Abstract

Since the early stage of establishment of the empire, the Mongolian government had provided excessive privileges to the Ortoq merchants, and also tolerated their indiscriminate profit-seeking activities while being consistent in treating them too leniently. Thus, these measures had increased the burdens on the local government and the people as well, and caused the leakage of enormous amount of property possessed by the imperial family. To get rid of such negative effects, Khubilai’s government had placed the Ortoq merchants under the control of the central government, and having established the Bureau of General Administration of Ortoq (斡脱總管府), the central government had this bureau integrate and control their profit-seeking activities accordingly. After conquering the Southern Song Dynasty, the range of Ortoq merchants’ activities had expanded to the southern province of China, and also to the parts of South China Sea. For this reason, Khubilai’s Government had raised the status of the Bureau of General Administration of Ortoq to the Office of Administration of Taxation, Foreign Commodities, and Property (泉府司, Quan-fu-si), and propelled the promotional policies of maritime trade in an aggressive manner, having regarded the Ortoq merchants as the main agent of foreign trade activities. After Ahmad’s downfall, the Quan-fu-si was abolished by Chinkim and the bureaucracy
of Han Chinese Group temporarily, however, this office was re-established in one year and four months by Khubilai and the group of government officials who had come from the countries bordering on Western China, and tried to promote maritime trading. Since then, having brought the Office of Foreign Trade(市舶司) under complete control of the Quan-fu-si, Khubilai’s Government had prepared an administration and support system for the maritime trade activities for Ortoq merchants in a unitary manner, and also expanded the scale for activities and its range drastically by carrying out oversea trade with official ship(官本船貿易). In addition, to pursue the promotional policies for maritime trade in a more efficient manner, Khubilai’s Government had established a local office, called “Xing-quan-fu-si”(行泉府司) in the southeastern region of China, which is a kind of a branch of Quan-fu-si and appointed Shab-ad-din(沙不丁), who was a merchant from the country bordering on Western China, as the Minister. He had produced enormous amount of commercial profit having administered and operated the maritime activities of Ortoq merchants efficiently. Despite that Shab-ad-din had been picked as the partisan of Sangha after his downfall, he received credit for his contribution to expanding the government’s financial income, so then he was able to avoid punishment. Rather, Shab-ad-din had served as the Minister of Xing-quan-fu-si, and had been responsible for the maritime trade activities of Ortoq merchants, and carried out his duties in a consistent and stable manner. Likewise, according to the policy stance of Khubilai’s Government, which aimed at protecting and promoting maritime trade activities of Ortoq merchants, the maritime trade between the East and West during Mongol period had been flourishing and prosperous having surpassed all previous achievements. The maritime trade activities of Ortoq merchants and the protective and management policy by Khubilai’s government had provided the principal factor of establishment of Pax-Mongolica in the 13th to 14th Century. In that regard, such events will carry significant historical meaning.