Manor of the Kōfuku-ji Temple

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The Kōfuku-ji Temple had many subordinate temples, including the Ichijō-in and Daijō-in. A distinction should be made between the manor of Kōfuku-ji or the temple estate, and those of these subordinate temples. However, since they have been dealt with indiscriminately, the study of temple estates has fallen far behind. This being the case, the author in this paper gives an overall view of the temple estate, and discusses how it was managed.

Management of the Kōfuku-ji manors can be considered as follows: The administrator, or Bettō, of Kōfuku-ji appointed an influential priest to the post of Azukari-dokoro (manager) of a manor and had him exercise general control over matters concerning the manor. In the Kamakura period, the manager, who directly managed the manor, appointed lower officials, such as Gesu. However, in the Muromachi period, except for a few manors near Kofuku-ji, the management in most manors took the form of the Ukedokoro (contractor) system where a Shugo (commissioner) or local powerful samurai assured a certain annual land tax to the Azukari-dokoro. The Azukari-dokoro used the land tax to provide various miscellaneous services to Kōfuku-ji. The appointment of a priest to the Azukari-dokoro was considered as a favor by the temple. However, the revenue of the Azukari-dokoro, as payment in return for the management of the manor and provision of services by means of the land tax, is not clear, due to the scarceness of historical documents.

Most of these temple estates of Kōfuku-ji became only nominal during the Age of Civil Wars. After the land inspection by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a tenure of only 15,000 koku (1 koku = 47.654 U.S. gallons) or so remained around Kōfuku-ji as its temple estate.