

## 9. Musashikokubunji Temple and villages

### 9.1 The Taika Reform and the Ritsuryo System

Many domestic and diplomatic difficulties existed in the Asuka Period at the end of the Kofun Period. In the East Asia of A.D.581, Sui established a nation in China, and Silla expanded its territory on the Korean Peninsula. In A.D. 618, Sui was ruined and Tang, establishing and regulating the Ritsuryo System, advanced into the Korean Peninsula, while the tensions between the nations intensified. In Japan, conflicts between strong families intensified into violence, and finally the Soga family seized real power.

Antipathy against the Soga family gradually increased, and its overthrow was planned by Nakanooeno-Oji (Prince Nakanooe, later Emperor Tenji(668-671) and his group. The Soga head family were attacked and ruined in A.D. 645. This coup d'état was later named Taika-no-kaishin (Taika Reform). This opportunity gave rise to the centralization of administrative power based on the Ritsuryo System of Sui and Tang. The Chinese character "ritsu" is defined as "criminal law" and "ryo" as "governance under administrative law". Land was provided to people who then had to pay taxes categorized as *so* (crop tax), *yo* (tax paid in labor) and *cho* (tribute) based on the Handenshuju-no-Ho (law for the equal allotment of fields).



*Fig.67 Bronze bodhisattva statue  
in Seigan'in Temple.*

In A.D. 710, the capital was moved to Heizei-kyo (Heijo-kyo) in Nara Prefecture. The following some 80 years were called the Nara Period (710-794). When the Nara Period arrived, the national system neared completion under Heizei-kyo construction and Ritsuryo System preparation. The populace was integrated into the administrative system of *kuni* (province), *gun* (county) and *go* (village) that were ruled by powerful regional families. Those families became government officials, and the government controlled the people through those families. However, the public land principle fundamental to the Ritsuryo System began to collapse in the middle 8th century. If a farmer claimed land, his claim was readily granted. Therefore, the central nobles expanded their territories in cooperation with the powerful regional farmers. This was the initiation of the Shoen (Manorial) System.

In A.D. 794, the capital was transferred to Heian-kyo in Kyoto. Thus, the Heian Period (794-1192) began, and enclosure of non-reclaimed hills and valleys was promoted by the central nobles, temples and shrines connected with the powerful families. This enclosure enforced by the ruling class pressed farmers onto public lands and brought ruin to small farmers. As a result, some farmers escaped to labor for the *shoen* (manors). In this circumstance, powerful regional families increased their power and subjugated farmers who had abandoned their fields, turning these fields into private lands. At the same time, powerful farmers also developed new land to cultivate.

## 9.2 Musashikokubunji Temple and Tosando Highway

*Kokubunji* Temples (national temples) were established in each *kuni* (province) by Emperor Shomu (724-749) and Empress Komyo for



Fig.68 Todaiji Temple (Nara Prefecture). Emperor Shomu (724-749) constructed this temple to relieve the people through prayer. It is also called Sokokubunji Temple (head national temple). By Buddhism the Imperial Court tried to maintain the Ritsuryo System whose base became destabilized.



Fig.69 Musashikokubunji Temple Ruins (Kokubunji City). A kokubunji Temple was constructed in Musashi Province in obedience to an imperial edict issued in 741. Presently, a stone monument is placed on the Kondo (Golden Hall) site.



prayer toward national security and peace. The kokubunji Temples were all constructed near the *kokufu* (provincial capitol). The kokufu were national government administrative towns established in the provinces under the Ritsuryo System, and they were where the *kokuga* (provincial government offices) were located. They functioned as regional political, economic and communication centers. The kokufu had direct connection to the central government in Kinai by road.

The Musashikokubunji Temple was constructed not later than A.D. 758. It was an impressive tile-roofed temple. Its tiles totaled 500,000 and many tiles with Tama region characters (such as "Ta", "Tama", "Tamagawara") inscribed on them have also been excavated there. The kokubunji temples and kokufu were inseparable from each other, so road construction and services were essential. Remnants of such a road have been excavated from the Musashikokubunji Temple Ruins. This straight road running north-south is considered to be the Musashino Road connecting the Musashi Kokufu to the Tosando Highway that runs through the same-name Tosando territory. In the early 8th century, Japan was divided into seven *do* (territories) (Tokaido, Tosando, Hokurikudo, San'indo, San'yodo, Nankaido, Saikaido) and five *ki* (five home provinces), or the Kinai (capitol district). The

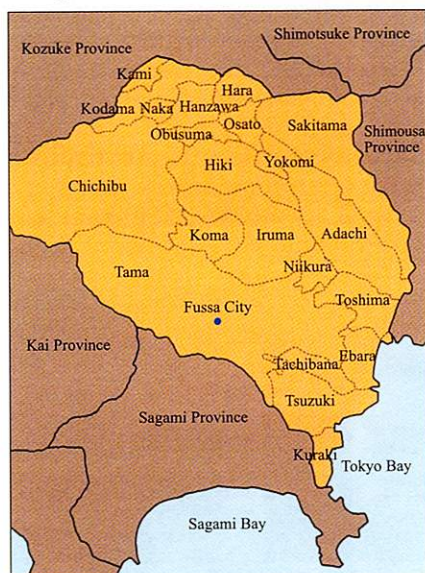


Fig.70 Counties in Musashi Province. Ancient Musashi Province was divided into 21 counties (*gun*). Its scale was second only to Mutsu Province in northern Honshu Island. The present Tama region, including Fussa City, belonged to Tama-gun.

Musashi Province belonged to the Tosando territory until it was attached to the Tokaido territory in A.D. 771.

Furthermore, a bronze bodhisattva statue dating to this period is installed in Seigan'in Temple. No inscription exists but it is considered to have been cast in the Hakuho Period based on its expression, pose, accessories and style. However, as the celestial robe style and left side waistcloth knot were not common in the Hakuho Period, it may have been created in China in the last years of Sui (581-618) or the early years of Tang (618-907). Although no traditions or records of this statue remain, it is considered that some adherent presented his privately worshiped statue to the temple because Seigan'in Temple was founded in the Muromachi Period (1392-1573).

### 9.3 Village distribution

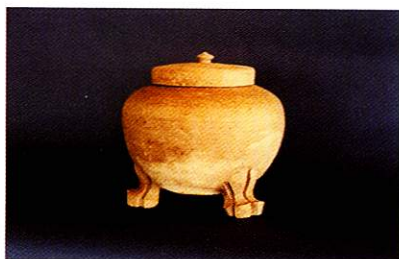
Ancient sites in the Tama River basin have been found centering on the



*Fig.71 Hachiojinanbu Kilns Site (Hachioji City). Many sueki pots and cups have been excavated from around kilns. These sueki earthenware items were carried to the Musashi Kokufu and Musashikokubunji Temple and other regional places.*



*Fig.72 Utsunuki Kilns Site (Hachioji City). There was a large scale sueki earthenware production site on the slope of the Gotenyama hill in Utsunuki-machi, Hachioji City. More than 60 kilns have been found there.*



*Fig.73 Tripod pot with beast motif legs (excavated from Tamagawa-cho, Akishima City). Sueki pots were ossuary (bone) urns. Cremation became popular in the Nara and Heian Periods. However, cremation was limited to the privileged classes. Burial in the earth was common among ordinary people.*



Musashi Kokufu (capitol town) in Fuchu City and the Musashikokubunji Temple in Kokubunji City. Villages were widely distributed around the important traffic points to the central government such as the Ochikawa Site in Hino City. No Nara or Heian Period sites have been found in Fussa City. However, there is the possibility of finding dwelling sites in the future because *hajiki* (low-fired orange to red ware) and *sueki* (high-fired grey ware) earthenware produced in the Nara and Heian periods have been found on the Haijima Terrace in Fussa City.

Heian Period middle Tama River basin villages were located near the Tama River. It was commonly considered that no people dwelled in such places because flooding must have often occurred while embankment technology was absent in that era. However, there is the view that a site might be found near the Tama River in the future because dwellings were not always built away from rivers.

Cremation spread among nobles and the privileged classes during the Nara and Heian periods. In the Tama region, several sets of cremated remains were found on the terrace north of the Musashikokubunji Temple in Kokubunji City. The influence of Buddhism can be observed in these cremated remains. The most important artifact in this area is a pot excavated from Akishima City. This sueki pot had beast-like



Fig.74 Miyoshino Site (Hinode Town). Miyoshino is the ancient dwelling site which once spread over parts of present day Akiruno City and Hinode Town. Large-scale ditches and horse harnesses have been found at this site. The ditches are considered barriers to keep horses in, and they point to a relationship between an ancient maki and this village.

decorations on its three legs, and it was used for storing cremated bones. It sat in an octagonal stone coffin with octagonal stone lid. The deceased must have been a powerful person or a Buddhist priest strongly connected with the central government or dispatched from the central government.

#### 9.4 Cow and horse domestication

In the Heian Period, Musashi Province had a role in delivering horses as tribute, and numerous *maki* (pastures) were established there. In Shinano, Kai, Kozuke and Musashi provinces there were 32 *chokushi-maki* (directly controlled maki) where cows and horses were kept for delivery to the Imperial Court. There are several hypotheses concerning the location of the *chokushi-maki* in Musashi Province. The most popular understanding is that Ogawa-no-maki corresponds to present Ogawa in Akiruno City, Yui-no-maki corresponds to present Yotsuya-machi to Nibukata-machi in Hachioji City, and Ono-no-maki corresponds to Ono-no-go as described in the "Wamyosho" (encyclopedia of Japanese names, compiled 931-938). For the location of Ono-go, hypotheses exist for Fuchu City, Tama City, and other locations. In any case, the people who maintained and managed the maki played a great part in the later formation of warrior groups.