

Social Wealth Structure of the Ming Dynasty and its Influence on the Historical Development of China

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Abstract: After the middle of the Ming Dynasty, with the rapid development of market commodity economy, Jiangnan town economy and silver monetization, the social production and life relations had undergone profound changes, and the polarization of social wealth became more and more serious. A hundred years and seriously solidified centralized system and party struggle and corrupt bureaucracy promoted this unfair distribution, intensified social conflicts, and eventually led to the demise of the Ming Dynasty. The article divides the social groups of the Ming Dynasty into different classes, analyzes the composition of its wealth structure, and discusses the influence of this structure on the historical development of China.

Keywords: Ming Dynasty; Wealth distribution; Wealth structure

The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) lasted for 276 years, and was the last feudal dynasty established by the Han nation in the traditional Chinese society. During the reign of the Ming Dynasty, China's history was deeply affected by the global economic development for the first time. From the closure to the open sea ban, the market commodity economy developed actively, and capitalism sprouted several times. During this period, private wealth accumulated rapidly, which had a significant impact on the flow of social classes and national macro policies, and the Ming government also tried to distribute private wealth through multiple channels due to the national financial difficulties. Some of these attempts have had good results in line with the ethics of Chinese national wealth, and some have completely failed due to institutional design defects or implementation deviation. In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, it was an active market economy and highly centralized society. Analyzing the source and social influence of these private wealth has practical reference value.

1. The wealth of the royal vassal state severely weakened the fiscal revenue power of the state

The Ming Dynasty was a dynasty in which the public field and the private field were parallel. In order to safeguard the imperial power, the Ming Dynasty adopted the system design of giving preferential treatment from the material and economic aspects and minimizing the zong vassal power to the political extent, namely the so-called "thick zong vassal state". In the Hongwu 28th year (1395), which was later implemented as the whole Ming Dynasty system, the highest level of prince earns 10,000 stones a year, while the highest level of Zhengyi official earns only 1,044 stones a year. In addition to the annual salary income, the greater wealth resources of the clan aristocracy were the land owned. On the one hand, the land is allocated according to the system according to his clan status or directly given by the emperor. Either level of clan can have a certain number of duty-free land in adulthood and become permanent private property. On the other hand, the land that dignitaries will also occupy according to power. In the Ming Dynasty, there were 62 princes, and 50 of their own vassal princes, all of which had large-scale princes. These Zhuang fields are mainly concentrated in Shandong, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan, Sichuan, Huguang and Jiangxi. In addition to the legally rewarded land, with the power, the number of official land occupied and invaded is also quite large. The occupied official fields include the army's tun, grazing grassland, as well as coastal salt farms, wetlands and inland rivers and wetlands. Minda occupied from non-paying land in the initial government tax relief to direct annexation regardless of land variety, grade or cheap purchase from farming farmers, or creating trouble traps.

2. The bureaucracy uses good tax immunity and corruption to collect its wealth

In the early Ming Dynasty, very low official salaries were formulated and extremely strict legislation on corruption. Throughout ancient Chinese history, officials of the Ming Dynasty had the lowest salary level. The History of the Ming Dynasty written by the Qing Dynasty said bluntly: " Since ancient times, the official salary is not like this." Unfortunately, the low salary did not bring a clean atmosphere to the Ming government, but corruption became a wind. The thin salary system of the Ming Dynasty was low salary, cancellation of job fields and discount distribution, among which, discount distribution was the core content of the thin salary system of the Ming Dynasty. Discount color refers to the salary of the salary in the name of the food converted to money such as banknotes and textiles, pepper and other objects. Discount items are not based on the needs of officials, but based on the number of goods in the government library, the discount standard is significantly lower than the normal market price. As for banknote folding, for example,

due to the gradual depreciation of the banknotes in the Ming Dynasty, the later identical waste paper was abandoned by the market to call silver as money. However, the official salary was still origami payment, so banknote folding is tantamount to reducing the salary. According to Wan Qi's calculation, " after the discount, the overall decline of 42%, the overall average level of the top 18 discount official salary is 307.6 stone, the average level of the official salary after the discount is only 177.7 stone."This thin salary system has greatly promoted the power of Ming Dynasty officials to obtain wealth from other channels, including participation in business operations, capital profits such as usury, and extrajudicial income such as corruption.

3. Fumin Merchants Group conducts capital operations through cooperation with other classes

On the definition of "enriching the people", the academic circle has its own views, and the social groups that occupy wealth and have higher cultural and education without privilege. It is rooted in the fertile soil of the interwoven development of natural economy and commodity economy. The group of China's industry covers agriculture, commerce, handicraft industry, mining, and even agriculture and commerce, involving various fields of social and economy, forming a unique rich society in China in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. nobles, officials and even readers who have obtained corresponding identities according to regulations have the privilege of tax exemption. Only land without privilege of enriching the people becomes the basis of the state tax, and the class of enriching the people becomes the main undertaker of the state service.

The rich people of the Ming Dynasty could be divided into several groups by industry, among which the most powerful was the emerging merchant class. After the recuperation of the early Ming Dynasty, the economy of the Ming Dynasty was restored and began to develop rapidly, and the domestic market was greatly expanded. In the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the silver change of money was generally realized, and the whole people became a common trend in business. A large number of regional merchant groups appeared and became the main body of the "rich class" in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Around the 16th century, China's private commercial capital has been quite strong, the Ming dynasty in regional merchants, merchants, Guangdong, su merchants, Shandong merchants established around the country, public, protect fellow interests, and in the form of trade organizations to protect the rights and interests of peers, the two also have intersection. For example, the capital of salt merchants, grain, wood, medicinal materials, tea, stationery, etc., is also involved in overseas trade. Based in the northern region as the base, Shanxi merchants initially operated grain and salt related to the northwest tun. Then in the later stage, they explored the financial field and began to operate Shanxi ticket.

4. Tag

Qian Mu once pointed out: " Modern China generally started from the Ming Dynasty." The Ming Dynasty was the inflection point of Chinese history. Ancient Chinese society began to be embedded by the global economy, or actively or passively carried out profound transformation and transformation, presenting many phenomena in the modern society. Later, the Qing Dynasty generally inherited the social and economic structure of the Ming Dynasty. From the macro perspective, social wealth of the Ming Dynasty flowed to the government through taxation and various extrajudicial collections. In the Ming Dynasty, the flow was mainly monetary; from the government to the government in the Ming Dynasty, especially in the late Ming Dynasty, which was actually extremely limited resources; multidimensional transactions through market commerce, handicraft, service, international trade, of course, agriculture was deeply involved in land transactions. Affected by the silver change of money, China not only the domestic wealth flow began to accelerate, but also greatly affected by the overseas markets.

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