

Analysis of the Causes of the " North and South List " Case in the Ming Dynasty

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Abstract: The imperial examination system of the Ming Dynasty was much more sophisticated than that of the previous dynasty. This article introduces the causes and consequences of the case and analyses the reasons behind the incident.

Keywords: " North and South List " Case, Causes.

1. Introduction

In 1397, the examiners, Liu Sanwu and Bai Xindao, accepted 52 candidates, including Song Zong. This is the spring list, and because all the candidates admitted to this list were from the south, it is also called the Southern List.

Since the Sui and Tang dynasties examination has never been this situation, caused the northern failed students extremely dissatisfied, joint "to say Sanwu and other southerners private its country", the Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang saw the sparse, angry, "ordered the Confucian minister to re-examine the fallen papers in the literature and science of the first. So the attendant reading Zhang Xin, attendant lecturer Dai Yi, Zanshan Wang Junhua, the Secretary straight Lang Zhang Qian, the Secretary of the school of Yan Shu Zai, Zhengzhi Dong Guan, Chang Shi Wang Zhang, Ji Shan Zhou Heng, Xiao Ji and, Chang Long, Shi Deng each read ten volumes." However, the examination papers submitted after the review were poorly written and even contained forbidden words, but the results of the review concluded that Liu Sanwu had not committed fraud or broken the law, and the original list was maintained.

Such a situation had never occurred in the imperial examinations since the Sui and Tang dynasties, causing extreme discontent among the failed students from the north, who jointly "wanted to say that Sanwu and other southerners were privy to their fellow countrymen". Seeing this, the Ming Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang was furious and " Ordered the Confucian ministers to re-examine the failed articles ". So the retainer Zhang Xin, Dai Yi, Wang Junhua, Zhang Qian, Dong Guan, Wang Zhang, Zhou Heng, Xiao Jihe, Chang Long, Shi E each read ten papers." However, the examination papers submitted after the review were irregularly written and even contained forbidden words, and the review concluded that Liu Sanwu had not committed fraud or breaches of the law and upheld the original list.

At this time, some people accused Zhang Xin and others of colluding with Liu Sanwu and deliberately submitting inferior examination papers from the north to the emperor for review, thus cheating him. When Zhu Yuanzhang heard of this, he became even more furious and ordered the execution of the examiners, including Bai Xindao and Zhang Xin, and the top scholar, Chen Anwei, while Liu Sanwu was spared death because of his old age and was dismissed from his post and sent to the army.

In June, Zhu Yuanzhang himself curated the question, "Take Han Kezhong from Shandong as number one scholar,

Wang Zhu as the second place at palace examinations, and Jiao Sheng from Shanxi as number three in national civil examinations, a total of sixty-one people, all of whom are also northern scholars." This was the summer list. Because all the sixty-one people recorded were from the north, it was also called the North List. The above is an introduction to the case of " north and south list ".

2. Reasons for the appearance of the South List

2.1. Situation in the North

After the An Shi Rebellion, too many wars took place in the northern lands, and people fled their homes and were displaced to escape the war. In Jizhou, for example, there were more than 83,0520 people in the Tang Dynasty (670-674 AD), but by the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty there were only 24,0670 people left, a reduction of 71.02%. In Taiyuan, for example, there were 77,8278 inhabitants during the Tang Dynasty (670-674), but only 15,5321 remained at the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty, a reduction of 80.04%.

Since An Lushan, his rebels had been burning and looting everywhere, "Every time the thieves broke into a city, the clothes, money and bribes, and women were plundered. The men, the strong, were burdened, the sick, the old and the young were killed with knives", and so were the Tang army.

In the Yuan Dynasty, the History of Dosun Mongolia describes the fighting style of Mongol soldiers: "The Mongol soldiers used many fraudulent tricks, and did not hesitate to tempt the enemy to open the city for various kinds of ransom. The Mongolian soldiers slaughtered all those who were too gullible and opened the city to beg for surrender. The Mongol troops slaughtered them despite their oaths that they would not die. Although the inhabitants begged for surrender and went out to meet the Mongol soldiers for mercy, they were still slaughtered. These people did not value human life, but only saw that they had an immediate catch and pasture for their herds." The Mongols were characterised by their slaughter of cities, a move that left the people in desperate poverty, displaced and with no time to study.

2.2. Situation in the South

Unlike the north, the south was relatively stable and economically prosperous, taking Jiaxing as an example, during the Tang Dynasty (713-741 AD) there were 63,2650 people, and by the Yuan Dynasty the population had reached 224,5742 people, an increase of 253.30%. In the 8th year of

the Tang dynasty (634 AD), there were more than 1,899 households, and in the 27th year of the Yuan dynasty (1290 AD), there were more than 46,6158 households, representing a 381.62% increase or decrease in the number of households between the Tang and Yuan dynasties.

The growth of the population is a reflection of the stability of the society, and the various resources in the south have been favourably exploited. Take rice for example, there are a great variety of varieties, such as red lotus rice, fragrant rice, arrow rice, pendulum rice, 60-day rice, 100-day red rice and 50-60 other varieties. In terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the basic physiological needs and safety needs are met before the higher cognitive needs, aesthetic needs and self-actualisation needs emerge.

Along with economic development, culture flourished in the south. In terms of writings, Suzhou produced 82 works in the Tang period and 3,827 by the Ming dynasty. Hangzhou saw 44 works during the Tang period and as many as 817 by the Ming.

The emergence of the Southern Ranking was not only linked to the economic and cultural prosperity of the south, but also to the materiality of the southern scholars. Because the imperial examinations began to distinguish between northern and southern papers and a system of provincial admissions, this led to a situation where places were limited, but even so, scholars from the south-east continued to perform well.

Many scholars have studied the geographical distribution of the best people in the imperial examinations of the Ming and Qing dynasties. In the Qing Dynasty, Jiangsu Province produced a total of 110 first-class scholars, accounting for 34.8% of the country's total, while Zhejiang Province produced 81 first-class scholars, accounting for 23.7%, and the two provinces together accounted for 58.5% of the country's first-class scholars. The northerners were martial, while the southerners were literate, and the imperial examination system has always attached more importance to literature, which gave the southern scholars the opportunity to bring their talents into play.

3. Reasons for the appearance of the South List

3.1. Zhu Yuanzhang's doubts

The geographical rivalry between the north and the south in the selection of talents for the imperial examinations has a long history. In the first year of the reign of Emperor Yingzong of the Song Dynasty (1064), Sima Guang, a scholar from the north, submitted a letter to the Tribute Court deciding not to use poetry and fuge in the imperial examinations, arguing that poetry and fuge as criteria for selection were not useful to the world and that it would be better to test scriptures instead. Sima Guang's idea had nothing to do with geographical disputes, but in fact the northern scholars were better at scripture and the southern scholars were better at poetry and fiction, so he was secretly supporting the northern scholars.

Two years later, Sima Guang made another proposal, in which he advocated a policy of taking people on a geographical basis and adopting a policy of care to promote the motivation of northern scholars to study (due to the years of war in the north, the economy and culture had been seriously affected, and the proportion of southern scholars in the imperial examination list had completely crushed that of

northern scholars).

So Ouyang Xiu, from the south, proposed to select officials according to their talents, writing: "..... I think the system of selecting talents by the state is fairer and better than the previous dynasty People from both east and west and north and south should be mixed together. Some people find that most of the talents selected in each examination come from the east and south, while those from the west and north are rare, so they want to change the examination system so that more talents can be selected from the west and north. They did not know that the world was so big and that different places had different customs and different talents. The customs of the East and the South are good at writing, while those of the West and the North are good at quality, so there are more scholars from the East and the South. This is because people of different talents have different strengths. Ouyang Xiu's idea is more fair and just for the imperial examinations and helps to improve the quality of the selection of talents for the imperial examinations. The two men's views actually represented the interests of different regions.

For Zhu Yuanzhang, a seed of suspicion had been planted in his heart ever since his father-in-law, Guo Zixing, repeatedly listened to the slander of villains, fell on his sword and imprisoned him, and his nephew, Zhu Wenzheng, defected to the salt merchant Zhang Shicheng. In response to the appearance of this southern list, Zhu Yuanzhang could not help but be suspicious of the examiners, wondering if they were cultivating their own power.

Zhu Yuanzhang always suspected that meritorious officials would be detrimental to himself and especially to the rule of his descendants, on the other hand, during the years when Zhu Yuanzhang was still called Zhu Chongba (in the Yuan dynasty, common people had no names if they could not go to school or become officials, they could only be named after the addition of their parents' ages or the date of their birth), the Yuan dynasty was extremely corrupt, in terms of the imperial examinations, the selection procedure for Han Chinese and Southerners was more complicated, the content of the examinations was more difficult, and all the officials of high rank were monopolised by the Mongolian nobles. The Mongol rulers did not treat the people as human beings and asked them for money when they had nothing to do with it, charging "festival money" for the New Year, "favor money" for favors. In the Yuan Dynasty, the officials were corrupt, and the people were pressured to pay the money. The Yuan officials were corrupt and oppressed the peasants, which led to the uprising of the peasants. Therefore, Zhu Yuanzhang hated the corruption of the officials, and he "used severe punishment in troubled times" to deal with the incident seriously.

3.2. Zhu Yuanzhang's sense of inferiority

Zhu Yuanzhang came from a poor background and did not have the opportunity to receive a good education. After he became emperor, he was told the origin of Zhang Shicheng's name. Zhang Shicheng was not well educated and could not see that he had been cursed for half his life by being called a villain and being branded as such. Hearing this, Zhu Yuanzhang felt curious and went back to the Mencius to find out that the story was true, and from then on he became even more suspicious and wary of the literati.

There is much historical evidence that the examiner Liu Sanwu was an extremely fair man; for example, when Liu Sanwu's son-in-law was corrupt, not only did he not play

favourites to absolve his son-in-law, but he also blamed himself for failing to discipline his family and wanted to resign. On the other hand, the candidates selected for the Southern Examination were all talented, and apart from the top scholar Chen An Semi who left politics prematurely, the rest such as Song Zong, Yin Chang Long and Liu Shidong rose to prominence and rose to high positions. There is no possibility of fraud on the part of Liu Sanwu himself, so Zhu Yuanzhang's decision on the case could be said to have been motivated by his concern for the talented people of the south of the country.

3.3. The political situation

The imperial examinations served as a bridge between learners and government authorities and were used by many politicians to enter the political arena. The advent of the Southern Ranking would discourage northern scholars from getting involved in politics by studying, which was not conducive to political operations.

In addition, as the country was in the early stages of establishment, the remnants of the previous dynasty were still watching and the Mongols would occasionally harass the country from the south. At this time, Zhu Yuanzhang urgently needed to recruit talents from the north in order to broaden his political base, improve the stability of the country as a whole and strengthen centralised power.

In the case of north and south list, Zhu Yuanzhang's handling of the case was not simply to deal with examination

malpractice, but more essentially to win the hearts and minds of the northern scholars. Morally speaking, Zhu Yuanzhang fingered deer for horses and straw men, but politically speaking he achieved great success.

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