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**ASUKA AND FUJIWARA PALACE SITES
EXCAVATION REPORT V**

INVESTIGATION OF THE EAST THIRD WARD ON SIXTH STREET
OF THE FUJIWARA CAPITAL SITE

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1. Map of archaeological features at the East Third Ward on Sixth Street of the Fujiwara Capital Site
2. Map of location selection of Fujiwara Capital

Chapter I Introduction

This is the archaeological report of the excavations in the East Third Ward on Sixth Street of the Fujiwara Capital Site, conducted by the Department of Fujiwara Palace Sites Investigations, Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, in advance of the construction of office building of the institute. The archaeological investigation was carried out for five seasons, in the period from April 1985 to May 1987. In addition, two supplemental investigations were conducted in 2004. A total of 17,000 m² areas were excavated.

Chapter II Outline of the Fujiwara Capital

History of the Fujiwara Capital

The Fujiwara Capital was the first Chinese-style planned city that had a square-shaped Imperial Palace area spanned 1 km square in its center. The city area was divided in regular fashion into residential blocks by streets and avenues intersecting at right angles in the form of a checkerboard. Divided by the central north-south road called *Suzaku-Ōji*, the western part of the city was called the Right Capital (*Ukyō*), and the eastern part the Left Capital (*Sakyō*). The smallest residential block called *tsubo* or *chō* was ca. 130 m square, and four *tsubo* (*chō*) blocks composed one ward called *bō*, which was ca. 265 m square and equal to a half of the ancient Japanese mile called *ri*. There were a number of residential houses, Buddhist temples and government offices in the city area, and sizes of the residences varied depending on the rank of the owner, from a quarter of *chō* to four *chō*. Although each ward had its own name such as “*rinbō*”, not all the original name has been known today, so we conventionally call a name of ward according to the name of facing road, such as East Third Ward on Six Street.

According to the Chronicles of Japan (*Nihon Shoki*), in AD 676 Emperor Tenmu decided to set up a new capital and planned to move from Asuka Kiyomihara Palace to the new palace. It was just after five years of his enthronement, but this plan was not realized at that time. He started the plan again to set up a capital in AD 682, but the construction was halted due to his death in AD 686. Succeeding Empress Jitō resumed the construction in AD 690, and relocated the capital to the newly founded

Fujiwara Capital in AD 694. Until the relocation of the capital to Nara in AD 710, the Fujiwara Capital had been served as the national capital of Japan for sixteen years.

The construction process of the capital has gradually been clarified by the results of successive archaeological investigations. The studies has revealed that the location of the palace had not been decided in the beginning of the construction, and the streets and avenues were firstly built covering all parts of the city. Excavations in the Fujiwara Palace Site revealed features of side ditches of the roads, which are called “precedent roads”. After the setting of the palace location, the side ditches of the “precedent roads” were buried, and channels were newly dug to facilitate the transportation of construction supplies for the palace. The wooden tablets dating back to AD 682 to 685 were recovered from the channels. This implies that the palace construction was ongoing at that time. In addition, it is considered that the construction of the Moto Yakushiji temple was started in AD 680, and archaeological investigations revealed that the Main Hall of temple had been accomplished in AD 688. The land of the temple precisely corresponded to the grid of the West Third Ward on Eighth Street. This suggests that the temple land was set using the streets and avenues as reference lines. In addition, the excavations revealed that the features of the small column avenue of the West Third Ward and the buildings and walls inside the ward existed below the prepared soil for the temple land. These evidences suggests that the city construction was ongoing at the time when the construction of the Moto Yakushiji was started. In addition, the small column avenue of the West Third Ward was buried at the time of the accomplishment of the capital, so this situation is equal to that of the “precedent roads” in the Fujiwara Palace. Therefore, not all the excavated roads in the city area necessarily continued to exist after the accomplishment of the capital, and it is possible that a residential area might spanned several blocks in the beginnings.

Plan of the Fujiwara Capital

About the plan of the Fujiwara Capital, Kishi Toshio had firstly proposed a hypothesis based on the investigations carried out from 1966 to 1968. He had shown

the plan that the capital spanned 8 wards from east to west and 12 wards from north to south, and that the eastern side corresponded to the Nakatsu-michi road, the western side corresponded to the Shimotsu-michi road, the northern side corresponded to the *Yoko-ōji* road, and the southern side corresponded to the *Abe-no-Yamada-michi* road respectively. The Kishi's reconstruction plan had been widely accepted for a long time; however, after 1979 a number of archaeological features of the streets and avenues have been revealed in the areas outside of the Kishi's plan. In the wake of the discoveries, many new reconstruction plans have been proposed as "Greater Fujiwara Capital". In 1996, T-junctions that corresponds to both the eastern and western sides of the capital were revealed, which assured that the capital spanned 10 wards from east to west. At present, the reconstruction plan that spanned 10 wards from east to west and 10 wards from north to south has been widely accepted. According to this plan, the Fujiwara Palace was positioned in the center of the city area, whereas the other ancient capitals in Japan had their palace area positioned in the north.

Chapter III Archaeological Features

In the archaeological excavations in East Third Ward on Sixth Street of the Fujiwara Capital Site, the area of ca. 17,000 m² was opened. A number of archaeological features that date back to the period between the Kofun period and the Middle Ages were revealed, including 2 city roads, 83 buildings with embedded pillars, 8 pit dwellings, 45 walls with embedded pillars, 38 wells, 37 ditches, 4 pits for buried pottery, and so on. For the most part of the features date back to the period of the Fujiwara Capital. In addition, some features belong to the Nara period (from AD 710 to 784). In this report, we divide the period into six Phases as follow: Phase I includes the Kofun period, mainly around fifth century. Phase II includes the period before the construction of the Fujiwara Capital in the seventh century. Phase III includes the period of the Fujiwara Capital, including its construction period, and this Phase is subdivided into three sub-Phases as follow: Phase III-A corresponds to the construction period. Phase III-B corresponds to the early part of the Fujiwara Capital. Phase III-C corresponds to the later period of the Fujiwara Capital. Phase IV

includes the Nara Period in the eighth century. Phase V includes the later part of the Heian period from the tenth to eleventh centuries. Phase VI includes the period after the later part of the Heian period in the twelfth century.

In Phase I, some features of pit dwellings were distributed along a winding natural stream that ran from the south.

In Phase II, the feature of large north-south ditch SD 4143 was positioned in the eastern side of the excavated area, and some features of buildings with embedded pillars were distributed in the west side of the ditch. These buildings were congregated around a relatively large building.

In Phase III, the area was used as the East Third Ward on Sixth Street of the Fujiwara Capital. This land was in a prime location of the capital, since it faced the eastern side of the Fujiwara Palace. In addition, it faced the Sixth Street in the south side, which ran through the southern side of the Fujiwara Palace, and also faced the Fifth Street in the north side, which extended from the Southern East Gate of the palace.

In Phase III-A, the ward was divided into four *tsubo* blocks by the small row street of the Sixth Street and the small column avenue of the West Third Ward. Among the four *tsubo* blocks, the situation of the northeastern and southeastern blocks were clarified relatively. The northeastern block was subdivided into eastern and western parts, and there was a compartment surrounded by walls. The compartment had a gate in the middle of the southern side, and buildings were positioned systematically inside the compartment. This situation suggests that the compartment was an official facility. The southeastern block was also subdivided into northern and southern parts, and each part occupied an area of a half *chō*. This situation suggests that the compartment was used for organized purposes like the western part of the northeastern compartment.

In Phase III-B, the previously subdivided blocks became integrated as one, and the large building SB 5000 was positioned in the center of the East Third Ward on Sixth Street. It is probable that this building was used as the main building in the ward, since there were neither other buildings on the central line of the ward, nor other large-scale buildings in the ward. In the east, there was a line of wall in the

north-south direction that divided the outer and inner compartments. Inside the inner compartment, a north-south building was positioned in the southeast of the main building. Although the area in the southwest of the main building has not been excavated yet, it is likely that there was another north-south building symmetrically. It is probable that the main building and two north-south buildings were arranged in triangle. In the northeast of the main building was an east-west building, and another east-west building was positioned over there. These buildings were positioned systematically, so it is likely that another pair of buildings were positioned at bilaterally symmetric location. At the front courtyard in the south of the main building, there was a feature of temporary structure. It is probable that this structure was associated with a ritual performed at the front courtyard. In addition, large east-west ditch SD 4130 was extended from the large north-south ditch and ran to the west direction, and large well SE 4740 was positioned nearby.

In Phase III-C, the ward still occupied four *chō* blocks, which was same as before, and the inner compound became larger. In the inner compound, an east-west building was positioned in the east of the main building, and two north-south building were positioned on a line in the southeast of the main building. It is probable that a group of buildings were distributed symmetrically in the western part of the compound. Although the layout of the compound adhered fundamentally to the previous one, the extent became larger substantially. In addition, a small building was positioned just in the south of the main building.

In Phase IV in the Nara period, the water channels still continued to exist. In the south part of the excavated area, a compartment surrounded by walls with embedded pillars was revealed. A pair of small and large east-west building were positioned on a line in the north-south direction inside the compound. In the northwest corner of the excavated area, a building with internal pillars was revealed, which is estimated that it was a warehouse. Considering the layout and extent of the structures, it is probable that these structures belonged to a government office.

In Phase V, large north-south ditch SD 4143 was revealed in the eastern side of the excavated area; however, the previous ditches SD 4130 and SE 4740 were almost buried. A pair of small and large buildings were positioned in the south part of the

excavated area. Although there were some large building in this Phase, it is probable that these were not a part of government office but a settlement.

In Phase VI, the area was subdivided into small plots, and wells were dug at every plots. Two groups of structures including a large building with small buildings, walls, ditches and pits were revealed in the center of the excavated area. The layout of these structures was modified at short intervals. After the Kamakura period, a curved ditch, that was probably a moat, ran in the northwest part of the excavated area, and some wells and east-west buildings were distributed around the area inside the moat. In addition, a number of roof tiles were recovered. This implies that there was a temple or shrine. Artifacts recovered from the moat date back to the later part of the fourteenth century. The present landscape of agricultural community around this region may trace back to that period.

Chapter IV Artifacts

A number of artifacts were recovered from the excavated area, especially from the large ditch SD 4130 and the well SE 4740 on the south side of the ditch, including roof tiles, bricks, pottery, earthen wares, wooden tools, metal tools and wooden writing tablets.

Roof tiles and bricks: A total of 121 round eave roof tiles, classified into 17 types, and 84 flat eave roof tiles, classified into 25 types, were recovered, which date back to the period between the ancient times and the Middle Ages. Most of the roof tiles of the ancient times were made from the same molds used in the Fujiwara Palace and Buddhist temples in the Yamato region. Especially, the existences of the round eave roof tiles with the design of simple lotus eight petals with concentric circle pattern and flat eave roof tiles with embossing palmette scroll design are worth noting, for the roof tiles of the same design are considered to be the earliest roof tiles used in the Kibiike abandoned temple (the Kudara Ōdera temple) erected in the early seventh century. The roof tiles of the Middle Ages includes two groups; the former dates back to the period between the late thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries (in the transition period from Kamakura to Muromachi), and the latter dates back to the period between the middle and late fourteenth century. A total of 3,860

pieces and 966.1 kg in weight round roof tiles, and 22,993 pieces and 3,083.9 kg in weight flat roof tiles were recovered from the site. In addition, a total of 9 fragments of square-shaped tile with relief of triad Buddha images were recovered from the northwest part of the excavated area.

Pottery and earthen wares: A total of 397 wooden boxes of pottery and earthen wares were recovered, which date back to the period between the Jomon period and the early modern period. Most of them were Haji and Sue wares recovered from the ditch SD 4130 and the well SE 4740. The artifacts recovered from SD 4130 date back to the period between the Fujiwara period and the later part of the tenth century, and those from SE 4740 date back to the period between the Fujiwara period and the early part of the tenth century. It should be noted that a large amount of the artifacts of the Nara period were also recovered even though the capital had already been abandoned at that time. In addition, the occurrence rates of eating utensils and other distinctive types are similar to those from other areas used for government offices. This suggests that the site had been used for a certain official facility in the Nara period. A total of 134 pottery with ink inscription were recovered, and over the 95 percent of them were from the features of SD 4130 and SE 4740. A total of 22 pottery have inscriptions associated with Mt. Kaguyama.

Wooden tools, metal tools, and coins: A total of 120 containers of wooden tools were recovered, mainly from the ditch SD 4130 and the well SE 4740, including containers such as bent wood boxes and lacquer wares, textile manufacturing tools such as spindles, accessories such as combs, musical instruments such as *koto* bridges, ritual implements such as figurines and pointed boards, and tools such as hafts of knife. The unearthed metal tools include iron implements such as short swords, sickles and nails, and bronze implements such as bronze bracelets and flower-shaped ornaments. In addition, a total of 46 coins were recovered. Among them, one plain silver coin and 27 *Wadō Kaichin* coins were recovered from the lower layers of the filling soils of the well SE 4740.

Wooden writing tablets: One talisman tablet was recovered from the well SE 4740. A total of 28 tablets were recovered from the ditch SD 4230 including tablets with inscriptions of office names such as “*Sakyō-shiki*” and “*Natsumi-no-tsukasa*”, tablets

and baggage tags with inscriptions of quantity terms such as “*soku*” and “*wa*”, and so on.

Analyses of archaeological science: Faunal remains such as horns of Japanese deer and teeth of horse were recovered from the ditch SD 4130. Other faunal remains including horses, cows, humans and soft-shell turtles were recovered from the features and layers of the Middle Ages and the early modern period. Plants remains including seeds of bayberry, chestnuts, plums and peaches were also recovered. It is probable that these were residues of edible fruits. An analysis of species identification for wooden implements clarified that bent wood boxes and pointed boards were mostly made from cypress. An analysis by florescence X-ray for *Wadō Kaichin* coins clarified that they were divided into four groups by their components. This corresponds to the difference of letters inscribed on the coins. Another componential analysis for attached matters to the tiles with Buddha relief clarified that the tiles were originally covered by some materials such as a white base coat, lacquer, and gold leaf. In addition, the covering materials differs from one tile to another.

Chapter V Conclusion

In conclusion we consider the characteristics of the site based on our investigations and studies.

In Fujiwara period: The site of the East Third Ward on Sixth Street was used for a government office, since the layout of the buildings was systematic and the front courtyard was placed surrounded by the buildings. The pottery recovered from the site also shows some distinctive characteristics of the ceramics used at government offices. Previous studies on excavated wooden writing tablets have clarified that there had been at least two government offices positioned in the city area; one was “*Emon-fu*”, the Headquarter of the Palace Gate Guards, at the East First Ward on Seventh Street, and the other was “*Ukyō-shiki*”, the West Capital Administrative Office, at the West First Ward on Seventh Street. Both of them were situated next to the palace. In addition, these facilities occupied large areas; the “*Emon-fu*” occupied four *chō* blocks and the “*Ukyō-shiki*” occupied more than three *chō* blocks.

These features are common to the counterparts of the site of the East Third Ward on Sixth Street.

During the Fujiwara period, the *Taihō* Code, the first full-fledged law system in Japan, was put in force in AD 701. In the wake of the implement, the “*Kyō-shiki*” was subdivided into the “*Sakyō-shiki*” and “*Ukyō-shiki*”. The wooden writing tablet with the inscription of “*Sakyō-shiki*” was recovered from the site of the East Third Ward on Sixth Street. In addition, the site was situated in the area of East Capital (*Sakyō*). It is probable the site was used for the “*Sakyō-shiki*”. From the beginning to the end of the Fujiwara period, the site had continued occupying four *chō* blocks. Therefore we consider that the “*Kyō-shiki*” had been placed on the site by AD 701, then the site had been used for the “*Sakyō-shiki*” after that. The change of the building layout from Phases III-B to III-C corresponds to the modification of the facility.

On the other hand, the “*Ukyō-shiki*” was placed on the new location at the West First Ward on Seventh Street. In the early part of the Fujiwara period, the West First Ward on Seventh Street was divided into four *chō* blocks, and it is considered that the southwestern *chō* block was used for a residence of an aristocrat. In the later part of the Fujiwara period, the residence at the southwest was modified into a government office, and it annexed the northwest block at the West First Ward on Seventh Street and the southwest block at the West First Ward on Eighth Street, then it occupied a long area covering more than three *chō* blocks. To secure the land for the “*Ukyō-shiki*”, the western parts of the West First Ward on Seventh Street and the West First Ward on Eighth Street were modified accordingly.

In Nara period: It should be noted that there are some pottery with the inscriptions associated with “*Kaguyama*” in the collection of artifacts of the Nara period. The “*Kaguyama*” means the Mt. Kaguyama located in the east of the site. It has been regarded as a sacred mountain and composed the famous “Yamato Triad Mountains”, together with Mt. Unebi and Mt. Miminashi. There has been a hypothesis that this site had some association with the facility named “*Kaguyama Shōsō*” (Kaguyama official warehouse) described on the “*Yamato-no-kuni Shōzei-chō*” (the tax list in Yamato Province) in *Tenpyō* 2 (AD 730), and the existence of the building that was possibly a

warehouse may support the hypothesis. In the studies on the “*Yamato-no-kuni Shōzei-chō*”, it has been considered that the “*Kaguyama Shōsō*” was situated not in the *Toichi* district but in the *Takaichi* district. The site is just situated on the border between the *Toichi* and *Takaichi* districts. According to the previous studies on the *Engi-shiki*, the book about laws and customs written in the ninth century, and other historical documents associated with the *Kidono-shō* manor in the later eleventh century, it is probable that the site belonged to the *Toichi* district. Therefore, the hypothesis that the site was associated with the “*Kaguyama Shōsō*” needs to be reconsidered. Instead, it is probable that there was another facility named after Mt. Kaguyama, and the pottery with inscriptions of “*Kaguyama*” were derived from it.

In other periods: Our study also clarify the situations of land use in the other periods. In the Kofun period, a number of pottery in the Korean peninsula style were recovered from the pit dwellings. This implies that some immigrants from the Korean peninsula were based in the Asuka region at that time. Although there were a few archaeological features date back to the seventh century at the site, it should be noted that some roof tiles had the same designs as the counterparts in the Kibiike abandoned temple (the Kudara Ōdera temple) erected in the 11th year of Emperor Jomei (AD 639). After the Heian period, the site has gradually blended into the surrounding landscape of rural country.

Perspectives and future issues: The archaeological investigation at the East Third Ward on Sixth Street of the Fujiwara Capital Site produce good results for understanding the past of the site. The study clarified that the archaeological features of the Fujiwara period were associated with the “*Sakyō-shiki*”. This is a new clue to understand the status of government facilities in the Fujiwara Capital. Especially, it is an important result to clarify the layout of the buildings in the government office, since there have been previously a few evidences to reconstruct the plan of the government offices. In addition, the study also shows that some important facilities were positioned around the palace. Especially, it is an important finding that both “*Sakyō-shiki*” and “*Ukyō-shiki*” occupied large areas, for understanding the situation of government offices in the Fujiwara Capital. However, there still have been a less investigations conducted on the Fujiwara Capital,

comparing to the other sites of the ancient capitals. Therefore, a full understanding of the Fujiwara Capital, the first full-fledged Chinese-style capital in Japan, awaits further investigations.