Forms of Communities in the Valleys and the Modes of Habitations

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The questions to be discussed here are: what kind of communities were formed and what kind of production domains were created in the villages of Ōta-no-shō in the middle ages. In case the historical materials of the middle ages in order to elucidate such questions are extremely limited in number, it is necessary to try to figure out the true picture of the society in the middle ages from the present environment, various lores and other historical data of the later period, whatever results follow. On that occasion, the first stage of the work will be not to grasp the precise pictures of the villages in the middle ages but rather to grope for the concept type, i.e., what kind of concept should be set up in order to figure them out more easily.

One of such concept types is the characteristic mode of habitation that they lived in the valleys. Although it is the most characteristic pattern seen in these villages, this pattern is not the only useful means to grope for the true state of the villages in Ōta-no-shō in the middle ages nor will it be the focus of the discussion. It is only one of the examples that has been preserved and transmitted to the later ages with less changes under several conditions. The habitation mode that they lived in the valleys may have some meanings in certain relations with other habitation modes that are traceable quite imperfectly. From that point onward, the study has just started and it's a topic for further discussion. This paper has only shown the process up to that point.