

A Study on the Civil Service Recruitment System in Han China

—With Special Reference to the Criteria of Official Promotion by
Virtue of the Special Recruitment System—

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In Han China there were a number of civil service examination systems, one of which was called 賢良方正, *Hsien-liang Fang-cheng* (capable/good and sincere/upright) as a special recruitment system. In comparison to China's famous examination systems in later times, the Han systems have been studied so poorly and incompletely that by now they are still ambiguous and open to further question. The author in this article attempts to clarify mainly the special recruitment system, *Hsien-liang Fang-cheng*, by means of analyzing the criteria of official promotion.

The bureaucracy of the Han times consisted of the 15 ranks of officials, covering from the fief-holders of 万石, *wan-shih* (10,000 bushels), to those of 百石, *po-shih* (100 bushels). The right to recommend competent candidates for government offices was restricted to the supreme officials, ranking over the fief-holders of 比二千石, *pi-erh-ch'ien-shih* (equivalent to 2,000 bushels). These supreme officials were thus to promote the positions of lower officials, ranking 四百石, *ssu-po-shih* (400 bushels), and below, to those of higher officials, ranking 比六百石, *pi-lu-po-shih* (equivalent to 600 bushels), and above.

It was, therefore, one of the aims and characteristics of the special

recruitment system of the Han dynasties to raise and reform the lower-grade to the upper-grade personnels of government offices. Centering on this issue, he also discusses some indispensable problems associated with the officialdom in general and civil service examination systems of Han China