

Analysis of the Abolition of the Imperial Examination System and the Development Trend of the Stratum of scholars in Qing Dynasty

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Abstract: With the changes of modern social structure, the reform of the superstructure that is not in line with social development has become the trend of the times. The reform and abolition of the imperial examination system has deeply affected the fate of many scholars and their families. The suspension of the imperial examination means the adjustment of the rules. The identity, status and fate of the scholars have also changed accordingly. The transition from traditional society to modern society has profound implications for the diversion to other social classes.

1. Introduction

The imperial examination system is an important system for selecting talents in China's feudal society, and it is the core system for the ruling class to recruit talents. In 1901, Zhang Zhidong proposed the "Three Folds of the Jiangchu Society", demanding the transformation of the traditional education system, learning the establishment of a new school in the West, reforming the imperial examinations and encouraging talents to study abroad. Eventually, the reform of the New Deal in the late Qing Dynasty led to the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905.

First. The Social Function of the Imperial Examination System

The emergence of "scholar" as a class can be traced back to the Western Zhou Dynasty. There were many noble scholars under the patriarchal system, and "scholar" evolved from it. During the social upheaval of the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, anyone who is a scholar or has a knowledge strategy for the country can be called a "scholar". This time, the number of scholars rapidly expanded and played an important role in society, initially forming a social class. The development and evolution of the class was related to the evolution of the electoral system of the feudal dynasty: the central government of the Qin Dynasty appointed the official system, and the inspection system of the Han Dynasty absorbed a large number of talented scholars into the bureaucratic group.

After the rise of the imperial examination system in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the scholars took the reading section into the official position as an important way to enter the ruling class. They provided tens of thousands of scholars with the opportunity to change their destiny through reading. They take "reading - seeking for the official" as the fundamental purpose of "cultivating the family, managing the country and the world" as an ideal. Reading a college entrance examination is a shortcut to improve your personal social status. It is the only way to honour the ancestors. "In the Qing Dynasty, the students can enter the official position in the middle of the Qing Dynasty. If they try the Chinese style again, they will become a scholar, and they will enter the Hanlin, and they will step into the clouds, especially the ranks of the scholars." [1] It can be seen that under the social trend at that time People hope that through hard work and the first official to honour the ancestors. It can be seen that the emergence of the imperial examination system encouraged many scholars to join the ranks of reading and doing officials, so that the imperial examinations played an important role in the rapid development of the hierarchy.

Second. The abolition of the imperial examination system and its impact on the scholars

In modern times, the input of Western learning has impacted China's decaying old system. The imperial examinations were unable to adapt to social development because of their own ills. They were abolished in the wave of reforms in 1905, which had a major impact on the future of

traditional scholars.

2. The drawbacks of the imperial examination system and its abolition

The imperial examination system played a positive role in the feudal dynasty's talents. However, the ruling class adopted this electoral system, which showed its class narrowness from its own class interests. The scholars are under the baton of the imperial examination, so the extent to which they learn, how to learn, and the degree of learning is determined by the ruling class. In the Song Dynasty, the scientific examination required to recite the "Four Books" and "Five Classics". It was good at making arguments, proficient in political history, especially the way of governing the country, and it was necessary to make poems. The defects of the imperial examination system in the Ming Dynasty further revealed that the eight-legged style was ruled by the rulers as the main method of taking the scholars, and the examination of the imperial examination system became a tool for the rulers to imprison people's thoughts. In the late Qing Dynasty, some progressive thinkers criticized the ills of the imperial examination system. Cao Xueqin once said: "This is not a sage of the sages, but it can explain the sages of the sages, but it is the order of the hunters." [2], indicating his critical position on the eight-part literary scholar. The shortcomings of the imperial examinations became more and more obvious in the late Qing society, and gradually failed to meet the needs of social development. During the same period of the year, the Westernization School opened a new school, which is undoubtedly a challenge to the imperial examination system. The civil service system was facing a serious crisis.

After entering the 20th century, the development of new-style education still cannot escape the shackles of the imperial examination system. Scholars refused to accept new-style education because of traditional ideas. However, under the general environment of the New Deal in the late Qing Dynasty, the imperial examination system was not a problem of reform, but a problem of early waste or late waste. In 1903, the Qing government stipulated that all students who returned from the West could enjoy the government's awards for scholars, and the examination pattern centered on the imperial examination was broken. Later, in the 1905 Japan-Russia War, Japan defeated the European powers, and the victory of capitalism against the autocracy greatly stimulated the late Qing nationals. In the late Qing Dynasty, people was shocked by this scene and advocated the immediate suspension of the imperial examination. So Yuan Shikai and a number of local governors in September 1905 played a request to abolish the imperial examination, the Qing government issued the same year in 1906 to stop the scientific examination. Since then, the imperial examination system has been "staying dead" and has had a major impact on modern Chinese society.

3. The influence of the imperial examination system on the scholars

The late Qing government abolished this important measure of imperial examinations, and the examination system for taking the scientific examination as a career also completely ended. The fate and direction of the scholars also changed, and the life goals will be re-planned. The traditional social structure has gradually disintegrated in modern times, which will inevitably affect people's way of life and even change their fundamental destiny. Yan Fu once said that the abolishment of the imperial examination: "This matter is a great move in our country for thousands of years. It is important to say that it is no different from the ancient feudalism and openness" [3].

In the feudal dynasty, the imperial examination system made tens of thousands of cold men enter the official career. In their eyes, it was a ladder to climb the sky; but the reform of the social system of the Qing government made the imperial examinations more difficult. This shows that the rapid growth of the hierarchy is inextricably linked with the imperial examination system. At the same time, if the imperial examination system declines and the social dependence is gone, should the Taoist class not gradually disappear? In 1905, the Qing government declared that the abolition of the imperial examination system ended the connection between the scholars and the bureaucratic class.

However, under the great social changes in the late Qing Dynasty, the number of people who choose miscellaneous careers increased sharply, leading to the increasingly intensified of the side branching of the imperial examination, which had a negative impact on the psychological and even livelihood choices of the scholars. [4] On the occasion of the alternation of the old and new society, the class of scholar-officials ultimately was led to a sharp division in the late Qing Dynasty.

Third. The development trend of the class of scholar-officials after the imperial examination system abolished

As a representative of the feudal society, the class of scholar-officials is closely related to the imperial examination system, but the system ended in the late Qing Dynasty, which led to their differentiation. In the local chronicles of the middle and late Qing Dynasty, "Shi" is relatively single and in an independent state; By the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, the "Shi" gradually became more diverse and gradually disintegrated and replaced by other emerging professions. What should this class do in the face of the revolution?

First, the scholars join the army. In the face of national survival, the declining Qing government had to carry out military reforms, set up new military schools, and created new troops, which improved the social status and salvation of the soldiers, and made the profession of the military extremely attractive under the social conditions of that time. The military class has become the mainstream of society and its influence has been increasing. In the late Qing Dynasty, the entry of scholars into the army became a trend, and it became one of the choices for the scholars who stumbled into life to seek their livelihood and improve their personal status. According to statistics, the officers who born as scholars in the end of the Qing Dynasty were countless in the new army. See the following table for details:

Table 1 Qing Dynasty were countless

	The eighth army of the new army	The ninth army of the new army	The twenty-first association
Scholars(number)	479	272	73
The proportion	72%	38%	55%

(Collected according to Chinese Modern Cultural History written by Zhang Zhaojun, Sun Yanjing)

Scholars have deep cultural knowledge and good qualities, and they can quickly occupy important positions. Therefore, the scholars joined the military class and promoted the modernization of the Chinese army.

Second, the scholars are engaged in business. In 1905, the Qing government announced the abolition of the imperial examination system, which cut off the flow pattern of "Shi - Officials", causing some bureaucrats, landlords, and scholars to turn to business in order to make a living. In the 1870s and the fall of the Qing Dynasty, according to the statistics of 10 industries in the modern society, there were about 145 modern enterprises opened by capitalists, of which about 202 were investors or founders, classified according to their original identity, as shown in the following table:

Table 2. 202 were investors or founders, classified according to their original identity

	The landlord and bureaucracy	Comprador	The merchant	The overseas Chinese
Number of people	113	50	37	2
The proportion	55.9%	24.8%	18.3%	1%

(Collected according to Research on the Changes of China's Modern Bank System and Its Performance written by Lan Rixu)

During the New Deal in the late Qing Dynasty, to encourage the development of industry in order to save the crisis of governance, and to improve the social status of business people, the legitimate rights and interests of businessmen were protected and recognized by economic

regulations. "The social boundaries between scholars and merchants have gradually become blurred"[14], which shows that the flow of business is one of the road choices for the gentleman class after the abolition of the imperial examination.

Third, the scholars become new intellectuals or freelancers. Firstly, after the abolition of the imperial examination in the late Qing Dynasty, some traditional scholars entered the new school to receive Western education, which gave birth to a group of new intellectuals. The traditional class gradually turned to new intellectuals. After receiving advanced education, they gradually became the main force of the new-style school. The number of new schools in the country has increased rapidly, as shown in the following table:

Table 3. The number of new schools in the country has increased rapidly

	In 1906	In 1907	In 1908	In 1909
The new school(number)	23862	37888	47955	56117
The number of students	545338	1024988	1300739	1639641

(Collected according to The End of the Imperial Examination System and the Rise of Imperial Examinations written by Liu Haifeng, Zhang Yaqu)

The large-scale rise of new-style schools in the late Qing Dynasty and the increasingly perfect institutional system of various schools indicate that the education system with bourgeois nature has been initially established in China.

Secondly, to study abroad, the glory of "Study abroad - Western studies", whose advantages fully demonstrated when compared with the shortcomings of "Imperial Examination - Old School". Before the abolition of the imperial examination, students who return from Japan can be awarded a fame, which is a way for them to be in the mainstream society and officialdom. While after the abolition of the imperial examination, this kind of reward system for returned students was extended to most international students. Since the road to scientific research is blocked, studying abroad will be a shortcut to gain fame. The road of studying abroad is "road of official, road of benefit, road of knowledge, road of fame, and road of increasing scholars yearn for is reasonable".

The class of scholars flows to the emerging intellectual class, and they have the dual status of "old fame" and "new education". Then the abolition of the imperial examination divides the traditional identity possessed by the class of scholars and can seek a living space for its own interests. Although the abolition of the imperial examination system has had an impact on the career of the class, as a new class, they have injected new vitality into the development of modern Chinese society in a certain sense, and brought a new atmosphere for modern China.

4. Conclusion

The abolition of the imperial examination system produced a series of chain reactions to the society at that time. For example, the political structure of the country was faced disintegration, the establishment of new institutions affected the old feudal machines, and the social mobility mechanism was rigid. However, it has the most direct impact on the development trend of the traditional class. The phenomenon of marginalization appears in the class and is more and more prominent, and finally leads to diversion to all levels. First of all, the abolition of the imperial examination resulted in the separation of the imperial power and the bureaucratic system. The political power shifted downwards. The scholars' sense of identity and belonging to the ruling class declined rapidly. They played an active role in the social transformation of the late Qing Dynasty, and participated in associations, newspapers, etc. in the cultural world participated in the society, such as the society and the newspapers. Enlisting in the army has promoted the arrival of the revolutionary trend and caused changes in social structure and social relations. Secondly, the abolition of the imperial examination system changed the way that the traditional scholars entered the profession, and their career changed. In the late Qing Dynasty, some traditional intellectuals

became new intellectuals, military and business. In short, the abolition of the imperial examination system has affected the development trajectory of China's modern society and the direction of social development. Therefore, this is not only a major change to the old system, but also an important turning point in the development trend of China's modern society.

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