

The Thought of Governing Country and Employing People in the Period of Emperor Wu of Han

-- Take the Appointment of Imperial History Officials as Examples

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Abstract. The Han Dynasty is of great significance to the process of the unification of China, and the system of the Han Dynasty also laid the foundation for the political system of China for more than 1,000 years. Among them, Emperor Wu was the key figure in the transition of the Han Dynasty system. Scholars generally summarize the ruling thought of Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty as external Confucianism and internal law, which is not accurate. From the analysis of the selection and appointment of the imperial officials in the Emperor Wu's dynasty, we can find that Emperor Wu's governance and employment strategy are based on his own will, which reflects strong functionalism and totalitarianism. Confucianism, as the mainstream thought advertised at that time, was more of a decoration.

Keywords: Emperor Wu of Han; The Imperial History Officials; Monarchical Consciousness; Functionalism; Aid Confucianism into Law.

1. Introduction

As the first unitary feudal dynasty in Chinese history, the politics of the Western Han Dynasty has long been highly concerned by academic circles. As one of the most important emperors in the Han Dynasty, Emperor Wu's theory of governance and political thought had a decisive impact on the whole Western Han Dynasty and even the Chinese history of more than two thousand years.[1]

Most people used to accept the outline in the textbook that Emperor Wu "overthrew all other schools of thought and respected Confucianism alone" and mistakenly regarded Confucianism as the mainstream thought during Emperor Wu's reign. However, if we read the original book carefully, it is not difficult to find that the "exclusive respect for Confucianism" is actually the words of the Song Confucians, and the original words of Emperor Wu were "ouster hundreds of schools and form the six classics". Emperor Xuan of the Han Dynasty angrily denounced the prince's famous sentence, "The Han family has its own system, which is mixed with the king's road, how can pure benevolent rule, with Zhou Dynasty politics?" [2] It also shows the essence of the political system of the Han Dynasty. It was not until the Emperor Yuan that the country really put Confucianism on the main position. Because of this, the ruling ideology of Emperor Wu is generally summarized as "With Confucianism as the packaging, actually for the legalist thought". There is certainly some reasonable to this statement, but whether it is accurate is debatable.[3]

But there is no doubt that Emperor Wu can never be simply classified as Confucianism or legalism. Confucianism was not the mainstream in the reign of Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty, but only used to decorate the officials. Criminal law is not the patent of legalists, and the application of harsh government politics and heavy criminal law does not come from the worship of legalists. The ruling ideas of Emperor Wu had complexity and multiplicity. This article tries to distinguish the Emperor Wu's thoughts of governing the country and employing people by taking the appointment of imperial history officials in the period of Emperor Wu of Han as examples.

2. Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty Imperial History Doctors Overview

Table 1. All the imperial history doctors appointed by Emperor Wu of Han [4]

Name	Term of office (years)	In office time	background	Official position before serving as imperial history doctors	Transfer situation	Outcome
Niu Di	1	140BC-139BC	/	prime minister in Qi	/	/
Zhao Wan	2	139BC-137BC	Confucian scholar, learned from Shen Peigong	Recruit good scholars of literature and get an officer	die in the post of imperial history doctor	Suicide in prison
Zhuang Qingzhai	2	137BC-135BC	The grandson of Wu Qianghou, Inherit the title	Wu Qianghou	Prince shaofu, promoted prime minister	Suicide to escape punishment
Han Anguo	4	135BC-131BC	Civilians, learn Han Feizi and theory of miscellaneous families	Under the curtain of King Liang Xiao ...	Demotion	Die of an illness
Zhang Ou	5	131BC-126BC	Good at the study of criminal, descendant of an eminent family	lieutenant	Removed because of old age and illness	A natural death
Gong Sunhong	2	126BC-124BC	Civilian; warder; later Confucian scholar	As a doctor and a left internal history	Promoted to prime minister and marquis	A natural death
Fan Xi	2	124BC-122BC	Local magistrate	Right inner history, Hedong governor	/	/
Li Cai	1	121BC-120BC	soldier	Light riding general	Promoted prime minister	Suicide
Zhang Tang	6	120BC-115BC	Civilian, Chang'an official	Court lieutenant	Die in office	Suicide
Shi Qing	3	115BC-111BC	Son of Wan Shijun, after the famous family	Governor of Pei County; Prince Taifu	Promoted prime minister	A natural death
Bu Shi	1	111BC-110BC	Shepherd and merchant	Taifu of Qi	Disparaged as prince Taifu	A natural death
Ni Kuan	8	110BC-102BC	Confucian scholars	Left inner history	Die in office	A natural death
Yan Guang	2	102BC-100BC	Local magistrate	Jiaodong magistrate	/	/
Wang Qing	2	100BC-98BC	Local magistrate	Jinan magistrate	Die in office	Suicide
Du Zhou	4	98BC-95BC	Civilian, Nanyang County officer	ZhiJinwu (Officialname)	Die in office	Die of an illness
Pu Shengzhi	3	94BC-91BC	Embroidery clothing emissary (local inspector officials)	Gwanglu doctor	Die in office	Suicide
Shang Qiucheng	4	91BC-87BC	Military merit (to smooth the rebellion of the crown prince)	Big Hong Lu	Die in office	Suicide
Sang Hongyang	7	87BC-80BC	merchants	lieutenant	Die in office	Be killed

(Mainly based on the Book of Han official table and other materials) [5]

First of all, I will display all the imperial history doctors appointed by Emperor Wu of Han, sort out their origins, positions before serving as imperial history doctors, transfer situation and outcome, to explore Emperor Wu's reign and employment preference.

3. The Imperial History Doctor's Tenure and Outcome Analysis

As can be seen from the data in the above table, the imperial historian officials in the Wudi Dynasty served for more than seven or eight years, or less than one or two years. Someone died of illness, but also calculate a good result; Some were promoted halfway and became prime minister. Eight ended up committing a crime/being framed for suicide. What caused their fate was not only related to their own ability and conduct, but also closely related to Emperor Wudi's thoughts on governing the country and employing people.

To sum up, persons whose long term is in that office were mainly due to their proper cooperation with Emperor Wu. The short term of office, there are no more than three reasons, rapid promotion, early death of illness or offend Emperor Wu. Among the seventeen imperial history officials (except Sang Hongyang, who served as Imperial history officials in the Xuandi Dynasty), Ni Kuan, Zhang Tang and Zhang Ou had a longer term, while Bu Shi, Wang Qing and so on were typical transgressors of Emperor Wudi and ended their terms hastily.

Ni Kuan, a commoner, was a Confucian scholar who was taught by Ouyang Sheng and Kong Anguo to learn the Book Shangshu. In terms of identity alone, Ni Kuan seems to belong to the Confucian scholars selected by Emperor Wu to carry out the policy of respecting Confucianism. In fact, Ni Kuan officials to the Three Councillors of State and served for eight years until his death, which had little to do with his identity as a Confucian scholar. Ni Kuan because of good to Shang Shu teaching decision litigation, by the charge of prison Zhang Tang appreciation and started. When he was promoted to left inner history, he was valued by Wudi for his outstanding performance in exceeding the national rental tax. When the Emperor asked about the matter of sealing Zen, he answered, "It is not seen in the classics, only the emperor ordered" , in the middle of the emperor's mind, was appointed as the imperial history officials. For several years in office, he "held office to his own will, so he had nothing to remonstrate for a long time, and was despised by his subordinates". Do nothing, protect the position just, and even look down upon by others.[6]

Zhang Tang's life story is more brilliant and complex. [7] Born in a family of ordinary officials, he was originally an official of Chang 'an. With the harsh law of severe punishment, the deep style of cruel officials and the ability to govern officialdom, Zhang Tang was deeply valued and dependent by Emperor Wu. When he went to the imperial historian official, he even had overhead the prime minister. Each business should be decided by the hands of Zhang Tang. As the most famous representative of cruel officials in Chinese history, Zhang Tang can be said to be a sword for Emperor Wudi to eradicate the local powerful and aristocratic forces of the imperial family. Whether it is to track down the henchmen behind the witch plot of Empress Chen, or to pursue and vigorously investigate the treason of King Huainan and King Jiangdu, Zhang Tang has shown extremely strong, extremely brutal iron and blood wrist. Not only for the emperor Wu clear the road ahead of obstacles, Zhang Tang know how to figure out the emperor Wu's intention. Later, Du Zhou said: "Where does the law come from? What was made by the former emperor and what was spoken by the present saint is a decree." Du Zhou act as an official is to emulate Zhang Tang.

Zhang Ou acted with prudence and steadiness. During his five or six years in office, there is no injustice in prison. He was also Emperor Wu's right-hand man.

As for the very short term of Bu Shi, started from the strong promotion of Emperor Wu of Han , dethroning is also Emperor Wu's command. Because he actively cooperated with Emperor Wudi in conquering the cause of the Huns and supplementing the state Treasury, Emperor Wudi followed his example to educate the people of the country and gave him an official grant. After he was promoted to the position of imperial history official, he was demoted after a year. Because of the opposition to the salt and iron monopoly, calculate min and other national economic policies,Bu Shi angered the emperor Wu and disparaged quickly.

It can be seen that the length of the term of the imperial historian officials was highly related to the degree of cooperation with Emperor Wu of Han. Those who could try their best to cater to the saints

and whose political thoughts were similar to those of Emperor Wu had a smoother and longer career. On the contrary, those who had a rift with Emperor Wu naturally could not protect their position.

4. Emperor Wu's Preference for Employment -- Analysis from the Common Characteristics of Imperial History Officials

After studying the length of tenure of the imperial doctors, we continue to analyze the employment strategy of Emperor Wu in terms of their origins and promotion channels. Looking carefully at the above table, it is not difficult to see that among the people who sat in the imperial history officials position in Emperor Wu's dynasty, only three were from serious famous families, accounting for about 17%; There are only three Confucian scholars, accounting for about 17%; The remaining ten or so were promoted all the way to the imperial history doctor due to their meritocracy, outstanding local governance ability or good governance of prison, accounting for more than 60%.

Through the above data analysis, we can find the common characteristics of these imperial history officials: first, most of them were born ordinary, without prominent family background or social status; Second, there were far more capable officials than Confucian scholars.

Imagine, these people are ranking among the three public officials and holding high positions, they did not have strong background support, nor did they conform to the Confucian political thought advertised by the Wu Dynasty. So, for what reason and for what purpose did Emperor Wu choose such a group of imperial history officials to assist the government?

First of all, because most of the imperial history officials came from the families of civilians or low-ranking officials, they were not entangled by intertwined clan forces and were not limited to factional disputes. Since it is not much involved with the forces of all parties, it is conducive to attacking the dignitaries and the clan for Emperor Wu and eradicating the dissenters. These relatively weak individuals are easily controlled by the imperial power, dependent on the monarch personally, representing the personified imperial power, and can closely follow the will of the emperor.

At the same time, the selection of imperial history officials mainly focused on the shrewd and able officials rather than the Confucians who were really good at speaking Confucian principles, which reflected the strong functionalism in the recruitment strategy of Emperor Wu of Han. Fundamentally speaking, Emperor Wu always looked down on those Confucians who cherished Confucian ideals and were impractical and pedantic. What he needs is people with strong action, first-rate governance and supervision ability as his ruling tools.

We can prove this view through Emperor Wu's attitude towards different Confucian scholars. For the true Confucian scholars, such as Dr. Di Shan, who had a dispute with Zhang Tang over the matter of the Xiongnu, Zhang Tang called him "such a stupid scholar and ignorant." And for Zhang Tang's remarks, Emperor Wu also showed the meaning of recognition, and "send Di Shan to take Zhang (name of an ancient state in what is today's Shandong Province)", which ultimately caused the death of Di Shan. Another example is Dong Zhongshu, who put forward the famous theory of "ouster hundreds of schools", and soon was put outside to assist the arrogant and reckless King Jiangdu Liu Fei. Soon after, he was sent to prison again for speaking of disaster and was not moved to an important position in the court for the rest of his life.

As for the few Confucian scholars among the imperial physicians, Emperor Wu did not pay much attention to their Confucian accomplishment. At the beginning of Emperor Wu's accession to the throne, he deliberately appointed several Confucian scholars, such as Zhao Wan and Wang Zang, to hold important posts in the central government. Not only because of the influence of Confucianism received in his childhood, but also in order to get rid of the control of Empress Dowmother Dou and change the status quo of the conservative. Unfortunately, Zhao Wan was soon convicted and committed suicide because carrying out the Confucian policy of establishing the Ming Hall and promoting the ritual system to contend for power with the Empress Dowager Dou. "Through the Spring and Autumn Annals, the common people sat to the position of the son of Heaven, and

conferred the title of Pingjin Marquis", Gongsunhong had been in the imperial history official on the transition of two years, deeply trusted by the emperor Wu. Gongsunhong "was a jailer of Xue(place name) when he was young", but he made his fortune by following Confucian scriptures. But his ability to hold high office for many years is inseparable from smooth flattery and catering to the sacred heart. The Confucian master Yuangusheng once mocked him: "Gongsunzi, the speech must be based on the correct theory, and must never misinterpret the meaning to cater to the hearts of the world." Throughout his life, Gong Sunhong was nothing but a "scholar and law official, adorned with Confucianism", Confucianism was an important aid to his promotion, but it was really not the reason why he won the trust of Emperor Wu for a long time. As for Ni Kuan, the previous part has been detailed, and will not be repeated here.

Therefore, for Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, who had great talent and strong political ambition, Confucian doctrines could not fulfill his grant ambition and hegemony. In the face of the social situation that gradually accumulated disadvantages, Emperor Wu valued immediate results and heavy punishments that could solve problems.

From this point of view, Emperor Wu's tendency to choose people with less illustrious families and strong utilitarian characteristics has been obvious. [8]

5. Confucianism Adorn Politics -- An Analysis of the Reasons Why Emperor Wu Chose to "Respect Confucianism"

Above, we have used a lot of ink to demonstrate that Emperor Wu has no special preference for Confucianism, and the desire to respect Confucian scholars is not strong, so why so fanatically put out the fame of "respecting Confucianism"?

The period of Emperor Wu was the key point of the transition of the Western Han Dynasty. After several generations of emperors and Huang-lao techniques, the crux of Western Han society has been gradually revealed. Local landlords controlled commerce and the common people; The power of the vassal states was allowed to expand, and the battles between the clans and nobles were frequent, even coveting the imperial throne. There are Huns outside. Coupled with the shocks brought by various political struggles after Emperor Wu ascended the throne, the political means and vision of Emperor Wu became sharper and sharper. Only by holding all the power in his own hands could he save the declining trend and create a prosperous era. And Emperor Wu was an emperor who wanted to leave a holy name for the ages, so such power politics needed a veneer of polish. At this time, neo-Confucianism came into the sight of Emperor Wu.

Although Emperor Wu was influenced by the Empress Dowager Dou, he had to practice Taoism, Wang Zang, the Confucian scholar, once "regarded Emperor Jing as the prince ShaoFu" and served as the teacher of Emperor Wu. So Emperor Wu was familiar with Confucianism when he was young, [9] When Dong Zhongshu put forward the book Countermeasures of Selecting Virtuous Men naturally did not feel strange. Dong Zhongshu's new Confucianism was quickly favored by Emperor Wu of Han because of his new unified ideological system which integrated Confucianism, law and Yin-yang school. This new thought not only denied the one-sidedness of legalists emphasizing the rule of law, taking officials as teachers and abandoning the rule of culture, education and virtue, but also absorbed legalists' thoughts of centralization and despotism and focusing on punishment. It satisfied the Han people's extreme rejection of Qin's tyranny and legalist policy, and at the same time was in line with Emperor Wu's ambition of strengthening centralization. It not only negates the weakness of Huang Lao's passivity and neglect of human's subjective initiative, but also absorbs the essence of his natural view, Yin and Yang penal virtues and other thoughts. All these hit off with Emperor Wu who was eager to strengthen his monarchy.

Just as Ji An said, "Your Majesty has a lot of desire in his heart, only on the surface of benevolence and righteousness, how can you really imitate the achievements of Tang Yao and Yu Shun!" In this way, Emperor Wu found a good coat for his power politics. At this stage, Confucianism has not

adjusted itself well to meet the social changes and ruling needs, so "adorning politics with the benevolence and justice of Confucianism" is just right. There were numerous examples of Emperor Wu aiding Confucianism into law, and Confucianism played an auxiliary role in criminal law to a great extent, making Emperor Wu's decisions in both law and theory convincing people. [10]

6. Conclusion

It is widely said that Emperor Wu began to respect Confucianism exclusively in Han Dynasty. However, this article proves that Confucianism is only a relatively light factor in Emperor Wu's selection of officials from the perspective of important official posts in Han Dynasty. During Emperor Wu's period, the monarch's self-consciousness was awakened unprecedentedly, and his governing and employing strategies were based on the monarch's own will and aimed at strengthening the centralization. The concrete implementation of the process reflects a strong color of pragmatism, reflected in the level of officials as cruel politics, the official political thought of Confucianism is still in the stage of decoration rule.

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