

## Causes of the Failure of Hundred Days Reform

Linfei Xu

Tianjin Commercial University, Beichen District, Tianjin

### Abstract

Since 1840, the Opium War opened the door of China. The Qing Empire, which regarded itself as the "Heavenly Kingdom", was constantly attacked by Western ships and guns, and was forced to become a vassal of foreign powers. China gradually entered the vision of the world. At the end of the 19th century, the failure of Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 not only had a profound and huge impact on China and Japan, but also triggered a frenzy of division of China by foreign powers. China was plunged into a miserable situation of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, but it promoted the Chinese nation to carry out profound reflection from top to bottom. In order to save the nation and survive, a large number of people with noble ideals set off a wave of reform, which prompted an important bourgeois reform movement in modern history of China -- the 1898 Reform. But at the beginning of the rise of the reform movement of 1898 with vigour and vitality, but such as a flash in the pan as rapid failure. However, the failure of the vigorous reform movement is not accidental, the bourgeoisie's own weakness, reactionary forces, feudal thought unusually strong and the bourgeoisie upper can't launch the people, the lack of the theoretical guidance of marxism, and so on the fate of the doomed failure are doomed wuxu reform movement.

### Keywords

Hundred Days Reform; Failure Reasons; Experience and Lessons.

### 1. Background of Hundred Days Reform

In the late Qing Dynasty, in order to maintain the corrupt rule, the Qing government levied heavy taxes and levies. Taxes were raised everywhere, and the Chinese shipowners paid many times as much as the foreign ships. Chinese products are often shipped to the mainland at higher prices than foreign products. The Qing government set up some barriers to restrict private capital investment, which seriously hindered the free development of private capital in China. As the Qing government became the imperial court of foreigners, the imperialists obtained privileges to set up factories in China, which further damaged China's self-sufficient feudal economy and caused a large number of handicraft workers to lose their jobs. In order to make a living, they had to sell their labor. On the other hand, after the First Opium War, China entered a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. China is no longer an independent and complete sovereign state. A series of unequal treaties were signed during the two Opium Wars, and the state sovereignty was fragmented. Uprisings such as the Taiping Rebellion and the Boxer Rebellion were suppressed, and the Self-Strengthening Movement had little effect under the conservative Empress Dowager Cixi. At the end of the 19th century, the Qing government was defeated in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, and signed the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki with Japan. At the same time, it announced the complete bankruptcy of the Westernization Movement. After the defeat of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, the defects of the Westernization Movement were gradually exposed, and the idea of "Chinese system for western use" was proved to have many drawbacks and limitations.

## 2. Causes of Failure of the Hundred Days Reform

The bourgeoisie has its own weakness. The bourgeoisie in China has evolved from the landlord class and the bureaucracy. In order to safeguard their economic interests, the bourgeoisie also tried to protect their economic rights and interests by gaining political power. Under the background of semi-feudal and semi-colonial society, the Chinese bourgeoisie was inevitably connected with feudalism and oppressed by it. The Chinese bourgeoisie, born in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, has close ties with feudalism and imperialism, which determines its own weakness and compromise. They attempted to establish the capitalist system without fundamentally changing the economic basis of feudal landlords' ownership of land, and did not dare to put forward a revolutionary programme of radical opposition to imperialism. Instead, they fancied that imperialism would help them establish the capitalist system in feudal China. This fatal weakness also determined that the bourgeois reform program could not work in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial society of China. At the difficult moment when the Chinese nation was facing the danger of annihilation, the reformers tried to launch a political reform movement and establish a capitalist system in China to make China rich and powerful, which was actually an illusion.

The reactionary forces were unusually strong, and the reformers did not make full use of Cixi. Among the reformers, neither Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, nor Tan Sitong were in power. They had no military power, and even the reformers' Guangxu emperor had no real power. So they were very passive and helpless in the face of the coup led by the Empress Dowager Cixi. For the Empress Dowager, the only one who could influence the political situation, the reformers were very disdainful of her. In fact, the Empress Dowager was not entirely averse to change in general. In fact, the Empress Dowager Cixi agreed to the reform only within limits: firstly, the reform must not violate the ancestral system, and secondly, it must not infringe on her power and position. Under such circumstances, the reformers should appease the Empress Dowager Cixi as much as possible and carry out reforms within the scope that she could tolerate. At the same time, the reformers should also strengthen their cooperation with the Westernizers. But the reformists will be from the start, the empress dowager cixi, the westernization movement included almost the entire hierarchy as barriers to reform, and suggests that the emperor exclusive empress dowager, take decisive measures to purges, the behavior of the reformists might be made was to the party, be wary of the empress dowager cixi reformists might feel annoyed, together with the side of the conservative bureaucrats to hinder and also destroy the political reform, the failure of the reform is inevitable.

The bondage of feudal thought. In the feudal society, the authoritative thought of the supremacy of monarchy had a fatal influence on them. Even after Kang Youwei failed the Wuxu coup and went into exile in Japan, the bourgeois revolutionaries expressed their hope to cooperate with Kang Youwei, but Kang Youwei refused to cooperate on the grounds that he had the "secret letter" of Emperor Guangxu and it was inconvenient for him to communicate with the revolutionaries. Under this kind of serious thinking to the bourgeois reformists figures from set out actually, seek truth from facts, through the establishment of his own political party, the army, and the party's unity is based on at least not damage the interests of its member material, on the basis of through establish communism beliefs as an ideological weapon to launch a reform movement is impossible.

There is no widespread mobilization of the masses. During the reform period, the reformers did not get any inspiration from the strong shock of the peasant uprisings of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Yihetuan to the feudal rule and imperialist aggression. They also failed to realize the tremendous power of advanced ideas when combined with mass movements. Perspective without a sufficient to build the people's revolution platform, the reformists launched by the masses to build their own political group army and even led the

army to do the most determined to fight the common enemy and achieve the final victory is for them, grow after a coup movement of reformists might still do not realize the importance of the people's strength, build up their army and urgency. It is no accident that the reformers failed to put forward a revolutionary program that fully mobilized the masses. What is most regrettable is that the reformers still failed to see the power of the people and the importance of having their own army after the 1898 coup.

In the reform stage, they were eager for success, did not follow the logic of political reform, and seriously lacked practical ability. Under the social conditions at that time, if the reform was to achieve a good result, it should proceed slowly, step by step, steadily and gradually, gradually expanding, not rushing forward, and avoiding touching the vital interests of all strata at once. Only in this way can we prevent the reform force from falling into the situation of being besieged on all sides. However, the reformers adopted an extremely radical way -- attacking from all sides, blooming in an all-round way, and simplifying the reform strategy.

Yuan Shikai's informant. Yuan Shikai was a whistleblower, but was not the direct cause of the coup. On September 19, Cixi left the Summer Palace and returned to the palace, reprimanded Guangxu to his face and limited some of his powers, and the coup de facto took place. In addition, Mr. Mao Haijian believed that the Wuxu coup was actually a "process", "composed of many related events", and the Empress Dowager's counter-measures were introduced and upgraded step by step. Since Guangxu removed the official of the Ministry of Rites without authorization, the coup d'etat had already started. Therefore, Yuan Shikai's informant was not the triggering condition for the coup, but only "intensified the intensity of the coup".

### 3. Conclusion

Although the Hundred Days Reform came to an end after only 103 days on the historical stage, its spirit of adversity is bound to last forever and has great practical significance. At the same time, it woke up the sleeping people, sounded the clarion call of the 1911 Revolution and opened a new chapter in the history of China. The failure of the Hundred Day Reform has provided experience for our subsequent movements. First, the reform thought must be in line with the current social development, and the reform thought that goes too far or falls behind the current social development is easy to cause waves. Second, the pace of reform must take into account the social capacity, steady but not impeccably; Third, the smooth progress of reform can not be separated from stability, only in this way, the reform can withstand the impact and test. To carry out the reform, we must deeply explore the process of reform, we must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the overall layout, not only to have a suitable political ecology and economic environment, traditional culture derived from a variety of traditional ideas and rigid thinking mode can not be ignored.

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