

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Confusion of Secretary Science Teaching Materials in China High Schools on the Background of Social Problems

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Abstract:

Secretary(mishu) phenomenon is an increasingly important issue in contemporary China, especially in the context of anti-corruption movements of China government. Secretary science is an extremely popular course in many high schools in China, with the great need of secretaries in almost every institution, company, government, organization and school etc. Secretary science teaching has been studied by many researchers mainly in the perspective of the teaching methods previously, however, rarely research of secretary science teaching has been done in the perspective of teaching materials. Teaching materials are the leading factor of teaching content of secretary science, so it is significantly important to study the teaching materials for the benefit of secretary science teaching. There has been much confusion and disagreement on the current teaching materials. This paper discusses the cause of the confusion and disagreement and compare a welcomed teaching material Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader and the commonly used teaching materials. It argues that the confusion and disagreement about the teaching materials is caused by the factors that outside the classroom. The prevailing hidden rules and corruption in some spheres give birth to the feverish interests in Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader, although the book does not instigate readers to apply the hidden rules and comply with the corruption, on the contrary, it teaches the students how to keep righteous and cope with the hidden rules and corruption.

Keywords: secretary science, teaching materials, mishu, Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader, hidden rules.

1. Introduction

Complaints arise in the classroom of secretary science. Most of the students believe that they are attending a nonsense lecture, in which the content of the teaching is boring, useless and dry. The teacher in the classroom would feel awkward, noticing the students do not focus on the lesson.

Secretary science is one extremely important course in the secretary major in China high schools. Secretary, in Chinese language which is called mishu, is ubiquitous in China (Li W, Pye L W., 1992) Secretary position permeates in government, company, school, factory, organization, institution and even army. Secretary is an extremely important position because this vocation keepsake in intimate touch with the leader, or the power center. Especially in the important political figure circle, secretary would know the privacy of the leader. Mao Zedong once said to his long-time security secretary: "there are no secrets about me or my family that I can hide from you even if I can hide them from heaven or earth." (Quan Yanchi, 1989: 1) The cadres in governments mostly are promoted from secretary positions, which is the cradles to cultivate the future cadres of China officials (Xun Lei., 2010:157-182.)

Ever since 1979, thousands of high school set up the secretary major for the benefit of both the students and the government. In the CCP Central Party School, where the high level cadres are trained, secretary science is the integral part of the curriculum. In any comprehensive university, there would be the secretary science course, and even in many vocational schools, the secretary science is also the integral part. From 1991 until 1995, secretary major has been abolished in many high schools, but the secretary science continued to exist in many adult vocational education colleges. In 1997, the secretary science was approved to exist in high schools again. So thousands of teachers engaged in the teaching of secretary science, and many of them would compile the secretary science teaching material and get them published. It would find that such teaching materials are similar with each other.

Teaching materials are the key factor in secretary science course. But in decades, the doubts and confusions about such teaching materials have been arising in classroom. Previous studies have discussed mostly the teaching methods in secretary science classroom (Lin Hui. Huzhu shi jiaoxue fa zai mishuxue zhong de yunyong. (Wang Yan., 2009). Some valuable research has also discussed the relationship between secretary science teaching and political events (Yu Min and Wang Chen., 2015) There are also some researches about the interdisciplinary study on the secretary science teaching (Li Sheng, 17-20) In the specific teaching of secretary science teaching, some schools invite the secretaries in governments to impart their experience of secretary experience in government to the students, and that interests the students greatly. There are also some schools increase the practice time of students in order to enhance the secretary experience of the students.

However, to date there is little discussion about the confusion and doubts of the teaching materials, even that the students has been complaining about the teaching materials of secretary science for decades.

Most of the teaching materials of secretary science are similar, and those are the target of the students' complains. But there is one book is welcomed by the students and netizens feverishly. The book is Canmou zhushou lun: wei shouzhang fuwu de yishu (*Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*), which was compiled by Wang Huaizhi and Guo Zheng.

No previous study has compared this teaching material and other confusing teaching materials. Without the comparison, very little will be known about the problems of the teaching materials. This paper will analyze the differences between *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* and other teaching materials. The specific objective of this research is to find the problems that lay under the confusions in the secretary science classroom. This research sheds new light on the secretary science teaching research.

The first section of this paper will give a brief introduction of *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*, the next section of this paper will give the account of the common teaching materials of secretary science in high schools. The following section will compare such two kinds of teaching materials in details. The next section of the paper will discuss the causes of the popularity of *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* in netizens and students.

2. Introduction to Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader

This books were compiled by Wang Huaizhi and Guo Zheng. They were professors of Xi'an Politics Institution of Liberation Army when they taught secretary sciences. Wang Huaizhi found most of the students were bored by this course and the teaching effect was deficient, which he believed that the teaching contents had some defects. So he decided to compile one teaching material for students. Then he invited Guo Zheng, another professor to give a series of lectures for the students. He recorded the teaching content of the lectures and compiled the content with Guo Zheng.

The students were attracted extremely by the original teaching content. Their classes were so welcomed by the students that the classroom was full and the students congested beside the doors and windows. Such content had never be heard about by the students, which was totally different from the other teaching materials.

What they taught in classroom was mainly about how to cope with the relationship between the secretary and the leader. The content was practical, because it was summarized from the secretary practice. The problems occurred in the secretary work got detailed analyses, and in this sense, the book is the handbook of the secretary work.

However, the teaching content was stopped by their supervisor. One vice president of the institution noticed the teaching content and criticized: "some of the senior professors have no principles and talked some unsuitable words. Our organs should investigate such content." (Zhu Xiaojia., 2011) Then the lectures were terminated. But the two professors complied one book, *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*, according to the teaching content of the lectures.

This book was published by North West University Publishing House in 1994 with 3,000 copies. Most of the copies were distributed in armies. Someone scanned the book and input it to the internet. Soon the netizens notice it and downloaded it for more than 27 times than the printed copy number of the book.

Although the content of the book was prohibited in classroom, the book was welcomed by the netizens and it also got high praise of the specialists. The president of Xi'an Politics Institution Zhang Benzhen commented the book that "the book is not of mannerism, false and hypocritical...it is the collection of honest words." (Zhang Benzhen., 1994) So in 2012, it is republished by World book publishing company, and until 2014, it had got reprinted for seven times.

3. The Common Teaching Materials in High Schools

Ever since 1990s, the teaching materials of secretary science appeared almost every year. Most of the teachers of secretary science would compile teaching books of secretary science after several years of teaching practice. The books are of the names such as *The Introduction to Secretary Science*, *The fundamentals of Secretary Science* or *Secretary Science*.

The content of the books is almost similar. The typified content of such books included the preface, the history of secretary in China, the history of secretary of the foreign countries, the characteristics and function of secretary, the classification of secretary, the requirements of secretary's abilities and the routine works of secretary. The routine works of the secretary include the investigation, the material collection, the letters and inquiry, the arrangement of meetings, the documentation writing, the process of the archive and keeping the secrets. There would some minor differences among the secretary science teaching materials, for example, some teaching materials, such as Lv Facheng and Fang Guoping's *Fundamentals of Secretary Science* (Lv Facheng, Fang Guoping. 2001), add the content of administration of secretary activities and the secretary activities in socialism market economy. The following section will describe the content of secretary science teaching materials with the book *Introduction to Secretary Science* (Zhu Xiaozheng, Luo Jielie, Wang Shiguo. 1998) as an example.

Introduction to Secretary Science includes four parts: the brief introduction to secretary science, the qualification of secretary, the administration of secretary and the works of secretary science. The brief introduction of secretary includes the brief description of secretary, the introduction to secretary activities and the functions of secretary. The second part of the book describes for qualities of secretary, the first is the moral quality, and the second is the knowledge, and the third and fourth are about the ability and psychological quality respectively. However, the qualities described in the part are of the general requirement of the overall developed person as required in China, so that is somehow the words of nonsense to describe the qualities of secretary.

The third part, which is the administration of secretary, includes the secretary institution, the administration of secretary, the environment of secretary and the rules for secretary. The institution of secretary describes the secretary institution in general, the main mission of secretary institution and the setting of secretary institution. The administration of secretary includes the content of the

administration and the organizing of secretary staff. That is about the selection of secretary, the appointment of secretary, assess of secretary, the award and punishment of secretary and the training of secretary. In this part, the book also gives a description of the organizing of secretary staff in the perspectives of age, ability, knowledge and temper.

The fourth part of the book includes the different works of secretary, such as documentation writing, information process, investigation, letters and inquiry, arrangement of meeting, acceptance of the visitor and keeping the secrets. This part is practical for the secretary works because the secretary would face such routine works every day. For example, the chapter of documentation writing describes the requirement of documentation writing, the procedure of documentation writing and the documenting of the documentations later.

Although the routine works of secretary are detailed in fourth part, the content in this part is easy to learn. So it is somehow like the handbook of secretary in practice. However, the course arrangement in high schools often rules the students of secretary science should learn the content in at least 8 classes with the teaching of teacher. The content is too easy to learn for the students, although the content is important for their future secretary job.

Generally, the book is easy to learn, but the course arrangement in high school often rules the students should learn the content with the teacher's teaching in 16 classes at least. So the teacher of secretary science would feel awkward on platform and the students are bored.

Although the teaching books of secretary science are numerous in contemporary China, with the first compile of secretary science book in 1990s, the content of such teaching materials are not changed much. They often follow the prior teaching materials. So it would find that the compile of such same books would be somewhat nonsense, and the content would be repeated many times.

Most of the content of such teaching materials are meaningless to the practice of secretary, and the useful knowledge that the teaching materials mentioned are too easy to learn in so many classes for students. So although secretary science is important for the students' secretary works, the teaching content and materials would be somewhat boring and awkward.

4. Comparison between Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader and Common Teaching Materials

4.1. The content of Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader

In the classroom of secretary science in Xi'an Politics Institution of Liberation Army of 1990s, the teaching content of secretary science has drawn fantastic welcome of the students. The teaching content is main about the book *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*.

It is necessary to compare the book *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* and the common teaching materials in order to find the problems with the teaching materials. In the following section, the paper will give a description of the content of *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*.

The book includes 27 chapters except the preface and appendix. In every title of the 27 chapters, there would be the word shouzhang(leader). The 27 chapters can be divided into five parts. The first part is about the brief description of the ordeal for secretary's service for the leader, which is mainly about the chapter one.

The second part discusses on how to maintain good guanxi(relationship) between secretary and leader, which includes chapter 2, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11. In the part, the book suggests the secretary should get familiar with the leader's temper, maintain the dignity of the leader, notice the leader's emotion, and how to do that artfully. This part also tells the students how to negate the opinions of the leader, to send the false message to the leader when it is necessary, to adapt to the different leaders with different tempers and to endure the weakness of the leader.

The third part of the book discusses on how to cope with the guanxi(relationship) between the leaders. This part is main about the chapters from chapter 13 to 19. In this part, the book told the students that secretary should notice the conflicts between the leaders and how to help the leaders to effect a compromise, to conceal the conflicts between the leaders, to coordinate the guanxi between the leaders, to help the leader to communicate with other leaders, to delay in some works in order to maintain the solidarity of the leaders and to arrange the visitors or guests of the leader.

The fourth part is mainly about how to cope with the guanxi between secretary and the leader's family number. The part includes chapter 26 and chapter 27. In this part, the book teaches the students how to cope with the problems that the family number of the leader interferes with the politics and to get along with the family number of his or he leader.

The fifth part is about the routine works of secretary, which includes chapter 3, 4, 9, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25. These chapter tell the students how to cope with the routine works in detail. Superficially, such content in this book would be similar to corresponding content in common teaching materials. However, such content in this book analyzes the routine works in the perspective of the guanxi(relationship) between secretary and leader. For example, when the book talks about recording and systematizing the leader's words, it does not only tell the student how to record in the technique perspective. On the contrary, it tells the students that the recording of the leader's words in some cases suitably would please the leader. The secretary can also enhance the words of the leader in the case that his or her recording can accord to the leader's intention. Besides, the secretary should pique the wise of the leader to summarize the meeting, or arouse the intention of the leader to give more speech about the problems.

Above all, in *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*, the focus is the guanxi(relationship) between secretary and leader. What is more important is that the content of the book is set from the benefit of the secretary. In China, guanxi(relationship) is extremely important in no matter official, business or daily life (Lovett S, Simmons L C, Kali R., 1999). Although some researchers believe guanxi would diminish as China moves toward an open market system (Fan Y., 2002), it will not diminish in at least five

hundred years, because on the one hand, guanxi has existed in China for thousands of years, and many businesses, governments or institutions has adopted to the condition. On the other hand, guanxi is popular in the world, in the broad sense.

The students are greatly interested in the content of *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*, because that has significant relationship with the benefit of them, and on the other hand, the content is honest to give an account of the situation of the secretary in practice. The leader is of extreme importance to the promotion of the secretary. "Some secretaries of high officials gain promotion through open selection with the backing of their powerful former bosses, despite never appearing on a reserve cadre name list." (Tsai W H, Kou C W., 2015) The position of being secretary is provisional to most of the secretaries. That the secretary is important and get great respect is because of the fact that he or she would be promoted one day. Besides, the secretary would also get many benefits from the power of his or her leader. So the guanxi (relationship) between secretary and leader is of extreme importance for the secretary.

Although the content of the book is in the perspective of the guanxi between secretary and leader for the benefit of secretary, the book does not teach the students impair the benefit of the benefit of the country and society. What the book narrates is the real situation of secretary in practice, so as a would-be-secretary student, the content should get his or her attention.

4.2. The Differences between *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* and Common Teaching Materials

The differences between *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* and common teaching materials can be analyzed in the perspectives of purpose and catalog.

In the perspective of purpose, it would find that the purpose of *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* is for the benefit of the secretary and how to cope with the relationship between secretary and leader, and the purpose of the common teaching materials focus on introducing the secretary phenomenon and works systemically. The purpose of the common teaching materials is to teach the students about the secretary phenomenon and works according to the requirement of the syllabus, without the attention to the benefit of both the secretary and leader. In other words, the main focus of the common teaching materials is about the objective phenomenon and works.

In the perspective of catalog, *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* is mainly about the guanxi between the secretary and leader, and that is not theoretical and systematic. However, the common teaching materials of secretary science is theoretical and systematic, but such content would be too simple.

Although the content of *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* is not theoretical and systematic, it points out the real situation of secretary and is for the benefit of secretary, so the book is interesting for the students. As the teaching of such content was halted in Xi'an Politics Institution of Liberation Army of 1990s, and it cannot be written in the common teaching materials, it would be thought as having the adverse effect for society and country. But in fact, the content in *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* does not teach the students how to cheat. Moreover, it teaches the students how to keep right, protect themselves and get the due benefit. But the content is still cannot be taught openly, so it must have touched some matters that seemingly should be hidden. Therefore, qian guize (the hidden rules) in the book *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader* should be analyzed in the next section.

5. Hidden Rules, the Cause of Popularity of *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*

5.1. Hidden Rules and its Influence

Principally, secretary should not be promoted according to his or her guanxi with the leader, but in most of the cases, the promotion of secretary would have intimate relationship with that. Therefore, the hidden rules play great important role.

Hidden rules are one concept with unique Chinese feature. Wu Si believes that hidden rules are the rules that beyond the laws, stipulations and regulations which are formal. Those rules are recognized widely, and are acquiesced in and abided by the most of people in the respective spheres. (Wu Si., 2001: 201-202) The origin of hidden rules in China has many reasons, one of the most important reason is that the cost according to the stipulations is more than the cost according to the hidden rules (Zhang D R, Yang H, 2011.), and once the hidden rules are overwhelming, the current society and regime would be endangered (Zhang D R, Yang H., 2011).

In China organizational politics, the hidden rules are popular (Lin W, Gao T, Amp L S, et al. 2010). Even some people oppose the hidden rules, the hidden rules exists and those who oppose it at first would identify with it eventually in many cases. "For institutional and cultural reasons, hidden rule is a phenomenon that will exist for a certain period of time." (Lin W, Gao T, Amp L S, et al., 2010.) But, on the other hand, the hidden rules are the dangerous factors in society and regime, besides, the hidden rules have intimate connection will the corruption. So the government of China claims all the hidden rules should be extinguished, and the society of China hates the hidden rules.

Although the society of China hates the hidden rules, people would live in the condition of hidden rules, just as Wu Si, a famous scholar in China, claimed that the hidden rules are the real "game rules" (youxi guize) in China history. Generally speaking, people would conform to the hidden rules and make their social activities smoothly.

In the practical works of secretary, the relationship between he or she with the leader should be treated meticulously, because that is related with his or her future and current situation. Secretary is the one who has the most intimate relationship with the leader (Zou Qiuyan., 2014). The leader would depend the secretary in many works, and the secretary would get the reward from the leader. However, in some cases, the hidden rules would play the role in the relationship. In addition, some secretaries became the accomplices or collaborators of the leaders in corruption. For example, Li Zheng, the secretary of Cheng Weigao, province governor of Hebei

province, helped his leader to corrupt. Qin Yu, the secretary of the municipal party secretary of Shanghai, corrupted together with his leader. When he was promoted to be the district governor of Baoshan District of Shanghai, his former identify as the secretary of municipal party secretary of Shanghai was emphasized (Zou Qiuyan., 2014). From those cases, we would find that the secretary and leader are in the same boat (zai yitiao chuanshang), and they share benefits or dangers.

Some researchers notice the extremely detrimental influences of the bond of secretary and leader on government anti-corruption measures. "The opportunities for corruption inherent in Chinese economic reform policies, while increasing mishu avenues to pursue their own interests, have bound the mishu and shouzhang even more closely together, to protect each other's criminal activities. The government's anti-secretary-corruption measures have largely failed because the corruption is systematic and institutionalized in ways that have defied government efforts to date." (Lollar, Xia L, Hamilton, et al. 2010) In the corruption, the hidden rules permeated. Principally speaking, the hidden rules are the breeding ground of corruption.

Obviously, the hidden rules are the thorny issues and the key preoccupation for the anti-corruption activities. To extinguish the hidden rules is beneficial to society and regime. So the hidden rules should not be taught in school.

5.2. Disclosure of Hidden Rules in Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader

However, in *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*, the hidden rules are not concealed, which would misguide the reader in first glimpse that the book tells the readers how to strive for their interests according to the hidden rules unscrupulously. A more serious worry about the content of the book is that, when the students learn the hidden rules in the book, they would be misguided to some extent. So the teaching of the content in classroom was stopped in 1990s.

Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader, in actual fact, although its content is deemed as detrimental to society and students, is welcomed by the readers with the crazy download of the scanned edition from the internet. Thus, different from the stipulations of the government and school, in society actual condition of the book is popular.

The popularity of book in society is because the society has the breeding ground of the hidden rules. Examples of hidden rules in China history abound, including the political conflicts of the emperors, ministers and officials, and the daily life of the ordinary people ((Wu Si., 2001: 45).

It must be noted that, in *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*, the hidden rules are entailed. For example, it points out the family number of the leader would interfere with the administration of the leader. The family number's interference with the administration of the leader can be divided into eight categories (Wang Huaizhi, Guo Zheng., 2012: 271-275). That is common in the actual daily life. For instance, the interference's of the leader's wife with the administration is called zhenbian feng (the advices around the pillow). The book also consents to the gift exchange in the interpersonal relationship of the leader (Wang Huaizhi, Guo Zheng., 2012: 24). Another example is the leading power of the part committee. Principally, the part committee is the central leading power, however, one or several individuals would handle the central power. In most of the cases, such individuals would be the ones who works for longer times in the unit, or who are fierce, or who have more qualifications, or who have the powerful boosters (Wang Huaizhi, Guo Zheng., 2012: 141).

All those exist in actual life and works, and have an ambivalent or blurred identity, because on the one hand, those are illegal, but on the other hand, they are rational and conform to the affectionate relationship among people.

Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader does not perceive the phenomena as abnormal, on the contrary, it deems the phenomena as the necessary condition that the secretary should cope with and get along with.

The book emphasizes the problems that the secretary would face, so for the students, the content of the book predicts the condition of the students' future secretary works. As a secretary in government, his or her remuneration, bonus, social status, prestige and promotion prospects would be better than many of other people. Especially the significant promotion prospects would be the most attractive factor for the students to be the secretaries. Nevertheless, the works of secretary are complicate and hard (Wang Huaizhi, Guo Zheng., 2012: 271-275.) Other common teaching materials do not reflect on the real situation and problems that the secretary would be faced in practice, on the contrary, they introduce the history of secretary and the routine works superficially. The students cannot find the actual detailed situation in such teaching materials, therefore they would not have so much interest as they show about *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*, which tells the students about the matters that relates to their careerism.

Those hidden rules are common in society, however, the books elaborate on them are not common, so for the students and some netizens, the hidden rules are somewhat mysterious. Therefore, the students would show more interest in the classroom for the course. In addition, when the book was scanned and put in the internet, the netizens downloaded the scanned edition crazily.

6. Conclusion

The paper has discussed the problems which are faced in the secretary science teaching. Two kinds of teaching materials have been used in the classroom, and received the different teaching effects. The common teaching materials only deal with the routine works of the secretary and the history of secretary in China systematically and theoretically, however, the actual situation that the secretary would be faced with is rarely touched in the teaching materials. The defects of the common teaching materials are avoided in *Adviser and Assistant: The Art of Serving the Leader*, a book compiled in 1990s, and the contents of which has been taught in classroom with the feverish welcome of the student and then stopped. However, the book was renowned in recent years after it was scanned and put in the internet.

The reason for the phenomenon is that the content of the book has the intimate relationship with the benefit of the secretary. It describes the actual situation of secretary would be faced in practice. For that reason, the book has to deal with the hidden rules, the rules that play an important role in the daily life and works, which most people should abide by, although they are not the official

stipulations. Nevertheless, the hidden rules are unsuitable in the public occasion. So the content of the book is improper to be taught in classroom, so eventually, the teaching content of the book was stopped in 1990s.

The different contents and effects of the two kinds of teaching materials reflect the fact that the hidden rules prevail. The difficulties and problems of the teaching materials are the results of conflicts of the official stipulations and hidden rules. In other words, the dilemma of the secretary science classroom is caused by the factors outside of the classroom.

Last but not least, hidden rules cannot be deleted easily in society, and the adverse effects of them would be serious for society, so it must get the deserved vigilance. Hidden rules would not be extinguished in the concealed state, on the contrary, a more open attitude should be adopted toward the hidden rules. Only if the hidden rules are talked openly can its adverse effects and the countermeasures for it be discovered. It is critical to cultivate the secretaries to be upright and to learn how to cope with the prevailing of hidden rules righteously.

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