

Kurume History Walks

No.34 The Castle Town of Kurume Domain Kurume Jokamachi 久留米城下町



Kurume Domain (Part of a diagram on a folding screen)

Castle town: This term refers to a town throughout Japan, which sprung up around a lord's castle. It was composed of samurai residential quarters, townsmen residential quarters, temple quarters, etc.











The castle town of Kurume Domain was established in 1621 by the lord Arima family, who ruled the northern part of Chikugo Province for about 160 years. They reformed the whole town, which had been built by the former lords. From 1621 to 1646, its basic frame was almost completed.

Structure of the castle: The Kurume Castle was consisted of, from north to south, the main enclosure (the political center), the second bailey (the lord's residence), the third (the residence area of the chief retainers), and the outer compound (the residence area of the higher-rank retainers). The middle and lower-rank samurais and the merchants used to reside on the outside of the outer moat.

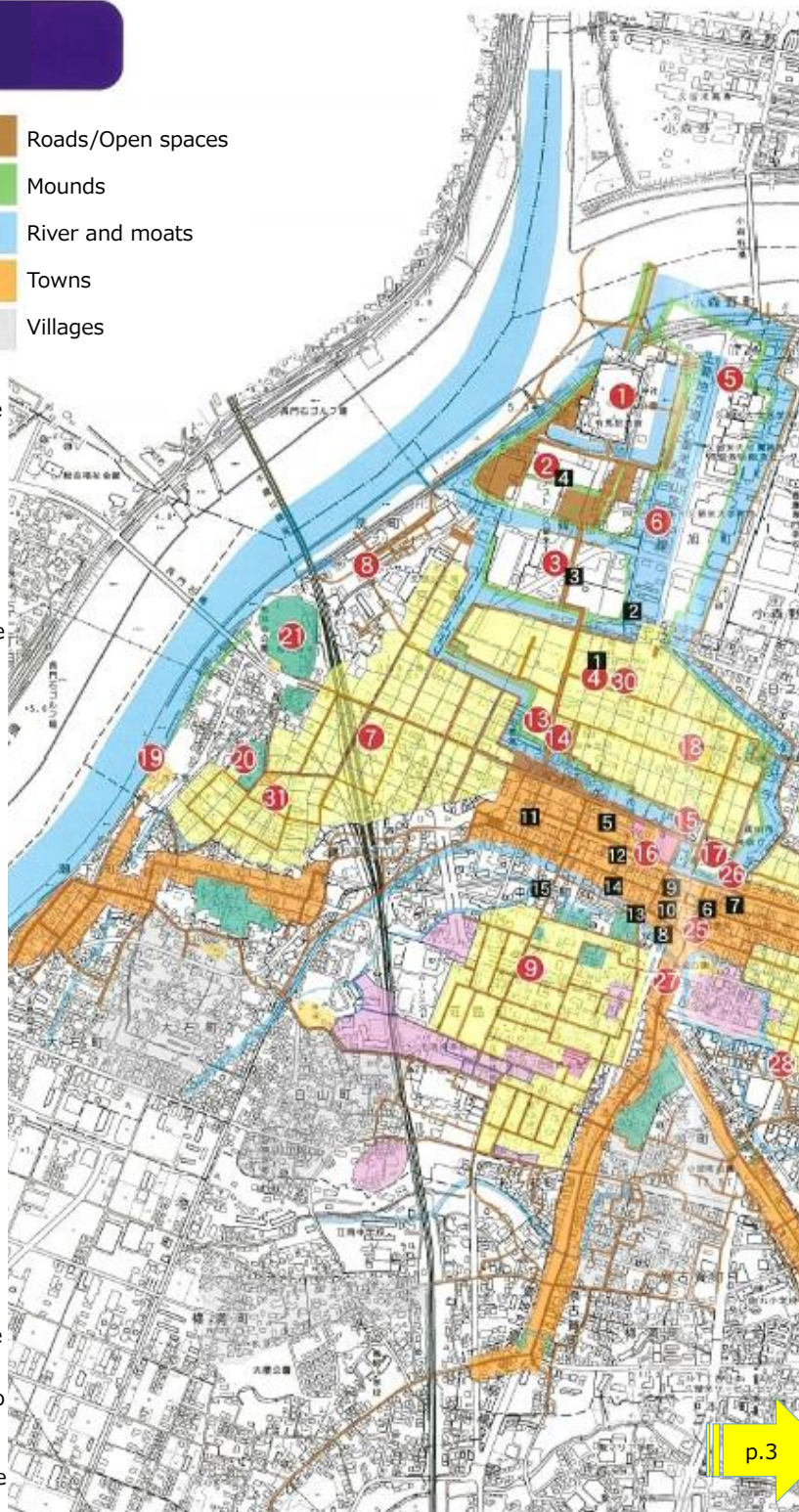
Traffic hub: Major roads of the domain passed through the castle town. People had gathered for selling and buying the merchandise. The town was not only a political center but also an economic and cultural center.

The Castle Town

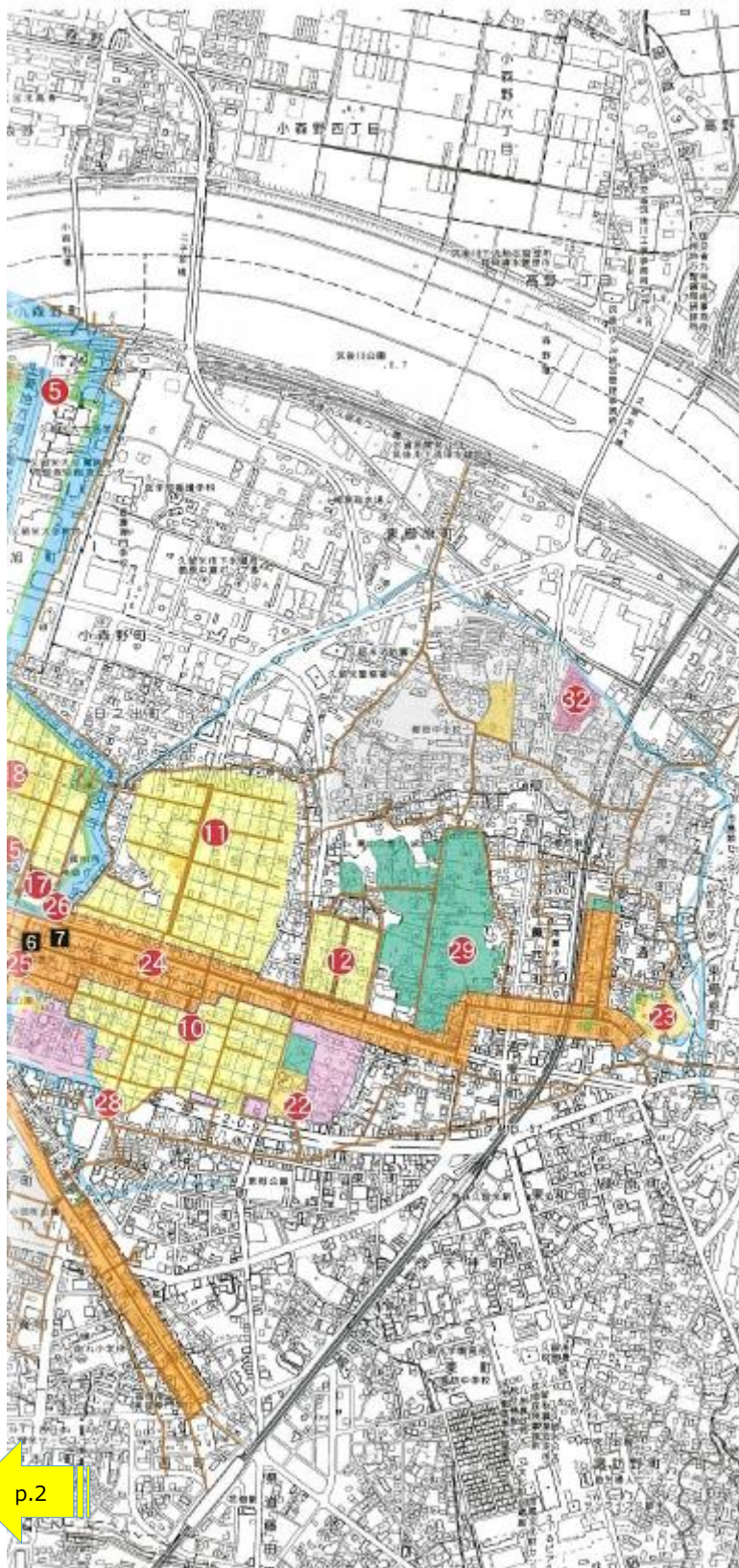
colored on map in 2010

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|--|---|
|  Residential area of Samurai |  Roads/Open spaces |
|  Spare Residences of higher-rank samurais |  Mounds |
|  Buddhist Temples |  River and moats |
|  Shinto Shrines |  Towns |
|  Facilities of Domain |  Villages |

- | | |
|--|---|
|  1 Main Enclosure |  17 Nagayamon Gate |
|  2 Second Bailey |  18 Gion-sha Shrine |
|  3 Third Bailey |  19 Suiten-gu Shrine |
|  4 Outer Compound |  20 Nichirin-ji Temple |
|  5 Yanagihara Area |  21 Bairin-ji Temple |
|  6 Chikuzen Moat |  22 Sanno-gu Shrine |
|  7 Kyoguma St. |  23 Gokoku-jinja Shrine |
|  8 Araikiri Area |  24 Toricho St. |
|  9 Shojima St. |  25 Sanbonmatu town |
|  10 Jukken Residence |  26 Fudanotsuji Junction |
|  11 Kushihara St. |  27 Yanagawaokan St. |
|  12 Teppo (firearm) St. |  28 Mutsumon Gate |
|  13 Meisen School |  29 Teramachi town |
|  14 Otemon Main Gate |  30 Nagayamon Gate |
|  15 Karizuka Bridge |  31 House of Sakamoto Family |
|  16 Domain Guesthouse |  32 Powder magazine |



*The right half is printed on the next page.



- 1 Remains of the outer compound:**
The outermost area of the Kurume Castle where the higher-rank samurais used to reside.
- 2 Remains of the moat around the third bailey:** The trace of the mound remains on both sides of today's walking road.
- 3 Remains of the third bailey:** It was a compound where the warehouse and the residence of five chief retainers existed.
- 4 Remains of the second bailey:** There used to be the lord's residence.
- 5 Former Ryogaemachi town:** The town name came from a Money Changer (*ryogae*) who existed in the 17th century. Remains of a Christian church of the late 16th century were found as a result of the excavation in this area.
- 6 Former Sanbonmatsumachi town:** This town had existed before the first Arima lord entered the castle.
- 7 Remains of Fudanotsuji:** It was a junction (*tsuji*) where street notice boards used to be put up.
- 8 Former Kajiyamachi town:** When the first lord of the Arima family moved to Kurume from Tanba, a blacksmith followed him and resided in this town. Then, it came to be called *Kajiya* (blacksmith) *machi* (town)
- 9 Former Kataharamachi town:** The street faced to the outer moat, and the houses stood only on one side. Then, this town is believed to be called *Katahara* (one side).
- 10 Former Komeyamachi town:** A major shop of the town was a rice dealer.
- 11 Former Tsukijimamachi town:** There used to be an embankment built (*tsuki*) like an isle (*jima*).
- 12 Former Gofukumachi town:** There used to be many kimono merchants or related shops in this area, then the town was called Gofuku (*kimono*, piece goods) *machi*.
- 13 Former Ikemachi town:** The town was built in 1661. As it was wetland, floods often occurred. Ike (pond) *machi* (town).
- 14 Former Saikumachi town:** Many craftsmen (*saiku shokunin*) lived in this town.
- 15 Former Tamachi town:** The town name came from the place name "Ta no Naka (In a rice field)".

Walk around the castle town

Kurume has been greatly developed as a principal city in the southern part of Fukuoka prefecture since the late modern period. The town appears to have lost the remnant of those days in place of modern urban structure. However, if we pay attention, we would find the traces at various places, such as a restored samurai residence, remains of a moat which was reconstructed as a walking road. And, there are some places which have the same town name since the Edo period. Let's enjoy walking and finding the traces of the Edo period.



▲Remains of Domain Guesthouse (Jonanmachi)



▲Sakamoto Hanjiro House (Kyomachi)



▲Former Mishima Family Gate (Sasayamamachi)



▲Former Yanagawaokan St. (Hiyoshimachi)



▲Remains of the outer moat of the castle (Sasayamamachi/Kushiharamachi)

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