Historical Urban Map of Edo in 17th and Early 18th Centuries

——Process of Establishment and Some Problems——

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Conventional restoration map of the urban area of Edo where people in general dwelled in the 17th and early 18th centuries thus far made cannot be considered as very precise. As for the town of Edo in the latter half of the Edo period after the last half of the 18th century, such maps as “Edo-zu” and “Edo-Kiriezu” have been published in many copies, and related documentary records have also been preserved. As we can see in the restoration map of Edo around the 1850s that NAKAMURA SHIZUO this time established to a considerable degree of precision, this sort of maps can be established with substantial accuracy. On the other hand, however, there hardly remain historical literature concerning the town of Edo in the first half of the 18th century and theretofore, which naturally limits the precision of possible restorated map.

The reason why the author attempted to establish a reconstructive map of Edo as a whole including its “Shitamachi” tracing back to the first half of the Edo period in spite of such historical restriction is that he thought it indispensable to do this as a basic work which would be much significant in the study of the History of Edo as a town.

The periods and the regions of the restored historical map this time prepared are as follows:

(1) Edo Castle and Edo Port at the very end of the medieval ages and their circumferences;
(2) The “Shitamachi” area in Edo around the Kan-ei era (first half of the 17th century); and
(3) The town of Edo as a whole around the Kanbun and Enpou eras (last half of the 17th century).

The reasons why these three were chosen are:

(a) To confirm, at least once for all, the prototype of the town of Edo, and to verify the positive transfiguration of the town after the disastrous fire
in 1657 (the third year of Meireki);

(b) To clarify what was Edo at the first half of the 17th century (the Kan-ei era), which is considered to represent the scale of the castle town the Tokugawa clan intended initially, and

(c) finally to elucidate what really was the town of Edo in the last half of the 17th century (the Kanbun and Enpou eras) as a result of the expansion and development after said big fire in the Meireki era.