

Fujiwara no Michinaga's Consumer Lifestyle: Powerful People and Consumption

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【要旨】

藤原道長の消費生活 —権力者と消費—

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藤原道長（966–1027）は、摂関政治を代表する政治家である。道長は、長徳元年（995）に内覧で左大臣となって以降、朝廷における実権を把握した。道長の権力の源泉は天皇の外戚であることにあり、娘彰子は一条天皇中宮となって後一条天皇・後朱雀天皇を生み、道長の外戚としての地位を確立した。

道長は当時最大の消費者であった。道長による最大の消費は、邸宅や寺院の造営であろう。本発表では、道長の邸宅や寺院の造営など消費のもつ意義について考察してみたい。

邸宅の造営としては、火事で焼失した本邸である土御門第の造営をあげることができる。その造営について、道長に対する批判的な言説で著名な藤原実資の日記『小右記』では、「造作の過差（度を越した華美やぜいたく）」を非難している。また、土御門第寝殿の造営は、受領一人に一間（いっけん）ずつ割り当てて行われた。

道長が行った寺院の造営としては、土御門第の東側に位置する法成寺の造営をあげることができる。法成寺は、浄土信仰に基づく阿弥陀堂の造営から始まったが、金堂や講堂も備えており、鎮護国家をも目的としていた。法成寺の造営において、道長は受領ばかりでなく、公卿たちにも負担を課して、講堂や薬師堂の礎石の据え付けを命じている。

このような邸宅や寺院の造営など道長の消費のもつ意義について様々な角度から考えてみたい。

Fujiwara no Michinaga was a politician who typified regency government from the second half of the tenth century to the eleventh century. In Chōtoku 1 (995), after his older brothers Michitaka and Michikane had died, he became secretary to the emperor (*nairan*) and Minister of the Left and seized real power in the imperial court. He married his daughter Shōshi to the emperor Ichijō (who already had an empress), and once she gave birth to the future emperors Go-Ichijō and Go-Suzaku, Michinaga's position as a maternal relation of emperors was secure. He subsequently also married his daughters Kenshi and Ishi to the emperors Sanjō and Go-Ichijō, respectively, which meant that a single family had produced three empresses. Michinaga's famous poem—“This world, I think, is indeed my world, for there is no waning in the glory of the full moon”—was composed at the banquet celebrating the appointment of his

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third daughter Ishi as Go-Ichijō's empress.

In this fashion, Michinaga seized power and could be said to have been the most profligate consumer at the time. As prime examples of his consumption, mention may be made of his construction of residences and temples. For instance, he owned several residences both inside and outside Heiankyō, but what could be described as his main residence was the Tsuchimikadotei. On the 20th of the seventh month of Chōwa 5 (1016) it burnt down, but reconstruction commenced soon afterwards on the 19th of the eighth month, and on the 27th of the sixth month of Kannin 2 (1018) Michinaga moved into his new home.

The *Shōyūki*, the diary of Fujiwara no Sanesuke, an aristocrat and contemporary well-known for his criticism of Michinaga, condemns the construction of this new residence, saying that "the extravagance of its construction is ten thousand times that of the previous residence."

On this occasion Minamoto no Yorimitsu, lord of Iyo, presented all the furnishings for the new Tsuchimikadotei. He not only presented the furnishings, but also filled them with valuables. For example, the household altar contained various articles, while a clothing chest held summer and winter clothes. In addition, Yorimitsu also presented twenty folding screens, silverware, wind and string musical instruments, swords, and so on. People in the capital are said to have visited the Tsuchimikadotei day after day to view these fine articles. Being the lord of Iyo and a provincial governor (*zuryō*), Yorimitsu possessed the necessary financial resources, and he was also one of Michinaga's retainers.

Michinaga did not bear all the costs for the reconstruction of the Tsuchimikadotei by himself, and in the case of the main house (*shinden*) he assigned an area of about six square feet to each provincial governor. This method of construction was also employed in the construction of the temple Hōjōji, to be mentioned later. This method of apportioning the construction to provincial governors was in fact the method used to rebuild the imperial palace when it had been destroyed by fire, and it is to be surmised that Michinaga adopted this method. Not only does it give us an idea of the scale of Michinaga's power, but it can also be considered that the provincial governors' rendering of services to Michinaga was considered to have a semi-official status.

The reason that provincial governors offered their services to Michinaga in this way was that he was the most powerful person at the time and had control of personnel management, and in order to gain a favourable evaluation of their performance after the end of a term of office and be appointed governor of another province the provincial governors needed to curry favour with Michinaga. At the same time, for Michinaga this method of construction was a perfect opportunity to incorporate the provincial governors' wealth into his own household finances and turn the provincial governors into his retainers.

Another major construction project, ranking with the Tsuchimikadotei, that was carried out by Michinaga was the construction of Hōjōji. It was built on the east side of East Kyōgoku Avenue, across the road from the Tsuchimikadotei. In the seventh month of Kannin 3 (1019) he made a vow to erect a statue of Amida (Amitābha) and began the construction of a new Amida Hall, and on this occasion too he assigned an area of about six square feet to each provincial governor, just as he had done when constructing the main house of the Tsuchimikadotei. As was mentioned before, this method was an effective means for turning the provincial governors into his retainers.

When constructing Hōjōji, Michinaga made not only provincial governors but also court nobles bear some of the financial burden. In Jian 1 (1021) the Lecture Hall was built, and court nobles were made to pay for the laying of the

foundation stones. He ordered high-ranking nobles to provide for the laying of three foundation stones each and low-ranking nobles two foundation stones each. It took two hundred people two days to put one foundation stone in place, and according to the *Shōyūki* everyone was lamenting the fact that an epidemic was raging at the time and there were not enough commoners to drag the foundation stones into place.

In Jian 3 (1023), when a Yakushi (Bhaiṣajyaguru) Hall was erected at Hōjōji, Michinaga again ordered court nobles, starting with his son and regent Yorimichi, to lay the foundation stones. On this occasion too there was criticism that the burden imposed on court nobles was excessive. Earlier regents had never placed such impositions on court nobles. In recent years it has become evident that the degree to which power was concentrated in the person of Michinaga differed considerably from the situation under previous regents. Michinaga made various impositions on court nobles in order to reduce the power of the nobles of the Grand Council of State, the cornerstone of the ruling class's authority, and place them under his own control, and his orders for them to provide the foundation stones when Hōjōji was being built was one such example.

Another area in which Michinaga's consumption is evident is ceremonies and rituals. In the twelfth month of Kannin 2 (1018) he conducted a Buddhist rite called Eight Lectures on the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Hōkke hakkō*) in memory of his deceased parents (Fujiwara no Kaneie and Tokihime). In preparation for the ceremony, life-size golden statues of Shaka (Śākyamuni) and Amida were erected, and Michinaga himself made a hand-copy of the *Lotus Sūtra* using gold paint. Thirty-four monks, starting with the highest-ranking *daisōjō*, were invited, court nobles also participated, and the lectures were held twice daily, in the morning and in the evening. Robes were provided for the monks, and the court nobles were given refreshments.

On this occasion too Michinaga assigned the provision of meals for the monks to senior counsellors (*dainagon*) and other court nobles. These meals did not consist of just one portion for each monk, and in the case of a senior monk he was given two trays, which were made of Japanese cypress, decorated in colour, and covered with silk cloths, as well as a wooden tub containing twelve *gō* of white rice. These impositions on court nobles were again absolutely necessary to show that Michinaga occupied a position far removed from that of other court nobles.

At the same time, court nobles were eager to provide their services so as to gain Michinaga's attention. On the occasion of these Eight Lectures on the *Lotus Sūtra* Michinaga had initially assigned the provision of meals for the monks to court nobles of the rank of senior counsellor and lower and had excluded the Ministers of the Left and Right and the senior counsellor Fujiwara no Sanesuke. But even Fujiwara no Sanesuke, who was frequently critical of Michinaga, wanted to offer his services and had enquiries made as to why he and the Ministers of the Left and Right had been excluded. As a result, he gained Michinaga's permission to provide meals for the monks.

Furthermore, on the fifth day of the lectures, when especially solemn rites were performed, offerings to the Buddha arrived from the emperor Go-Ichijō, the grand empress dowager (Michinaga's daughter Shōshi), the empress dowager (his daughter Kenshi), and the empress (his daughter Ishi). These offerings were quite lavish, being made of gold and silver, and were decorated with figures of mountains, peacocks, elephants, and so on. In addition, on this same day the court nobles made an offering of a silver censer.

Such venues for consumption were provided not only by Michinaga, but also by his daughter Shōshi, the mother of the emperors Go-Ichijō and Go-Suzaku who was also known as Jōtōmon'in. In Chōgen 4 (1031) she made a visit to the temple Shitennōji and other localities, and provincial governors were made to provide boats, refreshments,

food and drink for the servants, temporary structures, and so on. Already from its preparatory stages, this outing were being criticized for its ostentatiousness and extravagance. On the actual day, the 25th of the ninth month, the robes of her attendants, both high and low, the decorations of the boats, and so on were so ostentatious that they incurred the criticism that “the way in which she disregards regulations is just like the emperor.”

As we have seen in the above, in the cases of Michinaga and Jōtōmon'in the construction of the Tsuchimikadotei and Hōjōji and the staging of large-scale ceremonies and rites were not done just to spend their own wealth and flaunt their power and authority (with the construction of Hōjōji naturally also being an expression of Michinaga's Buddhist beliefs), and it can be pointed out that by making court nobles and provincial governors offer their services on such occasions of consumption these construction projects and so on also served as opportunities to build political superior/subordinate relationships whereby court nobles were placed under the control of Michinaga and Jōtōmon'in and provincial governors were turned into their retainers.

Lastly, I wish to draw attention to the fact that this large-scale consumption by Michinaga and Jōtōmon'in was not just extolled. Michinaga's construction of the Tsuchimikadotei was criticized for “the extravagance of its construction,” while the preparations for Jōtōmon'in's outing were described in critical terms as being “incomparable in their extravagance.” In other words, “extravagance” was regarded as something that was not necessarily commendable, and bans were sometimes placed on indulgence in extravagance. While these bans on extravagance were meant to act as effective regulations for promoting frugality, a background factor in their issuance was the existence of the idea of a correlation between Heaven and the human realm, according to which misgovernment in the form of extravagance gave rise to calamities and natural disasters, and bans on extravagance represented beneficent rule in that, by prohibiting extravagance, they forestalled calamities caused by Heaven.

I wish to end by pointing out that consumption by powerful people thus had both positive and negative aspects.

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