

The Research on Zhu Biao, the Prince of Ming Dynasty, Assisted in Managing the Government Affairs

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ABSTRACT

In the first month of the first year of Hongwu (1368), the great-grandfather Zhu Yuanzhang proclaimed himself emperor in Nanjing, established the Ming Dynasty in the name of Hongwu, and the eldest son Zhu Biao was the crown prince, and Zhu Biao was the crown prince, and was responsible for assisting in the work of governing the country from then on. Zhu Biao can be roughly divided into two situations, that is, when Zhu Yuanzhang went on his northern tour, he stayed to act as an agent to manage the country, and Zhu Yuanzhang assisted in the daily management of the government when he was in the court. This article will summarize the participation of Crown Prince Zhu Biao in politics based on limited historical data.

KEYWORDS

Zhu Biao; The Eastern Palace; The Crown Prince's Participation in Court Affairs.

1. INTRODUCTION

On the beginning of the Ming dynasty prince supervision of the government, there are still differences. One view is that the prince's administration began with Zhu Biao: Yang Shu-fan points out in his book *Institutions of the Ming Dynasty* that the prince's supervision of the state began in the first year of the Hongwu reign, but it was only during the Yongle reign that it became officially customized;^[1] Xu Weidong also supports the above statement and argues for the time of Zhu Biao's rule;^[2] Jiang Fengqi's *Trial Discussion of Zhu Yuanzhang's Education of the Crown Prince* argues that Zhu Biao's administration began in the sixth year of the Hongwu reign;^[3] Lian Xinyu, in *A Study of the Battle of Jingnan and the Fission of the Civil Officials Group in the Pre-Ming Period* claims that Zhu Biao had been involved in political affairs since the tenth year of the Hongwu reign. The other viewpoint is that the prince's administration formally began with the crown prince Zhu Gaoqi: *Ming Huidian* in the "East Palace Supervision" and *Ming History Chronicle* in the "Prince Supervision", etc., on the matter of the prince's supervision of the state all began with Zhu Gaoqi's record.^[4] The author agrees with the first point of view that the supervision of the state by the crown prince of the Ming dynasty began with Zhu Biao, and Yin Xiao pointed out in *Study of the Supervisory System of the Ming Dynasty, Centering on Zhu Gaoqi*, that due to the artificiality of some key historical materials of the Jingnan Revolution, "the supervision of the state by Zhu Biao is insufficient". Because of the change of the Jingnan period, the historical facts related to Zhu Biao's administration were covered up, and it is necessary to re-collect the fragmentary historical facts, and it is appropriate to examine Zhu Biao's administration in detail.

2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EAST PALACE OFFICIALS

In the same year, Liu Ji, Tao An and others wrote a report requesting the emperor to imitate the practice of establishing the prince as the head of the Secretariat in the Yuan Dynasty. "(The prince has the right to) lead officials to decide government affairs."^[5] Zhu Yuanzhang disapproved of their suggestion. He pointed out that this system is not worth imitating. Besides, the prince is "not old and knowledgeable" at this time. He needs to accept the teacher's lecture and read Confucian classics to teach morality in order to achieve a broad understanding of ancient and modern times. After that, the general state affairs will be handed over to the prince. Therefore, how to set up the Eastern Palace officials to assist the prince in matching reasonable politics became an important issue before the Ming Dynasty.

During Zhu Biao's tenure as Prince, the establishment of the Eastern Palace official organization was gradually completed. The Eastern Palace official organization took Zhanshi Fu as the commander in chief and took charge of the Left and Right Chunfang and the Sijing Ju. Each government has its own seal, all of which are the official positions of the Eastern Palace. This set of settings basically laid the official system of the Eastern Palace in the Ming Dynasty and has been used in the Ming Dynasty.

In the first year of Hongwu (1368), the official system of the Eastern Palace had not yet been established, and the official organization of the Eastern Palace was not yet mature. Only the court minister and the official of the Eastern Palace were in charge. At this time, only three of the Prince's masters were set up, that is, Taizi Shaobao, Taizi Shaofu, Taizi Shaoshi. Zhanshi Cheng's deputy You Zhanshi and Tongzhi Zhan Shiyuan were also established at this time, which was generally consistent with the establishment of secondary vocational officials in Zhanshi Yuan from Yuan Dynasty to the 19th year of Yuan Dynasty (1282). Left-led government envoys, right-led government envoys, same knowledge, left-led government affairs, same knowledge, right-led government affairs, left-led government deputy envoys, right-led government deputy envoys, subordinate to left-led government. In November, Zhu Yuanzhang selected talented people to serve as prince guests and assume the role of prince. At the same time, Yude Dafu and Zanshan Dafu were also set up. It can be seen from the above officials that the Spring Square of Zhanshi Fu and the Left and Right Shuaifu were established in the first year of Hongwu (1368).

Zuozhuochunfang was first located in Zhongshu Sheng and Menxia Sheng, which are equivalent to the exclusive East Palace in Tang Dynasty. In the fifteenth year of Hongwu (1382), Chunfang was changed into left and right Chunfang, and the configuration of officials was re-established. Left and right Chunfang each had a Shuzi, a Yude, a Zhongyun, two Zanshan and two Sizhi Lang. Shuzi, Yude, Zhongyun and Zanshan set up in the Tang Dynasty, the Hongwu Dynasty continued to use them. They are the assistant officials of Chunfang to assist the chief officials in dealing with prince-related affairs, such as conveying prince's orders, teaching prince to appreciate etiquette and pointing out mistakes; Yude is responsible for the moral education of the prince and satirizes him at any time; Sizhi Lang impeached bureaucrats in the Ming Dynasty.

Hongwu (1385) each set up a university student in Chunfang. A university student in Chunfang was also the official position set up in the Ming Dynasty. He was the principal officer of Chunfang. He managed all the officials in the left and right Chunfang and was also responsible for the prince reporting to the emperor, listening to official reports and reading and studying various matters. His work has the dual color of assistant and examination.

In April of the 22nd year of Hongwu (1389), Zhanshi Yuan set up various institutions to manage the East Palace to better assist prince and set Zhanshi as the chief officer of Zhanshi Yuan. Zhanshi Yuan has taken shape. Although the establishment of officials has been increased and changed in later generations, it is generally the same.

In the twenty-third year of Hongwu (1390), referring to the official system of Tang Dynasty, Sijing Ju and its subordinate officials were mainly related to the management of books in the East Palace

Among them, Xianma is responsible for storing the copy and storage of the attention book published in the subset of Donggong Classics and History; Two school books are responsible for the writing and decoration of books; Two members of Zhengzi, Xianma is the main official school book to assist his work.^[6]

Since then, the establishment of the official agencies and officials in the Eastern Palace during this period has been roughly completed, with Zhanshi Yuan as the head of the Eastern Palace Office in charge of the left and right Chunfang and Sijing Ju. Although the left and right rate houses are Eastern Palace institutions, there is no clear record that the evidence that they belong to Zhan Shiyuan belongs to the Eastern Palace institutions parallel to Zhanshi Fu.

3. SUPERVISING THE COUNTRY

"Because the war has not stopped, if I have something to do outside, I will stay in the prince to supervise the country."^[7] At the beginning of the founding of Hongwu, wars were still frequent. According to the records of Ming Taizu, Zhu Yuanzhang left the capital four times: in the first year of Hongwu (1368), in April, Jiazi went to the Capital of Song Dynasty (now Kaifeng, Henan Province), in the first year of Hongwu (1368), in August, Renwu went to the Capital of Song Dynasty, in October of the same year, Ding Chou went to the Capital of Song Dynasty, in the fourth year of Hongwu (1371), in February, Jiayu went to Zhongdu (now Fengyang, Anhui Province), in the eighth year of Hongwu (1375) Zhu Yuanzhang ordered the prince to handle various government affairs on his behalf when he left Beijing.

Zhu Biao took the place of the emperor to sacrifice many times in some time periods. *Ming Taizu Shilu* clearly records that there are three times: in the first year of Hongwu (1368), he went to Taimiao in July (1368), and in October (1375), he went to Taimiao in the eighth year of Hongwu instead of offering sacrifices. *Cunxing Lu* recorded in detail the congratulations of the first two sacrifices.

In the initial period of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Ming Dynasty set up a system construction and set up a censorship, headed by Liu Ji, the censorship, and was responsible for law enforcement and picketing officials. In the first year of Hongwu (1368), when Zhu Yuanzhang left the capital, Liu Ji set out to clean up the discipline and discipline, and all the eunuchs and attendants who were at fault reported to the prince and then disposed of according to law. This can also be mutually confirmed with Zhu Yuanzhang's order when he set up the officials of the Eastern Palace: "If I have something to do outside, I will stay with the prince to supervise the country. If I set up a government, officials and other internal affairs, I will start to hear about the prince."^[7] At this time, Zhu Biao has the authority to manage the government affairs. The above things can prove that he has actually managed the government. Therefore, the governance of the Prince of Ming Dynasty should start from Zhu Biao and be carried out when he was in the position of Prince in the first year of Hongwu.

4. DAILY MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

During the twenty-five years of Zhu Biao-ri's regular administration, Zhu Biao's practical experience is constantly enriched, accompanied by the deepening of his participation in politics and the continuous expansion of his authority.

In December of the fifth year of Hongwu (1372), Zhu Yuanzhang ordered officials to let the prince know about political affairs to the emperor in the future. At this time, Zhu Biao had the right to know that officials had initially stepped into the power center, but he did not have sufficient decision-making power for the government affairs played by various departments. In September of the sixth year of Hongwu (1373), Zhu Yuanzhang ordered various institutions to report the important affairs of the crown prince in the future. After reporting that the emperor Zhu Yuanzhang had thoroughly

delegated power, Zhu Biao's direct right to handle daily affairs was reported to the emperor. The power to handle Zhu Biao was further expanded from knowing the affairs to having the right to decide. In June of the tenth year of Hongwu (1377), Zhu Yuanzhang ordered his ministers to report to the crown prince first and then to the emperor. Zhu Biao's authority was further expanded to deal with all government affairs, which shows that his power is second only to the imperial power. In November of the same year, Zhu Yuanzhang couldn't help but sigh with emotion when talking about the prince to Li Shanchang and others, and ordered the crown prince to listen to the officials. Zhu Yuanzhang wanted to improve the prince's ability through this move, but he was afraid that the prince might mishandle affairs and ordered the officials in the Eastern Palace to participate in the decision-making when reporting the prince's government affairs. Although Zhu Yuanzhang delegated power to Zhu Biao, he thought that his handling of affairs was immature. At this time, Zhu Biao's handling power was limited by the participation of the Eastern Palace officials in the decision-making.

Although there is no specific record of Zhu Biao's participation in government affairs from the 13th year of Hongwu (1380) to the 25th year of Hongwu (1392), it can still be cut into from other aspects.

In the seventeenth year of Hongwu (1384), Zheng Zhen, a Confucian instructor, had to enter the capital to participate in the assessment because the professors and officials outside the capital had served for nine years. He recorded the specific situation of the court in *Xingyang Waishi Ji*, which can prove Zhu Biao's administration from the side. In Zheng Zhen's records of going to court in the past three months, there are five places located in Wenhua Hall, Wenhua Hall is the place where the Prince manages politics and sees things. Zheng Zhen's going to Wenhua Hall to meet the Prince can also prove from the side that Zhu Biao is diligent in government affairs and assists in governance.^[8]

After the abolition of the prime minister system in the thirteenth year of Hongwu (1380), Zhu Yuanzhang attributed a large number of government affairs to himself. Scholars often focused on the operation of the central institutions of the imperial court and the establishment of the cabinet afterwards, and often ignored Zhu Biao as Chu Jun, who undertook some government affairs for him.

Zhu Yuanzhang's order to convey the prince's governance was first conveyed by Zhongshu Sheng, and then changed to direct orders from various departments. At the same time, the government affairs of various departments bypassed Zhongshu Sheng and started to play the prince. This shows that the power of the prime minister of Zhongshu Sheng to deal with the government affairs of various yamen was separated by the prince and lost part of his decision-making power. It can be seen that the prince's governance helped the emperor to check and balance the power of the prime minister to a certain extent and cooperated with Zhu Yuanzhang to disperse the power of the prime minister until the thirteenth year of Hongwu (1380) with Hu Weiyong's case as the fuse to completely abolish the prime minister and eliminate the threat of the power of the prime minister to the imperial power. At the same time, the prime minister system was abolished and all affairs were handled directly by the emperor. Before the establishment of the cabinet and the improvement of the central organization, the prince who was in charge of supervising the state affairs at this stage replaced the vacant duties of the prime minister, and his scope of authority was obviously expanded.

Although there is no specific record of Zhu Biao's participation in government affairs from the thirteenth year of Hongwu (1380) to the twenty-fifth year of Hongwu (1392), it can still be seen from the transfer of officials in the Eastern Palace. Combined with the above, taking the abolition of the prime minister system as the node, the official structure of the East Palace has been obviously adjusted. The number of middle and low-level officials, such as the addition of Chunfang Daxue Shi, The Left and Right Shuzi, The Left and Right Yude, The Left and Right Zanshan, The Left and Right Sizhi Lang, Xianma, Jiaoshu, Zhengzi, etc., has more than doubled compared with that before the abolition. At the same time, we should rectify the state of no official affairs in the East Palace, and take Zhanshi Fu as the commander in chief to add four auxiliary institutions in the East Palace, namely Zuochun Fang, Youchun Fang and Sijing Ju. The addition of officials and institutions can confirm the increase of Prince's political affairs from the side.

5. SUMMARY

Zhu Biao participated in the government affairs for 25 years, which was the 25 years of normal participation. His authority expanded step by step with the enrichment of practical experience, from the initial only knowing the government affairs reported by officials to the handling of daily affairs, and then both big and small government affairs could be executed. At the same time, Zhu Yuanzhang's power over Zhu Biao did not relax. The prince did not completely decide the affairs of the officials. On the one hand, the important daily government affairs still need to be reported to the emperor. On the other hand, he sent the Eastern Palace officials to assist the prince's administration and have the right to participate in the decision.

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