Castle Towns and Power in South Kyushu during the Sengoku and Shokuho Eras

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What rules were followed in drawing up castle plans? Seeking to answer this question, the author focuses on the south Kyushu region, which has very distinctive castle plans. Using Chiran Castle in Kagoshima Prefecture as an example, he outlines the “separated structure” of castles in south Kyushu in the Sengoku period. He also confirms that a large number of samurai houses were concentrated inside the castle which served as the origins of the “fumoto” villages of modern times.

Next, the author looks to Hitoyoshi Castle in Kumamoto Prefecture to examine the factors that make up the castle structure that were confirmed with Chiran Castle. An important factor that made this study possible was the fact that the site of Hitoyoshi Castle remain in their entirety and could therefore be investigated. The results of the investigations could then be combined with the research conducted by KATSUMATA Shizuo and HATTORI Hideo on the power structure of the Sagara clan in the Sengoku (Warring States) era based on excellent historical materials like the “Sagarashi Monjo” and “Yatsushiro Nikki”.

As a result, the author concludes that the castle plan of Hitoyoshi Castle was influenced not only by geographical factors but also by regulations stemming from the power structure of the owner of the castle. It is demonstrated, therefore, that such an interrelationship between the power structure of the owner of the castle and the castle plan provides an important frame of reference in the study of urban landscape through the analysis of castles and castle towns in the Japanese islands.