The Shugo and Shugodai of Echu During the Muromachi Period

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In Echu during the Nanbokucho, Inoue, Momonoi and Shiba successively held the office of Shugo (military governor). Afterwards at the end of the Nanbokucho, Hatakeyama assumed the office until the beginning of the Sengoku period. The Shugojo (office of the shugo) was at Matsukura Castle (Shinkawa-gun) when Inoue and Momonoi held office, whereas the shugojo of Shiba was located at Moriyama (Isumi-gun). This was near the kokuga (main governmental office of the province) and Hojouzu, the shugojo during the Kamakura period, and was located in the center of Echu. The reason why Inoue and Momonoi could not have shugojo at the same place was because rule of the people was insufficient and they could not go further into the center. The shugojo of Hatakeyama, who succeeded Shiba is unknown, but there is a strong possibility that it was located at Hojouzu. Furthermore, it is assumed that there were castle towns at Moriyama and Hojouzu.

Hatakeyama was shugo over several districts and was also a kanrei (Shogunal Deputy), so the direct rule of the district was left to the shugodai (deputy military Shogun). At first, the shugodai was Yusa, but when trouble over inheritance took place in Hatakeyama's family, Yusa lost power and the three shugodai were put in charge of the districts. Two of the districts, Izumi and Nei, were ruled by Jinbo in Hojouzu. Yusa ruled Tonamigun at Hasunuma, and Shiina ruled Shinkawagun at Matsukura. Hojouzu was noted to be an important place for politics, economy and transportation. During the Kamakura period, Buddhist sects such as Zen and Ji were quite popular, and at this time they were also. By Meio 2 (1493), the 10th Shogun, Ashikaga Yoshiki, had stayed there for six years. Yusa's rule was restricted due to participation in the riot at Tonamigun. The size of the castle at Hasunuma was not bigger than those of the other officers of his district, and the castle town was not that big either. In the case of the castle at Hasunuma, the castle site has been examined. At Matsukawa, excavations and research on the castle and cadastres have also been conducted. Many strategic features can be found but the castle town had not developed.

Research conducted on the three castles and their towns has only clarified their locations, the surrounding environment and a few features of the scenery. Further excavations and research into place-names are continuing and promise new insights into the study of castles.