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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN SECRETARY EDUCATION AND ACTUAL SECRETARY PRACTICE IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The secretary vocation is ubiquitous in all sort organizations, factories, governments, schools and even armies in China, and so is the secretary education in high schools in China. However, the secretary education, especially the teaching materials of secretary science, is in conflict with the actual secretary practice. The content of the teaching materials is unpractical and too theoretical. The causes of the conflict are the problems that exist in secretary practices, which are resulted by the corruption and lawbreaking. Theoretically, the secretary should function as the teaching materials detail, but he or she cannot act as such because of the totally different actual situation in practice. It is necessary to discuss on such conflicts openly for the benefit of anti-corruption movement of China government.

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INTRODUCTION

In modern China, secretary is a group of huge population. In China history, the secretary group was also the group that played an important role. In current years, the corruption of the secretary in China became the focus of media. Most of the high rank officials would have the experience of secretary. Secretary Major becomes the necessary major in high school, and the students major in secretary course increased in contemporary China. Secretary has become a unique phenomenon in China.

However, the definition of secretary science and the teaching material in China high school are opaque or even in confliction with the real situation of secretary in practice. For example, in Secretary Science edited by Zhang Zhongliang and Jia Huafeng, secretary is defined as “the special adviser and assistance. As a name of social vocation, he is the civil servant of the central leader to provide the comprehensive and assistant service.” (Zhang Zhongliang and Jia Huafeng. 1994) In Yue Kaihua’s Modern Secretary Science, the secretary is defined as “staff who is employed by the individual or belonged the leader organization for assisting the policy deciding and processing the routine chores.” (Yue Kaihua. 2001). From those definitions of secretary, we would find that the secretary’s function is too broad to be understood. For the secretary major is the popular major in high schools, it is urgent to make clear the role and the function of secretary in the secretary science. In secretary science, the definition of secretary is the fundamental problem, for that determines the objective of secretary science’s teaching and study.

The paper begins by the literature review of China secretary studies. It then will go onto discuss on the situation of secretary in ancient China. In the next section, the paper will address one special secretary group, shiye, in Qing dynasty.

The following section will analyze the contemporary secretary phenomenon and secretary education China. One unique teaching material of secretary education will be discussed in the next section. The last section will investigate the conflicts between secretary education and the actual practice of secretary.

Literature review

Some research articles in Chinese have given the account of history of secretary in China. Chinese mishu, which translated into English as secretary, has been existed in ancient times. Mishu in ancient times is the ones who took care of the documents and archives; so in fact, the secretary in ancient China is like the one who works in the central library, museum and archive of modern China. The organization of mishu in that time is like the central library, museum and archive of modern China (Mao Hande. 1984). There were some staff in ancient China had the similar functions of secretary of modern times. For example, the ones who worked in Qijusheng and recorded the activities and discourses of the emperor in Northern Qi times, the eunuchs who worked for processing the emperor edicts in Han dynasty (Mao Hande. 1984). Shiye in Qing dynasty also has the function of modern secretary (Xiao Mu. 1998). The modern secretary in China appeared in the period of the revolution of 1911 (He Tanye. 1999). The function of secretary in China appeared in Xia dynasty, which was indicated by the appearance of official documents and secretary officials (Liu Baoning. 1995) The secretary vocation education of China and the western countries are different. China secretary vocation education focus on the theories and the secretary vocation education in the western countries focuses on the practical techniques (Yang Qunhuan. 2007). Previous studies have also pointed out that the secretary vocation in China is ubiquitous, in that

the secretary would have numerous classifications, roles and functions (Wei Li and Lucian W. Pye. 1992).

Secretary in Ancient China

The secretary appeared in Xia dynasty. At that time, the secretary position was often occupied by the one who was specialized in witchcraft and recording. After Xia dynasty, the secretary became more systematic and specialized. In the period before Qin dynasty, the secretary institution had the specialized secretary position and the more rigid principle of document processing and genre of document gradually. In Qin and Han dynasties, the secretary organization in all level government became popular. In Wei and Jin dynasties, secretary organization became more important in government. Especially in the period of Cao Cao, Cao Cao changed the mishu organization, which had been the institution of keeping the secret books, into the organization for drafting the important documents. In Tang and Song dynasties, the election of secretary and the drafting of the documents got more emphasis, and the government stipulated that one document should only address on one event. In Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, the dependence of emperors on the secretary organizations become more obvious, so the emperors would set the secretary organizations up or dismissed them in order to set up the new secretary organizations.

The government secretary, especially the secretary who was close to the emperor, would be extremely noble, and on the other hand, unstable. They were near the emperor because the emperors needed them to cope with the complicate events. They would get extreme noble and high rank position due to the trust of the emperors. The emperor would entitle them with the high rank to administrate the important spheres. When the political situation changed, the officials promoted from the position of secretary would be replaced or impracticable by the new officials. After the revolution of 1911, the secretary organization had the function of brain truster except of the function of document processing. In contemporary China, the secretary became more, even ubiquitous (Li W, Pye L W. 1992). Almost all the organizations, governments, institutions, factories and the enterprises would have the secretary positions. The secretaries in governments have unique function and situation especially. Many important officials had the experience of being secretary.

One important feature of China secretary is that the secretary has been involved in the political conflicts. Such involvement of politics has intimate relationship with benefits. In ancient times, the emperors depended on the secretary organizations for the stability of their thrones and ensuring their control on all over the country. The secretary organization played an important role in the political conflicts. One famous example is that, in three kingdoms period, Cao Cao controlled the emperor through controlling the secretary organization near the emperor. Or in other words, Cao Cao controlled the whole ministers through controlling the secretary organization. In contemporary China, the secretary sometimes represents his or her leader, shouzhang in Chinese language (Li W, Pye L W. 1992). When the company or the factory opens, the secretary would represent his or her shouzhang to cut the ribbon. Some meetings would also be attended by secretary representing his or her shouzhang. It is well known that Li

Zhen, the corrupted official sentenced to death many years before, has been the secretary of Cheng Weigao. In many situations, he represented Cheng Weigao dealt with the matters (Lollar, Xia L, Hamilton, *et al.* 2010). Many cases has proved that the conflicts between the high rank officials would be carried out by their secretaries respectively. In ancient China, the secretaries near the emperors would be the one come from the low social stratum. In Qing dynasty, the emperors controlled the whole military force all over China through Privy Council, an organization composed by 36 or so secretaries. Those secretaries were selected from the low rank officials. Besides, the leaders of them should not be above the third rank in the bureaucrat. When their former leaders were promoted above the third rank, they should leave the Privy Council (Han Ruihui. 2016). The central governmental secretaries beside the emperors were often selected in the low social stratum after Song dynasty. The secretaries from the low social stratum and low rank officials would had less connection with the high rank officials, so they would not threaten the emperor's position in the condition that they knew the confidential messages. On the other hand, they would be more loyal and faithful to the emperors in the condition that they depended on the emperors more. The emperors would appointed them to the high rank official positions, which would protect and maintain the benefits of the emperors.

Shiye, a Unique Secretary in Qing Dynasty

Shiye, a sort of private secretary, which was very unique in ancient secretary groups in China, existed for hundreds of years in Qing dynasty. Shiyes were employed by the officials in Qing dynasty. As the private secretaries, they were not officials, and their salaries were not come from the governmental budgets, but the wallet of the officials who employed them. Qing dynasty governments stipulated rigidly that the shiyes should not be the governmental officials simultaneously. One officials would had several sorts of shiyes, such as the shiye drafting documents, the shiye assisting in the finance and the shiye keeping the documentations. The stipends of shiyes would be huge cost of the officials in the case that governments did not provided stipends for shiyes. With only the salaries of the officials, they would not pay so much stipends for shiyes. The stipends for shiyes come mainly from the briberies (Xiao Mu. 1983). Shiyes assisted the officials in all kinds of matters. The function of shiyes is similar with that of the modern secretaries. However, the relationship between shiyes and officials is not institutionalized for their different status and stipends. The relationship between shiyes and officials is both of friends and employer-employee. With the institutionalized relationship between the secretaries and leaders, the secretaries would be promoted easily. Although shiyes would acute for profit, they would not be corrupted easily. Firstly, they were not officials, so they had no the public power as the modern governmental secretaries have. Secondly, they would not be easily be promoted, and on this condition, they would not have so much privilege just as the modern secretaries have. In Qing dynasty, the officials were selected from the national competition examination generally. Some of the examinees passed the examination and had no the opportunities to be the officials, therefore they turned to learn law, and then became the shiyes. Many of the shiyes were proficient to law. That facilitated their job as shiyes, for to be

a shiye, one should be familiar with the law. That is complementary with the official who was only familiar with the literary knowledge and the Confucian classics. To some extent, shiyes' knowledge background is more suitable to work in the governments than officials at that time, because they were familiar with both the literary knowledge and Confucian classics in that they had learned hard for the national competition examination. Adding to the knowledge mentioned above, they also familiar with law. So it can be said that they were technocrat private secretaries.

To be the shiye did not need the loyalty to the employer, and that is different from modern secretary. In modern China, the loyalty and the trust between the mishu (the secretary) and shouzhang (the leader) have been and will continue to be the central value in the relationship (Lollar, Xia L, Hamilton, *et al.* 2010). The bond of mishu and shouzhang is institutionalized, and they were interdependent on each other more than shiye and his employer, so the cooperation of shouzhang and mishu would bring the huge profit for them. Compared to other sorts of secretaries, shiyes were unique. They were not officials but the private secretaries. However, they played the important role in history. There were two climaxes of employing shiyes in Qing dynasty, the first climax was in the period of Yongzheng period, and the second time was during the period from 1840 until the revolution of 1911 (Xue Xiujuan & Peng Hongli & Peng Changjiang. 2014). Both of the periods are full of the social reformation and changes of social thoughts. Shiyes functioned well in the periods and the corruption of them was prevented effectively.

The Contemporary Secretary and Secretary Education in China

The modern secretary appeared in the period of the Public of China. In that time, the government sent many scholars to America to learn about the secretary science, and many journals and books about secretary science were published. Most of the scholars of secretary science focused on the study about the documentation keeping and documentation drafting (Hou Yongji. 2010). In 1980s, the secretary science developed more in China. Secretary science major was set up in the beginning of 1980s in Shanghai University and Nankai University. Later, this major became popular in universities in China, which contained the universities of the two-year systems and three-year systems. In 1998, this university major was cancelled by China Ministry of Education; however, it got developed in the adult education (Yue Kaihua. 2002).

The research articles of secretary science increased ever since 1980s. The representative research results include *Introduction to Secretary Science* (Weng Shirong. 1983), *Secretary Science and Secretary Work* (Wang Qiangong. 1984) and *Secretary Science* (Wang Shaoling. 1988) etc. It is common that many of the teachers of Secretary Science would compile Secretary Science teaching material and get it published. Most of the books of the research results in 1980s are of the teaching material and similar with each other. The secretaries in China became more ever since 1980s. Almost every institution, factory, school, company, organization or even army would had the secretaries. In the other words, the secretaries in China are ubiquitous (Li W, Pye L W. 1992). Although the secretary has appear ever since Xia Dynasty, which was 3000 years ago, the secretary science was not

established until 1980s in China. One reason of it is that the science of ancient China was not systemic in most cases. There were some rules and the inspirations about the secretary science were written down in ancient China, but there was no specific discipline to study it. That is similar in many other knowledge in ancient China, such as literary theory. Some knowledge of literary knowledge was written down by some scholars, but the discipline did not appear in ancient China. The secretary science discipline was set up in 1980s due to many reasons. The most important reason is that the Culture Revolution was over in China, and the secretary vocation was ubiquitous in China. Faced with the new social and economic condition, the government had new requirements for the secretary. On the other hand, the development of management and technology are also the impetus for the birth of secretary science.

In many teaching material secretary science, the study object contain the studies of secretary institution, secretary staff, secretary work, the history of secretary vocation, the characteristic and rule of secretary vocation. Most of the teaching materials of secretary science contain the documentation process, the documentation drafting and the meeting works etc. Taking Zhang Zhongliang and Jia Huafeng's *Secretary Science* as example, one would find that it contains the content of history of secretary institution, the foreign secretary vocation, the characteristics and functions of secretary, the arrangement of the secretary institution, the classification and function of secretary, the political preparation of secretary, the knowledge of secretary, the secretary psychology, the work of investigation, the work of material and information, the work of processing petition letter, the work of meeting arrangement, the work of documentation process, the chores of the secretary, the work of keeping the archives, the work of safeguarding the secrets and the future of secretary vocation (Zhang Zhongliang & Jia Huafeng. 1994).

The documentation drafting and process are the central responsibilities of a secretary. So almost every secretary major in universities would contain the teaching of the knowledge of them. In almost all of the secretary major in China universities, there would be a specific course, documentation drafting, or in other words, document writing, although the documentation drafting has be introduced overall in the course of Secretary Science. However, the course of documentation drafting in university only provides some document format rules for the students, and those would be very easily learned by the students, even in the absence of the teachers. So although the course provides many useful knowledge for the students because of the extreme usefulness of such knowledge in the future career of the students, it would be dry for most of the students, and on the other hand, the students would not handle the techniques of documentation drafting effectively only through learning the course. Learning how to handle the Chinese language is extremely important for a secretary, so most the major of secretary science is set up in Chinese department. Chinese department teaches the students about Chinese literature and language extensively and professionally. Through the learning, the students would handle the techniques of document writing more skillfully and proficiently.

The documentation process is another major work of a secretary. It is detailed in most of the teaching materials of secretary science. In the secretary science, taking Zhang Zhongliang and Jia Huafeng's *Secretary Science* as example, one would find the content of this section contains the content of characteristics and function of documentation process, the collection of information, the process of the information. Among the three parts, the first parts are dry for the students, because they would find that the theories are useless in practice. The second part seems naïve for them, because the content of it would be known by anyone, even he or she is not the secretary and does not learn the secretary science. The last part is informative somehow, because it provides some useful knowledge for the students in their future secretary career.

The most important feature of secretary science teaching materials in China universities is that it introduces the secretary science systematically and theoretically. Nonetheless, such introduction is plainly unpractical for the future secretary career of the students. It would find that most of the content of such teaching materials is only about the theories and the rules and requirements for secretary vocation. The theories would not be useful in the practical works of a secretary, and the rules and requirements are broken again and again in the practical works. The secretary would meet with more complicated situation and chores in their practical works. The corruption in government would also make them copy with the contraries of the rules and requirements written in the teaching materials. With the pursuit for the profit, the secretary would comply with *Qian Guize*, hidden rules.

THE UNIQUE TEACHING MATERIAL

Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader

In 1983, the one teaching material called *Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader* appeared. The authors of the book are Wang Huaizhi and Guo Zheng, the professors in Xi'an Institution of Politics in that time, who were inflicted by the problems of the teaching of secretary science. Wang Zhiyuan found that many problems encountered by the secretary were not addressed by the current teaching materials, so he and Guo Zheng decided to compile one book for addressing the problems in practice. In the beginning, they set up some lectures which were taught by Guo Zheng. Guo Zheng talked about many problems in practice for a secretary and Wang Zhiyuan recorded them. Later they compiled and polished the recorded contents. The problems they taught and recorded included the leader's receiving gifts and the conflicts among the leaders etc. They discussed some real and practical problems and talked some *da shihua*, the honest words (Zhu Xiaojia.2011). The lectures were soon welcomed feverishly by the students. The classroom was full, and the corridor was congested and even the students stood outside the windows. But soon the professors were warned by authority, because teaching content was unsuitable somehow. Therefore the lectures were not continued.

Three thousand copies of the first edition of this book were printed, and it was not republished until 2012. Most of the copies was distributed in the army before 2012. However, the book was scanned and put in the internet. The scanned book was downloaded by netizens for twenty seven more times than the number of first printed copies. So it could say that huge numbers of readers were interested by the book. In 2012,

the book was republished by World Publishing Corporation. From 2012 to 2014, it republished for five times again.

The book is regarded as touching the hidden rules in the official circle. Some people believe that the book have some similarities with *Hou Hei Xue*, which can be translated as *Thick and Black*, a famous book deals with the hidden rules. For that reason, the content of the book is unsuitable be taught in the classroom. So Guo Zheng and Wang Huaizhi were advised not to talk about this content (Zhu Xiaojia.2011). However, if one reads the book in details, he or she would find that the book teaches the readers to act upright in the practical and complicated social environment. It tells the readers the dark side and the hidden rules in practice, but it does not teach the readers to act unscrupulously. Nonetheless, in that time, such content was sensitive and deemed as the materials which could not be talked openly.

It is necessary to discuss on the complication in the practice of secretary in order to improve the efficiency of anti-corruption in China governments. In the actual situation, the special political and social environment caused the corruption of the secretaries. This book deals with the actual environment of a secretary honestly. So it is a valuable works for to investigate the condition of official circle of China.

The Conflict between the Content of the Secretary Science and the Secretary Work in Practice

Although the secretary has appeared before 3,000 years ago in China, the secretary science appeared almost 100 years ago. However, the secretary science in China high school only deals with the routine works and chores of the secretary superficially. Few teaching materials deal with the complication and actual situation of the secretary. Most of the teaching materials only deal with the simple works of the secretary, so the students of the secretary science would complain that they cannot learn some useful knowledge in the classroom, or most of the knowledge they learn in the classroom can be easily learned by self-study in short time. The teachers of secretary science would also complain that such course has no challenge, which means that the content of this course is too simple and monotonous to teach. So both of the students and teachers of this course believed that they are wasting their time in the classroom. Faced with this situation, some schools invite the secretaries who have much experience to give lectures to the students, and increase the practice time of the students. The secretaries who have experience of working the governments would provide the new and practical information for the students, so in this case, the students would be more interested. The practice of the students in the governments would also provide some useful working techniques for them. On the contrary, the teaching materials, which contain the formal teaching contents, cannot provide the students with enough useful and meaningful information. Reviewing the teaching materials edited from 1980s to 2010s, one would find the content of the secretary science has not changed much, and the conflict between the teaching content in classroom and actual secretary practice is continued. The reasons for the conflict are following: First, the hidden rules, or the dark side of society is forbidden in the teaching materials, although that exists in the actual daily life. The intention of the stipulation is to prevent the transmission of the hidden rules in schools. Such intention is favorable, but on the other side, that also results in that the students would

not adapt to the society well when they graduate and get the jobs.

Second, the cultural tradition of China requires the teaching content should enhance the morality and ethics. Although such tradition is not obvious in many courses of China high school, the tradition is latent in the teaching process in high schools. So any teaching materials containing the dark side of society would unfavorable and be expelled. The teaching materials of secretary science in high school would also be influenced by the phenomena mentioned above. As a result, the conflict between the teaching content and the actual practice of secretary is inevitable. The corruption of secretary is not caused by the teaching materials, but the secretary's special position in governments. In history of China secretary, Shiye, a special private secretary of official in Qing dynasty, were rarely corrupted. The critical reason for it is that they were not officials and had no privilege. Shiyes in Qing dynasty fulfilled the mission of secretary well, although they were not cultivated specially for being secretary. Qing dynasty stipulated that shiyes should not be officials; therefore shiyes had no privilege and power. Then they had no opportunity to be corrupted.

The power and privilege are critical factors responsible for corruption. In history, the secretaries were often involved in the violent political conflicts. The emperor would empower the secretaries beside him to the powerful positions, which could reinforce the emperors' power to control the ministers. In the process, the corruption was inevitable. The leaders, shouzhangs, and the secretaries, mishus interdepend with each other. The foremost pursuit of both the leaders and secretaries is benefits. As the intimate partners of the leaders, the secretaries knew much of the confidential secrets, and vice versa. The secretaries get the status and material benefits from the leaders, and the leaders get the service and comfortable life from the secretaries. After the secretaries get promoted to be higher rank officials, they would also keep the intimate relationship with the leaders. Most of the promotions of the secretaries would be with the assistance of the leaders. The relationship of the leaders and secretaries is so intimate that the secretaries would keep good touch with the family numbers of the leaders. In some cases, the chief secretaries would be the family number of the leaders. For example, Lin Biao's chief secretary was his wife, and the secretary of Sun Yat-sen became the wife of him later.

The interdependence of the leaders and secretaries is institutionalized. For the secretaries are the officials in governments, and such officials are selected by the higher rank officials to be their secretaries. Almost every important official would have their aids, the secretaries. The ranks of the secretaries are governmental, and their salaries were also given by governments. So it can be said that the relationship between the secretaries and the leaders is institutionalized. In contemporary China, the mishus are empowered invisibly, because as the official secretaries, they are combined closely with the power of the shouzhangs, leaders. In the process, although they were not appointed to be the critical officials, they would share the power of the leaders they served. On the other hand, the secretaries have potential to be promoted, which can improve their influence. Therefore the bribers would invest them before they are promoted. Some leaders and the secretaries would cooperate with each other intimately

for their common benefit. The secretaries and the leaders know too much secrets of each other, so the cooperation is necessary for them.

It can be concluded that the secretaries are of the extremely critical position, although they are not the officials who have power obviously. They are the potential officials and exert great influence on the leaders' decision. What they do in their routine work includes not only the duties mentioned in the teaching materials of secretary science, but also some other matters, such as how to cope with the relationship with the leaders, how to perceive the conflicts between the leaders and how to *get along* with the family numbers of the leaders, just as what the book *Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader* discussed, which are more important. However, such teaching materials detail such matters are expelled in the high school, although the teaching materials do not teach the students to be corrupted, on the contrary, such teaching materials, such as *Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader*, tell the students how to both keep upright and accomplish their mission well.

The teaching materials which deal with the dark side of society is necessary in the perspective of research. Only the dark side is discussed openly can the problems be solved completely. If the problems are concealed and neglected, they would get more serious. The corruption of the secretaries and the cooperation between some secretaries and leaders are known well in society, however, such problems are not discussed openly. That is obviously to the disadvantage of anti-corruption movement in China government in recent years.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to analyze the conflicts of the content of secretary science and secretary practical work. It has shown that the definition of secretary in secretary science does not reflect the reality of secretary. The practice of secretary is more complicated. Even that what the teaching materials said was only the fundamental work of the secretary. In history, secretary became increasingly close to the power center, and that makes secretary as one special vocation in that the power relied more and more on secretary. In modern China, the relationship of official and his or her secretary is also intimate with and relies on each other. Even in some cases, the secretary represents his or her official. So sometimes, the institutional corruption would happen because of that. The finding raises important theoretical issue that the definition of secretary in secretary science is obscure. The real situation of secretary in practice should also be recognized and discussed openly. That is one effective way to analyze the advantage and disadvantage of current secretary institution, to favor the anti-corruption movement and to delete the adverse effect of current secretary situation in China. Great efforts are needed to optimize the relationship of official and his or her secretary for the prosperity of society.

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