

The Expenditure of the Imperial Courton the Local Schools in the Song Dynasty

Liu Fang

International College for Chinese Studies, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, 210097, China

**CORRESPONDING AUTHOR*

ABSTRACT. *About a thousand years ago in the Song Dynasty of China, the emperor and the court paid great attention to the cultivation of talents. They regularly held imperial examinations to select talents who will serve for the national government. In order to train enough young students to take the imperial examinations, the court ordered to construct schools in all cities. National and local finances are involved in the construction and management of the school. These expenses include building school architectures, raising students, paying teachers and purchasing fees, arranging student banquets, sending local school students to capital city to take exams, as well as living expenses after their arriving in the capital city. The importance attached by the imperial court to education in the Song Dynasty is still worth learning from even today.*

KEYWORDS: *Song dynasty, Education expenditure, Local school*

1. Introduction

In Chinese history, the Song Dynasty was a dynasty that attached great importance to school construction. The imperial court at that time spent a lot of money to train talents working for the government. These funds have produced a large number of political talents and made a great contribution to the governance of the country.

2. Expenditure of the Imperial Court in the Construction of Urban Schools in the Song Dynasty

In 1034, the Song Dynasty courts began to set up schools in big cities and rewarded five farms to each school. According to the literature, the specifics of the expenditure are as follows:

The year of 1034: in June, the imperial court rewarded five Qins of fields to Chenzhou and Yangzhou schools (1 Qin is 3.3 square kilometers); in June, five Qins of fields were rewarded to Hangzhou school; in August, five Qins of fields were

rewarded to Shuzhou school.

The year of 1035: In September, five Qins of fields were rewarded to Zhengzhou School.

The year of 1037: In February, five Qins of fields were rewarded to the Changzhou school; in the summer of April, the Xuanzhou School were rewarded its farms; in December, the Xuzhou School were rewarded its farms.

The year of 1038: In May, five Qins of fields were rewarded to the school in Luzhou; in June, farms were rewarded to the school in Luzhou. [1]

Later, the famous minister of the Northern Song Dynasty, Fan Zhongyan, carried out political reforms during the Qingli period (1044-1048 AD). With the failure of the reform, the urban schools in the Song Dynasty gradually turned from prosperity to decline. After a period of development, many local schools have returned to the downturn as if it was in the early years of the Northern Song Dynasty due to policy changes. Fortunately, when Wang Anshi changed the politics, he noticed that in the process of conducting civil examinations and selecting talents on a large scale, school education was lacking. At the same time, Wang Hao, Sima Guang, Lu Gong, Su Shi, Han Wei and other ministers came out. They also reported to the emperor and discussed the matter at the court. After Wang Anshi presented the Emperor with the "Proposal to Reform the Imperial Examination System" [2], the urban school was built in the Song Dynasty nationwide again.

As recorded by Wang Anshi: (March 1071 AD) The emperor ordered the local cities to set up schools, and each city allocated 40 fields (about 2.67 square kilometers) as the grain production area for students. If there was already a school field in the city but the area was not large enough, they may increase it to a sufficient number; if the original school field is larger than the prescribed area, they can keep it. Teachers for teaching children and young men were also arranged, and anyone who has a position in the school was given a certain amount from the rationing food of the school.[1]

In addition to giving an order that offering a reward of land to schools, the Northern Song Dynasty also paid special funds to the local government, mainly for the sustain of numerous students and the construction of school houses. For example, on September 24, Yuanfeng six years (1083 AD), the emperor ordered that the school pays 200,000 copper coins to Ganzhou , and 10000 to Daojiang town in that year. So that the Chengdu government can support its students.[3]

Under the impetus of the imperial court, local schools have developed greatly in the those few decades. According to the "Long Editor Chronicles", in the first year of Dagan (1107), the number of students with a student status in Pucheng town, Fujian Province increased to more than a thousand. It was only a small town, so we can imagine how an enormous amount of students there was all over China.

In the second year of Dagan (1108), the emperor wrote a book called "The Story of the National University" in January. It is recorded that all the students in the empire have been educated and supported. This policy has benefited more than

110,000 people. We built houses for students to live in. The number of rooms reached more than 11,000, with a total expenditure of more than 2.41 million Guan (1Guan is 1000 copper coins), and more than 550,000 Dan of rice (1 Dan is probably 59.2 kg). Looking at the grand occasion of the construction of our school, the number of talents to train, even if compared with the ancients, I am not embarrassed.[4]

According to Ge Shengzhong's "Request to send students' books to the Imperial Court and the documents in the capital School", there were 24 provinces in the country, and there were 167,622 students of all ages in education and training. There were a total of 95,298 student residence halls. The annual income of student funds was 3,508,872 Min (1 Min is 10,000 copper coins), and the expenditure was 2,678,787 Min. The student's rations earned 64,291 Hu per year (1 Hu is 1 Dan, about 59.2 kg), and the total expenditure was 337,944. A total of 105,990 Qin (1Qin is 3.3 square kilometers) was awarded to the school. There were a total of 155,454 houses built by the school.[5]

From the huge expenditure figures, we can understand that when the local schools in the Northern Song Dynasty flourished, the imperial court needed to provide a large economic guarantee.

3. Expenditure of the Imperial Court in the Management of Local Schools in the Song Dynasty

In addition to the supply of food and housing in urban schools, there are many miscellaneous expenses that are used for daily school management. The history book "Editing the manuscript of important events in the Song Dynasty" [3] records other expenditures, as listed below:

Salary and procurement fees for professors: "Tianxi four years (1010 AD), Ma Qishan teacher from Mixian town, Miaoshan who teaches classic books, and Yang Guangfu who is a teaching assistant of the national school, all of them will be rewarded by 20 satin." The document also wrote "every 50 students are allowed to hire a professor. The cost of hiring a professor will be spent by the local education department. Because there was only one professor in each city, the amount of money spent was not much. Moreover, the professor's purchase fee and salary should be paid by local government undertakes. Even though the schools in the capital will hire some more teachers who may spend some living expenses, that will not exceed tens of thousands of copper coins." From this text, we can not only know the amount of financial expenditures for hiring professors, but also the source of funds. The professor's procurement fees and wages are provided by the local government, and there is no need to allocate funds from the total government budget. However, compared with the student's alimony, the cost of "hiring a professor per 50 students" is not much.

Rewarding students' books costs: In the fourth year of Xianping (1001 AD), the emperor ordered that the "Jiujing" (the nine most important classic books of Confucianism) should be rewarded to all provinces and cities where schools was

built or students gathered to study. In the sixth year of Tiansheng (1028 AD), the local army of Jiangyin wrote to the emperor to apply: "We have rebuilt the Confucius Temple. There are many young students who are planning to take the exam. There is no 'Jiujing' in this place until now. May I apply for your reward?" The emperor immediately agreed.

The cost of banquets held for students who pass the local exam. The Minister reported to the emperor and said: "On the day that the students passed the local examination, the court allowed local leaders to gather local officials to organize banquets, which cost a lot of school funds. There was no fixed limit for this money, and it was often over-spending at the local level. This actually hindered the cultivation of the scholars. It is possible to order a certain amount of expenditure from local government funds in the future. As state governments fabricated excuses to over-consume the money, Cai Cheng, the official in charge of the management of the school in capital city, wrote in the seventh year of Zhenghe (1117): "The major cities are scheduled to hold the banquet in accordance with national regulations every fall. For the students in the exam, the cost of the banquet should not be too much, but the local governments make excuses and spend too much, Now I request the emperor to set a consumption standard." So the emperor stipulated that the cost of banquet should not exceed three Guan (1 Guan is 1000 pieces of copper coins), and the other cost must not exceed 30 Guan.

The cost of rewarding the student. Some ministers said that some new students from civilians started their school work, and there are also outstanding ones among them. He asked the emperor to divide the students into upper, middle and lower levels. As long as they can recite "The Book of Filial Piety", "The Analects of Confucius", "Mencius", as well as tell the important theories of other scriptures, they can be regarded as passing the exam. As long as the middle level students can recite the "The Book of Filial Piety", "The Analects of Confucius", "Mencius", the government can reward him with satin, crown and hair band. If the inferior students can recite "The Book of Filial Piety", "The Analects of Confucius" or "Mencius", the government can reward him with the purchase fee for paper, pen, enamel and ink. "

The expenses that used on the trip to the capital to take the national exam by the students who pass the provincial exams. According to the records, when the national unified examination was held, each time a high-level student intended to leave for the capital. from the autumn, they would be arranged in the national dormitory, and the local leaders would gather together. Leaders set the task, arranged banquets in the student dormitory, treated these students politely, and send them away, requiring them to arrive in capital before the end of the year. for many students from the remote places like Sichuan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, the country would offer them food-receiving bills. If the road is longer than two thousand Chinese miles (1000km), they would receive higher-quality food bills and let them go on the road without worry about diet and accommodation, and these expenses were all from the education funds. [6] From history book we know that the state implemented a "three-level" system for schools in cities. High-level students live in high-class quarters, middle-level students live in medium-level quarters, and students with lower levels live in the worst dorm room. High-level students who pass the local

examinations must go to capital to take the national exams. The travel expenses and in which form it should be given to the outstanding students by the state were roughly the same. The court will give them various written vouchers to let the students go on the way. The city's rest station was free to eat and live.

The cost of food and accommodation of students in the capital. According to the literature, in students from all localities, the best ones were chosen to go to the capital to take the test. They must arrive in the capital in December of that year and go to Taixue (the highest institution established by the imperial court) to take the exam. The outstanding students from all over the country went to the capital to eat and live together with the second-class students of the Taixue.

The cost of increasing school buildings. According to the literature, on February 22, 1116, the emperor ordered the construction of more dormitories in accordance with the increase in the number of students in various local schools, and spent from the education funds of the court. The literature also records the case in which the local government of Tanzhou in the 7th year of Jingkang (1132 AD) collected taxes of a total of 5,000 Guan (1 Guan is 1000 copper coins) for the addition of school buildings. The amount spend on this project in Song Dynasty nationwide can be seen. It should be very huge.

4. Conclusion

It can be seen from the above statistics that the Song Dynasty paid a considerable price for the construction and management of urban schools, and many regulations were very detailed. These expenses include building school buildings, supporting students, paying teachers and purchasing fees, arranging student banquets, sending local school students to capital to take exams, as well as living expenses after arriving in capital. The Song Dynasty paid more attention to education than today's China. This is worth learning.

References

- [1] T. Li (1992). Long Series to Continue Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government. Zhonghua Book Company.
- [2] A.S. Wang (1959). Mr. Linchuan's Anthology. Zhonghua Book Company.
- [3] S. Xu (1936). Editing the Manuscript of Important Events in the Song Dynasty. National Peking Library.
- [4] R.U. Zhang (1983). Research on of Books in Shantang. Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature. Taiwan Commercial Press.
- [5] S.Z. Ge (1983). Danyang Collection. Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature. Taiwan Commercial Press.
- [6] D.L. Ma (1983). Documents General Examination. Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature. Taiwan Commercial Pres.