

E-Mail Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama City (23) July 2nd Issue

【Desiring the glory of Kibi Clan】

Hello. This is Omori, the Mayor of Okayama city.

On this issue I will introduce you about a story of attracting ancient romance. Regarding the era of Yamataikoku Himiko, whom you are familiar with, is described on “Gishi-wajin-den”. Her era was during the 3th century.

After Himiko’s era, descriptions regarding yamato era is gone from Chinese history and entered a blank era which details are not clear yet. However, it is said that “Kibi Clan” was the one who was hugely successful during this period.

There is a Tsukuriyama burial mound in Shinjoshimo, Okayama Kita-ku. People think it is a grave of a king who dominated early 5th century of Kibi. Its total length is some 360m and is the largest burial mound in Japan besides 3 burial mounds that are designated Mausoleum of Emperor. One of the 6 Baichoes is “Senzoku burial mound” and I will talk about this one.

It has become clear that Senzoku burial mound is keyhole shape with about 80m total length. Its sekisho (stone partitioning screen) with characteristic adornments which is called lines and arcs inside stone hut is made of sandstone which is only produced around Amakusa, Kumamoto prefecture. Stone hut is made of andesite which is produced in Kagawa prefecture.

This means this stone hut cannot be made without any help by people of Chugoku, Kyushu, Shikoku and other areas. This proves us that Kibi Clan was the leader of western japan.

I entered the stone hut in the early spring and saw sekisho and wall directly. I thought about the Kibi King who dominated the fifth century and felt thrilled.

And this time it is decided to restore this precious Senzoku burial mound taking 4 years from next year.

The purpose to restore is to establish a promenade with 50 replicas of a clay image excavated from a mound formed, so that people can climb to the burial mound. Moreover a tunnel in a back circular part will be established to allow people to observe inside the stone hut. One symbol in the time when Kibi shined the most regains the figure it used to have in the ancient time. I am very excited to be able to see the true colors of Kibiji.

I wish excavation of the Tsukuriyama burial mound itself starts immediately and find a history of those days if possible, so I was able to know about the lives of the 4th and the 5th centuries...