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**NARA HEIJŌ IMPERIAL PALACE
SITE EXCAVATION REPORT IX**

SURVEYS IN AREAS OF OUTER GATES
AND SURROUNDING WALLS

ENGLISH SUMMARY

**NARA NATIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTIES RESEARCH
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NARA (HEIJŌ) IMPERIAL PALACE SITE EXCAVATION
REPORT IX

SURVEYS IN AREAS OF OUTER GATES AND SURROUNDING WALLS
—1977—

C O N T E N T S

	Page
Chapter I. Introduction	1
Chapter II. Progress of Research Work	4
1. General Description of Research Work	4
2. Daily Record of Excavation Work and Events	7
A. Survey 14	7
B. Survey 15	8
C. Surveys 16 and 17	9
D. Survey 18	11
E. Survey 23	12
F. Survey 25	13
G. Survey 25-2	15
H. Survey 34	15
I. Survey 52-2	16
J. Survey 58	16
K. Survey 62	16
Chapter III. Excavated Sites	17
1. Introductory Remarks on Excavated Sites	17
2. Description of Structural Remains	18
A. Area of Suzaku-mon(6ABX, 6ABY)	18
B. Area of Tamate-mon(6ADF)	21
C. Area of Saeki-mon(6ADD, 6ADE)	24
D. Area of southwest corner of palace precinct(6ADH)	27
E. Area between Tamate-mon and Saeki-mon (6ADE, 6ADF)	31
F. Area of surrounding wall on north side (6ABA, 6ABN)	32
G. Other areas	33
Chapter IV. Artifacts	34
1. Wooden Tablets(Mokkan)	34
A. Mokkan from SD1900	34
B. Mokkan from SK1979	37
2. Tiles	39
A. Round roof-edge tiles(noki marugawara)	40

B. Curved roof-edge tiles (noki hiragawara)	46
C. Tiles used as tools	52
D. Round and curved roof tiles	52
E. Tiles bearing Chinese characters	53
3. Earthenware	54
A. Earthenware from SD1900	54
B. Pottery with Ink Writings	60
C. Earthenware from other sites	60
D. Pottery from Cultural Layers · Inkstones	61
E. An Earthenware coffin	61
4. Wooden Manufactures	62
A. Wooden shields from SE1230	62
B. Wooden manufactures from SD1900	66
C. Wooden manufactures from SK1979	71
D. Wooden manufactures from other sites	76
5. Manufactures of Metal and Stone	78
A. Manufactures of Metal from SK1979	78
B. Manufactures of Metal and Stone from other sites	79
Chapter V. Interpretive Essays	80
1. Sites	80
A. Outer palace gates	80
B. Surrounding wall	82
C. Thoroughfares within palace precinct	84
D. Shaku measurement units used in palace construction	85
2. Artifacts	88
A. Tiles	88
B. Earthenware	92
3. Outer Gates and Surrounding Wall in Literature	96
4. Conclusions	99
Chapter VI. Model Reconstructions	100
1. Suzaku-mon	101
2. West-facing Gates	105
Supplementary Tables	107
Summary	115
Plans and Sections	
Plates	

PLATES

1. Aerial photograph of Heijō-kyū remains
2. Areas 6ABX and 6ABY (total view, from south)
3. Area 6ABY-E
 - 1) Southern-facing surrounding wall SA1200, Suzaku-mon SB1800 and its eastern side gate (wakimon) SB1801 (from east)
 - 2) Suzaku-mon SB1800 and wall SA1812 (from east)
4. Areas 6ABX and 6ABY
 - 1) Total view, from south
 - 2) Suzaku-mon SB1800, and open area SH1850 (from east)
 - 3) Suzaku-mon SB1800, wall SA1812, and structures SX1830, SX1831 and SX1832 (build within drainage ditch SD1825 after the gate's dismantlement)
5. Area 6ABY-E·G
 - 1) Sites where foundation stones had been emplaced at Suzaku-mon SB1800 (northern row) and sites of post holes for wall SA1812 (from north)
 - a) Site of No. 1 foundation stone (from east)
Sites of No. 1 and No. 2 posts (from east)
 - b) Site of No. 2 foundation stone (from east)
Sites of No. 3 and No. 4 posts (from east)
 - c) Site of No. 3 and No. 4 foundation stones (from east)
Sites of No. 4, No. 5, and No. 6 posts (from east)
 - d) Site of No. 5 and No. 6 foundation stones (from east)
Sites of No. 8 and No. 9 posts (from east)
6. Area 6ABY-E
 - 1) Sites of foundation stones of Suzaku-mon SB1800 and of area dug out (horikomijigyō) in constructing base platform (from northwest)
 - 2) Area of horikomi jigyō for Suzaku-mon SB1800, showing hanchiku construction process of building foundation (from west)
 - 3) Area of horikomi jigyō for south-facing surrounding wall SA1200, showing hanchiku construction process (from east)
7. Area 6ABY-E·G
 - 1) Eastern side gate (wakimon) SB1801, from north
 - 2) Same, from northwest
 - 3) Western side gate (wakimon) SB1802, from north
8. Area 6ABY-E·G
 - 1) Remains of the base section of the western post in

- the eastern side gate SB1801 (from south)
 - 2) Remains of the base section of the eastern post in the eastern side gate SB1801 (from south)
 - 3) Remains of base section of eastern post in western side gate SB1802 (from south)
 - 4) Fourth from east (northern-row) foundation stone site at Suzaku-mon SB1800 and seventh from east post hole site wall SA1812 (from north)
 - 5) Fourth from east post hole site at wall SA1812 and remains of base section of post (from north)
 - 6) Third from east post hole site at wall SA1812 and remains of base section of post (from east)
9. Area 6ABY-E·G
- 1) Thoroughfare SF1760 within palace precinct (to east of Suzaku-mon) and wall SA1765, from east
 - 2) Same, viewed from northwest
 - 3) Thoroughfare SF1890 (to the west of Suzaku-mon), viewed from west
10. Areas 6ABX and 6ABY
- 1) Western side gate SB1802 and western edge of SH1850 (from south)
 - 2) Eastern edge of open space SH1850 and thoroughfare SF1950 (within palace precinct), from south
 - 3) Western half of open space SH1850, from north
11. Areas 6ABX and 6ABY
- 1) Drainage ditch SD1900A (from north)
 - 2) Drainage ditch SD1900B (from north)
 - 3) Dam SX1891 (from east)
 - 4) Same (from northwest)
12. Area 6ABY-G
- 1) Structures SX1830, SX1831, and SX1832 within drainage ditch SD1825 (from north)
 - 2) Same (from south)
 - 3) Remains of base section of eastern post in SX1830 and soil strata of SD1900 (from north)
13. Area 6ADF
- 1) Total view of sub-area R·T, viewed from northeast
 - 2) West-facing surrounding wall SA1600 and Tamate-mon site SB1616 (viewed from south)
14. Area 6ADF
- 1) Tamate-mon site SB1616 and east-west wall SA1692 (viewed from north)
 - 2) Area of horikomi jigyo at Tamate-mon site SB1616 and evidence of hanchiku process of constructing foundation (from northeast)
 - 3) Detail of same (from north)

15. Area 6ADF
 - 1) Total view, from north
 - 2) Buildings SB1711 and SB1717, and wall SA1692 (from northwest)
 - 3) Buildings SB1711 and SB1717 (from southwest)
16. Area 6ADF
 - 1) Drainage ditch SD-1759 (from north)
 - 2) Pit SK1623 (from southeast), showing stratification of filled in earth and debris
 - 3) Pit SK1623 (from south)
17. Area 6ADF
 - 1) Well SE1748 (from southwest)
 - 2) Well SE1595 (from north)
 - 3) Well SE1591 (from south)
 - 4) Well SE1598 (from northwest)
 - 5) Well SE1588 (from south)
 - 6) Well SE1596 (from east)
18. Areas 6ADD and 6ADE
 - 1) Saeki-mon site SB3600 (from south)
 - 2) Saeki-mon site SB3600 and walls SA3590 and SA3680 (from northeast)
19. Areas 6ADD and 6ADE
 - 1) Saeki-mon site SB3600 and walls SA3699 (from northeast)
 - 2) Area of horikomijigyō and hanchiku process of constructing base platform of Saeki-mon SB3600 (from southeast)
 - 3) Detail of same (from northeast)
20. Areas 6ADD and 6ADE
 - 1) Saeki-mon site SB3600, and walls SA3590 and SA3680 (from north)
 - 2) Same (from south)
 - 3) Walls SA3590, building SB3640, and pit SK3650 (from northwest)
21. Areas 6ADD and 6ADE
 - 1) Wall SA3680 and building SB3690 (from south)
 - 2) Wall SA3590 and building SB3640 (from west)
 - 3) Wall SA3590 and building SB3599 (from north)
22. Area 6ADE-M
 - 1) Walls SA3563 and SA3590, old river bed SD 1759, and pit SK3753 (from south)
 - 2) Same (from north)
 - 3) Walls SA3555, SA3557, and SA3563, and building SB3560 (from northwest)
23. Area 6ADH-F.K.L
 - 1) Southwest corner of palace precinct (from east)
 - 2) Southern edge of palace precinct (from west)

24. Area 6ADH-F.K.L
 - 1) South-facing surrounding wall SA1200 (from west)
 - 2) View of scattered roof tiles on north side of surrounding wall SA1200, and walls SA1240 and SA1245 (from southeast)
 - 3) View of scattered roof tiles on north side of surrounding wall SA1200 (from east)
25. Area 6ADH-J.K.L
 - 1) Total view (from northeast)
 - 2) Walls SA1221 and SA1240, buildings SB1220 and SB1222, and upper part of well SE1230 (from north)
 - 3) Walls SA1221 and SA1240, building SB1222, and upper part of well SE1230 (from south)
26. Area 6ADH-J.K.L
 - 1) Southwest corner of the palace precinct (from northeast)
 - 2) Building SB1333 (from northeast)
 - 3) Wall SA1345 and building SB1342 (from east)
 - 4) Building SB1397 (from southeast)
27. Area 6ADH-J.K.L
 - 1) Total view (from southwest)
 - 2) Total view (from north)
 - 3) Building SB1414 (from east)
28. Area 6ADH-J.L
 - 1) Walls SA1345 and SA1365, Building SB1366 (from north)
 - 2) Building SB1366 (from west)
 - 3) Buildings SB1379 and SB1419 (from east)
29. Area 6ADH
 - 1) Southwest section of surrounding outer moat SD1250 (east trench), from northwest
 - 2) Same, from west
 - 3) Southern section of surrounding outer moat SD1250 (west trench), from southwest
30. Area 6ADH-F
 - 1) View of upper part of well SE1230 during excavation (from north)
 - 2) Well SE1230 (from south)
 - 3) Same (from southeast)
31. Areas 6ADE and 6ADF
 - 1) Total view of north-south trench (from north)
 - 2) Wall SA1970 (from west)
 - 3) Wall SA1970 and covered conduit SD1975 (from east)
32. Areas 6ADE and 6ADF
 - 1) Square structure of wooden stakes SX1978, pit SK1979, and covered conduit SD1982 (from north)

- 2) Structure SX1978 and pit SK1979 (from west)
- 3) Wall SA1970 and covered conduit SD1975.
- 33. Areas 6ABA and 6ABN
 - 1) Northern half of Area 6ABA and total view of Area 6ABN (from southwest)
 - 2) Northern surrounding wall SA2300 (from west)
 - 3) Northern surrounding wall SA2300 and wall SA 2330 (from west)
- 34. Areas 6ABA and 6ABN
 - 1) Total view of Area 6ABA (from northwest)
 - 2) Northern surrounding wall SA2300 and tile-paved structure SX2333 (from south)
 - 3) Tile-paved structure SX2333 (from southeast)
- 35. Wooden tablets (*mokkan*)
- 36. Round roof-edge tiles (*noki marugawara*)
- 37. Round roof-edge tiles
- 38. Curved roof-edge tiles (*noki hiragawara*)
- 39. Red pottery (hajiki) from SD1900
- 40. Red pottery (hajiki) from SD1900
- 41. Red pottery (hajiki) from SD1900
- 42. Red pottery (hajiki) from SD1900
- 43. Grey pottery (sueki) from SD1900
- 44. Grey pottery (sueki) from SD1900
- 45. Ink-inscribed pottery from SD1900
- 46. Red and grey pottery from SD1900, and ceramic inkstone and ceramic coffin lid from pit SK1949
- 47. Shield from SE1230
- 48. Shield from SE1230
- 49. Shield from SE1230
- 50. Shield from SE1230
- 51. Shield from SE1230
- 52. Detail of shield from SE1230
- 53. Inked and incised drawing on shield from SE1230
- 54. Incised drawing on shield from SE1230
- 55. Round wooden food container (*magemono*) from SD1900
- 56. *Magemono* and wooden bowl (*hachi*) from SD1900
- 57. Wooden spinning and weaving utensils from SD1900
- 58. Wooden tools and other wooden objects from SD1900
- 59. Wooden broom and other wooden objects from SD1900
- 60. Wooden objects from pit SK1979
- 61. Wooden tools from pit SK1979
- 62. Wooden objects from pit SK1979 and other sites
- 63. Metal manufactures and other objects
- 64. Model of Suzaku-mon
- 65. Model of West-facing Gates

PLANS AND SECTIONS

1. Topographical map of entire area of Heijō-kyū remains
2. Diagram to scale of areas 6ABX and 6ABY (entire)
3. Diagram to scale of 6ABY-D·E·F·G (central part of southern half)
4. Diagram to scale of 6ABY-G·E (eastern part of southern half)
5. Diagram to scale of 6ABY-F·G (western part of southern half)
6. Diagram to scale of 6ADF-P·R·T (entire)
Diagram to scale of 6ADD-Q and 6ADE-K·L·M (entire)
7. Diagram to scale of 6ADF-R·T (entire)
8. Diagram to scale of 6ADF-P (southern half)
9. Diagram to scale of 6ADF-K·P (entire)
10. Diagram to scale of 6ADD-Q and 6ADE-K
11. Diagram to scale of 6ADE-K·L (entire)
12. Diagram to scale of 6ADE-L·M (entire)
13. Diagram to scale of 6ADH (entire)
14. Diagram to scale of 6ADH-F
15. Diagram to scale of 6ADH-I
16. Diagram to scale of 6ADH-K
17. Diagram to scale of 6ADH-K·L
18. Diagram to scale of 6ADH-L·J (northern half)
19. Diagram to scale of 6ADE-P and 6ADF-J·K (entire)
20. Diagram to scale of 6ABA-N and 6ABN-B (entire)
21. Diagram to scale of 6ACA-D·E

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

1. List of major buildings
2. Classification of round roof-edge tiles
3. Classification of curved roof-edge tiles

COLOR PLATES

Frontispiece	Reconstructed model of Suzaku-mon
COLOR PLATE	The original of Hayato shield
	The model of Hayato shield

FIGURES AND DIAGRAMS IN TEXT

1. Areas excavated in each separate survey
2. Map of areas excavated in Survey No. 14 and principal remains
3. Map of areas excavated in Survey No. 15 and principal remains
4. Map of areas excavated in Surveys No. 16 and No. 17 and principal remains
5. Map of areas excavated in Survey No. 18 and principal remains
6. Map of areas excavated in Survey No. 23 and principal remains
7. Map of areas excavated in Survey No. 25 and principal remains
8. Principal remains unearthed in the area of Survey No. 25-2
9. Schematic drawing of the foundation platform with subterranean substructure
10. Well SE1247, from west
11. Well SE1410, from south-east
12. Well SE1313, from south
13. Well SE1422, from north-west
14. Round roof-edge tiles of types 6233, 6273, 6274 and 6275
15. Round roof-edge tiles of types 6275, 6276 and 6288
16. Round roof-edge tiles of types 6278, 6279, 6281 and 6284
17. Curved roof-edge tiles of types 6641, 6642 and 6643
18. Curved roof-edge tiles of types 6643 and 6646
19. Curved roof-edge tiles of type 6681
20. Curved roof-edge tiles of types 6687, 6671 and 6675
21. Incised chinese characters and a mark on roof tiles
22. Relative dimensions of red pottery tableware
23. Relative dimensions of grey pottery tableware
24. An earthenware coffin
25. Map showing the distances between
26. Coordinate values at each measured point and a conceptual map of it's position
27. Changes over time in designs of round roof-edge tiles
28. Sumiki-futagawara (tiles covering ends of angle rafters)
29. X-ray fluorescence analysis of pottery excavated from SD1900
30. The number of Groups I and II pottery, classified by shape-types
31. Ratio of red pottery, classified by purpose
32. Comparison of pottery by it's use between Nara Palace site and other several specific sites
33. Process of making miniature building

TABLES IN TEXT

1. Area and time span of execution in each survey
2. The number of roof-edge tiles excavated from dairi north exterior precinct
3. Tiles with incised character of "Ri (理)"
4. Quantities of pottery unearthed from SD1900A classified by shape-types
5. Manufacturing technique of red pottery tsuki and sara
6. Relative dimensions of wooden shields
7. Relative dimensions of crosspieces attached to the wooden shields
8. Relative dimensions of cylindrical wooden containers
9. Relative dimensions of cylindrical wooden containers
10. Relative dimensions of cylindrical wooden containers
11. Dimensions of wooden spools
12. Dimensions of worked wooden boards and sticks found from SD1900
13. Dimensions of wooden models excavated from SK1983
14. Dimensions of wooden hafts or handles of tools found from SK1983
15. Dimensions of ritual wooden blade
16. Dimensions of iron nails
17. Size and weight of bronze coins
18. Scale of roofed mud-wall
19. Differences of binding angles between round faces and semicylindrical ends of round roof-edge tiles
20. Names attached to the twelve gates around the Palace

NARA (HEIJŌ) IMPERIAL PALACE SITE EXCAVATION
REPORT IX

Heijō-kyū (Nara-no-miya), whose construction was begun in 708, was built in the central part of the northern extremity of Heijō-kyō (Nara), which was the capital of the country during the Nara Period, following the removal of the capital from Fujiwara-kyō in 710. The basic palace area was approximately 1250 meters from east to west and 1000 meters from north to south, but it had a protruding addition on the east side measuring 250 meters from east to west and 750 meters from north to south. The total area was approximately 120 hectares.

With the exception of certain areas along the northern and eastern edges which are occupied by private residences, nearly the whole area of the Heijō-kyū has been preserved, and excavation surveys are continuing to be carried out. Ever since the studies of Heijō-kyū made by Kitaura Sadamasa in the middle of the 19th century, the area of the palace was thought to be one kilometer square, and this became a fixed view in academic circles. When in 1961 a certain private company planned to develop the southwestern part of the palace area and as a result the decision was taken to preserve the entire palace site, it still seemed natural that the area in question should be taken as measuring one kilometer square. However, after excavations were begun in 1964 to determine the four sides of the palace area, it was learned that no remains existed for the three gates on the eastern side (i.e., the *Yama-mon* 山門, the *Takerube-mon* 建部門, and the *Ikuha-mon* 的門, from north to south, respectively) at the sites that had been postulated for them. During a 1967 survey of a newly postulated site for the southernmost gate on the eastern site, remains were uncovered of a gate which opened, rather, to the south along the street known as *Higashi Ichibō-ōji*. In this way it could be hypothesized that the Heijō-kyū had a protrusion on the eastern side of the originally supposed area. From visible topographical features of nearby paddy fields it was newly postulated that the eastern edge of the protruding area lay some 250 meters away from the originally supposed boundary. Through a 1968 survey, the southeast corner of the protruding area could be verified. This area was later designated as corresponding to mentioned in historical literature the "*Tōin*" 東院 (or "eastern courtyard") and thus also as the area where the Yamamomono-miya 楊梅宮 ("willow and plum palace") must have stood.

The preservation of this protruding area came to be a new problem as a result. Through the efforts of many different parties, nearly the entire sector with the exception of areas where private houses already stood is to be preserved in perpetuity.

Three gates opened on each side of the rectangular palace area, and with each gate there was associated the name of a prominent clan. The gate at the center of the South side of the palace is in historical literature of the Nara Period known as the Suzaku-mon (not indicating the name of a clan), but it is possible that this gate was at first also known as the Ōtomo-mon. The problem of which names may be attributed to which gates was taken up in the *Nara Imperial Palace Site Excavation Report II*.

With the above sort of background to the various excavation surveys carried out, the present report deals with some of the areas surveyed in the attempts, mentioned above, to determine the outer boundaries of the palace precincts. The areas discussed in the present report are primarily the following: area of the central gate on the south side (the *Suzaku-mon*, Surveys 16 and 17); area of the southern gate on the west side (the *Tamate-mon* 玉手門, Survey 15); area of the central gate on the west side (the *Saeki-mon* 佐伯門, Survey 25); area of the southwest corner (Survey 14); area between the *Tamate-mon* and the *Saeki-mon* (Survey 18); and area of the surrounding wall on the north side (Survey 23) (See Chapter I).

The southwest corner and the *Tamate-mon* areas were excavated in 1963; the areas of the *Suzaku-mon*, of the surrounding wall on the north side and of the interval between the *Tamate-mon* and the *Saeki-mon* in 1964; and the area of the *Saeki-mon* in 1965. The survey in the *Suzaku-mon* area uncovered drainage ditches on the east and west sides of the *Shimotsumichi*, (The three official roads "kando" which cut across the Yamato basin from north to south were called Kamitsumichi, Nakatsumichi, and shimotsumichi, respectively, the last named lying furthest to the west among the three) the road which may be taken as having formed the standard axis dividing the main area of the palace into east and west sectors at the time of the palace construction (See Chapter II/1).

In the present report, following the above-mentioned general outline is a daily record of progress in the excavation work (Chapter II/2).

Chapter III deals with the various remains uncovered.

Numbers of the various types of remains uncovered are as follows: Buildings (22); Surrounding walls (3); Other walls (22); Drainage ditches (15); wells (14); Pits (10). Remains of buildings were few due to the fact that the areas surveyed were adjacent to the outer wall surrounding the palace. The various remains are discussed in the following order: the *Suzaku-mon* area; the *Tamate-mon* area; the *Saeki-mon* area; area of southwest corner; area between the *Tamate-mon* and the *Saeki-mon*; area of the surrounding wall on the north side; and lastly, other small-scale excavation areas (Chapter III/1).

Among the excavated remains, we may state regarding the palace gates and surrounding wall (i.e., the principal objects of the surveys),

as follows. The site of the Suzaku-mon (SB1800), in comparison to the other two gates, was in a relatively good state of preservation. The remains of the foundation stones which had been removed revealed an east-west dimension of 5 span and a north-south dimension of 1 span, with each span (distance between centers of foundation stones) measuring 5.05 meters. The southern half of the gate's foundation structure had at some time been destroyed in the digging of a pond. The southernmost remaining traces of a row of foundation stones corresponds to the center line, widthwise, of the southern surrounding wall, a fact which permits us to assign two span instead of one span as the original width of the gate. No remains of other structures outside the gate's foundation platform were revealed. When the foundation was built, it was placed largely below the original ground level but also protruded above the original ground level in the form of an earth mound specially prepared to have sufficient soil resistance. The original work of digging an excavation in the surrounding soil is known as horikomi jigyo. From the traces of this horikomi jigyo it is possible to estimate that the foundation extended 1.5 meters below the original ground level. The foundation was built up by a process known as hanchiku, i.e., successively building up and hardening thin layers of clay and sand in the area dug out to be filled. The horizontal dimensions of the gate were thus 25.24 meters in length by 10.10 meters in width (with 5.05 meters, or 17 shaku, as the distance between pillars). At approximately 29 meters to both the east and west of the gate are remains of side gates (wakimon, SB1801 and SB1802) which form openings in the southern surrounding wall of the palace. These are approximately 4 meters wide. The excavation surveys confirmed the fact that the southern surrounding wall (SA1200) was built on a foundation which was set, by means of horikomi jigyo, approximately 0.4 meters below the original ground level, and also the fact that the width of its base was 2.4 meters. It was possible to confirm the same base width also in the survey (No. 14) carried out in the area of the palace precinct's southwest corner. However, within 12 meters on both the east and west sides of the Suzaku-mon, the base width of the surrounding wall is found to measure approximately 3.5 meters. This feature of the surrounding wall being built wider than usual in segments which adjoin either side of a gate has not been found in the surveyed areas around other palace gates, and is thus peculiar to the Suzaku-mon. There are remains of an east-west mud (SA1812) built around posts sunk into the ground (hottate-bashira). It was constructed across the northern edge of the gate's foundation platform, evidently after the time when the Suzaku-mon was dismantled.

In the case of the Tamate-mon (SB1616), no traces remained of the foundation stones or of the sites of their removal but the survey work revealed the position of the bottom layer of the gate's foundation work, which had been, at the time of the gate's construction, the bottom

of the area dug out through horikomi jigyō. The depth of the horikomi jigyō was discovered to be approximately 0.6 meters. The foundation was built up by means of hanchiku, as described above. As for the horizontal dimensions of the horikomi jigyō, the length was found to be approximately 32.1 meters (north to south), while a reconstructed figure for the width (only a half of which was confirmed during the survey in question) may be given as 13.9 meters.

The site of the Saeki-mon (SB3600), like that of the Tamate-mon, leaves no traces of foundation stones or their removal sites. Its size likewise has come to be known only through the remaining evidence of the horikomi jigyō, seen to have a depth of approximately 0.7 meters. The length of the area of the horikomi jigyō is 29.4 meters (north to south), while the width (east to west) is thought to be about the same (13.9 meters) as the width of the Tamate-mon.

The surrounding wall on the palace precinct's west side (SA1600) into which the two above-mentioned gates are built, was found to have a foundation built with a shallow horikomi jigyō, in a way similar to the construction of the surrounding wall on the south side (SA1200). A reconstructed figure for the width of the foundation's base yields 2.4 meters, the same as in the case of the southern wall. A part of the remains of the northern surrounding wall was revealed in Survey 23. At the time it was built, the Heijō palace was first set apart by means of a wall of hottate-bashira construction, which was subsequently replaced by a thicker roofed wall (Tsuiji).

In the areas covered in the present report, there were found the remains of a large number of wells. Most of these date from the Heian or Kamakura periods, but one well (SE1230), in the south-west corner of the palace precinct, is from the Nara period and is also noteworthy for the fact that it made use of painted wooden shields, placed side by side to serve as planks around its four sides (See Chapter III/2).

The wooden tablets (mokkan) uncovered among the various remains were discussed in the 1970 publication Heijō-kyū mokkan. However, a selective list of the more important finds is given in the present report. For example, the tablets bearing the notation Kasofu 過所符, uncovered from the lower strata of site SD1900, were a kind of passport for passing through checkpoints, and thus are an important source material for research concerning the transportation routes of the time. Among the mokkan uncovered from pit SK1979 in the area between the two above-mentioned gates on the west side (Survey No. 18), there are a large number which bear notations having to do with metal nails 釘. The fact that these mokkan were uncovered together with wooden handles for metal utensils, furnace fittings for the insertion bellows and slag left over from molten metal suggests that there was a metal-casting workshop in the vicinity (See Chapter IV/1).

In proportion to the extent of the areas surveyed and also in view of the fact that the surveys in question centered around gates and the surrounding wall, it may be said that the quantity of roof tiles uncovered was surprisingly small. Among the 261 roof-end round tiles ("noki marugawara") and 239 roof-end curved tiles ("noki hiragawara") uncovered, 138 of the former and 102 of the latter ... 48% of the total-- were of types used in the Fuji-wara palace. In the case of the area of the Suzaku-mon, 65% of the noki marugawara and 68% of the noki hiragawara were Fujiwara palace types. (See Chapter IV/2).

Pottery treated in the present report is limited to those objects unearthed from site SD1900, i. e., the drainage ditch along the west side of the Shimotsumichi. Taken together, the 183 pieces of hajiki (red pottery) and 139 pieces of sueki (grey pottery) form excellent material for purposes of establishing a chronology of pottery types.

Among those examples of pottery which bear inked Chinese characters, there is a shallow bowl (Tsuki) which bears an inscription reading 秋 万呂十口 and which may refer to a set of ten such bowls (found together) that were the property of one "Akimaro". Others bear inscriptions like 五十戸家 and 五十家 which seem too refer to households in village governed by the system of one "village" (sato) unit designated for each 50 households, as prescribed in the Taihō legal code of 701. In addition to utensils, also unearthed was the lid of a pottery coffin from Tumulus (Kofun) Period. It has the shape of a hipped (shichūshiki) roof (See Chapter IV/3).

Among wooden objects uncovered from site SD1900 were such food receptacles as tapered bowls and round boxes (magemono), spindles, bridges to hold Koto strings, combs, wooden clogs (geta), tool handles, etc. From pit SK1983 (Survey No. 18) were recovered such wooden objects as round boxes, spoons, various models in the shape of arrows, knives, etc. (probably used to instruct metal manufactures as to the desired dimensions of orders placed), and handles to such implements as knives, drills and scythes. The 16 painted wooden shields used as side planking in well SE1230 (Survey No.14) fit the description that is given in the "Hayato no tsukasa" article of the Engishiki code (completed 927) with regard to shields employed on ceremonial occasions by the group of people known as Hayato (who lived in Southern prefecture of Kyūshū). The lengths of the shields uncovered vary from 149.6 to 152.2cm, and their widths vary from 48.0 to 50.8cm, the average figures being 151.1 cm and 48.6cm., respectively. This corresponds almost exactly to the dimensions given in the Engishiki, namely, a length of 5 shaku (151.5 cm) and a width of 1.8 shaku (50.5cm). The shields bear sawtooth designs at both their upper and lower ends; swirling designs painted red, white and black are drawn on the center portions, and at the very top are several small holes thought to have been for the purpose of attaching

horse hair. These particulars also fit the Englishiki description. On the reverse sides of several of the shields are found such characters as [山], [山地], [海], [海□], and [鳥], written in ink or with a stylus. The patterns by which paint was applied to the obverse side may be classified into two types (See Chapter IV/4).

Chapter V gives attempts at interpretations based on the facts listed above. These deal primarily with the gates and secondarily with the surrounding wall, thoroughfares within the palace precinct, and units of measure used in palace construction.

Supposing that the size of the foundation platform of the Suzaku-mon was approximately the same as that of the area of the horikomi-jigyō carried out at the site, we may hypothesize that the platform extended on all four sides approximately 10 shaku (about 3 meters) beyond the area demarcated by the pillars supporting the roof, and that the platform was on all four sides overhung by eaves. From these facts, it could be supposed that the roof was either of a hipped (yosemune-zukuri) or a hipped and gabled (irimoya-zukuri) construction. However, given the fact that the area of horikomi jigyo was deep (approximately 1.5 meters) and painstakingly filled in to make the ground under the platform as hard as possible, and in light of the extant picture scroll (emakimono) representations of the Suzaku-mon of the Heian-kyū (likewise the principal "front gate" of the palace), we are probably justified to suppose that the Suzaku-mon of the Heijō-kyū had a heavy hipped and gabled roof construction rising several storeys high. The fact that the area of horikomi jigyo of the other two gates is shallower, the fact that their lateral dimensions are somewhat smaller, and especially the fact that the ratio of their shorter to their longer sides is smaller (each of the 5 span between the six pillars on the longer sides to equal thought are 5.05 meters, but each of the 2 span on the shorter sides are thought to equal only 4.5 meters) permit us to suppose that the roofs of those gates were of a simple gable-type construction. The east-west wall (SA 1812) built across the northern edge of the Suzaku-mon platform may be seen as giving a clue to the time when the gate was dismantled. By excavation at the sites of this wall's former foundation stones, it became clear that the wall was built following the end of the gate's use. The fact that it was built only within an area corresponding to the length of the gate's platform indicates that there was at one time thought to be a need to seal up the opening in question. In this regard, it is highly probable that at the time this wall was built, the surrounding wall on the southern side was still in existence. No traces of such a wall built within the gate area were found at the two other gate sites surveyed. It is probably correct to see the year 791 (Enryaku 10) ... i. e., the year when the various gates of the Heijō palace were physically removed to be newly set up at the Nagaoka palace ... as marking the time when the Heijō palace outer gates were dismantled.

The units of measure used in the Heijō-kyū construction were discussed in The Nara Imperial Palace Site Excavation Report II.

However, the present report contains some further material, including the discovery, through surveys of the gates and surrounding walls, that the shaku used in the earliest stages of the palace construction was equal to 0.295 meters (See Chapter V/1).

The fact that many of the roof tiles were diverted to the Heijō palace from the Fujiwara palace after the latter was abandoned is attested by manufacturing techniques, physical composition, special characteristics in ornamental patterns, size and weight, etc. The fact that the tiles newly manufactured at the time of the Heijō palace construction showed, in comparison to the Fujiwara-kyū tiles, a tendency to become smaller, is thought to be related to the necessity of producing tiles in large quantities. The transition in the composition of the various tile patterns from the Fujiwara palace types to Heijō palace types is treated from the point of view of typology (See Chapter V/2A).

Nextly, consideration is given to the red pottery (hajiki) unearthed from site SD1900. The pieces unearthed from this drainage ditch are divided into 2 groups. Those in the first group show features common to other hajiki unearthed in the Asuka and Fujiwara regions after the latter half of the 7th century, and it is highly probable that the pottery in question was in common use in agricultural villages of the Yamato basin. Those hajiki in the second group are similar to pieces unearthed from various sites around Lake Biwa in Shiga-ken and in the southern part of Kyoto-fu. Those hajiki in the first group are mainly for use in serving food, while those in the second group are mainly for use in cooking. The uses to which the pottery in the two groups was put may thus be seen as mutually complementary. Given the characteristics of excavated site SD1900, the pottery in question was thrown away during the early stages of the palace construction. The same site SD-1900 produced mokkan on which is inscribed the name of a village, Ōno sato 大野里, which is believed to have disappeared at the time the Heijō palace was built. Further evidence to support the possibility that there existed an agricultural settlement (or settlements) on the same spot before the construction of the Heijō palace may be had in the fact that among the pottery uncovered at SD1900 are pieces with inked characters such as (五十戸家) and (五十家), indicating the existence of rika ("village houses," corresponding to the terminal elements in the structure of local administration prescribed in the ritsuryō codes). Given the fact that the pottery from site SD1900 was discarded immediately prior to the time when the Suzaku-mon was completed, as well as the fact that no earlier pottery is included and the fact that there is a mixture of pottery from different places of manufacture, it was pointed out that it is possible that the pottery in question was used by ekimin (per-

sons carrying out obligatory labor services) from the various provinces (kuni) who had come to work at building the palace. (See Chapter V/2B).

In addition to the above attempts at interpretation, some further considerations are attempted, based on written historical materials, in regard to such matters as supervision of the gates, entry and exit function of the surrounding wall, and punishments administered to persons who climbed over the wall unlawfully (See Chapter V/3).

Chapter VI deals with the models of the Suzaku-mon and the excavated west-facing gates, construction of which is continuing on the basis of excavation survey results. Each of the models in question is built to 1/10 scale. The work of making a reconstruction of the Suzaku-mon also makes use of comparative data from other excavations, and can usefully refer to the examples to be had in buildings which still remain from the Nara period, as well as to the examples to be had in pictorial scrolls which depict the Heian palace in Kyoto. In the present report, the particulars of the Suzaku-mon reconstructed model are described in the following order: a) general form b) pillars c) entablature (tokyō) d) eaves e) roof f) miscellaneous fixtures g) base platform h) the roofed adjoining wall. The two west-facing gates in question are thought to have been of identical scale and construction.

They are thought to have had many points in common with the still extant Tegaimon 轉害門 at Tōdaiji.