Restoration of Settlements in Ritsuryo Period
— Restoration Model of the Murakami Site —

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Almost overlapped on the execution period of the joint research: “Study on the Ancient Settlements”, a restoration model of a settlement at the “Murakami Site” belonging to the Ritsuryo period has been manufactured, which is now under exhibition at the National Museum of Japanese History. This model has incorporated a part of the fruit of said joint research and has been manufactured applying and representing the results of the studies on the ancient dwelling clusters so far made and the remaining issues. The author himself took charge of the establishment of this model with the aids from researchers of architectural history and the persons in charge of excavation. This paper attempts to deal with the fundamental problems in the study on the ancient settlements making use of the evolution up to the establishment of the model and making therein reflected the problematical points and the fruits of the studies.

The Murakami Site is a large-sized settlement exploited during 8th and 9th centuries on the Bohsoh Plateau where once existed a dwelling cluster belonging
to a village Muragamigo, Inba Gun, Shimofusa no Kuni (ancient name of this site) in the eastern Japan.

In the settlement surveyed, there existed 164 remains of pit dwelling, more than 33 buildings with pillars embedded directly in the ground, an open space at the center which was surrounded by such diversified styles of buildings as houses, storages and so forth. We can thus assume an existence of a group that occupied a defined region. The settlement, about 300 meters by 300 meters in square reveals that five to six groups had occupied the region. Moreover it demonstrates the existence of housing lot and green space anc supposes an ancient living unit called “Gohko” and its subunit, “Bohko”. In order to restore the dwelling clusters or settlements which coexisted at a certain period from the archaeological features stratified into several layers during 200 years, not only buildings but plowed lands, roads and rice fields have been restored all together. The model wd made is of 1/200 scale, which allows to emerge the structural remains as a whole under an internal illumination within a certain time interval.

This model incorporating many problems concerning planned village, it can represent a typical planned village at that time. Including the pre-ritsuryo settlements, those in the ritsuryo period (7th to 10th centuries) were restructured, remade and maintained administratively by the state. The combination of buildings to be considered as their unit existed already in the 6th century. This paper has thus discussed the universality and period of the Murakamai Site depicting some examples in which a clear-cut same orientation was taken over in reconstructing such varied buildings as pit dwellings and buildings with pillars embedded directly in the ground.