

## The *Kuni-yuzuri* (Land Cession) of Iwa no Ōkami: the Keyhole-shaped Burial Mound and Stone Miniature Artefacts of Ishitsukuri Sato, Shisawa Kōri

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### Stories in *Harima Fudoki* about Iwa no Ōkami

Out of 54 deities named in *Harima Fudoki*, the most frequent is the deity indigenous to Harima called Iwa no Ōkami (the Great Deity of Iwa), with nineteen myths across six *kōri* (rural administrative districts): Shikama, Ihibo, Sayo, Shisawa, Kamusaki and Taka (Yū MIZUNO, ‘Harima no Kuni Fudoki’ in *Nyūmon Kofudoki (Jō)*, Yūzankaku, 1987).

That his divine authority was the highest and maintained throughout the majority of the Harima region is clear from the entries in the six relevant *kōri* in *Harima Fudoki*. This is especially evident from the entry for Iwa Sato in Shikama *Kōri*, where it says the village was so-called because the Iwa no Kimi (‘lord’ of Iwa) came and settled here; and in the entry for Ishitsukuri Sato in Shisawa *Kōri* it says that its original place name was Iwa. In myths in the other *kōri*, he wins the fight for occupation of the land against the immigrant deity ‘Ame no Hiboko’, and consolidates the province.<sup>1</sup> Moreover there are references to his offspring, and according to *Engishiki Jinmyōchō*<sup>2</sup> there were shrines (Iwatsuhime Jinja) dedicated to the Great Deity’s wife/wives in Akashi and Akaho *Kōri* too.

On the basis of this, Kōjirō NAOKI argued in Volume 1 of *Hyōgo Kenshi (A History Hyōgo Prefecture)* that the locally powerful Iwa family who worshipped the Great Deity of Iwa held sway in this region prior to the Saeki family’s rise to power as the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko, as recorded in ‘*Kokuzō Hongi*’ in *Sendai Kuji Hongi*, Vol. 10.<sup>3</sup> Naoki deduced that the Iwa family ceded their land (*kuni-yuzuri*) under pressure from the Yamato Court sometime around the fifth century. This was a truly insightful observation. The main shrine dedicated to Iwa no Ōkami is ‘Iwa masu Ōnamochi Mitama Jinja’ (Shrine to the spirit of Ōnamochi enshrined at Iwa’), Harima’s prime shrine (*ichi no miya*) according to *Engishiki*, and the deity was considered to be identical with Ōnamuchi no mikoto and Ashihara Shikowo no mikoto.

### The encroachment of Yamato authority from the viewpoint of archaeology: the meaning of ‘*kuni-yuzuri*’

The most appropriate archaeological evidence for corroborating this view consists of (a) the presence or absence of stone miniature artefacts that are deemed to have been ritual objects pertaining to the Yamato Court, and (b) the construction of keyhole shaped burial mounds (*zenpōkōenfun*) that represented political links between the Yamato centre and the provinces.

The map below shows the distribution of stone miniature artefacts in the Harima region, divided according to their location of discovery in a *kofun* (burial mound) or settlement site. Setting aside the Kako River valley, this map reveals that they are mainly concentrated in three districts. One is the area around the former Shikama-gun and Ibo-gun centred on Himeji-shi, and

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<sup>1</sup> Translator’s note: *Kuni o tsukurikatameta*, literally ‘forms and sets the land’. In Japanese mythology this expression seems to imply the addition of cultural attributes to a natural landscape. In other words, it implies that Iwa no Ōkami consolidated his religious and political control of the disputed region threatened by continental immigrants. (There is no suggestion that the deity represents any particular human: this myth is rather metaphorical.)

<sup>2</sup> Translator’s note: dated 927 CE.

<sup>3</sup> Translator’s note: Early Heian period, 9th century.

the other two are northern Harima centred on the former Taka-gun, and eastern Harima centred on Akashi-gun (including former Minō-gun).<sup>4</sup>

A clue to the understanding of this distribution can be found in the aforementioned *Kokuzō Hongi*, which was compiled at the beginning of the Heian period. That is to say, in the fifth and sixth centuries there existed three *kuni no miyatsuko* (local chiefs who had submitted to the Yamato kings prior to the *ritsuryō* era, and were appointed by them to that position), called 'Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko', 'Harima Kamo no Kuni no Miyatsuko', and 'Akashi no Kuni no Miyatsuko'. The districts under the authority of these *kuni no miyatsuko* and the districts of concentration of stone miniature artefacts correspond well. The earliest stone miniatures in each of the three districts (found at the Higashimaehata and Nagakoshi, Takadamiyanoushiro, and Kitaōji Archaeological Sites) were identified from respectively the Danjōzan, Tamaoka and Yoshidaōtsuka Kofun, which are thought to be the burial mounds of those three *kuni no miyatsuko*.

### **Stone miniatures in the district of the Harima no Kuni no Miyatsuko**

Since the Nagakoshi Site (No. 41 on the map) is nowadays at a distance from the coastline, it was not identified as a harbour or port until recently. The present author reassessed it as a ritual site of the Yamato powers associated with a port, on the basis of the presence of a semi-built-up boat (i.e. a dugout canoe with plank gunwales) and water channels (a canal and creeks). When it comes to ports, a connection starts to be made with the Munakata and Okinoshima Archaeological Sites in Fukuoka Prefecture that have been designated World Heritage Sites, where the Yamato Court carried out rituals for the safety of exchanges with the Korean peninsula. Along with the remains of the well at the Fujie Bessho Site in Akashi-shi (where a wheel-shaped stone miniature and miniature bronze mirror were excavated), I believe this port in Harima to have been a similar ritual site, being the base for navigation (i.e., rituals for safe passage) through the Inland Sea, established by the Yamato government for obtaining iron resources from the Korean peninsula.

A stone miniature was also excavated from the Higashimaehata Site (in the former Kōdera-chō, No. 34 on the map), which corresponds to an entry point from the south into Kamusaki *Kōri*; but why would it turn up here? It is a miniature stone sword, which is by no means an unusual find in a burial mound, but it is the oldest of its kind (dating from the second half of the fourth century) in Hyōgo Prefecture. We can assume with confidence that this was a ritual object associated with the Saeki family who were appointed as Kamo no Kuni no Miyatsuko. According to the entry for Tada Sato, Kamusaki *Kōri*, in *Harima Fudoki*, their founding ancestor was 'Aganoko,' who resettled there when King Homuda (Ōjin) visited Harima on a royal progress. In other words, this district was the original base of the Saeki family, and the Higashimaehata Site functioned as both the site of production of talc beads that were ritual objects for the Yamato powers, and as a place for conducting rites. Then, when the Saeki suppressed Harima's most important places related to the Iwa family (Himeji, Iwa Sato, Nagakoshi Archaeological Site), the Iwa likely retreated into seclusion in the back reaches of Harima (their original stronghold) and adopted an appeasement strategy towards the Yamato government. As evidence for that is the construction of the one and only keyhole-shaped *kofun* in the upper reaches of the Ibo River, north of Ichinomiya-chō, Shisō-shi, and the discovery there of ritual objects pertaining to the Yamato hegemony (i.e., stone miniatures).

### **'Kuni-yuzuri' by the Iwa family**

An archaeological dig was carried out in 1974 in the paddy fields on the river terrace to the south of Iwa Shrine (Iwa Archaeological Site, No. 59 on the map). Finds included miniatures—two curved beads (*magatama*), forty-seven 'mortar-shaped' beads (*usudama*) and one iron sword—from the site of a pit dwelling (first half of the fifth century); and one perforated disc and one small round-bottomed jar with a hole punched in the side found nearby (see photograph).

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<sup>4</sup> Translator's note: Local government reform was implemented across Japan's rural areas during the early 2000s, largely due to the effects of depopulation. For example, from 1 April 2005, the former administrative districts of Yamasaki-chō, Ichinomiya-chō, Haga-chō and Chikusa-chō that previously comprised Shisō-gun were amalgamated to form the new Shisō-shi. Until then, the former *gun* boundaries had retained the historical ancient *kōri* boundaries to a surprising extent, and therefore they are sometimes more relevant when discussing ancient territory.

This example was probably for community rites conducted within the settlement (as the predecessor to Iwa Shrine), with the mountain called Miyayama (*kannabi*)<sup>5</sup> and the rock called Tsuru no ishi ('Crane Stone') (*iwakura*)<sup>6</sup> as the objects of veneration. However, the power of the locally predominant Iwa family's position as 'Harima's leaders' fell into decline with the start of the Kofun period, and they constructed an ancestral tomb (*okutsuki*) on the low terrace that extends out from Miyayama: 4-gō-fun, an elliptically-shaped burial mound 38 metres in length. Among the the Iwa Nakayama Kofun cluster of burial mounds, permission from the Yamato king would have been required in order to construct the keyhole-shaped 1-gō-fun on the condition of *kuni-yuzuri*—the ceding of their land to Yamato authority—in return. The 1-gō-fun mound is a distorted keyhole shape, 62 metres long, and its rounded end measures 38 metres across; the vertical stone burial chamber contained grave goods such as a bronze mirror (*hōkaku T-ji kyō*), curved and tubular beads (*kudatama*), an iron sword (*sokantō tachi*) and an iron axe.

It is thought that the above-mentioned settlement received ritual objects from the Yamato powers. By assenting to conduct the rituals of the Yamato powers, the settlement was thereafter completely incorporated under the Yamato government.

By the way, in the present writer's view, the fact that the inner sanctuary (*honden*) of the later Iwa Shrine most unusually faces north, was in order to worship 'Ame no Hiboko', whose main place of worship is to the north in Tajima.

### **The rituals of Tajima and Awaji Provinces, and the transfer of authority**

According to the entry for the seventh month of Suinin 88 in *Nihon Shoki*, the King pronounced, 'When Ame no Hiboko, a prince of Silla, first arrived, he brought seven kinds of treasures to Tajima. We would like to see those treasures now ourselves.' Thereupon Kiyohiko (Tajima no Kuni no Miyatsuko, Hiboko's great-grandson) brought the sacred treasures in person and rendered them to the King. Such 'presentations' of the treasures that the locally powerful families all over the country possessed were enforced by the Yamato Court to make them submit to the king's authority.

Regarding Awaji Province there are tales in *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* of the king hunting there. For example, in the entry for the ninth month of Ingyō 14 in *Nihon Shoki*, it records that when the king went hunting in Awaji, he was unable to catch any deer or wild boar, although they were plentiful. As this was deemed to be due to the wrath of the island's deity, he consulted the oracle, who said, 'It is my will that you catch no beasts. But you will have success in the hunt if you harvest a pearl from the seabed at Akashi and offer it up to me.' Thereupon Osashi, an *ama* (fisherman) of Awaji Province, dived for it, and found a shining abalone deep on the seabed. He took the pearl from it, which was as big as a peach stone. Once the King had offered it to the deity of the island, he went hunting with great success. This tale implies that Izanagi no mikoto, the deity of Awaji Island, ceded the island's rights to perform rituals there in return for the King observing those rituals properly.

Nowadays, the Izanagi Grand Shrine to Izanagi is at Taka, Ichinomiya-chō, in the north of Awaji Island. Sōsaborō YAGI [1866–1942] formerly reported that this shrine held stone miniatures such as a small knife and axe (*'Kyōdō bibōroku'* ('Collaborative Notes') in *Tōkyō Jinrui Gakkai Zasshi* (*Journal of the Tokyo Anthropological Society*), Vol. 15, No. 17, 1900). Assuming these artefacts were the vestiges of similar 'proper' ritual on the part of the Yamato authorities, this is particularly noteworthy.

When we talk about *kuni-yuzuri* in Japanese myths, generally the deity 'Ōkuninushi' ('Great Lord of the Land') in Izumo is what immediately comes to mind, but actually it refers to the transfer of ritual and political authority in order to make provinces such as Harima, Tajima and Awaji submit allegiance and obedience to Yamato, in the process of state unification in ancient Japan.

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<sup>5</sup> Translator's note: *Kannabi* are mountains with an aesthetically pleasing domed symmetry, notably Mt. Fuji, that were/are considered deities in themselves.

<sup>6</sup> Translator's note: *Iwakura* are particularly awe-inspiring or unusual rock formations, such as crags and crevices in the mountains, that became the objects of veneration. They were/are often deemed to be the place to which deities descend, and are therefore considered sacred.