

## On the Horse Trade of Song Dynasty

### Abstract:

This article attempts to figure out the characteristics and change rule of horse trade of Song Dynasty, through historical quantitative analysis of its background, means, area, object, process, numbers, quality, and transportation.

The territory of Song became gradually small, owing to its failure in conflicts with Liao, Jin, and West Xia, whose people were good at riding and shooting. To meet military and political needs, Song had large-scale transactions with nomads around.

There were mainly two ways of horse trade. One way was to establish markets on the border, where the government could assign some persons in charge of buying horses. The other was to trade through tributes of nationalities around. The price of both ways was beneficial to the seller. The form of payment was initially copper cash, and then gradually changed to such real objects as silk, tea and salt.

The area of horse trade underwent drastic change, as a result of change of the frontier. Northern Song bought horses mainly from northwest area, while Southern Song mainly from southeast. The scales of trade were also quite different during earlier and later Song Dynasty.

There was specific institution responsible for horse trade, whose job was to regulate the process, number, quality, distribution, and transportation. But in practice, there existed lots of difficulties and demerits.