“Gyōji-Kurōdo” in the “Sekkan” Period

FURUSE Natsuko

It is well-known that the ceremonial and regular court functions in Heian era were operated by such hierarchical personal organization of “Dajō-kan” (super council of Emperor) as “Shōkei”, “Ben” and “Shi” in this hierarchical order. However that the “Kurōdo” was concerned with a wide variety of court functions is evident from “gishiki-sho” (ceremony proceedings) and diaries prepared in and after the “sekkkan” period. To find a clue to the relationship between the dajō-kan and “kurōdo-dokoro” (an office created in 810 by the emperor Saga to manage administrative matters and wording of imperial decrees), this paper will analyze the activities of “gyōji-kurōdo” centered on the sekkan period, who concerned himself in the operation of ceremonies and events together with the shōkei.

In the course of our analyses made of the office of the “gyōji-kurōdo”, it has been turned out that the ceremonies and events in Heian era can roughly be divided into three categories: those which are taken charge of only by shōkei, those both by shōkei and gyōji-kurōdo and finally those taken only by gyōji-kurōdo. The court functions and year’s events occupied only by gyōji-kurōdo are those having, for emperors, personal significance, which were held or operated at the “seiryō-den” (Emperors’ daily dwelling place) and “kōkyū” (inner building of the palace), if they are to be operated within the palace. Here it should however be noted that even those operated only by gyōji-kurōdo not a little depended, from the financial viewpoint, upon the organization of dajō-kan.

The office of gyōji-kurōdo consisted in what concerned emperors and their family, court ladies, high-ranking courtiers allowed to get on the floor of the Imperial Palace and “Ise-Hōbei” (offering a wand with hemp and paper streamers to a Shintō God of Ise); in a word, all what concerned the emperor himself. Though this office may be much limited, we should take notice of a fact that even the shōkei could not directly control it. The gyōji-
kurōdo give instructions to diverse officers and posts to fulfill his tasks; this means that a new line of command different from that of dajō-kan comes into existence.

It is considered that a creation of such a new line of command under the gyōji-kurōdo should have a considerable influence upon the organization of dajō-kan itself in the regime of “ritsuryō”. In the middle ages and thenceforward court ceremonies and events would be operated by “Kan-Gata” as dajō-kan’s descendant and “kurōdo-Gata”. The appearance of “gyōji-kurōdo” in the “sekkan” era can be grasped as the first step thereto.