A Note on Studies of Castle Towns (Kouriyamajyo Yoshida, Kasugayama and Okou) in the Sengoku Period

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Three examples of the remains of castle towns in the Sengoku (civil war) Period were studied to throw light on their actual conditions and characteristics at the time, employing the field work based on the results of recent excavation research and the method of historical examination of castle development.

The examples put under investigation are Kouriyama-jo Yoshida under the Mouri warlord (located in Hiroshima Prefecture), Kasugayama under the Uesugi warlord (located in Niigata Prefecture) and Okou under the Chousokabe warlord (located in Kouchi Prefecture) as well as Tamura, which was the seat of administrative supervisor from the central regime for the local province.

Some of their common characteristics are decentralized residences of their retainers, underdeveloped civilian residential quarters, and poor urbanization. Special attention was paid at this time to the differences in character between the castle towns in the Sengoku period and those in the Shokuho period, and the transition process from the former type to the latter type.

Kouriyama-jo Yoshida was moved to Hiroshima, Kasugayama to Takada after Fukushima, Okou to Outakasaka (in Kouchi) respectively over the period from the Shokuho period to the Tokugawa period. The studies at this time succeeded in pinpointing the exact time for each move that took place and revealed that by the time of their moves extensive repairs had been made on the castles and other parts of the towns. Despite the modifications made on them, they were moved in the Shokuho period to build new castle towns, showing the essential difference between the castle towns in the Sengoku period and those in the Shokuho period.

The essential difference between the two stems from the difference between the governmental capabilities of Daimyo based on the resources of local vassals and those of Daimyo supported by the central regime that unified the whole nation. The remnants of castle towns in the Shokuho period show large scale centralized residential quarters of retainers, traders and artisans. Outstanding structural development