

I. Dynasty 194

Chapter 194: Post-War Meeting

“Your Highness, many villagers are now purging corrupt local officials. Should we intervene?”

After the military funeral, the Battle of Cangzhou was finally concluded.

With the momentum of the great victory, the remnants of the noble families in the six prefecture were in despair.

Encouraged by their success, the civilian militias—high in morale—launched a sweeping campaign to eradicate the remaining noble factions. Many who had hidden in remote mountains and forests were hunted down and eliminated by the militias and local garrisons.

At the same time, the militias arrested village chiefs who had once served the noble families, parading them through the streets in a clear effort to completely dismantle the nobles’ influence.

Currently, Xiao Ming was in the Governor’s Residence, where all six prefectural governors, their deputies, Pang Yukun, Zhan Xingchang, Niu Ben, and other Qingzhou Army officers had gathered

With the war over, Xiao Ming believed it was necessary to hold a debriefing—to summarize the lessons of the battle and turn them into case studies and training materials. Only through practical experience could they continue to improve.

The question had been raised by Pang Yukun, based on reports from local officials in recent days.

“Crushing the remnants of the noble families isn’t a polite dinner party. It doesn’t require gentleness. On the contrary, this is another kind of war. The people have been oppressed by these nobles for years. Now that they’ve finally risen up, they need to vent their grievances—to completely shatter the mental shackles the nobles imposed and ensure they can never regain a foothold.”

After a pause, he added, “So not only should we not stop this, we should encourage the people to dig up old grievances. Drag the imprisoned nobles out and let the masses denounce them. The government must support this movement—only then can we ensure the noble families never return.”

Pang Yukun nodded, jotting down Xiao Ming’s words.

On this matter, he agreed with Xiao Ming. They couldn’t allow the noble families to revive. The six prefecture must become infertile soil for them—turning the nobles into outlaws, despised by all.

After addressing Pang Yukun’s question, Xiao Ming turned to Chen Wenlong.

“The Machinery Department’s timely delivery of ammunition during the crisis was also a great achievement, worthy of reward. You and your son will each receive a thousand taels of silver.”

Chen Wenlong and Chen Qi bowed in delight. “Thank you, Your Highness!”

Xiao Ming nodded. “Chen Qi, you’ve made significant contributions, yet I didn’t promote you. You must be confused, right?”

Chen Qi, always unkempt and more devoted to machinery than social niceties, answered bluntly:

“Yes, Your Highness. I wanted to ask, but my father wouldn’t let me.”

Chen Wenlong nearly facepalmed. This blockhead has no sense of humility!

The others chuckled. Chen Qi’s straightforwardness was refreshing.

Xiao Ming, however, appreciated his personality. As a former researcher himself, he understood that such minds were pure—obsessed only with their work.

That was also why he kept Chen Wenlong as Chen Qi’s superior—the older man was far more experienced.

“You won’t get a promotion this time, but something bigger is coming for the Machinery Department.”

Chen Qi and Chen Wenlong perked up with interest.

Xiao Ming continued, “I plan to establish a dedicated Military Arsenal, responsible for the production and development of weapons. Chen Qi, I want you to oversee it. What do you think?”

“Your Highness, really?!” Chen Qi’s eyes lit up. Ever since the cannons were developed, he had been fascinated by their production—now that was a real technical challenge.

“Would I lie to you? But taking charge means heavier responsibilities. You’ll be solely in charge of weapons production and R&D for the military.”

“No problem, Your Highness! But I’ll need to take skilled craftsmen from the Machinery Department with me.”

Given the unstable environment, Xiao Ming couldn’t afford to prioritize the economy over the military. He had decided to develop both simultaneously.

“Take whoever you need—craftsmen, slaves, your choice.”

Chen Qi grinned excitedly.

Chen Wenlong, however, looked worried. “Your Highness, if Chen Qi leaves, what happens to the Machinery Department?”

“Don’t worry. The Military Arsenal will remain under the Machinery Department’s oversight—it’s just a new branch. At the same time, the department’s functions will expand. Alongside the Arsenal, we’ll establish a Research Institute, selecting top students from the Bowen Academy to specialize in chemistry, physics, machinery, and other technical fields.”

Chen Wenlong sighed in relief. This was effectively a promotion for both of them.

Though terms like chemistry and physics made his head spin—these were Bowen Academy subjects.

“The Research Institute will be located within the Bowen Academy. Chen Qi, you’ll also be part of it.”
Xiao Ming added before Chen Qi could ask.

Chen Qi relaxed. The Military Arsenal and the Research Institute wouldn’t conflict. For example, Lu Tong’s work on gunpowder complemented cannon development.

Xiao Ming was restructuring based on lessons from Cangzhou’s ammunition shortages.

Previously, the Machinery Department had been a jumble of responsibilities. Now, Xiao Ming was refining industrial specialization—particularly in military production—while the Research Institute would pool talent for broader technological advancements.

The military officers, including Niu Ben, approved. This showed Xiao Ming’s commitment to the army—further reforms were likely coming.

Sure enough, after addressing the Machinery Department, Xiao Ming turned to Niu Ben.

“You’ve all witnessed the cannons’ power in battle.”

Niu Ben and the others nodded.

“Therefore, the Qingzhou Army will establish a new branch—the Artillery Corps. And to prepare for future firearms deployment, I’ve decided to reform the military structure. Units will now be organized into squads, platoons, companies, battalions, regiments, brigades, divisions, and corps.”

Blank stares met his words. These terms were unheard of.

Xiao Ming’s reforms aimed to adapt the army for firearms in advance.

The current Great Yu military hierarchy—with its commanders, colonels, captains, centurions, and decurions—was ill-suited for firearms. The Qingzhou Army was still divided into cavalry, crossbowmen, swordsmen, and spearmen. In the future, it would be entirely firearms-based.

Squads, platoons, and companies were far better suited for modern warfare.