Purveyors for "Goyō" and Modern Society

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In recent years, the author has discussed the nature of the Modern state and society, which required purveyors, from the standpoint that the rule of farmers in the Modern Age was based on three groups; warriors, farmers, and purveyors for official business, "goyō". However, there still remain many problems to be solved. In this paper, the author attempts to give a full and detailed description of purveyors by clarifying the relationship between warriors, farmers and purveyors, as regards the real state of business management by purveyors, and their ranking. Materials for research were taken from a country inn that served as the magistrate’s office at Ōmori, Iwami Province, a demesne of the shōgunate.

Chapter 1 overviews the role of Gunchū Sōdai and Sōdai Shōya, which were located in the middle ruling organization of the magistrate’s office. Chapter 2 deals with the period in which purveyors for "goyō" appeared in the control of the shōgunate’s demesne, and the role played by them. Chapter 3 and following chapters contain the main part of discussion in this paper.

Due to the insufficiency of materials, research on purveyors so far has been centered around their functions, and there has been almost no discussion of the purveyors’ family occupation in detail. To tackle this problem, Chapter 3 examines the breakdown and the income of the country inn, studies how it was used, and makes it clear that the income was composed of charges for board, interest, and charges for labor; and that the inn was often used for private purposes. Based on this examination, the author argues that the purveyor was of necessity an inn, and easily swayed by private interests.

Chapter 4 makes clear the standpoints of warriors, farmers, and the country inn; warriors thought that purveyors were minor officials involved in official business; farmers regarded them as employees; and the country inn while in fact being obliged to act as an employee of farmers, consciously regarded itself as a minor official = ruler. The author further gave his opinion that the different standpoints of warriors and farmers reflected their differing concepts of “official business (goyō)” itself; and the differing concepts of the “state” or “public interests” for which they aimed.

In conclusion, the author showed that the perception of public officials in modern society, and local society and the community that was formed through the appearance of the purveyor, may be closely related to the problem of the reformation of the local autonomy system by the Meiji Government.