

The Education of Prison Officers in Late Qing Dynasty

Jiaxin Cui^{1, 2, a}

¹School of History, Hebei University, Baoding 071000, China

²Editorial Department, the National Police University for Criminal Justice, Baoding 071000,

China

^a37146391@QQ.com

Abstract: During the period of prison reform in the late Qing Dynasty, the late Qing government began to attach importance to the training of prison officers, and adopted a series of measures, such as holding prison education, training prison specialized managers, and improving the rank and treatment of prison officers. In the late Qing Dynasty, the government has achieved positive results in the training of prison officers in a short period of time, attracting some excellent talents, but there are also many problems.

Keywords: Late Qing Dynasty, Prison reform, Prison Officers.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are many problems in prison management in China due to the low quality of prison administrators, the lack of strict selection and appointment, and the lack of professionals. Facing all kinds of drawbacks of prisons, the late Qing government also realized that in order to fundamentally change the backwardness of prisons, it is necessary to improve the quality of managers. In the late Qing Dynasty, the government combined with the specific situation at that time, mainly from two aspects: one is to organize school education to train prison management professionals. The second is to reform the official system and improve the rank and treatment of prison officials. The reform has achieved certain results and attracted some excellent talents. However, since the late Qing Dynasty was in the initial stage of training prison personnel in modern times, there was no historical experience to be found before, mainly referring to the practices of Western countries, resulting in a certain gap between the idea and the actual effect.

2. GENERAL SITUATION OF PRISON OFFICERS BEFORE PRISON REFORM IN LATE QING DYNASTY

2.1 Prison administration is not independent and prison officers have unclear powers and responsibilities

In ancient China, judicature and administration were inseparable, and judgment and execution were inseparable. Traditional prisons are subordinate to the Judicial and Administrative Offices. Although there are different forms of prison settings from the central to local, and prison officials are responsible for the management, in fact, prison officials are only responsible for handling various specific prison affairs, and the real power of prison management is still in the hands of the Chief Executive at all levels. There were two kinds of prison officials in Qing Dynasty: prison officials and prison officers. Prison officers are the supreme leaders of prisons in all parts of the country, and also the chief administrative officers of all parts of the country. For example, county magistrate, they have jurisdiction over prisons, but they have many jobs and many affairs, so they have no time to interrogate prison affairs at all. The other type of prison officers is prison officers, who are actually responsible for the management of prisons, guards and prison affairs. Although they are full-time prison officers, they have no jurisdiction over prisons.

2.2 Lack of professionals in prison management

Prison officers have long been regarded as inferior positions in the eyes of the secular world. Generally speaking, people who read books seldom study the law and are more reluctant to engage in prison-related affairs. In Chinese feudal society, prisons, like other compulsory tools, were mostly operated by people who lacked legal knowledge. Officials and jailers are often lower-class people with neither knowledge nor shame. Local prisons even appoint some people of bad conduct and cruelty as jailers. These people basically do not have the professional knowledge reserve to act as prison officers, neither have certain legal knowledge, nor have the moral quality of loyalty and kindness, so they can not manage the prison reasonably and effectively. Lack of professional personnel in prison management inevitably seriously affected judicial efficiency, resulting in a vicious circle of prisons, which became an important cause of the darkness of prisons in the Qing Dynasty.

2.3 Prison officers have low status and low salaries

In terms of political status, prison officers have very low ranks and are at the bottom of the whole rank system. What's more, their income is extremely low. As a result, they often vent their discontent on the prisoners, through the exploitation of the prisoners and their families to maintain their livelihood, and do their utmost to corrupt the law, extortion, cruel and tyrannical ability. During the New Deal Period of the late Qing Dynasty, under the double pressure from home and abroad, the Qing government reformed the prison, changed the backward concepts with punishmentism and revenge as the core in the past, and gradually formed the modern prison management concepts with the theme of inspiration and humanitarianism. With the deepening of prison reform, the problem of personal quality and training of prison officers has gradually

attracted the attention of people of insight. In order to achieve the effect of prison reform as soon as possible, we must attach importance to the training and appointment of prison officers.

3. MAIN MEASURES OF THE LATE QING GOVERNMENT TO TRAIN PRISON OFFICERS

3.1 To organize prison schools and carry out prison officer education

Shen Jiaben, Minister of Law in the late Qing Dynasty, had a profound understanding of the training of prison personnel. In April 1907, he proposed to the late Qing government to train prison officers, and advocated that "prison schools should be set up in the law schools of various provinces or new prisons established to train prison officers". Once the proposal was put forward, it received a positive response from the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice advocates that in addition to establishing "prison discipline" in the Law School of Beijing Normal University, prison specialties should be set up in all the law and politics schools outside Beijing, and students of higher legal and political schools should be selected for special research. Where a new type of prison has been established, a prison school should be attached. Soon the Ministry of Education issued official documents to Beijing Normal University and the provincial law and politics schools to implement them. In 1907, the School of Justice and Politics of Beijing Normal University opened a prison department. It not only compiled specialized courses of prison science, but also selected students from the School of Justice and Politics to specialize in prison management skills. At the same time, it hired Japanese prison scientist Koizhiro to lecture on prison science. Various government-run prison schools have been set up in various provinces. Not only that, people from all over the country have sent out to study the advanced system of prison justice, sent overseas students to Japan and other countries to study prison science knowledge, and trained a number of overseas students with prison science knowledge.

3.2 Reform of the judicial system to improve the quality and treatment of prison officials

The officials in charge of prison administration in ancient China not only had low political status, but also had very low salaries. It can be said that apart from the shortcomings of the system leading to lax appointment, under the heavy pressure of life, it is not surprising that the warders and jailers exploit the prisoners. In order to get rid of the bad habit of corruption and malpractice of prison officials and jailers, Shen Jiaben pointedly put forward the idea of "changing the grade of prison officials" in order to improve the political status and economic treatment of prison officials, so that the shortcomings of corruption and malpractice of traditional prison officials and jailers can be solved naturally. The Ministry of Justice has also proposed an increase in prison officers'salaries. The late Qing government accepted these suggestions and carried out judicial reform. The reform ended the confusion of prison administration, justice and administration. Special prison managers at all levels have been set up. Local departments have been changed from the Procuratorate. Prison departments have been set up to specialize in one province's prison administration. Each section usually has one section chief, one first-class section member, two second-class sections and several clerks. At

the same time, the grade of prison officers at all levels has been improved accordingly. The chief of the prison section is five-grade, the first-grade is six-grade, the second-grade is seven-grade, and the secretary is 89-grade. The economic treatment of prison officials at all levels has also been improved, which is a great progress compared with before the reform. For the first time, the political status of prison officials has been raised to a higher level, and the predicament of economic treatment has been changed.

4. POSITIVE EVALUATION

4.1 A more scientific and systematic plan for training prison personnel has been formulated

In the late Qing Dynasty, all kinds of prison schools had detailed regulations on the admission qualification, length of study and content of study. As far as admission qualification is concerned, the prison departments of various prison schools or law and politics schools have certain restrictions on the age, educational level and quality of the enrollees. From the source, the selection of prison officials' quality has been strengthened. At the same time, in the training mode of prison officers, most of them have arranged practical training, which not only pays attention to the theoretical knowledge learning of students, but also strengthens the training of practical ability. The content of theoretical study is rich, including Chinese and Western legal knowledge. Students must pass the examination before they can graduate. The qualities of prison officials trained through such formal education are quite different from those of former prison officials and jailers. They have become the backbone of prison reform in the late Qing Dynasty and the essential talent basis for the modernization of Chinese prisons.

4.2 The policy of improving the grade of prison officers is a powerful incentive mechanism for prison employees

It will help to change the traditional thinking of the people and improve the enthusiasm of prison officials in the long run. Judging from the present situation, in the past, people seldom studied prison science specially. Most of the students preferred to be the smallest official rather than the warder. Their disdain for prison affairs was deeply rooted. The Qing government improved the quality of prison officials and the treatment of prison officials, which not only helped to change people's outdated ideas, but also helped attract a large number of outstanding talents to study in prison schools and engage in prison management. At the same time, it also stimulated the enthusiasm of existing prison officials and promoted the development of prison system to a more benign direction.

4.3 Great contributions have been made to the training of prison administrators in modern times

Although the rule of the Qing Dynasty went to extinction shortly after the reform of the prison system, many measures could not be implemented, the prison in the late Qing Dynasty was still full of a large number of old-style prison officials and jailers. However, in the late Qing Dynasty, the government began to use formal school education to train prison management talents, drawing on the excellent achievements of Western prison system improvement. In

response to the change of the concept of prison execution in modern times, it has made great contributions to the training of prison management personnel in modern times. The training of prison personnel with certain legal knowledge through specialized vocational training injected fresh blood into prison management in the late Qing Dynasty, played a positive role in improving the efficiency of prison management, and provided a talent reserve for the subsequent reform of prison system by the Republic of China Government.

5. ANALYSIS OF PRACTICAL EFFECT

5.1 The Late Qing Government was eager to succeed in training prison personnel

The Qing government set up prison schools and trained prison personnel, mainly to meet the realistic needs of the prison reform at that time. Many provinces have rushed to set up prison departments or special prison schools in law and politics schools. However, no matter what type, the length of study is basically the same as that of law and politics schools at that time. Usually one year, one and a half years are higher disciplines, and half years are simple classes. Most of them are quick education, and the time for students to receive education is obviously shorter. For the training of legal professionals, such short education time is far from enough. It is difficult for educates to master professional prison knowledge in such limited time, let alone really understand and apply it. Therefore, under the fast-track education, there are few real learners either in China or abroad.

5.2 It is difficult for the Qing government to really select excellent personnel by improving the grade of prison officials

To a certain extent, the incentive measures of the Qing government to improve the status of prison officers have abnormally stimulated people to compete for prison officer positions, and it is difficult to really select high-quality talents. At the end of the late Qing Dynasty, the imperial examination system ended, but the concept of "learning to be a good official" remained firm. Under the new situation, learning in new-style schools became a new choice for most people at that time. As mentioned earlier, in order to ensure the source of students, the Ministry of Justice has provided many official awards to prison school graduates as a guarantee. Even those who have not achieved good results in prison specialty can be awarded official posts after graduation, and they are well-paid. These political and economic incentives are irresistible temptations for those who have already abandoned the Imperial examination. So many people go to school with a utilitarian mind, but few people concentrate on prison studies. Under the influence of such entrance motivation, the learning effect of high quality can not be guaranteed naturally.

5.3 The training of new prison personnel lacks corresponding social system reform

It is a long process to improve the quality of prison officers. Although the late Qing government recognized the importance of improving the quality of prison management personnel, it took seemingly reasonable measures to select and appoint prison officials. However, these efforts will inevitably be ineffective because the defects of the feudal system have not been fundamentally changed. On the one hand, under the social background at that

time, few people were willing to attend prison schools. On the other hand, most of the students are not purely purposeful, utilitarian, and can not seriously study. Whether at home or abroad to study in prison department, most people study diffusely, not in the mind of learning, and finally get a diploma through drilling camp. Although graduating smoothly, the basic social system remains unchanged, the feudal official custom remains unchanged, and the construction of related supporting facilities has not followed up. If the pace of new prison construction does not catch up with the speed of prison graduates' rapid training, then the loss of talents and the waste of resources are inevitable. With the collapse of the Qing government, the training of prison officials lacked the necessary support of human, material and financial resources, so it was impossible for them to take on a new look.

6. CONCLUSION

Chinese traditional formal education has never attached importance to the training of prison officers. In the late Qing Dynasty, the government carried out the training and education of prison officers under specific historical conditions, which is very worthy of affirmation. Establishing prison schools and training prison professionals is the beginning of incorporating the training of prison management personnel into the formal education system in modern China, and is also a major event in the history of prison and education in modern China. Although the reform has not achieved remarkable results in a short period of time, it is the beginning of training prison management talents with the idea of formal school education and systematic law and prison science, which opened the door of training prison personnel in modern times, and provided talents for prison reform in the later period of the Republic of China.

REFERENCES

- [1] Frank Dikotter. *Crime, Punishment and Prison in Modern China* [M]. Jiangsu People's Publishing House, China, 2008.
- [2] David Taylor. *Crime, policing and punishment in England* [M]. St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- [3] Xue Meiqing. *Prison History of China* [M]. Mass Press, China, 1986.
- [4] Frank Dikotter. *Prison reform in modern China* [M]. *British Journal of Criminology*, spring, 2002.
- [5] Cheng Liaoyuan. *The World of Jurists and Politicians in the Late Qing Dynasty* [M]. Law Press, China, 2003.
- [6] Fei Zhengqing. *China: Tradition and Change* [M]. World Knowledge Press, China, 2002.
- [7] Sanford H. Kadish. *Blame and Punishment* [M]. Macmillan Publishing Company, America 1987.
- [8] Yang Honglie. *History of Chinese ideology of law* [M]. China University of Political Science and Law Press, China, 1998.