

Location characteristics of Shinto shrines in flood prone areas Targeting Kurobe River alluvial fan, Toyama Prefecture

Akiyoshi NII and Syuhei HATTORI

Kokushikan University, Fujitec Construction Consultants Co., Ltd.

E-mail: nii@kokushikan.ac.jp

Keywords: *flood protection, local knowledge, Shinto shrine, alluvial fan*

Abstract

The study clarified location characteristics of Shinto shrines in flood prone areas and considered roles of Shinto shrines in flood protection of villages.

Although several studies have clarified location characteristics of Shinto shrines along rivers, only few studies have focused on flood protection of villages. We already have pointed out the possibility that Shinto shrines were located to protect villages from the flood for five villages in Kosurido district of the Kurobe River alluvial fan. However, the previous study has not compared high and low inundation frequency areas.

Therefore, in this study, we extended the target site to all the right side of the Kurobe River alluvial fan (Nyuzen whole town) and grasped positional relationships between villages and Shinto shrines, location micro-topography of Shinto shrines. And we considered the location characteristics of the Shinto shrines from the differences in inundation frequency.

The results of this study are as follows. About 43 villages of Nyuzen town, we identified head families of villages using family pedigree maps and grasped original village areas. We also identified the Shinto shrines using the Shinto shrines document of Meiji era and grasped their locations. Furthermore, the villages were classified according to frequency of inundation using flood disaster histories and flood hazard maps. As a result, only 30% of the villages had Shinto shrines within the original village areas. In the high inundation frequency villages, about 70% of the Shinto shrines locate between the river and the village.

Micro-topographical locations of the Shinto shrines were classified into valleys or ridges using agricultural field improvement plans and a 50 cm pitch contour map. As a result, in the high inundation frequency villages, the Shinto shrines located in valleys occupy 70%, while in the low inundation frequency villages, the Shinto shrines tend to be located in ridges.

From the above results, we have clarified that the Shinto shrines in the high inundation frequency villages tend to be located between the river and the village, and also in the valley. We have pointed out that the Shinto shrines were located to protect villages from the flood, based on this result and the characteristics of the flood in the alluvial fan, the folklores of each Shinto shrine. In addition, we have suggested that sacredness of Shinto shrine was used to preserve important places for villages.