

"Race Against Time : Saving Yamatai's Heritage from Extinction"

Toyohashi was formally known as Atsumi District. In this area there were the grounds of Yoshida Castle, at the mouth of the Asakura river (朝倉川). These were huge, more than 20 times the size of the Tokyo Dome.

The Akumi Kanbe Shinmei Shrine (安久美神戸神明社) was located in the Toyohashi Park. Due to wartime relocation, the shrine's Oni Matsuri(鬼祭) where Tengu (天狗 a mystical creature with description of human and bird- like features) drives away Oni (鬼 an ogre-like creature with the horns on his head), has been preserved. Excavations in this area revealed the Akumi remains(鮑海遺跡).

In Oku Mikawa, the festival of divine spirits, known as Hana Matsuri(花祭) has been passed down. Is there a connection between these two festivals?

Toyohashi, an area rich in ancient burial mounds (古墳, kofun), played an important role in the spread of burial mounds to the northern Kanto region. A breakthrough discovery stirred the world as inscriptions on a iron sword found in the Inariyama burial mound (稲荷山古墳), the oldest of the Sakitama tumulus cluster (さきたま古墳群) in Saitama Prefecture, were reconstructed through X-ray imaging—a once-in-a-century revelation.

(表) 辛亥年七月中記乎獲居臣上祖名意富比埜其兒多加利平足尼其兒名弓已加利獲居其兒名多加披次獲居其兒名多沙鬼獲居其兒名半弓比

(裏)

其兒名加差披余其兒名乎獲居臣世々為杖刀人首奉事來至今獲加多支鹵大王寺在斯鬼宮時吾左治天下令作此百練利刀記吾奉事根原也

"In the year of 辛亥(AD471), in the middle of July, I record. A servant of Owake 乎獲居, his ancestral name is Ohohiko 意富比埜. His child, named Takariskune 多加利平足尼. His child, named Teyokariwake 名弓已加利獲居. His child, named Takahashiwake 多加披次獲居. His child, named Tasakiwake 多沙鬼獲居. His child, named Hatehi 半弓比. His child, named Kasahiyo 加差披余. His child, named Owake-omi 乎獲居臣. Generation after generation, serving as the leader, we have faithfully carried out our duties to this day. During the reign of King Wakatakeru 獲加多支鹵大王, when his temple, Shiki-no-Miya(斯鬼宮), was in place, I, having left the governance of the realm, ordered the creation of this finely crafted sword, recording the roots of my service."

The inscription has been translated in various ways, interpreting "記乎獲居臣" as "the servant of Owake of Ki " or even transforming it into the surname " ki". Similarly, Wakatashiro or Wakatakeshi have been proposed translations for 獲加多支鹵大王, but it is commonly understood as Wakatakeru Great King. This is associated with Emperor Yuryaku (雄略天皇), also known as Prince Oohatsusewakatake 大泊瀨若武尊, renowned for his other title, Prince Wakatakeru.

This "Shiki-no-Miya (斯鬼宮)" is usually linked to "Hatsuse Asakura-no-Miya (初瀨朝倉宮)" of Emperor Yuryaku (雄略天皇).

The iron sword excavated from the Etafunayama burial mounds (江田船山古墳) in Kumamoto Prefecture (late 5th to early 6th century) bears the inscription "治天下獲□□鹵大王世." It is suggested that this might also be associated with Wakatakeru, as found on the iron sword discovered at the Inariyama burial mounds (稲荷山古墳). Moreover, given that it is documented that he served at the imperial court as a civil servant, does this suggest that the imperial court had a presence between both individuals?

In the official historical record "Book of Song (宋書)" under the record of foreign people(夷蕃伝) specifically the "Wa Country" (倭国条) in the envoy dispatch by the Yamato Kings, the 'Five Kings of Wa (贊, 弥, 濟, 興 and 武)' are mentioned .

After the mention of Queen Himiko(卑弥呼), from the year 226 onwards, for a century, Wa (倭 ancient Japan) disappears from the Chinese official history, marking a period known as the "Blank Century." During this era, keyhole-shaped tombs (前方後円墳) emerged, spreading across the nation.

The Five Kings of Wa(倭) sent envoys to the Southern Dynasties of China(南朝), calling themselves as "Highest Rank Military Commander(使持節)", Commander of all Military affairs of listed regions (都督), Wa(倭), Baekje (百濟), Silla(新羅), Mimana(任那), Gaya(伽耶), Jinhan(秦韓), and Mohan(慕韓), Grand peacekeeper-General of the east, King, Wa(倭) . " Alternatively, they asserted as "Highest Rank Military Commander, Commander of all Military affairs of listed regions(使持節都督) of Wa(倭), Baekje(百濟), Silla(新羅), Mimana(任那), Gaya (伽耶), Jinhan(秦韓), Mo Han(慕韓), Grand peacekeeper-General of the east(安東大將軍) , King, Wa(倭), " insisting on recognition of this title.

"使持節" is translated as "Imperial Commissioner," "Commander-in-chief," or "General-in-chief" among the three ranks of military commanders which include "使持節," "持節," and "假節." "都督" is translated as "Commander," indicating a military commanding officer with supervisory and overall control responsibilities.

The title of "Grand peacekeeper-General of the east" is interpreted as a counterpart to the "Supreme Commander of the East(關東大將軍)" given to Goguryeo(高句麗).

In the first part of King Bu's(倭王武) memorial document, it is stated, "Our ancestors conquered fifty-five countries in the east, sixty-six countries in the west, and pacified ninety-five countries beyond the northern seas," closely mirroring the legend of Yamato Takeru.

If a dynasty ruled the eastern and western parts of the Japanese archipelago, would that dynasty have been centered in Honshu?

There are numerous commonalities between Yamato Takeru and Emperor Yuryaku (雄略天皇).

Ise Inner Shrine, also known as Ise Grand Shrine, was initially relocated to its current location during the reign of Emperor Sujin(垂仁天皇), led by Princess Toyosukiirihimenomikoto(豊鍬入姫命) and Empress Yamatohime(倭姫). There is also an Outer Shrine(外宮) that existed as "Former Ise(元伊勢)," and it is said to have been directly transferred from Tanba(丹波) during the reign of Emperor Yuryaku.

Emperor Yuryaku(雄略天皇) is depicted as ruthless person, engaging in what seems like a coup to seize royal authority. Meanwhile, Yamato Takeru is portrayed as cunning and brutal, using underhanded tactics to triumph over Kumaso Takeru and Izumo Takeru.

In the Kojiki(古事記), the deity of Hitokotonushi(一言主神) in Katsuragi (葛城) appears with the exact same form as Emperor Yuryaku (雄略天皇), and it is said that the deity of Hitokotonushi was cursed with an ugly appearance by Ennoodunu(役小角). However, in the "Yakusha Emaki(役者絵巻)" scroll, this deity is referred to as Ōmononushi(大物主) or Nigihayahi, another name for the deity.

In the Nihon Shoki(日本書紀), Emperor Keiko(景行天皇) refers to Yamato Takeru as "I have known him, his form like my child, yet he is a divine person", and Emperor Yuryaku(雄略天皇) is described as "Emperor born, radiant with divine light, filling the palace." It is highly likely that Yamato Takeru served as a model for these descriptions.

The reign of Emperor Keiko(景行天皇) lasted from AD 71 to 130, while the "civil war of Wa (倭国大乱)" mentioned in the Later Han Book(後漢書) occurred between the reigns of Emperor Huan of Han and Emperor Ling of Han, approximately AD 146 to 183. Therefore, the accounts of Emperor Keiko (景行天皇), Yamato Takeru's expeditions from Kyushu to Kanto, and subsequent events involving Emperor Chuai (仲哀天皇), Empress Jingu (神功天皇), and Emperor Ojin (応神天皇) may have drawn inspiration from or been influenced by the historical context of the civil war of Wa(倭国大乱).

The reading of "武" in "倭王・武" as "タケル" results in "Yamato-ō Takeru" (Yamato King Takeru). The Akumi Site is believed to be the shiki-no-miya where Yamato Takeru performed mystical rituals, possibly including Himiko's supernatural practices of oni. In the Oni Festival, Oni flee from Tengu. If those displaced by war took refuge in the mountains, inheriting the supernatural practice of oni, it could connect to the Hana Matsuri. This implies the survival of ceremonies in Yamatai-Koku (邪馬台国).

The names of Akumi (飽海) and Atsumi (渥美) are have their origins the Azumi tribe(安曇族), whose cultures and beliefs are considered to be one of Japan's earliest sea religions. In northern Kyushu, where traces of the Azumi tribe exist, there's the Shujou-onie (修正鬼会) where an oni, seen like as a Buddhist incarnation, appears. This ritual is studied alongside the Hana-matsuri. Kibitsu-hiko Shrine (吉備津彦神社) also features a Hana Matsuri, preserving related dances. Though not abandoning its original form, the shrine holds the legend of Momotaro's oni extermination. If the Hana Matsuri, linked to the ceremonies of Yamatai-Koku, was widespread, it would be possible to revitalize the Hana Matsuri, which is at the risk of fading due to depopulation, on a national scale.

Hosting the Hana Matsuri at Toyohashi Park, where the site of its former Shiki-no-miya, could attract people nationwide. While there are multiple potential locations for Hatsuse Asakura-no-Miya (初瀬朝倉宮), the Akumi Ruins at the mouth of the Asakura River are not included. If there's no clear evidence to the contrary, this site should also be considered as one for research. If it is related to significant heritage of Japan or globally, it should be treated as a nationally recognized area. The benefits of effectively utilizing this area could be immeasurable.

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This is the shrine in the new location.

Oni Matsuri at Akumikambe Shinmeisha in Toyohashi.



Oni Matsuri 鬼祭



Oni of Oni matsuri heldin Akumikambe Shimmeisha

Hana Matsuri 花祭



Oni in Hana Matsuri of Futto