

Kuni no miyatsuko and Miyake

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What were *kuni no miyatsuko*? What were *miyake*?

Kuni no miyatsuko and *miyake* were institutions for local control that existed in Japan before the system of *ritsuryō* government that began in the latter half of the Asuka Period (late 7th century).¹ *Kuni no miyatsuko* are thought to have been appointed from among local powerful provincial families after the Iwai Rebellion in northern Kyūshū in 527 CE. There are some interesting stories about the *kuni no miyatsuko* and *miyake* of Harima Province in *Harima Fudoki*. I would like here to explore the *kuni no miyatsuko* and *miyake* of Harima Province through historical documents about them.

The *kuni no miyatsuko* of Harima Province that appear in *Kuni no Miyatsuko Hongi*

Three designations of *kuni no miyatsuko* are recorded in *Kuni no Miyatsuko Hongi*² as being *kuni no miyatsuko* of Harima Province: (1) Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko, (2) Harima no Kamo no Kuni no Miyatsuko and (3) Akashi no Kuni no Miyatsuko. It says that the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko is the descendant of Ikojiwake no mikoto, a grandson of Inase Iribiko; that the Harima no Kamo no Kuni no Miyatsuko is the descendant of Ichiiriwake no mikoto, son of Mihowake no mikoto; and that the Akashi no Kuni no Miyatsuko is the descendant of Tsumiji no Sukune, son of Yashiro no Sukune. It is apparent from their names that these *kuni no miyatsuko* were each linked to other families by extended family relationships (*dōzoku*). It has been ascertained that the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko was related to the extended family of the Saeki no Atai; the Harima no Kamo no Kuni no Miyatsuko to that of the Kamitsukenu no Kimi; and the Akashi no Kuni no Miyatsuko to that of the Yamato no Atai.

The Saeki no Atai were an extended family that mainly fulfilled military and security roles in the central government. It is recorded in *Shinsen Shōji Roku* (early Heian Period) that the above-mentioned Inase Iribiko was awarded the position and title of Harima Wake Saeki no Atai for having rediscovered the descendants of Ezo³ in Kamusaki *Kōri* whom Yamato Takeru had forcibly removed there, and he was granted authority over them. It is recorded in *Harima Fudoki*, too, that a person called Aganoko, being the founder of the Saeki-be, had been granted permission to rule this district (Tada Sato, Kamusaki *Kōri*). The name Aganoko is documented in *Nihon Shoki* as the person who hunted down Prince Hayabusawake and Princess Medorinohime in the reign of King Nintoku when they rebelled against the king, and he is entered there as Harima no Saeki no Atai Aganoko. It says that Aganoko committed the crime of stealing the beads (*tama*) that the princess wore, and that the land which he subsequently surrendered as punishment was thereafter called Tamate; and that the place name still remained in Tamate, Shikama *Kōri* (present-day Tamate, Himeji-shi). So the Saeki no Atai family who were titled Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko mainly exerted their power over the Ichi River basin, from Kamusaki *Kōri* to Shikama *Kōri*. And since a family titled Harima no Atai also appears in Shikama *Kōri*, it is thought that the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko included the families of the Harima no Atai in addition to the Saeki no Atai.

¹ Translator's note: In short, *kuni no miyatsuko* refers to the title of an official position bestowed by the Yamato Court upon the leaders of local previously-ruling families. *Miyake* denotes estates of land reclaimed for rice farming, including its granaries.

² Translator's note: This is one of the ten volumes of *Sendai Kuji Hongi* (or *Kujiki*), thought to date to around 807–936 CE. It purports to record the history of approximately 130 *kuni no miyatsuko*.

³ Translator's note: 'outlanders' from the northeast of Japan; i.e. beyond the Yamato frontier.

As far as the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko is concerned, it is recorded in the *Kitadera Daichido Ron*⁴ (which has been passed down at the Ishiyamadera in Shiga Prefecture) that in Kamo *Kōri* there were Kurumamochi no Kimi and Ōno no Kimi, who belonged to the extended family of Kamitsukenu. In the *Kitadera Daichido Ron* copied at Kitadera in Kamo *Kōri* in Tenpyō 6 (734), the names of many people who contributed materials to the work are listed. Among them are the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko, the Saeki no Atai, and the Harima no Atai. What this means is that the position of the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko was tantamount to the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko based in the district of Kamo *Kōri*, and that in practice they were one and the same. It is highly likely that the Saeki no Atai (or more accurately, their precursor group) moved into Harima in the fifth century, judging by the appearance of the power of the Kibi in the tales of Aganoko. By contrast, the Kamitsukenu no Kimi originally had its power base in Kamitsukenu Province, and became a powerful family at the centre of Yamato rule, so their incursion into Harima must have been later than that. It was the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko of Kamo *Kōri*—who was linked through extended family relations with the Kamitsukenu no Kimi—who was the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko.

With regard to the Akashi no Kuni no Miyatsuko, on the other hand, it is recorded in the entry for Jingo Keiun 3 (769 CE) in *Shoku Nihongi* that a man named Ama no Atai Mizonaga of Akashi *Kōri* was granted the title and position of Yamato Akashi no Muraji. *Mokkan* (wooden labels) inscribed with the words Ama no Atai of Akashi *Kōri* have been unearthed from the site of the Asuka capital, proving that there was a close relationship between the *ama* (seafaring) groups and Akashi. From the fact that the Yamato no Atai family was formerly included in *ama* communities, and from the fact that they had been awarded the same title of ‘Yamato’, presumably that was why the *ama* groups of Akashi—who belonged to the same extended family as the Yamato no Atai—were appointed as Akashi no Kuni no Miyatsuko.

The Kuni no Miyatsuko of Harima Province

As seen above, it appears that the *kuni no miyatsuko* in Harima Province were derived from two groups: one comprising the grouping of the Saeki no Atai, Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko, and Harima no Atai; and the other group of the Ama no Atai. But that was not actually the case. The section on Akashi *Kōri* is missing from *Harima Fudoki*, but passages thought to have been part of the Akashi *Kōri* section are quoted in other documents. Among them we see the name of the Kuni no Miyatsuko Iwasakahime no mikoto, “Maiden of the Great Deity who Formed the Land.” The “Great Deity” in *Harima Fudoki* refers without exception to Iwa no Ōkami, the Great Deity of Iwa, so from this we can see that the founding ancestors of the Akashi no Kuni no Miyatsuko also emphasised their lineage as descendants of Iwa no Ōkami. This inference is corroborated by the existence of Iwatsuhime Shrine which is dedicated to Iwa no Ōkami in Akashi *Kōri*.

Belief in Iwa no Ōkami is centred on Shisawa *Kōri*, but related stories and shrines are found over almost the whole of Harima, and he is a deity representing not just Shisawa *Kōri* but Harima Province as a whole. It is well attested that the extended families of the Saeki no Atai and Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko were not limited to Kamusaki *Kōri*, Shikama *Kōri* and Kamo *Kōri*, but were dispersed across the province (see Table 1). This means that worship of Iwa no Ōkami and the territory of the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko more or less coincided with each other. From this we can deduce that there was a close connection between the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko and tales about Iwa no Ōkami.

Looked at in this light, the difference between the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko and the Akashi no Kuni no Miyatsuko was restricted to their extended family relationships with the central government, but when it came to the regional society of Harima there was probably little difference in terms of the *kuni no miyatsuko* within Harima Province. The *kuni no miyatsuko* in Harima can be thought of as a single authority that worshipped Iwa no Ōkami in common. It is highly likely that the political unit on a provincial scale called Harima was established by at least the fifth century.

Kuni no Miyatsuko and Miyake (rice estates)

⁴ *Daichido Ron: the Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-sāstra (Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom)*, 2nd century CE.

What is problematic about the relationships between the *kuni no miyatsuko* is the question of *miyake* rice estates (see Map). At least nine different names of *miyake* have been confirmed for Harima Province (see Table 2). There were probably several more. It is thought to have been the *kuni no miyatsuko* who administered the *miyake*.

Sure enough, there are several tales linking the *kuni no miyatsuko* with *miyake*. In *Harima Fudoki*, it is recorded that the five *kuni no miyatsuko* of the provinces of Oki, Izumo, Hoku [Hōki], Inaba and Tajima had overstepped themselves in arrogance, so the Yamato Court forcibly sent them to construct the paddy fields that were the origin of the Shikama *Miyake* in Shikama *Kōri*. If it were the *kuni no miyatsuko* who administered the *miyake*, the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko would naturally have been appointed to the position of running Shikama *Miyake*, but no evidence of this has been found. To the contrary, it is recorded that in Asagu *Sato* in Shikama *Kōri*—which was very close to the Shikama *Miyake*—the *kuni no miyatsuko* called Toyooshiwake no mikoto behaved impudently towards the King, but he was exonerated through the mediation of Akone, the *kuni no miyatsuko* of Tajima Province; the paddy land that Toyooshiwake surrendered by way of a fine was cultivated by people from Asagu *Kōri* in Tajima.

These tales indicate that it was labour mobilised by the *kuni no miyatsuko* of the San'indō [Japan Sea coast], and especially of Tajima, who first developed the Shikama district. We must note that the stronghold of the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko was developed there as a *miyake* rice estate, but that it was confiscated as a resource by the Yamato central government. We can assume that for the *kuni no miyatsuko* of the provinces, the development of *miyake* estates was tantamount to submission to Yamato central authority.

There were also some *miyake* that had nothing to do with the *kuni no miyatsuko*. There was, for example, the Shijimi *Miyake* in Minagi *Kōri*, where it is told that the Princes Oke and Woke hid *incognito*, but no *kuni no miyatsuko* has been verified for Minagi *Kōri*. The establishment of *miyake* estates was fundamentally up to the central government, and had little to do with the wishes of the *kuni no miyatsuko*.

Japanese Society in the Sixth Century

For Japanese society in the first half of the sixth century when *kuni no miyatsuko* and *miyake* were instigated, it was an era of great strengthening of state control overall throughout the provinces. This was a result of reduced supply of advanced commodities such as iron, due to political instability on the Korean Peninsula. The strengthening of Yamato state power and the concomitant reduction in the autonomy of local society was mainly due to that. We should bear in mind that the *kuni no miyatsuko* and *miyake* in Harima were no exception.

Table 1: The distribution of *kuni no miyatsuko* in Harima

<i>Kōri</i>	Family, title and/or name	Source
Akashi	Kuni no miyatsuko Akasakahime no mikoto Ama no Atai	<i>Harima Fudoki</i> Akashi no <i>Kōri</i> Itsubun (cited in <i>Shaku Nihongi</i>) <i>Zoku Nihongi</i> Jingo Keiun 3.6. [769], Mokkan excavated from the Asuka-kyō Garden Site (<i>Mokkan Kenkyū</i> 25)
Kako	—	
Inami	Saeki no Atai	<i>Nihon Sandai Jitsuroku</i> , Ninna 3.7.17 [887]
Shikama	Saeki no Atai Harima no Atai Kuni no Miyatsuko Toyooshiwake	<i>Nihon Shoki</i> , Nintoku 40.2 <i>Shōsōin Chōfu Kokusho Mei</i> <i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Shikama <i>Kōri</i> , Asagu Sato
Ihiko	Saeki no Atai	<i>Zoku Nihongi</i> , Enryaku 7.11 [788]; Enryaku 8.5 [789] (no name) <i>Shoku Nihon Kōki</i> , Jōwa 10.3 [844]
Akaho	Saeki no Atai Harima no Atai	<i>Chōya Gunsai</i> , Chōwa 4.11.16. [1015], Harima Kokufu Enryaku 12.4.17 [792], <i>Harima no Kuni Sakoshi Kōbe Ryōsato Kaian</i>
Sayo	Harima no Atai	Heijōkyō Mokkan 7 (No. 12655), <i>Heijō Kyūseki Shutsudo Mokkan Gaihō</i> 30
Shisawa	—	
Kamusaki	Saeki no Atai	<i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Kamusaki <i>Kōri</i> , Tada Sato <i>Shinsen Shōjiroku</i> , Sakyō Kōbetsu <i>Kitadera Daichido Ron</i> 36
Taka	Harima no Atai	Tenpyō 9.3.30 [737], <i>Heijō Kyūseki Shutsudo Mokkan Gaihō</i> 31
Kamo	Saeki no Atai Harima no Atai Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko Kuni no Miyatsuko Kurodawake Kuni no Miyatsuko Koma	<i>Kitadera Daichido Ron</i> 33 et al.; <i>Heijō Kyūseki Shutsudo Mokkan Gaihō</i> 24 (Saeki-be) <i>Kitadera Daichido Ron</i> 47 et al. <i>Kitadera Daichido Ron</i> 42 et al. <i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Taka <i>Kōri</i> Narahara Sato <i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Taka <i>Kōri</i> Narahara Sato

Table 2. Miyake in Harima

<i>Kōri</i>	<i>Miyake name</i>	<i>Source</i>
Inami	Yake <i>Miyake</i>	<i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Inami <i>Kōri</i> Yake Sato
Shikama	Shikama <i>Miyake</i> Ujika <i>Miyake</i>	<i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Shikama <i>Kōri</i> Ayabe Sato; alias Kawaraku <i>Miyake</i> <i>Nihon Shoki</i> , Ankan 2.5.
Ihibo	Koshibe <i>Miyake</i> <i>Miyake</i>	<i>Nihon Shoki</i> , Ankan 2.5; <i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Ihibo <i>Kōri</i> Koshibe Sato <i>Hōryūji-zō Karyaku Shitoku Nenkan Ikaruga Sō Ezu</i>
Sayo	Nakatsugawa <i>Miyake</i>	<i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Sayo <i>Kōri</i> Nakatsugawa Sato
Kamusaki	<i>Miyake no hito</i>	<i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Kamusaki <i>Kōri</i> Tada Sato (Kawabe Sato) Asuka Fujiwara <i>Mokkan</i>
Taka	<i>Miyake no sato</i>	<i>Wamyō Ruijushō</i> , Nijō Ōji <i>Mokkan</i> /Tōdaiji Ryō Soga I, Sawada Iseki Kokusho Doki ‘Soga’, ‘Soga Nishi’
Minagi	Shijimi <i>Miyake</i>	<i>Kojiki</i> , prior to the accessions of Emperors Seinei and Kensō <i>Harima Fudoki</i> , Minagi <i>Kōri</i> Shijimi Sato