

## **Exploring the Institution of the Emperor's Inspection Tour through the Regulations on the Imperial Carriages in the Tang Dynasty**

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The escorting of an emperor on tour was a performance of state power as well as a symbol of political status. In terms of the ritual system, the *Da Tang Kaiyuan Li* recorded The Institution of Emperor's Inspection Tour by Escort Carriage (*lubu*), and these were ways for the emperor to show the majesty of the imperial power. In terms of the legal system, laws formulated the rewards and punishments of the following officials, and were also an important symbol upholding imperial power.

The time when the emperor went on tour was a critical moment when he most needed protection; and inclusion of an official in the escort was a key sign that he was seen as loyal. The Northern Command was mainly responsible for travel inside and outside the Xuanwu Gate, as well as attending the emperor on his travels, whether for tour, patrol or conquest. In fact, the Northern Command was the main force of the accompanying army. Because the Northern Command was still under the direction of the Southern Command, on such tours the emperor was primarily guarded by the Southern Command. The responsibilities of the Southern Command as the emperor's legal escort are spread throughout the articles of the Tang Code, reflecting the comprehensive scope of the protection expected of the Southern Command during imperial tours as well as the multiple forms that dereliction of duty by the Southern Command as the

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emperor's mobile guard could take. From this, the importance of the Southern Command in protecting the emperor during imperial tours as part of the imperial escort (*lubu*) may be seen.

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