

The Failure of the Tsang-p'i Evaluation System of the Ch'un-hsi period: Two Types of Censorial Methods in the Southern Sung(1)

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In institutional research into the characteristics of the Sung in the Chinese legal tradition, aspects of centralization and the emperors' despotism have been emphasized so far. However, the contemporary arguments of Sung politicians were mainly on whether the bureaucratic laws and orders themselves could be observed.

Tsang-p'i, or 'evaluating personalities,' meant personal like or dislike to other persons in the Southern and Northern Dynasties. However, literati's freedom of personal appreciation of others, together with the private writing history, was suddenly forbidden in 593. And almost no example of this usage of Tsang-p'i can be seen in *The Twenty-Five Histories* after this. But Tsang-p'i was revived in a more institutionalized way by Hsiao-tsung, the emperor in the Southern Sung, in an attempt to control his staff after the Ts'in Huei dictatorship. It was to supervise local yamens through obligatory regulations. However, it had never been executed successfully, because of increasing local power that circuit intendants faced but could not cope with. On writing about this plan, there were two streams, positive and negative, represented by Ts'ai K'an and Chu Hsi. Ts'ai K'an eagerly tried to observe the edicts, while Chu Hsi completely neglected the imperial orders and insisted on the importance of spontaneous impeachment. After thirty-seven-year struggle, this plan was abolished, and as Chu Hsi strongly insisted, impeachment by Yüshitai remained as the sole means to supervise magistrates.

There is little doubt that for Sung bureaucrats, both positive and negative, it was difficult to observe the obligatory small arrangements. As Chaffee rightly notes, they were always sacrificed to local politics as well as bureaucracy itself. The most realistic way to supervise the bureaucrats was no obligatory, but spontaneous impeachment, which by no means depends on each person's moral, not on the institution that bureaucrats were obliged to share. This may be seen in throughout the latter half of imperial period.

This inquiry into the relationship between censorial regulations and spontaneous impeachment by Yüshitai in local politics will be further argued in the coming essay on "Two Types of Censorial Methods in the Southern Sung (2)."