

One Body, Two Wings, Internal and External Dimensions: A Re-understanding of the Central Political Structure in Ming Dynasty

Zhang Zhizuo

College of History and Culture, Northwest Normal University, Lanzhou, Gansu, 730070, China

Keywords: Ming Dynasty; imperial power; cabinet

Abstract: The political structure of the Ming Dynasty Central Committee and its "abnormal" development have long been a topic worthy of attention. As far as the political structure of the Ming Dynasty's central government is concerned, it is a typical pyramid-shaped power structure. The imperial power is high, and the Cabinet and Civil Service Officer under it d, forming a situation of common sense and conduct. The development of the political structure of the central government in the Ming Dynasty experienced the "one-on-one model" of the emperor and the prime minister, the "one-to-many mode" of the emperor and the six, and the "one-two model" of the emperor and the cabinet and the court. Finally, a stable triangular relationship of "one body two wings, inner and outer phase dimension" was formed, which guaranteed the normal operation of the Ming Dynasty in the abnormal state in the middle and late period.

1. Introduction

As far as China in the imperial era is concerned, no matter the "family world" of the feudal dynasty, its most important manifestation in the macro is the political system, and the central political structure at the top is the core part of the political system. Generally speaking, the development of the central political structure of the Ming Dynasty reflects an unchanging situation, that is, the political system of any dynasty has the characteristics of "inheritance and evolution". Yang Shufan, a Taiwanese scholar, has long pointed out that "all systems have their own reasons for their rise and development. It is not difficult to find out the truth by investigating its causes [1]." That's what I mean.

As far as heredity is concerned, it refers to the traditional inheritance relationship between antecedents and antecedents, that is, what Yang Shufan mentioned above refers to as "inheritance of the legacy of previous generations"[2]. Evolution refers to the contradiction and struggle that the political system originated from the real life at that time. That is what Poplar Shufan called "meeting the needs of the present dynasty" [3]. However, in terms of both "inheritance and evolution", we need to pay more attention to "evolution". Looking at the evolution of the political system of the imperial era, it is not difficult to find that the evolution of the politics of any dynasty central government has a common feature in it - from the inside to the outside. As far as the Ming Dynasty is concerned, although Zhu Yuanzhang has made great changes to the political system of the Ming Dynasty, the central political structure of the Ming Dynasty is not static. Its evolution in the past three hundred years is still a matter of course.

2. The Change of Central Political Rights in Ming Dynasty

Professor Fang Zhiyuan believes that "the Ming Dynasty's state power structure has undergone an evolutionary process of initial creation, shaping, adjustment, and re-formation." and pointed out two basic characteristics or principles of the Ming Dynasty's state power structure: "The first one will be outside The court authorities regarded it as the primary threat to the imperial power, which led to the emergence of internal and external, internal and external dimensions. It will eventually form a dual-track power system of the inner court eunuch system and the outer court civil official system in the state power structure of the Ming Dynasty, essentially sanctioning the civil official system through the eunuch system. Secondly, the mutual checks and balances of various

departments or power systems should be taken as the basic means or policy to safeguard the imperial power. This is a legal regulation on the basic principles of the Ming Dynasty's state power structure of emperor centralization, decentralization of central departments, centralization of central authorities and decentralization of local departments, and has led to the formation of the power structure of the size and size of the system and the upper and lower levels of the two-dimensional structure of power [5].

For the Ming Dynasty, on the one hand, Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty abolished the position of Prime Minister, and on the other hand, Zhu Yuanzhang chose Hanlin bachelor's degree for consultant because of the vacancy in power structure and inconvenience in power operation. Afterwards, the cabinet was separated from the Imperial Academy, which became the important secretarial group of the emperor, and eventually became the central organ of the foreign court dealing with state affairs. On the other hand, eunuchs have gradually got rid of the narrow responsibility of only serving as sprinklers and sweepers. As the ceremonial inspectors gradually override the internal inspectors and become the head office of the twenty-four internal government departments, the internal inspectors have become the central organs of the internal court dealing with the state affairs. As a result, the Cabinet and the Secretary of the Board of Directors are in charge of "voting" and "granting red". The inner court eunuchs fully participate in state affairs and become an important part of the state power structure. It has formed a dual-track power system that is only seen in Chinese history and runs through the entire dynasty.

By comparing the changes in the central political power structure between the Ming Dynasty and the middle and late Ming Dynasty (as shown in Figure 1).

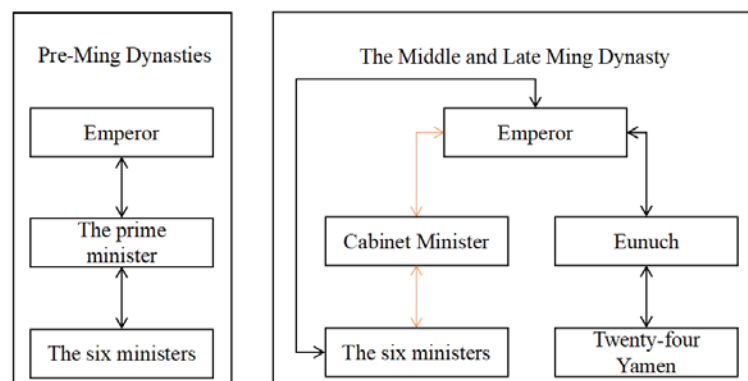


Fig.1. The Changes of the Political Power Structure of the Central Government in the Middle and Late Ming Dynasty

It is not difficult to find that the two have commonalities and no small differences. In terms of common ground, whether in the Ming Dynasty or in the Ming Dynasty, the imperial power has always been in a high position. In terms of difference, the Ming Dynasty achieved the right to collect power through decentralization. The emperor achieved the goal of controlling the political situation by maintaining the restriction and balance between the cabinet and the Minister of ceremonies. In this regard, I think that the Ming Dynasty's model of governing the country is more reasonable. Although this rationality must be based on a diligent emperor.

As Professor Fang Zhiyuan pointed out, the structure or composition of central politics "includes not only the vertical structure from the top to the bottom, but also the horizontal structure in the hierarchical power system, and the relationship between them [6]. The central political structure of the Ming Dynasty actually formed a three-dimensional pyramid structure (as shown in Figure 2).

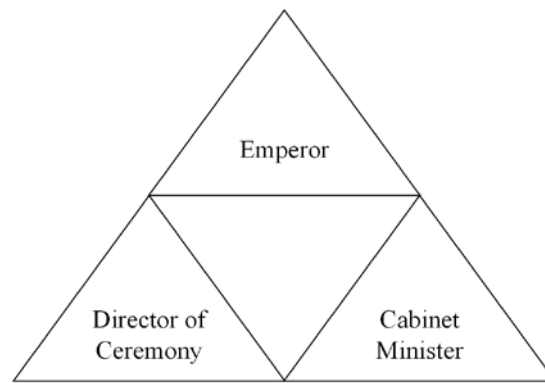


Fig.2. The Pyramid Structure of the Formation of the Central Political System in the Ming Dynasty

To say that centralization is the power structure of the "pyramid", we should consider it from two aspects: first, from the degree and level of centralization, the central authorities and leaders are at the peak of power. Second, from the number of people, the greater the power, the less the number of people, and at the peak there is only one person - the emperor, the leader or the head of state.

Obviously, in this structure, the emperor is in a high position. As the product of the emperor's power, the Civil Service Officer and the Cabinet are separated under the emperor's power. They form a situation of internal and external dimensions. This situation I call "one body, two wings". "One body" is the high power, the single center, the singularity, and the authority; the "two wings" means that the two are derivatives of the imperial power, and they are the auxiliary force and the beneficiary of the royal power aura. In the Ming Dynasty, the relationship between the autocratic monarchy, the cabinet and the eunuch was "one body and two wings", that is, the monarchy was the body, the root, and the book; the cabinet and the eunuch were two opposing and unified aids attached to the monarchy. power.

The purpose of the Ming emperor to control the cabinet and the eunuch was actually to make the two better serve the monarchy. It can be seen from Figure 2 that the emperor is at the top of the power apex, the ceremonial ceremonies and the cabinet are under the imperial power. The form of "home and the world" allows the emperor to make use of one party to suppress the other at any time. Because, like the law of value, imperial power is a key factor that is invisible and can be manipulated at any time. Similarly, it is precisely because they are always under the imperial power. Even if there are powerful ministers or castrates again, it is easy for the emperor to make a resolution to remove them. The former, such as Yan Song, and the latter, such as Wei Zhongxian, are clear evidence.

3. Power Relations of Central Decision-making System in Ming Dynasty

Contradictions are everywhere and everywhere. After Zhu Yuanzhang's ascendancy, the most important thing he considered was how to maintain the Yongxi of the dynasty with the surname of Zhu. In a word, it is what kind of administrative methods should be adopted to maintain the dynasty's operation. In the process of continuing to draw lessons from the "Emperor-Prime Minister" model since the Qin Dynasty (which I abbreviated as "one-to-one" model), Zhu Yuanzhang's doubtful character enlarged his contradiction between the imperial power and the emperor's power. In order to make him a waste of phase, he split the power directly into six parts, so that the six official officers directly face the emperor, turning the previous "emperor - prime minister" mode into the "emperor - six" model (I put this The model is abbreviated as "one-to-many" mode). In Zhu Yuanzhang's view, this kind of decentralization system is conducive to mastering more information so that he can enjoy more dominance.

Professor Wang Jian from the College of Liberal Arts of Jilin University put forward a core point of view: there are two types of imperial power governance models in the Ming Dynasty, one of which is the "Hong Yong Model" and the other is the "Three Yang Model". In his view, the reality of the former is that the emperor is diligent in dealing with political affairs in the upper dynasty,

while the latter's main realization is to answer the syllabus. For the former, there should be no too much objection. As far as the latter is concerned, I think it is more complicated. In fact, in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, more is the Cabinet and the Secretary of the Board of Supervisors (I am here to refer to this model as the "one-two" model). According to my previous understanding, the "Hong Yong Model" can actually be understood as the "one-to-many" model. From this point of view, the Ming Dynasty imperial regime has experienced a "one-to-one model" - a "one-to-many model" - a "one-to-two model". So, can we understand that the Ming Dynasty's imperial governance model experienced such a process from one "extreme" to another "extreme" and then to compromise? The later history of the Ming Dynasty shows that this "one-to-two model" has a stable triangular relationship. In addition, the imperial power has always been in the top position in this triangle relationship (even if the emperor was Chongling or did not go to court for a long time), forming a situation of interaction and restraint among the three, which ultimately guaranteed the normal operation of the political situation in the Ming Dynasty.

In short, the power relationship of the central decision-making system in the Ming Dynasty was actually reconstituted after the abolition of the phase. The Cabinet votes to deal with all domestic and foreign affairs, the Minister of ceremonies represents the emperor to re-adjudicate the cabinet votes, sign or reject all "intentions" to supervise, and the emperor ignores the court and does not receive the minister "hanging arch and governing". In this pattern, the emperor does not have to deal with any specific matters in person, but can always hold the responsibility of any department. The emperor, the internal supervisor, and the cabinet became the triangular power relations of the central decision-making system. On the surface, the emperor is the core, the cabinet and the ceremonial ceremonies are the two fulcrums, but in essence, the cabinet is restricted by the internal court and the court ruling representative.

From this point of view, the central political structure of the Daming Dynasty was based on the imperial power, with the ceremonies and cabinets as the branches, and the mutual checks and balances of the two "hands-to-hands" as the water, and finally grew to maintain the normal operation of the Ming Dynasty. A big tree. In the early Ming Dynasty, the monarchy was strengthened, and the emperor was monopolized. After Xuande, the imperial power was weakened, and the power between the cabinet and the eunuch competed to form a triangular relationship of "the emperor - the cabinet - the eunuch." The ceremonial inspectors had relative stability, while the cabinet had greater randomness, which was the embodiment and extension of the arbitrariness of the monarchy system in the Ming Dynasty. Whether this arbitrariness could be curbed or not largely determined the stability of the Ming Dynasty society. However, Zhu Yuanzhang felt most sorry that he had prevented eunuchs from doing business for a long time, and it was more intense than his predecessors.

4. Cabinet Function in Ming Dynasty

There are three forms of the relationship between imperial power, Prime Minister power and eunuch power: first, emperor power is the focus, which was generally the case in Hongwu and Yongle years. Secondly, emphasizing the empowerment of the emperor, in other words, empowerment of the emperor, such as Yan Song in Jiajing period. Thirdly, we should focus on eunuch power, such as Liu Jin and Wang Zhen. In the Ming Dynasty, the third situation was the most serious, even nearly buried the Ming Dynasty, and the Ming Empire declined thereafter.

From the theoretical and practical point of view, the imperial power is obviously dissociated between the Cabinet and the Minister of ceremonies: if depending on either side, it will inevitably form a dominant party, which will lead to the emergence of ministers or ministers of power or castration. There is only one way to solve this dilemma, that is, the two are "using people." Because only in this case, this power structure can work well, making the state governance a healthy and orderly state. If the two are "non-human", they will fight each other. In serious cases, there will be "participation disputes" that will harm the later generations. In fact, the extreme situation of the "used people" is that the two cooperate well and form a community of interests to form a monopoly. However, this situation is at least better than fighting the two, which is not only a situation that

undermines the unity of the country and the poisonous world.

In the process of handling state affairs, the Cabinet and the Secretary of the Board of Directors have changed their roles and degrees with different stages. The roles of the two at different stages have a dominant or implicit performance. All of this depends on the emperor's own ability to control the system. When the emperor strictly controlled the internal supervision, the role of the cabinet was manifested prominently, and then became the dominant party in the implementation of the state administration, and the internal supervision became the partner. When the emperor's attention is not in politics, he may become more an intermediary through the close agent, the internal supervisor, to contact the imperial power and the foreign court, and even more often let the internal supervisor to act on his behalf. Although this behavior is a serious violation of the system of the DPRK. In this case, the internal supervisor's intervention in the political situation and affairs of the court and the role of left and right will be clearly reflected, when serious, there will be eunuch dictatorship. This is both an explicit and implicit aspect of their roles.

In addition, while both of them are explicit and implicit, they are placed in the main aspects of contradiction and the focus of attention and struggle of the court bureaucratic groups. When the role of the cabinet is dominant, the contradiction between the cabinet and the six ministries and the officials of science and technology becomes the main contradiction. On the contrary, it is reduced to a secondary contradiction. When the internal supervisory role is manifested, it becomes the main aspect of the contradiction. The struggle between the internal supervisor and the entire civil service bureaucratic group (although there are no shortage of civil servants who even rely on the internal supervision for the tiger) has risen to the main aspect of the contradiction. This is one aspect of the struggle between the two.

Of course, the two sometimes have a side of cooperation. But in general, this kind of cooperation is actually based on the internal control of the cabinet, and the cabinet is in the period of its dominant performance. Especially after the middle and late Ming Dynasty, the cabinet, especially the first and second assistants, appeared only when they maintained good or even close personal relationships with the court officials. Judging from the actual situation of the Ming Dynasty, we can not deny that in fact, the internal supervision is completely overwhelming, and our civil service group is not explicitly recognized. In Professor Fang Zhiyuan's words, it is more out of "face". Literati doctors are unwilling to admit this situation. After all, under the feudal monarchy, the Confucian ideas they represent are the "kingly way" of governing the country.

Admittedly, when the autocratic imperial power developed to the extreme, everything was based on the right and wrong of the emperor, and transferred to the good or bad of his mood. When commenting on the centralization and autocracy of the Ming Dynasty, people always use the "supremacy" and "no restriction" of the imperial power to illustrate the degree of its strengthening. In fact, any autocratic monarch has to be restricted by social and economic conditions and traditional moral norms. We usually say that the emperor has supreme power. It only says that in the legislative, administrative, judicial, etc., in principle, the emperor must make a final ruling. It does not mean that there is no matter how small it is, and it must be decided by the emperor. We say that the imperial power Unlimited. It is just that there is no legal provision to impose restrictions on the emperor, and it does not mean that the emperor can do everything he wants or do whatever he wants. In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, the emperor was at least "legitimate" in the power structure and political system at several levels, such as the ceremonial ceremonies, cabinets, and six subjects [7].

5. Conclusion

In summary, the emperor of the Ming Dynasty was the arch of the power structure from the political structure of the central government of the Ming Dynasty. Without them, the government's power could not function. Also, the emperor of the Ming Dynasty was an administrative official who needed daily pro-government to determine and promote governance. If this link is missing, then there needs to be something that is not absolutely satisfactory to replace the emperor's own domination. With the rise of the Cabinet and the Cili Guan as the basis, the emperors in the middle

and late Ming Dynasty gradually got rid of the mode of judging everything by themselves, but depended on the checks and balances between the various systems and the various government departments to maintain the operation of the empire. In this way, the expression of imperial power has evolved from "everything must be done by one's own hands" to "governing by the arch". As for the "pro-government" of Emperor Chongzhen, it can only be regarded as the variation of the manifestation of imperial power in the Ming Dynasty under special conditions [8].

References

- [1] Yang Shufan. Ming Dynasty Central Political System [M]. Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1982.
- [2] Yang Shufan. Ming Dynasty Central Political System [M]. Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1982.
- [3] Yang Shufan. Ming Dynasty Central Political System [M]. Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1982.
- [4] Fang Zhiyuan. State power structure and operation mechanism in Ming Dynasty: Introduction [M]. Beijing: Science Press, 2008.
- [5] Fang Zhiyuan. State power structure and operation mechanism in Ming Dynasty: Introduction [M]. Beijing: Science Press, 2008.
- [6] Fang Zhiyuan. State power structure and operation mechanism in Ming Dynasty: Introduction [M]. Beijing: Science Press, 2008.
- [7] Fang Zhiyuan. State power structure and operation mechanism in Ming Dynasty [M]. Beijing: Science Press, 2008.
- [9] Fang Zhiyuan. State power structure and operation mechanism in Ming Dynasty: Introduction [M]. Beijing: Science Press, 2008.