradition of kingly succession among Paekche royalty. Sama had a son called Saga who passed away young, but had a son Pobsa. Pobsa or Hohshi in Japanese was listed as the ancestor of the Yamato clan, which kept producing some royal members including the mother of fiftieth King Kanmu. So this line of the Paekche royal family is continued down to this day in the royal family of Japan.

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