

EMPERORS AT WORK

The daily schedules of the K'ang-hsi and Yung-cheng Emperors 1661-1735*

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INTRODUCTION

There were two major components in the Confucian ideal of Emperorship, namely Efficiency and Sagehood. An efficient ruler was one who ran the government properly with the assistance of his ministers; a sage ruler was one who, by virtue of his studies in the Confucian Classics and his practice of filial piety, could be considered a moral exemplar to his people. Both the K'ang-hsi and Yung-cheng Emperors were conscious of this ideal, and strove to attain it; the pattern of their working days, accordingly, showed this goal-orientation. They worked hard at government business, studied the Classics with considerable diligence, and were meticulous in performing the rituals of filial piety.

This essay is concerned mainly with the problem of work and efficiency (the problem of Sagehood, though no less important, deserves separate treatment at greater length). It is hoped that by showing how these two early Ch'ing Emperors carried on government work, we will contribute to the history of the dynasty as a whole. For it was their experiments and routines that were sanctified by later Emperors as "the institutions and laws of the ancestors." It is true that the private lives of these Emperors were often shrouded in secrecy; but nevertheless enough material is extant to enable us to paint a general picture, and to show how much of the later stability was rooted in the personal industry of these early rulers.

THE K'ANG-HSI EMPEROR

A. Routine in the Capital

The pattern of a normal day in the Capital during the first half of his reign has been recorded by the K'ang-hsi Emperor himself in his essay "Daily Study Schedules in the Palace."¹ Rising before dawn, he ordered the Imperial Lecturers (*chiang-kuan* 講官) to expound the Confucian Classics. The rest of the morning was devoted to Audiences with the various groups within the central bureaucracy. First he received memorials from the heads of the Boards and Departments, and

* The basic research for this paper was done under a summer grant (1969) from the East Asian Research Center, Harvard University.

discussed any problems with them. Next, he called the Grand Secretaries to his presence, and discussed pressing state affairs in great detail. In the late morning, he received representatives from the Imperial Household, to issue instructions on matters involving Palace administration.

The afternoon was spent at his personal studies, in writing poems or essays, or in practising calligraphy. These occupations, he wrote, "would occupy all my time until sunset." When the candles were lit at the first watch (about 8 p. m.) he started to read the routine memorials that had arrived that day (mainly from the provinces) and drafted his decisions on them. "In general," claimed the Emperor, "I would not go to bed before midnight."

This is, of course, an idealized picture, the Emperor presenting himself for the applause of posterity. It is also a normative one—that is, it does not include the periods of absence in Manchuria or the provinces, nor does it take into account sudden crises that demanded long stretches of extra administrative work, nor stretches of illness when the schedule had to be abandoned, nor the various changes in study habits which the Emperor made. The amount of sleep that the Emperor gives to himself also sounds underestimated; since there are plenty of sources to show that he arose at about 5 a. m., we may assume either that he slept at some stage in the afternoon, or retired well before midnight.

But on the Audience system, the heart of the morning schedule, and the amount of work that got done, the Emperor was not deceiving posterity. In the years before 1682, the morning Audience was held so early, around five a. m., that officials had to start their journey to the palace from one in the morning onward. This caused so much difficulty that an edict of 21 October 1682 revised the Audience schedule to a slightly later time.² In future, Audiences were to be held at seven a. m. during spring and summer, and at eight during the autumn and winter; they were held daily, and all the "deliberative officials" (that is, those from the nine ministries, and the censors) had to attend. There were frequent requests by officials that the morning Audience should be held only once every two, three or five days, so that "both the Emperor and his ministers might find some leisure time to rest."³ All such requests were turned down by the Emperor, and the 1682 schedule remained unchanged until the end of the K'ang-hsi reign.

These morning Audiences (known as the *yü-men* 御門, an abbreviated term signifying that the Emperor arrived at the Ch'ien-ch'ing Men where the Audiences were held) constituted an important part of the early Ch'ing government structure. The extant sources reveal the variety of matters that were dealt with at this time. The heads of the Six Boards and the other departments in the Capital presented their memorials in person; these memorials were subsequently turned over to the Grand Secretaries for discussion.⁴ Sometimes the Emperor discussed matters arising from these memorials on the spot, and gave immediate instructions to his Grand Secretaries.⁵ At the same time the Emperor dealt with the "suspend-

ed memorials"—memorials incorporating the deliberations by the Boards on provincial matters, or other questions within their special jurisdiction, which still needed further analysis at the Grand Secretary level before a final decision could be made.⁶ The Emperor might also discuss matters that had already been deliberated in joint session by the Grand Secretaries and the Nine Ministries in response to his previous order.⁷ Lastly, a personal Audience might be granted to some important provincial official, though these personal Audiences (and also the receiving of foreign envoys) were often conducted later in the day.⁸

The morning Audience was not necessarily the first item on the Emperor's daily agenda. On the fifth, fifteenth and twenty-fifth day of each lunar month the morning Audience was preceded by the "Regular Audience" (*ch'ang-ch'ao* 常朝); largely ceremonial in function, these Audiences were attended by all the higher ranking metropolitan officials, who assembled in the T'ai-ho Hall. Recently promoted officials expressed their thanks to the Emperor in person, newly appointed magistrates were "interviewed" (*yin-chien* 引見), and so on.⁹ Also, while the Heir-apparent Yin-jeng was still young, the Emperor often asked him to recite the passages he had learnt in the Confucian Classics at this hour.¹⁰ And on certain days ritual ceremonies were completed before the morning Audience began. At the time of the winter solstice, for instance, the Emperor first led the Manchu princes, ministers and palace guards to pay homage to the Grand Empress Dowager and the Empress Dowager; moved to the Chung-ho Hall to accept the congratulations of the Manchu chamberlains of the imperial bodyguard and the other officials in charge of the formal ceremonies; and proceeded thence to the T'ai-ho Hall, where he received the homage of the other princes and senior ministers, and accepted the tribute offered by the Mongolian envoys.¹¹

When the morning Audience was over, the Emperor attended to other matters of business. The Transmission Office presented memorials submitted by officials of junior rank who were not entitled to present their memorials in person.¹² Individual officials were summoned for consultation.¹³ There was a lecture session with the imperial tutors (*jih-chiang* 日講), who were mostly Hanlin scholars,¹⁴ or perhaps a visit to the Empress Dowager to inquire after her health.¹⁵

The K'ang-hsi Emperor spent much of his time outside the Forbidden City, in his suburban villa the Ch'ang-ch'un yüan. Since this villa was only six miles from the Capital, he did not feel it necessary to make any modifications to the existing Audience system, which continued daily in the House of Tranquillity (*Tan-ning chü* 澹寧居). The main difference for the officials was that they had to rise even earlier in the morning, and got back to their offices later, since the round trip on horseback took about three hours.¹⁶ The Emperor varied his routine by studying European sciences, especially mathematics, with Jesuit tutors at the villa: two hours each morning, and two in the afternoon, according to a Jesuit writing in 1703.¹⁷

B. Absence from the Capital

During the latter part of his reign, the K'ang-hsi Emperor spent the summer months of each year in the cooler surroundings of his summer villa at Jehol, and here, as might be expected, his work schedule was more flexible than it was in the Capital. Morning Audiences were still held, but often the only participants were the Grand Secretaries, even though some Board officials were also present at Jehol.¹⁸ The established procedure when the Emperor was at Jehol, or on tour fairly near the Capital, was that routine memorials from the various provinces were submitted to the Transmission Office as usual, while memorials from the Capital, which would normally have been presented in person at the morning Audience, were instead submitted to the Grand Secretariat. The Grand Secretariat would then dispatch these documents to the Emperor once every three days through the post-express facilities.¹⁹ Palace memorials from the Capital were also submitted to the Grand Secretariat and sent (unopened of course) to the Emperor along with the routine memorials. This was the system technically called "memorial dispatching" (*pen-pao* 本報).²⁰ The exception to this system was the palace memorials from the provinces, which were brought directly to the Emperor's travelling lodge by the memorialists' private couriers.²¹

As well as disposing of the routine administrative business, and keeping up with his studies, the Emperor might still summon individual officials to appear for a special Audience.²² Furthermore, Manchu princes of all ranks were required to send private messengers to Jehol every twenty days, to inquire after the Emperor's health,²³ and the Mongol princes were received regularly, and granted lavish gifts and titles. Much activity was also expended on hunting, an exercise combining the joys of the chase with the training of troops in military formation, designed to maintain the fighting tradition of the Manchus.²⁴

Besides the frequent hunting excursions in and around Jehol, the K'ang-hsi Emperor engaged each September to October in the "Autumn hunt", held at the Mulan hunting grounds about 130 miles (400 *li*) north of Jehol.

According to Father Ripa, who accompanied the Emperor on the hunt in 1711, the journey took about five days, and the imperial retinue contained some 30,000 persons, including 12,000 Manchu soldiers. Several of the Emperor's concubines, and his sons, were also in attendance.²⁵ There were three main types of hunt: the "little hunt", for deer, pheasant, hares and rabbits (the imperial bow accounted for 318 rabbits in a single day, relates one source²⁶); the "stag hunt"; and the "tiger hunt."²⁷ If there was no hunting on a given day, for religious or other reasons, the Emperor "came out of his pavilion," as Ripa observed, "and, sitting upon a carpet on some elevated situation, he either watched the dexterous efforts of his Tartar wrestlers, or commanded some of his grandchildren, and other great military mandarins, to practice archery before him. Sometimes he would even enter the lists against his third son [Yin-chih], who managed the bow nearly as

well as himself."²⁸ On other days, again according to Ripa, the Emperor would simply relax in one of the little pleasure cottages, built at scenic spots in the Jehol summer palace area: "With his ladies on foot around him, he is carried around the grounds by eunuchs, in an open chair; with them he sails in little boats, fishing in the canals and the lakes; with them he eats.... Even when studying he is surrounded by his favorite queens, as I myself have often seen."²⁹

On most of his other tours outside the Capital, the K'ang-hsi Emperor seems to have maintained a similar balance between routine administrative work, the handling of special problems, and pleasurable relaxation. On the six Southern Tours, for example, senior metropolitan officials were in the retinue. Regular Audiences were held for the conduct of business, important officials were received in private Audience (as were retired officials now living in the provinces), and memorials were carefully read. At the same time, there were large numbers of extra formal Audiences, where the senior officials in each province came to pay their respects, and large numbers of formal banquets. But there were also smaller banquets, visits to temples, tours to scenic spots, and opera performances and other entertainments financed by the textile commissioners (*chih-tsao* 織造) or by the wealthy local salt merchants.³⁰

C. Holidays and tabooed days

Absence from the Capital modified the Emperor's routine patterns of work, although the work itself continued. It was only on certain special days that normal business came to an almost complete halt: at the "Three Major Festivals" (*san-ta-chieh* 三大節), tabooed days, days set aside for fasting, and on days of unusually inclement weather.

It has been pointed out that the Ch'ing Emperors had fewer holidays than previous rulers.³¹ Among the most important ones that they observed were the "Three Major Festivals": these were the lunar New Year (*yüan-tan* 元旦); the Winter Solstice (*tung-chih* 冬至 or *ch'ang-chih* 長至); and the Emperor's birthday (*wan-shou-chieh* 萬壽節).³² During the New Year and birthday festivals the morning and regular Audiences were suspended, being replaced by special congratulatory Audiences. On the Winter Solstice, the morning Audience was held, but was preceded by a congratulatory Audience.³³ During all three festivals, sacrificial ceremonies were held to the appropriate deities,³⁴ and occasionally a nationwide celebration of the Emperor's birthday was held.³⁵ European observers were particularly impressed by the spectacular firework displays at the suburban villa on New Year's eve.³⁶

On certain tabooed days (*chi-jih* 忌日), such as the anniversary of the death of his imperial predecessors, or when the Grand Empress Dowager or one of the imperial uncles died, the K'ang-hsi Emperor suspended the handling of state affairs altogether.³⁷ And there were other partially tabooed days, or days when the

Emperor had to perform certain sacrificial ceremonies, or confine himself to the "fast and prayer room" (*chai-kung* 齋宮) when routine work was partially or completely suspended.³⁸

From three possible days in the twelfth lunar month (the 19th, 20th, or 21st) the imperial astronomers would choose one as the day for "closing up the official seals" (*feng-yin* 封印). This period lasted one month, until "the reopening of the seals" (*k'ai-yin* 開印). During this time, the Emperor did not see any memorials dealing with penal cases; this same rule applied to the first two days of each lunar month, as well as certain other festivals and sacrificial periods.³⁹

Cessation of work on these days was ritually prescribed and amounted, therefore, to a virtually inflexible rule. But the Emperor might also, when he chose, order the suspension of the morning Audience and related business on the grounds that the weather was excessively hot or cold, or when there were heavy rain or snow storms. This gesture toward the convenience of the imperial person and the officials was itself, however, also modified. For at these times it was still expected that memorials from the central administrative bodies should be submitted through the Grand Secretariat.⁴⁰

D. The Diaries of the Emperor's movements

The official diaries of the Emperor's movements (*ch'i-chü-chu* 起居注) provide key source material that enables us to round out the general picture with some detailed information. Though only fragments of these diaries have survived, these fragments are enough to give us some idea of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's life style.

1. *Diary of K'ang-hsi 12/1/1 (1673)*⁴¹

Early in the morning,⁴² the Emperor led all the Manchu nobility (*wang, pei-le, pei-tzu, kung*), the Grand Secretaries, generals, Board presidents, and the palace guards to the National Shrine (*t'ang-tzu* 堂子) to worship Heaven,⁴³ then returned to his private quarters.

At 8 a. m. (*ch'en*) the Emperor led them to the palaces of the Grand Empress Dowager and Empress Dowager, to salute them in turn. He then returned again to his private quarters.

After a while, he arrived at the Chung-ho Hall where officials who would be on duty in the formal ceremony first saluted the Emperor. These officials included: senior assistant chamberlains of the imperial body-guards, officials from the Grand Secretariat, Hanlin Academy, Board of Ceremonials, Censorate, and Court of State Ceremonials.

The Emperor arrived at the T'ai-ho Hall where Manchu and Mongolian nobles, court ministers, and envoys from Korea and other tributary countries presented their "New Year Day Congratulation Memorials" and saluted the emperor. He then returned to his private quarters again.

At 10 a. m. (*ssu*): The Emperor arrived at the Pao-ho Hall where he invited

them [the above officials excluding the envoys from Korea and tributary states] to a banquet.

At noon (*wu*): The Emperor held a banquet for all the members coming to salute him. Wine was served when music began. The Emperor called some senior Manchu princes to his throne and served them wine with his own hand. He then called in the Manchu and Chinese presidents of the Boards, lieutenant generals of the Eight Banners, the Korean envoys, to his presence and granted them wine personally. After the wine, they thanked the Emperor for his kindness; then the Emperor returned to his apartments again.

The diarists of the day: Fu-ta-li (Manchu) and Hsiung Tz'u-li (Chinese).

2. *Diary of KH 12/11/15 (Winter Solstice) (1673)*⁴⁴

[In order to prepare himself for the Winter Solstice festival, the Emperor began his fast and prayer from the 11th day. The diaries for these days are very brief.]

The 11th day: The Emperor did not handle any governmental affairs in order to devote himself in fast and prayers for the coming sacrifice at the Heavenly Altar.

The 12th day: Same.

The 13th day: Early in the morning, the Emperor arrived at the T'ai-ho Hall to investigate the "prayer tablet" (*chu-pan* 祝版) on which a prayer was written to be burnt at the Altar.

The 14th day: Early in the morning, the Emperor came to the Heavenly Altar to offer sacrifices to Heaven and Earth.

On the 15th day:

This was the Winter Solstice. The Emperor led the Manchu nobility, ministers and guards to pay their homage to the Grand Empress Dowager and Empress Dowager in turn. Then, he returned to his palace.

The Emperor arrived at the Chung-ho Hall and the T'ai-ho Hall to accept congratulations from the court officials and Mongolian envoys as he did on the New Year. Then, he returned to his palace for a brief rest.

The Emperor arrived at the Ch'ien-ch'ing Gate for the morning audience where the court officials presented their memorials in person.

3. *Diary of KH 19/9/20 (1680)*⁴⁵

[This diary records how the Emperor handled the "suspended memorials" with his grand secretaries in the morning audience].

Early in the morning.

(a) The Emperor arrived at the Ch'ien-ch'ing Gate where officials from the Six Boards and other departments first presented their memorials in person [They also answered questions which the Emperor had asked and received the Emperor's oral instructions on matters within their jurisdictions],⁴⁶ then they retreated from the Emperor's presence.

(b) Subsequently the grand secretaries and sub-chancellors reverently presented the "suspended memorials" (*che-pen* 折本) to secure the Emperor's instructions in person.

[i] Concerning the memorial from the Board of Civil Appointment which suggested that Ma-erh-sai (馬爾賽), a department director [of the Imperial Household], who had been impeached by the censor Li Chien-lung (李見龍) for having stolen money appropriated for the repair work of the Heavenly Altar and other places, be exempted from the alleged charge without discussion of punishment, (*wu-yung-i* 無庸議), the Emperor commented: "Ma-erh-sai had requested wages for many workers. But when Li Chien-lung was commissioned to investigate the situation, no workers were found there. Had Ma-erh-sai and his colleagues indeed transferred the workers to other places to do repair works, why then should he have failed to explain [to Li] the other day? This shows that Li's indictment was based on truth. The Board of Civil Appointment arrived at their suggestion solely on the basis of Ma's clever excuse supported by the testimony of Ma-fa (馬法), the Altar-keeper who actually had nothing to do with the business—the Board's suggestion therefore is extremely unreasonable. Li had been specially commissioned to investigate the repair work; if his indictment were disregarded, hereafter who would want to initiate any impeachment? Let [the said Board] re-examine the case seriously and report to me again the results of their deliberations.

[ii] A suspended memorial from the assembly of nine ministers and censors: The memorial had been presented to report to the Emperor the results of their deliberations on a memorial submitted by the vice-president of the Coinage Office, Chu P'ei 朱斐 and others, which reported that the rising price of copper coins had greatly impoverished the people. The assembly, in their memorial, had suggested that the government should reduce the copper allotments which the various customs houses were required to purchase, because local rowdies had illegally melted copper coins to make copper blocks for better profits.⁴⁷

On this suspended memorial, the Emperor commented: "They did not discuss whether a reduction of the required amount of copper will be a real solution to the copper shortage problem, and whether this will benefit the people. I think it may be a good idea to reduce the weight of the coins slightly so that more coins may be cast. What are your [the grand secretaries] opinions on this matter?

Mingju, the [Chief] Grand Secretary, answered: "I have heard that the various customs houses all sent men to the capital for purchasing copper, and that many evil elements made copper blocks by destroying copper coins in order to get higher prices. It may be a way of preventing further destruction of coins, if the customs houses are asked to secure an identification paper from the local authorities when they dispatch copper to the capital, and let the censors and supervisory

censors check the amount of copper against the identification paper after their men have arrived at the capital."

Le-te-hung (勒德洪), a Manchu grand secretary, said: "I don't see what difference it makes to cast slightly lighter coins as long as they all bear the characters *pao-ch'üan* (寶泉) or *pao-yüan* (寶源), [titles for the two government coinage offices]."⁴⁸

The Emperor said, "The high prices of coins are caused by the shortage of coins; if we make more coins, there will be no reason for the price to rise."

Li Wei (李蔚), a Chinese grand secretary, said, "Your Majesty's view is indeed correct; the price will go down as soon as more coins are cast."

The Emperor said, "Well, then you ought to make another draft proposal for me to consider."

[iii] On the deliberation of the nine ministers' assembly on the Autumn Assizes of Kiangnan province, the Emperor commented, "In reviewing carefully the various cases, I found Chia Jih-tsu's (賈日祖) case needs to be reopened; let, therefore, his execution be deferred. As to the cases of Mrs. Feng (馮氏), Wang Pai-liang (王白良), Wang Hsiang (王祥), and Ts'ui T'ing-hsüan (崔廷選), let their executions be deferred also. As to the other cases, let them be carried out according to the assembly's recommendations."

[iv] On the suspended memorial from the Board of Punishments, suggesting that Wu-shih-erh (五十兒) should receive the death penalty for having killed Chin-ts'ai (進財), the Emperor decided: "Wu-shih-erh and Chin-ts'ai were not enemies. The latter was killed accidentally while they were attacking each other jokingly. Hence, Wu-shih-erh should not receive the death penalty. You ought to make another draft proposal embodying this decision clearly."

At 8 a. m. (*ch'en*), the Emperor arrived at the Mao-ch'in Hall. Lecturers of the day, K'u-le-na (庫勒納), Yeh Fang-ai (葉方藹), and Chang Yü-shu (張玉書), came in to give lectures. [The Emperor first expounded on one verse from the *Book of Changes*; and the lecturers expounded on four other verses from the same book.] Diarists of the day: K'u-le-na and Yeh Fang-ai.

4. *Diary of KH/42/9/25 (1703)*⁴⁹

(1) At 8 a. m. (*ch'en*): The Emperor held the morning audience at the House of Tranquillity in the suburban villa. The Board of Civil Appointment introduced new magistrates to have interviews with the Emperor. The magistrate Hsü Lin (許琳) was called first. The Emperor asked, "Where are you from?" Hsü answered: "I was born in 1654." The Emperor realized that he was unable to answer questions [because he was extremely nervous] and asked Wu Han (吳涵), "Is he a post-graduate (*shu-chi-shih* 庶吉士) in the Academy?"

Wu: "Yes."

Emp.: "What kind of person is he?"

Wu: "He is an honest man."

Emp.: "How do you know he is an honest man?"

Wu: "Because I was concurrently the chancellor of the Hanlin Academy when their graduation examination was held this year."

Emp.: "A district magistrate is supposed to take care of the people. Now Hsü Lin didn't even know how to answer my questions; how on earth could he be expected to be an official? You, Wu Han, intended to protect him, not giving due respect to your important duty of introducing an official for the interview and the civil appointment authority of mine. Now when I inquired about Hsü Lin, you just said that he was an honest man. How could I appoint him to the post because of your protection? Furthermore, a man's morality is very difficult to determine. Many people talk about 'learning of the Way' but their conduct is often erroneous. You cannot even guarantee your own integrity; how could you guarantee Hsü Lin's honesty?"

Wu: "Yes, Your Majesty's exhortation is indeed correct."

The Emperor then asked K'uei-hsü (揆敘), the Manchu chancellor of the Hanlin Academy, concerning the situation of two other officials who had come also for the interview. One of them was Fan Kuang-tsung (范光宗), who, being a Hanlin corrector,⁵⁰ was recommended to fill the vacant post of *tsan-shan* (贊善). The Emperor asked Wu Han about Fan and said, "How is his personality?"

Wu: "He is a peaceable person."

Emp.: "There is no trouble in the Hanlin Academy. How could he not be peaceable!"

The Emperor asked Wu about Fan's learning. Wu said, "Fan wrote good essays." Then the Emperor turned to K'uei-hsü for comment. K'uei-hsü said, "He is an average person. I heard that he stood in the second class list graduating class."

Then the Emperor asked Wu's opinion on Huang Shu-lin (黃叔琳), a Hanlin compiler, who was recommended for the vacant post of Tutor in the National College.⁵¹

Emp.: "Where does he come from?"

Wu: "A *chin-shih* from Chihli."

Emp.: "How is his scholarship?"

Wu: "A good essayist."

Emp.: "How do you know?"

Wu: "When he was a proof-reader in the Wu-ying Hall, he did his work very quickly and accurately."

Then the Emperor turned to K'uei-hsü and asked, "What is your opinion?" He answered: "His scholarship is indeed sound. He was also on the second class list in the graduating class." The vice-president of civil appointment Fu Chi-tsu (傅繼祖) also confirmed the soundness of Huang's scholarship.

After the audience, the Emperor visited the Empress Dowager's palace, inquiring after her good health.

[K'uei-hsü was one of the diarists of the day]

THE YUNG-CHENG EMPEROR

The Yung-cheng Emperor, a mature and well-educated man of forty-six when he succeeded his father to the throne, naturally developed his own work patterns to suit his inclinations, though as a filial gesture he had initially denied that he intended to do so.⁵² The two men were so different in temperament that they were bound to work in different ways. For Yung-cheng, the main goal was efficiency in government; because of the challenges that he faced from his jealous brothers, and because of the potentially dangerous antagonisms within the bureaucracy, he could only attain this efficiency if he established a really strong central control system. He acknowledged that because of his own poor health he could not undertake the arduous hunting expeditions or the lengthy tours that had been his father's stock in trade;⁵³ he decided, therefore, to remain in the Capital area, and to ensure efficient government through conscientious and *personal* supervision of administrative detail. Staying either within his Peking palaces, or at his favorite suburban villa the Yüan-ming yüan, he never even followed his father's example of retiring to Jehol in the hot summer months.

Nor was he as attracted to the Audience system as his father had been. The Yung-cheng Emperor preferred either to read the important documents carefully on his own, or to confer with a small advisory group on state affairs. So he held morning Audiences only occasionally.⁵⁴ In general, the metropolitan officials submitted their memorials through the Grand Secretariat (as was discussed above, during the K'ang-hsi reign this procedure was only used if the Emperor was away from the Capital). In an edict of 3 October, 1725, while in residence at the Yüan-ming-yüan, the Yung-cheng Emperor explained his views on this matter of ministerial reporting: If court ministers had something important to report, they should do so at once, without any delay. But if they had no urgent business, they should simply go to their Peking offices without reporting to the suburban villa. So that the officials and their servants might avoid the extremes of heat and cold, the time that they should arrive at the villa was to vary with the season: in the cold hours before dawn in spring and summer, and just before sunrise in autumn and winter.⁵⁵ When, the following month, the Emperor learned that despite the winter cold various officials were still leaving home before 4 a. m. to get to the villa in time, he reiterated his earlier instructions, and pointed out that "it would not be detrimental to my execution of state affairs if you are slightly late, or even if a couple of people cannot make it."⁵⁶

The cloistered life of the Emperor encouraged various uncomplimentary rumors, including one put about by the eunuchs that he was indulging in day-long drinking

bouts in the palace.⁵⁷ It is unlikely that there was any foundation for such stories. They gained credence because the Yung-cheng Emperor did spend long hours at the Ch'in-cheng Hall in his suburban villa—even during the hottest months of summer—either reading on his own, or waiting for his ministers to come and discuss state business with him.⁵⁸ To avoid criticisms of extravagance, he rarely gave any elaborate banquets for his officials.⁵⁹ His main relaxation, in accordance with his leanings as a devout Ch'an (Zen) Buddhist, seems to have been viewing the scenery at the villa, and "riding for pleasure on a barge" on the canals that crisscrossed the area.⁶⁰

As far as we can reconstruct his working day, it was as follows: He rose around four in the morning, and read one volume of the Veritable Records (*Shih-lu*) of the earlier reigns, and one volume of the Sacred Instructions (*Pao-hsün*) of his late father. Breakfast was at seven, and then the administrative day began. If there was a morning Audience that day, he met with his ministers or interviewed local officials; these discussions often continued into the afternoon.⁶¹ The rest of the day (sometimes as late as midnight)⁶² was largely spent in reading and commenting on the palace memorials that flowed into him as a result of his own decision to expand this system in the interests of efficiency. A really well-educated man (unlike his late father), the Yung-cheng Emperor could write out long and lucid essays in Chinese without drafts or outside help of any kind. The immense collection of his lengthy vermilion endorsements appended to thousands of palace memorials, which were collected into the *Chu-p'i yü-chih*, bear astonishing testimony to his unflagging industry.

CONCLUSION: MOTIVATION AND ABILITY

We need not hesitate to capsulize the K'ang-hsi and the Yung-cheng Emperors as generally successful autocrats. But we should also remember that this success was the result of hard work, a clear notion of how government should be run, and was achieved at considerable personal cost. As early as his mid-thirties, the K'ang-hsi Emperor was being troubled by various minor ailments, and had strained his eyes to such an extent that he could no longer read small Chinese characters; and he had to have his ailments painfully treated by cauterization with moxa.⁶³ Even if he was not well enough to attend morning Audience, he would continue to receive ministers and interview new officials in his private apartments in the Ch'ien-ch'ing palace.⁶⁴ During major military campaigns he received as many as four hundred routine memorials each day, and forty or fifty in peacetime. He read these carefully, frequently correcting wrong translations or miswritten characters.⁶⁵ Though there were fewer palace memorials, he read them with even greater care, and wrote out the endorsements in his own hand—using his left hand on occasion, when some disability stopped him writing with his right.⁶⁶ Having a keen mind, he read these memorials rapidly, and remembered their contents for a long time.⁶⁷

He would wait up for particularly important memorials, as he did till 10 p.m. on one Southern Tour; then he retired, having left instructions that he be wakened when they arrived. They were finally brought to him at 2 a.m., and he rose immediately and read them till daybreak.⁶⁸ He liked to contrast his own conscientiousness with his officials' lack of the same quality: pointing out that senior officials only put in a few hours a day at their offices, feigned illness, made errors in their drafts, and even fell asleep in his presence!⁶⁹ Yet old age brought him a further share of troubles: some kind of heart condition, or possibly high blood pressure, gave him palpitations (*hsin-chi* 心悸) and spells of dizziness; he also suffered from nervous strain (*cheng-ch'ung* 怔忡) and was worried by his forgetfulness.⁷⁰

For the K'ang-hsi Emperor, these troubles seem to have been irritants to a man who, generally, led an energetic and hearty life. His son the Yung-cheng Emperor seems to have been physically weaker, leading a sedentary life by choice, suffering intensely from the heat (*wei-shu chi* 畏暑疾) which apparently he did not feel strong enough to escape by retiring to Jehol, and also having fainting spells.⁷¹ Yet he worked even harder than his father, not only in his tireless endorsement of palace memorials, but also in his extraordinary attention to the minute details of metropolitan and provincial government.⁷² He, also, complained of his officials' laxity. Once he lamented that he could find only three men of real trustworthiness and competence for the ranks of governor and governor-general;⁷³ another time, he complained that he sat alone all day in the palace, but no official troubled to come and see him.⁷⁴

There are, of course, some inconsistencies in these Emperors' analyses of themselves: the K'ang-hsi Emperor claims to remember the palace memorials, and also complains of his forgetfulness; the Yung-cheng Emperor issues an edict that officials need only come to see him on important business, and then complains when they do not show up. But the overall record of these two early Ch'ing Emperors underlines an important point about autocracy: that autocracy will only be as good as the autocrat. It was hard work, and one had to be highly motivated to persevere. One also had to think hard about government, and be institutionally flexible even while conscious of the heavy weight of the past. Thus the Yung-cheng Emperor remarked that really he had no leisure: even while ostensibly doing nothing, he did not let his mind wander, but "applied it to the reviewing of important matters that had come to his attention from the Capital or the provinces." The result of this ongoing review was that "although I have handled many things, I do not easily forget them."⁷⁵

We might suggest, in conclusion, that neither the K'ang-hsi nor Yung-cheng Emperors were complacent about their role as Emperors, they knew that they could not afford to take either the bureaucracy's dedication or the country's strength for granted. They worked hard to be successful, and their successors inherited

the foundations they had laid. But those successors did not truly build on those foundations; they rested on them. And so, when flexibility and industriousness became once again a matter of life and death in the nineteenth century, they were found wanting, and the whole structure fell apart.

NOTES

Abbreviations

- BH. Brunnert, H. S. and V. V. Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China*. English translation, Shanghai, 1912.
- CPYC. *Chu-p'i yü-chih* 硃批諭旨
- CSL KH. *Ta-Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen Huang-ti shih-lu* 大清聖祖仁皇帝實錄
- CSL YC. *Ta-Ch'ing Shih-tsung Hsien Huang-ti shih-lu* 大清世宗憲皇帝實錄
- KH. The K'ang-hsi reign.
- SH. *Shih-ch'ao sheng-hsün* 十朝聖訓
- SL. *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* 大清會典事例 1899 ed. (Taiwan, 1963 reprint).
- SLTKCP. *Shih-liao ts'ung-k'an ch'u-pien* 史料叢刊初編 (Taipei, 1964 reprint).
- WHTP. *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien* 文獻叢編 (Taipei, 1964 reprint), pp. 1068-1072: "K'ang-hsi ssu-shih-liu nien shih-yüeh ch'i-chü-chu kao-pen ts'an-chüan" 康熙四十六年十月起居注稿本殘卷.
- YC. The Yung-cheng reign.
1. *K'ang-hsi ti yü-chih wen-chi*, 康熙帝御製文集 (Taiwan 1966 reprint) 20.18b-20. The document (undated) must refer to the pre-1686 period, as "Imperial Lecturers" were abolished in that year (CSL KH 126.2b) and their functions taken over by scholars in the South Library. Cf. my "Nan-shu-fang chih chien-chih chi ch'i ch'ien-ch'i chih fa-chan" 南書房之建置及其前期之發展 (Founding of the South Library and Its Early Development), in *Ssu yü yen* 思與言 (Thought and Word), vol. V, no. 6, March, 1968, pp. 6-12.
 2. Edict of KH 21/9/21 in CSL KH, 104.26b-27.
 3. Edict of KH 23/5/11 in *ibid.* 115.13b; edict of KH 29/10/5 in *ibid.* 149.2b; edict of KH 32/12/3-4 in *ibid.* 161.10b-11b.
 4. SL 14.27.
 5. WHTP, p. 1071b.
 6. Cf. my "Memorial Systems of the Ch'ing Dynasty, 1644-1911", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. XXVII (1967), p. 16. Also WHTP, p. 1070, Fragmentary Diary dated KH 46/10/21; and SLTKCP, p. 486, Diary of KH 19/9/10.
 7. SLTKCP, p. 572, Diary of KH 42/9/26; WHTP, p. 1072, Fragmentary Diary of KH 46/10/29.
 8. Cf. Malone, Carroll B., *History of the Peking Summer Palaces under the Ch'ing Dynasty* (Urbana, 1934), p. 38, for John Bell's audience with the K'ang-hsi Emperor.

9. SLTKCP, p. 569, Diary of KH 42/9/25; and *ibid.* p. 446. On regular audience days the morning Audience was always held at 7 a. m. (CSL KH 104. 26b-27).
10. Chang T'ang-jung 章唐容, *Ch'ing-kung shu-wen* 清宮述聞 (Peiping, 1941), ch. 4, p. 4b.
11. SLTKCP, p. 438.
12. *Ibid.* 452-453.
13. Chang T'ang-jung, ch. 4, p. 2b.
14. *Ibid.* 4.4b.
15. This was done normally every two or three days; but as many as three times a day if she were ill. Cf. SLTKCP Diaries *passim*.
16. Ripa, Matteo, *Memoirs of Father Ripa* (London, 1855), p. 111.
17. Malone, p 29.
18. Diaries of KH 42/7/25, 26 in SLTKCP, pp. 533-539.
19. Sometimes even every two days if the Emperor was touring near the Capital. CSL KH 114.17; 117.4b; SL 14.27b-29.
20. SL 14.27b. This term may also be used as a noun to indicate the entire body of documents so dispatched to the Emperor.
21. CSL KH 212.26b, where it is recorded that Li Hsü's private messenger delivered his palace memorial directly to the Emperor at the Jehol summer villa.
22. *Li Wen-chen kung nien-p'u* 李文貞公年譜 ch. 2, p. 62b-64b, where it is recorded that Li Kuang-ti 李光地 had a farewell audience with the Emperor. It is interesting to note that the Emperor wanted to keep their conversation strictly between themselves, and that he wrote his words on slips of paper to communicate with Li who was hard of hearing; Li whispered back his answers to the Emperor.
23. Edict of KH 56/5/8 in CSL KH 272.16b.
24. Hedin, Sven, *Jehol, City of Emperors* (New York, 1937), p. 147.
25. Ripa, pp. 74-79.
26. Sekino Tadashi 關野貞 and Takeshima Takuichi 竹島卓一 *Nekka* 熱河 (Tokyo, 1937), p. 8.
27. *Ch'in-ting Jo-ho chih* 欽定熱河志 (1781 ed, Taiwan, 1966 reprint), 26.10b.
28. Ripa, p. 79.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 73. cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 115-116 for more interesting details on imperial life in Jehol.
30. Spence, Jonathan, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor* (New Haven, 1966), chapter 4.
31. Yang, Lien-sheng, *Studies in Chinese Institutional History* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 22.
32. SL 297.1; SL 297.15; SL 297.16b.
33. See CLTKCP, p. 438.
34. HT, 35.1 and 28b; Ripa, pp. 60-61.

35. SL 297.18b; Malone, pp. 30-37.
36. Ripa, p. 61; Malone, p. 40.
37. Diary of KH 42/7/1 in SLTKCP, pp. 521-25.
38. For such days cf. *Ta-ch'ing hui-tien* 大清會典 (1899 ed., Taiwan, 1963 reprint), 77.3b; 80.8b-9b; 81.13; 92.3.
39. *Ch'ing-ch'ao hsü wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 清朝續文獻通考 (Taiwan reprint), p. 6598.
40. CSL KH, 121.5b; SH 7.1.
41. SLTKCP, 335-338.
42. In the diaries, only vague time word indicating either one hour or two hour intervals is used. The character *tsao* (早 "early in the morning") here probably denotes the time period around 6 a. m. in view of the fact that the next time word in the context was *ch'en* (辰), which denotes the two hour interval between 7 and 9 a. m. In the following translation, *ch'en* will be translated into 8 a. m.; and *ssu* 巳, the next two hour interval, into 10 a. m., and so forth.
43. Origin and ceremonial regulations in SL 1180.3b; and *Hsiao-t'ing tsa-lu* 嘯亭雜錄 2.41.
44. SLTKCP, 436-439. Diaries for other days, e. g. KH 12/11/25, show that the Emperor usually attended the "daily lectures" at 8 a. m. in the Hung-te Hall.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 504-507.
46. These are implied. Cf. Fragmentary Diary of KH 46/10/23 in WHTP, p. 1069b.
47. For some discussion of copper shortage problems and the customs houses in charge of purchase, cf. Spence, *Ts'ao Yin*, pp. 106-108. Cf. also John Hall, "Notes on the Early Ch'ing Copper Trade with Japan," HJAS XII (1949), pp. 444-461.
48. BH 366, 460A.
49. SLTKCP, 569.
50. Rank 5B. BH 200C.
51. Rank 6A. BH 412A.
52. CSL YC, 1.19.
53. SH YC, 1.3b-4, edict of YC 4/10/2.
54. CSL YC 3.32b. Regular Audiences were held on three prescribed days, but not three times a month as in the K'ang-hsi reign. E. g. cf. CSL YC 16.23 which records a Regular Audience for the 15th day of the month, but no reference to one on the 25th.
55. CSL YC 35.22b.
56. *Ibid.*, 36.14b.
57. *Ibid.*, 44.12b-14b.
58. *Ibid.*, 58.9b-10.
59. *Ibid.*, 44.12b-14.
60. Malone, p. 59.
61. This general description is based on the Yung-cheng Emperor's own words in the "Preface" of the CPYC and I. Miyazaki's 宮崎市定 *Yō-sei-tai, Dokusai no*

- kunshu* 雍正帝——獨裁の君主 (Tokyo, 1950), pp. 90-91. The latter does not indicate original sources. I also doubt that Yung-cheng could rise around four in the morning regularly, as Miyazaki has suggested.
62. CPYC, O-erh-t'ai's memorial dated YC 4/9/19.
 63. CSL KH 140.23b.
 64. CSL KH 149.3; 169.15.
 65. CSL KH 231.25-25b.
 66. CSL KH 265.14b-15.
 67. CSL KH 246.16-16b.
 68. CSL KH 117.4-5.
 69. CSL KH 284.3-5.
 70. Edicts of KH 56/10/30 and 56/11/21 in SH KH 9.1; and edict of KH 58/4/9 in SH KH 9.3b.
 71. *Ta-i chüeh-mi-lu* 大義覺迷錄, 1.19b-20.
 72. CSL YC 9.11-12; 56.16-16b, 159.4-4b.
 73. CPYC, vermilion endorsement on Li Wei's memorial, dated YC 4/11/24.
 74. CSL YC 58.9b-10.
 75. Edict dated YC 7/4/12 in CSL YC 80.12b.

實際工作的皇帝

康熙和雍正的日常工作安排(1661-1735)

吳 秀 良

根據儒家的理想，一個皇帝至少應當具備兩個條件。第一、他應當在臣工協助下，有效率的治理國政；第二、他應當為萬民以身作則，研讀聖賢經典，以追求內聖外王的境地。康熙和雍正至少都曾以追求這兩個目標為己志，這種精神一部分可以從他們日常工作形態中反應出來。這種形態自然因時間和空間的關係而有修正；而本文只不過是對這一個問題的平均描述而已。

就空間而論，康熙經常居住的地方有三：北京城內的皇宮、西郊的暢春園、和熱河的避暑山莊。當他居住在北京的時候，他每天黎明前就起來。早晨最重要的節目為早朝和引見官員；下午多半從事寫作或練習書法；晚間多半批閱本章。這種工作上的安排至少在他執政的前半期是如此。

早晨（早朝及上午時間）是康熙理政的中心。諸凡對部院官員章疏的受理和諮詢；與大學士等共同對“折本”（部院議覆本章有疑難者）的研討；和私人官員的引見等都是在這個時間內舉行。當他住在暢春園的時候，上朝的官員要在早晨一點到三點起來，相當辛苦。在熱河的時候，雖然有一部分部院大臣隨駕，但經常參加早朝的只是大學士等少數人，不像在京師時那樣隆重死板。同時與外面通訊的方式也稍有變更。例如，外省本章仍舊先送到北京然後每三天向熱河轉送一次。如果是奏摺則由遞摺人逕赴熱河投遞。

康熙在熱河的生活似乎比較有伸縮性而且輕鬆。他有時出去打獵，有時操練隊伍，每年九十月間的木蘭秋狩是規模最大而最有趣味的節目。隨駕的耶穌會教士的記載說隨行人員和軍隊約有三萬人之多。

康熙亦常常出巡外省，尤其他的六次南巡最為出名。在這種情況下，他的工作形態自然要因時地而不同。另外，每逢假期、忌日、年終封印年初開印等特別日子，他的工作方式當然更不是按照常態了。

雍正雖然一再強調處處遵從康熙的“成憲”，實際上他日常理政的方式卻與康熙迥然不同。他不太注重形式化的早朝。當他住在圓明園的時候，他甚至告訴上朝臣工不必過早起身；沒有緊要事也不必全來早朝；並且他也不主張天天要有早朝。重大政務常是他和一小組親信大臣討論處理。

雍正也從來沒有幸過熱河，更沒有南巡的事。他似乎終日忙於處理政事；講效率不重形式。我們實在很難說出他日常工作的方式到底怎樣。有人說他每天四時起床，這恐怕不是他經常的習慣，因為他在硃批諭旨中透露他常常“燈下”批摺，常常批到“夜半”；而且他的身體並不太結實，不可能經常那麼早起來。

康熙和雍正的確算是清朝兩個認真而能幹的皇帝。但是他們都受到身體和年齡的限制。特別到了老年，疾病越來越多，就不能再像以前處處認真，顧到細節了；這樣自然就影響到政事有效的推行。這似乎是每一個專制君主都不能避免的命運。