

韓鉄（大宰府管志摩郡製鉄所）考：九州大学構内遺跡出土木簡

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<https://hdl.handle.net/2324/18608>

出版情報：坪井清足先生卒寿記念論文集，pp.984-995，2010-10-26．坪井清足先生の卒寿をお祝いする会
バージョン：
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Thoughts on Kara-Kanuchi (A site of a furnace in Shima County under Dazaifu Reign)

Wooden strips unearthed from the site on the campus of Kyushu University

Kyushu University has been relocating to a new campus in Nishi Ward, Fukuoka City. Fukuoka City Board of Education conducted research on the proposed land prior to construction. They discovered many wooden strips with letters written on them in sumi-ink. Among them was a wooden strip with an era name on it, 1st of Taiho (the year of 701.) It was actually the oldest era name that Japan used. Wooden strips which have older era names than Taiho (such as Taika, Hakuchi, or Shucho) have not been found anywhere in Japan until now. There must have been a kind of facilities here that put the Japanese era name on the wooden strip for the first time, and that shows it directly represented wills of a constitutional country by Ritsuryo-Law at the time.

This place belonged to Shima-gun (Shima County) in Chikuzen-no-Kuni (Chikuzen Province) in ancient times. Some wooden strips had names of villages that belonged to Shima County, such as Shima, Akashiki, Toshi, and Kume. Villages all over the county brought taxation (mainly rice) to this place and many people and horses gathered here.

Kara-Kanuchi was also one of the villages in Shima County. Its name was seen on one wooden strip. Besides, a site of a furnace was detected at this place. Kara-Kanuchi had much to do with Korean iron mills. It had a strong relationship with Korean Peninsula since its name bore a letter of Kara (Korea.)

In this discussion, I reviewed the wooden strips. The one with the era name of Taiho on it was called Kasho-Mokkan, and was used as a pass certification. I also reinterpreted some of the letters on the wooden strips, and raised the possibility that there might be Kaou (signature) on them instead of letters. I presumed that this very place, where the wooden strips lay, was the site of Kara-Kanuchi official iron mill in Shima County, run directly by Dazaifu Reign.