

A Study on the Graves and Coffin Contents of the Feudal Lords and Their Families in the Edo Period

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There are some graves for a daimyo (feudal lord) in the Edo period, both in his dominion and Edo, because all daimyos were required to leave their wives and children in Edo and to attend the shogunate's court there on alternate years from 1635, when the Laws of the Military Houses were changed to establish the Sankin Kotai (参勤交代) as a system. Those graves consist of Honsoubō (本葬墓) which was built to bury the corpse of Daimyo, and Bunreibo (分霊墓) to pay homage to him.

In archaeology, dominator's graves are important clue to make clear the form of political organization and system of the past. But studies on the graves of daimyos have concentrator on the form of Honsoubō, coffin contents and Bunreibo have scarcely been investigated.

Almost all of the excavated graves of daimyos are Honsoubō, and the only case of Bunreibo is graves of Tsugaruke (津軽家) that had been daimyo family of Hirosaki-han (弘前藩) .

I distinguished some periods concerning the graves of daimyos by the study on the form of graves and coffin contents from Honsoubō and Bunreibo, and examined the changes in the daimyos.

Largely three periods are distinguished from the graves and coffin contents of daimyos and their families in the Edo period.

In the first period, from 1600 to the middle 17th century, many daimyos were buried in tubs, palanquins or biers as coffins, with side arms, armors and tea-things of the first-class. Daimyos in this period were both military men and votaries of the tea ceremony who had lived through the age of civil strife.

In the middle period, from the middle to the end of the 17th century, many daimyos were cremated and their ashes were laid to rest in funerary

urns. For coffin contents, articles used on a Buddhist altar, e.g. rosaries, began to take the place of side arms and armors.

In the last period, from the beginning of the 18th century to 1868, burial style was established in every family of daimyos.

When a daimyo's death often linked directly with attainder of the daimyo's family in the first period, the late daimyo was the object of worship. After the 18th century, the people enjoyed a long period of peace and tranquility and the late daimyo changed to be object held a mass by the people.