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## Shijimi *Miyake* and the Yunoyama Kaidō

Wataru SAKAE (trans. Edwina Palmer)

### The place name ‘Shijimi’

There is a railway station called Shijimi at present on the Kōbe Dentetsu Ao Line. ‘Shijimi’ is a somewhat unusual place name, but it is well known among scholars of ancient Japan. It appears in *Kojiki*, *Nihon Shoki* and *Fudoki*, which were all compiled in the eighth century, in which it is written with various Chinese characters.

### The location of the *miyake*

Some discrepancies can be seen in the three sources mentioned above, but they all include the storyline that the Yamato Court established a *miyake* here, i.e., a rice estate under their direct control; one Oshinumi no Miyatsuko Hosome was in charge; the two princes Oke and Woke who had fled from political persecution were discovered working as servants here; and later they ascended the throne as the Yamato kings Kensō and Ninkei (see Chapter 6: ‘The actual stories of Oke and Woke’).

There is the view that the story from the discovery of the two princes to their accession is not factual, but was fabricated for ancient dramatic performance to please an audience. On the other hand, there was a strong link between this place and the Yamato Court, and a *miyake* existed here, and these are historical facts. It seems that a powerful continental immigrant family, the Karakanuchi no Obito, lived here from the fifth century onwards: they were overseers of the groups of blacksmiths here and had some connection with both the Katsuragi family of Yamato and the powers in the Kibi region. The ‘Oshinumi’ of the name Oshinumi no Miyatsuko Hosome was a place name in the vicinity of Katsuragi in Yamato. The *miyake* itself is thought to have been systematically established from the middle of the sixth century, and its most likely location was at the Shijimi-naka Nakatani Archaeological Site in Miki-shi, where stones and gutters in the form of a well, ink-inscribed pottery, and broad concave eave-end roof tiles (*karakusamon nokihiragawara*) have been excavated.

### Interpretation of a *miyake* in the hills

Little thought seems to have been given hitherto to the reasons why a *miyake* was established here. Generally speaking, most ancient *miyake* are assumed to have been located at important strategic transportation points. However Shijimi has been understood as a *miyake* in the hills with poor access, due to the fact that the two princes Oke and Woke ended up living here in hiding, and from the fact that blacksmiths lived here who required vast supplies of firewood resources.

In medieval and early modern times, Shijimi and its environs was not a mountainous territory cut off from the outside. The Yunoyama Kaidō (road) passed through here: i.e., the main overland route starting from Koya in Itami, Settsu Province, in the east, to Kunikane in Kako *Kōri*, Harima Province, in the west. It formed a pair with the Sanyōdō (Saigoku Kaidō section) which ran east to west along the southern side of the Rokkō Mountains, and was its counterpart on the northern side of the range. The Yunoyama Kaidō also linked the Japan Sea Coast to the Inland Sea along the large river systems of the Muko and Kako Rivers. In other words, this means that the Shijimi *Miyake* was sited where the Yunoyama Kaidō intersected with the north–south river transportation route.

### The boundary districts of western Settsu and eastern Harima

According to research into medieval history, the boundary district between western Settsu Province and eastern Harima formed one coherent region through this transportation network from the late Heian Period (ca. 12th century) onwards. The central powers represented by the Taira government and the heads of the Hōjō family continuously controlled this region as a whole. It frequently became a strategic battleground during the unrest of the Nanbokuchō era (1337–1392). In particular, land at Shijimi was where Akamatsu’s (Northern Court) Shijimi Redoubt (at the Yoshida Sumiyoshiyama Archaeological Site) was erected in the battle for attacking Tanjōzan, which was decisive in the outcome of the fighting in this region.

In the light of this later history, we start to see that the area around Shijimi where the *miyake* was located was a strategic place, both politically and militarily. That being the case, the question arises of how far back into the ancient period this situation goes, or to put it another way, when was the predecessor to the Yunoyama Kaidō developed?

### **Development of the transportation network towards the continent by the Soga family**

As explained above, the land at Shijimi was first appropriated in the fifth century by a Katsuragi-based group who encroached from the route that ran from the Akashi River in the south and along the Hosome River in the Shijimi Hills. Then it seems that the Katsuragi met their downfall in the sixth century and their authority was superseded by the Soga family, who aimed at systematically constructing the *miyake* estate here.

It is well known that in the late sixth century, at the time of Soga no Iname [ca. 506–570] and Soga no Umako [ca. 551–626], the central Yamato Court planned to develop the inland waterway routes to the continent, and especially to install *miyake* as strategic footholds on the transportation routes all over western Japan, in response to the tense international situation on the Korean Peninsula. In Hyōgo Prefecture, for example, we know that they promoted their policy of developing large-scale *miyake* estates, at Taka in Taka *Kōri*, Harima, in the upper reaches of the Kako River (present-day Naka-ku, Taka-chō). The construction of the *miyake* there is thought to have been part of a holistic plan to develop the transportation route northwards via Tanba and Tajima Provinces, ultimately towards the Oki Islands which faced the Korean Peninsula. It is highly likely that the systematic construction of the Shijimi *Miyake* had to do with the Soga's foreign policy.

### **The development of Arima Onsen (Shionoyu)**

What is of interest in this regard is the passage in a fragment of *Settsu no Kuni Fudoki* about present-day Arima Onsen (hot spring) to the east of Shijimi, which records that this was discovered at the time of 'Shima no Ōkimi' (*Shaku Nihongi*, Vol. 14). Shima no Ōkimi refers to Soga no Umako. From a strategic point of view, he not only developed the facilities at Arima Onsen as a resort but set them up as a transit point in order to appropriate the route to Shijimi *Miyake*, which sits on a direct line due west.

### **The excavation of an imported sword belonging to the Soga family**

We should also take into consideration that the pommel of a gilt bronze round-pommel sword was discovered in Iwaya 1-gōfun, a round *kofun* burial mound constructed in the late sixth century, at Iwaya in Shijimi-chō, Miki-shi, near the site of Shijimi *Miyake* (see cover photograph, and page 231). Decorative round-pommel swords were popular from the late 6th to early 7th centuries, and are thought to have been imported from the kingdom of Goguryeo on the Korean Peninsula. It was the Soga family that controlled their distribution. Of course, there is no direct evidence that the person buried in the Iwaya 1-gōfun mound was connected to the family running Shijimi *Miyake*; but there is a high probability that he was.

In short, it can be deduced that it was the Soga family who commandeered the route that later became the Yunoyama Kaidō, and developed this whole district as a strategic foothold, including at Arima Onsen and Shijimi *Miyake*. This took place around the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh centuries. In respect of the ancient roads running along the Rokkō Mountain range, we have been inclined to think solely of the Sanyōdō to its south until now, but we should also take into consideration the role played by the Yunoyama Kaidō, which was the main road on its northern side.