

**The Impact and Problems of
Ishimoda Sho's Small Empire of
the Donggi Theory:
Focusing on the Interpretations of
Jil and *Mimana's Jo***

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The Impact and Problems of Ishimoda Sho's Small Empire of the Dongi Theory: Focusing on the Interpretations of *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo*

Ishimoda Sho's Small Empire of the Dongi [東夷, Eastern Barbarians] theory is one of the most influential theories that have shaped the Japanese historical understanding of ancient Korea-Japan relations and the character of the ancient Japanese state. Part of the most important supports for the theory are drawn from *Jil* [質, hostage] and *Mimana's Jo* [任那之調, Mimana's tribute]. This paper examines these two ancient diplomatic practices to critically assess Ishimoda's theory.

Keywords: Ishimoda Sho [石母田正], the Small Empire of the Dongi theory [東夷の小帝国論], *Jil* [質, hostage], *Mimana's Jo* [任那之調, Mimana's tribute], ancient Japanese state

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I. Introduction

The Yamato [大和] Dynasty is the first ancient state in the Japanese archipelago with a full-fledged administrative system and political culture. It unified all the political forces in ancient Japan, from Kyushu [九州] to Kanto [関東] to Tohoku [東北], and established a central government in the region of Kinai [畿内]. By dominating regional polities and suppressing opposing forces in Kyushu and Kibi [吉備], this ancient kingdom of Wa built a government and ruling structure where its political power concentrated on the king. In this process, international relations and interactions with neighboring countries, especially with the states in the Korean peninsula, played a pivotal role.

Three theories have most influenced the understanding of ancient Japan's diplomatic relations with the Korean states and the character of the ancient Japanese state, and they are: Suematsu's *Mimana Nihonfu* theory, Nishijima's vassal system theory, and Ishimoda's theory of the Small Empire of the Dongi [東夷, Eastern Barbarians]. These three theories provide a basic theoretical framework to characterize and define

the ancient Japanese state and its diplomatic relations with the Korean states, and they still hold significant influence in the field of ancient Japanese history. In addition, all three make use of *Jil* [質, hostage] and *Mimana's Jo* [任那之調, Mimana's tribute] that Baekje and Silla sent to Japan, as an important ground to build and develop their theories.

These theories interpret *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo* as “hostage” and “tribute,” respectively, that a vassal state submits to its local superpower as a token of fealty and subordination. Both practices are considered as crucial evidence that supports Japan's suzerainty over the Korean states and its presence in the Korean peninsula as a small empire that ruled the Dongi or the eastern barbarians.

In this regard, *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo* cannot be ignored to understand the history of ancient Japan. The present paper examines these two ancient practices of diplomacy and critically assesses Ishimoda's Small Empire of the Dongi theory, one of the theories that have made the most remaining impact in the study of ancient Japan. His theory is still influential and highly regarded in the Japanese historical field for providing a basis of common understanding and a theoretical framework to analyze the relations between ancient Korea and Japan.

II. Review on the Small Empire of the Dongi Theory

1. The Small Empire of the Dongi Theory and Its Effects

With the promulgation of the Taiho Ritsuryo [大寶律令, Taiho Code] in 701, Yamato evolved into the Ritsuryo state, a state governed by the rule of law. However, before the establishment of the Ritsuryo state, it is agreed by most historians of ancient Japan that interactions and exchanges between the Kinai-based kingdom of Wa and the states in the Korean peninsula made significant impact on the formation and refinement of Yamato's statehood and institutions. The impact can be found from the establishment of its sovereignty in Japan in the 4th

century to the development of government and administrative systems such as Fukan system [府官制], Nin system [人制], Bemim system [部民制], Miyake system [屯倉制], and Kani (Ikan) system [官位(衣冠)制] through the 5th to 7th centuries.

However, existing studies on the exchanges and interactions between Wa and the Korean peninsula are mostly centered on Gaya [加耶] polities. That is, scholars of ancient Japanese history generally analyze not just the relationship of Wa and Gaya but that of Wa and other Korean states in terms of *Mimana Nihonfu*, a Japanese military outpost believed to be stationed in the region of Gaya, and of *Mimana's Jo*, tribute paid from Mimana to Japan. Furthermore, Mimana is understood as a crucial or even determining factor that shaped the relationship between Wa and Silla/Baekje, even after the collapse of Mimana.¹ The most representative theories from this approach are Suematsu's Mimana Nihonfu theory and Ishimoda's Small Empire of the Dongi theory.

Suematsu assumes it as an unchallengeable fact that Wa colonized Mimana and controlled the region through a military outpost, *Mimana Nihonfu*. This assumption is already found to have a lot of problems, and it is not too far-fetched to say that no historians today accept this theory at the fact value. But still maintained, inherited, and shared by the current Japanese scholarly community are his interpretations of *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo*. In particular, his views that the supplier of *Mimana's Jo* changed from Silla to Baekje around July and August in 642 and that *Mimana's Jo* refers to the tribute from four polities in Geumgwanguk [金官國] are still widely accepted.²

On the other hand, Ishimoda's view should be taken more seriously, for his famous theory of the Small Empire of the Dongi is still widely accepted in Japan, maintaining its strong influence. The Small Empire of

¹ Refer to Kim (2005), in particular, for problems of this analysis.

² Refer to Kim (1985), Yeon (1998), and Na (2008, 2010) for detailed discussion on Suematsu's theory and its problems.

the Dongi theory can be summarized as follows.

After extensive military expeditions in the 360s, the king of the Yamato regime established himself as ruler of the Dongi and thereby incorporated his country into the Chinese hegemony. He made Mimana a hereditary territory of his direct control and became the emperor of the Small Empire of the Dongi, taking Silla and Baekje as his protectorates that paid tribute. This picture of Yamato as a small empire whose sovereignty extended as far as to the Korean peninsula has been the fundamental concept in Ishimoda's theory that defines the whole structure and the character of the ancient Japanese state. In this picture, the matters of the peninsula were actually a domestic affair to the Wa king that concerned the existence and foundation of his kingdom. In the mid 6th century, after Mimana's collapse, Wa's sovereignty of the Small Empire of the Dongi became more symbolic and nominal than real. But its international mindset (or hegemonic mentality) continued and made rulers of Yamato and the Ritsuryou State consider their international relations intrinsic part of their internal affairs. Suiko Tenno's politics was intertwined with new contradictions and tension the Small Empire faced due to the tributary states that tried to outrank the empire. The Taika Kaishin [大化改新, Taika Reforms] and defending Baekje were all necessary measures to maintain the Small Empire, and that is why the Ritsuryou State codified its being a small empire (Yamao, 1989, pp. 54-55).

According to Ishimoda's theory, Wa's status as Small China/Small Empire [小中華・小帝國] was sustained by its dominance and political subjugation of the states in the Korean peninsula. At least, Wa constantly had to maintain its political dominance over the Korean states, and Ishimoda finds evidence for this in: (1) *Mimana Nihonfu*, (2) five Wa kings' requests to be addressed with a title that included the names of the southern Korean states in the Section of the Wa Kingdom in *Songshu*, and (3) *Mimana's Jo* and *Jil*.

The evidence in (1) *Mimana Nihonfu* is borrowed exactly from Suematsu's theory, which has been found inconsistent with today's

research findings. Therefore, only the evidence in (2) and (3) needs to be addressed.

The evidence based on the record in *Songshu* in (2) also has been found with many problems (Yeon, 1994, 1998, 2005; Noh, 2004; Joo 2004; Lee G.W., 2004; Lee, J.S., 2004; Seo, 2008). Therefore, as of now the sole remaining evidence that supports Ishimoda's theory is *Mimana's Jo* from Silla and *Jil* from Baekje, which are understood as a tribute to express subordination and as a pledge of vassalage, respectively.³

However, recent findings have also revealed that *Mimana's Jo* and *Jil* in the 6th century and the records on Wa in *Songseo* written in the 5th century are not sufficient to evidence the small empire theory. In that regard, Ishimoda's theory of the Small Empire of the Dongi can be said to have been built on flimsy foundations.

Despite its lack of solid evidence, Ishimoda's theory has secured wide acceptance among Japanese historians as a theory that provides a basis for general understanding of the ancient Japanese state. Especially, the theory's influence is still prominent in the interpretation of historical significance of *Mimana's Jo*, in which the existence of Mimana is an essential premise. (This part will be further explained later.)

If I venture a bit of misunderstanding, can't it be said that the so-called mainstream theory in the Japanese history field has not yet progressed any further from the framework established by Ishimoda Sho? At least it seems to be the case where it concerns the understanding of the relationships between Wa and the states in the Korean peninsula and that of *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo*.

The strong presence of Ishimoda's theory in the Japanese history field is illustrated well by the fact that their mainstream analysis of Wa's foreign policy is based on his theory of Wa being "Small China/Small

³ Problems with the existing interpretation of *Jil* have been also raised among Japanese historians (Na, 1993).

Empire.” Here I summarize representative analyses of *Jil* and *Mimana’s Jo* by renowned Japanese scholars.

A) Suzuki Yasutami (1984)

In 397, Baekje’s king sent the crown prince Jeonji [腆支] to Wa as *Jil* [hostage]. This indicates that Baekje and Wa were not in an equal relationship but in an unequal relationship where Baekje was a subordinate to Wa. In addition, from the fact that Wa soldiers were accompanying Jeonji when he was returning to Baekje in 405 to succeed the throne (Records on Jeonji’s Ascension to the Throne [腆支王即位前紀], *Samguk Sagi*), it can be concluded that Baekje provided Wa with a ground to intervene in Baekje’s affairs. (p. 202)

Silla’s supply of *Mimana’s Jo* was an act of vassal diplomacy paying tribute of its specialties, and it evidences the record in the Section of Wa in *Suishu*. That is, China’s political hegemony over Silla and Baekje, whose main suzerain was Wa, was in fact realized by Silla’s supply of *Mimana’s Jo*. (p. 229)

B-1) Ishigami Eiichi (1984)

The Section of Wa in *Suishu* records, “Both Baekje and Silla pay homage to Wa as their big nation and think that Wa has a lot of valuable rareties. Hence they revere Wa and exchange envoys all the time.” This shows that till the early 7th century, Japan was a “big nation” to Silla and Baekje, which were its tributary states, and presided over them as the Small Empire of the Dongi. (p. 265)

After the collapse of *Mimana* in 562, Wa’s status as a “big nation”... was maintained by Silla and Baekje’s rivalrous tribute offerings to Wa and by Silla’s proxy payment of tribute after its occupation of the *Mimana* region – and by Baekje’s proxy tribute offering after its occupation of the region in 642. (p. 264)

B-2) Ishigami Eiichi (1987)

Japan subjugated Silla and Baekje by taking *Jils* (i.e. hostages) from them (p. 80) and forced Silla and Baekje into a diplomatically subordinate position through means such as *Mimana's Jo*. (p. 82-83)

C) Sakamoto Yoshitane (1993)

In 646, the Kaishin regime demanded a *Jil* from Silla in place of *Minama's Jo*. Japan subjected the weakened Silla to a stronger subordination.⁴ (p. 94)

D) Mori Kimiyuki (2002)

The new regime's diplomatic policy was to have Baekje and Silla remain as its tributary states by ordering Baekje to supply *Mimana's Jo* and Silla *Jil* to the royal court of Wa. (p. 42)

E) Sakayori Masashi (1993)

In 397, the king of Baekje sent his crown prince Jeonji to Wa as *Jil* in order to strengthen the ties. This fact suggests Baekje's subordination to Wa. (p. 43)

F) Sakayori Masashi (2001)

Jil was a royal delegate sent to a militarily superior country when countries made a treaty concerning a military action (or inaction) to guarantee the agreement. The fact that *Jil* was sent only from Silla and Baekje to Japan and Koguryo indicates that the latter two nations exerted a certain level of diplomatic hegemony over Silla and Baekje. (p. 48)

⁴ Nishimoto (1987) also has proposed the same idea.

In the above analyses, *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo* are taken as important bases that attest the diplomatic relations between Wa and the Korean states, and these ancient systems of diplomatic exchange are interpreted as Wa's political superiority over ancient Korea states.

2. The Foundations and Problems of Ishimoda's Theory

Although nobody can deny that Suematsu's and Ishimoda's theories still influence and inspire new generations of historians in great deal, they are not without problems that we should overcome.

Problems of Suematsu's theory on *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo* will not be discussed here, since they were already dealt with in Na (1996, 2000). The key problem lies in the fact that his theory presented in *Mimana Koboshi* [任那興亡史, *The Rise and Fall of Mimana*] is based on the premise that Japan directly ruled Gaya polities through *Mimana Nihon-fu*. Accumulated research findings and developments, however, have already discredited the premise. Nevertheless, as shall be discussed later, Suematsu's interpretation of *Mimana's Jo* is still widely adopted by a new generation of historians, even by his critic, Suzuki Hideo.

What needs more careful inspection is Ishimoda's theory on the ancient Japanese state. As has been summarized before, Ishimoda's theory on ancient Japan has been presented with names such as Village Chief System [在地首長制], Ancient Imperialism [古代帝國主義], International Juncture [國際的契機], and the Small Empire of the Dongi. A number of studies including Shinakawa (1999), Kito (1976), and Yamao (1989) have already offered worthwhile implications and criticisms of these aspects of his theory. Ishimoda's theory on the ancient Japanese state was first proposed in *Nihon-no Kodaikokka* [日本の古代國家, *The Ancient Nation of Japan*], which was published by Iwanami Shoten [岩波書店] in 1971. In the Small Empire of the Dongi theory, the kingdom of Wa is described as a small empire or small China that reigned over the vassal states in the Korean peninsula, taking tributes and

controlling the throne successions.

Then what historical evidence is Ishimoda's theory based on? One is the 8th century's law code ('Ancient Record [古記]' in *Ryo-no-Shuge* [令集解, *Collected Commentaries on Ryo Code*]), which defined Tang as a neighboring country [隣國] while Silla as a barbarian country [蕃國], and the other is the record in the Wa Section in *Suishu* that includes the following statement:

“新羅·百濟皆以倭為大國,多珍物,並敬仰之,恒通使往來”

Both Baekje and Silla pay homage to Wa as their big nation and think that Wa has a lot of valuable rareties. Hence they revere Wa and exchange envoys all the time.

Of the two historical records, the latter one needs more careful interpretation and understanding than the first one. The following two points, which are taken as premises for the interpretation of the historical record, need careful examination.

The first thing to consider is the background in which this record was included in the book. The record was made by Sui's official historians based on the information given by Japanese envoys who came to Sui in order to learn its advanced culture in the early 7th century (more specifically, in the years of 600, 607, 608, 610, and 614). However, more than the fact that the claim was from Japanese envoys, Sui's diplomatic situation influenced the angle of the record. Considering Sui's warring relations with Koguryo at that time, Sui might have exaggerated the status of Wa more than what it really was in order to draw Wa to its side, for Wa maintained close ties with Baekje and both countries were supportive of Koguryo.⁵

Secondly, the Japanese envoys' claim that Wa was a “big nation”

⁵ For details, refer to S. Lee (1990, 1998).

over Baekje and Silla indeed show the superiority or pride of the 7th century Wa ruling and bureaucratic classes over Baekje and Silla. However, it should be understood as a display of national pride derived from Sino-centrism shared by all East Asian nations at that time (Sakayori, 1993) rather than as a piece of evidence that shows the real status quo between Wa and the Korean states at that time.

As seen so far, Ishimoda has stretched and over-interpreted facts from historical source material, and it cannot but be said problematic. What is more, Ishimoda's theory, which is built based on historical records from the 7th century or later, is applied as it is to the understanding of the 6th and even the 5th century history. In other words, the Wa Section of *Suishu* [隋書, *The Book of Sui*] is a useful source to understand the 7th century and after, but one cannot but wonder whether the Small Empire of the Donggi theory based on this 7th century source can be used to understand the 6th or 5th century, not just to understand the 7th century.

What is more, *Mimana's Jo* and *Jil* are referred to as the most important evidence that supports the view of Wa as "big nation." In fact, the meanings and characteristics of those two customs are defined by Ishimoda's theory. That is, the Small Empire of the Donggi theory founded upon the imperial tributary practices in the 7th century is used to interpret the historical incidents in the 6th century such as *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo*.

Here apparently, historical findings about the 7th century are used to define and characterize the realities of the 6th and 5th centuries. Shouldn't this be reversed? That is, one can build a historical understanding of the 7th century based on the findings about the history of the 6th or 5th century, but not the other way around.

This logical fallacy suggests the limitation of the Small Empire of the Donggi theory, but raises a more fundamental question. That is, famous Ishimoda Sho's theory, which has wielded great influence, can be in danger of crumbling according as how *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo* are interpreted.

What needs to be preceded is, I believe, an accurate understanding of *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo* before historically situating the relationship between the ancient Korean states and Wa. Furthermore, the character of the ancient Japanese state, which is closely related with the international status quo at that time, should be more clearly defined.

As stated before, Ishimoda's theory owes its fundamental interpretation and assessment of the period of the 5th and 6th centuries, that is, the period prior to the 7th century, to Suematsu's *Mimana Nihon-fu* theory. In other words, this widely renowned theory owes its most important foundation to Suematsu's theory which assumes *Mimana Nihon-fu* as a historical fact and claims that Wa ruled Gaya polities through this military outpost located in the region (Yamao, 1989, p. 56).

However, it has been long since Suematsu's theory lost its ground. It is no longer believed that Wa directly ruled Gaya and indirectly Koguryo, Baekje, and Silla, although it is assumed as an undeniable fact in Suematsu's theory. Then, isn't it possible to say that Ishimoda's theory is also in danger of collapse like a house of cards?

What have been discussed so far are why the Small Empire of the Dongi theory is problematic and why one needs to be more cautious in adopting this theory to describe the relationship between Korea and Japan in the period before the 7th century.

For these reasons, *Mimana's Jo* and *Jil* have been at the focus of confrontation between Korean and Japanese historians, divided by con and pro. And the foundation of Ishimoda's theory can crumble down depending on how these two practices are understood. Moreover, it can bring about inevitable modification to the recent Japanese understandings of the history of Korea-Japan relations and the history of the ancient Japanese state, at least in some areas, especially to those theories that share their premises with Ishimoda's theory. Against this backdrop, a fresh take on *Mimana's Jo* and *Jil* seems absolutely necessary.

With these issues in mind, the present study addresses problems in the interpretations of *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo* assumed in Ishimoda's theory

as well as in Suematsu's theory that provides an important foundation for the Small Empire of the Dongi theory.

III. Problems in the Interpretation of *Jil*

Ishimoda's understanding on *Jil* is well displayed by the following quotes:

Taika Kaishin was not a simple domestic reformation but a reformation to maintain the small empire as Suiko Tenno's reforms had been. The next year, after the successful reforms, Takamukono Kuromaro [高向玄理], one of the key figures in the reforms, was sent to Silla to demand *Jil* instead of nominal *Mimana's Jo*. The accomplishment of the demand signifies the same kind of humiliating subjugation of Silla as that of Baekje.⁶ This means that the reforms brought about the strengthening of the small empire. (Ishimoda, 1962, p. 41)

Considering the nature of *Jil*, this shift from *Mimana's Jo* to *Jil* signifies the strengthened subjugation of Silla. In reality, however, Kim Chun-chu, the prime minister of Silla and *Jil* that Silla sent to Japan, stayed in Japan less than one year and went to Tang to conduct an important diplomatic affair. It seems that this particular *Jil* was really a diplomat who was bridging Silla, Japan, and Tang rather than a symbol of subordination. (Ishimoda, 1971, p. 56)

Ishimoda interprets *Jil* sent to Japan from Baekje and Silla as an expression of subordination, but we should look at Silla's practices of *Jil* to examine the validity of his interpretation.

As stated in the incitation above, Ishimoda himself characterizes Kim Chun-chu, who came to Japan as *Jil* in 647, as a diplomat bridging

⁶ The underlines in the quotes are my own.

the three countries of Silla, Japan, and Tang rather than a symbol of subordination. However, there is a more convincing case that shows that Silla's *Jil* did not signify subordination. It was the case of Gyunjeong [均貞], a *Jil* that Silla planned to send to Japan in 802.

Samguk Sagi has the following record in the section of Sillabongi [新羅本紀, The Annals of Silla]:

授均貞大阿滄為假王子、欲以質倭國、均貞辭之

[The Sillan king] bestowed the title of Dae-Achan on Gyunjeong and appointed him as substitute for the prince to go to Japan as *Jil*, but he refused. (King Gyeongmun, 2nd Month of the 3rd Year)

This indicates that Silla sent *Jil* to Japan even in the early 9th century. The problem arises here, however, if *Jil* was indeed a “token of fealty and subordination.” The international status quo at that time, that is, the international situations surrounding Silla and its relations with Tang and Balhae and its relations with Japan make it difficult to believe that the *Jil* was to express subordination. We need a consistent and plausible answer to explain why Silla sent *Jil* to Japan then. However, the historical data we have now unfortunately cannot provide a satisfying answer. Nevertheless, Gyunjeong's case suggests an important implication regarding *Jil* and can be a good counterexample to the interpretation of *Jil* as a token of fealty and subordination between states.

Another counterexample is the case of aforementioned Kim Chun-chu. Apparently he came to Japan as *Jil*, but if his presence in Japan was indeed as a hostage to pledge Silla's fealty and subordination to Japan as the interpretation widely accepted in Japan suggests, one cannot but wonder why this important historical practice wasn't mentioned in later records. (Refer to the records on Jito [持統] Tenno's period discussed below.) This gap is incomprehensible, especially when Kim Chun-chu's stay in Japan as *Jil* must have been the unparalleled opportunity to satisfy

the pride of the Japanese ruling class who regarded themselves as Small China or Small Empire that reigned over Baekje and Silla.

In relation to this, *Nihonshoki* offers a noteworthy article in the records of Jito Tenno, 5th Month of the 3rd Year (689), as follows:

命土師宿禰根麻呂、詔新羅弔使級滄金道那等曰、太政官等、奉勅奉宣、二年、遣田中朝臣法麻呂等、相告大行天皇喪。時新羅言、新羅奉勅人者、元來用蘇判位。今將復爾。由是、法麻呂等、不得奉宣赴告之詔。若言前者、在昔難波宮治天下天皇崩時、遣巨勢稻持等、告喪之日、翳滄金春秋奉勅。而言用蘇判奉勅、即違前事也。又於近江宮治天下天皇崩時、遣一吉滄金薩儒等奉弔。而今以級滄奉弔、亦違前事。又新羅元來奏云、我國、自日本遠皇祖代、並舳不干楫、奉仕之國。而今一艘、亦乖故典也。又奏云、自日本遠皇祖代、以清白心仕奉。而不惟竭忠宣揚本職。而傷清白、詐求幸媚。是故、調賦與別獻、並封以還之。然自我國家遠皇祖代、広慈汝等之德、不可絶之。故弥勤弥謹、戰々兢兢、修其職任、奉遵法度者、天朝復広慈耳。汝道那等、奉斯所勅、奉宣汝王。

Haji-no Sukune Nemaro was ordered to state the Emperor's proclamation to Kyusan Kim Dodeung and the other funeral messengers from Silla. He said, "The ministers of the state, by order of the Empress, make this pronouncement. In the second year [of Jito Tenno], Tanakano Ason Norimaro was dispatched to Silla, and told of the death of the late Emperor. At that time Silla said, "In the past, the one who delivered imperial proclamations to Silla was always of the rank of Sokan. Now we would again like that precedent to be observed." Therefore, Norimaro could not state the proclamation as he should have. If you speak of precedent, then in the distant past, when the Emperor of Naniwa Palace [Kotoku Tenno] died, Koe-no Inamochi was dispatched to relay the day of the funeral, and Eisan Kim Chunchu received that imperial proclamation. Your insistence that one of the rank of Sokan should deliver the order differs from the past precedent. Also, when the Emperor of Omi Palace [Tenji Tenno] died, you dispatched Itsukitsusan

Kim Salyu as the funeral messenger. Now you dispatch a funeral messenger of the rank Kyusan, and that differs from the past. Also in the past, Silla said, “Our country is one that has served since the times of the ancient emperors of Yamato, lining up the ships and never letting the oars go dry.” Now only one ship has come, going against precedent. Also they said, “Since the times of the ancient emperors of Yamato, we have served with a pure heart.” However, you have not been careful in your loyalty to your original charge. Thereby the pure heart is injured, and you instead resort to deceptive flattery. Therefore, your tribute and other goods will be sealed and returned. However, the virtue that has spread wide since the days of our distant imperial ancestors will not end. Therefore, put forth effort and be circumspect, for the grace of the court will be great for those who observe their charge and follow the law. You, Dodeung, and the others, receive this proclamation and state it to your king.”

The article above describes a diplomatic trouble with Silla concerning the envoy who came to inform Silla of Tenmu [天武] Tenno’s death. In the article, Japan complains the low rank of the Sillan official who received the Japanese envoy delivering the news of Jito Tenno’s husband, Tenmu Tenno’s death. Jito Tenno’s court accused Silla of a diplomatic discourtesy, referring to the precedent occasion in which Kim Chun-chu (i.e. Silla’s envoy to Japan) received Japan’s funeral envoy that had come to inform Kotoku Tenno’s death in 654. With this historical reference, the article disregards Silla’s claim and argues Wa’s superior status over Silla.

However, here arises a question. Jito Tenno’s period in the late 7th century was the period where Japan’s nationalism reached its peak as the fact that the publication of *Nihonshoki* started at that time shows. Moreover, after the battle with Silla in the Baekchon River in 663, a painful experience for Japan, its hostility against Silla must have been the highest during this period. Despite all this, this Wa regime never mentioned Kim Chun-chu’s coming to Japan as *Jil*.

Silla had sent *Jils* to Japan, not long before the period of Jito Tenno, Kim Chun-chu in 647, Kim Da-su in 649, and Mimu [彌武] in 655. If these *Jils* indeed represented Silla's subordination to Japan, Jito Tenno's royal court not mentioning these not distant but recent historical occurrences seems incongruent. It only mentions Kim Chun-chu's reception of the messenger of Kotoku Tenno's death.

Moreover, instead of using a relatively recent historical fact, Jito Tenno's regime referred to Empress Jingu [神功]'s invasion of *Sam Han* [三韓, three ancient polities in the south of the Korean peninsula], a historically distant incident recorded in Jinkoki [神功紀, the Records of Jingu Tenno], as historical evidence and validation that supports Silla's subordination to Japan.

If Silla's *Jil* to Japan, which had started by Kim Chun-chu's short stay in Japan, was indeed a token of subordination as understood by Japanese historians, it is difficult to understand Wa's logic shown in the article of Jito Tenno, especially when Kim Chun-chu had become the king of Silla and his descendants were continually occupying the throne of Silla during the reign of Jito.

It reminds us of a similar argument that happened in Tang between Silla and Balhae. Silla argued for its superiority over Balhae, citing the Dae-achan [大阿飡] position Silla had bestowed to Dae Jo-yeong [大祚榮], the founder of Balhae, as evidence. Dae-achan was ranked fifth among Silla's 17 government posts (Choi Chi-won, 1972, pp. 47-49). This makes a good contrast to the reactions by Jito Tenno's court.

In a way, it appears to show how Silla's *Jil* was perceived by Wa regimes, especially by Jito Tenno's regime. That is, it shows that the Japanese rulers at that time didn't regard *Jil* as a token of fealty and subordination.

Another example was Misaheun [未斯欣], Silla's first *Jil* sent to Japan in 402. Misaheun was sent to Japan to counteract Baekje's *Jil* Jeonji [腆支] who had been sent to Japan in 397, and it further raises a question to the meaning of *Jil*. Considering the international situations

surrounding Silla, it is hard to believe that Silla sent *Jil* Misaheun to Japan as a token of fealty and subordination.

In conclusion, this interpretation of *Jil* is far from the reality that has not taken Silla's situation, especially its relationship with Koguryo, into consideration. This is even more difficult to understand when the king, who sent Misaheun to Japan as *Jil*, was King Silseong [實主王] and it was the year 402.

As noticed, Silseong was *Jil* sent to Koguryo in 392 during the reign of King Naemul [奈勿王], and came back to Silla and ascended to the throne after 10 years of stay in Koguryo. Considering his affinity with Koguryo, it does not appear plausible that Silseong sent *Jil* to Wa to pledge its fealty and subordination. Moreover, the Gwanggaeto Stele [廣開土大王陵碑] well describes Silla's situation and its relationship with Koguryo around the year 402. In 399, Silla was attacked by a coalition of Baekje and Wa and asked Koguryo for help. In response, Koguryo sent a large army of 50,000 troops and by the year 400, the allied forces of Koguryo and Silla were engaging in a large scale battle against the coalition forces of Baekje, Japan, and Gaya. Considering this situation, it is hard to believe that Silla sent *Jil* to Japan in order to pledge its new fealty to Japan, betraying its allegiance with Koguryo.

One more thing to consider is how *Jil* is expressed in historical records. That is, it is important to take careful consideration to the terms used in relation to *Jil*.

When Baekje sent *Jil* to Japan in 397, it stated that its purposes were to form diplomatic ties [結好], to have good relations between two countries [修好], and to communicate with each other [和通], as shown in the records below:

- a. 王与倭国結好、以太子腆支為質。(『三国史記』百濟本紀 阿莘王六年五月条)

The king sent the crown prince Jeonji to form diplomatic ties with Wa.
(*Samguk Sagi*, Baekjebongi, King Ahwa, 5th Month of the 6th Year)

- b. 阿花王立無禮於貴國。故奪我枕彌多禮、及峴南·支侵·谷那·東韓之地。是以、遣王子直支于天朝、以脩先王之好也。(応神紀八年三月条所引百濟記)

King Ahwa breached courtesy to your country. Hence, you took the land of Chimmidarae, Hyeonnam, Jimchim, Gokna, and Donghan from our country. To recover the friendly relationship we had during the reign of the former king, we sent Prince Jikji to the court of Tenno. (*Nihonshoki*, Ojin Tenno, 3rd Month of the 8th Year, Records on Baekje)

- c. 百殘違誓、與倭和通、王巡下平壤。(『碑文』永樂九年[399]己亥条)

Baekje communicated with Wa, breaking the promise with our country. Thus, the king went down to Pyeongyang to surveil the country. (Gwanggaeto Stele, Yeongnak, 9th Year, Records on the Year of Pig [399 A.D.])

Although it is not the case of *Jil* sent to Japan, *Samguk Sagi* records that the purpose of sending Silseong as *Jil* to Koguryo in 392 during the reign of King Naemul was also to maintain good relations between two countries [修好]:

高句麗遣使、王以高句麗強盛、送伊滄大西知子實聖為質。(新羅本紀 奈勿王三七年[392]正月条)

Koguryo sent an envoy. Thereby the king learned that Koguryo is a powerful country, and sent Ichan Daeseoji's son Silseong as *Jil*. (Sillabongi, King Naemul, 1st Month of the 37th Year [392 A.D.])

遣使新羅修好、新羅王遣姪實聖為質。(高句麗本紀 故国壤王九[392]春条)

Koguryo sent an envoy to Silla to establish good relations between the two countries. The Sillan king sent his nephew Silseong as *Jil*.

(Koguryobongi, King Gogukyang, Spring of the 9th Year [392 A.D.]

In addition, Misaheun, Silla's *Jil* sent to Japan in 402, was described to be in order to form a friendly relationship through communication [通好]. *Samguk Sagi* records that as *Jil*, Misaheun symbolizes “sincerity”; in other words, *Jil* was a symbol and token of sincerity.

- a. 與倭国通好、以奈勿王子未斯欣為質。(『三国史記』新羅本紀 実聖王元年 [402] 条)

Silla has formed a **friendly relationship** with Wa and sent Prince Misaheun as *Jil*. (*Samguk Sagi*, Sillabongi, King Silseong, 1st Year [402])

- b. 第十七那密王即位三十六年 [390] 庚寅. 倭王遣使來朝曰. 寡君聞大王之神聖. 使臣等以告百濟之罪於大王也. 願大王遣一王子. 表誠心於寡君也. 於是王使第三子美海(一作未吐喜) 以聘於倭. (『三国遺事』奈勿王 · 金提上条)

In the 36th year of King Naemul [390], the 17th king [of Silla], the king of Wa sent an envoy, who said thus: “Our king has heard of your majesty’s divine greatness and made us come here to tell you Baekje’s misbehavior. I hope your majesty sends a prince to show your **sincerity** to our king.” Thereby, the king [King Naemul] sent his third son, Mihae (or Mitohui) to the court of the Wa king. (*Samguk Sagi*, Records on King Naemul and Kim Je-sang)

The record on Gonji [昆支], a *Jil* sent from Baekje to Japan in 461, is also found in *Nihonshoki*. It is described that the purpose of his being *Jil* was to have good relations between two countries [修好], as shown below:

- 辛丑年、蓋鹵王遣弟昆支君、向大倭、侍天王。以脩兄王之好也。(雄略紀五年七月条 分注 소인「百濟新撰」)

In the year of cow [i.e. 461], King Gaero sent his younger brother Gonji to Great Wa to wait upon the Tenno. Thereupon, he [Gonji] helped his brother King Gaero and the Wa king **build closer relations**. (*Nihonshoki*, Yuryaku Tenno, 7th Month of the 5th Year, Note on *Baekje Shinchan*)

As is shown, ancient historical documents from both Korea and Japan (namely, *Nihonshoki*, *Samguk Sagi*, *Samguk Yusa*) and inscriptions (the Gwanggaeto Stele) all associated *Jil* and its purpose with building good relations between countries [修好], establishing good ties [結好], forming a friendly relationship through communication [通好], and communicating each other [和通]. What is noted here is that these expressions are all used for diplomatic forms between neighboring countries with equal status (Hirano Kunio, 1985).

IV. Problems of the Interpretation of *Mimana's Jo*

The widely accepted interpretation of *Mimana's Jo* is as follows: (1) Wa's acceptance of *Mimana's Jo* offered by Silla and Baekje signifies its permission for Silla and Baekje to occupy Mimana. (2) Historically, *Mimana's Jo* was a tribute paid in person at the royal court of Wa to express subordination. It was a ritual or a form of staged act used to satisfy Wa kings' sense of superiority as Small China/Small Empire that ruled the Korean peninsula or as the host of *Mimana Nihonfu*.

The fundamental premise that the interpretation in (1) relies on is, the Kingdom of Wa was a politically superpower over Baekje and Silla. This view cannot but be said to be one-sided and favoring the perspective of Wa kings.

However, this interpretation of *Mimana's Jo* is a dominant view of the Japanese history field, which is profoundly influenced by Ishimoda's theory. Ishimoda's understanding of *Mimana's Jo* is well displayed in the following quotes:

Mimana's Jo didn't have any substance under Silla's rule, but Wa considered it an important symbol to deal with Korea as a "big nation" (Ishimoda, op. cit., pp. 48-29)

After negotiation with Silla, Wa demanded Silla to submit not only its own *Jo* but also *Mimana's Jo*. This means that tribute from Mimana was to be prepared separately, with its own separate envoy and vessel. This was a ritual and formal practice in which Mimana was to pay respect to Wa as "the emperor's vassal state" as though it were an independent state, although in reality Mimana was without any territory or polity. (ibid., p.50)

Noteworthy influences of Ishimoda's theory are the interpretation of *Mimana's Jo* as an extremely abstract ritual and a strong emphasis on Mimana envoy.

According to Ishimoda's theory, the historical significance of *Mimana's Jo* is understood in association with the existence of Mimana envoy. In the interpretation widely accepted in the history field of Japan, Mimana envoy is considered an indispensable element that supports the historical reality of Mimana, not just goods and products transferred from Silla and Baekje to Wa. That is, *Mimana's Jo* is understood as intrinsically intertwined with Mimana envoy.

This understanding of *Mimana's Jo* can be also found in the new theories by Suzuki Hideo and Nishimoto Masahiro, which are claimed to have overcome the problems of Suematsu's theory, a previously popular theory, as they faithfully inherit the thoughts of Ishimoda Sho.

For instance, Suzuki, one of the representative Japanese historians with new theories on *Mimana's Jo*, argues that the significance of *Mimana's Jo* lies in the fact that it was an offering from a Mimana envoy with a certain official status, not in the offering of goods. He bases his argument on the analysis of historical data drawn from the *Nihonshoki* records on Suiko Tenno [推古天皇], 11th Month of the 31st Year (622) and

on Kotoku Tenno [孝徳天皇], 7th Month of the 1st Taika Year (645) (Suzuki Hideo, 1996, pp. 239-240).

Nishimoto, who proposes a new theory on *Mimana's Jo* different from the existing theories, also assumes *Mimana* envoy to be an important element in the practice. He claims that *Mimana* envoy was the key to the resurrection of *Mimana*, and argues that *Wa* tried to achieve the resurrection of *Mimana* and display Tenno's authority as the king of *shoban* [諸蕃, clans descended from Korea] by making a *Mimana* envoy submit *Mimana's Jo* in the royal court of *Wa* (Nishimoto, 1990, p. 3).

Both Japanese scholars, following the long trend of the Japanese history field that has put the primary focus on ideology, naturally have founded their theories on the premise that the political custom, *Mimana's Jo*, sent from Korean states to *Wa*, has a symbolic and ritualistic character.

In the following, I attempt to clarify problems in the understanding of *Mimana's Jo*, which are found both in popular existing theories by Suematsu and Ishimoda and new theories such as the one by Suzuki. Careful examination of related historical source material⁷ reveals crucial problems in both existing and new theories.

The first material to examine is the *Nihonshoki* records on Bidatsu Tenno [敏達天皇], 6th Month of the 4th Year (575):

<A>

六月、新羅遣使進調。多益常例。并進多々羅・須奈羅・和陀・癸鬼、四邑之調。

Silla dispatched an envoy with tribute, and it was more than usual. Also they sent tribute for the four villages of Tatara, Sunara, Wada, and Hatsuki.

⁷ The discussed problems on the *Mimana* envoy here are largely based on my previous study (2009).

<A> is noted for being the first record known to contain *Mimana's Jo*. It records the first tribute sent from Silla (tributes from four villages) from Japan.

What should be noted here more than anything else is that the delegate who brought tribute from four villages, i.e. *Mimana's Jo*, was no other than a Sillan envoy. That is, nothing suggests that there was a separate, independent Mimana envoy. This indicates that Mimana envoy was not a necessary element in *Mimana's Jo*, which casts doubt on the prevailing understanding that associates *Mimana's Jo* with Mimana envoy.

For Wa kings, a Mimana envoy was not a prerequisite condition for *Mimana's Jo*. In conclusion, this titular, ideological history interpretation of *Mimana's Jo* of the Japanese historical field cannot but be said to be quite problematic.

The following two sources of records are considered important historical evidence that associates *Mimana's Jo* with Mimana envoy: the records on Suiko Tenno, 31st Year in and on Kotoku Tenno, 7th Month of the 1st Taika Year in <C>. These two records also show problems of the existing interpretation of *Mimana's Jo*.

First, we will look at the records on Suiko, 31st Year. Although the text is long, I have posted the whole for more convenient discussion. The numbers and emphasis are my own.

① 秋七月、(1) 新羅遣大使奈末智洗爾、任那遣達率奈末智、並來朝。仍貢
仏像一具及金塔并舍利。且大觀頂幡一具・小幡十二條。即仏像居於 野秦寺。
以余舍利金塔觀頂幡等、皆納于四天王寺。(2) 是時、大唐學問者僧惠齋・
惠光・及医惠日・福因等、並從智洗爾等來之。於是、惠日等共奏聞曰、留
于唐國學者、皆學以成業。応喚。且其大唐國者、法式備定之珍國也。常須達。

.... autumn, seventh seventh month. (1) The Sillans dispatched Nama
Ji Seoni as grand ambassador, Mimana dispatched Tatsusotsu Namalji,

and they came to the court. They brought as tribute a Buddhist statue, a golden tower, cremated remains, a baptismal flag, and 12 smaller flags. The Buddhist statue was set in Uzumasa Temple in Kadono. The cremated remains, golden tower, baptismal flag, and the rest were set in Shitenno temple. (2) At that time, the student-monks Esai and Eko and the doctors Enichi, and Fukuin who had went to study in Tang, all came back following Ji Seoni. Then, Enichi and the others together reported, “Those who went to study in Tang have all succeeded in their studies and should be summoned back. Tang laws and rituals are prepared and established, and it is an excellent country. We should regularly have correspondence.”

② 是歲、(1)新羅伐任那。任那附新羅。於是、天皇將討新羅。謀及大臣、詢于群卿。田中臣對曰、不可急討。先察狀、以知逆卒擊之不晚也。請試遣觀其消息。中臣連國曰、任那是元我內官家。今新羅人伐而有之。請戒戎旅、征伐新羅、以取任那、附百濟。寧非益有于新羅乎。田中臣曰、不然。百濟是多反覆之國。道路之間尚詐之。凡彼所請皆非之。故不可附百濟。則不果征焉。(2)爰遣吉士磐金於新羅、遣吉士倉下於任那、令問任那之事。時新羅國主、遣八大夫、啓新羅國事於磐金。且啓任那國事於倉下。因以約曰、任那小國、天皇附庸。何新羅輒有之。隨常定內官家、願無煩矣。則遣奈末智洗遲、副於吉士磐金。復以任那人達率奈末遲、副於吉士倉下。仍貢兩國之調。(3)然磐金等、未及于還、即年、以大德境部臣雄摩侶·小德中臣連國為大將軍。以小德河辺臣弥受·小德物部依網連乙等·小德波多臣広庭·小德近江脚身臣飯蓋·小德平群臣宇志·小德大伴連(闕名)。小德大宅臣軍為副將軍。率數萬衆、以征討新羅。(4)時磐金等、共會於津、將發船以候風波。於是、船師滿海多至。兩國使人、望胆之愕然。乃還留焉。更代堪遲大舍、為任那調使而貢上。於是、磐金等相謂之曰、是軍起之、既違前期。是以任那之事、今亦不成矣。則發船而度之。唯將軍等、始到任那而議之。欲襲新羅。於是、新羅國主、聞軍多至、而予懼之請服。時將軍等、共議以上表之。天皇聽矣。

That year, (1) Silla invaded Mimana, and Mimana became a feifdom of Silla. Thus the Empress wanted to attack Silla, and planned with the

Senior Minister, and inquired of the ministers. Tanaka-no-Omi said in reply, “We cannot attack soon. First we must observe the circumstances, and know Silla’s response, and after doing that, it will not be too late to attack. Try sending a messenger to take a look at the situation.” Nakatomi-no-Muraji Kuni said, “Mimana was originally our domain, and now the Sillans have invaded and taken it. We should prepare for battle and attack Silla, and take Mimana and attach it to Baekje. At any rate it is better than letting Silla have it.” Then Tanaka-no-Omi said, “No. Baekje is a country with many covered in rebellion, and in the time it takes to pass on the road they will deceive us, and all the things they say cannot be believed. Therefore, we cannot attack and give Mimana to Baekje.” Thereby they were not able to attack. (2) Then the Empress dispatched Kishi-no-Iwakane to Silla, and Kishi-no-Kuraji to Mimana, with orders to ask about the Mimana incident. At that time, the ruler of Silla dispatched eight ministers who told the things of the country of Silla to Iwakane, and told the things of the country of Mimana to Kuraji. Then they promised, saying, “The small country of Mimana is the fiefdom of the Emperor. How can Silla so lightly take it? As always, we will observe the domains that have been established, and we wish you to not worry.” Accordingly Nama Ji Seoni was to be sent with Kishi-no-Iwakane, and **the man of Mimana Tatsusotsu Namalji was to be sent with Kishi-no-Kuraji along with the tribute** from both countries. (3) However, as Iwakane and the others had not returned, after a year the Empress dispatched Daitoku Sakaibe-no-Omi Omaro and Shotoku Nakatomi-no-Muraji Kuni as shoguns and Shotoku Kawabe-no-Omi Nezu, Shotoku Mononobe-no-Yosami-no-Muraji Oto, Shotoku Hata-no-Omi Hironiwa, Shotoku Omi-no-Anami-no-Omi Iifuta, Shotoku Heguri-no-Omi Ushi, Shotoku Otomo-no-Muraji (no name), and Shotoku Oyake-no-Omi Ikusa as deputy shoguns, and they led some tens of thousands of men and went to attack Silla. (4) At that time, Iwakane and the others together met at the port, and were going to set out, and were waiting on the weather, waves, and wind. Then, many ships

filled the seas, and the messengers from the two countries [Silla and Mimana] looked at this and were afraid, and returned to their homes and stayed. In exchange **Gamji Daisha was made the tribute messenger from Mimana** and sent the tribute. Then, Iwakane and the others spoke together saying, “**This army has set out in defiance of our earlier promise. In regards to the Mimana problem, now it cannot succeed.**” Then they set their ships out and crossed. Only the shoguns first reached Mimana and took council, and wanted to invade Silla. Then, the ruler of Silla heard the many armies and wanted to surrender out of fear. At that time the shoguns counseled together and reported it to the Empress. The Empress approved it.

③ 冬十一月、(1)磐金倉下等、至自新羅。時大臣問其狀。對曰、新羅奉命、以驚懼之。即並差專使、因以貢兩國之調。(2)然見船師至、而朝貢使人更還耳。但調猶貢上。爰大臣曰、悔乎、早遣師矣。(3)時人曰、是軍事者、境部臣阿曇連、先多得新羅幣物之故、又勸大臣。是以、未待使旨、而早征伐耳。(4)初磐金等、度新羅之日、比及津、莊船一艘、迎於海浦。磐金問之曰、是船者何國迎船。對曰、新羅船也。磐金亦曰、曷無任那之迎船。即時、更為任那加一船。其新羅以迎船二艘、始於是時歟。

Winter, 11th month. (1) Iwakane, Kuraji, and the others returned from Silla. At that time the Senior Minister questioned them about the situation. They said, “The Sillans received the order of the Empress with fear and awe. Then both countries **sent messengers**, and therefore **the tribute of both countries** was to be sent. (2) However, seeing the ships approach, the messengers to the court with the tribute fled, but **the tribute has been sent.**” Then the Senior Minister said, “It is unfortunate that we rushed to attack.” (3) At that time people said, “These men of war, **Sakaibe-no-Omi and Azumi-no-Muraji both previously got many bribes from Silla**; therefore, they encouraged the Senior Minister to rush to attack without waiting on the messengers to return.” (4) Previously when Iwakane arrived on the day that he and the others

crossed over to Silla, in the port there was one decorative ship to greet them. Iwakane asked them, “What country’s ship is that welcome ship?” Men replied, “It’s a Sillan ship.” Then Iwakane said, “Why is there no welcome ship from Mimana?” Then a ship from Mimana was added.

The Sillan custom of sending two welcome ships started from this time.

Based on these records, we will discuss what *Mimana’s Jo* and Mimana envoy meant for Wa kings. Records (2), (3) and (4) in ② state that Wa sent an envoy to Silla and Mimana in 622, and in return Silla dispatched its own envoy as well as a Mimana envoy to Japan [達率奈未遲]. However, the Mimana envoy’s rank was downgraded to **Gamji Daisha** [堪遲大舍] due to Wa’s military expedition to Silla, and in response, Wa’s envoy stated, “是以任那之事,今亦不成矣[In regards to the Mimana problem, now it cannot succeed].”

The record in ③ seems to be another consequence of the same incident. Silla sent only *Jo* without any envoy to Wa although it had promised Wa to send *Jo* of the two countries with official envoys at the request of the Wa court. Thereby, Umako-no-Ooomi was regretting his decision on the premature military action against Silla, saying “悔乎,早遣師矣 [It is unfortunate that we rushed to attack].”

These are considered historical records that evidence the close connection between *Mimana’s Jo* and Mimana envoy. For example, Nishimoto claims that the reason for Kishino Iwakane [吉士磐金]’s lament, “The Mimana problem cannot succeed,” is that only *Mimana’s Jo* was sent to Japan without a Mimana envoy. Nishimoto considers a Mimana envoy as an essential element in *Mimana’s Jo* and the key to the resurrection of Mimana.

Another piece of historical evidence that emphasizes the existence of Mimana envoy is in <C>, the record on Kotoku Tenno, 7th Month, 1st Taika Year:

<사료C>

丙子、高麗·百濟·新羅、並遣使進調。百濟調使、兼領任那使、進任那調。唯百濟大使佐平緣福、遇病留津館、而不入於京。....

又詔於百濟使曰、明神御宇日本天皇詔旨、始我遠皇祖之世、以百濟國、為內官家、譬如三絞之綱。中間以任那國、屬賜百濟。後遣三輪粟隈君東人、觀察任那國堺。是故、百濟王隨勅、悉示其堺。而調有欠。由是、却還其調。任那所出物者、天皇之所明覽。夫自今以後、可具題國與所出調。....

On the tenth day, Koguryo, Baekje, and Silla all sent envoys to present tribute. The envoys from Baekje were also charged with being the envoys to present the tribute of Mimana. Only the ambassador of Baekje, Sahei Yeonbok, came down with some illness and stayed in a foreign guest house at the port, and did not enter the capital. Then he proclaimed to the envoy from Baekje, “The bright divine honorable heaven Yamato Emperor proclaims, ‘In the beginning in the generations of my distant imperial ancestors, the country of Baekje was made an *uchitsu* [內官家, a family of the tenno], and [we became] like three strings weaved into a cord. Sometime before now, Mimana was granted to Baekje as a fiefdom. Afterwards, Miwa-no-Kurukuma-no-Kimi-Azumahito was sent to inspect the borders of Mimana. At that time the King of Baekje pointed out the borders according to imperial proclamation. However, there is deficiency in this tribute. Therefore, we return it. Mimana’s exports will be inspected at by the Emperor himself. From now on, you should clearly distinguish which taxes are from which country....”

Suzuki pays attention to the part “兼領任那使 [also charged with being the envoys to present the tribute of Mimana]” in <C>, which states that Baekje provided *Mimana’s Jo* to Wa. In particular, he notes that the Baekje envoy also acted as Mimana envoy [兼領], and claims that it was because there was no Mimana envoy coming to the Wa court when Baekje sent *Mimana’s Jo*. The historical records in and <C> have

provided the basis for the claim that Mimana envoy was an essential element in *Mimana's Jo*.

However, these records need careful examination in a number of aspects. The record in <C> clearly states that Wa made a demand on *Mimana's Jo* to the Baekje king. In the statement “任那所出物者、天皇之所明覽。自今以後、可具題國與所出調 [Mimana's exports will be inspected at by the Emperor himself. From now on, you should clearly distinguish which taxes are from which country],” the Wa court emphatically demands Baekje to distinguish between Baekje's *Jo* and *Mimana's Jo*.

However, what needs to take note in this material is that there is no mention of Mimana envoy in Wa's demands on Baekje. Although Wa demanded Baekje to distinguish its *Jo* from *Mimana's Jo*, there is no demand on a Mimana envoy distinguished from Baekje's.

In fact, when Baekje's envoy offered *Mimana's Jo* acting as Mimana envoy as well in 645, it doesn't seem to have caused any diplomatic dispute between the two countries. What is more, Baekje's envoy didn't even attend the ceremony of offering *Mimana's Jo*, citing illness.

All these point to the liability of Ishimoda's and other similar understanding of *Mimana's Jo*. That is, the idea that the offering ceremony of *Mimana's Jo* at the Wa court should be accompanied by a special envoy called “Mimana envoy” has little ground.

Now turning to the interpretation of the record on Suiko Tenno, 7th to 11th Months of the 31st Year, the following issues must be explained. That is, what made Wa's envoys say, “是以任那之事、今亦不成矣 [In regards to the Mimana problem, now it cannot succeed],” and its top minister regret the military action? In other words, what were the criteria to judge *Mimana's Jo*, a diplomatic policy pursued by the Wa court, a success? Why did the Oomi regret his own decision of military action? These questions must be answered.

In conclusion, the answers to these questions can be considered in terms of two issues: Mimana envoy and *Mimana's Jo*.

Regarding Mimana's special envoy, two possible interpretations can be postulated. One is to follow Suzuki's theory that places importance on the presence of a Mimana envoy with a certain bureaucratic rank. According to this theory, Wa's envoys reported that Mimana's affairs have not been accomplished because Silla downgraded Mimana's special envoy from Naemal [奈末], the official ranked 11th among 17 bureaucratic ranks to Daesa [大舍], the one ranked 12th.

Was it really the rank of the Mimana envoy that made the Wa court consider 'Mimana's Jo had not been accomplished'? A careful examination of Mimana envoys' ranks in association with *Mimana's Jo* shed light on this problem.

Shinkawa Tokio's study reveals, however, that around the Suiko Period, Silla mostly sent Naemal as Silla envoy and Daesa as Mimana envoy (1994, p. 102). Therefore, the rank of Mimana envoy, Daesa, cannot be the issue in the year 622's *Mimana Jo* in question.

Rather, this case can be understood as a particular exception. It seems that for whatever political reason, Silla had decided to send a higher ranked official as Mimana envoy [任那人達率奈末] at first, but after the trouble with Wa (Wa's military expedition), it reverted the rank of the envoy to the earlier state (Shinkawa, 1994, p. 102).

Here is another important example in relation to *Mimana's Jo* and the rank of the Mimana envoy. In the 18th and 19th years of Suiko (610-611), Sillan and Mimana envoys visited Japan. In the 7th and 10th months of the 18th year of Suiko, the Sillan envoy was Naemal [奈末竹世士] while the Mimana envoy was Daesa [大舍首智買]. Again, the Sillan envoy who came to Japan in the 8th month of the 19th year was Naemal [奈末北叱智] while the Mimana envoy was Daesa [大舍親智周智].

In both cases, the Mimana envoy was an official holding the position of Daesa in the Sillan government. That is, the rank of the envoy was the same as the one that is believed to have caused uproar in 622.

However, there is no indication that such a diplomatic contention happened in 610 and 611 due to the rank of the Mimana envoy being

simply Daesa. Rather, the record on Suiko, 7th Month of the 18th Year, states that they were received with great hospitability according to the ceremonial courtesies for guests⁸ established during the reign of Suiko. Moreover, the ceremonial courtesies received by Sillan and Mimana envoys had little difference from the ones received by Pai Si-qing [裴世清], an envoy of Tang who had visited Japan in 608 (Suiko, 16th year).⁹

The examples so far evidently show that the rank of the Mimana envoy was not a big issue. That is, the root of the trouble with *Mimana's Jo* was not the replacement of the envoys or the rank of a special envoy. Then, does the problem have to do with the absence of a Mimana envoy as suggested by Nishimoto?

To say the conclusion first, this is not a right interpretation either. It does not make sense that Silla sent *Mimana's Jo* in 622, along with the returning Japanese envoy without even its own envoy. It is far more plausible to think that Sillan envoys delivered the tribute from both countries. Two things lead to this conclusion.

First, the Sillan envoy seems to have had a special diplomatic mission for this visit to Japan, totally different from previous ones. It appears that the Sillan envoy attempted to overhaul the practice of *Mimana's Jo* that Wa had been insistently imposing upon Silla. Thereby, Silla was attempting to bring about fundamental changes to Wa's diplomatic policy toward Silla or overturn Wa's diplomatic policy toward Silla itself to a new one, based on its new strategies on Wa.

More than anything, Silla was pouring upon Japan unprecedented diplomatic overtures to replace the diplomatic relations maintained through the tradition of *Mimana's Jo*. It initiated exchange of envoys as a new diplomatic maneuver,¹⁰ offered to teach Silla Buddhism to offset the

⁸ The ceremonial courtesies for guests of this period are detailed in Tajima Isao (1986, pp. 207-215).

⁹ Refer to Tajima Isao's study (1986, pp. 213-215).

¹⁰ Tamura (1979, 1980) discusses Silla's initiative to start envoy exchange with Japan in the record

spread of Baekje Buddhism in Japan since the period of Kimmei Tenno [欽明天皇].¹¹ It also instigated disputes in the Wa court over diplomatic stance,¹² persuading Wa to have diplomatic relations with Tang, for example, through the famous monk Huiji [慧日], and with Silla.¹³ In addition, it intentionally induced Wa's military expedition to Silla. All these were planned and executed to achieve its diplomatic purpose. Further details on these special purpose of Silla shall be discussed in another paper.

Considering this ulterior purpose of Silla, it is impossible to conceive that Silla sent *Mimana's Jo* without a special envoy that was required with this tribute ritual. In this case, there is no reliable ground to deny the presence of a Sillan envoy just because a Mimana envoy didn't come along.

Another reason to suspect the truth of what was written on the 11th Month is that they contradict the record of the 7th month of the same year. In these two entries, unlike that of the 11th month, it seems that Silla and Mimana both sent envoys with both countries' tributes [兩國之調]. They also record that the envoy to Tang, Kusushino Enichi [医惠日], returned with Sillan envoys and that Sillan envoys brought a variety of Buddhist cultural products. Especially, the factuality of the description about Buddhist cultural products from Silla in the 7th month record has been sufficiently supported by other historical sources than *Nihonshoki* (Shinkawa, 1994, pp. 99-101).

Considering the two points discussed so far, the real reason behind the Japanese envoy's statement “是以任那之事、今亦不成矣 [In regards to

on Suiko Tenno, 7th Month of the 30th Year.

¹¹ Shinkawa (1994, pp. 99~104) discusses Silla's political motive behind its offer of Buddhist teaching.

¹² The record on Suiko, 30th Year

¹³ Refer to Ishimoda (op. cit., p. 52) and Shinkawa (op. cit., p. 101) for the interpretation of the record on the 7th month of the 30th year of Suiko, which states that the proposition made by Kusushino Enichi [医惠日] not only reflected Tang's intention but also Silla's.

the Mimana problem, now it cannot succeed]” cannot be the downgraded rank of the Mimana envoy or the absence of one. Rather, it should be interpreted to be about a transgression, such as the military expedition to Silla, made by the previous regime of Wa. What the statement means in the records of the 30th year and 11th month of the same year of Suiko is the failure of the *Mimana Jo* policy that the Wa court had been pursuing due to its sudden military action on Silla. That is, it is highly likely that the record refers to the failure of making Silla adopt the practice of *Mimana’s Jo*.

The reasons for the failure, therefore, were not the inappropriateness or absence of the special envoy that Silla sent with *Mimana’s Jo*. That is, the reasons that the Wa court evaluated their goal of making Silla accept their policy on *Mimana’s Jo* a failure were not neither the rank nor the absence of the Mimana envoy. Then, what were the criteria for Wa to deem their *Mimana’s Jo* policy a failure or a success? It cannot but be the absence or deficiency of the tribute.

So far, the paper has discussed the importance of the Mimana envoy in *Mimana’s Jo*, the premise that Ishimoda’s and other widely spread theories in the Japanese historical field. A careful examination of related historical records on the 30th year of Suiko Tenno reveals that the historical significance that Ishimoda and other Japanese historians have attributed to *Mimana’s Jo* is built on a flimsy foundation without factual substance from historical records. Therefore, *Mimana’s Jo* must be interpreted with different perspectives from the aforementioned theories of Japanese historians, perspectives free from ideological and customized boundaries.

V. Conclusion – For an Accurate Understanding of the History of Korea-Japan Relations

The accurate understanding of ancient Korea-Japan relations relies on how accurately we interpret the actual reality of interactions and

exchanges between the Wa Dynasty and the three kingdoms and the Gaya polities in the Korean peninsula, whereby how accurately we define the relations between those nations and the kingdom of Wa.

However, the only historical source material available now that attests the relations between the Korean states and the Yamato Dynasty is the records contained in *Nihonshoki* [日本書紀, *The Chronicle of Japan*] on the emperors at that time such as Keitai-ki [繼體紀], Kinmei-ki [欽明紀], Bidatsu-ki [敏達紀], Sushun-ki [崇峻紀], and Suiko-ki [推古紀]. These records cannot but be biased in favor of Wa kings. Therefore, the understanding of ancient Korea-Japan relations differs according to how the related source material is interpreted.

The Japanese understanding of ancient Korea-Japan relations represented by Ishimoda's theory has the following characteristics and limitations:

1. A common characteristic shared by most Japanese historians is their adherence to the historiography of *Nihonshoki*, Japan-centered (especially, Yamato-centered) historiography. They are particularly attached to the view that ancient Korean states were colonies of Japan and to the terms such as *Jil* and *Jo*. Therefore, they lean to understand the relations between ancient Korean states and the Kingdom of Wa from the perspectives of Yamato centricism and superiority.
2. Diplomatic relations are the products of on-going and mutating exchange and interactions between two nations. But the Japanese understanding of diplomatic relations between the ancient Korean states and Wa is constrained by an abstract and ideological framework. For example, people and goods the Korean states gave to Wa were part of diplomatic exchange between two nations, but their meanings are interpreted in terms of the assumption of Wa being "Small China" and an imperial superpower.

Recent studies on ancient Japan's international relations have not much departed from the boundaries defined by Suematsu Yasukazu's theory of Japan as a colonial ruler of the southern part of the Korean peninsula and Ishimoda Sho's theory of the small empire of the Dongi or small China. Especially, Ishimoda's understanding of the ancient Japanese state (in particular, its international relations) remains still influential.

However, recent findings have revealed the implausibility of Suematsu's theory and shaken the foundation of Ishimoda's Small Empire of the Dongi theory, whose premises (i.e. interpretations of historical records) are drawn from Suematsu's. Since Suematsu's theory is now mostly rejected, Ishimoda's theory has lost a significant ground.

Without the interpretations of historical records drawn from Suematsu, the only historical evidence left that Ishimoda's theory is based on is, records about the so-called "Five Kings of Wa" in the section of Wa Kingdom of *Songshu*, records about "big nation [大國]" in the section of Wa Kingdom in *Suishu*, and records on *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo* sent from Baekje and Silla.

However, Ishimoda's interpretation of the *Songshu* records has long been disputed, and his linear interpretation of the *Suishu* material has also been criticized for overstretching the historical records on the time before the 7th century. This paper also has pointed out the problems with his interpretation of *Jil* and *Mimana's Jo*.

Therefore, Ishimoda's theory no longer dominates the Japanese historical field as an infallible truth and its validity and reliability have been challenged. In this light, the Japanese historiography of ancient Korea-Japan relations based on the theoretical framework provided by Ishimoda should be re-defined from the basis. It is time to rectify the misinterpretations and pursue a more accurate

historiography of ancient Korea and Japan.

The different interpretations on the terms such as *Jo* and *Jil* are also a cause to breach the historical understandings of the two nations. Japanese scholars tend to apply the modern concepts of those terms to ancient traditions practiced during Ritsuryou State. The interpretation of *Jil* is a typical example. Japanese historians tend to interpret Baekje's *Jil* sent to Wa as a symbol of subordination and desire for stronger diplomatic ties with Wa. However, the reality of *Jil* needs to be examined without the taint of contemporary sense of the word.

Jo, including *Mimana's Jo*, has been defined as tribute offered to show subordination, an abstract interpretation constrained by the sense of the Ritsuryou term. It also needs to be examined by studying actual practices and reality at that time rather than defined by the modern sense of the word.

Recognizing these limitations of previous studies, we need to work on to establish a more accurate historiography of ancient Korea-Japan relations in future studies.

First, the research on the relations of Wa and ancient Korean states should be approached with the assumption that they were in an equal relationship and based on Hirano Kunio's elucidating work (1985) on diplomatic formalities and terminology of Wa and the three kingdoms of Korea.

Second, another premise to be based on in the research is Kito Kiyooki's view (1976) that diplomacy and international relations should be understood in terms of shared interests between the involved countries, departing from the idea of Wa centrism.

Thirdly, for a more reality-based understanding of ancient Korea-Japan relations, Kim Hyun-gu (1985)'s perspectives and findings should be taken as a basic framework. He defines the relationship between Baekje and Wa as a mutually beneficial and cooperative one where

Baekje provided advanced culture in exchange of Wa's military assistance.

Lastly but more specifically, one should not be too adherent to terminologies used in *Nihonshoki* to have the two countries share more historical understanding. The most problematic case is the term *Jil*. The mainstream Japanese understanding of this ancient practice of *Jil* heavily relies on the present sense of the word, which interprets *Jil* as a symbol of subordination. Under this interpretation, *Jil* has been used as an unequivocal example that evidences a master-vassal or superior-inferior relationship, and thereby, it has been argued that the Yamato Dynasty was politically superior to Baekje and Silla.

Meanwhile, Korean historians have been showing allergic reactions toward the terms *Jo* and *Jil*, and have been denying the existence of these two practices. This attitude also reflects that they are bound by the contemporary concepts of those words. What is urgently needed for a more accurate and objective understanding of ancient Korea-Japan relations, the historians of both countries must go beyond the semantics of *Jo* and *Jil* and see the realities of the actual practices.

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