

THE LINEAGE OF GILT-BRONZE OPENWORK CROWNS AND SHOES EXCAVATED IN JAPAN

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Metalworking in Japan was technically perfected circa the 5th century with the production of gilt-bronze works such as horse gear and personal ornaments that suddenly appeared in mounded tombs, *kofun*. However, there was no sign of the production process having taken root in Japan or an independent flowering for some time. It is certain that at this stage, as can be seen in the artifacts excavated from tomb mound No. 126 at Niizawa in Nara prefecture, the strong involvement of Silla was clear, but as the same sorts of works cannot be traced far back in time in Silla itself and they appeared there at approximately the same time, one might surmise the possibility that the two countries received the impact of Goguryeo or China in equal measure. In Japan, at least, the technology to produce such objects did take root at this time, and the techniques of gilt-bronze metalworking continued to be devoted exclusively to the simple ornamentation of weapons and defensive equipment. Reflecting international relations of this period, the latter half of the 5th century, many metalwork items that share characteristics with those of Kaya, or Gaya, have been excavated throughout Japan, which instead demonstrates the intimate relationship with Kaya.

This situation was transformed around the year 500 CE with the first appearance of gilt-bronze, open-work crowns and shoes as burial goods. As a result of the re-examination of these types of works excavated from the Jūzen no mori Kofun in Fukui prefecture, which had been restored early on, it was confirmed that the type of shoes found there were of the type that had previously been understood to have existed only at the Shimoshibayatsu Kofun in Gunma prefecture. It was also learned from painstaking analysis that they and the gilt-bronze, openwork crown are the earliest ever excavated in Japan. This is because these items are characterized by ornament with a dragon motif in openwork and glass beads fixed by split pins. In contrast to the shoes, the parts characterized by crossing strips that intersect in single or double-crossed patterns and use many openwork triangular shapes seem to be from crowns. As for the shoes, whose existence has only recently been reconfirmed, it is clear that they are of a different lineage from the shoes found in the Inariyama Kofun in Shiga prefecture, which are from the latter half of the 6th century, and from the earlier shoes with repoussé turtle design from the Eda-Funayama Kofun in Kumamoto prefecture, but the latter were greatly influenced by them.

Then, by seeking the lineage of these gilt-bronze, openwork items on the Korean peninsula, we can confirm that there are similarities in the motifs from the works from mounded tomb No. 1 at Popcheonri and others in Baekje. The same type of design motif is known to have been preferred for use in crowns in Baekje. Judging from the above, it is clear that in the midst of changing circumstances in foreign relations, the people of Wa circa 500 CE enthusiastically attempted to adopt the Baekje system of personal adornment that used gilt-bronze items. This marked a great change, which was not limited to personal ornament.