

3.

WRITINGS OF WESTERN SCHOLARS ON EARLY JAPAN

Archaeological findings assign the neolithic Jōmon 縄文 (straw-period to before the third century B.C., the bronze-iron Yayoi 彌生 between the 3rd century B.C. and the 3rd century A.D. (300 B.C. and the Tomb period to the 4th through the 7th centuries.¹ Gathering with chipped and ground stone tools characterized the Jōmon people. However, a whole new way of life was introduced in the Yayoi period by the irrigated rice cultivation which is believed to have come from central China across the China Sea to southern Korea (1000 B.C.) and then to Japan (around 300 B.C.).² There must have been a migration of people equipped with knowledge of copper and bronze smelting, wheel-made pottery, and rice cultivation, perhaps from southern

to Sansom (1931: 20): “Doubtless, during her transition from the Yayoi to the Kofun, Japan received small contingents from Korea; but by that time the ethnic groups were already formed in a process of ethnical fusion going on since the beginning of the Yayoi period, the antiquity of which we have no knowledge.”³ Sansom (1963:

the Yayoi age is usually followed by a bronze or copper age, which is then followed by the iron age. According to Sansom (1931: 11-12), before the bronze age replaced the neolithic culture in Japan, it was overtaken by an iron age. Therefore it is generally held that there was no true bronze age in Japan.” Munro (1911: 426): “Before the Wado 和銅 (Japan Copper) period which began with the accession of the Empress Gemmei [A.D. 707-715] and which was marked by the discovery of workable copper in the province of Musashi, this metal was imported from Korea . . . The source of supply was fitful and inadequate . . . This accounts for the few signs of a bronze age in Japan.” Munro (1911: 577) notes that the metal is called Akagane (red metal) while bronze is called “Karakane or Karakane, signifying its special manufacture in Korea.”

Wheel-made, hard-fired and bright reddish Yayoi pottery was made by a spinning process which was more uniform and better shaped than the hand-made Jōmon pottery with raw-rope patterns. It was first discovered in the place called Yayoi in the province of Yamato (see Aoki, 1974: 14).

to Sansom (1931: 27-28), “we had better content ourselves with

in which they settled . . . [I]f there was some degree of fusion of people whom we may call aboriginal and the later arrivals.”

At the end of the Yayoi period, social organizations recognized chieftains as superior to the rest of the community and endowed with political authority. According to Beardsley (1955), “the bronze objects are evidence for social stratification, for they clearly were too few either in the days when they came all the way from China or in the days when they came from Korea], to be in the ordinary mortal’s hands.”

According to the Wei-zhi, which is regarded as the most detailed and reliable record of Japan, towards the end of the Yayoi period, there were about a hundred tribal states in Wa which were in a state of civil war. A strong ruler arose. The Wei-zhi gives a list of states forming the kingdom which she presided and records that the Queen Country was a district called Yamaichi 邪馬壹國.⁴ Sansom (1931: 15-16) notes that in the middle of the third century a number of Japanese tribes or clans on Kyūshū had gone a long way towards unification under a single ruler.

... [I]t is most likely that the relations with Korea, which they had shared, served as a bond of unity, distinguishing them from the mainland and increasing their power of attack and defense [The] kingdom was in the west and . . . with its associated countries it formed the northern half of Kyūshū [W]hen the Wei 魏 dynasty

ruled in varying proportions, elements from several parts of the eastern coast [e.g., people of southern origin such as Malays, tribes akin to the Miaos, aboriginals of South China as well as people of Mongol extraction] were incorporated into the population of Japan at the opening of the Christian epoch.” According to Beardsley, “blood types, in which the Japanese patterns differ greatly from the patterns found in various parts of Korea, do not permit the assumption that migrants from the mainland whose influence was made manifest in Yayoi culture came in any great numbers or exterminated the aboriginal population.” Sansom contends that “most Yayoi vocabulary has Indonesian analogues; tooth-blackening, tattooing, and other customs parallel” and that “through Jōmon times a language of southern origin and a social system like that of present-day Polynesian was widespread throughout the islands.”

At the end of the Yayoi period, the Queen Country was named Yamaichi. However, historians (as well as Sansom) have used the character “dai” 臺 in place of “ichi” 壹. Recently, Furuta Takehiko has convincingly shown that the character “dai” is related to the Kyūshū state and has nothing to do with Yamadai or Yamato 大 (1983).

pan shows that recollections of a long period of disorder were
ie national memory”

to Sansom (1963: 22): “It is highly probable that Kyūshū and
art of the main island were inhabited by tribes of various origins.
ccount somehow for the ‘southern’ element in Japanese culture,
perhaps suppose that some of the people south of the Queen
: of southern origin. The wars mentioned by the Wei reporters
e been due to antagonism between groups of different ethnic

ing Tomb period is marked with iron weapons and tools, high-
and enormous burial mounds being built throughout western
rding to Meyer (1976: 18): “the tomb culture was superimposed
g inhabitants by new waves of immigrants from Korea. Like the
res, it spread from Kyūshū northwards. These newcomers were
l aristocratic people, whose invading warriors rode horses, wore
armor, and used iron swords. The tumuli or period name derives
of high earth tombs or stone burial chambers, similar to those
orea . . . entombed items include curved jewels, mirrors, and
ar in nature to Korean ornaments and weapons. These tombs,
s of early Japanese priest-kings, are found mostly in the ancient
t of Nara and Kyōto in the Kinki plain.” Meyer (1976: 20)
he two Japanese chronicles (i.e., Nihongi and Kojiki) . . . relate
grandson of the Sun Goddess, descended from heaven to Kyū

(1937: 15) notes that: “Then for a period of nearly one hundred and
is no mention in Chinese records of visits from Japanese envoys. This
tical change in Japan, Korea, Manchuria, and northern China.”

l: 24) notes that the gigantic size of the tombs “might have been
press the peasants with the authority of the ruler, since peasants in the
iod, coming out of the Yayoi communal stage, were not accustomed to
tus disparity observed in the later tomb period.” Befu (1971: 22)
]he size [of tombs] gradually increased until about the early fifth
fter the size on the whole decreased, although the number of tombs
reased in the sixth and seventh centuries.”

1963: 22) notes that: “Unlike the earlier tombs, these no longer contain
is, but iron swords and body armor. They do contain bronze articles,
ncipally mirrors and ornaments, which are cult objects” Sansom
tinues: “[W]e see features of early Japanese society to which we can
is of later religious beliefs and moral ideas. They appear to be free
nfluence, but probably owe something to Korean and Mongol sources.”

jewel, the moon; and an iron sword, a lightning flash. In turn, Jimmu Tennō, moved up from southeast Kyūshū via the eastern shores in the Yamato area in the Kinki plain.” Beardsley (1955), the tomb culture was superimposed as a model of culture on the mass of ordinary people who experienced hard lives compared to what the Jōmon people had experienced at the onset of Yayoi culture.

Reischauer and Craig (1973: 329) state that: “The authors [of the *Nihongi*] . . . wove together often contradictory myths and legends in an effort to enhance the prestige of the ruling family and create a facade of centralized rule and respectable antiquity comparable to that of the Roman Empire. Sansom (1931: 21) notes that some might have challenged “the veracity of the Yamato sovereigns, so . . . it was thought essential to bolster their dynastic claim; and it was chiefly with this object that the *Nihon-shoki* were compiled.”

Reischauer and Craig (1973: 330): “Back of this legendary story lies some historical reality. Cultural waves did indeed come to North Kyūshū and up the Inland Sea to the Kinki region. Kyūshū became the first and greatest center of tomb building The Kinki region of Kyūshū and the Kantō by the Yamato state had taken place by the 4th century.” Reischauer and Craig (1973: 5) further note that: “Many sites associated with the tomb culture show strong new influences brought from the continent”⁸

The region of Kyūshū is for the most part mountainous and has little space available for settled communities to cultivate food crops. The Yamato plain, though small in area, is agriculturally very productive. According to Reischauer and Fairbank (1958: 467): “The story of Jimmu’s conquest may reflect dim memories of a movement of conquering peoples up the Inland Sea, which would be perfectly consistent with the archaeological record.” According to Sansom (1963: 17): “There is no doubt that by 400 there was a ruling family which had already for some time exercised at least a general sovereignty over a number of powerful clans

and Higuchi (1982: 290) also note that: “[t]he wave of continental culture swept through Kyūshū, the Inland Sea, and Yamato was also felt in the Kinki region. Metal goods of continental styles, particularly horse trappings and the remains of mounted warriors, are well attested in the tumuli of Late Yayoi. Trade-passages and Sue ware ceramics also appeared.” It is interesting to note that the authors using the expression “continental” in place of “Korean.”

na may also have contributed to their influence.

to Kiley (1973), “The *old dynasty*, including *Emperors Sujin* consisted of ritual-religious sovereigns who reigned during the th centuries. Next came the military *middle dynasty* of the fifth . Finally, the *new dynasty* was established on or about the year ng generally known as Emperor Keitai. It is this dynasty which its sovereignty to the present day. . . . Mizuno concludes that rring the early fourth century. Egami also asserts the historicity claims, with equal plausibility, that he [first] ruled in Kyū shū, ng there from Korea. . . . [C]ommunities reigned over by ers, such as Himiko and Sujin [during the third century] . . . are y states in the strictest sense.”

to Edwards (1983), “the Japanese historic chronicles show a . . . ntinual contact, mostly with Korea, which enabled the Japanese w techniques and ideas throughout the fifth century. They e; one hand, a steady flow of immigrants who provided skilled ch the Japanese themselves did not initially possess. These ing . . . [and] advanced techniques in various industries, such as ttery, and metallurgy. The chronicles also document the of Korean-style political institutions, which appear to have ificant part in stabilizing central authority in the sixth century, ounding of a true dynasty from the time of Emperor Keitai on.”

to Sansom (1931: 37), the Yamato society consisted of its called *uji* 氏. These were communities formed of households ancestry, or households which, for the purpose of solidarity, ame ancestry. Each *uji* was under the control of an *uji-no-kami* (chieftain) who was generally given such appellations as Omi, , Sukune, and Kimi. According to Reischauer (1937: 9): “This hereditary title (*kabane* 姓) which was held not only by the clan by his close relatives as well. This *kabane* system is believed to m Korea.”

a was ruled by a number of clans which maintained attendant groups called *be* 部. Sansom (1931: 38) notes that: “The country occupied by a number of clans -- doubtless derived from those ; which had first conquered it -- who agreed to accept the a dominant clan” The most powerful one was the Imperial chieftain ruled directly over his own clansmen and the members hereditary corporations [*be*] that served him and his court.

suarily in more diluted form. As a consequence, the primitive structure of Japan was less modified and so may have remained at in the later stages of civilization than in Korea.” According to Reid Craig (1973: 10-12), “the growing strength and institutionalization of the Yamato state were probably in part the results of continuing contact with the continent, particularly Korea. There was a steady flow of people from Korea to Japan that lasted up until the early ninth century. Many of these people, as well organized groups, whose leaders took a prominent role at the Yamato court because of the knowledge and skills they possessed. The movement of people was probably facilitated by the Japanese foothold in South Korea called Mimana (任那 by the Japanese) in South Korea while it is probable that it resulted from alliances by the people of that area with the Japanese related groups which had earlier crossed over to Japan.”⁹ Reid Craig (1973: 64) notes that “[w]hile the Japanese cannot be said to have ruled Mimana (任那) in any meaningful sense, the court did exercise some political influence there, a role that was probably encouraged, rather than imposed, by Mimana’s tribal chiefs, who desired a counterweight against powerful neighbors, especially Silla. For the Japanese, the assured continual access to iron and advanced continental technology had been channeled through the area since ancient times.” Reid Craig (1973: 64) notes that: “It must be remembered that for the greater part of the eighth century Japan had little or no direct intercourse with China and was therefore dependent upon Korea for instruction.” Emperor Monmu (r. 685-697 A.D. 781-806) abandoned the capital city of Heijōkyō in favor of Naniwa which remained the seat of emperors until 1869. According to Reid Craig (1973: 64) Kammu moved “away from the power base of the Temmu line to Naniwa, the center of the Yamashiro (山城) province, a stronghold of the immigrants, where his own maternal relatives were entrenched.” Reid Craig (1973: 64) notes that the Tenji line including Kammu “maintained a strong connection with the Yamashiro province even through a century of political power yielded by the Temmu line in the Yamato

to Reischauer (1970: 14), “Though explained in the Japanese histories as a result of conquest by a warrior empress, the Korean foothold was more correctly a result of the movement of people from Korea to Japan and the relations between certain groups on both sides of straits separating the

r (1937: 29) tells us about ranks, during the age of the Court (592-1167): “The lower officials, from the Fourth Rank through rank . . . though far less wealthy and powerful than the High s . . . [accounted for] most of the scholars, highly skilled men, and artists [T]he military men in this upper middle : the Feudal Barons (Buke 武家) that dominated the next age. leavage between the Fifth and Sixth Ranks was very marked. ause officials of the Fourth and Fifth Ranks came generally from Yamato-no-kuni and gifted foreign clans, while those of the th, and Eighth Ranks were descendants of the ancient local former, consequently, received many more favors than the latter. fth Rank officials were given rank rice fields, rank salaries, and rial dress. Their sons were known as Rank Inheriting Sons and rited ranks, being also permitted to enter the Court University.”

to Reischauer (1937: 46), it was during the Pre-Heian Era of l that “Japan was transformed from a primitive, decentralized m into a civilized, unified, bureaucratic state” and that “the nnō) changed from a great Clan Chieftain (Uji-no-kami) into an ile “the other Clan Chieftains became Court Nobles (Kuge 公家), strict Officials (Gunji 郡司).” Reischauer (1937: 57-58) further ie men of *The Pre-Heian Era* had been fascinated by Chinese and although they had not always understood what they were had devoted most of their energies to transplanting this o Japan [During the Early Heian Era of A.D. 794-967], the f enthusiasm for all things Chinese, which had risen so rapidly e of Shōtoku-Taishi [A.D. 593] on, attained its greatest height o recede Ever since the latter part of *The Nara Period* been so unsatisfac-tory with Silla that Japanese embassies to sail by the southern route across the treacherous East China Sea the northern route along the west coast of Korea and then across

hi (KEJ: 3. 121) states that “Kammu . . . aided by the economic power : FAMILY of earlier immigrants from the Korean peninsula [Paekche], t of government from Nara to Nagaokakō in order to eliminate the ical power of the Nara Buddhist sects and to bring new vigor to the n of government. However . . . in 793 . . . [Kammu] ordered Fujiwara to build a new capital in the village of Uda (now Ukyō Ward, Kyōto), agaokakyō, was in Yamashiro Province, an area that had long been e Hata family.”

But the Japanese should have come to feel that China did not have things to offer to warrant the maintenance of such costly ties. So, during this era, Japan turned her back on the continent and lost her own culture."