

The Actual Life of Tang Zhong-you and the Evaluation: A Comparison with the Local Government Described in Qingmingji

Toda, Yuji

Abstract

In this paper I have examined Zhu Xi's impeachment reports against Tang Zhong-you's (governor of Taizhou) corruption in detail and made clear the social relations prevailing during Southern Song dynasty in which local officials did their duties. In addition, I attempt to compare the situation with the one in which despots and bullies worked in the local administration, which is vividly described in Qingmingji.

Conventionally, the impeachment against Tang Zhong-you has been considered to be a childish and persistent impeachment by the great Confucian scholar. However, a large volume of detailed impeachment reports Zhu Xi wrote are suitable resources to know the relationships among the influential persons in Taizhou and among the officials' relatives.

Tang Zhong-you committed a variety of corrupt practices, but it is not the variety that we should pay attention to. Examining the impeachment against Tang Zhong-you, we come to realize that his corruption was not due to his own character but he committed wrongdoings influenced by his family and his relatives by blood who accompanied him or the influential persons in Taizhou who were his relatives by marriage. He regularly sent the benefit he gained in Taizhou to his family in his hometown. Thus, his corruption should be considered in relation to his whole family. Judging from the gazetteer, the influential persons in Taizhou,

who were his relatives by marriage and aided and abetted his wrongdoings, belong to the same hierarchy that is called “despots and bullies” in Qingmingji.

The situation Tang Zhong-you was in is not unusual at all, but can be applied generally to local officials during Southern Song dynasty. Zhu Xi’s impeachment against Tang Zhong-you should be treated not as a topic of the study of Zhu Xi but as a topic of the study of social history.

Keywords: Southern Song, Local administration, Tang Zhong-you, Qingmingji, Zhu Xi