Research of Medieval City Sites

Shidahara Shigeto

Recently, medieval archaeology has attained remarkable development through the research of sites and villages, castles, temples, sites of production, and burial tombs.

Moreover, good results have been obtained at village sites and especially from research conducted at cities. For example, at Sengen-cho (Kusado, Hiroshima Pref.) the changes in the town through its history have begun to be revealed through the study of extant structures and relics. Structures of buildings are still buried in good condition under the present city area in Kamakura, Kyoto, Sakai, Tomo, Omichi, and Hakata.

A variety of relics have been excavated from these sites. From the study of these relics, many aspects of the life of medieval people which were obscure from previous study conducted mainly on the basis of historical literature, are gradually being revealed. Mokkan (wooden tablets), a focus of attention as a new historical source, have been found at medieval sites at various places. From the study of these documents commodity circulation has become clearer.

The study of magical tools such as cards and dolls has revealed the world of magic practiced to a great extent during medieval times. The research of medieval city sites is extremely difficult due to the fact that most of them are buried under present city areas. Moreover, at present, research has only been conducted to a limited extent. Thus, the accumulation of historical sources gained from continuous research is desired. In the future, the development of medieval archaeology must be achieved; a more comprehensive medieval history is expected to be compiled from historical literature and other related fields.