SUMMARY

This thesis attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis on the life and career of Lu Zhi and his views on government.

Chapter One discusses the aims and objectives of this research, as well as the source materials related to the topic.

Chapter Two discusses the political crisis at the time of Emperor Dezong. It is noted that after more than a century of internal stability, the rebellion of An Lushan in 755 AD. nearly brought the dynasty to its knees. The most serious long-term damage caused by the rebellion was the central government's loss of control over the provinces.

Chapter Three, biographical in nature, gives a general account of Lu Zhi's life, educational background, early career and his service at the court of Emperor Dezong. Chapter Four examines the influence of Confucian political philosophy on Lu Zhi and his high aspiration to pacific the world.

Chapter Five elaborates Lu Zhi's views on rulership. To Lu Zhi, the political crisis occurred during Dezong's time was not a matter of the mandate of Heaven, but entirely the problem of rulership. He believed that the hinge of a country's safety and danger is very much based on the emperor and, therefore, education pays a very important role in nurturing sage kings.

Chapter Six is a discussion of the "Seven Malpractices" of the imperial court as suggested by Lu Zhi. The chapter also covers proposals put forward by Lu Zhi on appointing and assessing government officials.
Chapter Seven deals with Lu Zhi’s views on frontier defense. Lu had suggested the revival of the militia system of early Tang so that the peasants forming the new militia would live in the area where their military units stationed.

Chapter Eight elucidated Lu Zhi’s views on Finance. Lu Zhi devoted much of his attention on the financial problems when he was the chief minister. His most important contribution was the submission of a six-part memorial in 794, on "making taxation equitable and thus show pity for the common people," which criticized the Liang Shui system and the many abuses that had grown up since its imposition.

Chapter Nine expounds Lu Zhi’s political bearing and his political talent. During his official career, Lu Zhi had been above all a moral preceptor on the classical Confucian model, exhorting his ruler to exercise power by a display of virtue and humility. He was also sharp in forecasting the political development of his times and warned the emperor of possible danger.

The last chapter is a conclusion on Lu Zhi’s contributions to the history of the Tang dynasty. His contribution can be summed up in four main areas: 1. He successfully solved the political crisis of Emperor Dezong and made way for the Tang dynasty to prosper for another hundred years. 2. He reformed the machinery for appointing government officials and as a result recruited many talented young officials for the court. 3. His views on defense did not only affect the Tang but were also quoted by reformers of the Ming dynasty. 4. His proposals on financial reform and amendments on the Liang Shui system became the foundation of Xianzong’s restoration.