Geomorphological Environment of the Manor
and Reconstitution of Spatial Organization
in Meiji Era

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At one time, Ōta-no-shō was managed of which territory was, as its main part, the basin of Ashida River running to the east-south of the tectonic line valley in the western part of Kibi plateau in the southern side of the Chūgoku mountains and some part of the slope facing the Japan Sea. In this region, many small valleys dissected by the main and tributary streams of Ashida River are developed dendritically. On the heads of these small valleys, farmhouses that retain the traces of “myō” in the middle ages are still standing. Especially in the main part of this manor territory, the upper terrace of the diluvial layer was left as the mountain forests and wasteland, and the middle terrace was used as the residential area. The lower terrace, on the other hand, was aims for paddy fields development including reservoirs – irrigations. In the alluvial plain, the flood plain was generally avoided and the paddy farming was conducted mainly on the 1st surface of alluvial plain based on the river irrigation by excavating the “Ōmizo”:large ditch. It is a geomorphological surface, on some of which remains of the ancient rice field grid system “Jōri” can be found.

The author conducted the geomorphological divisions taking into considerations the land utilization and made comprehensive analyses of the physical environment, and then, reconstituted the spatial organization at Meiji era in an attempt to trace back, up to the time as old as possible, the spatial organization consisted of roads, water conduits, foot pathes and limits between rice fields, that formed the framework of the land use.