The Jiitō System in the Early Stage of the Kamakura Bakufu
—Before the Ordinance of the Jiitō System in 1185—

TANAKA Minoru

Before the ordinance of the jiitō system issued in 1185 (in the first year of Bunji), the appointment of seven jiitō (stewards) and three geshi (officers) by Minamoto Yoritomo are recognized at present through my research. The jiitō were all appointed to places in Tōgoku, but most of them were owned by rebels and confiscated for the reason that they were on the side of the Taira family or Minamoto Yoshinaka. Meanwhile, the places where geshishiki were placed were divided into (1) land confiscated from the Taira family that Minamoto Yoritomo was granted from Go-Shirakawa hōō (emperor) and eventually where Yoritomo became head of shōen (2) land of the bushi (warriors) on the side of the Taira family in Saigoku, further west of the Kinai area. In short, in the area mentioned in (1), Yoritomo was the head of the shōen and held control and the right to appoint geshishiki. In the second example, although the area was owned by the bushi of the Taira, in Saigoku Yoritomo didn’t have the right to appoint jiitōshiki independently; he had to have the heads of shōen appoint gokenin (“followers”) and afterwards acknowledge the appointment and issue documents concerning the nomination of geshishiki.

Yoritomo appointed in jiitōshiki in Tōgoku to sites once owned by rebels, but in his own shōen he appointed geshishiki instead of jiitōshiki. It is said that Yoritomo adopted the official title jiitōshiki as it was a good name to express a title that was independent of the right of appointment pertaining to the head of the shōen. In the Yoritomo’s shōen he adopted geshishiki and not jiitōshiki from his status as the head of shōen. Also in Saigoku, as Yoritomo didn’t hold control of administration as he did in Tōgoku, he had no right to confiscate the titles held by the rebels and appoint jiitō instead.

This conferment of the two titles jiitōshiki and geshishiki lasted until November 29 in the first year of Bunji, when the ordinance concerning the appointment of jiitōshiki was announced and afterwards the title was unified to jiitōshiki.