

Challenges and Improvements in the Implementation of China's Leniency System for Pleading Guilty and Accepting Punishment

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Abstract

The Chinese leniency system for admitting guilt and accepting punishment is a significant initiative in the reform of China's criminal procedure. It aims to encourage suspects and defendants to voluntarily admit guilt and accept penalties in exchange for lenient treatment. The implementation of this system has played a vital role in enhancing judicial efficiency, optimizing resource allocation, streamlining litigation processes, and conserving judicial resources, while also contributing to social reconciliation. However, practical challenges persist, such as low lawyer participation, rigid sentencing recommendations, and ineffective oversight mechanisms. To address these issues, it is essential to strengthen the role of defense lawyers, refine the sentencing recommendation system, and enhance oversight and review mechanisms. These measures will ensure that the leniency system strikes a balance between litigation efficiency and judicial fairness, upholding both the swift resolution of cases and the integrity of justice.

1. Introduction

Criminal litigation reform is an essential part of the modern legal system, aiming to enhance judicial efficiency while upholding the principles of fairness, transparency, and due process. Against this backdrop, many countries have adopted mechanisms that encourage defendants to plead guilty in exchange for reduced sentences. For instance, the plea - bargaining system in the United States, the sentencing reduction mechanism in the United Kingdom, and the criminal reconciliation system in Germany. These systems contribute to optimizing the allocation of

judicial resources, alleviating court congestion, and facilitating dispute resolution.

In this context, China officially incorporated the leniency system for pleading guilty and accepting punishment into the Criminal Procedure Law in 2018, marking an important milestone in the modernization process of China's criminal justice. This system represents a significant innovation in China's criminal litigation reform. It is designed to encourage criminal suspects and defendants to voluntarily plead guilty and accept punishment, and to embrace lenient sentencing recommendations. As a result, it can accelerate the case - handling speed, reduce unnecessary trials, enhance litigation efficiency, optimize judicial resources, and promote social reconciliation. Since its implementation, the leniency system has been widely applied in criminal cases across the country. According to statistics from the Supreme People's Procuratorate, currently, more than 85% of criminal cases apply the leniency procedure, which has significantly shortened the trial time and alleviated the judicial burden. This system has also played a role in promoting restorative justice, encouraging offenders to compensate victims and express remorse, thus facilitating harmonious dispute resolution.

However, despite its obvious advantages, the system still faces challenges in aspects such as procedural justice, legal representation, sentencing flexibility, and the consistency of judicial application. Moreover, the dominant position of prosecutors in making sentencing recommendations sometimes leads to mechanical sentencing with limited flexibility, reducing judicial discretion. Additionally, the lack of effective supervision and review mechanisms undermines the credibility of the system and increases the risk of judicial injustice.

A comprehensive analysis of these issues and exploration of possible improvement measures are not only of theoretical significance but also crucial for the sustainable development of China's criminal justice system.

2. Methodology and Procedures

This study adopts methods such as literature analysis, empirical research, and comparative research to examine the practical dilemmas of China's criminal leniency system and explore optimization paths.

2.1 Literature Analysis

Literature analysis serves as a fundamental approach in this research. By thoroughly examining legal literature, policy documents, and academic studies both at home and abroad regarding the leniency system, we can comprehensively understand its theoretical underpinnings and historical development. Domestic legal literature, including relevant statutes, regulations, and judicial interpretations, offers in - depth insights into the legal framework of China's criminal leniency system. For example, the specific provisions in the Criminal Procedure Law and related regulations clarify the scope of application, conditions, and procedures of the leniency system for pleading guilty and accepting punishment. Policy documents issued by the government and judicial departments also play a crucial role. They reflect the policy - making intentions and guiding directions behind the system, such as promoting judicial efficiency, safeguarding social stability, and realizing the purpose of criminal punishment.

On the international front, foreign academic research and legal materials provide a broader perspective. They introduce different models and experiences of leniency systems in other countries, which can be used for reference and comparison. By studying these, we can identify the commonalities and differences between China's system and those of other countries, and draw lessons from their advanced concepts and successful practices.

2.2 Empirical Research

Empirical research is another important method in this study. We utilize the data from the

Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Supreme People's Court to conduct a comprehensive review of the application of the leniency system for pleading guilty and accepting punishment across the country. These data cover various aspects, such as the number of cases applying the system, the types of crimes involved, the sentencing results, and the feedback from the parties.

For instance, through the analysis of the number of cases applying the system in different regions and time periods, we can understand the popularity and acceptance degree of the system. Analyzing the types of crimes involved can help us determine whether the system is more applicable to certain types of crimes, and whether there are any imbalances in its application. The sentencing results data can reveal whether the sentencing recommendations are reasonable and whether the system can achieve the goal of balancing punishment and leniency. By collecting and analyzing these data, we can accurately identify the key challenges faced by the system in practice, such as issues in the sentencing process, problems in the participation of the parties, and the impact of the system on judicial fairness and efficiency.

2.3 Comparative Research

Comparative research is also an essential part of this study. We conduct a comparative analysis of the plea - bargaining system in the UK and the US, the criminal reconciliation system in Germany, and the guilty plea agreement system in Japan.

The plea - bargaining system in the UK and the US has a long - standing history and rich experience. It mainly focuses on the negotiation between the prosecution and the defense, where the defendant pleads guilty in exchange for certain concessions from the prosecution, such as reduced charges or lighter sentences. By studying this system, we can learn from its negotiation mechanisms, the balance of power between the prosecution and the defense, and how to ensure the voluntariness and fairness of the plea - bargaining process.

The criminal reconciliation system in Germany emphasizes the reconciliation between the offender and the victim. It provides a platform for both parties to communicate and resolve disputes, aiming to promote social harmony and the rehabilitation of the offender. We can draw on its experience in promoting victim - offender communication, the role of mediation institutions, and how to incorporate social factors into the criminal justice process.

The guilty plea agreement system in Japan has its own characteristics, especially in dealing with specific types of crimes such as corporate crimes and organized crimes. We can learn from its specific application scope, the review and supervision mechanisms of the agreement, and how to effectively combat complex crimes through the guilty plea agreement system.

By comparing these systems with China's criminal leniency system, we can identify the areas where China can improve, and draw on the valuable experiences of other countries to optimize China's system, making it more in line with the actual situation of China's criminal justice and better serving the goals of justice and efficiency.

3. Results

3.1 Achievements of China's Leniency System for Admitting Guilt and Accepting Punishment Since Its Implementation

3.1.1 Enhanced Litigation Efficiency

Since the leniency system for admitting guilt and accepting punishment was incorporated into the Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China, it has been widely adopted nationwide. According to statistics from the Supreme People's Procuratorate, over 85% of criminal cases are now resolved through this system, significantly shortening trial durations and alleviating case backlogs.

Under this system, judicial authorities employ case differentiation to expedite the handling of

minor offenses, thereby reducing workload pressures on courts, procuratorates, and public security agencies. This approach optimizes the allocation of judicial resources, allowing these institutions to focus on complex and major cases. Additionally, the system has strengthened the overall coordination of the judicial process, fostering interconnected workflows across investigation, prosecution, and trial stages.

3.1.2 Enhancing Judicial Fairness

Since the implementation of China's leniency system for admitting guilt and accepting punishment, judicial authorities have been required to fully safeguard defendants' right to information and right to legal defense, ensuring the voluntariness and rationality of guilty pleas. This practice has increased transparency in criminal proceedings, making judicial fairness more tangible and thereby boosting public trust in the judicial system.

When proposing sentencing recommendations, procuratorial organs comprehensively evaluate case facts, legal provisions, and societal implications to ensure the legitimacy and appropriateness of lenient treatment. Courts, when adjudicating cases under this system, conduct thorough assessments of sentencing recommendations based on factors such as the defendant's attitude toward admitting guilt and demonstration of remorse, thereby upholding the fairness of sentencing outcomes.

3.1.3 Promoting Resolution of Social Conflicts

The implementation of China's leniency system requires suspects and defendants to actively compensate victims and seek their forgiveness, which helps mitigate victims' losses. Through constructive communication and negotiation, the system reduces antagonism between parties, alleviates victims' psychological distress, and fosters reconciliation. Simultaneously, it reinforces the educational function of the law by ensuring defendants understand the legal consequences of admitting guilt and accepting punishment.

For criminals who refuse to admit guilt or demonstrate no remorse, judicial authorities retain the authority to impose severe penalties in accordance with the law, preserving the deterrent effect of justice. By operating as a fair, transparent, and efficient mechanism, the leniency system helps prevent wrongful convictions and judicial injustices that may arise during litigation, further strengthening public confidence in judicial institutions.

3.2 Main Problems Encountered in the Implementation Process of China's Leniency System for Pleading Guilty and Accepting Punishment

3.2.1 Low Participation Rate of Lawyers

The leniency system for pleading guilty and accepting punishment requires that the defendant pleads guilty knowingly and voluntarily when accepting the sentencing recommendation. However, due to the relaxation of the case trial procedure, in some places, legal aid lawyers only play the role of "witnesses" in the procedure of pleading guilty and accepting punishment, and fail to fully exercise their right to provide free legal defense. This leads to an imbalance in the power between the prosecution and the defense, and to some extent, undermines the procedural rights of the defendant. This problem is particularly evident in regions where the legal aid system is still underdeveloped.

In legal aid cases, some lawyers also fail to conduct an in-depth study of the case details. They only provide procedural assistance to the defendant, failing to effectively safeguard his or her legitimate rights and interests. There are even cases where lawyers induce suspects to sign the written statement of pleading guilty and accepting punishment as soon as possible, which hinders the suspects from understanding the legal consequences. At the same time, currently, lawyers lack effective considerations for defense when it comes to the sentencing recommendations proposed by the procuratorial organs. Also, the opinions of lawyers are not fully taken into account by the

court during the appeal process, which may affect the fairness of the case.

3.2.2 Unbalanced sentencing recommendations

Due to differences in judicial resources, case types, and law enforcement concepts, there are significant disparities in the application of this system across different regions. In the economically developed eastern regions, the legal aid system is more complete, the participation rate of lawyers is higher, and case handling is more standardized. In contrast, in the less developed western regions, the shortage of legal professionals has a negative impact on the implementation of the system.

In addition, prosecutors mainly adopt fixed sentencing recommendations or sentencing range recommendations. However, in some regions, there is a phenomenon of mechanically applying sentencing recommendations, which restricts judicial discretion. Coupled with the uneven allocation of judicial resources in different regions, it leads to significant differences in sentencing recommendations for the same crime. Even though the leniency system for pleading guilty and accepting punishment is widely applied in minor crimes (such as theft and fraud), its application in serious crimes (such as financial or corruption crimes) remains limited, resulting in an unbalanced utilization.

3.2.3 Ineffective Supervision Mechanism

Since cases involving pleading guilty and accepting punishment are mainly led by the procuratorial organs, the court's review of sentencing recommendations is largely formalistic. When hearing such cases, due to the large number of cases and the short trial time, the court usually tends to accept the sentencing recommendations of the procuratorial organs. The review of whether the defendant truly pleads guilty voluntarily often becomes a mere formality, leading to an excessive concentration of power in the procuratorial organs and being unable to effectively prevent the defendant from "being forced to plead guilty".

In some cases, the procuratorial organs may, based on factors such as case handling efficiency and case closure rate, overly push the defendant to plead guilty, resulting in judicial injustice. At the same time, there is a lack of external supervision. As cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment generally apply summary procedures or expedited procedures, the court trial process is often not open to the public. Moreover, the scope of public disclosure of judgment documents for such cases on the Judgments Online platform is limited. The existing public disclosure system fails to fully cover these cases, making it difficult for social supervision to play an effective role.

3.3 International comparison of similar systems

Globally, different jurisdictions have adopted corresponding mechanisms to improve litigation efficiency while ensuring procedural justice and safeguarding the rights of defendants. This section will compare the plea - bargaining system in the United States, the guilty plea commutation system in Germany, and the sentencing reduction mechanism in the United Kingdom, with the aim of providing references for China's judicial practice.

3.3.1 The Plea - Bargaining System in the UK and the US

Plea - bargaining is a criminal litigation system commonly applied in common - law countries such as the UK and the US. It refers to the negotiation between the defendant and the procuratorial organ. The defendant admits to some or all of the criminal facts in exchange for a reduction in charges, a lighter punishment, or favorable conditions.

There are usually three forms of plea bargaining. Firstly, sentencing negotiation refers to the defendant pleading guilty in exchange for the prosecutor recommending a reduction in sentence to the court. Secondly, factual negotiation refers to the defendant admitting guilt during negotiations by excluding certain facts from the charges in order to minimize punishment. Thirdly, the accusation of bargaining refers to the defendant admitting a lighter offense, such as a minor

offense rather than a serious one, in order to obtain a lighter sentence. By balancing efficiency and justice through these three methods, plea bargaining plays a crucial role in resolving cases without the need for lengthy trials.

The plea-bargaining system offers both benefits and drawbacks. On the positive side, it enhances litigation efficiency and conserves judicial resources. It also provides defendants with the opportunity for reduced sentences, encouraging more voluntary guilty pleas. Additionally, it helps alleviate the burden on courts and prisons by resolving cases more quickly.

However, there are significant concerns. Innocent individuals may feel pressured to plead guilty, particularly when they lack access to adequate legal representation due to financial or health-related constraints. The prosecution holds considerable power in the process, which may lead to the misuse of bargaining tactics. Furthermore, victims' rights and interests can be overlooked, as plea agreements often proceed without their consent or direct involvement.

3.3.2 The Criminal Reconciliation System in Germany

Germany's criminal reconciliation system was formally incorporated into the criminal law system in the 1990s. It aims to reduce the antagonism of criminal litigation through a reconciliation mechanism, encourage the defendant and the victim to reach an agreement, and promote social harmony. It is mainly applicable to minor crimes and some public - interest crimes, such as theft, injury, economic crimes, and traffic accidents. Usually, the procuratorial organ or the court can recommend criminal reconciliation, but the consent of the victim must be obtained. The victim can initiate a reconciliation request on their own or raise it during the trial stage. Then, the defendant must sincerely repent and take the initiative to take remedial measures, such as compensating for losses and apologizing. Finally, if the reconciliation is successful, the court can reduce the punishment or even waive criminal punishment.

The criminal reconciliation system has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages mainly include reducing the judicial burden and improving litigation efficiency; promoting the resolution of social conflicts and reducing secondary harm to the victim; and enabling the defendant to take the initiative to assume responsibility, which is conducive to rehabilitation and resocialization. The disadvantages are that the reconciliation may be unfair, and the victim may be forced to accept the agreement due to pressure or self - interest considerations; and the scope of application is limited, and it cannot handle serious criminal cases.

3.3.3 The Guilty Plea Agreement System in Japan

Japan's guilty plea agreement system was newly added in 2018 and is applicable to specific cases such as corporate crimes, organized crimes, and economic crimes. If the defendant provides clues to other crimes or assists in solving cases, they can get the opportunity to receive a reduced punishment or have the charges withdrawn. Its main characteristics are as follows: The court must review the guilty plea agreement to confirm its authenticity and voluntariness; lawyers play a key role in the agreement negotiation to ensure that the defendant's rights are not infringed; and Japan's judicial transactions are only applicable to certain types of cases.

Japan's guilty plea agreement system has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are mainly conducive to cracking down on organized crimes and economic crimes and improving judicial efficiency. The disadvantages mainly include the possibility that the defendant may provide fabricated evidence and the lack of effective checks and balances on the procuratorial organ.

4. Suggestion

4.1 Strengthening the Role of Lawyers

4.1.1 Improving the Quality of Legal Aid

Firstly, increase support for legal aid lawyers. Set up special funds and raise the subsidies for legal aid lawyers, so that lawyers are more motivated to handle cases conscientiously and improve the quality of legal aid. Establish a compensation mechanism based on the complexity of the case and the time spent on defense to ensure that lawyers can receive reasonable remuneration and enhance their enthusiasm for defense.

Secondly, strengthen the professional training of legal aid lawyers. Regularly organize criminal defense business training to improve lawyers' professional knowledge and practical abilities in cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment. Establish a "legal aid expert database" to provide more professional legal support for difficult cases.

Thirdly, optimize the selection mechanism of legal aid lawyers. Set up access criteria for legal aid lawyers to ensure that only lawyers with certain criminal defense experience can join the legal aid team for cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment. Establish a lawyer rotation system to ensure that all defendants receive effective defense and their rights are not impaired due to uneven resource allocation.

4.1.2 Strengthening Lawyer Intervention

First, ensure that lawyers intervene early in the stage of pleading guilty and accepting punishment. In the investigation stage, lawyers should intervene early and provide legal advice to ensure that defendants understand their legal rights and consequences before pleading guilty.

Second, establish a communication mechanism among procuratorial organs, courts, and lawyers. Before the case enters litigation, lawyers should put forward legal sentencing suggestions.

Third, strengthen the role of the lawyer rotation system. Duty lawyers should conduct a preliminary review of the evidence, facts, and sentencing suggestions for the case to prevent defendants from blindly pleading guilty when they lack sufficient information. At the same time, ensure that all defendants receive effective defense and their rights are not damaged due to uneven resource allocation.

4.1.3 Entrusting Lawyers with Greater Case Participation Rights

The extent of lawyers' participation rights in cases directly determines the effectiveness of their defense. During the stage of pleading guilty and accepting punishment, lawyers' opinions on sentencing suggestions should be fully solicited. Lawyers should be able to discuss the leniency sentencing suggestions for pleading guilty and accepting punishment on an equal footing with procuratorial organs and courts. Entrust lawyers with the right to raise objections to the sentencing suggestions of procuratorial organs, and require the court to attach lawyers' opinions. This can avoid the mechanical application of the leniency system for pleading guilty and accepting punishment and give defendants more room for choice. In major and difficult cases, a tripartite negotiation mechanism among lawyers, prosecutors, and judges should be established to ensure that lawyers can maximize the protection of defendants' rights and interests within the legal framework, conduct more thorough discussions on the leniency sentencing for pleading guilty and accepting punishment, and ensure its rationality.

4.1.4 Establishing a Supervision Mechanism for Legal Aid Lawyers

Establish a work quality assessment mechanism for legal aid lawyers during the stage of pleading guilty and accepting punishment. Through a multi-party evaluation mechanism involving the lawyers' association, procuratorial organs, and courts, ensure that lawyers conscientiously perform their defense duties and prevent the formalization of the right to defense. For lawyers who are perfunctory and do not provide serious defense services, measures such as early warning and restriction of practice can be taken to enhance lawyers' sense of responsibility. At the same time, establish a case quality evaluation system. In cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment, introduce a case quality evaluation system to comprehensively review the fairness of

sentencing suggestions and the quality of lawyers' defense, ensuring that legal aid lawyers fully exercise their right to defense during the stage of pleading guilty and accepting punishment and safeguard judicial fairness and the legitimate rights and interests of defendants.

4.2 Improving the Sentencing Recommendation System

4.2.1 Establishing a Unified Sentencing Recommendation Standard for Cases of Pleading Guilty and Accepting Punishment

The sentencing recommendation system is an important part of China's confession and plea system. Although the sentencing recommendation system has improved efficiency, the problem of inconsistent sentencing recommendation standards in confession and plea cases must be resolved. Currently, there are significant differences in the sentencing suggestions of procuratorial organs and courts across the country in practice, and the sentencing measurements are not unified, resulting in large deviations in the judgment results of similar cases in different regions. We can draw on the "Sentencing Guidelines" of the UK, clarify the sentencing range and application conditions, and enhance the predictability of judicial judgments. The Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate should jointly formulate guiding opinions on sentencing suggestions for cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment, clarify the sentencing suggestion scope, leniency ratio, application conditions, etc. for different types of cases, and refine the consideration standards for sentencing factors, such as the defendant's plea attitude, compensation situation, and social relief nature, to ensure the fairness and rationality of sentencing suggestions and the unity of judicial practice across the country.

4.2.2 Introducing Information Technology to Assist in Sentencing Recommendations for Cases of Pleading Guilty and Accepting Punishment

Led by the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and in cooperation with public security and judicial administrative organs, establish a unified national sentencing database to form a cross - departmental and cross - regional data sharing platform. Integrate various judicial data across the country, including case databases, judgment document websites, laws and regulations databases, internal data of public security, procuratorial, and judicial organs, social and economic data, and expert opinion databases. Then, with the help of big data analysis systems and artificial intelligence systems, combined with the characteristics of various cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment, use neural networks and deep - learning algorithms to comprehensively calculate reasonable sentencing suggestions. Finally, have experts conduct manual review, verification, and adjustment to make up for possible algorithm deviations and ensure that fair sentencing suggestions can be obtained for different cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment.

4.3 Strengthening the Supervision and Review Mechanism

4.3.1 Strengthening the Initiative Review Mechanism for Pleading Guilty and Accepting Punishment

Establish a rigorous review mechanism for the voluntariness of pleading guilty. The court should conduct an independent review of whether the guilty plea is made voluntarily. Judges are explicitly required to meticulously inquire during the court session whether the defendant pleads guilty without being under coercion or deception. The written statement of pleading guilty and accepting punishment must be jointly signed by the defendant, the lawyer, and the prosecutor, and the entire process of pleading guilty should be recorded to prevent the procuratorial organ from intimidating, enticing, or deceiving the defendant. In the event that the defendant withdraws the guilty plea and can prove that the plea was not made of their own accord, the court should conduct a strict and comprehensive examination of the constitutive elements and circumstances of the crime. Meanwhile, the court can obtain the full - process video recording during the plea -

bargaining stage to verify whether the defendant was threatened, induced, or deceived.

4.3.2 Promoting the Transparency of Cases of Pleading Guilty and Accepting Punishment

Drawing on the practices of the Sentencing Council in the UK, publish typical cases and statistical reports to enhance public trust in the leniency system. Establish a publicity system for cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment, and regularly release the sentencing data of such cases. By making the cases and sentencing data public, judicial transparency can be improved. Allowing the public and the academic community to be aware of the sentencing standards will contribute to enhancing judicial transparency. Additionally, a public reporting platform can be established to encourage the news media to conduct investigations and fair reports on cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment, so as to increase public understanding of the system and unblock the reporting channels. Specialized agencies should be responsible for investigating and handling cases of pleading guilty and accepting punishment that are reported by citizens as potentially non-transparent or unfair.

4.3.3 Establishment of Robust Error Correction Mechanisms

To ensure procedural fairness in plea leniency systems, a dual-track judicial safeguard should be implemented. First, granting defendants the right to request judicial review by higher courts and file appeals when claiming coerced confessions or insufficient understanding of legal consequences during plea bargaining processes. Second, establishing an independent review committee comprising legal experts, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judicial representatives. This oversight body shall be empowered to:

1. Recommend case rehearings and issue binding legal interpretations
2. Formulate systemic improvements for leniency procedures
3. Initiate reinvestigations upon detecting:
 - Evidence of coercion or material misrepresentation
 - Inadequate legal representation during plea negotiations
 - Procedural violations affecting voluntary consent

When substantiated findings indicate potential wrongful convictions arising from leniency system applications, mandatory error correction procedures or formal retrials shall be activated. Concurrently, administrative disciplinary measures and criminal liability shall be pursued against officials involved in professional misconduct, including:

- Dereliction of supervisory duties
- Procedural manipulation
- Willful disregard of defendants' rights

This mechanism shall incorporate periodic transparency reports documenting case reviews and institutional reforms, ensuring continuous system optimization through empirical legal analysis.

5. Conclusion

The leniency system for those who plead guilty and accept punishment in China has played a significant role in improving judicial efficiency, optimizing resource allocation, and promoting social reconciliation. Since its implementation, this system has accelerated the case-closing speed, reduced litigation costs, and simplified judicial procedures. However, despite these achievements, there are still some challenges, including low lawyer participation rates, rigid sentencing recommendations, insufficient judicial supervision, limited transparency, and weak error-correction mechanisms. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensuring that the system takes into account both judicial efficiency and fairness as well as procedural justice. Measures such as strengthening the role of lawyers, improving the sentencing recommendation system, and strengthening the supervision and review mechanism are important ways to further improve the

leniency system for those who plead guilty and accept punishment in China and achieve a balance between efficiency and justice.

The success of the leniency system for those who plead guilty and accept punishment in China depends on its ability to balance efficiency and justice. There is no doubt that this system has increased the speed of case resolution and optimized judicial resources. However, to ensure justice, it is necessary to strengthen lawyer representation, improve the sentencing procedure, intensify judicial supervision, and perfect the post - conviction review mechanism. By implementing these comprehensive reforms, China can establish a more transparent, fair, and effective leniency system for those who plead guilty and accept punishment, ensuring that judicial justice is served effectively and fairly.

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