

Effects and Role of Financial Relief Measures for Hatamoto-rank Retainers of the Shogun in the Latter Part of the Early Modern Period

～An Examination of the Financial Administration of the Tsuchiya Clan, a Hatamoto-rank Retainer of the Shogun～

Introduction

From the earliest stages of Edo Period historical research, several researchers have pointed out that the financial privations faced by Hatamoto-rank (upper-rank) and Gokenin-rank (lower-rank) retainers of the Tokugawa Shogunate are a phenomenon observed consistently from the early Edo Period.

It is a commonly known fact that the Shogunate feared disruption to its system of governance due to the failures of the household finances of Hatamoto-rank and Gokenin-rank retainers, who were supposed to be instruments of Shogunate authority. As a result, they introduced several financial relief measures such as frugality and debt-relief directives in the early Edo Period, in order to provide financial assistance to its direct retainers.

When considering the relationship between the finances of Hatamoto-rank retainers and these directives, many doubts arise with regard to the link between relief directives and Hatamoto household finances, the actual effects on household finances, and whether the directives achieved their goals of relieving the financial privations of the retainers.

In order to analyze this relationship, this study examines how the directives affected the administration of the 1,150-koku (1 koku = 150 kgs. of rice) enfeoffment of the Hatamoto-ranked Tsuchiya Clan, which had its administrative headquarters in Ooyaguchi Village, Katsushika County, Shimosa Fief. In addition, it examines the effect of these directives on the finances and activities of the Tsuchiya Clan.

The methodology of this examination focuses on the financial trends of the Tsuchiya Clan by perusal of the deeds and clan historical materials maintained by the Ookuma Family, which was a famous clan of Ooyaguchi Village supervising the administrative headquarters in Ooyaguchi Village as well as seven other villages.

This examination especially focuses on the effects of the No-Interest Yearly Installment Payment Directive issued in December 1843 based on an abundant number of deeds consigned to lenders prior to and after issuance of this Directive.

Doubts as to why Shogunate retainers underwent financial privations can be addressed through an examination of the rationale behind these directives and detailed financial activities of a specific Hatamoto-rank retainer clan.