

I. Dynasty 328

Chapter 328: The Title System

“Your Highness, I’ve assigned a team to each war chariot,” Niu Ben reported, pointing to the soldiers standing around one of the Hussite chariots.

These soldiers were specially selected to accompany the chariots. While cavalry couldn’t do much against the chariots directly, most armies would send heavy infantry ahead of a cavalry charge to destroy the vehicles.

That’s why each war chariot needed its own protection unit.

“Let me hear the details,” Xiao Ming said.

He was currently focusing on training his subordinates. In the future, he would need capable generals to expand and protect the land. Doing everything by himself was no way to run a state.

Niu Ben explained, “Your Highness, the chariots you designed have four wheels and are pulled by two horses. They’re very stable when grouped into formations and can be quickly deployed against cavalry. To prevent the barbarians from sending slave soldiers to destroy them, I’ve arranged for eighteen men per chariot: ten musket soldiers, six sword-and-shield fighters, and two drivers.”

Xiao Ming was very satisfied with the arrangement. The musketeers could deal with cavalry and enemy infantry from a distance, while the sword-and-shield fighters could defend the chariots against close-range attacks.

These soldiers would ride inside the chariots and move with the army. That meant they could enter combat immediately once danger was spotted.

“Very well. Use that formation. Once the soldiers from the other provinces arrive, have them train together with the musketeers.”

Time was running out. Before the barbarians made their move south, Xiao Ming needed his army to be ready for battle—to ensure they didn’t suffer a devastating defeat at the hands of the nomadic cavalry.

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After checking the first chariot, Xiao Ming went on to inspect the other squads and their training before returning to the prince’s manor.

Equipping the army with flintlocks was just one part of it. Proper training and strict discipline were what would allow the weapons to be used effectively in actual combat.

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Back at the manor, Xiao Ming returned to his long-term project—writing teaching materials. The recent achievements of Lu Tong and Lin Wentao had made it clear that his books were making a real impact.

These weren’t just piles of paper—they were carriers of knowledge. The students of Bowen Academy were beginning to understand and apply knowledge they had never seen before.

That was exactly what Xiao Ming wanted. Only when more and more people accepted scientific knowledge would the seeds of cultural revival take root and eventually erupt like a volcano.

Because of this, Xiao Ming felt even more motivated. Previously, he had completed the curriculum for middle school. Now, he was starting on the high school level textbooks.

In addition, he planned to set up laboratories in every academy so that students could put their ideas into action.

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Over the next two months, Xiao Ming personally traveled back and forth between the military camp, merchant guild, weapons factory, and slave plantations—supervising everything from training and exports to firearm production and crop cultivation.

Last year, Qingzhou had grown too fast. As a result, many institutions were understaffed and disorganized.

That's why instead of rushing into new ventures, Xiao Ming chose to slow down and focus on building strong foundations. Every department had to function properly.

In the military camp, after discussions with Niu Ben and other officers, he announced the establishment of a military tribunal.

Xiao Ming wrote a military law code and handed it to Niu Ben.

The laws included strict punishments for violations of military discipline. For example, desertion meant immediate execution. Crimes like raping women, leaking military secrets, and selling military supplies were all punishable by death.

These laws were based on modern military regulations. Xiao Ming had adapted them to fit the current time and handed them over for immediate use.

He also updated Qingzhou's civil laws, publishing the new regulations in local newspapers so that civilians would know what behaviors were considered illegal.

At the same time, to encourage people in every field to contribute to Qingzhou's development, Xiao Ming upgraded the reward system.

Those who made outstanding contributions would be granted noble titles. These titles came with matching social status and, in some cases, private land.

"Gong of the Commandery, Gong of the County, Hou of the Commandery, Hou of the County, Bo of the County, Zi of the County, Nan of the County," Pang Yukun read aloud in the governor's office.

In total, there were eight noble titles. The system came from the Tang Dynasty. There were also titles like Prince and Heir Prince, but those were too high—Xiao Ming didn't have the authority to grant those. So he only included the latter eight.

“What do you think of this system, Chief Secretary Pang?” Xiao Ming asked.

“You want to give noble titles to commoners?” Pang Yukun was more than shocked—he was stunned.

Yes, the Great Yu Empire had a nobility system. But these titles were typically reserved for royalty, noble clans, or awarded to heroes who had contributed to the founding of the state.

Now Xiao Ming wanted to hand out noble ranks to anyone who made contributions to Qingzhou.

“That’s right,” Xiao Ming said with a smile. “The titles will be mostly honorary, but they’ll also come with heritable land.”

Pang Yukun was still struggling to process the idea. “Then... what kind of achievements would qualify someone for these titles?”

Xiao Ming had already prepared for that. He handed over a thick register listing the requirements.

Pang Yukun opened the merit log and began reading carefully.

The document separated achievements into different professions—government officials, farmers, merchants, craftsmen, students, and soldiers. Every category had its own criteria for earning a title.

Officials could earn titles through major public service. Craftsmen could earn them through invention and skill. Students could gain them through innovation. Soldiers were rewarded based on military merit.

Even the lowest title, baron, came with 300 mu of permanent farmland—land that could be passed down to heirs.

The higher the title, the more land was granted.

After reading it all, Pang Yukun said, “Your Highness, you are truly a bold and unconventional leader. In the past, titles were reserved only for soldiers. But now, you’ve opened it to every walk of life. This will greatly motivate the people in your territory. I have no objections.”

Xiao Ming nodded. “Good. Then I’ll have the newspaper publish the new title system for everyone to see.”

Pang Yukun smiled and nodded.

In the past, he would have argued against such drastic changes. But over the last year, Xiao Ming had proven that even his strangest policies usually worked.

Now, Pang Yukun supported every new reform Xiao Ming proposed—unless it was absolutely ridiculous.

With his chief secretary's approval, Xiao Ming handed the job of promoting the noble title system to the newspaper office.

To him, the titles themselves weren't the most important part. What mattered was what they represented: honor.

He wanted to build a Qingzhou where honor and loyalty meant everything.