Administration of the Shogunate in the Regency Period

NIHIRA Yoshitaka

This paper aims to examine the Shogunate in the Regency Period (under Regents Yasutoki and Tsunetoki), focusing on the supreme court trials. The results of many studies on the Shogunate of this period have been produced. It has been made clear that the supreme court was operated under the leadership of the Regent; that the supreme court was the mainstay of tribunal structure; and that the jurisdiction of the period was exercised by the Regent. However, there seems to remain some problems in which no interest has so far been taken. These are (1) Where were the supreme court trials held? (2) How did the Shōgun participate in the supreme court trials led by the Regent? The author wishes clarify to make clear a phase of the Shogunate administration during the Regency through examination of these points.

So far, it has been thought that the supreme court trials were held in the residence of the Shōgun. However, it cannot be said that this understanding has been fully proved. According to the "Azuma-kagami", the supreme court trials were held in the Shōgun Palace before the period of Regent Yasutoki. However, trials in the period in question are known to have been held in the Shōgun's residence, the Supreme Court, the Regent's residence, Kozamurai-dokoro, Mandokoro (administrative office), and so on. It may be said this shift shows the operation of Supreme Court trials were held under the leadership of the Regent. The Shōgun did not participate in such Supreme Court trials. He only perused the written judgment of the trial, called 'Hyōjō-kotogaki'. In the period of Regent Tsunetoki, even the perusal of documents by the Shōgun was omitted, and the Shōgun came to take no part in the jurisdiction and Supreme Court trials. There are some who point out examples of trials in the presence of the Shōgun and insist that the Shōgun still exercised his jurisdiction in the period in question. However, there remain some doubts about this interpretation of historical documents, which require further examination. Rather, the author considers the following facts should be noted: trials in the presence of the Regent Yasutoki were held, and direct appeals at court were made under Yasutoki and Tsunetoki.

As shown above, the Shōgun did not directly participate in the Supreme Court trials in the period of Regents Yasutoki and Tsunetoki. This period may be looked on as a true Regency, which is "a form of politics ruled by a Regent".