

Longevity 114

Chapter 114: Annual Salary Arrives at Sha Village! The Anticipation of Zhao Ying and Her Mother!

But Zhao Ying, having left the courtyard and turned around, felt some trepidation. Big brother, you absolutely must not let anything happen to you; you have to stay alive.

Clearly, Zhao Ying had deliberately not allowed Mrs. Zhao to go. If something truly had happened to her brother, she could keep the news from reaching their mother's ears if she alone knew about it. But if Mrs. Zhao herself had gone, it would have been irreversible.

「At the village entrance!」

It didn't take long before several hundred people had gathered—men and women, old and young. Households unrelated to the military watched with a sense of spectacle, while military families were filled with both nervousness and anticipation.

With the distribution of the Annual Salary, each household's life could improve a little. They could use the money to buy better daily necessities and purchase some charcoal. Winter was already approaching, which was always the most arduous time. In this era, a great number of people froze to death each year, and money was universally accepted in Qin.

"Wu Lizheng, have all the military families in the village arrived?" the Commander of Five Hundred, dispatched by the Shaofu, asked the Village Chief.

"Replying to the Lord," Wu Lizheng answered quickly after a glance, "all the military families are here."

"Good," the Commander of Five Hundred nodded and then turned to look at the gathered villagers.
"Then begin the distribution of the Annual Salary."

He was neither a soldier in the main battle camp nor the Logistics Army. Instead, he was one of the Prefecture Soldiers stationed in the Prefectural City. During wartime, his duty was to patrol the Prefectural City, guarding against spies and preventing enemies from causing trouble in the rear. Once the war ended, he would assist the Shaofu in distributing the Annual Salary. In this era, there were many mountain bandits; such threats could only be prevented by a proper army. Even in the mighty Qin, bandits existed.

In the past, there had been audacious bandits who robbed the funds for the Annual Salary. But since Ying Zheng began to rule in person, he paid extra attention to this matter and took great care of the soldiers who joined the army. A royal edict was issued directly, stipulating that anyone who dared to rob the Annual Salary would have their entire family and clan exterminated. Additionally, the state dispatched troops to eliminate most of the bandits within its borders. After this, all the criminals of Qin knew that the military's Annual Salary was not to be touched. To do so was a path to certain death.

Under the ironclad laws of Qin, bandits and bullies had very little room for survival, especially closer to the capital. However, in more remote, mountainous, and forested regions, some evil-doers remained. No matter how powerful the era, evil always exists.

"A Royal Edict from the Great King to the military households of Qin!" the Commander of Five Hundred proclaimed, holding up a copied edict.

All at once, most of the villagers at the village entrance knelt, while a few bowed deeply in respect.

"We listen reverently to the Royal Edict!"

In Qin, those who held a military rank for their achievements in battle could meet the king without kneeling, but those without a title had to perform the kneeling ritual. This was a powerful reflection of the military merit system, allowing those with ranks and accomplishments to enjoy glory and dignity.

"Due to our Qin's campaign against Han, the distribution of the Annual Salary, which was to be issued each season, was delayed. Now that Han has been annihilated and its territory incorporated as Yingchuan County, all the Sharp Warriors of our Qin Army are meritorious."

"Today, we are specially distributing one full year's Annual Salary to all the Sharp Warriors of our Qin."

"To bestow favor upon the meritorious soldiers of our Qin," the Commander of Five Hundred announced loudly.

"May Qin last ten thousand years! May the Great King last ten thousand years!" all the villagers shouted.

The villagers naturally understood that this event marked a truly joyous occasion for Qin.

"Now, I will call out the names," Chen Fen announced loudly. "Those whose names are called may receive their military register's Annual Salary. My name is Chen Fen, Commander of Five Hundred of the Shaqiu County Prefecture Soldiers, appointed by the Shaofu to specifically oversee this distribution."

He then raised his hand and took a set of bamboo slips from a subordinate behind him, which contained the list of names for the salaries.

Opening the bamboo slips, Chen Fen proclaimed, "From Shaqiu County, Sha Village, Wu Da! Rank of second-level constructor, holding the position of Shizhang. He is entitled to an Annual Salary of one hundred dan, and a monthly official salary of three dan—totaling thirty-six dan for the year—for a combined total of one hundred and thirty-six dan."

In response, Wu Da's entire family immediately lit up with joy and stepped forward. Trembling with excitement, they said, "We are grateful for the Annual Salary granted by the Great King."

Behind them, a few soldiers in charge of the distribution took out money bags sealed with tags and handed one to Wu Da's father.

"Press your fingerprint to receive it," the distributing soldier called out.

"Yes," Wu Da's father replied, immediately pressing his fingerprint onto a piece of silk fabric.

Then, contentedly taking the money bag, he broke the seal. After all, in this era, not everyone was literate, nor did everyone have the opportunity to learn to read and write. The reason Zhao Feng could recognize the characters of this period was due to their similarities with those of later times, as well as his mother's teachings.

Returning to the matter at hand, the Annual Salary was issued in Qin money, with its value tied to its purchasing power and the price of grain. This year's salary was equivalent to being able to purchase one hundred and thirty-six dan of grain, which was more than enough for a whole family to live well.

After collecting the Annual Salary, Wu Da's family, all smiling, took the money and stepped back.

"Count your salary as soon as you receive it. If there is any discrepancy, report it at once," Chen Fen announced loudly. "Deliberately misreporting the amount or feigning concealment will be treated as a grave crime."

"We commoners understand," Wu Da's family replied, immediately moving to the side.

"Congratulations, congratulations."

"Your Wu Da has been promoted again, eh? Last year he was a Wuzhang, and now he's a Shizhang."

"Hahaha, I don't care about his promotion. As long as he can stay alive, I'm happy."

"That's true."

The surrounding villagers congratulated Wu Da's family one after another.

"Count the money. Make sure there are no mistakes," Wu Da's father instructed his family.

Then they began to count. The money had been strictly prepared before distribution, placed into money bags, each labeled with a name and secured with a seal.