

Book review: Chui Peng-shan “from Economy to law: History of China’s market evolution in Ming and Qing dynasties”

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Abstract

In the past, a view of global economic history built from the perspective of “European Central Theory” was popular in academic circles. The logic of this set of historical views is as a: in the 18 and 19th century, Europe, because of the industrial Revolution, was able to take the lead in transforming into an advanced country with rapid economic growth, and established a modern global economic system centered on Europe. In this global economic system, Europe is the center of modern global economic growth, the same period of the Ming and Qing dynasties has always been in a state of stagnation, which is related to the absence of the industrial Revolution, has also been referred to as the so-called “Ming and Qing dynasties social and economic development stagnation theory.”

This book opposes the “stagnation of social and economic development in the Ming and Qing Dynasties,” and also opposes the interpretation of the economic development history of Ming and Qing dynasties only according to the historical view of Industrial revolution This book advocates starting from the development context and materials of China’s social and economic history, and exploring from the perspective of market evolution, in order to understand the historical facts of social and economic development and change in Ming and Qing dynasties.

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According to the study of this book, the social and economic market in the Ming and Qing dynasties appeared at least four important evolution in the “Quality” part: first, the protection of businessmen’s public property rights and the emergence of a large number of autonomous associations of businessmen. Second, businessmen try to construct the production order of the market. Third, businessmen in the struggle with the state and society to rebuild the market trading order. Four, the rise of merchant consciousness and the adjustment of the internal order of merchant groups.

Keywords: Ming and Qing dynasties social economy, Suzhou merchant groups, clubhouse, Ming and Qing business books, Yunnan copper, Chongqing