

# On the early year politics of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty

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**Abstract:** Emperor Wen ascended to the throne and immediately implemented the policies of "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States", which prevented the noblemen not to occupy the capital. Emperor Wen, weakened the aristocratic power of the noblemen and dispelled the intention of supporting the political situation of the noblemen.

**Keywords:** Emperor Wen, political arrangement, kingdom policy

## 1. Introduction

The feudal changes in thousands of years. The establishment and development of QinHan county system has changed the mode and trend of China's historical evolution. The solution of the problem of the same surname in the Han Dynasty was the last battle that the county system of the Qin and Han Dynasties was established. The kingdom governance of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty laid a key foundation for the solution of the kingdom problem. The unification of Emperor Wen by Dai Cheng was the result of the military nobles and the Liu princes, which ushered in a critical moment. After Emperor Wen ascended the throne, the Han Dynasty also faced four problems: the weight of military merit, kingdom domineering, invasion and economic vanity. And the kingdom governance became the most important political action in the political situation of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty. At the beginning of the Han Dynasty has always been important by scholars, and the author of the study was the elaboration of the trilogy of "reducing the power", "cutting vassal states" and "pushing grace", focusing less on the ideological field of the Han Dynasty. The author compared historical materials, deeply explored the political situation of Emperor Wen in the early year from the perspective of political and cultural history, restore the strategies and measures of Emperor Wen to deal with the problems of the kingdom, and understand the deeper depth of imperial administration and imperial governance.

The Emperor Wen Dynasty was the first systematic outbreak of the problem of Kingdom in the early Han Dynasty. The problem of kingdom governance became a structural problem in the Emperor Wen Dynasty. This period of the kingdom problem is facing at least the following three aspects: one is the Emperor of the kingdom in Emperor Lve and Emperor gradually adult rule, the second is Lve broke the political agreement, three is military nobles and Liu princes to the court coup to overthrow the rule of the Emperor, under these factors, positive concentration to the Emperor Han. After Emperor Wen ascended to the throne, he not only faced with rectifying the military nobles, but also suffered great pressure from Emperor Huainan, Qi and Wu. Based on the situation at that time, Emperor Wen adopted the suggestions of Jia Yi and other officials, issued the policies of "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States" of great historical significance, and took the initiative to solve the problems of military meritorious nobles and kingdoms simultaneously.

Less than a year after Emperor Wen ascended the throne, he successively promulgated two important policies, "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States". How to understand the two policies? Who exactly is the object of the policy? Is the king of Huainan really the ultimate goal of "Yi Hou Yi"? Scholars have great differences. One view is represented by Mu Qian, Yong Ma, Kaiyuan Li, etc. It is believed that the two policies are mainly aimed at the nobles who occupied in Chang'an, Emperor Wen moved the State among the noblemen's states to the Han County, Make them back from the center to the State seat, in order to weaken their power; One view is represented by SuZhen Chen, The two policies are "ostensibly aimed at the Noblemen, In fact, the main spearfinger is directed at the state of Huainan and Qi, It was another move by Emperor Wen to

weaken and control the kingdom. ";One is represented by MengLong Ma, he thinks that the "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States" was before the "Yi Hou Yi", Mainly to deal with the military merit nobility, "Yi Hou Yi" was held later, It was issued by the specially weakened Huainan state.

SuZhen Chen believed that it was difficult to disperse the noblemen's states in the kingdom or Han counties but not conducive to management, but Kaiyuan Li believed that the relocation of the noblemen's states to the Han county, so that the acceptance of the supervision of local administration was conducive to strengthening the centralization. MengLong Ma sorted out nearly 160 Marquis states of the Han Dynasty and only 2. He believed that 160 noblemen's states seemed to outweigh the loss and unreasonable. He further believed that although the noblemen's states affected, Huainan was still aimed at the bureaucrats of military merit. In the author's opinion, SuZhen Chen linked the two policies together to investigate, and put forward the view of the kingdom governance, which further promoted the study of the Kingdom of the Western Han Dynasty, especially he thought that the two policies are actually to solve the view of Qi, which is quite accurate.

However, further understanding is necessary regarding the purpose of the two policies. First, MengLong Ma's interpretation pointed the two policies, especially the "Yi Hou Yi" policy, to the king of Huainan, but it cannot explain the strategic role of Huainan in the early year of Emperor Wen and the suppression and differentiation of Emperor Wen on the state of Qi, which had a great conflict in historical facts. Second, SuZhen Chen's views could not well explain the suppression of the two policies on the noblemen. Although it was expedient, the occupation of the central nobles was indeed a major threat in the early year of Emperor Wen. Instead, the relocation of the noblemen to accept the supervision of the county defenders was the best way to dilute the nobles. However, as SuZhen Chen pointed out, the "Yi Hou Yi" and the "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States" were not actually carried out. According to Ma Menglong research, B.C.178, the new noblemen's state is basically not in the noblemen's state, but it was still about 51% in the noblemen's king in B.C.169, this shows that although the two policies are implemented, but the effect of policy implementation is not satisfactory. Third, the above view based on the political level that the policy was oriented to the king of Huainan could not well explain Emperor Wen's connivance to Huainan in the early period and the restoration of Huainan in the later period. Therefore, we should really understand the purpose of the two policies, must start from the beginning of the Emperor, combined with the political atmosphere and social environment, from the whole two major policies, put them in the social and historical background, to find the Emperor of the political arrangement and control, more profound understanding of his strategy for the kingdom, quite successful strategy and measures.

## 2. "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States"

The author from the beginning of the political situation analysis that "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States" is the beginning of the Emperor stability, solve the government of the key measures, the Emperor finally in four years to strike, dissolve the hero and the vassal state political attempt, it is the political side of the Emperor kingdom governance strategy.

Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty did not know the specific situation of the court coup at that time, and was quite confused. After repeatedly confirming it, he believed that "there was no suspicious person" and finally went to Chang'an as the son of heaven. After following the unification, he immediately appointed Zhao Bo, Chang Song, Wu Zhang and others to master the military power, and commanded the palace to ban the internal and external dormitory guards and the Northern and southern forces. In October to June of the first year of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty (B.C.179), Emperor Wen and the supporting officials had their own actions between each other.

Let's start with supporting the noblemen. Two months after Emperor Wen ascended to the throne, the hero urged Emperor Wen of Han to become crown prince. The early Emperor, like the Han Dynasty, was also in March of the previous Yuan Dynasty, nearly two years since Emperor Jing ascended the throne. Of course, please build the crown prince early to stabilize the throne to inherit the chaos and restore the political order. It seems to test the attitude of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty on the noblemen. We should know that Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty ascended the throne and all supported the noblemen.

After Emperor Wen ascended the throne, he was quite familiar with national governance. When he asked Bo Zhou about public security and economic issues, Bo Zhou did not know how to deal with it. Asking Ping Chen again, Ping Chen said that each department has his own duties. Emperor Wen further asked, then what would the Emperor do? Ping Chen replied that the "chief minister" was mainly

managing the prime minister, who assisted to deal with government affairs. Emperor Wen was very satisfied with Ping Chen's answer, which can be seen that Emperor Wen paid special attention to the left and right prime minister. Interestingly, after Bo Zhou left the court, he blamed Ping Chen for not teaching him how to deal with Emperor Wen's answer. Ping Chen said with a smile, Can the Emperor not know what the officials did? He was really asking Chang'an? Ping Chen said that his life could read the imperial heart. Emperor Wen's involvement in specific government affairs is obviously beyond specific affairs. Emperor Wen was concerned about the Emperor's "chief power" as a "sole minister". What is the "chief minister"? "The king is the minister", the Emperor has the sole power, master the lives and death of the world, let alone the noblemen and nobles? Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty and the noblemen were very obvious.

Looking at Emperor Wen, after Emperor Wen ascended the throne, he amnesty the world and made his contributions, but he did not make a large-scale partition, but conferred the contributions. To appease the noblemen king, he appointed Prince You as King of Zhao, and migrated Ze as King of Yan. All the Lve family captured. Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty used the measures to seal and return to the old kingdom to achieve the stability of power, which should be said to have achieved the goal. In June of the first year, the Dai State also honored the meritorious officials. In order to enhance the support power, he specially conferred the meritorious officials since Emperor Gaozu and implemented the system of "Yi Hou Yi" system.

"Yi Hou Yi", Zhuo Jin notes that "Hou Yi in Huainan, easier to seal his county, do not want to be wrong in the kingdom". It will soon be replaced in the noblemen state to the county directly managed by the Han Dynasty. Almost at the same time, the king of Zhao conferred the uncle of Huainan as noblemen of Zhou Yang, and the uncle of Qi as noblemen of Jing Guo. "If you just look at "Yi Hou Yi", it seems to be the ordinary arrangement of the personnel system. However, in the winter and October of the second year, the prime minister Ping Chen died of illness. Only four months from the "Yi Hou Yi", Emperor Wen issued an edict to "order the Kingdom of the noblemen". The noblemen gathered in the capital to enjoy the tax of food before. According to Emperor Wen, the purpose of this system lies in two points: one is "far city, officials suffer to lose money", and the other is to "do not teach the people", but the real purpose or effect is far from two points.

SuZhen Chen combined with the two policies of "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States" that Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty seemed to be aimed at the noblemen, but in fact it was mainly aimed at Huainan and Qi, the two largest princes of the same purpose. Because Huainan and Qi had considered the object of the meritorious nobles. The two policies separated the king of Huainan from the assistance of his uncle. After this success, in the ten sons of Fei Liu in the fourth years (B.C.176), both the ten sons and Jun Si were stationed in the central government, so they lost their assistance and support and fell into the two counties of the Han Dynasty and Jinan. It can be seen that SuZhen Chen meant that one year after Emperor Wen ascended to the throne, he began to carry out measures to weaken Huainan and Qi. SuZhen Chen has certain reason, especially for the connotation of the Han Emperor division interpretation is very clear, however, the author thinks the two policies with one stone, two birds with one stone: one is to Huainan kingdom "Yi Hou Yi" as Emperor political change breakthrough, achieve the purpose of division, the second is to cooperate with the "state" to rectify the aristocracy in the capital.

Let's talk about the first point. It can be seen from the first section that scholars had very different views on Emperor Wen's disposal of the problem of the Kingdom of Huainan City, which affected their understanding of the politics of the early years. In fact, King Huainan was the closest half-brother after Emperor Wen succeeded to the throne. His relationship was basically similar to that of Emperor Jing of the Han Dynasty and King Xiao of Liang. King Li of Huainan mentioned many times that he did not serve the law of the Han Dynasty, such as killing Marquis Pei Yang and examining his food, Emperor Wen of the Han attitude was lenient. It was not until it really obstructed that his uncle Bo Zhao was severely responsible for teaching. Even after the rebellion of the King of Huainan, he still did not kill him. Later, he appointed the prince and then restored him, which showed his preferential treatment to the King of Huainan. From this, we believe that the following, Even if the "Yi Hou Yi" system is aimed at Huainan and Qi, But the starting point of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty was not to weaken the power of Huainan, But with the blood prince of Huainan, as a breakthrough point to rectify the political situation, Because Huainan was the younger brother, "Yi Hou Yi" took the lead from the state of Huainan, The military merit nobles, Qi and other forces naturally have nothing to say, It can naturally return the vassal stationed in the central government, It also took the opportunity to divide the power of the Qi state, Break the game, From Zhao Bo 's book, we can see that "Yi Hou Yi" made King Huainan "get the reality of the three counties", But the king of Huainan was unresourceful, did not see through

the inconvenient purpose of Emperor Wen, Show a "not willing" attitude. However, the policy had been set, and Emperor Wen still forced the "Yi Hou Yi" policy.

But, "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States", the policy has not been long in the central state of positive response, is likely to arouse the vibration between merit, such as minister has been beneficial, but with meritorious Liu noblemen is still marquis status, according to the Emperor "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States" edict, they are obviously to separate from the kingdom, to their own city, which for Emperor Liu is difficult to accept. So in March of the second year, support the hero to appoint the prince as the vassal king.

The intention of the nobles was not only to appoint the sons of Emperor Wen, but actually forced Emperor Wen to admit the intention of the noblemen and Qi and Liu brothers, fulfill the policy promise, and realize the purpose of conferring the king at the beginning of Lu'an and Liu. When Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty changed Xiang Liu as King of Qi, Zhang Liu and Xingyu Liu, he established three imperial states. In fact, as early as two months after ascended the throne. Although the old land of King Langya was restored to Yan, Jibei and Chengyang were both the old states of Qi. Emperor Wen did not meet the original idea by adding the actual land governance, and conferred the river of Zhi Zhao to Piqiang Liu, the younger brother of King Zhao. Emperor Wen was nothing more than to warn his ministers, "under the general heaven, the king". The official could only be heard by Emperor Wen alone. In this way, in the second year of Emperor Wen, the situation of establishing the three princes, two states of Zhao and three states of Qi, completely dispelled the idea of Liu Zhang of Zhu Xu as king of Zhao and Liu Xingju as king of Liang, and weakened the strength of the Kingdom of Qi.

Although Emperor Wen conferred the title of vassals and Kings, he introduced a new policy. Emperor Wen gave the county magistrate tiger characters and bamboo envoys, which guaranteed the leadership of the system and increased the power and strength of local administrative officials and important dispatched officials of the kingdom. It was obviously a powerful warning for the Marquis, and its intention was quite profound.

In May of the three years (B.C.177), Xingju Liu, king of JiBei, rebelled for rebellion. Emperor Wen took Wu Chai, Noblemen of Jinpu, as the general, led the four generals of 100,000 troops, captured Xingju Liu, and committed suicide. All the officials who rebelled with him were pardoned and the country was divided as Han County. Emperor Wen's pardon showed not only his benevolent side, but also the confidence that he had taken control of the noble states.

Emperor Wen was calm and firm in the measures of the noble Kings. In May and September of the four years, the Liu and the princes were given naturalized or granted preferential treatment, especially the service of Qi Prince Hui as nobleman. According to SuZhen Chen's research, the ten princes should all in Jinan and Jinan counties. Therefore, "The ten sons and Si Jun should have left the capital of Qi and lived in their respective cities, thus falling under the surveillance and control of the two counties of Ji in the Han Dynasty and Jinan. Without their support and support, the young King of Qi could not do anything. Since then, the state of Qi was quiet, with no adverse events to the Han Dynasty." It can be seen that the four years of Emperor Wen basically completed the first major adjustment of the vassal Kings. In the four years of Emperor Wen, the state of Wu, Chu, Qi, Chengyang, Dai, Huaiyang, Liang, Yan, Zhao, Hejian and eleven kingdoms of Changsha were total.

The second point is reanalyzed. Reviewing the historical materials, Emperor Wen's attack on the supporting noblemen seemed to be mainly achieved by the "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States". Since the objects of "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States" were both vassals, but they had not received a positive response from the noblemen, does it mean that there were special objects and these objects were well known at that time? Because according to the regulations, the princes of Emperor Wen's two years served in the central government or granted in Beijing, but the crown prince on the state. According to the system of noblemen in the early Han Dynasty, all noblemen had meritorious service. Generally, noblemen were senior officials in the central or county states, so it was quite unrealistic to make a large number of noblemen on the state, which was also impossible for the noblemen to resign. They could not go to the local country with or quit the official position appointed by the Han Dynasty. According to the research by SuZhen Chen and MengLong Ma, the two policies have not been implemented since then. Then the system of Emperor Wen seems unreasonable, in fact, the object is carefully chosen, and the deep meaning is naturally beyond the content of the imperial edict.

It was obviously not acceptable to Emperor Wen, so he made prime minister Bo Zhou take the lead in preventing the minister from the state. To be the prime minister of the country, completely in line with the special situation of "for the official and the decree", can be sent to the crown prince. So how

did Emperor Wen want Bo Zhou to avoid minister twice? This is the "prime minister", but it does carry other purposes. Bo Zhou was the most qualified and powerful Gaozu noblemen after Ping Chen, the hero of Emperor Wen, and the core figure of the early nobles. Bo Zhou avoided the power of the country with the meaning of beating the nobles.

The former prime minister, Bo Zhou, discussed his experience after the country, which can reveal the essence of Emperor Wen's aforementioned policy. First, he should accept administrative supervision after the state, which in fact is to resolve the political and public security pressure of the capital, and put the marquis in the local administration of the Han Dynasty. Second is "subsequent people have a letter to reverse", with Zhou support the Emperor, of course, not rebellion, whether Zhou implicated Ji Bei, King Xingju Liu rebellion to prison, but only from the key of the Hedong guard inspector speculation, it does not have the possibility of private contact, hidden ditch, the event is likely to be the Emperor to "reverse" have to beat a merit. Third, "the restoration" until the end of 11 years, nine years of history records no record. This shows that through the example of "the prime minister", Emperor Wen urged the nobles and princes to return to the food city or recognize the political status situation. At this point, in the first four years, Emperor Wen completely solved the supporting noblemen, especially the noblemen who served in the court, and ordered them to actively maintain the rule of Emperor Wen and completely dispel their unrealistic attempts to influence the bureau of the court.

In addition, Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty gradually changed the example of meritorious officials as 9 ministers, the official government and the county. Some Chinese officials and military officials began to ascend the stage of history, so as to divide the power and strength of military nobles. Interestingly, at the central official level, the military nobles still firmly grasped the high level of the 39 ministers. In the early years, Emperor Wen introduced the old ministers, Wu Gong, Yi Jia and others, but when the high level of Yi Jia, Yi Jia was strongly resisted by the military nobles, and Emperor Wen's plan to disintegrate the military nobles in the central government was not realized. However, Emperor Wen arranged a large number of close officials or officials to enter the local administrator: According to the watch of Emperor Wen, 40 governors were Governor, like Tian Shu of Han Zhong, Meng Shu of Yun Zhong, starting as officials. In terms of kingdoms, the history recorded the prime minister of the eight states 10 people, including Chu- Tang Feng, Wu- Ang Yuan, this trend is more obvious in the latter Han Dynasty. In terms of Tai Fu of the kingdom, Emperor Wen only saw Yi Jia, including Chang Sha- Tai Fu and Liang- Tai Fu respectively. In sum, during the period of Emperor Wen, the number of military officials as three officials, official hospitality, nine ministers and other senior officials has dropped from 97% and 81% during the period of Emperor Gao and Hui to 50%. Although Emperor cannot shake the military nobles hold the central three nine qing high situation, but arranged a group of close officials, foreign officials to the county, weakened the power distribution, played a certain role, at the same time can prevent military nobles (especially princes) and local princes communication, can also strengthen the local administration of princes or military nobles to supervision and control. In this way, Emperor Wen defeated the military noble group led by Bo Zhou through the implementation of the policy of "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States", and clarified the system of non-military ministers in the charge of military power, so as to strengthen the comprehensive control of the military nobles.

### 3. Summary

In the first four years, Emperor Wen firmly grasped the important policies such as "Yi Hou Yi" and "Ordering the Noblemen to Go Back Their States", and tried to solve the problem of "powerful military nobles and the Kings of Liu" through relatively moderate and not radical means. Emperor Wen is undoubtedly lucky, Xiang Liu, Ping Chen and Zhang Liu's natural death saved him a lot of energy, and provides a good opportunity for some of his actions; Emperor Wen is also decisive, the third year Xingju Liu seek suicide, kingdom of Zhao, kingdom of Qi, their power continues to fall, Emperor Wen completely control the court.

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