

The Qing court summoned three times

On the fifth day of the first lunar month in the 24th year of the Guangxu reign (February 11, 1898), the Qing court ordered Wang Wenshao, Zhang Zhidong, and Sheng Xuanhuai to report on the "rapid construction of the Guangdong Han Railway" in various sections, and the Lu Han Railway began to be jointly developed with the Guangdong Han Railway in the north and south. Sheng Xuanhuai first signed a loan contract with Hexing Company in the United States through the ambassador to the United States and Spain, Wu Tingfang. At the same time, Zhang Bishi was called to request funding for the purchase of railway land, and promised that "all mining areas near the Guangdong Han Railway can be subscribed to by shareholders" as a preferential condition. Zhang Bishi actively responded by publishing prospectus advertisements in Singapore and domestic newspapers to attract capital. In the 24th year of the Guangxu reign, Zhang Bishi was invited by Sheng Xuanhuai to return to Guangdong to discuss the preparation of the railway. He was appointed as the General Manager of the Guangdong Han Railway and was in charge of the preliminary construction of the Guangsan Railway. The road is divided into two sections for construction, namely the Provincial Buddha Branch Road (from Guangzhou to Foshan) and the Provincial Three Branch Road (from Guangzhou to Sanshui). Construction began in the 27th year of the Guangxu reign (1901) and was completed in the 29th year of the Guangxu reign (1909). In 1898, Zhang Bishi was summoned back to China and was summoned by Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu. In 1903, the General Administration of Railways and Mines reported that Zhang Bishi had invested a huge sum of 200000 taels to undertake the Railway and Mining School.

Emperor Guangxu issued an edict to summon Zhang Bishi. In this meeting, Zhang Bishi presented a memorial proposing twelve policies on how to enrich the country, including:

- 1、 Attracting investment and undertaking agricultural and mining projects.
- 2、 Inviting investment and promoting water conservancy.
- 3、 Cultivate mountains and cultivate crops.
- 4、 Xingken Shanli Mining.
- 5、 Inviting investment to establish water conservancy projects.
- 6、 Both cultivated and uncultivated areas should be prepared for water conservancy.
- 7、 Attracting investment to establish a rural loan company.
- 8、 Inviting investment to establish crafts and recruiting workers.
- 9、 Attracting investment and setting up railway tracks to guide the way.
- 10、 Attracting merchants and civilians from other cities.
- 11、 The full measurement method should be planned one.
- 12、 Add commercial officials from various provinces.

Emperor Guangxu greatly appreciated the patriotic overseas Chinese leader in front of him, and at the same time, Zhang Bishi donated 300000 taels of silver to show his patriotism. This made Empress Dowager Cixi treat Zhang Bishi particularly well, and immediately rewarded him with the rank of Third Rank Jingtang Candidate and the title of Assistant Minister. At the same time, he was ordered to find ways to attract Chinese businessmen to revitalize industry.

In 1904, the gentry, merchants, and scholars from the three provinces of Hunan, Hubei, and Guangdong demanded the abolition of the contract signed between the Qing government and American companies for the sale of the Guangdong Han Railway, advocating for the recovery of railway rights and the collection of shares for self operation. In the struggle to reclaim the right of way, Zhang Bishi appeared as a representative of the gentry and merchants of Guangdong, and together with the gentry and merchants of the

whole province, he established contact with the provinces of Hunan and Hubei, vigorously resisting the court. The Qing court was intimidated by the anger of the masses, so they took back the Guangdong Han Railway and allowed it to be operated by merchants and civilians. Emperor Guangxu issued an order to appoint Zhang Zhenxun, the alternate third rank Jingtang, as the Minister of Commerce of the Southern Expedition, to oversee the construction of agriculture, industry, railways, and mines in Fujian and Guangzhou. He ordered him to raise funds to build railways. At this time, Zhang Bishi utilized his influence in overseas Chinese to attract many overseas Chinese to return to China for investment. Within a year, he raised and self invested a large amount of capital, allowing the construction of the Guangdong Han Railway to continue. At the end of the year, Zhang Zhidong reported that Zhang Bishi and others had worked hard and made great contributions to the country. After the memorial, Emperor Guangxu granted Zhang Bishi a headscarf to wear as a commendation.