

# 明清中國社會成員的制度選擇

## ——以捐納制度為中心

伍躍<sup>\*</sup>

在明清時期的中國，人們生活在由各種制度交織而成的社會之中。這些制度，既有成文的法律、則例與宗法村規，也有不成文的風俗習慣和潛移默化的約定俗成。社會成員以主動或被動的方式接受這些制度的約束的同時，還根據自身的生活需要或利益追求，選擇和利用制度。這種利用，既包括對某一單項制度（例如科舉制度）的利用，也包括對複數制度的選擇利用（例如本文將要言及的選擇利用科舉制度和捐納制度中的某些部分）。在特定的歷史時期，一些社會成員為了自身的目的，甚至不惜使用包括暴力在內的非常手段試圖衝破某些制度的束縛，建立起他們自身認為可以滿足其價值觀需要的制度。因此，形同具文的制度在社會上是沒有任何生命力的。只要是存在於社會之中的制度幾乎無一不是與社會成員的活動結合在一起的。

本文旨在透過對科舉制度和捐納制度的分析，考察明清時期的社會成員在考慮提高自身的社會地位時是如何主動地選擇利用國家制度的問題。他們認真地評估自身的利益，決定人生的目標，通過靈活地利用國家制度迴避可能遇到的風險，獲得利益並實現目標。在這個意義上，我認為明清時期中國社會中存在的這些行為再一次證明了，人在尋求提高自身社會地位時往往根據「迴避風險」的原則，理性地決定著自己的行動。

關鍵詞：制度 制度選擇 科舉 捐納 明清時期

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<sup>\*</sup> 日本大阪經濟法科大學國際學部教授

# The Institutional Choices of Social Actors in Ming-Qing China: A Case Study of the System of Purchasing Eligibility( 捐納 )

Wu, Yue<sup>\*</sup>

In the Ming-Qing Period China, social actors lived in a society composed of a variety of institutions. Some institutions had written guidelines such as laws, precedents, clan instructions, or village rules. Other institutions had no written guidelines but were instead the social product of custom and gradual change. At the same time that social actors either deliberately or passively accepted the restrictions of such institutions, they also selected and used institutions in the pursuit of advantage or their own needs in life. Such use might focus on a single institution, e.g. the examination system, or it might involve the use of several institutions, such as the selective use of the examination system and elements of the system of purchasing eligibility for academic titles and administrative office (*juanna*). In particular historical periods, some social actors were not above using extraordinary methods, including violence, in an effort to overcome institutional restraints and to establish institutions that satisfied their own social values. Thus, purely prescriptive institutions lacked any sort of social vitality; nearly every institution that existed in society was inextricably tied to the activities of social actors.

Using the institutions of the public service examinations and the system of purchasing eligibility for academic titles and administrative office, this essay examines how social actors in the Ming-Qing period selectively used national institutions to advance their own social status. Rather than passively accepting

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<sup>\*</sup> Professor, Faculty of International Studies, Osaka University of Economics and Law

contemporary institutions, social actors carefully evaluated their own interests and developed strategies to pursue such interests through skillful use of institutions, thus reducing potential threats to their social status and economic interests. In this sense, we can say that the example of the Ming-Qing period China confirms the general principal that people are rational actors intent on reducing risk to their interests.

**Keywords:** institution, institutional choice, examination system, the system of purchasing eligibility for academic titles and administrative office, Ming-Qing period