

EXAMINATION OFFICIALS ARE SUED
BY SCHOLARS FOR FAVORITISM AND FRAUD¹⁵

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It would seem that the graders of the examination, who provoked numerous, unsuccessful candidates to lodge complaints, did their work too swiftly. People suspected that the results were prearranged as a result of corruption or that the grading was improperly done. Their suspicions were fueled by the fact that the names of successful men were leaked prematurely. The graders excused their haste by saying that they had other pressing official responsibilities and in addition wished to reduce the cost of the examination process by shortening the time spent at the examination site. Wang Shih-chai does not accept their arguments and orders a reconsideration of the failed papers.

The state recruits scholars every three years to serve the Imperial Court and administer the country. This is very important, Scholars take the examinations every three years to win honors for themselves

and prominence for their parents, which for them may be even more important. Much responsibility rests with the prefect.

Those who monitor the examinations should be at one with the prefect, supervising the examiners daily and giving every attention to the quality of the examination papers. Why should they frequently ask for permission to hurry in tearing off the covered numbers on the papers and announcing the winning candidates on the placard?¹⁶ Why should they use the saving of daily expenses as an excuse for their haste? Not long ago the appointed examiners themselves were nurtured by their seniors. Now is the time for them to nurture others. I do not understand what urgent state affairs make them so anxious to leave the examination hall.

From the eighth month [when the examinations were held] until now, complaints and lawsuits have come in plenty. Some accuse the examiners of deciding for personal reasons and others charge that the grading is fraudulent. Before the placard of successful candidates appeared, rumors [about who had passed] were already going around concerning many of the reportedly successful names, including a list of twenty-seven [men who passed]. If we recruit scholars this way [with the names being leaked prematurely], it will be impossible to remove the suspicion of the community, of the scholars, of the Imperial Court, and of the whole country. For the time being, I have sealed the submitted list of the eighty-three men¹⁷ and also ordered the examiners to select separately 249 papers¹⁸ from among the ones that were previously rejected by them. On the day when I myself come to the examination hall office, I will use my own discretion to make the decisions.