ABSTRACT

The revolt led by Fang La was a major event occurred during the last hours of the Northern Song Empire. Although the revolt was suppressed by the government in a relatively short period of time, it was the largest revolt against the Song Empire in terms of the land areas and people involved.

Fang La's revolt is highly regarded by Mainland China historians, hailed as a good example of class struggle, the peasants' class versus the landlords' class.

The main objective of this academic exercise is to examine the true nature of this revolt, and why the revolt failed miserably although it had strong support from the people.

The study shows that the nature of the revolt was not a "peasants' revolution" (农民起义) the Mainland China historians tried to promote. It was actually an anti-government event, which involved different sectors of the society. Many reasons had contributed to the failure of the revolt, but the main reason was the management of armed forces by the Song Empire. It enabled the revolt to occur easily only to be suppressed comfortably by the soldiers. Although the revolt did not bring any positive effects to the nation and it's people, Fang La's revolt should not be condemned as a mindless violent riot. The revolt occurred because of the ill treatment of the people by the corrupted ruling class.
Other topics like the background of Fang La and the role religion played in the revolt have also been discussed in the thesis.