

Role and Effects of Financial Relief Measures for Shogun Hatamoto-rank in the Latter Part of the Early Modern Period: Examination of the Financial Administration of the Tsuchiya Clan

Introduction

From the earliest stages of research on the Edo Period, several studies 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 consistent phenomenon, which existed from the early Edo Period.

It is well-known that the Shogunate feared disruption to its governance system due to the failing household finances of Hatamoto- and Gokenin-rank retainers, who were supposed to be the 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, several doubts arise with regard to the link between the directives and Hatamoto finances, their effects, and whether the directives helped in 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 study 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 regarding why Shogunate retainers underwent financial privations can be addressed by examining the rationale behind these directives and detailed financial

activities of a specific Hatamoto-rank retainer clan.