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**Images, Ideas and Reality:
Empress Dowager Cixi's Self-Image and
Western Understandings of Cixi**

MAIN TEXT

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A dissertation submitted to the
Department of History of Art, University of Glasgow,
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Author's Note

The pinyin system is generally used for all Chinese terms in this thesis -- including personal names, locations, palaces etc. However, some other Chinese terms which have been conventionally used in the West will be retained here, for example, Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen instead of Jiang Jieshi and Sun Yixian.

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Acknowledgements

I first had the idea for this thesis in Edinburgh University where I was doing my MSc. degree in the Fine Art Department in 1999-2000. At that time, when working on an essay for a course called Political Authority and Identity, I wrote a comparison between England's Elizabeth I and China's Empress Dowager Cixi as to their visual images. After completing my Masters degree, I still had some eagerness to be engaged in making more research about Empress Dowager Cixi, an important and controversial female ruler, about whom there remained many uncertainties for historians. Finding from the internet that Dr Nicholas Pearce was an expert in Chinese art and was also interested in the images of Cixi, I realized that I could ask him to be my supervisor. Since 2001, when I started to undertake my PhD research with him, he has been a wonderful supervisor for four years. First, I would like to thank him for his invaluable counsel, inspiration and encouragement during many generously long discussions while I prepared this thesis. Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the unfailing help and good humour I have experienced from other staff, both academic and administrative in Glasgow University.

I spent lots of time having reading in National Library of Scotland where there are many materials and books that I could explore and also there are some helpful librarians. I also read Sir Edmund Backhouse's two exciting memoirs in the British Library in London.

Last years, I spent nearly two months doing research in America. Here, I specially would like to thank several figures helping me a great deal during my research in America. Linda Raditz, Archivist of Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gave me great help in my research about Cixi's photographs made by Xunling. There, she showed me dozens of Cixi's pictures, some of which I saw for the first time. She helped me to clear out some unsolved questions about Cixi's photographs. I went to Missouri Historical Society and the St Louis Art Museum -- both has all the collections (including official documents, journals, magazines and newspapers) concerning the St Louis World Fair in 1904. Mr Jason D. Stratman was a most helpful librarian who guided me to get the useful collections and some official documents to let me read in smooth way without any difficulties. He also suggested that I should see Norma Sindelar who is an archivist of The St Louis Art Museum where art works were exhibited about the 1904 World Fair. She was a brilliant lady who also helped me a lot. She enthusiastically showed me some important documents and letters in the archive. She brought me to the exact spot where the portrait of Empress Dowager Cixi had been located in 1904. In front of the Museum, facing the Forest Park, she explained to me how the World Fair was arranged and held arranged.

During my research in Boston, Dr Pearce was there to link up with me to visit the archives of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University (where Hubert Vos' 'realistic' portrait of Cixi is housed). Its archivist, Ms Diana Larsen, guided us to see Hubert Vos' portrait

and to search for some significant information about this particular portrait in the archives. Besides these libraries' and archivists' great help, there are many others working in libraries and museums who had some correspondence with me or met me and gave me some help and inspiration, including: Jessop Les of Sunderland Museum; Grant Menzies, a writer and an expert on Princess Derling, now living in Canada; Dr Larry Bird, a curator in the Division of Political History at the National Museum of American History; and Sandra Mathews, a photographer who is also interested in Chinese photographs and Xunling's photographs etc.

I am also deeply indebted to my loving and encouraging husband for understanding and standing by me and giving me great emotional support. He is a person who has great confidence in me and believes in me. In front of him, I can be 100% 'me' without pretending. He is the person who spotted that I have a good 'eye' to see things in paintings that other people do not see. His knowledge and far-sighted understanding about world affairs is remarkable and really helpful to me. Because of that and our frequent discussions, his words inspire me so much. I want to thank him sincerely for his great encouragement and inspiration. Most important, I would like to say thanks to my mother in Taipei. As a traditional Oriental woman of remarkable endurance and hard work, she has sacrificed her own happiness to help me. Her high expectation of me drives me to do many things to let her feel proud of me. Her unfailing encouragement, confidence and

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Lastly, I would like to thank all who have over the years tried to improve my English – for I had spent much more time on science and engineering in my adolescence in Taiwan than on English – and my fellow students who showed confidence in me by selecting me President of Edinburgh's Taiwanese Student Society. And of course I need to point out that any errors in what follows are my own.

Synopsis

This thesis, titled *Images, Ideas and Reality*, mainly focuses on China's Empress Dowager Cixi's image-making (her response to the Western attack on China at the time of the Boxer Rebellion) and on Western views of Cixi. One particular portrait of the Empress is central to the discussion here. Made by an American portraitist, Katherine Carl, it was to be displayed at the 1904 St Louis' World Fair (also called the Louisiana Purchase Exposition) and was planned to be given afterwards as a gift from Cixi to the American government and people. It is made central here because this portrait is the one to which Cixi paid so much attention in terms of her image-making for showing to the West; also it was the one that so many Westerners saw after 1904, so it did indeed have an influence on Western views of her (in comparison with other works). (This particular portrait is titled here 'the LPE portrait of Cixi.')

The thesis is thus divided into two main parts, concerning the intended and achieved image of Cixi and their connection with likely reality.

In the first part, the manner of Cixi's public appearances in front of crowds outside the imperial palaces and in front of foreign painters, ambassadors and princes and their wives, and so on inside her imperial palaces are examined. Cixi appeared remarkably 'democratic' and much 'Westernized' in the public domain at least at the end of her reign, around the time the LPE portrait was made. As well as making analyses of Cixi's portraits and photographs as to their aesthetics, the LPE portrait of Cixi is also examined in special detail. The thesis identifies the main essence of Cixi's political image, that is, her widowhood. Cixi's widowhood was crucial to establishing her political power, with the help of China's traditional domestic system. But some subsequent flaws caused by her

cultivation of widowhood arguably helped lead to her country's downfall. The paradox of Cixi's widowhood – its benefits and flaws – is discussed in the thesis.

In the second part, Western pro-Cixi and anti-Cixi views from Cixi's time until the present are analyzed. The thesis points out that Westerners' ideas about Cixi actually reflect their individual personal experiences, and rather seldom who Cixi herself really was. Another discovery is about the prototype of Cixi's bad image that had been kept in the Western mind. That is the demonized mythological figure by which the British Sinologist Sir Edmund Backhouse characterised Cixi. How has the LPE portrait of Cixi been viewed by Western audiences since 1904? Apparently, because of Cixi's friends and foes (both in the West and in China) the portrait was a piece which could not be fully understood.

Like the LPE portrait, the real Cixi cannot be easily understood although lots of articles and biographies written by Westerners who have tried to portray her. Until now, Cixi still remains something of a mystery. What this thesis aims to achieve is this: as the title – *Images, Ideas and Reality* – implies, studies of Cixi's public appearance, her photos and her portraits (images) as well as various opinions about her (ideas) are thought to get as close as possible to the real Cixi. Arguably, the most important approach to her is to understand the LPE portrait. This thesis will try to point to what is the likely reality behind the images and ideas. Here, art history is used to unravel serious confusions of the past affecting the image of a long-reigning Empress and indeed the very image of imperial China.

Introduction

This thesis concerns the visual imagery, i.e. the portraiture, for Empress Dowager Cixi of China (r. 1861-1908) – within the context of a country undergoing change and upheaval at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The thesis explores the influences on the creation of that imagery; and it further considers the influence of the imagery in the century after it was created. A cast of a score or more ‘actors’ is involved, including Chinese imperial princes, princesses, Chinese officials, foreign painters, photographers, statesmen, statesmen’s wives, biographers, female monarchs in other countries, a wider audience in America, of course Empress Dowager Cixi herself, Chinese nationalists, reformers and later Chinese governments. At the centre of this nexus stands Cixi’s most famous portrait, the most dignified one created, and indeed dictated, for the international St Louis Exposition of 1904 (called the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, abbreviated as LPE) (Fig. 1).

Questions about imagery have dominated academic thinking over the past decade in the West. Some experts – since most notably the late Edward Said created his own new meaning for the old term ‘Orientalism’ – have preferred to see most static imagery and stories of other cultures coming from the West as chiefly propaganda exercises concerned to keep the ‘victims’ in other cultures in their place. This possibility will be examined with regard to Empress Cixi’s portraiture, taking into account also other individual efforts to mediate (and frankly to ruin) Cixi’s image. The master plans of Cixi and her painters will be presented, for these were certainly influential in some cases, at least for many decades. An attempt will be made to ask whether (social) realities were more or less important than (personal) ideas in shaping the development of Cixi’s international reputation; and to ask what role the portraits of Cixi played in this.

Empress Dowager Cixi: a Biographical Summary and Evaluation

Following the death of her husband, the Qing Manchu Xianfeng emperor in 1861, leaving the couple's four-year-old son as heir, Empress Dowager Cixi effectively ruled China (whether as a regent or, in the 1890's, remaining 'the power behind the throne') until her death in 1908. Throughout Cixi's remarkable reign, as the world's most powerful woman, China remained an oriental despotism which struggled to cope with its own bloody civil war of the 1860's, with the encroachments of other nations from all sides (an operation called 'slicing the melon'¹), and in 1900 with the unsuccessful rebellion of 'Boxer' traditionalists complaining that Western innovations such as railways and churches interfered with China's natural balance (*feng shui*) – leaving Cixi finally indebted to the West for restoring her to her throne.² By Cixi's death, entry to the civil service no longer depended entirely on the traditional literary essay, and there were 13,000 girls receiving schooling; still, at Cixi's death many younger people were dissatisfied and, by 1912, the Qing dynasty had vanished and China became a republic containing rather few people wishing to preserve any favourable image of Cixi. Though often thought to have had steely determination along with respected intelligence (if not perhaps literacy), Cixi also had a show-stopping smile and could be charming (especially perhaps to men when she was younger and to women when she was older). Cixi seems to have enjoyed a lifetime mastery of Beijing's 3,000 palace eunuchs and of a childhood sweetheart, Ronglu, who became a leading bannerman and certainly rescued Cixi from several difficult circumstances. Cixi liked dogs, boating, walking in the rain and playacting as Buddha of Mercy (Guanyin); she encouraged opera and shaped the aesthetics of the court, including dresses and porcelain wares. In her later years, she enjoyed being accompanied by Manchu ladies in the court and had diplomatic

relationships with foreign ladies. Following this, she became interested in how photography and portraiture might be used to establish and improve her international image. She died after a stroke and the onset of dysentery.

Almost every important detail of Cixi's life has been disputed by historians, but an acceptable basic chronology might be as follows. In 1835, she was born, named Yehonala, in an unknown location. About her childhood, Cixi subsequently made it taboo to discuss her early years.³ The period of her history is something of an enigma despite numerous historians and biographers having offered different impressions, most of which cannot be trusted. After 1851, when she was selected by the Empress Dowager (the Xianfeng emperor's mother) as the Emperor's 'concubine, fifth rank,' and entered the Forbidden City, the diminutive Cixi eventually managed to attract the lustful Emperor's attentions and the union yielded the Emperor's only child, his son Zaichun (known as the Tongzhi emperor) in 1856. In 1860, Cixi followed the Emperor and the entire court to escape to Rehe as the culmination of twenty years of losing battles with Western powers. On the Emperor's subsequent death, Cixi and Cian (the Emperor's other consort, whose position was higher than Cixi because Cian was the Xianfeng emperor's first wife) were appointed joint regents for the Tongzhi emperor. In 1869, Cixi lost her favourite eunuch, An Dehai, executed by Cian after a court power struggle. In 1875, Cixi's son Tongzhi died of dropsy and dissipation; and his wife also passed away soon after. Cixi adopted her four-year-old nephew named Zaitian (who later became the Guangxu emperor) as an adopted son, and so Cixi and Cian resumed their regency. In 1880, Cian died. Cixi became a solo regent until 1889 when Zaitian reached his adulthood and Cixi 'retired' from the government. In 1897, the reform-inclined Guangxu emperor was worried that Cixi would be the crucial person who would stop him reforming the country and so encouraged plotters to kill bannerman Ronglu. The plot failed in the end and Guangxu was made a virtual prisoner.

Cixi resolved to modernize the military but little else. Scores of Guangxu's reform edicts were cancelled by Cixi in 1899. In 1900, Western legations were besieged while the Boxers rebelled against the foreign forces. Cixi fled to Xi'an – not to Manchuria, now Russian-occupied. Cixi was restored by the West and proceeded to cultivate Western ladies – though evidently a lonely figure even if still possessed of steely determination, as *per* Carl's portraits. Cixi died suddenly, twenty-four hours after the death of Guangxu – both poisoned, said some, but medical records (both Chinese and British) recorded the deaths as natural.

Though some attempt was made above to indicate points of controversy, it now needs to be said that there are two broad accounts of Cixi's life which are utterly different. The first, a 'negative' account, comes chiefly from the British 'China hand' Sir Edmund Backhouse and his friends at the *Times* newspaper. It is repeated engagingly in Keith Laidler's lively 2003 book, *The Last Empress: the She-Dragon of China*. Essentially, it is that Cixi was a highly driven woman who used extreme sex and violence to deal with all opposition. All strange deaths during her reign are attributed to her use of poison or to her having enemies – for example, Guangxu's favourite concubine – pushed down wells in the Forbidden City by her loyal eunuchs. When her nephew took the throne in 1889, Cixi became the focus for conservative opposition to reform; and, enraged by fraudulent claims about the West's great demands on China, she even agreed to back the disastrous Boxer rebellion. Finally, she is claimed to have poisoned her own nephew in 1908 – and within a day to have been poisoned by his reforming friends as revenge. In short, Cixi is held to have been a virtual psychopath who inflicted disaster on her country by her failure to embrace reforms that would have widened the base of China's government and given it a chance of standing up to modernized and militarized nations.

The second and 'positive' account – strangely unmentioned by Laidler – is contained in the 1992 book, *Dragon Lady: the Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China*, by Sterling Seagrave. Its denigration of Backhouse is based chiefly on the 1978 work of Oxford University historian Sir Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Hermit of Peking*. Seagrave's positive account of Cixi originated from the opinion of the foreign ladies who met Cixi and came to favour her. Here, Cixi is presented as a woman struggling against enormous odds to hold together the world's largest and historically most civilized country while battling not only with the greedy Western 'big noses' but also with a major fertility problem within the royal household – requiring a succession of regencies. This account points to Cixi's own statements acknowledging the need for change to adapt to new circumstances, and also to the unsuccessful financial dealings (in Mexico) of her nephew's leading 'reforming' adviser, Kang Youwei, and to Kang's frankly (in those days) visionary schemes of sexual equality. In this account, the many deaths of Cixi's reign are attributed simply to natural causes – e.g. the death of her nephew, which was fully and publicly considered by Chinese and British doctors, and also her own death, said by Seagrave to be due plainly to exhaustion and to her sincere grief at the death of her nephew, just twenty-four hours earlier.

It is not the business of the present thesis to resolve these enormous differences. But it can be said that the final image that Cixi left with the world via art work is not one involving the elements of 'modernization' that great dictators such as Ivan the Terrible, Cromwell, Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler and Mao have invariably stressed. Cixi's failure to 'modernize' can certainly be criticized with the benefit of hindsight, but many of her countrymen and courtiers fully agreed with her that they felt no wish to go down the way of the Japanese 'dwarves', let alone of the 'barbarian' and 'hairy' Westerners. Cixi failed to find a way for China to modernize; but China's imperial principles would never have

allowed the mass starvation and around 70 million deaths which Mao Zedong subsequently delivered to a Chinese nation that should have positively prospered after being on the winning side in the twentieth century's two World Wars.⁴

Thesis Plan

This thesis considers two aspects of how Cixi presented herself, including her public *persona* and her body politic, to address Western encroachment; as well as how the West understood Cixi in response to her public presentation. How did Cixi react to Western modernization – the voice of which, she felt, was becoming ever louder and stronger in China? In her public *persona*, she showed herself in the public domain to Westerners, including people of high social class and the general public; in her body politic, her visual imagery – especially, public portrait done by Katherine Carl – was officially presented by her and her whole Court and the Government was involved. Her public *persona* and her body politic both express political motivations and are thus given the same term here: 'Cixi's political body.' Before 1898, no foreign official ambassadors ever saw Cixi in person.⁵ Her oil portrait was presented for viewing by the Western circle for the first time in 1904. At that period, she had entered the close of her political career as well as of her life. Through looking at *her political body* in the last decade of her career, her liaison with and her attitude towards the West and her intention of how she wanted to be viewed and the true nature of her political life can be observed. The other aspect that the thesis addresses is Western views of Cixi's political career and her portraiture during the hundred years in the past. Understandings of Cixi in the period from her life time until now do not come into agreement, but vary. Finding the prototypes of Cixi's good and bad images and exploring their development become central in this aspect. The ideas and

backgrounds and the plan and some crucial questions of individual chapters will be discussed in the thesis as follows.

Like many traditionalists at the end of the Qing dynasty, Cixi and the majority of her Court had views: that China as a country of the most ancient and venerable civilization had been built up over centuries by “observance of the fundamental doctrine that the nation must be governed by moral rather than by physical force.”⁶ They believed that a China of “moral superiority” would not be overthrown by the “material success” of the Western countries.⁷ They hoped that Western material modernization was an action of the devil or witchcraft and could obtain only a temporary victory. Yet the reality was that, through the whole of the nineteenth century, the West won more and more victories on the battlefield against time-honoured, slow-to-change and vulnerable China, which proved incapable of defending itself. In her later life, Cixi must have been painfully aware of how her fragile and subdued nation had submitted to the West several times. Given the West’s military and technological superiority and innovation in the realm of fashion, dressing styles, portraiture images, photography and manners, Cixi must have felt an enormous pressure to modernize.

The growth of visual culture and journalistic reportage with illustrations in China at the end of the nineteenth century was a vital influence on both the development and the perception of the Chinese monarchy. There was extensive coverage of Cixi by the media – involving the new technique of photography, newspapers, journals and magazines, printing, the illustrated press, the telegraph, letters and correspondence both within and outside the Court. With such changes, the image of an uncriticized and mysterious monarchy could not last long. In the new atmosphere of free communication and discussion, the single channel of government-supplied information was dramatically challenged. Owing to Cixi being a leading figure of the traditionalists (whereas Zaitian,

the young emperor, appeared a reformist), Cixi's reputation had been challenged and she was portrayed as a stubborn and ignorant old lady by Kang Youwei and his associates.⁸ Cixi's new bad reputation also spread fast, even in Western circles. Cixi once said to her chief lady-in-waiting of 1903-4, Derling, who had tried to comfort Cixi when seeing her crying, "You need not feel sorry for me for what I have gone through; but you must feel sorry that my fair name is ruined."⁹ She thus knew perfectly well how damaged her reputation was.

As a leading political figure, Cixi would have wanted to shape Westerners' perceptions of her nation, of her Manchu ethnicity and even of herself; so, she thus finally revealed herself. However, what was her method of response to the trend of modernization? Chapter One will look at the way that Cixi presented herself in the public domain, focusing on the style and manner of Cixi's public appearances beginning in 1898. What does her different diplomatic style from her imperial ancestors say in China's political philosophy? What does her unique and novel gestures and body language say? These will be observed to pick out her late-in-life revolution in diplomatic style.

Chapter Two will analyze the problem presented by her gender. Under a social framework of patriarchic dominance, Cixi as a female could climb up to the top of the tree to become a powerful leader commanding over four hundred million people in China.¹⁰ How could Cixi find her way through this framework? What do her multi-statuses as a wife (to the Xianfeng emperor), mother (to the Tongzhi emperor) and aunt (to the Guangxu emperor) say about her political body and her private one? Is there any association of her gender with how she built up her powerful political career and with how she had her final downfall? These questions will be examined so that the nature of Cixi's political career can be understood.

In China, where there were various divisions, some people took Cixi's traditional and conservative side while others supported the radical reformer, the Guangxu emperor; still others just wanted to turn the country into a republic. These divisions involved not only ideas (conservative and Confucian *versus* reforming and Westernising) but also, more important, different ethnic groups – the Manchus *versus* the Han people. Manchus did not support the republican system which the majority people of China, the Han people, were coming to embrace. Han intellectuals like Kang Youwei and his associates, and the founder-to-be of the 1910 Chinese Republic, Sun Yat-sen, and his associates, introduced racial or ethnic theorising by writing articles as propaganda: they linked race with democracy in China, maintaining that since the Han were a majority and also ethnically superior, they should become the ruling, and not a ruled people. In addition, two Han groups had a disagreement between themselves. Kang Youwei wished China to move forward yet still retain the monarchy, at least in the case of the young Guangxu emperor, while Sun Yat-sen was anti-monarchical; but both groups agreed on a hostile attitude towards Cixi. The Dowager Empress, who was conspicuously influential in the Chinese Court, became the target at which people aimed blame and praise, whereas her nephew Zaitian (the Guangxu emperor's personal name) was much less visible.

Apart from the divisions found at Court and in China itself, the circle of resident Westerners also held diverging views of Cixi. British *Times* journalists like Dr George Ernest Morrison in Beijing and J.O.P. Bland (John Otway Percy Bland) in Shanghai and their crucial translator, Sir Edmund Backhouse, busily defamed the Empress.¹¹ Besides these three, several ladies such as Lady Susanne Townley and Alicia Little who had audiences with Cixi also made criticisms. Other foreigners supported Cixi: for example, Sir Robert Hart, the Ulsterman who effectively created the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs and worked in China as Inspector General until 1908; Isaac Headland, a

Professor at Beijing University, whose wife Mariam Headland was a doctor in Cixi's court; some ladies like the American ambassador's wife, Mrs. Conger; an American portraitist, Katherine Carl, who had a close relationship with Cixi; and a British diplomatic couple, Sir Claude and Lady Ethel MacDonald, who had solid confidence in Cixi – all these were sympathetic with Cixi and defended her strongly. Most people did not stay neutral: as far as can be ascertained, opinions for and against Cixi became virtually a black-and-white matter for top Westerners in China. So the two sides of the story will be presented in this thesis.

Following these phenomena of the time, Chapter Three describes how Cixi's image has been wrecked in the West, with especial focus on the main figure, Sir Edmund Backhouse, who introduced a sensational way of destroying Cixi's reputation. The side which supported Cixi is presented in Chapter Four, showing various positive ways of portraying her in the very early twentieth century that become a prototype of her good image; and there is also discussion of their later followers in the twentieth century. Cixi died in 1908. Since then, she has not been forgotten in the West. In just the past thirty years, there has been Marina Warner's *The Dragon Empress Life and Times of Tzu-hsi*, having several editions from 1972 until the 1990s, Sterling Seagrave's *Dragon Lady* in 1992, and then Keith Laidler's *The Last Empress: the She-Dragon of China* in 2003. This shows that interest in Cixi's legend still continues. These opinions about Cixi come from the people who went to China in the time from the late nineteenth century until Cixi's death. What were the main images that were created at that time? Chapters Three and Four will also bring these to light and set out the changes of Cixi's bad and good images over the years.

Katherine Carl's portrait in LPE for discussion needs to be specially considered because the portrait's public purpose was explicit: Cixi knew that this portrait would be

sent to St Louis, that people from all over the world would see it; also, she promised to give it to America as a gift when the exhibition ended, showing that she wanted to leave it in a foreign country (though, ironically, the Smithsonian Institute in Washington in the end put it on permanent loan to the National Museum of History in Taipei, Taiwan). In a sense, this portrait involves high motivation and political implications. To properly discuss her idea of presenting her portrait – showing her values, interests, and intentions to viewers, Carl's other three portraits, Hubert Vos' two portraits and Xunling's photographs in which Cixi was the sitter will also be considered.¹²

Therefore, from Chapter Five onward, the focus will be the LPE portrait of Cixi. Chapter Five will examine how the portrait was made and discuss crucial reasons that influenced Cixi to accept the Western medium and to break some traditional taboos of Chinese portraiture. This chapter will trace what can be learnt about her knowledge of Western oil portraits and photographs, work out how and why she agreed to her portrait being taken and even approved showing it to the foreign public, and which ideas she applied to her portraits and where she found these ideas.

Chapter Six shows Cixi engaging (with the West) and analyzing the aesthetic characteristics of every detail of the portrait under her supervision. These aesthetic analyses will lead to a further examination – of her political ambitions, including her political intentions (whether conscious or unconscious), as to how she would be seen in the world and appeal to the West by making use of the Western medium and methods of being portrayed. In Chapter Seven, responding to Cixi's intention through the portrait, how has it been viewed by the West? After the portrait was delivered in a careful and complicated process, involving a ceremonial ritual from China to America, it was first exhibited in St Louis, then in the Smithsonian Institute, and later in Taipei. First, during the LPE, what were the opinions of 'Cixi's body politics' surrounding the portrait of Cixi

made during the LPE? If the whole context is brought in for discussion, what are the implications behind the location of the portrait in the LPE? The second matter concerns the comparison between the portrait and her other pictures. That Vos' 'realistic' portrait made in private was later exhibited in France, then in a private collection, and at present in Harvard University, without Cixi's agreement, and that photos of her taken by Xunling have been shown in many publications and cheap albums spread in the market were exactly what she had neither wished nor expected. Compared with these, what impact has the LPE portrait of Cixi had in West? Third is the question about the portrait having been moved to several locations. What was the effect of these several moves? The above three discussions will help to understand the attitude of the West towards the portrait.

Brief Introduction to Chinese Portraiture

Before beginning the first chapter to discuss Empress Dowager Cixi's thinking about portraiture and the LPE portrait of Cixi, a brief introduction is necessary to Chinese portraiture, especially to ancestral portraits (APs), as follows.

Discovered at tombs in Changsha, Hunan province in 1973, works on silk show the images of the family of the Marquis of Dai which are believed to have been made in the second century BC. This "idealized portraiture" – involving mythological context, a cosmic diagram, and flight in a spiritual world – presents a combination of humans and supernatural creatures.¹³ Profoundly imbued with Confucian ideas – for example, *Kong zi jia yu* (*Gleanings of Confucian Rites*) says that in Confucius' home are "portraits of [good] rulers Yao and Shun with kind looks and those of [bad] rulers Jie and Zhou with evil looks which are put on the walls in order to provide instruction and warning" – the portrait was employed by the feudal ruling class as a tool to cultivate manners, human relations and moral concern. The images of legendary rulers, meritorious officials, sages,

saints and virtuous ladies, remained dominant in Chinese portraiture from the later Han period until at least the Qing period. Most of the time, these portraits are imaginative and this kind of image was enhanced as “an imperially sanctioned orthodox” by many emperors who commissioned painters to paint – for example, famously, Emperor Gaozong of Southern Song period (r. 1127-62).¹⁴ Anti-idiosyncratic images seem very obvious. Despite this, there are some other portraits which are neither so formal nor connected with morality. For example, in *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove*, an image from a 5th-century tomb, the seven ‘eccentric’ figures were praised. Their outfits and postures show their idiosyncratic and unconventional states. Following the line of the unconventional images, many other portraits with a Daoist or Buddhist mood were painted. For example, Tang dynasty’s Wu Daozi (685-758) mastered the painting of religious figures for Buddhist and Daoist temples. He used stylish, unrestrained, bold and energetic brush lines with a free spirit. Northern Song’s *wen ren hua jia* (‘intellectual painters’), such as Li Gonglin (1049-1160), emphasize a poetic, simple and tranquil mood as the highest artistic realm, rather than verisimilitude. This concept influenced many painters in the Yuan dynasty whose portrait paintings departed even more freely and wildly from convention – for example, Yan Hui, Liu Guandao and Zhang Wo. The Ming dynasty’s Chen Hongshou (1598-1652) often painted realistic self portraits and portraits of others. His *Life of Tao Yuanming* shows his admiration for Tao Yuanming (365-427) who was a figure who gave up official life to be a hermit living on a mountain. Chen’s works greatly influenced later Qing-dynasty painters, especially the three Rens (Ren Xun, Ren Yi and Ren Xiong).¹⁵ In the Qing dynasty painters preferred to imitate the ancient works. The portraits of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou present figures very differently, especially the portraits of Huang Shen (1687-1777). His figures’ bodies and clothes in his portraits seem to be flying and moving – portrayed using dramatic and cursive script

brushwork; and he liked to portray such figures as beggars, fishermen and working-class people to reflect their lives of hardship.¹⁶

Portrait paintings had been called by several terms – *xie zhen* ('painting of likeness'), *chuan shen* ('transmission of the spirit'), and *chuan zhen* ('transmission of likeness').¹⁷ Whether portraying a likeness or conveying spirit is more significant has been a topic for artistic debate for a long time. A story was described in *Anecdotes in the Realm of Painting* as follows. Zhao Zong sat for two portraitists, Han Gan and Zhou Fang. On completion, the two works were brought to Zhao's wife. She looked at the two works and commented: "The former has captured merely my husband's features while the latter has in addition invested him with his spirit and depicted his temperament and expressions."¹⁸ Her words point out the important debate between form and spirit. The Eastern Jin period's Gu Kaizhi's own work, *A Portrait of Vimalakirti* (a mural at Waguan Temple, Nanjing), is argued to be an important portrait. The reason is that Gu applied his painting theory – 'delineating spirit through form' – to this portrait.¹⁹ Yan Liben's famous works *Emperors and Kings through the Dynasties* and *A Man-Drawn Carriage* are also other portraits in which 'delineating spirit through form' was used. Gu Kaizhi and Yan Liben established the foundation for Chinese portraiture whose basic principle is mainly that line drawing with slight touching up is adopted to delineate spirit through form. Later, the first alteration should be attributed to the Song dynasty when scholar painters were engaged with making entirely different portraits (with simpler form but more expression) from court paintings (with very much attention to details). Li Gonglin and Liang Kai created new techniques – *bai miao* (plain line without use of colour) and reduced-strokes *xie yi* (impressionist style) – respectively.²⁰ Zhao Mengfu, Wang Zhenpeng, and many other portraitists in Yuan period carried on using these methods – in particular, *bai miao* was extremely popular.

Another alteration in Chinese portraiture came in the Ming dynasty. During the Wanli period of the Ming dynasty, an Italian missionary, Matteo Ricci, brought portraits of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ with him to Nanjing and stayed there for several years. A portraitist, Zeng Jing (Zeng Bochen) (1568-1650), had a permanent home in Nanjing where it is believed that he must have seen these foreign portraits which became the main inspiration for his own artistic creation. Jiang Shaowen in his *History of Silent Poetry* remarks:

Every portrait [Zeng Jing] is applied with dozen of layers of *hong ran* to add shading around an object to make it stand out.” Zhang Geng, in the *Record of the Painters of the Qing Dynasty*, writes as follows: “There are two schools of portraiture, one putting stress on *mo gu*, that is, outlining first, then followed by application of colours to bring out the complexion according to the age of the subject and impart the spirit to the picture. This is the technique of Zeng Bochen of Fujian Province. The other one is sparing use of light ink to sketch out the facial features and then add touches with *famille rose*. This is the traditional method of the artists south of Yangtze River, and Zeng Jiang is also proficient in doing this.”²¹

The two terms – ‘stress on *mo gu*’ or ‘dozens of layers of *hong ran*’ – both refer to the method in which ink is used to carry out the sunken parts after the outlining, which while being truly an invention under the enlightenment of Western art, retains unique features of traditional Chinese painting. The chief feature is actually lines. The new style furnishes the effects of *ao tu* (literal meaning: concave and convex which suggests gradation of space) and of an impression of three-dimensions. Talking about the inking method in portraiture, a Qing artist, Shen Zongxian, states: “There is no mystery in using ink; it is only a skill of letting the ink flow with the brush and supplementing what the brush fails to convey.” In the Tang and Song dynasties, portraits mainly depend on the brushwork of

lines, which are differentiated into trenchant or fluid, bold or slender, heavy or light ones, to portray images. Yet, the evolution of portraiture in the Ming and Qing dynasties lies in using ink – either *cun ca* (showing shades and texture by light ink wiping strokes) or *yun ran* (showing solidity by different colour tones) – “to supplement what the brush fails to convey.” Such an artistic evolution enriches the relatively simple technique of outline sketching which had prevailed since the Tang and Song dynasties. From the Late Ming dynasty to the Qing dynasty at least, the method of gradation of space of Zeng Jing and his ‘Bochen School’ had been widely adopted, thus making a popular trend.²²

This new method changes the faces into a state of realistic vividness whereas their drapery and other features remain simple and far from being realistic (Figs 2, 3, 4 & 5). For example, in the *Portrait of Li Rihua* (Fig. 2) painted in Ming period, there is full expression in the shaping of the cheekbones and sunken parts near the cheekbones, and below the mouth and in two sides of face. The artist stresses the portrayal of facial detail, including eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth, etc. Importantly, the artist gets hold of the spirit-carrying eyebrows and concerns himself with the connection between the eyebrows and the arch and muscles beneath in a very nice way – which meets the saying, ‘Knit the eyebrows and a stratagem comes to mind.’²³ In addition, remarkable realism about faces had been also adopted in the formal ancestral portraits (APs) of the late Ming and Qing dynasties. Making ancestral portraits, painters worked from already-painted full-length portraits showing a range of official costumes or backgrounds, in which the face area was left blank and waited to be filled in. The realistic faces would be carefully painted by painters to be added in the blank area.²⁴

Western viewers have long been intrigued by the dignified and imposing figures which appear in China’s ancestral portraits (APs) – involving a rigid, affluently clothed and supra-mundane figure, frontally presented on a hanging silk scroll in a symmetrical,

formidable and forward pose and looking directly at the viewer (such presentations began in the Ming dynasty).²⁵ Obviously, there is much realism in many of these pictures, in partial line with the main thrust of post-mediaeval European art until around 1900. At the same time, the Chinese portraits neither reveal the sitter's psychology nor conjure or explore any special relationship between the sitter and the viewer; and, until recently, Western museum curators remained unimpressed by China's many "anonymous paintings by professional artisans."²⁶ The following six points concern the main features of China's APs.

The first is about history. APs date back to 500BC.²⁷ At that time, they were relatively individualized; yet, gradually they became more and more standardized. Around the eleventh century AD, there were swings into 'expressivism' and back to 'verism' [i.e. realism].²⁸ Conventional realism was well established by the time of the Ming dynasty since Zeng Jing and his 'Bochen School' started.

Secondly, APs involve four main distinct elements – the face, the outfit, the posture and the personal effects of the sitter. Realism in painting of the face is largely of the physical type – even displaying moles and wrinkles.²⁹ The idea is not to portray character or emotion. What is important is to individuate the sitter clearly as to his or her identity. The point is that APs were intended for worship. (Earlier portraits often had a 'spirit box' into which the ancestor's spirit could supposedly be summoned by worshippers' prayers; but gradually painters and the worshipping descendants came to rely largely on strict physical facial realism.) More especially, the 'realism' of China's APs did not require the sitter to be life-like, for the whole point was to conjure up a *dead* ancestor to receive veneration. Hence, there is a big difference between Chinese and Western artistic realism. (The only standard Chinese demand in the face was for high cheekbones, though at some periods physiognomic manuals specified that there were just ten types of faces.)³⁰

By contrast, the uniform, the posture and effects of the sitter were intended to display (and sometimes frankly to exaggerate – despite Confucians urging accuracy and honesty) the sitter's social status in China's elaborate (sometimes 27-level) social hierarchy. A big belt indicated power, a five-phoenix head-dress showed a woman's high class, a dragon's claws were auspicious, animal skins (especially of the tiger) were used underneath the sitter to indicate a man's triumphs, rubies and round-backed chairs signified prosperity etc.³¹ Such symbols were universal – so much so that workshops prepared APs involving suitable non-facial ingredients, then simply added the sitter's face when a picture became available (hence the absence of a neck in many APs).³² Above all, the portraits kept the sitter's knees vastly wide apart – thus using the classic symbol of dominance in male primates (Fig. 6), but not being at all suitable to portraying the virtue of women (who are better advised – as by Doctor Johnson – to keep their legs *together*) (Fig. 7). There is another difference between male portraits and female portraits: the posture for males (unsymmetrical exposed hands) is more flexible than for females (symmetrical invisible hands totally covered by sleeves).

The third point concerns other variants. In Chinese classical commemorative art (which produced no Botticelli showing erotic physical beauty), the closest approximation to 'eroticism' apparently was the frankly prim young woman with tiny rose-bud lips (Fig. 8).³³ Thus, the APs blended Chinese versions of realism and idealization.³⁴ J. Stuart & E. S. Rawski frankly admit: "'reality' is a relative concept in the realm of APs."³⁵ Occasional variants in imperial APs include Buddhist and imperial themes to remind viewers of Chinese claims over, for example, the Qianlong emperor's iconographic image (Fig. 9). Western themes were sometimes introduced to give an exotic air – for example, the portrait of the young Prince Guo (1733-1765) with a Western background (Fig. 10).

A fourth point concerns problematic questions about the realism of the ancestral faces. The fact of APs having a specialized connection with reality poses numerous problems for art historians. It is often unclear whether portraits were drawn from life or from corpses or were drawn from memories or were copies of previous portraits.³⁶ Furthermore, subsequent doctoring of portraits was common so as to bring the portrayals more happily into line with later sensitivities; pictures from the past would be used as models (creating impressive apparent family likenesses); and there was substantial creation of back-dated and poor copies for sale to Westerners (always specially keen on supposed Ming-dynasty-made portraits). Quite often, say Stuart & Rawski, it is hard to date pictures even to within 200 years, making it difficult to trace securely the historical progress of the AP tradition.³⁷

Fifthly, Chinese AP realism finally found itself well satisfied by the arrival of photography.³⁸ Many Manchurian and Chinese officials and even Cixi herself were apparently captivated by the new invention. They found it vastly superior for their purposes to the expensive, time-consuming and subjective vagaries of painting. By 1906, many photographs of Empress Dowager Cixi had been distributed.³⁹

Evidently, the chief point of APs was to inspire veneration – but of the right person! This was specially so because of the habit of changing people's names as they went along in China. Thus the Empress Dowager went from being 'Lan' (Orchid) to 'Yi' (Virtuous), to Cixi (Compassionate and Blessed) and finally Xiao Qin Xian Huanghou (Filial Commanding Respect Empress), showing that, in official imperial terms, her real identity was chiefly in her relationship with her imperial family. Different from Cixi's own ancestral portrait with a *realistic* and *old* face from which viewer can immediately recognize she is Cixi (Fig. 11), the LPE portrait of Cixi has an *idealistic* and *young* face instead of realism (Fig. 1). It bears the identifying legend, 'Great Qing State Empress

Dowager Cixi' (*Da qing guo ci xi huang tai hou*). It is 'Cixi,' her imperial name, that she would like to let viewers remember as being used during her political career of 47 years -- since she seized power in 1861 until her death.

Chapter One

How Cixi Presented Herself in the Public Domain

After 1898, when the Guangxu emperor's One-hundred-day Reform failed and Prince Gong died, there was no one in China with more political power than Cixi in any visible sense.⁴⁰ It was at this time that Cixi began to develop her public relations with foreigners. Was her presentation to foreigners conservative or modern?

Cixi began developing diplomatic relations with official foreigners such as ambassadors, princes, missionaries and foreign ladies, most of whom were the wives of ambassadors from other countries. She invited them to come to the Forbidden City. Among all her guests, Cixi specially attended very carefully to the foreign ladies.⁴¹ According to *The Times*, she shook each of seven foreign ladies by the hand in their own Western fashion; Lady Macdonald addressed congratulations to Cixi; Prince Qing acknowledged the greeting and responded with good wishes; Cixi put a gold ring, inlaid with a large pearl, on a finger of each lady; and the ladies bowed to Cixi. During the lunch that followed, the women were served using Western table etiquette, such as using a knife and fork, and sipping champagne; and tea was later taken in another room. Next, these visitors went to another room to meet Cixi and then went to see a production at the imperial theatre; finally they had more tea.⁴² During the last tea service, Cixi especially talked of "one family – all one family."⁴³ The procedure followed the pattern of Cixi's first meeting with these ladies in December, 1898.⁴⁴ The same pattern was later repeated on numerous other occasions when these foreign ladies were repeatedly invited to the palace.

Following the line of being friendly to the West, while Cixi was preparing to return from hiding to Beijing in 1902, she ordered a special enclosure prepared where foreigners

were welcome to watch her and her court during the parade part of her journey.⁴⁵ At the end of this journey, there was a “memorable incident” at Qian Men where she paid her thanks in the temple dedicated to Guanyin for her safe homecoming.⁴⁶ Cixi arrived at the gate flanked by two temples with yellow-tiled roofs. Stepping down from her sedan chair, she observed many foreign troops and civilians on the city wall watching her. At that moment, the eunuchs encouraged her to move on in order avoid her being seen too much. Instead of following this advice, Cixi did something different. One witness Don Rodolfo Borghese describes what happened:

... the Empress was not to be hurried, and continued to stand between two of her ladies, who held her up under the arms on either side, not because she needed any support, but because such is the custom in China, when a great personage appears in public on a ceremonial occasion At last she condescended to move, but before entering the temple where the bonzes [Buddhist clergy] were all ready to begin the ceremony, she stooped once more, looking up at us, lifted her closed hands under her chin, and made a series of little bows.... The Empress appeared pleased. She remained there for a few moments longer, looking up and smiling. Then she disappeared within the temple.⁴⁷

One gentleman in the crowd, Sir Robert Hart, also wrote in one of his letters to his ‘confidant’ James D. Campbell, “[Cixi] was most gracious, bowing, and smiling on the foreigners.”⁴⁸ She smiled, nodded, and waved the hand holding her handkerchief. The ‘memorable’ scene was thus shot by a photographer and the photograph was later published (Fig. 12).⁴⁹ From the above descriptions, Cixi stopped and used body language quite *intentionally*.

Cixi made a dramatic change. Instead of using the former conventional rites, she revealed her real face, invited foreigners to come to the palace, shook hands with them, no

longer asked them to kowtow, allowed them to use Western table manners, permitted the ordinary public to watch her during the parade and presented herself to the spectators in a friendly way. Compared with Western public activity for royalty (social events such as parties and receptions were often held), Cixi's change seems like an imitation. On this, Carl comments, "[Cixi] has so frequently been made the dupe of European diplomacy [and acts herself] by duplicity."⁵⁰ However, this was nevertheless a totally new move and a big step for her. She was definitely China's first ruler to accept the Western way of socializing and the political campaign method of seeking support and appreciation. Cixi thus used two different methods: she employed the magnificent social setting of the Forbidden City as an ideal space for the development of politics and diplomacy; and she brought herself face-to-face with a wider public. Before discussing the further implications of her two methods, there follows analysis of the gradual changes in her political domain in order to help understand her political status under China's hierarchical system.

Imperial Objects

Lady Susan Townley writes: "Having paid our respects to the Empress-Dowager we turned to salute the Emperor who sat [on] her left a little behind her."⁵¹ Such an observation was also made by some ambassadors and their wives. Had the arrangement in which Cixi was witnessed by the Westerners (having audiences in Chinese Court after 1898) to sit on the throne and Guangxu, to sit at her side, in the throne room, been made all the time? Not quite. It actually took Cixi ages to come to this arrangement. This involved the relationship between *imperial objects*, *her spatial position*, and *the degree of power*.

Firstly, a key imperial object is the *screen*. In the *Double Screen*, concerning the nature of the Chinese traditional *screen*, Wu Hung explains that the *screen* has its “face” and its “back” and thus “divides an undifferentiated space into two juxtaposed areas” – one is in front of it and the other is behind it. So, once it is set up, the area behind the *screen* will become hidden from sight. The person in front of *screen* will find himself within an encircled area, perceives this area as belonging to him, and will not be aware of the other person behind it.⁵² If the one behind the *screen* would like to know what the other person (in front of the *screen*) is doing and talking about, he can do so secretly. Such ‘eavesdropping’ and ‘peeping motifs, (behind the *screen*) are often portrayed in Chinese paintings (Figs 13, 14 & 15). Before Xianfeng died, Cixi used to hide behind the *screen* quietly. In this case, Xianfeng would remain unaware of her – this is the symbolic meaning of the *screen*. Secondly, from 1861 (after Xianfeng’s death), for over thirty years, Cixi came out from behind the *screen* and stepped forwards to sit behind the bright yellow silk *curtain* with her co-regent Cian whereas Tongzhi and Guangxu during their minority had audiences with officials. In this step, the key object was the silk *curtain*. The two empress’ regency is famously called *chui lian ting zheng*, literally meaning ‘administering state affairs behind a *curtain*’, but implying that the persons who sat behind the *curtain* were decisive (especially referring to Cixi rather than Cian), and not the emperors. If Cixi, while standing behind the *screen* or sitting behind the *curtain*, controlled the politics, she had some political influence only ‘behind the political scene’ – at that time, she did not yet show her real image. What is the distinction between the *curtain* and the *screen*? The *curtain* functioned so that persons in front of it could not know what the other person behind it looked like. Yet they (in front) knew perfectly well that the other person (behind) existed and listened to the conversations (partly by the black shadow, and by the occurrence of some sounds or movements). In Cixi’s case, she

was behind the *curtain* and also spoke (asking and answering questions).⁵³ Officials were well aware that Cixi was there, but they could not see her face. So, to the persons (the emperor himself and officials) in front of the *screen*'s 'face,' whereas the *screen* indicates 'no awareness,' the *curtain* refers to 'awareness.'

Thirdly, after the One-hundred-day Reform process failed and Guangxu asked Cixi to resume authority in 1898, Cixi did not need the silk *curtain* any more. She thus came out from behind the silk *curtain* and showed her face and talked face-to-face. She could enjoy sitting on the *throne*, the imperial object symbolizing political power. Now, she sat in front of the *screen*'s 'face' (with her back to the screen). The *screen* is something of both an exterior object as well as an extension of her political body: about the former, the *screen* in the throne hall creates a boundary for the ritual performing audiences with her governmental officials and grand councillors – in this area, Cixi could openly wield her political power; about the latter, the *screen* and Cixi's political body merge into each other, appearing in unison. Simply, the *screen*'s 'face' and Cixi's frontal body are seen at the same time. The *screen*'s 'face' becomes an object defining her as a ruler and enhancing her authority over this area.⁵⁴ Cixi's power was growing at that time. However, all her information from outside the Palace relied on the words of her Grand Councillors. She wielded her power only within the confines of the Palace. For this reason, her power had its limits.

Fourthly, an enormous imperial object is the imperial palaces, where emperors' consorts and concubines were often confined for their whole life.⁵⁵ Marriage for Cixi meant the complete uprooting from her original family, friends and even the outside world. The palaces, surrounded by high walls, let Cixi in reality have no freedom to see for herself and understand what was happening to the whole of China. In 1902, she broke through this obstacle – processing outdoors and waving to the crowd. China's terrible

defeat made her think it is necessary to negotiate with foreign countries directly. Cixi only then for the first time had unlimited power in dealing with foreign ambassadors, princes and their wives. These four imperial objects – *screen*, *curtain*, *throne*, and *imperial palaces* – are what Cixi was familiar with in her political career. The objects not only are solid materials with shapes, but also have symbolic meanings – being sometimes obstacles blocking the development of power and sometimes symbolizing powers. The throne is a political axis to the various *objects* – the *screen*, the *curtain*, and the *Palace*. Cixi's spatial position relative to the throne forms a crucial demonstration of her power (Fig. 16): the line directly connected to behind the *screen* (very far away from the throne), through the *curtain* (closer to the throne), through the throne (central), to outside *the Palace* (beyond the throne) progresses forward. Although Cixi, before she died, could still not cross the sea to visit other countries, the progress indicates her influence had gradually improved: from having no voice (behind the *screen*) to showing the shadow (behind the *curtain*), to sitting on the throne (within *the Forbidden City*), until finally revealing herself outside the *Palace*, – these changes chart her increasing political power.

The palace as a setting for politics and diplomacy

With respect to the style in which Cixi invited foreign official diplomats to come to the palace, the location was the Forbidden City. This glorious palace was the place where she stayed for nearly fifty years and hardly ever left. There are solid buildings, strong roofs, magnificent decoration and furniture providing a traditional and secure background. Cixi as the household mistress of the palace would have had great confidence in handling everything, whether in holding conversations or entertaining guests. She should have felt safe and secure. So what did she show to her Western guests? How did she show her belongings to them? According to Derling, before the guests came, what Cixi did was to

remove jade statues of Buddha and curtains embroidered with five hundred Buddhist deities, her toilet table, and her bed made of sandalwood. And then large numbers of the Western clocks put in a large tray were brought in.⁵⁶ Katherine Carl, one of her guests, said that there were eighty-five clocks that chimed as loudly as a 'cathedral bell' in the vastness of the throne room.⁵⁷ Ethel MacDonald also said that Cixi showed to every lady her "large and very yellow diamond which [Cixi] evidently prized most highly came from Europe."⁵⁸ What Cixi had done -- removing Chinese things away and introducing Western items -- was intended to appeal to her foreign guests. The messages that she tried to convey were 'I have Western objects,' 'I am not a conservative,' 'I am a reformer,' etc. (Funnily enough, she changed all the furniture and decoration back to the original after the guests left.) She wanted to appear as a modern lady, at least in front of the Westerners. Her action was very different from how the Qianlong emperor decorated his palace when his Western guest, Lord Macartney, visited him during 1793-4. Lord Macartney records that every piece of furniture was Chinese and concludes that the "materials and distribution of the furniture within" were "the sober pomp of Asiatic greatness."⁵⁹

Cixi publicly treated her foreign guests according to Western manners. All these techniques that reduce the distance between her and various representatives from other countries show this was the first time in Chinese history for other countries to achieve *equal diplomatic status* with China. From the idea of China's equality with other countries that Cixi practised, what did China's traditional political philosophy lose? There are two points.

First, according to Confucianism, there is a certain spiritual power -- the virtue of Emperors could supposedly attract the people "from afar" outside Chinese culture and civilization. These people "from afar" were regarded as barbarians. The relationship between Emperors and these barbarians was followed on a theoretical basis: barbarians

who came to China in order to join the cultural, civilized and beneficial Empire had quickly to become more civilized and more Confucian. Emperors with dignity would normally show their compassion to these barbarians. But the foreigners arriving under Cixi were not converted to Chinese ways; instead, Cixi made efforts to change into something more Western-like in her palace.

Secondly, there was no kowtow – as performed by imperial tributary vassals. Much earlier, from the seventeenth until the nineteenth century, European countries had sent embassies to China and they were treated as ‘tributary princes’ – the same status as for ambassadors from other tribute bearing countries such as Japan and Korea. All these ‘tributary princes’ had to perform the kowtow before the Emperor. For example, the members of the Dutch embassy under Isaac Titsingh who were in Beijing in 1794-5 kowtowed to the Emperor on each occasion. J. L. Cranmer-Byng explains the Chinese point of view:

From earliest times China had been surrounded by barbarian peoples whose culture was clearly inferior. At no time did the Chinese come into direct contact with an equal civilization; countries on China’s flanks such as Korea, Japan, Annam and Siam were strongly influenced by the culture of the ‘Middle Kingdom.’ From their previous contact with the barbarians around them the Chinese were conscious that their own superiority was not one merely of material power but of culture as well. So outstanding was the culture of the Middle Kingdom that the barbarians in contact with China turned towards her for their culture, thus supporting the Chinese conviction of superiority.⁶⁰

Cixi gave up the ancient concept of tributary system according to which foreign countries were barbarians while China was the superior country. Saying that all were “one family – all one family,” she linked herself with foreign representatives as ‘members of the same

family' in diplomatic contact. Cixi can be said to have been the first Chinese leader to recognize China's *equality* with other countries.

Style: costumes and diplomatic skills

In the Qianlong emperor's style, Lord Macartney describes how the Emperor's "approach was announced by drums and music" and then "he was seated in palanquin, carried by sixteen bearers, attended by numbers of officers bearing flags, standards, and umbrellas, and as he passed we paid him our [Lord Macartney and Sir George Staunton] compliments."⁶¹ Qianlong showed himself so great. During their visit, the Emperor also gave the two guests "*ju-eu-jou* or *giou-giou* [rnyi], as a symbol of peace and prosperity."⁶² This is a *proper* but rather *indifferent* gift that symbolizes a polite relationship between countries and does not indicate the Emperor's personal warmth. In addition, some surviving sketches concerning the images of Qianlong, made by Lord Macartney's attendant William Alexander (1767-1816) who worked up his preliminary sketches after returning back to England, show that the Emperor wore his imperial formal robe. So, the Emperor's exhibiting his glorious magnificence and his official costume invited "silence and solemnity" – he maintained an awe-inspiring air.⁶³ Compared with Qianlong, there are two points about Cixi to be discussed as follows: one is about how Cixi chose her costume to meet her guests; the other is about what skills she used for her diplomacy.

About how Cixi chose her costumes for meetings, Derling reports the process.

Her Majesty gave orders for the Imperial Yellow Gown to be brought in.... She said that she must dress in her official robe for this occasion. This robe was made of yellow satin, embroidered with gold dragons. She wore a necklace composed of one hundred and eight pearls, which formed part of this official dress. She said: "I don't like to wear this official robe. It is not pretty,

but I am afraid I will have to.”... The next morning Her Majesty got up early, and was busier than ever.... It took her almost two hours to dress her hair, and by that time it was too late for her usual morning audience, so she proposed holding that after the foreigners had gone away. She looked at herself in the looking-glass, with her Imperial robe on, and told me that she did not like it, and asked me whether I thought the foreigners would know that it was an official robe. “I look too ugly in yellow. It makes my face look the same color as my robe,” she said. I suggested that [...] if she wished to dress differently, it would not matter at all. She seemed delighted.... Her Majesty ordered that her different gowns should be brought in, and after looking them over she selected one embroidered all over with the character “Shou” (long life), covered with precious stones and pearls, on pale green satin. She tried it on, and said that it was becoming to her, so she ordered me to go to the jewel-room and get flowers to match for her hair. On one side of the headdress was the character (shou) and on the other side was a bat (the bat in China is considered to be lucky). Of course her shoes, handkerchiefs and everything else were embroidered in the same way. After she was dressed, she smiled....⁶⁴

This description proves that Cixi had a great struggle between a political implication presenting ‘imperial authority and power’ (yellow robe with the pattern of dragon) and an aesthetic sense presenting ‘beauty’ (gown embroidered all over with precious stones and having a feminine design). She chose the latter in the end. Her final choice was not to fill her guests with awe, but to be more personal; and her choice – which would make her, she believed, “look nice, and be amiable” or make her appear “pretty” – demonstrates that charm was more significant to her than authority.

As to diplomatic skills, which did Cixi use in the Palace? Her skills can be categorized under three aspects. The first concerns gifts. These, such as Chinese scroll

paintings, costumes, sceptres, fans and so on, were sent to individual guests' homes soon after each visit to the Palace. Such gifts are often mentioned by Sir Robert Hart and Mrs. Sarah Conger.⁶⁵ Cixi once "presented to each of the ladies a gold ring set with pearls, which her Majesty herself placed on their fingers."⁶⁶ On another occasion, she also "took two beautiful jade rings from her fingers" to give them to Miss Russell and Lady Susan.⁶⁷ These gold and jade rings were taken from Cixi's own fingers acts as if these ladies were her close friends. Yet this, as a matter of fact, happened when they were only just starting getting to know each other.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Mrs. Conger, in one letter to a relative, mentions a 'special' gift received from Cixi before leaving China. This gift was a 'blood jade' that was not only a "good-luck stone" by which Cixi wished her a safe journey, but also, more importantly, it was a ring which had a remarkable history. Concerning its historical significance, Conger says:

the stone had been worn by some of China's rulers for two thousand years, and the present Empress Dowager [Cixi] had worn it during her reign, during the siege of 1900, in her flight, during her stay hundreds of miles from her palace home, and during her return to her own Peking [Beijing] and Forbidden City, and it had protected her through all dangers. This protecting power she wished to go with me on my journey homeward.⁶⁹

Cixi dispensed so many treasured gifts, many of which were pretty personal as well as treasured objects significant to China's imperial family. These gifts were far more valuable than people could ordinarily accept. Learning that some Westerners accused her of bribery, the foreign ladies argued that the accusation was utterly wrong and defended her presenting gifts to her guests as a common custom in China.⁷⁰ The ladies were right in that giving gifts and meals are a part of traditional social manners in China. But, behind the gifts, besides friendly gestures, there is another further implication – it is expected that recipients can one day repay favor to and help their donor. Using a Western manner to

think about Cixi's behaviour, Westerners are also reasonable to think of it as bribery. The truth is that many of the guests who received gifts became keen defenders of her reputation. As a result, Cixi's generosity can be said to have yielded no small effect.

The second aspect is Cixi's affectionate touching which was, most of the time, for foreign ladies. Take three examples. The first example is 'cup:' *The Times* notes that Cixi "drank from the same cup with each Minister's wife."⁷¹ The second example is 'bed:' she invited her foreign ladies to sit down on the *kang* ('royal bed'). Lady Susan remarks scene,

After the feast the Empress-Dowager conducted us to her private apartment.

On her "k'ang" or bed were thick layers of woolen covers.... As I happened to

be standing nearest to her, the Empress-Dowager invited me to climb on to the

"k'ang" with her, which I did.... The other ladies stood by the sides of the

"k'ang," and joined in the conversation which now became very informal.⁷²

The third example is 'embracing and touching:' *The Times* records that Cixi was excited at "giving way to an outburst of womanly emotion" by "embrac[ing] all her visitors in turn."⁷³ It also depicts that she "was especially gracious to Lady MacDonald, and once while conversing with her patted her playfully on the cheek."⁷⁴ Similarly, on another occasion, according to Lady Susan,

The Empress-Dowager played with my muff, putting both her hands in it; she also pushed her long garment towards me, that I might admire its texture and trimming ... Our talk over, we climbed off the "K'ang" with as much dignity as this difficult operation admitted of, the Empress-Dowager clinging to me with both hands.⁷⁵

Cixi's sharing the same cup with her foreign ladies, encouraging them to sit down on her bed, embracing them and touching them with 'her hands' would be a posture that shortens personal distance and gives people a feeling of warmth. Were these actions common for Cixi or within the rules of courtesy of her Court? About Cixi's cup, Professor Robert K.

Douglas is suspicious, saying, "To persons accustomed to Chinese life this reads strangely. It certainly does not represent a Chinese custom, and it is difficult to suppose that so staunch a ceremonialist as the Empress would have departed from the strictly laid down rules of etiquette to the observed at such functions and would have invented a new social rite for the occasion."⁷⁶ About sitting on the *kang*, Cixi once expressed her resentment at someone touching her bed. Thus her encouraging these ladies to sit on the royal bed for conversation highlights her unusual method of diplomacy.⁷⁷ Her embracing and touching were also unusual according to China's traditional etiquette and also had never been done by her before 1898. According to psychologist Peter Collett, an Oxford University expert on modern politicians' 'body language,' physical touching between diplomats or politicians in their meeting ritual sometimes reveals what each person is really like and what they are trying to achieve with the other person. Yet he also thinks, "Whether a *tell* (i.e. sign) is an action or the way that an action is performed usually depends on how common the action is."⁷⁸ If not common, these actions were highly "informative."⁷⁹ Some such as Douglas and Townley may say that such indiscretions could bring about a lowering of a monarch's dignity. However, not interpreting the closeness as a gesture as a sign of lowering dignity, instead, Collett thinks a politician's touching others is often a 'power tell,' showing not only friendly gestures and connecting people but also re-assuring themselves and reminding recipients that the politician is in control. In his opinion, showing closeness is as a sign of dominance. He guides us to look at the present British Queen Elizabeth II, the Head of the State whose physical touching is slight except shaking hand with others. Most of time, she shows her trade mark – her 'hands crossed' in front of her stomach. He explains that the present Queen does *not* show a 'power tell.' He also compares differences between classical representation and modern representation of the people in control: whereas in the former one, the politician need not

show his 'power tell' (because he is respected by his rank and his status is unchallenged), in the latter one, the politician, needs to show his 'power tell' to defend himself (because he appears friendly and equal to the others, as a part of crowds, but also constantly reminds others that he is in charge by e.g. grasping the elbow or patting the other's back). So, Queen Elizabeth II still represents herself in a classical way (*without* showing a 'power tell'). In democratic countries, for example, in America, George W. Bush always enjoys patting other politicians' shoulders, cheeks, and embracing them.⁸⁰ Like many democratic leaders, Cixi showed such apparently friendly gestures. Democratic leaders always remain in a state in which they do not feel secure for their political careers, but often encounter many challenges, attacks, pressures, and criticisms. One could say Cixi was in a desperate state. One could also imagine that she wanted to find some support. Whatever reason it was, she did appear like modern democratic leaders rather than classical monarchs. The fact that she acted actively in showing close behavior with her guests meant that her guests appear more passive – this also constantly reminded them that she was a host of the Palace and was in control. So, Collett's notion of pseudo-friendly 'power tells' seems relevant.

The third aspect is that from 1902 Cixi actually appeared as if she was a victim. To win her guests' sympathy, she had sharp and useful weapons – apologies and tears. Some depict Cixi's frequent weeping after 1902.⁸¹ Some argue China's decline led to her weeping; some think her tears were a kind of pretence. There is something to be said for both views. After the Western countries won the battle of 1900, in order not to be recognized, Cixi, wearing a blue ordinary dress of the Han style instead of her own Manchu costume, secretly escaped to Xi'an.⁸² After that, she was an old lady who had failed. Between 1903 and 1904, with tears, Cixi described that believing in the possible success of the Boxer Uprising "is the only mistake I have made in my whole life and it

was done in a moment of weakness. Before I was just like a piece of pure jade; everyone admired me for what I have done for my country, but the jade has a flaw in it.”⁸³ She felt regretful that China was in a devastated state and thus she had much to cry about. As a figure representing the country, Cixi should not have shown any sign of weakness and should have shown as much of a positive side as possible. Instead, she would unexpectedly cry in front of many of her male or female guests. Possibly, inviting sympathy was her motivation. On one occasion with the foreign ladies, one Austrian lady, Paula von Rosthorn, wore a medal on her costume. Cixi asked her what the medal meant. She answered, “This was presented by my Emperor [Franz Joseph] because I was wounded in the Boxer insurrection.”⁸⁴ Cixi immediately wept and asked for forgiveness. Witnessing Cixi’s tears, this lady, who originally was prepared to blame Cixi, suddenly softened her heart and did not criticise the poor Empress any more. Carl, too, saw Cixi weeping sometimes and thus developed a strong compassion for Cixi. In this sad atmosphere, people felt for her. By contrast, the foreigners seemed to have become an opposing power. Whereas Cixi was oppressed, the foreigners had become suppressors – the pattern lets Cixi become a ‘minority,’ symbolising the weak and the disadvantaged (as is so fashionable in the modern world). The solution for this pattern is naturally that the ‘majority’ should feel sympathetic with the ‘minority.’ Tears proved to be a quite useful weapon – making her guests stop their criticism. Before her, few national leaders made a humble apology to the foreign representatives or other country leaders. Differently, in the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, apology became a necessary policy. Some leaders with humanist views intended to apologize to people mistreated in the past; for example, post-1945 German governments apologized for what their Nazi predecessors had done to the Jews in the Holocaust. American President Bill Clinton publicly made an apology to American and African Blacks for slavery in the past; George

Bush Jr. and Donald Rumsfeld said sorry to the Iraq soldiers for their humiliations and injuries at the hands of American soldiers. Behind these politicians' eating humble pie, there is a political intention – to reduce the anger and hatred of victims. Cixi's humble apology and tears which reduced complaint of her enemies were arguably a pioneering policy.

Cixi used the style that presents a less political and more personal state to her guests. Unlike the Qianlong emperor showing his compassion in his 'tender cherishing of men from afar,' Cixi risked what is called a monarch's dignity and modestly and even humbly sought compassion from others. In front of guests, unlike Qianlong, Cixi did not appear as a magnificent empress, but as a victim. Naturally, with their Christian religion, most Westerners who met Cixi immediately felt great sympathy for her. Was Cixi really like what Carl says about her diplomacy as 'duplicitous?' Yes and No. Yes, Cixi adopted Western manners – drinking champagne, shaking hands, and so on. No, she showered with many of her personal gifts, and using personal touching, and tears and apologies was totally new. Following his many meetings with Cixi, Sir Robert published books and articles supporting her tremendously.⁸⁵ Most notable were her favorable meetings with foreign *ladies* – besides the foreign ambassadors' wives (for example, Lady Macdonald, Mrs. Conger, and so on), there are some other ladies like a crucial female portraitist (Katherine Carl), a lady-in-waiting (Derling), and a doctor to the imperial princesses and Cixi (Mrs. Headland).⁸⁶ After leaving the Palace or China, many of them published books, mainly defending Cixi and worked to protect her image in order to veil off the criticism on the empress.⁸⁷

Outdoors as a space for face-to-face contact with the public

Whereas the Palace was for receiving high-class representatives, the outdoors was for the general public. In 1902, at Qian Men, Cixi looked up at the crowds on the roof who were curiously looking at her. She smiled, nodded, waved her hand with her handkerchief to them. There is no roof, no throne, and no imperial decoration – most of the surrounding about imperial values, except some eunuchs, disappeared. She stood outdoors – an unfamiliar setting – and had face-to-face contact with the public. Her sense of security and her ego must have decreased. Her arrogance must have also decreased. This strangeness of environment where so many people watched her pushed her to do something friendly in response to them. What was the result from the friendly posture? Borghese describes an impression at the scene:

The effect of this gesture was astonishing. We had all gone up on to the wall, in the hope of catching a glimpse, as she passed, of this terrible Empress, whom the West considered almost an enemy of the human race. But we had been impressed by the magnificence of the swiftly moving pageant, and by the beauty of the picturesque group, in palanquins of yellow satin, flashing with gold. Something told us that the return of the Court to Peking marked a turning-point in history, and in our breathless interest we forgot our resentment against the woman who was responsible for so much evil. That little bow, made to us who were watching her, and the graceful gesture of the closed hands, took us by surprise. From all along the wall there came an answering, spontaneous burst of applause.⁸⁸

This was her first time; but she responded well. Cixi's charisma was extraordinary. Haldane comments on the whole cynical process of campaign for the new image-making, "[b]y the magic of Old Buddha's gesture", everything could be "forgotten and forgiven."⁸⁹ Her action was indeed very successful. Cixi looked up at the spectators – this was not her usual habit in the Palace. She was used to sitting on a chair looking at

Tongzhi and Guangxu paying respect to her, as well as seeing her officials reporting and greeting her on their knees. Her eye contact was always *looking down*. In the incident when Cixi *looked up*, Guangxu was also there, but he acted differently – he did not pay attention to the crowd and just quickly entered the temple (Fig. 17).⁹⁰ Acting in different ways, Cixi won a “spontaneous burst of applause” whereas the Emperor did not.

In one photograph from 1945 of the American president Dwight Eisenhower (r.1953-1961), he waves with both his arms and *looking up* at his audience who were positioned in the skyscrapers of New York to watch and thank their president (also a war hero) (Fig. 18). (This photo does not actually show the enthusiastic crowd; but the viewer is naturally able to infer the existence of this audience.) This American president comes across as in a theatre where the actors should consider their audiences – not only whose seats are on the same level as the actors, but also whose seats are at a higher level. Unlike typical monarchs who were used to waving their hands on the balcony where the mutual eye contact between the public and monarchs is of monarchs *looking down* whereas the crowds *look up*, Eisenhower apparently responded in a more modern way. Compared to many dictators such as Adolf Hitler (r.1934-1945), Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), Chairman Mao (r.1949-1976), president North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Il (r.1994-) and so on – who would set themselves high up on the stage, letting people worship them and look up to them *in awe* – Eisenhower behaved more democratically. In the theatre, the actors often look high up so that the audiences who receive the friendly message – ‘you, our audience, are very important to us, the actors’ – can focus on the play more. This position can generate *charm*. Like Eisenhower’s spectators, Cixi’s likewise received a friendly message; therefore their psychology was quite different from their originally bad impression of her. When she won their applause, the impact explains how she decreased

her distance from the people and also smoothed away foreigners' hatred and anger in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion.

In the photograph of the 'memorable' scene of Cixi at Qian Men (Fig.12), besides her eyes looking-up to make contact, her hands are also crucial. (Her whole body is dressed loosely and wrapped closely, so only her face and hands can be seen.) The hands are the most awkward part of human body when the person is in public. He or she must feel anxious and would like to do something with his or her hands in order to appear untroubled.⁹¹ Cixi's right hand waves to the crowd with her handkerchief while her left hand is put on her breast. If the photo is looked at carefully, it is likely that she posed *intentionally* on this occasion. Owing to Cixi being the first China's ruler to wave her hand to the crowd, it is impossible to compare her with other previous Emperors. But, compared her with five British female royals – Elizabeth I, Queen Victoria, Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Elizabeth II, and Princess Diana, some evolution of the various hand gestures used at different times over a range of more than 400 years can be observed. In a portrait of Elizabeth I (which displays Elizabeth going in procession to Blackfriars in 1600), the Queen sits in the royal coach enjoying the adulation of the crowd looking out from the windows of the buildings; one of her hands is on her breast while the other one rests on her skirt (Fig. 19). In another portrait of her (showing Queen Elizabeth riding to Tilbury to address her troops assembled to fight against Spanish invasion), she carries some objects in her hands (one hand has a sword, the other cannot be identified), keeping them at the level of her waist (Fig. 20). In both paintings, Elizabeth's two hands are not raised at all – suggesting complete indifference to her crowd. Then, in a photo of a smiling Queen Victoria sitting in her royal coach in around 1887, she holds a sprig of flowers in her hands, supposedly given her by the crowd (Fig. 21). Both Queens don't take any trouble to wave their hands. But Victoria could be said to be more friendly than

Elizabeth I: whereas the sword that Elizabeth I holds is not related to the crowd, the flowers that Victoria holds *do* make a connection. In the case of the Queen Mother (1900-2002), during the Second World War (1939-45), she often met crowds in London. The back of her hand was what faced the crowd when she was waving. In her old age, when greeting her crowd, she showed some part of the back of her hand back but also some part of the palm to them (Figs 22 & 23). In the case of the present Queen, Elizabeth II, a photo was shot on the date of her father's King George V's coronation in 1937 (Fig. 24). Little Princess Elizabeth practised the same famous royal wave as Queen Mother used during war time. Later, however, Elizabeth II shows even more of the palm than the Queen Mother. But, very often, she prefers to wear gloves when waving to and shaking hands with the crowd (Fig. 25) – reducing intimacy. The Queen Mother's and Elizabeth II's hands are often lower than their heads. By contrast, Princess Diana made a royal revolution in hand-waving. Diana's palm, with the fingers widely spread (less defensive) – would totally face the crowd. She would also raise her arm up to make her hand much higher than her own head (Fig. 26). What does the evolution of these different monarchs show? Collett says that showing the knuckles is a sign of power and dominance.⁹² The more a monarch shows the knuckles, the more dominant she appears. Allan Pease also thinks that showing the palm is used as “non-threatening gesture” and showing back of hand has “immediate authority” and makes people “feel antagonistic towards you.”⁹³ Instead of talking about knuckles, Pease talks about palms. In spite of that, Pease and Collett plainly have a similar idea. The Queen Mother definitely presents a more friendly look in her old age. In her youth, she perhaps showed her dominant side since her husband George VI was physically rather weak and had a stutter – her image might even show that she would like to take over her husband's job. Collett's theory explains why the Queen Mother appears more friendly in her later life than in her youth. It

also explains why the method of Diana's hand-waving says that she presents herself as a part of the crowd, much more friendly than Queen Elizabeth II and the Queen Mother. Further, the posture of Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), who was selected in a highly hierarchical system and was in theological theory appointed by God, is worth noting. Famous for traveling to other countries to see people, he often used both his hands to wave to the crowds. His two hands were posed at the same height as his head (or a little lower). The extraordinary posture of his was that his palms first faced the crowd and then turned inward to face himself, appearing to draw the crowd to him but in fact showing it the backs of his hands and knuckles (Figs 27, 28 & 29). The Pope showed two combined elements – love and authority – to his people. He could be said to have been a brilliant master of social skill in his hand-waving, getting his meaning across. Coming back to Cixi's hand-waving, she does not show her knuckles to the crowd. Her hand is posed in the position higher than her head. Thus Cixi's waving of her right hand was a more modern, friendly and democratic gesture – whether genuine or contrived.

With her left hand, observed carefully, what she tries to show is her extremely long fingernails with well-decorated nail protectors.⁹⁴ In the modern Western view, her long fingernails make her look like an embodiment of a wicked witch. In her time, long fingernails meant rather that this person did not do any manual work and had high status and a life of luxury. Concerning her right hand holding her silk handkerchief, is there something monarchical about it? In the Qing Court, the handkerchief and the fan had come to symbolize decoration, more hygienic concern, and more ownership.⁹⁵ It seems that the above characteristics of the handkerchief and the long fingernails with golden or jade protectors suggested that Cixi presented herself as less modern. This should be compared with the other female figure, Madam Chiang Kai-shek (her maiden name is Song Meiling, 1898-2003), regarded as “a pivotal player in one of the 20th century's great

epics – [in] the struggle for control of post-imperial China waged between the Nationalists and the Communists during the Japanese invasion and the violent aftermath of World War II.”⁹⁶ Like Cixi, Madam Chiang had long finger nails and always carried a silk handkerchief with her in public. There is a story about her long finger-nails. At a dinner in the White House, asked how the Chinese government would deal with a strike by coal miners, she did not say a word, but silently drew a line across her neck with her sharp long fingernails. Eleanor Roosevelt later commented that Madam Chiang “can talk beautifully about democracy. But she does not know how to live democracy.” For a long time, Madame Chiang preferred to greet people with her silk handkerchief, even doing so late in her life (that is, at the end of 20th century and at the beginning of 21st century). Almost one hundred years later, Madame Chiang, still did the same thing that had been done by Cixi in 1902. In addition, there were two incidents during her 1943 stay at the White House. She was unwilling to dine with the President and his wife, preferring to enjoy dinner on her own – this habit was adopted by the Qing Emperors. Also, instead of using the phone to call the staff for serving, she clapped loudly in the way a princess or empress living in the old times called her servants. Her behaviour upset the White House staff and even the Roosevelts. Madam Chiang was still steeped in strong monarchic habits.⁹⁷ Cixi and Madame Chiang both had the old monarchical attitude. Maybe both of them were old-fashioned. But it should be observed that whereas Cixi was living at the junction between old time and modern times, Madame Chiang lived in republican times and even post-modern times. Arguably, Madam Chiang had a seriously elitist nature. As for Cixi, she had lived a monarchic and luxurious life-style during her youth and through to her old age – which the environment of the Palace encouraged her to do. Considering the periods when both were living, Cixi had an excuse but Madame Chiang had none.

Cixi's body language

According to a dominant and influential theory, verbal communication (in literal statements) is used mainly to convey information whereas the non-verbal channel (the vocal element and body language) is used to negotiate interpersonal attitudes.⁹⁸ Holding this theory, many scholars such as Albert Mehrabian, Ray L. Birdwhistell and Michael Argyle make similar conclusions from their experiments: in the total impact of a message during face-to-face conversation, non-verbal communication is more influential than verbal component.⁹⁹ However, in his new book published this year (2004), Geoffrey Beattie is daring enough to challenge the established orthodoxy: he thinks the separation of non-verbal and verbal behaviours is too simple-minded. He argues that there is the fundamental weakness in the orthodox view. The first one is called "the 'demand characteristics' of the experiment:" participants joining experiments quickly worked out what the experimenters were expecting and therefore might have played with them. The second one is: in order to deliberately measure the relative importance of language and nonverbal communication, the experimenters had to be equal in strength when measured independently. What the experiments can get in the end is people's perceptions of a certain class of communication with the range of the strength of the components being artificially set. They could not show anything about the range of effects produced by languages and nonverbal communication in the real world at large.¹⁰⁰ Beattie's argument is much more reliable since he considers a wider and more detailed context. Here, there is no intention to separate the two behaviours. However, Cixi could not speak any foreign languages to her Western guests but there were some translators to be a bridge for communication between them. Understandably enough, what the guests could remember was only Cixi's feminine, soft, and pleasant voice, her look, and dresses, her facial expression, hands gestures, elegant movements, and her kindness when they revealed the

stories about Cixi in their writings (a more detailed discussion about pro-Cixi Westerners will be provided in Chapter Four). Thus, what these Westerners who saw Cixi received from her was her non-verbal messages. What she conveyed to her guests through verbal statement seemed insignificant. (Few people paid attention to what she said. Possibly, the official words were quite stereotyped). What the fact that Cixi had been much favoured by people who could only remember her non-verbal behaviour says is that her body language was developed to almost maximum effect by her.

Did Cixi fake her body language in order to send an untruthful message to her guests and spectators? Collett coins the descriptors "false tells" or "counterfeit tells."¹⁰¹ Pease thinks that it is impossible to fake one's own body language. He further explains that it is very much likely that "the lack of congruence" (including facial muscular twitching, expansion and contraction of pupils, sweating at the brow, flushing of the cheeks, increased rate of eye blinking and many other minute gestures that signal deceit) will occur and the "human mind seems to possess a fail safe mechanism that registers 'tilt' when it receives a series of incongruent non-verbal messages." Faking could gain some advantage if only temporarily. Over a longer period, the body will emit signals that the subconscious mind sends automatically – which are different (or independent) from conscious gestures (lies). Once one has the intention to pretend oneself, one's body sends out contradictory signals which will give people the feeling that one is telling a lie.¹⁰² Collett has a different point of view, believing that it is unlikely to arouse suspicion if people try to hide what they are thinking. He further explains, "Psychologists have identified a special group of micro-tells called 'micromomentary expressions,' which are confined to the face. They are very brief and usually appear for [little] more than one-eighth of a second." Because the true feeling is so brief, what people manage to see is one's 'counterfeit tells' rather than one's true feeling if people are not sensitive enough.¹⁰³

In front of guests and spectators, Cixi made her every movement *intentionally* and *consciously*. She made conscious efforts to adopt herself to fit in with Western manners (shaking hands with guests, letting them use a knife and fork and serving wine during meals, sitting down together) as she had never done before. Giving generous, unusual and personal gifts, showing some intimate gestures, giving apologies, waving her hand to the crowds with her handkerchief, showing her long fingernails with casings – were also her conscious actions. As Collett says, Cixi's many guests could not observe her untrue feelings within one-eighth of a second. As a clever politician and social hostess, she had refined her gestures to the point where she cut out as many negative gestures as she could and practised what were 'charming' gestures and many her Westerners fell under her 'magic spell.'¹⁰⁴ As Carl says in her book, Cixi was "a consummate actress."¹⁰⁵ Possibly the body language was not really genuine. On the other hand, as for 'bursting into tears,' it would normally arise from powerful emotion. It is hard to cry by conscious intent; actresses quite often have to use an onion or eye drops to get their tears flowing. Thus, her tears were probably genuine. Cixi's actions to the Westerners demonstrate she could take attitudes both of cynicism and of realism about the West. Facing the enormous pressure from Chinese reformers' and republicans' planning to overthrow her, loud and aggressive voices backing modernization, and the Chinese continuing losing the war to the West, she was arguably in a desperate state. Relying on the West was perhaps her only and last choice no matter whether she sincerely appreciated the West or not.

Many Westerners who saw Cixi approved of her, whereas some Westerners who never saw her took a view against Cixi. What does it mean? Can we say people witnessing Cixi are more reliable than those never seeing her?¹⁰⁶ Not really. If Cixi's body language was careful, intentional and conscious and deceptive, those viewing her could have picked up an untruthful message. What those seeing Cixi in person knew was

her vocal element and body language – the two elements which could not represent the whole of her.

Conclusion

What this chapter argues is that, in her public relationship with the West, Cixi was a pioneer to present herself in a way which was less imperial (for example, her starting the idea of equality with other countries and her getting rid of the tributary system and of the insistence on Confucianizing foreigners). Her style was less classically political and involved more personal contact (e.g. Cixi's choice to wear an informal dress to meet Western guests and her policy of intimacy, giving personal gifts, and weeping with them). She sometimes showed a more democratic attitude (for example, looking up at the spectators). Probably, she still kept some monarchic habits. Some will probably argue that only China's defeat and weakness led to her imperial principles becoming more relaxed; and they may also regard Cixi's performing the public diplomacy as a sheer 'masquerade' in view of the fact that her presentation did not correspond with that it was meant for (about this contradictory phenomenon, more will be supplied for discussion in Chapter Six). However, Cixi's daring and modern approach was notable. 'Reuter's Special Service' comments, "[t]he effect of [Cixi's diplomatic skills is] more significant than any political change."¹⁰⁷ Cixi's compromise with the modern approach was not wasted. There was at the end some tangible gain: Cixi's portraiture, involving six oil portraits and approximately forty photographs.¹⁰⁸ Without the assistance of Westerners to whom Cixi carefully attended during her meetings with them, these visual images showing her to the World would have been impossible. These visual images can have some impact on the West and can also help bring about understanding of her political intentions – as will be discussed from Chapter Five onwards.

Chapter Two

Widowhood

Under the Qing dynasty, called a period of “Confucian Renaissance” by historian Leslie Marchant, women seemed to be screened out of the public sphere and also played a marginal role in the political world.¹⁰⁹ Confucius’ teaching warns *jun zi* (gentlemen) not to associate with mean and inferior men or with women, showing that women were ranked on the same level as the lower class.¹¹⁰ The Confucian classics which say “women’s words should not be heard beyond the inner quarters,” also tell that women could neither be serious nor have any impact whatsoever in politics. In addition, there were a series of institutional connections militating against women: according to *yin-and-yang* theory, a female (*yin*) naturally has femininity, emotion, imperfection, and weakness.¹¹¹ The country being under the influence of woman rulers meant that female *yin* (weak and wicked nature) would prevail over the male *yang*. Heaven would signal its discontent by means of comets, earthquakes, drought, and floods, leading to famine for the people and ruin for the country.¹¹² Also, at the beginning of Cixi’s reign, there was a rumour spread concerning her birth: “Manchu rule would some day be ended forever by a great woman of the Yehenara clan bearing the mark of the fox.”¹¹³ The term *hu li jing*, which literally means ‘fox’, is used in criticism of a female’s evil nature – women being jealous of other women, seducing men, etc.¹¹⁴ Also, in Qing’s China where Buddhism was the dominant religion, in Buddhist views, a woman carried the burden of the human original sin with her. Whether using Confucius, *yin-and-yang*, literature, Buddhism or some other theory, criticism of woman abounded. Under this kind of social framework, Cixi as a female could only with difficulty climb up to the top of the tree to become a powerful leader

commanding over four hundred million of population in China.¹¹⁵ Does the female's being cut out of public life mean that women can play no role in politics? How could Cixi find her way through this framework against women? What was the nature of Cixi as a female politician whose career was connected with the way out that she found? These questions finally lead to the final question: given this background, what is the 'tragic flaw' leading to China's decline? These questions will be examined in what follows.

The Qing codes

In all Cixi's public images – including oil portraits, black-and-white photographs, formal audiences, and on an outside journey by the whole Court in 1902, Cixi appears to have little or no colouring or cosmetics on her face. Lady Susan Townley, one of the ladies of the Diplomatic Corps, with whom Cixi often had audiences, remarks, "[Cixi's] complexion is that of a North Italian and being a widow her cheeks are unpainted and unpowdered."¹¹⁶ Without make-up, the natural colour of her face was apparently like a North Italian's, recalling Headland's description of the real colour of her face – "her complexion was of an olive tint."¹¹⁷ Townley explains that Cixi had no cosmetics (neither powder on her cheeks nor red patches on her lips) in order to distinguish herself from the other women who were still single or whose husbands were still alive (there is a slight red spot on the upper lip; on the lower lip there is usually a much larger patch for young women).¹¹⁸ Besides showing her natural face in public, her costume too was sombre – with its colour tone of blue, seen in the dresses in all of her portraits.¹¹⁹ Regarding the blue dresses, Katherine Carl remarks, "She wears deep mourning the first three years after his [Xianfeng's] death, and then [there is a] second [period of] mourning; she can never again put on the festive red, joyous green, or any other colour except blue or violet—second [mourning]."¹²⁰ These foreigners observed that limited cosmetics and a blue dress

were the Qing codes. Cixi does not make any exception to the convention. Far from challenging these codes, she positively used them to remind people of her widowhood.

Sexuality and Old Age

The codes immediately tell us that Cixi is a widow. However, what are the implications behind the codes? England's Queen Elizabeth I and Britain's Queen Victoria are selected to be brought into the following discussion from time to time to compare with Cixi – though these two foreign monarchs are also distinct from each other. Elizabeth's highly artificial face with very 'thick' cosmetics and dresses glistening with various kinds of jewels and Victoria's limited make-up and dark dresses can be observed in all the images made in their later life. Their different looks could be associated with their contrasting ways of political ruling: does Elizabeth deny old age, whereas Victoria and Cixi celebrate it?

The first topic to be considered is *sexuality*. Shirley N. Garner presents this view: with the use of cosmetics on their faces, women "seduce and lead astray."¹²¹ Putting cosmetics on women's face makes them more attractive and sexual but is often linked up with vanity, unnaturalness and untruthfulness. The image of Elizabeth in her old age (Fig. 30) is often said to be of one who "paint[s] herself, and deck[s] and [at]tire[s] herself with gold, pearl, stone and all kind of precious jewels" – this indicates her lack of true natural beauty. In *A Treatise against the Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women* (1616), Thomas Tuke articulates these "abominable sinnes of murther and poysoning, pride and ambition, adultery and witchcraft" which are associated with the use of cosmetics.¹²² Elizabeth's focus on visual images, loud cosmetics and jewelry, was in contrast to her contemporary Protestantism's focus on verbal debate, discussion and argument and thus her later imagery is sometimes argued as linked to Catholic whoredom. Thus her image

was transferred from 'immaculate virginity' (the image in her youth) into 'whoredom' (the image in her old age). Manchu women could paint with their faces when they were unwed or wed. Their heavy use of cosmetics – similar in amount to what Geisha girls in Japan would put on their faces – was intended to seduce and attract potential suitors or husbands. Any loss of their men makes them change their appearance dramatically in order to announce their adoption of chastity and rejection of further wooing and sex. Visually attractive make-up, which resonates with female sexuality, is absent from Cixi's portraiture by the time she loses her husband and begins her reign. Cixi's pride, dignity, strength, and authority were instead promoted as she dispensed with artificial cosmetics that transform women into sexual objects and also give them a fragile and weak position. She rejected sexual vitality, artificial looks and re-marriage, and adopted the form of chastity to follow the values which she deemed appropriate to a female ruler. So, her minimal use of cosmetics shows her intention to keep away from sex.

Anti-sexuality is a widow's *virtue*. Before virtue in Empresses is discussed, the matter of virtue in Emperors should be noted. What principle is behind the ruler's acceptance – virtue or heredity? In the Shang and Zhou periods, selection of successors was based on their virtue. Ruler Yao did not choose his own son, but instead choose a virtuous man, Shun, to succeed him. After that, this 'rule by virtue' had become an ideal principle for every ruler though most could not, however, resist passing their power to their biological sons. This situation is thus one of conflict between the ideal and human nature. Evelyn S. Rawski in her *Last Emperors* notes Qing's problem on this issue and states it clearly:

[w]ithin Confucian political thought there was a basic tension between two principles of legitimation – virtue or heredity – that remained unresolved. Qing emperors sought to raise 'rule by virtue' over 'rule by heredity,' but as analysis of ritual delegation shows, heredity continued to be an element in imperial

legitimation. When their legitimacy, as defined by Confucian political theory, was directly challenged by drought, political exigencies demanded that rulers pursue an eclectic policy of religious patronage. Efficacy mattered [more] than consistency: Confucian virtue could not be the sole arbiter of imperial legitimacy.¹²³

In 1735, the system was refined from 'rule by virtue' to infuse the emperor's designated heir with imperial qualifications when the Yongzheng emperor appointed Hongli (who later became the Qianlong emperor) as his next successor. (Yongzheng's secret certificate where the name of Hongli was written as his successor was put inside the sealed *jue* box hung on the Tablet written *zheng da guang ming* in the Palace of Heavenly Purity.) Emperors seemed to be free to choose the most 'meritorious' or 'virtuous' sons among all their sons.¹²⁴ This is how the Qing dynasty resolved the tension between heredity and virtue – by combining the two together. The 'rule by virtue' is after all the embodiment of "the ancient canonical tradition as genuinely transformative form of kingship, whereby the ruler's example inspired emulation by his subjects and thus laid the basis for a virtuous society."¹²⁵ In spite of that, never passing the political power to persons without a genetic connection was also a basic principle. So the Qing emperors basically ruled the country and its people by the *hereditary* principle. According to Confucius' idea, there is a great power influencing others because of a person's virtue (*de*).¹²⁶ The power inherited in each emperor can influence others, leading to the result that he would irresistibly attract the 'barbarians' (living outside China) to be converted to Chinese civilization. In 1902, *The Peking Gazette* reported from a meeting of the representatives of America, France, the Netherlands, Russia and Great Britain with the Guangxu emperor that all the foreigners "admitted that divine virtue certainly emanated from the Emperor, hence the fear and trembling they felt even when they did not look upon his Majesty."¹²⁷ Here, the 'divine virtue' shining from the Emperor's political body apparently made these

'barbarians' come to China and respect the Emperor with great awe. This exaggerated depiction appears to involve a kind of magic. It does not matter whether the emperor was really virtuous or not.¹²⁸ China's male 'rulers with virtue' are not exactly equal to the rulers who are virtuous. Simply, virtue is always there by nature because of their inherited blood. Apparently, the term virtue as applied to the Qing male Emperors is beyond logic.

By contrast, a widow politician's virtue is not the same. She has the connection with monarchy because of her *marriage*, not because of her birth. She does not carry the *genetic divine virtue*. Her virtue is not natural. So it is necessary that she possess real virtue, e.g. by being a widow. She cannot behave like an emperor, having many concubines or going to brothels. Her virtue appears only when she owns chastity. Such virtue is thus directly strongly linked with the moral sense. In the Qing dynasty, the widow was still a sexual being, either chaste or unchaste.¹²⁹ The belief that the Qing dynasty followed closely warned of women's flaws, sin, evil, weakness and easiness of losing chastity. If a widow who had lost her husband's supervision (*yang*) wanted to avoid being called evil, weak, imperfect and immoral, and if she wanted to receive positive compliments, anti-sexuality provided the only way out. The Qing state awarded silver to the households of chaste widows (remaining unmarried in their life): it was used for setting up memorial arches and also for establishing local temples where tablets were erected to honour and canonize chaste female martyrs.¹³⁰ The whole society highly encouraged a widow for anti-sexuality and anti-transgression. Remaining unmarried and chaste was regarded as involving enormous economic and emotional hardship and self-sacrifice.¹³¹ About this, Lou Rufang (1515-1588), who is widely considered a most liberal scholar of Confucianism in the late Qing period praises a widow a great deal, emphasizing that a widow's chaste behaviour contrasts with the normal state of human beings (*chang*); her fighting against the human normal state, overcoming it and triumphing pose enormous

challenges. He concludes that the moral virtue exhibited in a chaste widow surpassed what a sage could achieve.¹³² As long as she possessed this special quality, a widow could win respect and dignity. Thus, the weakness of female body was as if transferred into one wrapped in strong metal protecting her by way of her chastity (anti-sexuality).

By contrast, Elizabeth I kept emphasizing her physical and sexual attractiveness in order to appeal to her *male* courtiers. Besides her masked face, she also had another way of showing her sexuality – squeezing into a wasp waist, making a contrast with relatively wide skirt around her hips. The effect that her wearing a corset and bustle achieved – a dramatically thin waist – can be observed in all of her portraits. The phenomenon of Elizabeth's slim waist is like that of her make-up: the older she becomes, the thicker and heavier is her make-up; and the older she becomes, the slimmer is her waist. According to Nancy Etcoff's *Survival of the Prettiest: the Science of Beauty*, which deals with modern research by evolutionary psychologists, a low waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) is perceived world-wide as a key attractive point in human females.¹³³ In the film *Gone with the Wind*, Scarlett O'Hara tears down the green curtain and squeezes her waist to try to keep her eighteen-inch waist in order to hope to rekindle Rhett Butler's sexual enthusiasm. She succeeds in this goal when Butler's eyes see her slim waist. The waist is thus a kind of 'erogenous zone' – not only in the West, but also in China (Fig. 31).¹³⁴ About a female's slim waist in China, literature and paintings demonstrate this physical attraction to male eyes. The slim waist is called *liu yao* ('willow waist'). Taking some examples, the Song Dynasty poet Liu Yong (987-1055) has two poems – one is *fa qu xian xian in*; the other is *liu yao qing* – highly praising the willow waist. In the former poem, Liu writes, "willow waist is like a charming and enticing flower (*liu yao hua rui jiao yan li*).” In the latter, he writes, “the waist of a dancing girl is soft (*ying ying miao wu yao zhi ruan*).”¹³⁵ There is another Song poet, Zhang Xian, whose poem *zui chui bian* also gives a compliment on a

thin waist: “when I first met you in the feast.... Carefully observed, you have soft, delicate, and slim waist and the patterns of your dress are moving. I found you so wonderful and make me want to treasure you as if you are mountains in the mist of sunset because you create mysterious atmosphere....”¹³⁶ In addition to poetry, the painting also praises a girl’s slim waist. The screen with the slim-waisted female image is described in a poem by Liang dynasty prince Xiao Gang:

Painted on the hall, a fairy maid;
 Forth from the palace, a lovely lady.
 How charming – both are painted,
 So who can tell the real from the false?
 A glitter in the eyes can be made out in both.
 And both have the same slim waist
 One thing can be taken to show the difference –
 One’s always in a lively mood!¹³⁷

The description about the image of a beautiful girl on the screen mainly deals with a portrait of an ideal lady. What is the ideal lady? “Slim waist” refers to the lady as being ‘lovely’ and ‘charming.’

The explanation is typically that a low WHR, under natural conditions, is a sign that a female is not already pregnant. This would certainly have been correct in Elizabeth I’s time. However, to judge from surviving portraits from the late 1580s through to around 1630, *pregnancy* portraits became quite fashionable in England.¹³⁸ Many pregnant women had their portraits painted before giving birth to a baby. Doubtless this was partly a preparation for their possible death in childbirth for such a high percentage of pregnant women died in childbirth at that time. But there may have been another special reason at that time for this particular fashion. Karen Hearn expresses it thus: “It seems a paradox that these portraits proliferated at the very time that there was an unmarried female

monarch who was increasingly unlikely to become a mother and thus provide an all-important royal heir. By the end of the century it may in fact have reflected the undercurrent of anxiety about the succession to the English throne.”¹³⁹ The contrast between Elizabeth I’s extreme slim waist and wide waist in other women’s pregnancy portraits thus presents something of a *paradox*. However, in my view, this paradox does not show Elizabeth I’s anxiety (that Hearn remarks). This paradox – the fashion of pregnancy portraits (with a wide waist) and Elizabeth I’s portraiture (with a slim waist) – might additionally show Elizabeth’s emphasis on her own great difference from other pregnant women. The women’s wide waists in their portraits symbolize their pregnancy, highlighting their motherhood, implying they are not virgins any more, and are not so concerned to be attractive to men. In their portraits (Figs 32 & 33), their right or left hands are often put on their bellies and lifted corners of mouths show their love and satisfaction at the approach of motherhood. Signals of pregnancy are not signs of sexuality. Also, the pregnancy is “not regarded as attractive.”¹⁴⁰ An unattractive appearance is a rejection of sexuality. Elizabeth’s case is so different. Her exaggeratedly narrow waist and extremely wide skirt contrast her with those pregnant women. Her low WHR in her portraits was a special tool to show her sexual attractiveness and her availability and wish to attract men’s interest and devotion.

Moreover, the theory that men prefer the hourglass figure is confirmed by a scientist Dr Grazyna Jasienska and his colleagues in 2004 who measured women’s levels of two fertility hormones (oestradiol and progesterone) which are crucial indicators of fertility. The levels of two hormones are much higher among these women with slim waist (and large breasts) than others. This research result suggests male predilection for slim-waisted women has evolved as a means of choosing a mate having the greatest reproductive potential. Mark Henderson remarks, “[i]f body type is a genuine signal of

fecundity, men who recognised it and pursued Barbie clones would over time [have] left more descendants than those who preferred other shapes. Their tastes would then have been passed on to their sons, leaving a lasting mark on the male sexual psyche."¹⁴¹ This scientific theory is persuasive as to the origin of human sexual attraction – female attraction and male sexual psyche. Does the fact that Elizabeth I never had a baby contradict Jasienska's theory? Certainly not: Elizabeth kept her image as having an extremely thin waist to show that she was not pregnant, to remain attractive to her male suitors and also to suggest that she had the potential of producing a baby.

Unlike Elizabeth I, Cixi invariably wore a loose Manchu dress without a waistband. Isabel Fonseca thinks that a loose dress does not show the slim waist but rather a "baggy, shape-hating look, too cool to fuss over gender, too low-key to flirt." This look abjures femininity and a curvaceous and glamorous shape – leading to an "androgynous" appearance.¹⁴² Cixi actually expressed her view on slim waists: "the foreign costume was very becoming to well-made and well-proportioned people" but "it shows off to advantage [only] a good figure."¹⁴³ On one occasion, Cixi said, "I should say they must be quite uncomfortable round one's waist. I wouldn't be squeezed that way for anything."¹⁴⁴ She summarizes the issue well: maintaining an hourglass figure is attractive but *uncomfortable*. Squeezing the woman's waist with corsetry is erotic for men but women sometimes had their ribs broken and fainted as the corset restricted breathing and blood flow.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, footbinding in China also involved excruciatingly painful processes during a girl's childhood as the toes were turned back underneath the rest of the foot. Before the twentieth century, footbinding (Manchu women kept their feet at liberty and would never submit to the Chinese operation of binding the feet) had an effect on "the sexual role [which] bound feet [played] in male fantasy."¹⁴⁶ John Francis Davis in *The Chinese* says, "That appearance of helplessness which is induced by the mutilation

[makes men] admire extremely...[the walk of girls having bound feet is compared] to the waving of a willow agitated by the breeze."¹⁴⁷ Chang Jung in her *Wild Swans* also depicts the attractiveness of her grandmother having bound feet, making her walk "like a tender young willow shoot in a spring breeze."¹⁴⁸ Thus, both slim waist and footbinding are to stop woman natural growth. Because they oppose normal physical development, discomfort and self-torture will be brought about in spite of the attractive look. How Cixi intended to dress herself was in neither a sexy nor a self-torturing way, but a way to make her *comfortable*. From her choice, Cixi was arguably not interested in seducing men or in appearing sexy.

Whereas Elizabeth I attracted her male courtiers and foreign suitors to keep on having interest in her and devoting themselves to serve her, what is shown by Cixi's keeping away from sexuality in her court? In the Forbidden City, behind the public arena, is a remarkably *feminine* place that was usually occupied by numerous court ladies, princesses, maidservants and eunuchs. The original idea of this arrangement at the palace was that there was not a single virile man to compete with the emperor who could thus have unchallenged enjoyment of women (its concern was with *yin* and *yang*). But, in Cixi's case, the situation cannot be explained in this way. Many royal princesses were often invited to the Court to be Cixi's inseparable and intimate companions even after their marriages (commonly arranged by her). Many of these arranged marriages went wrong, either because the husbands died or because the couples never consummated the marriage. Actually, if the long-standing female companions to Cixi are carefully examined, many of them are widows. Her three favorite female companions were Prince Gong's eldest daughter, Prince Qing's fourth daughter and Councillor Qingshan's daughter. All these three had lost their husbands soon after their marriages (that were originally arranged by Cixi). Cixi had also another two favorite companions. One was

Empress Longyu, the wife of the Guangxu emperor. There is much evidence that this emperor disliked and even resented Longyu from the very beginning; but Cixi still arranged their marriage to take place in 1888. Their resulting relationship was awful. Longyu, a 'spy' who monitored the behaviour of her husband, became an unconditional royal supporter of Cixi. The other quasi-widow attending Cixi was a lady-in-waiting, He Rong-er, servicing Cixi's smoking habit for eight years by bringing her water-cooled pipes. Cixi arranged for this favorite lady-in-waiting to marry a *eunuch*. Understandably, this marriage was a disaster. Rong-er was asked to come back to the Court less than one year after this unhappy marriage. The cases of Longyu and Rong-er can be likened to widowhood. Such married women whose husbands were still alive but whose relationship with him was never consummated are termed *huo gua fu* (literally meaning 'a living widow'). Thus Cixi's mistakes led to disasters for these women's marriages. She broke the custom by which married women generally stay in their late husbands' households until their death.¹⁴⁹ Instead, she invited these 'widows' to return to the Court. Rong-er in her memoirs also mentions that these were Cixi's "intentional arrangement."¹⁵⁰ Her arrangement was highly beneficial for herself. Yet, for the Guangxu emperor who could not be like other emperors, the Court became an uncomfortable and also unfriendly place while all the ladies at Court were under her control, not under his. For this reason, he became one of the most miserable emperors in the whole of Chinese history.¹⁵¹ Cixi was more keen to have people of the same sex as her courtiers and companions rather than to attract the opposite sex. That Cixi had a lot of female companions was the result from her indifferent attitude towards men.

In old age, the signs of age in Cixi's face were not apparently masked by cosmetics thus heightening the congruity between her advanced age and her supreme power. Shirley N. Garner states that cosmetics are normally intended to "evince pride, as the [wearers]

make vain efforts to stave off old age.”¹⁵² That Cixi avoided using cosmetics on her cheeks and red patches on her lips meant that her real age was shown in her aging face. Also, she did not wear a young light or colourful costume, but wore loose and blue-toned costumes to emphasize her age. Emphasis on old age is often linked with attitude of anti-sexuality. Cixi was such a case. Did Cixi try to reduce societal anxieties about having an ageing monarch on the throne as a new century approached? The seniors’ opinions carry more weight than those of youth since old age symbolizes being experienced, wise and mature. Social status was determined by various intangible qualities – for example, degree of cultural refinement and mastery of elaborate linguistic etiquette and virtue. But respect for seniors was still an unchangeable principle. Thus, among all of her many titles, Cixi’s two favourites were ‘Old Buddha’ and ‘Old Ancestress.’¹⁵³ Using the word ‘old’ as a title made Cixi even more venerable. Moreover, would the public have associated an aging emperor or empress with illness, weakness or vulnerability? Death is hardly discussed in Confucianism -- “Our life is not fully understood yet. We should concentrate on life. It is not necessary to talk about the death,” says Confucius.¹⁵⁴ Accordingly, in every picture of Cixi, she wears a costume which is full of the Chinese character *shou* (‘long life’). Instead of being associated with death, ‘long life’ is brought in to connect to her old age. Her avoidance of cosmetics and a youthful appearance can thus be interpreted as an effort to keep her public intrigued by her old age (not her ‘sexual’ beauty) which is equal to (not contradictory to) her proven ability, rich experiences and solid status which kept her subjects subservient to her power. Thus Cixi’s old age was used to represent her as a mature, strong and vital ruler.

If Cixi had seen portraits of Elizabeth I in her later life, it is likely that Cixi would have disapproved of her. In an opposite way to Elizabeth I, Queen Victoria became a widow since her beloved husband, Prince Albert, died from typhoid fever in 1861. She

subsequently made a show of her old age and apparent indifference to the sexuality – always wearing black dresses and little make-up (though today's historians incline to believe Victoria had a Scottish lover at her country seat of Balmoral). An apparently desolate Victoria remained in self-imposed seclusion for many years. Her genuine but obsessive mourning, which would occupy her for the rest of her life, played an important role in the evolution of what would become the Victorian mentality. In many of her photos (Figs 34, 35 & 36), a portrait, photo or statue of her late husband is seen by her side; her eyes sometimes look at his statue or portrait and sometimes look down spiritlessly and melancholically; her hands support her heavy head and sad face; she never smiles, making her look like an old, fat, grumpy, and indifferent grandmother. Such images highlight how she fully played the role of a widow. These images obviously demonstrate her obsessive memory of her late husband. John Plunkett also states that “photography was instrumental in creating the familiar and iconic image of Queen Victoria in her widow's weed[s].”¹⁵⁵ British audiences were not pleased at and even genuinely fed up with these gloomy scenes and her inactive state (instead of concerning herself with the country) whereas Victoria was successful in the media outside Britain, and never more than in India and China. After Prime Minister Disraeli gave her a lead, in India and China, Queen Victoria came to be regarded as a semi-goddess, leading to an actual cult surrounding her. Take an example from China: in some issues of famous and popular magazine published monthly in China called *Dian shi zhai hua bao* reflecting the social phenomenon of the end of Qing dynasty, covering the news of China and the world, in the content of reporting, there are some drawings of images of Queen Victoria, by the side of which are words giving highly flattering compliments to this foreign Queen.¹⁵⁶ For example, the two drawings (Figs 37 & 38) that were based on a photo taken by Alexander Bassano (Fig. 62) show Chinese admiration for the Queen. The photo of Victoria taken by

Bassano became a well-known image in China. Hanging a portrait of Queen Victoria on her wall (showing Cixi's admiration towards the foreign queen – although which portrait hung on Cixi's wall is unknown), Cixi may have seen the features of the body politic of Victoria as a widow – the images of Victoria show her wearing a black dress with white lace, no make-up, a broad waist, a heavy body and a grumpy face – looking old and unattractive. But Cixi favoured these features, presenting female moral codes which are associated with anti-sexuality and seniority in age.

Widow's mandate

“Widow's mandate”, a term coined by an American feminist, Martha Ackmann, refers to the phenomenon of a wife succeeding her late husband in office – as happened in the case of Cixi.¹⁵⁷ Europe only rarely had cases of the ‘widow politician.’ But the phenomenon often happened in the East, both in ancient and modern times. Ackmann thinks that a widow politician is not required or expected to have any political experience as long as she continues her late husband's policies. So a woman can reach political power far more easily through this way within a hierarchical or monarchical system. A daughter could not inherit political power from her father in the East (in some Western countries, daughters in recent centuries had the right to inherit from their father if there were no surviving sons); but for a wife to succeed her late husband in office, either through appointment or election, is an unofficial tradition in the politics of many Asian countries. Many women have won political power by their marital status and their husband's sudden death. For example, in Sri Lanka there was S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's widow, Sirimavo Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike (who was a Prime Minister in 1960-5, 1970-7 and 1994-2000); India had Feroz Gandhi's widow Indira (who was prime minister in 1966-77 and 1980-84) and Rajiv Gandhi's widow Sonia became a President and leader

of the Indian National Congress Party; the Philippines had Benigno S. Aquino's widow Cory Aquino (who became President in 1986-92), and so on. In Chinese history, Cixi was not the only widow politician. Before her, there were some widow politicians who had won political power – for example, Empress Lu (r. BC 195 –180), Empress Teng (r.105-121), Empress Feng (r.465-471, 476-490), and Empress Wu (r. 659-705).¹⁵⁸ The phenomenon in China has been called *wai qi gan zheng*, meaning 'intruding politics of families or clans on the maternal side.'¹⁵⁹

Marital relationship is the key. For this reason, Martha Ackmann has a critical view of a woman having a political career through her marital and dependent connection to a male politician. Ackmann thinks that it is wrong that people feel "more *comfortable* with the idea of a woman acting out her husband's wishes than governing according to her own principles." She suggests that a widow politician lacks "a mind of her own."¹⁶⁰ However, why do people feel 'comfortable' with a woman carrying on her late husband's views and policies? A male politician generally has had numerous loyal followers before and after he dies. The vacancy that his death brings about often causes political instability because his rivals are eager to take power. So, these die-hard supporters who have followed him and his political views will ask who is to be the successor. Without question, the answer seems simple: 'the heir.' But, how does the chance of wielding power fall to the late male politician's wife? In the Xianfeng emperor's case, his only son was only six years old. Officially, Grand Councilors needed to be in charge of this little emperor. Yet, most Manchu princes and their followers finally supported and co-operated with Cixi instead of with the Grand Councilors.¹⁶¹ This problematic question will be examined by analyzing the dual nature of widowhood – one is that Cixi at the beginning presented a widow's *fragile* and *loyal* nature; the other is that, later on, Cixi as a widow showed her *strong* and *powerful* nature.

The vulnerable and loyal nature of a widow

During Xianfeng's reign, China faced internal rebellion and persistent Western harassment, and the Qing Dynasty dramatically declined. A terrible situation resulted in 1860, with the Emperor and his whole Court (including Cixi) fleeing to Rehe as refugees. Xianfeng was at that time devastated and humiliated (by Western forces) and eventually died of a broken heart in 1861. On the day of the ritual journey with his funeral cortège from Rehe to the gate of Beijing, a political upheaval happened. The two empresses Cixi and Cian, led by Cixi, threw their support behind the majority at Court (Prince Gong, Ronglu, and their associations) who managed to arrest Sushun and his seven colleagues (these eight called *gu ming ba da chen*) who were in charge of Xianfeng's heir. On the same day, an imperial decree charged these men with "arrogating imperial authority, deceiving the late Emperor, obstructing the safe settlement of foreign difficulties, and attempting to create divisions between the two Empress Dowagers."¹⁶² Why did this political upheaval happen on the day of Xianfeng's funeral, and not on some other day? The funeral ritual must have been under the jurisdiction of the Board of Rites and have also followed the record of *xiong li* ('rite of misfortune'), one of five groups of rites in *Da qing hui dian* (collected regulations of Qing).¹⁶³ Such a funeral is not just an empty ritual, but something more important. The *ritual* is an essential occasion that reminds people of the male politician's terrible death (which often have involved tragedy, assassination or an overturning of expectations) as well as of his widow's sharing his suffering, and of her continuous support when he was alive and humiliated; the *ritual* increases people's hatred for enemies who may have contributed to the death; the *ritual* honours the dead; and the *ritual* also makes people feel sympathy with this poor and helpless woman who faces a major life crisis in the absence of her man.

At the age of twenty-five, Cixi was widowed. As a young girl, she must have been regarded as a sexual being. Suzanne A. Brenner remarks that widows can easily fall into becoming "the objects of gossip and suspicion for their sexual activities because they are no longer under the supervision or control of fathers or husbands." Brenner also explains that "a woman who is not subject to any [male] control is potentially threatening to the male-dominated social order."¹⁶⁴ Therefore, male members of the household still had the right to supervise the widow's behaviour. Directly pointing out a Qing widow's vulnerable position, Anne Waltner remarks that the position of a widow (having no sons, or whose sons were minors) within her late husband's family was only partially protected and she could not have any true inheritance because she needed to consult her in-laws.¹⁶⁵ Matthew H. Sommer thinks a widow's brothers-in-law watched her to make sure she was faithful to her late husband.¹⁶⁶ (The relationship between a widow and her brothers-in-law will be discussed later in this chapter) In front of tombs and during the annual mourning, a widow's melancholy mood – showing tears and a sad face – makes her appear "essentially emotional." The widow's emotional reaction, instead of being a rational response, shows that she preserves "a modest demeanor" and does not, in fact, constitute a threat (to her in-laws).¹⁶⁷ Her tears, resulting from her emotion, conveyed a female formulaic message: this woman is weak and fragile, so she needs more help and sympathy. Psychologically, people feel sorry when someone is a defenseless victim, as the widow of tragic circumstances is categorized. Helping, comforting and supporting her come naturally. This melancholy presentation is not the same as having a complete breakdown, but is necessarily combined with her decorum, implying her ability to carry out her responsibilities. The widow's display of sadness and dignity during the funeral and the period of mourning were important signals of her playing the role of defender of her dead husband and his political views to all the followers who originally supported the deceased

man. Such a display could possibly mean that the widow became qualified as the only plausible political substitute (surrogate or successor) for her late husband.

Cixi would have agreed about the importance of rituals. It is uncertain how Cixi displayed herself during Xianfeng's funeral, but it is reasonable to assume that she showed a melancholy mood together with decorous behaviour. On every anniversary of Xianfeng's death (on the fifteenth day of the seventh moon in the lunar calendar), she always performed official mourning. Derling describes the details of how Cixi worshipped her late husband on that day each year:

Her Majesty was devoted to the late [the Xianfeng emperor], and she was very sad and morose during this period. We all had to be very careful indeed not to upset her in any way, as she would find fault on the slightest provocation. She hardly had a word to say to any of us, and cried almost incessantly. I could hardly understand the reason for such grief, seeing that the Emperor had died so many years previously. None of the Court ladies were allowed to dress in light-coloured gowns during the whole of the seventh moon. We all dressed either in dark blue or pale blue, while Her Majesty herself dressed in black every day without exception. Even her handkerchiefs were black. The theatres which were usually opened on the first and fifteenth of each month, were closed during the seventh moon. There was no music, and everything was conducted in the most solemn manner; in fact, the whole Court was in deep mourning.¹⁶³

Cixi's annual mourning renewed and proclaimed her unchanging loyalty. Her 'incessant crying' and tears of mourning for Xianfeng also showed that she was still subject to her husband's supervision and was not potentially threatening to the male world. That she continued as if under her late husband's supervision also demonstrates that she was a substitute for him. What is noteworthy is this: in 1880, the antagonistic relationship

between Cixi and Cian seriously erupted after they had a disagreement about their standing positions during the *ritual* in front of tomb of Xianfeng on the anniversary of his death. Cian, as First Consort, claimed the central position on this occasion. Despite her childlessness, she was fully entitled to do so according to the principle of precedence. Cixi, who had given birth to an heir, was unhappy that her rival could stand in the central position in front of Xianfeng's tomb. Their positions were in competition. So there was an open clash between these two imperial widows. This fighting was more serious than ever before. A *ritual* reflects the high or low level of real power "in the creation of a hegemonic order, that is, a widely accepted system of beliefs concerning the origins of power and the ethical correctness of the social order" and affirms "a hierarchy of status within the supernatural as in the secular world, in which inferiors acknowledged their submission to [the] supernatural."¹⁶⁹ So this shows that the ritual at the tomb is crucially significant. No wonder that Cixi and Cian fought over which of them should be blessed, should succeed to real power, and be justified in front of their husband's tomb.

In addition to a widow's loyalty after her husband's death being associated with her popularity, her loyalty *during her husband's life time* is also important. Take a comparison between Cixi and Cixi's niece Longyu: Cixi was the regent for the Tongzhi and Guangxu emperors; Longyu was the Empress who had the right to supervise the last Xuantong emperor (Puyi). After they became widows, did both have the same degree of support from the Court and the public? Two different arguments have been advanced. The first is explored in *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking* by E. Backhouse and P. O. Bland.¹⁷⁰ These two co-authors concluded that there were always repeated incidents ("vicious circles") in Chinese history and resemblances to be found between Cixi and Longyu in every way.¹⁷¹ Backhouse & Bland note they belonged to the same clan (the Ychonala), were also widows, had the same temperament, and had the same conservative

political views; Cixi had her favorite eunuch, Li Lianying, likewise Longyu had her favorite eunuch Zhang Yuanfu (Li Lianying's successor) and both eunuchs were incorrigibly corrupt. The role, the events, the political situation and so on of Cixi and Longyu are interpreted by Bland and Backhouse thus: "history repeated itself with almost monotonous observance of dynastic tradition, and with the usual deplorable result."¹⁷²

The other argument is that of a British journalist, George Morrison, who wrote an article soon after Longyu's death.¹⁷³ He makes different comments on the two individual empresses and remarks that Longyu was "a reactionary by instinct and a fierce partisan...the Regent and his brothers had no cause to love the woman who had played so treacherous a part in the humiliation of the unfortunate [Guangxu]" whereas Cixi was a supportive wife to her own husband.¹⁷⁴ Bland and Backhouse emphasize that the reigns of these two empresses brought similar results for China viz. substantial disaster. *The Times*, however, thought the two empresses' differences brought about different results and said in a leading article that, under Cixi's reign, the Chinese empire experienced a "marvellous revival" from "the lowest depth of abasement" – referring to China's Taiping turbulence, the two Opium Wars, the British and French attacks, and their burning of summer palace etc. during Xianfeng's reign. Cixi, said the *Times*, "leaves [China], on the whole, prosperous and in enjoyment of the respect and consideration of all foreign nations."¹⁷⁵ As for Longyu, *The Times* stated, "[Longyu]'s action hastened the *débâcle* of the Manchu dynasty."¹⁷⁶ Backhouse and Bland ignore the deeper difference between these two women: Cixi carried on her husband's conservative views whereas Longyu (who at the time of the coup d'états in 1898 was openly on the side of her aunt Cixi) humiliated her husband as a radical reformer. Arguably, being an unsupportive partner led to her low popularity. Longyu became unwelcome and isolated at Court and was later criticized as a disloyal wife by historians. By contrast, Cixi won the full support of the Court.¹⁷⁷

A widow's strong and powerful nature

That widows succeeded their late emperors was not an official regulation, but it happened quite often. Zhao Fengjic remarks the phenomenon "should not be regarded merely as something accidental," but as a "dynastic institution."¹⁷⁸ The feminist writer Adrienne Rich, despite her dislike of male dominance, observes in her book *Of Woman Born* that a patriarchal system does not rule out female power in the East.

Patriarchy is the power of the father: a familial-social ideological, political system in which men – by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labour, determine what part women shall and shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male. It does not necessarily imply that no woman has the power or that all women in given culture may not have certain powers....¹⁷⁹

Society might be patriarchal, but it was possible for a woman to hold power. In *Bewitching Women, Pious Men*, all the articles, written by different writers, deal with the relation between men and women in Asia. They strongly criticize the dominant male-oriented society; yet they observe that women could handle important things in life and possess more power than men.¹⁸⁰ How could the paradox – a widow in the end achieving the unlikely position of wielding power – be explained? In an article discussing the position of Asian women, Derek Maitland concluded that "Asian women as a whole have always had their backs to the wall, and rather than chain themselves to palace gates and wave banners to change the system, they have made it pay in their own way."¹⁸¹ Like many historians, Maitland, who felt puzzled about the paradox, finally concludes that Asian women "have had their own ways of outwitting men" – which is a rather vague and

unsatisfying explanation.¹⁸² What are exactly their ways? Or do the traditional customs make a way for them?

Winning power was a long process for Cixi as a widow. First, having a son – the only heir for throne – was a fortunate start. She had been promoted. Anne Waltner states that “[t]he ties which bound [a widow] to her husband’s family, though in theory unchanged, were fundamentally weakened by his death, especially if she had not reinforced the ties by bearing a son.”¹⁸³ Then, after her son died in 1875 (Cixi was forty), wisely, she immediately adopted a baby boy – Zaitian, the son of Prince Qing (Xianfeng’s brother), -- and appointed him as the next successor. Waltner remarks that if a widow had no son, she could adopt a son (most of the time, she generally adopted a nephew of her husband) and her status would still be solid.¹⁸⁴ So, from this, Cixi did not use an unusual method to justify herself, but only did exactly what widows generally would do during the Qing period. Cixi had two sons – one was biological; the other was adopted – in line for the throne. Thus her three regencies lasted several decades.¹⁸⁵

Second, the image of widowhood combined with motherhood in China, as found in literature and social history, is of women having many positive, admired and respected virtues – such as coping with problems, being hard-working, educating their children, and showing strength, patience, nurturance and wisdom.¹⁸⁶ Here are two examples of China’s scholars’ widowed mothers. The first example concerns Mencius (who is China’s ‘Second Sage’ while Confucius is the ‘First Sage’ – their philosophy is called *kong meng si xiang* meaning ‘philosophy of Confucius and Mencius’). In order to find a good environment for Mencius, his mother, who was widowed when he was still a little boy, changed her abode three times – this action being unusual in China and a sign of a mother who would do everything for the healthy growth of her children. Moreover, as a child, Mencius started wandering around and playing the fool. His widowed mother was very

disappointed and cut the web of her loom, her only tool for making a living – her action meaning that all her hard work was in vain since the boy would not behave himself and study hard. The second example concerns Ou Yangxiu (1007-1072), the famous conservative official and great scholar of the Song Dynasty. Like Mencius's mother, Ou's mother was a widow. She was living in very poor conditions, making a living on her own by manual work and could not afford to buy pens and paper for Ou. She taught Ou how to write words in the soil (substituting for paper) by using sharp small sticks or bamboos (as pens). Such stories were much re-told, indicating Chinese veneration not only for motherly virtues and education for their sons, but also, more important, for widows' *hardship, strength, and independence* while lacking the support of husbands.

Third, the great reward of widowhood comes much later. If a widow's son is to go on to a remarkable career, being a great scholar or leading to a contribution to the country, it arguably needs the long-term devotion of a widowed mother even more than her son's intelligence and his own hard work. Luo Rufang, a Confucius scholar (1515-1588), has written several essays on respected widowed mothers. Among these essays, one is about Lady Dong, the mother of Chen Shiwei. She was young and Chen was a tiny baby when her husband died. From then on, she was a devoted mother, bringing up her son to be a successful scholar. In a life of hardship, she overcame many difficulties, including that her husband's family pressured her to re-marry, but she refused. After her son's success, she won an honorific tablet recording her entry to "the Hall of Motherly Nurturance and Chaste Widowhood." Widowed mothers who could be honoured by community, society and government were those who remained chaste and provided their children with a responsible upbringing (including health, nutrition, education and encouragement to achieve). The honouring of these devoted mothers is tightly connected with filial piety (*xiao*). Luo remarks that "[a] mother nurtures her child with affection [*ci*] and child serves

his mother with filialty [*xiao*],... [They] are bestowed by Heaven. They are rooted in the heart-mind [*xin*].... In times of hardship a mother may suffer greatly even while she tries to sustain her affection for her child, which will in turn invoke the child's filialty.¹⁸⁷

Honouring a widowed mother is an important expression of a son's fulfilling his filial duty. The key feature of a son's filialty enables a widow to have power. Cixi obtained benefits from Confucius' view about the relationship of sons towards mothers. The following four examples convey some idea of the benefits.

The first concerns Cixi's honorific titles.¹⁸⁸ During her three regencies, in order to demonstrate their respect, gratitude and filial piety, the two young emperors gave honorific titles to her, sixteen titles altogether – far more titles than other dowager empresses ever had.¹⁸⁹ The second example concerns Guangxu's marriage, which was arranged by Cixi. She finally decided to have her own niece Longyu as an Imperial Consort. An empress dowager chose her daughter-in-law for her son – not for the sake of her son's happiness, but largely for her own.¹⁹⁰ Subsequently, Longyu became a faithful companion to Cixi, but not to Guangxu. A third example involves the positioning of the seats of Cixi and Guangxu. In the throne room, he was seated in a chair on her left while she sat upon the throne in the middle. Carl explained the reason for this arrangement of their seats as follows.

according to Chinese tradition, she [Cixi], being his [Guangxu] 'ancestor,' must always take the first place. She sits upon the Throne, he upon a chair at her side. It would be improper, according to all Chinese law, were it otherwise. The foreigners speak of the Empress Dowager forcing the Emperor to stand in her presence and to sit upon a stool while she occupies the Throne. It is not Her Majesty who forces him to do this, it is an immutable thousand-year-old tradition in China that a son must take a lower place than his parent in his presence, be he Emperor or peasant.¹⁹¹

Similar filial piety can be seen in “Birthday Celebration at the Palace of Compassion and Peace” (Fig. 39) (one of the set of albums titled *Display of Jubilation*) which shows the Qianlong emperor humbly bringing a drinking cup to his mother, the Empress Dowager, who sits frontally and proudly on the throne.¹⁹² In front of the Empress Dowager, there are a lot of dishes on a table. From this portrait, a womanly life leading to widowhood can be seen to allow a woman great respect. The positioning of the seats accorded with propriety. So, an empress dowager has considerable power over her son. A fourth example concerns the content of the edict that Guangxu issued. After the failure of the One-hundred-day Reform, during the *coup d'états* of 1898, Cixi rushed back to take over his ruling power. Soon, he issued an edict. In its content, he confessed that he had ignored Chinese filial tradition and had tried to be more powerful and influential than his adopted mother by using military force to confine her to the Summer Palace so as to stop her interfering with the political affairs – the edict was full of his guilt. He also stated that it was at his request that Cixi had resumed the reins of power when the affairs of state had become so difficult and complicated for his inexperienced hand.¹⁹³ He was imprisoned soon after the issue of this edict. This edict was received with much scepticism, though it is only fair to say that his notions of filial piety, and the fact he owed his throne to his adopted mother, made it extremely difficult for him to attempt any resistance to her will if she was emphatic. From the above four examples, can we conclude that Cixi did anything improper? According to domestic manners, the examples sound appropriate. For Cixi’s seniority, both in age and status, she should be put above her young adopted son, Guangxu. He was obliged to pay her respect by the ritual kowtow. Guangxu was bound by the Chinese idea of filial piety to render his unquestioning obedience.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, filial piety became a protecting umbrella for her dominant or even frankly tyrannical behaviour.

The fourth benefit concerns Cixi's great rivals. In *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, Matthew H. Sommer, carefully studying Qing law cases concerning widows, finds the surviving brothers of the dead man generally had a hostile attitude towards their late brother's wife because they should all share the properties that the dead man leaves and thus the widow's brothers-in-law regarded her as an obstacle to their control of property.¹⁹⁵ Cixi and her brothers-in-law shared the same household because both sides (one is consort; the other is blood connection) were regarded as defenders of the late Xianfeng's patriarchal status.¹⁹⁶ This forms a triangular relation between Xianfeng, his consort Cixi and his brothers. In wielding power, Cixi could not do anything she wished. It was necessary for her to consult her brothers-in-law. As long as her brothers-in-law were still alive, she was constantly under their scrutiny. Most historians have suggested rather unattractive routes as to how Cixi advanced – winning power by using female sexual attraction and murder in an evil way – and stressed the dangers inherent in female sexuality. This solution appears convenient to historians. Like Empresses Dowager Lu, Teng, Wu, and Madame Mao, etc, Cixi encountered the same fate at the hands of historians – she allegedly used her charm to commit adultery, for example with Ronglu. With the fall of the Empire, no one was much interested in undoing the stereotype of Cixi as sex-mad. Yet, Sommer implies that it is hard for a widow to escape constant scrutiny from her brothers-in-law. They often hoped to discover that the widow was an infidel who could be expelled. In many cases, they would set up some traps to accuse her of being sexually polluted.¹⁹⁷ A false accusation might even put the widow's status into jeopardy. It is well-known that there was often a stormy relationship between Cixi and her brothers-in-law, especially Prince Gong. This stormy relationship could be possible if Cixi's brothers-in-law were the same kind that Sommer discusses in his book. Thus, if Cixi was not chaste, she could have been caught and brought down by

her rivals. Taking a generally acceptable view of a widow's greatest rivals – brothers-in-law seeking to make life more difficult for her – thus, she almost had no chance of committing adultery. About chastity (as I said earlier, this special quality could allow a widow to win glorious respect and dignity), she passed the test.

Concerning the tense relationship between Cixi and her brothers-in-law that the triangular relation led to, in addition to Cixi's chastity, there is a crucial scene in which Cixi sat down behind a curtain during the time of Tongzhi's and Guangxu's minority. The two emperors still needed their regent for supervision. When the little emperors sat at the front, Cixi sat behind the *silk yellow gauze curtain*.¹⁹⁸ Numerous Chinese historians and writers interpreted the two emperors as puppets and regarded an invisible and mysterious regent as 'a black hand controlling the whole political affairs.' This yellow curtain was given an evil, dark, secretive and negative meaning. Seagrave explains this screen as making the "woman invisible" so that "women were able to participate in family life (or in court life) without seeming to be physically 'present', which would have disturbed the sensibilities of Confucian males."¹⁹⁹ Derling more directly explains the reason why this screen was made, as follows.

Prince [Gong] had ordained that a woman as beautiful as [Cixi], and young moreover, should not hold audience with the ministers, which made an official job for [Tongzhi]. In order to avoid comment, or to avoid being considered immodest, [Cixi] caused a [curtain] to be built behind her throne.²⁰⁰

Seagrave and Derling have the same view of Cixi's curtain. The curtain was made not by Cixi herself but set up by established precedents, adopted by the male prince, Prince Gong.²⁰¹ Within months of Prince Gong's death in 1898, Cixi resumed her meetings with foreigner ministers and their wives. In *Court Life in Peking*, Isaac Headland thinks that her motive for this new move "may have been that she hoped by this stroke of diplomacy to gain some measure of recognition as head of the government" and "at least [to] see how

she was regarded.²⁰² At that time, she was the real household head and could decide anything in Court and also concerning public affairs without consulting her brothers-in-law. Her transformation into an old widow as well as into a real household head allowed her to win power since the great obstacle to her had disappeared. Many writers and historians focus on her audiences after 1902 and ignore the fact that her audiences actually started in 1898. Their view is that the change from her inactive state into active political activity for reform was purely due to the Western allies' defeat of China in August 1900. However, the fact of her meetings with foreigners in 1898 and March 1900 (before her defeat by foreign troops) should not be excluded.²⁰³ Thus, Cixi's willingness to appear in public was not enforced by Western allies. Rather, this has something to do with Prince Gong's death (among Xianfeng's surviving brothers, Prince Gong was the last to die).²⁰⁴ Therefore, the final step towards Cixi's winning power was furnished by the death of the male members of the imperial household.

In the LPE portrait for the public (Fig. 1), there are two distinct elements concerning Cixi: her hands are seen; and her right hand holds a handkerchief and her left hand rests on a cushion – not part of the standard female imperial pose, but rather that for males. Cixi's 'female' elements in this portrait – her frontal, full-length body, proper dress, headdress, hiding her feet, no make-up on her face, and phoenixes in the background screen show her restraint and domestic appearance. Her 'male' imperial pose elements – her hands are visible and the composition is not symmetrical – show her daring and public look. Thus, in her public image, Cixi might be said to have two bodies: one is her natural and female body; the other is her political, public and masculine body. As a whole, she shows her 'androgynous' body in public. In the examples of the widowed mothers of Mencius, Ou Yangxiu and Chen Shiwei, we find no contradiction between public development and the emphasis on women's duty. These widows functioned not

only as moral guardians and familial managers providing nurture -- the traditional female domestic role -- but also as providers who needed to make a living, just like a man. Besides playing the female and motherly role, e.g. organizing domestic and moral affairs, Cixi also played a male and fatherly role, e.g. taking responsibility in public and political matters. There was no split between the domestic sphere and official (or public) sphere in the case of her widowhood. Cixi certainly functioned in both spheres. This is exactly what Cixi did after 1898 (the year of death of Cixi's last surviving brother-in-law, Prince Gong).

Ban Chao as the Mother of 'widowhood'

Ban Chao (48-117 A.D.), a female moralist and scholar, was the first thinker to formulate a single complete statement of female ethics.²⁰⁵ She wrote an influential essay called "Lessons for Women" (*nu jie*), involving seven sections -- Humility, Husband and Wife, Respect and Caution, Womanly Qualifications, Whole-hearted Devotion, Implicit Obedience, Harmony with Younger Brothers- and Sisters-in-law. In the work, her main contribution was to select old traditions or aphorisms that could, she thought, be suitable to exemplify a woman's virtues, to make comments and interpretation on these sayings, and then to set out what an ideal married woman should have in her daily life.²⁰⁶ For example, in the section on Implicit Obedience, Ban Chao quotes from *A Pattern for Women (Nu Xian)* as follows: "to win the love of one man is the crown of a woman's life; to lose the love of one man is her eternal disgrace." Next, she comments: "This saying advises a fixed will and a whole-hearted devotion for a woman. Ought she then to lose the hearts of her father- and mother-in-law? [When a woman faces her parent-in-law,] nothing is better than an obedience which sacrifices personal opinion." Then, she advises what a woman should do practically: "Whenever the mother-in-law says, 'Do not do that,'

and if [t]hat is right, unquestionably the daughter-in-law obeys. Whenever the mother-in-law says, 'Do that,' even if what she says is wrong, still the daughter-in-law submits unfailingly to the command." She finally concludes by quoting a different passage from the same book *A Pattern for Women* as follows. "If a daughter-in-law is like an echo and a shadow [to her mother-in-law], how could she not be praised?"²⁰⁷ Whether a mother-in-law is right or not, a daughter-in-law should play an obedient role – sacrificing her personal views, following her mother-in-law's words, and also being an echo or shadow.

After Ban Chao died, plenty of her successors, regarding her as an exemplar, carried on her deep-rooted influence until the Qing Dynasty. Ban Chao's sister-in-law, Cao Fengsheng, wrote a book teaching female virtues; Song Ruohua, a women, wrote *Analects for Women (Nu lun yu)*; Chen Maso's wife, Chen Shi, wrote *Book of Filial Piety for Women (Nu xiao jing)*.²⁰⁸ In addition, Zhen's *Book for Women (Nu zi jing)*, Lan Luzhou's *Learning for Women (Nu xue)*, *History of Women (Nu shi)*, *Training for Women (Nu xuan)*, *Domestic Exemplars (Gui fan)*, *Exemplars for Women (Nu fan)*, etc. are also works unchangingly following Ban Chao's moral views. Amazingly, in the Qing dynasty, Ban Chao's life and works were often suggested as subjects for essays required in the examination system.²⁰⁹ With the awakening of new respect for her moral teachings and the embodiment of her female virtues, imaginative portraits of her started appearing. One painting called "Madame Cao [also means Ban Chao, because she married to a man called Cao Shou] Teaching" (Fig. 40), painted by a famous court painter Jin Tingbiao (?-1767), collected by the Qianlong and Jiaging emperors, portrays Ban Chao sitting at a table using a pen brush to write calligraphy and two mothers holding their children standing by her side to look at her writing.²¹⁰ This portrait shows that her personality was highly praised again in the Qing period. In addition, the two most famous collections are the *Wu Shuang Pu* of the early part of Kangxi's period and *Jie Zi Yuan Hua Zhuan* by Wang Anjie. This

imaginative portrait by unknown artist became the model or the inspiration for many others in various later collections.²¹¹ None of these portrayals ranked high in comparison with the great paintings of figures in other previous dynasties, but they proved a widespread phenomenon favouring Ban Chao as a representative Chinese woman of the Qing dynasty.

Ban Chao was invited to be an instructress by the Ho emperor (89-105 AD) to Ho's young wife, Empress Teng. At that time, the empress was very young; Ban Chao, who was said to have shown "the canons of widowhood," was a widow of over fifty.²¹² After the Ho emperor died, the twenty-five-year-old empress became a regent in 106 A.D. when the heir was only an infant. One year later, the heir died and his cousin, a boy of 13, became the successor. Owing to the An emperor's minority, she carried on being a regent until her death at the age of 40 in 121 A.D. Fan Yeh records, "When the empress Teng became regent she conferred with Ban Chao concerning [affairs of] state." Not only was Ban Chao able to interfere in governmental affairs, but also what she said had a strong impact. Fan Yeh concludes that "at one word from Mother Pan the whole family [including the] the empress' brother, General Teng,] resigned."²¹³ So, Ban Chao played a leading part in on the political stage. The essay, "Lesson for Women," could be thought to have improved Empress Teng in moral sense. More importantly, what Ban Chao taught Empress Teng forms a pattern, that is, of a mother-figure giving a moral teaching to a young girl. In addition, Ban Chao also clearly explains her reason why she composed the essay, "my son Ku... is a man and able to plan his own life. I need not again have concern for him." She continues, "But I do grieve that you, my daughters, just now at the age for marriage, have not at this time had gradual training and advice; that you still have not learned the proper customs for married women... In order that you may have something wherewith to benefit your persons, I wish every one of you, my daughters, each to write

out a copy for yourself.”²¹⁴ So the system of moral principles that she created was primarily intended to train her young daughters. Here, again, the pattern was formed of a mother towards her daughter (or an infertile woman towards a fertile girl). For a long time, doubtless, her instructions carried on until even modern China, as a matter of fact, urged control of mothers towards and over daughters (or elder women towards young girls).

Power was thus not for young and attractive women, but for female elders and widows who “emerged as the *de facto loci* of authority within the lineage or its household.”²¹⁵ Young women necessarily sacrifice their enjoyment, to suffer patiently, modestly swallow pain and suffering and learn how to handle the household in preparation for being influential and powerful in the future. Derek Maitland thinks that this is the training of women for perfect wifehood and old age.²¹⁶ It means they spend their whole young days staying behind the public stage, making provision for their old age. The Western adage *carpe diem* (“seize the day”) never crossed their minds. Women would not appear in the public domain until they were old enough and then would be able to enjoy more freedom.²¹⁷ When young girls became old widows one day, after encountering cruel trials, their heart could not love, but was full of coldness, hatred and bitterness. They treated their daughters and daughters-in-law without love, but rather with cruelty. This is a continuous non-stop process, carried from one generation to another. There is a passage written by an American medical missionary Charles Taylor about Chinese traditional footbinding: “One day, as [I and my wife] were passing a Chinese dwelling..., we heard most piteous and imploring screams. On looking in at the open door, we saw a mother binding the feet of her little girl, who was seated on a high bench. We have seldom seen such a look of anguish as marred that fair, young face; and such an expression of cruel indifference to the torture of her child as rested on the countenance of the mother.” In addition, in Chinese families, the cruelty of mothers-in-law towards daughters-in-law is

often recounted in numerous stories. This was how elder women treated younger girls (whether in their families by birth or by marriage). In modern eyes, some of these customs appear cruel and unbelievable. However, under the values that Chinese society shared in the past, the cruel practices would, Chinese mothers believed, be finally beneficial to their daughters.²¹⁸ These mothers probably meant well. So did mothers-in-law. Thus one can question the view that it was patriarchal dominance that forced women be unable to enjoy freedom. Rather than making men take all the blame, there should be acknowledgment of women's substantial willingness to agree on and follow, rather than to rebel against the system.

In the section of this chapter on Sexuality and Old Age, it was shown how the Court was transformed while all the ladies at Court were under Cixi's control, not under that of Tongzhi and Guangxu. To be discussed now are Cixi's two daughters-in-law, Alute (a beloved wife to Tongzhi) and Concubine Pearl (Guangxu's favourite concubine). Both were lively and loved so much by Cixi's two sons. Both died in their youth. It has been suggested that they could not get along with Cixi at all – the tense relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law was no great surprise. According to the official record, Alute died by suicide soon after Tongzhi's death.²¹⁹ Concubine Pearl, who was a modern reformer encouraging Guangxu to carry out modernization for the country, died from being pushed into a well behind Zhenshun Gate (*Zhen shun men*). After coming back to Beijing from Xi'an in 1902, Cixi said that Concubine Pearl committed suicide in 1900. In these two incidents, the way of death in official records is the same – killing themselves for honour. Are these accounts true? The authenticity of official records is debatable.²²⁰ It is much more likely that Concubine Pearl did not commit suicide, but was pushed by a eunuch, Cui Yugui, on the orders of Cixi. The process is fully and vividly recorded in He Rong'er's memoir.²²¹ Whether Alute committed suicide of her own or following Cixi's

cruel hint or order has not yet been fully proved. But, using the mentality of old widows (Cixi was one of them), with little doubt, Cixi could possibly have used a harsh or bitter way to treat Alute even if Cixi did not actually directly kill her.

Flaw

China was challenged by a series of military defeats during Cixi's reign. The nation's hopelessness lasted to the end of the Qing dynasty. Some people were pessimistic. Among these, some, like government officials, could not bear seeing the Western invasion and a great tradition's fall, and they finally committed suicide. Some used opium to cope with episodes of depression. These two reactions are ways of neutering the normal human response of frustration and disappointment at the decline of one's country. But the faith of some other Chinese people in political action was actually strengthened. These men looked forward to a world in which failure, hunger, and poverty were eradicated. Nationalist and patriotic fervour grew. Such intellectuals included Kang Youwei and his followers who supported monarchy but thought China needed reform and Sun Yat-sen and his followers who were believers in total republicanism; the other groups were grass-roots Boxer rebels. Whereas the former were keen on cooperating with West and Japan and eager to learn from them, the latter kept away from West and held tightly on to as much tradition as they could. Both groups were people of great passion. Cixi saw the divisions. Furthermore, she saw some differences between China and the West and faced the fact that China was experiencing a painful struggle and conflict between new and old – including modern ways of trading and capitalism (opposite to principles of traditional morality and spiritualism), of new military technology (ruining the palaces and attacking Chinese people), of Christianity (forbidding the worship of ancestors), science (cutting off superstition) and democracy (making the government appeal to the majority

of people, as against elite rule by the Manchurian minority), etc. In such a period of demand for knowledge and information about outside world, Cixi chose to support the conservative way instead of modernization. She is said to have been a power-crazed, stubborn, incorrigible ruler. She is also thought of as a person taking responsibility for all the terrible state of China. Should she be blamed for the Chinese Empire's failure? Two crucial aspects about the widow politician will be examined as follows: whether Cixi was literate or not and whether China was ruled by Cixi or by her Grand Councillors.

Was Cixi literate? Almost all biographers and people who saw her in person agree that she was a highly intelligent woman. But not every one thinks she was substantially literate. Scgrave states that the "truth is that as a young woman Yehenara did not know how to read or write either language, because it was not customary to teach girls to read and write.... Yehenara 'was almost, if not quite, illiterate'."²²² He continues that Cixi's only education had been that "she was fourteen when she was nominated as a candidate-concubine, sixteen when she was chosen, and eighteen when she completed the preparation. After this four-year ordeal, like an over-fastidious finishing school, she was as subdued and careful as a girl entering the inner sanctum of any royal family."²²³ Making a similar statement, Mariam Headland, a female doctor to Cixi's mother, Guangxu's sister-in-law and some other royal princess and ladies for twenty years, remarks: "[Yehenara] was not educated."²²⁴ Unlike other biographers who are vague on this issue, Headland and Seagrave dare to say she was almost illiterate. Are they right in this?

There is certainly no evidence showing Cixi was a scholar. Yet, something about Cixi's knowing Chinese characters is mentioned in many sources. There are three sources concerning her possible literacy. First, Cixi invited 'her reader' to read some books for her. Carl depicts the scene: "[w]hen the Empress Dowager went to her own apartments for her

‘siesta,’ her reader would come bringing volumes of her favourite authors. Some days I could hear his voice rising and falling in regular cadence during the whole time she was resting in her apartments...she was particularly interested in what had been read to her.”²²⁵ Secondly, Cixi wrote some calligraphy. She wrote some words with brush pens and then gave her calligraphic artwork as a beautiful gift to ambassadors and their wives. The Chinese characters that she repeated again and again were *fu* (happiness) and *shou* (long life). Thirdly, there is evidence from when Wu Yong, who was a local district magistrate in a small town called Huailai, seventy miles from Beijing, rescued Cixi on her way to Xi’an and encountered Cixi and the whole Court (who “showed plainly their fatigue and hunger”²²⁶). In his book *The Flight of an Empress*, he recalls that Cixi kindly asked him his name and he answered “it was ‘Yung [yong]’ meaning eternity, from the propitious phrase, ‘Everlasting happiness, eternal well-being.’” And, he continues: “the Empress Dowager on hearing this said, ‘Ah, is it the water ideograph with a dot?’ I answered, ‘It is, it is.’”²²⁷ Apparently, Cixi recognized the character *yong* (*yung*).

Do these above three sources falsify Headland’s and Seagrave’s opinion? The first example – Cixi’s enjoyment on her courtier’s reading – could not prove that she was a great literate lady because plenty ordinary and even illiterate Chinese are able to listen to the stories and enjoy them. About the second example, the characters, *shou* and *fu*, are not complicated and are recognisable by almost every Chinese person. The two characters that Cixi wrote on a piece of paper in a calligraphic method still survive (Fig. 41). Carl and Conger mention that Cixi’s favourite words are *shou* and *fu* and these two characters were often written to give to princes, ministers and foreign ladies as gifts.²²⁸ With a little practice, writing these words would have not been difficult. With regard to the third example, in the usual analysis of calligraphic standard script, the character *yong* includes the basic eight numbers of strokes of characters, called as *yong zi ba fa* (‘The Eight

Principles of Character *Yong*') whose eight numbers of strokes are *che* (dot), *le* (horizontal stroke), *nu* (vertical stroke), *ti* (stroke out and up from line), *ce* (dashing stroke), *lue* (long stroke made with a lower-left curve), *zhuo* (short stroke made with a lower-left curve), and *zhe* (long stroke made with a lower-right curve) (Fig. 42). To do good calligraphy, this character needs to be practised many times by beginners until they are familiar with every stroke. The implication is that it does not take much trouble to know this character *yong*, so this example too cannot prove that Cixi had substantial literacy. For these reasons, it should be reckoned that whether Cixi was a great scholar is seriously questionable – though she was perhaps not totally illiterate.

In a famous mid-Qing novel, *Story of Stone* (also called *Dream of the Red Chamber*), the characters include a young man, Jia Baoyu, his surrounding beloved girls, a powerful elderly widow, and many others. The whole story's setting was the domestic life of a wealthy household during the Qing dynasty. This novel was written much earlier than Cixi's period. Readers cannot read Cixi's real domestic life in this novel.²²⁹ Yet, this is a convincing novel to let readers to imagine what the possible life of Cixi in the palaces looked like.²³⁰ This novel depicts that all the girls could make paintings, read poems by heart and even make some clever poems in their leisure time. Their poems are involved with sentimental and romantic contents. The subject of their paintings was mainly flowers.²³¹ If the paintings made by Cixi are carefully examined (Figs 88, 89 & 90), their subjects are flowers, insects, birds, stones, etc – all these are what Cixi could see in her gardens.²³² Unlike Cixi's paintings, Qing *wen ren hua* ('intellectual painting') made by intellectuals are full of magnificent landscapes, including high mountains, forests, rivers, etc – all are what the outside world looked like. This art training that Cixi received was different from that of her contemporary intellectuals. Her vision and her way of training were naturally limited. The world that she saw was confined within walls and was purely

domestic. The way of her thinking and the things of her concern would be much narrower, being unable to be like intellectual men having wider views. Cixi had received only a *domestic training*, not any intellectual education. This training was not to teach her how to read, how to write, to know geography, to know history or to know of world events, but was a practical preparation for how to be careful, elegant, and obedient, how to make the emperor happy, how to enjoy leisure time, etc. Such domestic training would have left her with serious limitations as to political knowledge and judgement. Cixi could do Chinese paintings, was familiar with historical stories and legends, could read some famous classical phrases by heart, and could write some words in calligraphy – but these do not guarantee any great literacy. Her limitations could easily have led to the problem of living in ‘fear,’ ‘anxiety,’ ‘helplessness’ and worse, -- symptoms which Carl and Derling often claim to have seen.²³³

In respect of the relationship between Cixi and her councillors, in the past, the Qianlong and Jiaqing emperors could manage to embark on southern tour in China to investigate the life of people and know about the outside world. But Cixi was treated differently. Cixi was confined inside her enormous and glorious palaces. What information from outside the Palace came to her entirely through the eyes and the mouths of her Grand Councillors. Could Cixi rely on them to provide ‘eyes’ and ‘mouth’ for her? The following are examples to see whether Cixi’s Grand Councillors told her about reality to her or not, and to examine what their relationship was.

First, did Cixi’s councillors tell the truth to her? Long before the infamous Boxer Rebellion, Britain had greatly expanded her empire in Africa in the 1870s. Various sieges and battles resulted in British victories against colossal odds. From 1889, Britain had the ‘Maxim gun,’ the earliest machine gun, with which to kill African tribal fighters. In 1898, at the Battle of Omdurman, Britain famously killed 11,000 natives for the loss of only 28

British soldiers. The acerbic British poet, Hilaire Belloc, summed it up wittily: “Whatever happens, we have got / the Maxim gun and they have not.” If Cixi had known of these events, she could have predicted that the Western success in Africa could be similarly repeated in China. Her Grand Councillors did not tell Cixi the truth; on the contrary, they invited the three members of the Boxers to ‘demonstrate’ to Cixi that their bodies could not be hurt by guns or knives: ‘two of them, armed with spears, attacked the third, who in unarmed combat, repelled all their attack.’²³⁴ They laid on play-acting to deceive her. Cixi, apparently an awed onlooker, was completely convinced that these invulnerable and immortal Boxers would be immune to any weapons, even Western bullets. The fact of Cixi being cut off from the world and her not being intellectually educated must have been an enormous problem – especially since she was surrounded by sycophantic officials who clearly sometimes lied to her. Even though she was an intelligent lady, she could easily make a wrong judgement amidst such confusion. Thus, among the two nationalist groups – one was the intellectual one; the other was the grass-roots one – instead of accepting her intellectuals’ reforming views, Cixi did not get right advice and so made the biggest mistake of her life, encouraging the Boxers to attack Western forces.

Second, Lady Macdonald, as a leading figure in the group of diplomatic ladies by 1901, records in her published account her experience of how she and other foreign ladies managed to meet Cixi in 1898. She complained much about the Councillors:

The Empress was very curious to see us, but her Councillors objected strongly to this new and pro-foreign move, and tried in many ways to block our Audience....²³⁵

This passage shows with what difficulty these ladies reached Cixi. MacDonald concludes in her account that Cixi was “a woman swayed hither and thither by the counsels of her advisers, of whom the vast majority are certainly phenomenally ignorant of anything outside the ‘Middle Kingdom,’ and in addition arrogant and anti-foreign.”²³⁶

Third, according to Wu Yong, Cixi confessed to him, “[i]f you see anything outside or any great matter, you must write a memorial to me yourself, and not send it through the Grand Councillor.”²³⁷ From Cixi’s words, after the Boxer rebellion, her trust in her Grand Councillors had been much weakened. Wu also says that the Grand Councillors “were not pleased” that his report about outside world to Cixi “had been managed without consulting them.”²³⁸ One of Grand Councillors even blamed Wu’s direct communication with Cixi,

“What did you say ... in the presence of the Old Buddha?” he [the Grand Councillor] asked. “Today when the Grand Councillors came to audience they all struck snags. Old Buddha was very angry and scolded them in a loud voice. ‘Why do you not tell me about the things outside every day? You cover the eyes and stop the ears of both mother [Cixi] and son [Guanxu]!’ The councillors looked at one another questioningly and their colours changed, and no one knew what to answer. All they could do was to take off their hats, kneel, and kowtow to the Empress Dowager.”²³⁹

The revelation of Cixi’s distrust for her Grand Councillors and the councillor’s anger indicates that the Grand Councillors had kept back some truth from outside the Palace and had instead given Cixi some sweet and false reports. This resulted in two environments receiving different information and having a different understanding of world affairs.

Cixi was superficially the head of her country (she could even wield power after Prince Gong’s death); but in fact she was a puppet and victim of the corrupted and powerful Grand Councillors. There is also some explanation from Cixi’s widowhood. Cixi’s anti-sexuality and old age created an atmosphere of solemn awe and even horror. She also used her power only to command, and not to stimulate discussion and argument. Who watched the world for her? Who dealt with foreign affairs? Who fought for the nation? They were men, not women. She indeed attracted women and filled the Court up

with women. But she never took any trouble to reach her men's hearts. Comparing Cixi with two famous British female leaders, Elizabeth I and Margaret Thatcher, did the two English leaders have the same situation? Elizabeth made an effort to emphasize her waist and put on a lot of cosmetics – even appearing like a 'whore.' In her propaganda, she appeared a virgin – as well as actually remaining unmarried. This message suggested that the Queen was always available to every man. Thus she created an atmosphere of sexual opportunity and gave a space for her subjects' discussion of her. Lady Thatcher was a married woman with two children. She did not invite a single woman to join her Cabinet. All in her Cabinet were men who were a little older than her. She established an atmosphere of carefully and admiringly listening to these elder, intelligent and experienced men. She sometimes expressed her dislike of feminism. Instead, she praised men's work, including that of her husband and her Cabinet members. Although Elizabeth and Margaret Thatcher had different approaches – one was a virgin; the other was married – they had the same aim – attracting men and letting men sincerely and honestly tell the truth. Cixi's official Li Hongzhang was enchanted by the Russian Tsar's wife's beauty and youth when he was sent to Russia for the Tsar's coronation. Dealing with this matter, Cixi was extremely furious and fined him one-year's salary.²⁴⁰ Li was attracted by this Russian Tsarina, and not by Cixi. Cixi's widowhood's moral attitude – avoiding sexual attraction to men and opposing an approach towards men's heart – was perhaps her crucial political error.

Could 'ignorance be bliss?' Cixi heard every word of her councillors and saw the Boxers' performance in front of her. She was living in a world where the sycophantic and untruthful courtiers were everywhere and telling her lies. So what she 'knew' was perhaps as much illusion as reality. Inside the famous cave in Plato's *Republic*, the prisoners were chained and unable to turn their heads to see what was behind them. All they could see

was the wall of the cave. Behind them was a burning fire. Between the fire and the prisoners was a parapet along which puppeteers walked. The puppets that the puppeteers cast shadows on to the wall of the cave. The prisoners could not see these puppets, the real things that passed behind them. What the prisoners saw and heard were shadows and echoes cast by things that they never saw. Such prisoners might mistake the shadows for reality. They might think the things they saw on the wall (the shadows) were real; they would know nothing of the real causes of the shadows. Cixi's situation was exactly the same as that of these prisoners in Plato's cave. She was chained behind the closed doors of the Forbidden City: she mistook for reality that was in fact only her home, her domestic world and her illusions. When Cixi met Robert Hart in 1902 for the first time (this meeting lasted for twenty minutes), Cixi wept openly and repeatedly told him that the Boxer troubles were "all due to ignorance."²⁴¹ She herself agreed with the idea that her own "ignorance" was the main reason for her failure in the Boxer crisis. Ignorance coming from her education and her isolation could easily have resulted in the problem – living in 'fear', 'anxiety' and 'helplessness' and finally making the wrong decisions. Wasima Alikhan thinks that 'Ignorance breeds hate.'²⁴² And David Coleman thinks that 'hate breeds violence and violence breeds death, destruction and heartache.'²⁴³ In short, ignorance leads to disaster. Thus ignorance cannot generally be bliss – nor was it in Cixi's case.

Like the prince's wife's role in the family portrait (Fig. 43) where the prince on the right is reading a book whereas his wife on the left is in charge of domestic duty, Cixi's was simply a traditional *domestic* woman. She was trained to be a woman who followed traditional Confucian principles – always looking back, not forward; and to be a wife who was expected to support her husband's political views – which were conservative. She relied on traditional laws and customs. She thought that the moral sense she applied to

politics would be always backed up and licensed by inflexible traditional law. Her *domestic moral* instinct immediately rejected all these Western progressive developments: her negative attitude was specially towards Western materialism, which she connected with immorality.²⁴⁴ Since Cixi made use of domestic morality, filial piety and discipline too much in political affairs, it seems that Cixi could not face the world's progressive changes, and thus finally appeared and remained backward. All her decisions were made in a moral context. It never occurred to her that the morality that she followed in a traditional way through her life was wrong. How could she admit that traditional Chinese values in which she believed correctly were inadequate to a changing world? Her widowhood was a source of strength but, resulting in Cixi's focus on domestic morality for her country, it was arguably also a politically tragic flaw.

Conclusion

To sum up, a female's marginalized role in public was not an insuperable obstacle for powerful women such as Empress Dowager Cixi. A widow could become influential in the public sphere through the following achievements from her youth to her old age: her remaining chaste, her son or sons having successful achievements, and winning over her brother(s)-in-law. The death of Cixi's husband (the Xianfeng emperor) and her getting through all trials led to increases in her power.²⁴⁵ In her whole 47-year political career, widowhood was a significant shield. She was proud of publicly following Qing moral codes – no make-up and a blue-toned dress, presenting the image of old age and rather than sexuality. A high standard of morality was what China always stood for. However, in spite of passing all the extremely difficult trials, she still had Grand Councillors, as go-betweens between outside world and herself and in the end became a

kind of a woman deceived by these 'eyes and ears.' Widowhood resulted in a ruler having problems of understanding the world, of limited literacy, ignorance and traditionalism. Her commanding nature was unable to insist on honest opinions and truth from her councillors; and she unchangingly carried on her husband's old-fashioned views and brought domestic moral principles governing the household into politics – flaws which could not allow China to catch up with the world's rapid progress. Unfortunately, Cixi's widowhood – though a strength to her – was a significant reason for Imperial China's downfall.

Chapter Three

Wrecking the Image of an Empress

Sir Edmund Backhouse (1873 –1944) was a Sinologist, writer, historian, translator and philanthropist.²⁴⁶ He arrived in China in 1898 and stayed there until his death – though from 1921 he led the life of a ‘recluse.’²⁴⁷ The year 1898 was that of the Hundred Day Reform.²⁴⁸ China, especially in the South, was experiencing a wave of strong faith that new political thinking and activities could lead to the country’s improvement.²⁴⁹

Backhouse became aware of the hostility of Chinese people to Cixi in social discussions and publications. He remarks that “many unfounded and ridiculous stories have been circulated in recent years attributing to the Empress Dowager humble, and sometimes disgraceful, antecedents.” He continues that these “malicious storics were freely circulated, and often believed, in Peking [Beijing] and in the South: witness the writings of Kang Youwei and his contemporaries.”²⁵⁰ He thought these criticisms of Cixi had a “frankly prejudiced character” and also were “[not] worthy of complete confidence.”²⁵¹ The tone of this statement of his doubts about these rumours makes it sound as if he was a supporter of Cixi; but, considered carefully, these are only one or two sentences from his books. The truth is actually far from what he implies here.

The year 1908, ten years after Backhouse arrived at China, was the best time to write about Cixi. Her sudden death in 1908, the drama of Zaitian’s early subsequent death and the exciting political implications of these events all stirred up curiosity and naturally caused great interest and speculation among Western observers. The world was waiting for someone who could clarify the history of Cixi’s whole life and some rumours about her – including that of what had been the relationship between Cixi and her courtiers and

eunuchs. How had her co-regent Empress Cian unexpectedly died in 1881? Had Cixi officially played a crucial part in the Boxer Rebellion and the Siege of the Legation? How had she dealt with the messy days in the Forbidden City when she fled Rehe (during the Anglo-French strike against China of 1860) and also when she escaped to Xi'an as a refugee (during the invasion of Eight-Power Allied Forces of 1900-1)? Zaitian's and Cixi's deaths gave Backhouse an opportunity to emerge from ten years of obscurity. Coincidentally, at that time, George Morrison, who was normally a leading contributor of news, was absent from Beijing. Morrison asked J.O.P. Bland, who was originally a journalist in Shanghai and moved to Beijing in 1907, to stand in for him in case anything dramatic happened during his absence. Morrison's absence meant that a wonderful chance fell to Bland and Backhouse, whose friendship started growing very soon after Cixi's death.²⁵² Bland and Backhouse began writing about the dead Dowager Empress in the *London Times* and in two jointly authored books – *China under the Empress Dowager* (1910) and the later *Annals & Memoirs of the Court of Peking* (1914).²⁵³ Their writings, especially their two books, elaborated on myths about Cixi and were intended to satisfy people eager to know about her.²⁵⁴

In order to achieve credence for what he said, several diaries were mentioned by Backhouse as his 'sources and references.' These diaries include those of: Qingshan (furnishing a record of the myths of "the inner history of the Court of Peking during the height of the Boxer Crisis and the Siege of the Legations" in 1900); a Chief Eunuch to Cixi, Li Lianying (who wrote of the relationship between Cixi and her son Zaichun and the causes of Zaichun's and his wife Alute's death); and "a certain Doctor of Letters and member of the Hanlin Academy" (telling of the escape of Xianfeng, Cixi and the whole Court to Rehe in 1861).²⁵⁵ It was upon these diaries and a few other original documents that Backhouse repeatedly claimed to rely. Backhouse claimed that he held these original

diaries and documents – though actually they were later proved to be non-existent or faked. He made it appear that he translated them. Subsequently, Bland ‘revised’ those translations; but it was Backhouse’s ‘work’ that was decisive.²⁵⁶

Backhouse’s articles and two books were successfully published and enjoyed much popularity.²⁵⁷ The diaries and documents are indeed impressive. The *Spectator* in 1910 reviewed *China under the Empress Dowager* saying “[i]t publishes for the first time documents which but for the diligence of the authors would never have come under English eyes,” “represent[s] the truth, or [at least] the approximate truth,” and expresses “highly respectable condemnation of [the] profligacy and extravagance which emanated from ... Tzu Hsi [Cixi].”²⁵⁸ The book was also praised in the *Spectator* in 1912 as follows: “The book contains nothing so precious as the diary of the Chinese courtier who recorded all the emotions and agitated expédients of the Empress Dowager and her hangers-on during the siege of the Legations in the Boxer rising.”²⁵⁹ *China under the Empress Dowager* was published in 1910 – the same year in which the other biography of Cixi, Philip Walsingham Sergeant’s *The Great Empress Dowager of China*, was also published. Sergeant’s book, in fact, was published earlier than Backhouse’s. Sergeant, in his Preface, mentioned how the hatred of Westerners in China towards Cixi had become transformed into eulogies by 1910. He wrote:

When I went out to China to edit the *Hong Kong Daily Press*, the Boxer troubles were just approaching their acutest point. It was customary then for foreign journalists and other residents on the China coast to speak of the Empress Dowager as a bloodthirsty old harridan, a murderous-hearted hag, and the like... Times have changed since then. We have read in recent years many whole-hearted eulogies of the Old Empress Dowager, both before and after her death two years ago. For some reason which I cannot profess to explain, it is from American pens that the warmest praise has come.²⁶⁰

This passage obviously claims that Western circles were generally in favour of Cixi by 1910. The new 'eulogies' could have come from the Legation ladies. From 1898, after Prince Gong's death, Cixi had begun a new campaign to give her a new image. She very often had audiences with foreigners such as ambassadors and royal princes, and especially foreign ladies (most of whom were the wives of ambassadors from other countries); and she attended to them very carefully. Cixi's new campaign did affect matters a lot. In 1904, Cixi's portrait was painted by an American painter, Katherine Carl, and sent to America for the St Louis Exposition. In 1906, Carl published *With the Empress Dowager of China* in which she portrayed Cixi as a wonderful empress. Then, in 1909, Isaac Taylor Headland and Sarah Pike Conger published respectively *Court Life in China* and *Letter from China* in which they gave Cixi much praise. They often defended Cixi in the press. All these changed Cixi from being a reviled to being a respected figure.

However, soon, in October of 1910, Backhouse's *China under the Empress Dowager* created a second reversal of opinion. Backhouse was Cixi's first really critical biographer. After him, there grew up a largely negative industry concerning Cixi to satisfy Westerners' curiosity. The *Spectator* often emphasized Backhouse's books when it mentioned news about China or the Chinese. It was as if Backhouse's record was taken as the real truth about China. For example, the "News of the Week" section of the *Spectator* of April 15, 1911, gave the news of the death of Li Lianying, a Chief Eunuch to Cixi, and remarked that "Readers of Messrs. Bland and Backhouse's most interesting book on the late Empress Dowager [Cixi] will remember the account of the ascendancy established over the Empress's mind by Li Lien-ying [Li Lianying] during the Boxer outbreak and the siege of the Legations."²⁶¹ The "Obituaries" section of the *Times* used the phrase "Sir E. T. Backhouse: an eminent authority on China" as a title to praise Backhouse's contribution.²⁶² Also, there were several main biographies of Cixi written by Westerners

like Daniel Varè, Marina Warner and Keith Laidler which made extensive use of Backhouse's books as their main source. Varè, in his preface to *The Last of the Empresses*, mentions, "[f]rom the inspiration of *China under the Empress Dowager* was born my desire to write a book on the same subject" and strongly condemned Cixi as "the ruler who had committed such unpardonable crimes" and also used ironic phrases to describe those foreign ladies, the great supporters of Cixi, as "poor little Mrs. So-and-so" and "not very sophisticated women-folk of the foreign community."²⁶³ Backhouse's great influence has lasted until the present time, in which Keith Laidler has written *The Last Empress: the She-Dragon of China* (published in 2003) where Backhouse still serves as the main source. In Laidler's book, he still uses Backhouse's typical tone - e.g. Cixi used 'cunning and bloody plots to murder her enemies' -- to blacken Cixi's name.²⁶⁴ Thus Backhouse's books did a great deal to shape Westerners' views of Cixi.

Can Backhouse be trusted?

Debate about whether the record that Backhouse supplied was genuine lasted throughout his lifetime. Nearing the end of Backhouse's life, he received encouragement from Reinhard Hoeppli (1893-1973), a staff member of the Beijing Union Medical College during 1930-1941 and Honorary Swiss Consul in charge of American, British, and Dutch interests in Beijing during the Pacific War.²⁶⁵ Hoeppli became acquainted with Backhouse and visited him "for many months nearly daily" until his death.²⁶⁶ At that time, Backhouse wrote two memoirs for this new patron – actually his last writings, *The Dead Past* and *Décadence Manchuoue*.²⁶⁷ In the two memoirs, he constantly emphasized his innocence, replying to critics of his honesty "I deny the accusation 'in toto'" and saying there was in his writing "nothing but the truth, the whole truth and the absolute truth."²⁶⁸ Also, to handle his critics, he used the supposed words of Cixi's favourite eunuch, Li

Lianying, who had once paid a compliment on his honesty: 'you are like the water lotus emerging from the slime, the one honest man among so many looting and murderous Europeans and Americans; you are as rare as the morning star which shimmers, a point on the bright verge of dawn.'²⁶⁹ However, there is no proof that this eunuch ever really met and talked to him. Backhouse also now criticised his co-writer Bland and his colleague Morrison who had both played a crucial part in his life but then lost trust in him.²⁷⁰ He repeatedly denied all accusations in his memoirs. From his repetitions, it can be seen that he was indeed fearful that his name would be ruined by 'lies.'

Can his defences and his use of diaries and documents as his references to describe Cixi's life prove that he was an honest man – or do they make him appear even worse? About the Qingshan diary, when Bland met Morrison in London in 1910 and showed him 'the prospectus in which the reference was made the central document, the diary of Qingshan,' Morrison 'read it with a sickly smile' and said that Backhouse must have invented it; however, he did not provide any evidence against Backhouse. Some historians including Sir R. F. Johnston (1874-1938), who was a tutor to the last emperor of China and later wrote a famous book *Twilight in the Forbidden City* (1934), argued that the diary was authentic. Later, a British journalist, William Lewisohn, and a Dutch sinologist, J. J. L. Duyvendak, questioned the authenticity of this diary. Some other Chinese scholars, like Fang Chaoying and Cheng Mingchou, also believed the diary to be a fake, raising questions like the following. How could Backhouse have been able to recognize the document written in a special and difficult Chinese writing style *cao shu* ('grass-hand')? Why did Backhouse always delay supplying some other part of the original diary that had not been published in *China under Empress Dowager*? Why was the remainder of the diary not submitted to Duyvendak after Backhouse promised that he would let it be seen? There are also many discrepancies between the actual events of the Boxer Uprising and

the record in the diary. Some speeches ascribed in this diary to Cixi and Ronglu (one of Cixi's favourite courtiers) did not come from real conversations, but were copied from imperial edicts and public memorials.²⁷¹

It took much time to establish the Qingshan Diary was a fake. Morrison was the first person who was sure that the diary was invented. Morrison went to Beijing as a journalist in 1897. He held a strong view – that a republican democracy could guide China towards the best future. That he could neither speak nor read Chinese was his Achilles heel. In recent years, political correctness (e.g. taking a negative view of the British Empire and Western imperialism) has become dominant. Historians like Sterling Seagrave and Hugh Trevor-Roper criticised Morrison's ignorance of Chinese language and his arrogance, ambition, and radical imperialism. In spite of these, Morrison's intelligence actually led him to have good judgement – and to be right about Qingshan's diary at the very beginning and subsequently.²⁷²

Concerning the diary of Li Lianying who had been accused of poisoning Cixi's mind for around forty years thanks to his influential position, Mr. M. E. Weatherall, a businessman interested in Chinese art, had been told by Backhouse that the complete diary of Li Lianying and a translation from Chinese into English were in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University – to which Backhouse donated his Chinese collections. However, when Weatherall went to this library, he could not find the original diary – only two typed pages of translation.²⁷³ In fact, this diary never existed. Charlotte Haldane remarks that there were few reliable sources on the life of Cixi and she also specially mentioned the Annals of the Qing dynasty are “in several instances as unreliable as the libels published by the Empress's enemies.”²⁷⁴ Although she did not directly mention Backhouse's name and his book, her words strongly imply that this book is *Annals & Memoirs*. By 1976, Oxford University's Trevor-Roper, who is the only (but highly

competent) biographer of Backhouse, had completed his *The Hidden Life the Enigma of Sir Edmund Backhouse*, a careful research into Backhouse's whole life and work. In 1992, Seagrave also wrote extensively about Backhouse in his substantial volume *Dragon Lady*. Both of them carefully and persuasively prove – by examining many diaries and much correspondence from Morrison, Bland and Hart and some other original documents – that Backhouse had really been an outrageous liar. Robert Twigger thinks that even without Trevor-Roper's hard work to find evidence to prove that the contents of Backhouse's memoirs are inauthentic, people can easily use their 'instinct' to judge that the stories are made up.²⁷⁵ Truth cannot be reliably found in Backhouse's writings.

Trust in Backhouse should thus be zero. However, the chief concern of this chapter is not with the authenticity of Backhouse's stories about Cixi and China, but with how his views on Cixi influenced many writers who used his works as a bible. His opinions and pretences are an important source when studying the start of the anti-Cixi campaign and the development of Cixi's negative image. Concerning his two memoirs, *The Dead Past* and *Décadence Manchouie*, the first deals with his own childhood, his relation with his mother, and his life in Europe; the second one contains his stories about China and his new relation with Cixi – were also doubted by Hoeppli as lacking any precise 'historic value.'²⁷⁶ Despite this, readers of the memoirs can learn something of Backhouse's mind, psychology, and imagination in relation to Cixi. He preposterously tried to link his own life with the fate of Cixi. Whether these stories are true or false is immaterial. Hoeppli, who thought Backhouse's stories were worthy of being preserved for the world and therefore asked him to write them down, thinks that Backhouse's writings "represent a wealth of material for psychological study of the author's highly complex personality."²⁷⁷ This is what matters – it is important to find the source of the false contemporary accusations against Cixi and to understand how she was portrayed not only by Backhouse

but by the many other historians who based themselves on his books. However, in order to understand how Backhouse came to develop his story-telling, it is necessary to discuss something about his intellectual development and connection with contemporary late-Victorian England. The discussion will bring us to see further questions such as: What was his psychology and motivation? Why did he wield his sharp, even libellous pen against Cixi? Why did he consider the Empress Dowager from China to have a fate connected with his own? What were the main criticisms he made of her? How did he wreck her good image and ruin her reputation? What is the essential nature of Cixi's wrecked image?

Wilde and Backhouse

In Joseph Danhauser's painting, *Liszt at the Piano*, a bust of Beethoven (who began the Romantic Movement in music) is set by a curtain on the right and a profile of Byron (who began Romanticism in literature) is on the wall in the middle. Franz Liszt (1811-1886) is playing the piano. Additionally, there are another six famous followers of Romanticism arranged clockwise from the bottom right hand corner as follows: Marie d'Agoult, George Sand, Dumas Père, Victor Hugo, N. Paganini, and G. Rossini. The painter imagined that these major intellects might have met to listen to the music played by Liszt and to worship the romantic spirit of Beethoven and Byron. Danshauser's painting involved a largely French circle of romantics. However, the romantic spirit of Byronism had also been admired and widely emulated in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and influenced numerous famous people, like Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1st Baron Lytton, 1803-1873), Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-1882), Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), T. E. Lawrence (1888-1935), and so on.²⁷⁸ Although different in their own

ways, they have many features in common: they were all witty, talented, creative, rebellious, aristocratic, intellectual, political, revolutionary, sexually reckless, narcissistic (obsessed with their self-images) and had a love of exotic and oriental things.²⁷⁹ As for Backhouse, he himself combined all the traits of these famous celebrities and was deeply imbued with the British nineteenth-century romantic spirit.

Among all the figures of romantic spirit who have been mentioned, Oscar Wilde was the only person with whom Backhouse claimed to have a strong personal connection: in his memoirs, besides constantly using Wilde's lines, Backhouse claimed that he joined Wilde's homosexual circle, that he had sexual relations with Wilde and that his bankruptcy of 1895 resulted from his financial support for Wilde to fight his famous lawsuit with Lord Alfred Douglas' father, the Marquis of Queensberry.²⁸⁰ Backhouse bears a striking resemblance to Wilde. Both of them were born in high society and ended their lives dying in foreign lands (France, and China). They were well-educated (at Oxford) and classicophilic. Backhouse himself combined all the traits of an "aesthete of the Decadent Nineties" – he was a dandy – full of charm, wit and humor and passionately admiring the ancient Greek relationship between men and younger boys.²⁸¹ Like Wilde, Backhouse also experienced anxiety about British people's view of 'sodomites' (the term which the Marquis of Queensberry used against Wilde) at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the same year as Wilde's trials, Backhouse left Oxford without a degree. In 1898, he appeared in China. During the three years between the two incidents, Backhouse went missing. Trevor-Roper calls these three years of "a total blank" as providing the "formation of his character and tastes, and in the direction of his later life."²⁸² Yet the development of his character and tastes may have started during his Oxford days or even earlier. While writing about his Merton undergraduate friend Backhouse, William

Rothenstein writes that Backhouse was an “eccentric” person. While Backhouse, Rothenstein and Max Beerbohm sometimes had dinner together, Backhouse in the middle of dinner “would make some excuse and leave us for the rest of the evening. He worshipped Ellen Terry; once he engaged a whole row of stalls which he filled with undergraduate friends.”²⁸³ As well as linking up with Max Beerbohm, Backhouse also associated with George Cecil Ives, Theodore Wratishlaw, and J. F. Bloxam who were living an ancient Greek homosexual way of life (the most influential idea was that expounded by Aristophanes in Plato’s *Symposium*) during their undergraduate days (most were Oxford men but Ives was a Cambridge man). The magazine *The Chameleon* which Bloxam edited carried a short story (“The Priest and the Acolyte”) written by Bloxam, two poems (“Praise of Shame” and “Two Loves”) by Lord Alfred Douglas, and Wilde’s “Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young.” *The Chameleon* was brought to sensational attention during Wilde’s trial. From all this, Backhouse can be said to have had connections with Wilde and his lover ‘Bosie.’ It is possible that both of them met Backhouse or even that Backhouse belonged to Oscar’s homosexual circle (Bosie and Backhouse were students at Merton College, Oxford, at the same time). In spite of this being a possibility, there is no evidence that Backhouse truly met or had a sexual relationship with Wilde. In December 1895, he was declared bankrupt – what a coincidence! If he did finance Wilde, leading to his own bankruptcy, this would surely have caused sensational news or been mentioned by somebody. Yet, it was never mentioned. His “eccentric,” ‘withdrawing,’ ‘extravagant’ and ‘homosexual’ nature had been apparently developed before Wilde’s trial. In spite of that, one can still agree with Trevor-Roper’s view of Backhouse’s serious thinking about the direction of his life during the ‘blank years.’ Backhouse’s claimed links with Wilde may be uncertain but the homosexual icon’s trials and conviction and the repeated news of Wilde and Bosie widely

and sensationally reported by the press must have had a great impact on the young Backhouse (then aged 21).

During the 'three blank years,' Backhouse' mind must have been pretty much preoccupied by Wilde.²⁸⁴ Havelock Ellis in the introduction to his *Sexual Inversion* thinks that "the celebrity of Oscar Wilde and the universal publicity given to the facts of the case by the newspapers may have brought conviction of their perversion to many 'inverts' who were previously only vaguely conscious of their abnormality, and, paradoxical though it may seem, have imparted greater courage to others."²⁸⁵ Ellis concludes that Wilde's trial "aroused inverts to take up a definite attitude."²⁸⁶ On the other hand, Ed Cohen in *Talk on Wilde Side* thinks the Wilde' conviction "not only made [homosexuals] highly conscious of the legal injunctions against the sexual practices that gave them pleasure but also catalyzed their own self-awareness by redefining and rearticulating their status as sexual subjects."²⁸⁷ Cohen inclines to believe that the effect was to make them feel worried and have a withdrawing attitude instead of having a "definite attitude" as Ellis puts it. What was the effect on Backhouse himself? Regania Gagnier argues that Wilde's image as a "dandy, rooted in high Society," was in conflict with the idea of an English "gentleman, rooted in the public schools then producing a standardized middle class" man of his time, and thus that his aesthetic manner challenged the prevailing social and cultural hegemony.²⁸⁸ Ed Cohen further argues that culture of "dandy" was linked with sexual relations among men during the 1880s but "[t]he supplementing of 'aesthetic' effeminacy with connotations of male sexual desire for other men" was a consequent result of the newspaper representations of the Wilde trials because "the characterizations of Wilde as 'aesthetic' or 'effeminate' ironically served to publicize his style even more widely."²⁸⁹ The contrast between Wilde's florid and effeminate aesthetic preaching of "cynical evidence" and "pointed epigram and startling paradox" and, on the other hand, the

Marquis of Queensberry providing a masculine image of a “noble defendant” with his “arms folded” (two distinct versions of maleness) was portrayed by the press.²⁹⁰ So, whereas the latter one (masculinity and heterosexuality) represents the reality of what was demanded in the nineteenth century, the former one (effeminacy and homosexuality) was a force against the general ideology of the time. Backhouse retained only a rather distant relation with his family. He was reluctant to discuss his three brothers, whom he seldom mentioned in his memoirs, probably because of their own career choices of being brave and having self-discipline – two of his brothers became distinguished admirals while another brother held a position in the Army. In contrast with his brothers (following his Quaker family’s faith of ‘pacifism, veracity and thrift’), Backhouse had an extravagant, undisciplined, wandering and unstable life. His father was a successful banker and Backhouse’s bankruptcy maybe led to his father’s future policy that Backhouse would not have any financial inheritance from him.²⁹¹ He was regarded as the “black sheep, the scapegoat” of the family.²⁹² From this situation, it can be imagined how disappointed his father and family were in him. In the wider English ‘hypocritical’ (as Byron, Wilde and Backhouse called it), ‘masculine’ (Cohen), and ‘aggressive’ (Peter Gay) society, he could neither compete with other men nor do any proper business. He saw that Queensberry was a father figure, symbolizing authority and winning the case, and that Wilde paid a heavy price (under Section XI of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, he was prosecuted and put into jail for two years hard labour). Backhouse thus realized that one’s fate could easily be ‘tragic’ when one’s life was “immoral,” “unnatural,” “improper,” “indecent” and so on (which were the antithesis of the Victorian middle-class public sexual norms).²⁹³ He must have felt himself fall into Kafkaesque fear and anxiety. For such reasons, Cohen’s view looks right. Soon after Wilde left jail and chose to go to France and Italy to have a wonderful life with young teenage boys, Backhouse himself went to China. Unlike many

imperialist and nationalist British youths, he did not intend to be a bourgeois incarnate, being competitive. Instead, he intended to be a reclusive hermit, searching for solitary, and having 'boys' and 'servants'.²⁹⁴ He lived in poverty in a foreign land. Like Wilde, he chose exile. Wilde's tragic figure of 'art for art's sake' gave him just one idea – withdrawing from Britain and leading a secret life.

Can we regard the cases of Backhouse and Wilde, who lived through fear of prosecution, as a typical phenomenon of the nineteenth century? Like many historians who generally believe that there was no freedom for 'sodomites' at that time, Ed Cohen is also a strong believer in the suppressive middle-class society of the nineteenth century – including medical doctors, families, schools, churches, and other authorities forming a network supervising a young boy's behaviour and development. He also characterizes Wilde as an aesthetic martyr and regards his trial and convictions as an obvious example highlighting homosexuals' problems in the nineteenth century. Unlike Cohen, however, Graham Robb in his new book *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century* emphasizes homosexuals enjoyed much more freedom in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth century. Robb comments that in Wilde's case, the effects of anti-sodomy legislation were amplified and his problem was actually that "he lied stupidly and antagonized his prosecutors by hinting (as solicitor-General Lockwood put it) that they were 'too low to appreciate' his art."²⁹⁵ Since the 1860s onwards, the invention of medical and scientific theories about homosexuality had been popular. Backhouse had all the visible signs or symptoms that the eminent and influential Victorian medical doctor, Henry Maudsley, described as arising from self-abuse or masturbation – often connected with homosexuality in those days.²⁹⁶ Robb confesses he is not happy about these "medical fairy tales" and also remarks that "[t]he identification game, with its promise of instant wisdom, became a stubborn habit."²⁹⁷ In spite of that, he argues that "[t]he full

humiliating effect of medical discourse was not felt until well into the 20th century, when superstitions adopted by the medical profession returned to the community emblazoned with technical terms.²⁹⁸ He has a sympathetic view (despite some criticism) of the nineteenth century's dawn of medical ideas about homosexuals – starting to understand 'sodomy' and forcefully defends the notion that "classification systems ... helped to distinguish 'normal' homosexuals from prostitutes, transvestites and [the] criminally insane; and they gave homosexual desire a kind of legitimacy."²⁹⁹ Robb's complaint is of medical approaches at the very end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century because doctors tried to use various 'cruel' treatments to 'change' and 'cure' homosexuality and held a 'nature will out' view, meaning "heterosexuality would naturally reassert itself like a stream that had been dammed or diverted."³⁰⁰ Wilde sensed that. In his petition for his release, written while he was confined in Reading Gaol, he wrote: "the terrible offences of which [I] was rightly found guilty ... are forms of sexual madness [and] disease to be cured by a physician rather than crimes to be punished by a judge."³⁰¹ Therefore, homosexuals at the very end of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century "would have a hideous portrait of [themselves] hidden away in the attic."³⁰² Robb also thinks that Wilde's trials and convictions should not be regarded as a general phenomenon of nineteenth-century Britain, but rather as helping to produce an atmosphere in the *twentieth* century against homosexuality. Robb's view is probably more realistic than Cohen's because the truth was that intellectual homosexuals of the 19th century did largely enjoy their ideal life of ancient Greece and enjoy their great success and admiration in the artistic world, such as in literature and on the stage. Wilde's troubles arose because he wilfully and recklessly took legal action against Bosie's father. Homosexuals generally received 'tolerance and acceptance' in Victorian society.³⁰³ As

Wilde was sent down, Backhouse witnessed a dramatic change in sexual freedom in Britain. This may be the chief reason why he chose to leave for China.

Mother / Cixi

Backhouse was concerned to link his fate with Cixi's doomed decline. He wrote a footnote for his book *Décadence Manchoue* quoting a poem of Swinburne's. This poem, called "Dolores," includes the lines: "We shall know if hell be not heaven; / we shall see if tares be not grain; / And the joys of thee seventy times seven / Our Lady of Pain."

Backhouse's footnote to 'Our Lady of Pain' was "'Lady' should be changed into the male gender for me, though both exist in my dual nature."³⁰⁴ Since his whole memoir dealt with the life of Cixi, for Backhouse, the 'Lady' should apparently be both Cixi and also Backhouse himself – Cixi and Backhouse were indistinguishably linked together in his mind. For Backhouse, Cixi was an androgynous figure – with a female form but a strong male heart. Backhouse himself was, too, of male form but with a female's delicate and sensitive heart. He recalled his life and made a conclusion about it: "Take[n] all in all, my life has been unhappy." And then he continued and immediately linked his unhappy life with Cixi's marked decline:

... one who was neither born great, nor achieved greatness, nor yet had greatness thrust upon him except perhaps for a brief hour under my great mistress, [Cixi], the Empress Dowager, won from the sands of time, I do not know that the shadows of a sad decline, imposed, as it were, by the inexorable law of averages (it is a just law, it is 'God's law'), should be allowed to shut out remembrances of halcyon days [which] gild old age with the afterglow of youth, even as an Ode of the agnostic to immortality.³⁰⁵

As a matter of fact, all Backhouse's writings showed his strong interest in Cixi and that he wanted people to believe that his life was tightly, imaginatively and intimately tied with

Cixi's – just as the butler Malvolio in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* believed in his own 'greatness' (though not 'born great' etc.) and keenly wanted others to believe that he was favoured by his employer, Countess Olivia.

Why did Backhouse choose Cixi as his target? Before his interest developed in the Empress Dowager Cixi, the grand lady by whom he affected to be so enchanted was Ellen Terry (1847-1928), at that time called the 'Queen of Britain's stage.' Was Ellen Terry a young girl at that time? No, when he went to see her show, she was almost fifty years old. Likewise, in his memoirs, he said that in 1894 (during his college days), he had met the Russian Empress (Nicholas II's wife) and the Empress Mother (Tsarina Maria Feodorovna, 1847-1928) in Moscow and enjoyed agreeable conversation with them. In the same year, he went to Paris to study the theatre. Again, he was apparently introduced to Empress Eugénie (1826-1920) and, according to himself, had a wonderful conversation with her.³⁰⁶ Finally, he wrote that he met Cixi in 1902 and that they, too, had an enjoyable conversation.³⁰⁷ Did he in fact meet these empresses? The Empress Mother in Moscow, Empress Eugénie in France and Empress Dowager Cixi in China were quite elderly female rulers – respectively aged 47, 68, and 63 – when Backhouse claimed to have met them. Furthermore, in his books there are often mentions of other grand ladies like Queen Victoria of Britain, Catherine de Médici of France, Catherine the Great of Russia, Cleopatra, Elizabeth I of England and Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's play whom Backhouse thought Cixi greatly resembled.³⁰⁸ These ladies had something in common: besides having a female form with a masculine heart, they were also quite old (at least for those days), had led extravagant and sensational lives, and were grand, influential and powerful women. These are the main fantasies that captured Backhouse's imagination. His final destination in his life was China. Cixi became a real-life figure who fulfilled all

his fantasies. Arguably, he spotted her as a long-term companion for the world of his imagination.

After linking his fate with Cixi in *The Dead Past*, Backhouse continued by saying “Certainly my childish years were ideally unhappy” and that his mother was responsible for the unhappiness of his whole life.³⁰⁹ He rebuked his parents and described them as “two utterly bad people” who “made me the special object of their sadistic cruelty.”³¹⁰ More seriously, he specially hated his own mother. *The Dead Past* deals with experience of his childhood and college days and his resentment of his mother. Subsequently, he mainly wrote about his hostility to another old lady, Cixi, in *Décadence Manchoue*. Apparently, he connected his unhappy life with the crucial figures in his life -- his mother and Cixi. The two memoirs written soon before his death provide the main evidence of the prototype of Empress Cixi’s image that finally appealed to the anti-Cixi campaigners – as follows.

Medusa

Backhouse had such bitterness that he “tremble[d] to think of the sort of nightmare existence” of his mother.³¹¹ He thought his mother was a woman

whose cruel eyes unsated with torture petrified like a Medusa my early years with pallid terror, a ‘raksha’ incarnate, half Medea, half Jezebel, arrogant despot, ignorant and overweening, from whom in the twenty and more years of our dolorous acquaintance or rather inveterate hostility (for I never saw her (nor wanted to) after 1894 till her death eight years later), I heard not a kind word nor received a grudging dole of sympathy but hate and hate throughout the livelong days, the while she mocked my childish tears.³¹²

In *The Dead Past*, he frankly and repeatedly says his mother’s eyes are ‘Medusa-like’ – reputedly able to turn men to stone. His repetitive complaints about his mother show that

he was living in awe, torture and terror, supposedly because of her cruelty. Subsequently, in *Décadence Manchoue*, he used the same expression about Cixi: “as one listened to her conversation, now and then the expression of her eyes completely changed as she alluded to some person or some incident which had caused [her] umbrage [—she had] eyes which could fascinate and terrify, [and] that Medusa-like stare.”³¹³ The victims were apparently himself and also the two emperors, Zaichun and Zaitian. Backhouse emphasized that his mother bullied him. He compared his mother’s bullying to Cixi’s case. Cixi was portrayed as a cruel and tyrannical mother – treating her biological son and her adopted son – both the two emperors – badly so that they were paralyzed, became weak, unhappy, pathetic and unhealthy, and made little progress in their lives. Backhouse blamed his mother for ruining his life. At the same, he thought that Cixi was responsible for the two emperors’ unhappiness.

Besides her deadly stare, Medusa had another important feature – anger. In the *Aeneid*, Medusa expresses her anger by making flames shoot from her eyes. Backhouse remarked that his mother was a kind of monster with great anger, “a ‘Mégère des plus effrontées,’ subject to violent paroxysms of rage, probably more or less ‘déraçonné’ or ‘tapée’.”³¹⁴ He comments Cixi was moody and had a bad temper: he mentions “Old Buddha’s cold-blooded policies and vengeful moods;” and “her swift changing and uncontrolled moods, her childish lack of moral sense, her unscrupulous love of power, her fierce passions and revenge....”³¹⁵ In his two famous books *China under the Empress Dowager* and *Annals & Memoirs*, Backhouse also frequently mentioned Cixi’s anger, calling it “Divine Wrath.”³¹⁶ Backhouse created this unpleasant, unkind and tyrannical image of Cixi.

Medusa’s blood was also supposedly fatal. Backhouse often remarks in his books that Cixi was always keen on asking her enemies and dear friends to drink liquids whose

prototype Backhouse thought was Medusa's blood – the gift from Athena to Asclepius of two drops of the Gorgon's blood, one of which had the power to cure and even resurrect, while the other was a deadly poison. Backhouse mentions that Cixi not only poisoned her enemies and resurrected her dear friends by asking them to drink some poisonous liquid but also asked him to drink this liquid as well.³¹⁷ He described how, after drinking, he felt his legs begin to fail – becoming cold and stiff. His depiction of himself is exactly the same as the scene of the philosopher Socrates nearing death after drinking hemlock. Backhouse also sometimes likened himself to Socrates in *Décadence Manchoue*.³¹⁸ It is notable that Socrates' last words were: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius. Will you remember to pay the debt?"³¹⁹ Asclepius, whose drinks are drops of Medusa's blood, is the god of healing. Socrates' last words are interpreted as that Socrates would like to thank this god for the painlessness of his death. Healing and killing thus happened at the same time. So, in her provision of drinks, Backhouse suggests Cixi is the embodiment of Medusa.

According to *The Dead Past*, at age twenty-nine, when his mother died, Backhouse visited his mother's grave with his father. In front of his father, who "reverently bared his head," Backhouse cursed his mother, describing her "detestable memory in ten different tongues, much to my sire's edification."³²⁰ In *Décadence Manchoue*, when Backhouse mentioned Cixi's death and her grave, he used a similar formula to depict the terrible scene. He cursed his mother in her grave. Similarly, he also cursed Cixi by describing her horrible appearance after her tomb was ransacked, her coffin violated, and all the treasures put by her side stolen by the hungry and helpless mobs in 1927:

Her glorious raven hair shockingly dishevelled, half rust, half ruined ebony,
her face drawn and ghostly but with the familiar features as recognizable as
when I had last seen her in her birthday robes twenty years ago; the mouth
wide extended and set in a horrible grin, eyes partially open and glazed with a

yellowish film, her breasts covered with thousands of hideous black spots, body distorted and transmuted to be a leathery or parchment hue, the left side of the abdomen presenting a different colour from the rest of her body, probably due to the hemorrhage after Yuan's fatal shot, her once beautiful pudenda ... displayed before us in their full sacrilegious nudity, the [pubic] hair still abundant, sign of perhaps slight decomposition around the buttocks and thighs, her hands and feet just as I remembered them³²¹

Backhouse described some of Medusa's horrible facial features – such as filthy and untidy hair and a wide-open mouth. Steven R. Wilk, in his *Medusa: Solving the Mystery of the Gorgon*, depicts the appearance Medusa's head thus:

the decaying head of someone dead for a period ranging from a few days to one or two weeks shows many of the features that would come to be associated with the Gorgon: bulging eyes, which look like a parody of a stare; grossly protruding tongue; puffy and lined facial skin—all of these features are the result of gases caused by decay bacteria. The separating hair gives the appearance of an odd coiffure, and the skin may draw back from the teeth, revealing the rictus grin. Bloody fluid can leak from the eyes, as was alleged of the Furies.³²²

Wilk's record of dead bodies is of a decaying look from several days to two weeks after death whereas Backhouse said that he saw Cixi's dead body many years after her death. Strangely, their descriptions are similar. So, surely, Backhouse's description came largely from his own imagination. His depiction of Cixi's awful body, ravaged by bacteria, is probably based on his own terror from his impression of the Medusa with her monstrous ugliness, deadly stare and mysterious hair.

Moreover, in Backhouse's description of this terrible scene, he writes about Cixi's abdomen: '... the left side of the abdomen presenting a different colour from the rest of her body, probably due to [a] haemorrhage after Yuan's fatal shot.' Cixi's death still

remains a mystery. Backhouse wanted to think that the *abdomen* was the cause of Cixi's death. Why did he specially choose this position? The abdomen with which Backhouse was preoccupied with was probably transferred from his unconscious mind developed during childhood. He had been anxious to win his mother's lost love – in the traditional British life of that time, parents in grand families busied themselves with (an often enjoyable) social life and hardly saw their children, having nannies to take care of young children and later sending the children to boarding schools. To a child, the abdomen is also readily confused with a woman's womb. When Backhouse imagined himself to have a sexual relationship with Cixi, he remarked, "As I lay there, naked as when I emerged from the womb of my mother, flaccid and limp, I marveled that I should have found favour in the sight of ... the sovereign of a mighty empire."³²³ Cixi's abdomen might thus be linked to Backhouse's fantasies about his mother's womb. The mother's womb is the place for the unborn baby and also the source of birth and in which child received its mother's full love and nutrition. Backhouse was probably eager to return to his mother's womb because he was so unhappy throughout his whole life. He also hated this womb which finally expelled him in giving him birth. To him, Cixi's fatal shot in the womb was the symbol of his own hatred. His hatred of his own mother was arguably projected years later on to China's elderly empress.

In addition to this already terrible portrayal, Cixi was also portrayed by Backhouse as a sexual animal. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Medusa's transformation is said to be a punishment for her sexual transgressions in Athena's temple – a punishment arranged by the virgin goddess of wisdom who is the embodiment of chastity and abhors sexual relations. In Backhouse's eyes, Cixi's female body expressed Medusa's alluring and rampant sexuality. Backhouse often stated that Cixi bore a considerable resemblance to Catherine of Russia – the notoriously sex-maniacal female ruler who had a new soldier

copulate with her every day, and sometimes (it was rumoured in Europe) a horse – and also to Cleopatra whose marriages to her two younger brothers did not distract her from her tempestuous and hyper-sensual affairs with Caesar and Mark Anthony. Backhouse also liked to make a comparison between Cixi's relationship with her chief eunuch and Queen Victoria's relationship with her Scottish equerry, Mr Brown, rumoured to have been the Queen's lover in her widowhood.³²⁴ Words like 'lust' and 'orgy' are used to describe Cixi's behaviour in every book by Backhouse. The constant theme of *Décadence Manchoue* is her 'two hundred encounters' with himself, and 'love affairs' with male prostitutes and eunuchs at Court. Also, his own homosexual fantasy of having sex with 'boys' is described on page after page. Frankly, this has to be a book of pornographic fiction.³²⁵ Hoeppli's opinion about this matter is "the explanation ... rests in the pleasure the Empress Dowager found in the company of a clever, witty, amusing foreigner [Backhouse], always respectful and discreet who as far as the purely physical side of the question is concerned, perhaps just on account of his perverted sexual instincts was able by clever devices to provide enjoyment for an old oversexed woman like [Cixi]."³²⁶ Backhouse portrays Cixi as having insatiable sex mania.

Conclusion

Cixi simply became a vehicle for the psychological problems of a *uniquely* sexually perverted man at a period when homosexuality was under attack. As Leo Mckinstry says in his 2005 book *Rosebery: Statesman in Turmoil*, Backhouse was a "pathological sexual fantasist and fraudster."³²⁷ Andrew Roberts thinks that his stories are "bitchy gossip and falsehoods."³²⁸ Unfortunately, Cixi's image fell into Backhouse's hands. Because of his poisoned pen, Seagrave summarized that a "bloodthirsty caricature" had become a widely held image of Cixi.³²⁹ While denying the usual rumours about Cixi which circulated in

China, Backhouse supplied even more daring stories – even less reality-based than the usual rumours. He colourfully criticised Cixi by using the Western mythological figure Medusa – revelling in Cixi's cruel and tyrannous bullying of the two emperors (cf. Medusa's horrible stare), her decaying mortal body (cf. Medusa's mortality), her unstable temper (cf. Medusa's anger), her poisonous and murderous capacity (cf. Medusa's blood) and her restlessly sex-maniacal image (cf. Medusa's punishment). Cixi's supposed sexual states surely referred to Backhouse's strong fascination with his mother; and Cixi's allegedly cruel, dominant and tyrannical behaviour (to her son and nephew) reflected Backhouse's terrible fear of his own mother. Backhouse turned Cixi's image into that of *Medusa, the prototype of the anti-Cixi campaign*. From his description of Cixi in his memoirs, the reader can see Cixi's image being wrecked and at the same time Backhouse's psychologically intoxicating pleasure. It is understandable that Chinese Republicans and Communists never defended Cixi against such untrue accusations – simply because of their own anti-monarchist political views. They were only too glad to believe and exaggerate the depravity of the late Qing dynasty. These awful allegations are what most Westerners have believed about Cixi for the past century. Seldom can one perverted man's distorted psychology and wild fabrications have had such a wide and enduring historical influence.

Chapter Four

Promoting the image of an Empress

This chapter is about how Cixi's image was improved by her Western supporters. These first Western supporters were not strangers, but people to whom Cixi carefully attended in numerous audiences from 1898.³³⁰ Among her guests, besides some individual gentlemen, the most supportive were foreign ladies, accompanying their missionary and diplomatic husbands. These supporters also influenced the views of later generations towards Cixi. All of them helped to build a new image for Cixi, transformed from being a cruel figure bullying the Guangxu emperor (whose personal name was Zaitian) and desiring to destroy 'foreign devils' into that of a friendly and elegant lady without any trace of cruelty. What they did and what they wrote about Cixi will be discussed. However, before talking about the supporters of Cixi, in order to let readers understand the dark side of audiences between Cixi and ladies and understand the situation more clearly, it would be better to talk about some distinctly *unsupportive* foreign ladies, especially two main foreign ladies – Lady Susan Townley and Alicia Little.

Lady Susan Townley, the wife of Walter Beauprè Townley (Secretary at the British Legation in Beijing during 1902-3), in her two books, *My Chinese Note Book* and *'Indiscretions' of Lady Susan*, reveals her negative, suspicious, and critical view of Cixi although not entirely hostile to her. She finds the intimate physical touching, by which Cixi often used to show her friendliness, to be behaviour lacking dignity.³³¹ Cixi's use of Western furniture was commented on as rather "lawdry"; her arrangement of her furniture was said to "look terribly out of place in their present surroundings."³³² The Guangxu emperor's strange, weak, pathetic, perfectly submissive and tragic appearance is described

as the result of Cixi's "tyrannical influences."³³³ In addition, she genuinely believed that Cixi's real heart "intended to culminate in the destruction" of the Westerners.³³⁴ Concerning China's future, she justified the war by concluding that we "are witnessing the war of Western Civilization against that of the East and the conclusion is foregone, the former *must* win as it has done in Mexico and Peru, in India, in Central Asia and in Africa.... [China] must adopt [the civilization of the twentieth century] in time of peace, and adhere to it in time of war."³³⁵ Why did she not change her attitude into something more positive after meeting Cixi? In the correspondence of Dr George Morrison, whose hostile attitude towards Cixi was well-known, he compliments Townley as a "charming" girl who was "much missed when [she] left Beijing."³³⁶ Talking about the wife of an American ambassador, Sarah Pike Conger, who had always been a faithful supporter to Cixi, Morrison and Townley both despised her as "a Christian Scientist" in a tone as if she were a silly and mad religious woman: Morrison writes this in one of his letters, Townley in one of her books.³³⁷ In an incident in 1902, sensation was caused among the diplomats. Cixi and her Court had their ceremony for worshipping departed Emperors at their tombs. Cixi spent around a week at Paoting Fu before returning to Beijing. Townley and her good friend Flora Russell were the only foreign ladies who saw the procession and had a private audience with Cixi. From her own accounts, her special permission was through an arrangement made by Yuan Shikai. It was Yuan who invited her to meet Cixi.³³⁸ Why did Yuan only invite Townley, and not other diplomatic ladies? It was well-known that Morrison was a close and significant advisor to Yuan and even strongly defended him while Yuan has been criticized by many.³³⁹ Talking about Yuan, like Morrison, Townley also portrays Yuan as a singular figure for China's future. She praises him as "the Chinaman of the future [who] stands almost alone for reform, progress and education."³⁴⁰ Therefore, it is likely that she shared the same view as Morrison and both could have an

information-exchanging connection. Morrison did not attend the audience between Cixi and the foreign ladies in 1902. How could Morrison obtain information to write about the scene of the meeting in *The Times*? In the article, he was confident in describing the scene of the audience and says that Cixi “grasped Mrs. Conger’s hand for some minutes. Trembling, weeping and sobbing loudly she exclaimed in broken sentences that the attack on the legations was a terrible mistake of which she repented bitterly. Mrs. Conger replied that the past would be forgotten.”³⁴¹ He also criticizes Cixi’s “prejudices against the meeting of the sexes being waived.”³⁴² He maintains that Cixi appeared in a pretty pathetic state, that Conger was so easy and foolish to believe the liar and that the gatherings show Cixi’s sexist attitude. Townley was one of the ladies in the audience. It was probably Townley who told Morrison the details of the meeting. Owing to their connection, it is no surprise that Cixi could not win Townley’s heart.

In Derling’s account of an audience of 1903, a lady was “dressed in a heavy tweed traveling costume, having enormous pockets, into which she thrust her hands as though it were extremely cold” and “wore a cap of the same material.”³⁴³ Cixi immediately noticed the “unusual” clothes were “made out of ‘rice bags’” and thought of her as not coming from respectable society. Cixi, feeling unhappy, responded that, from their dresses, she was able to judge which lady respected her and which lady didn’t. After that, she never allowed any “undesirable” people to come to the palace anymore.³⁴⁴ This lady was Alicia Bewicke Little, a wife to a merchant Archibald Little who became an active campaigner for female rights as well as against footbinding.³⁴⁵ Little says that it was 12 May 1903 when she attended Cixi’s garden party at the Summer Palace.³⁴⁶ In *Round about My Peking Garden*, she describes how Cixi “certainly looked her age, sixty-eight, with a very broad face and many double chins” – such a negative portrayal of her appearance had never before been made by anyone.³⁴⁷ In *Intimate China*, she openly takes in every word

of Kang Youwei (who was the main Chinese figure criticizing Cixi), believes it and calls him a man with “an extraordinary gift for winning and guiding adherents.”³⁴⁸ This book reveals how much Kang’s views shaped her attitude towards Cixi.³⁴⁹ She had searched for evidence to prove that the Guangxu emperor was a wonderful man, but she immediately believed what she heard about Cixi without checking – for example, that Cixi loved money and gambling, did not care for China and her people, was not clever, murdered her relatives unlawfully, and as a concubine should not have been an empress dowager (these were the things that Kang said in his interview and open letter).³⁵⁰ Her manner of writing about Cixi is the same as the way that Kang used when he depicted Cixi: making a comparison between Cixi and Guangxu to Cixi’s disadvantage.³⁵¹ About the audience with Cixi, she does not say much but writes: “The few foreign ladies who have conversed with her, and been flattered by her attentions, seem only the more, not the less, convinced of her remorselessness.” She implies that she was one of these ‘few foreign ladies.’ At the same time, she criticizes most of foreign ladies such as Conger. Little indicates Conger’s and other ladies’ behaviour being close to Cixi as bad conduct by saying: “[t]he American Minister’s wife [Conger] speaks of ‘my friend the Empress Dowager’ or ‘Her Majesty.’ But at each fresh foreign visit to the Old Buddha, as the Chinese call the Empress Dowager, Chinese Christian women weep and protest bitterly.”³⁵² Like Townley, Little disapproved of Conger as well as Cixi. A superior attitude is certainly found in some of the foreign ladies like Townley and Little. They looked at Cixi and her country through eyes of all too many Europeans. Not only did they maximize the differences between the two cultures, but also they suggested the best way for Cixi and China was to follow in the footsteps of the West’s modernization. Like Townley, Little appreciates Western modernization and she thus finds that Kang’s reforms were promising. Unlike Townley

who preferred to stay in her Beijing home where the garden remained in an English style, Little was more adventurous and travelled to many places in China.

According to some ladies' descriptions, lack of harmony between Cixi and foreign ladies sometimes occurred. Some foreign ladies and some other unidentified ones disliked Cixi. Some refused Cixi's invitation for various reasons. For example, Lucy Ker (1868-1969) who had been as a hostess to the British ambassador Sir Ernest Satow (a bachelor) was of this kind. She did not attend the audience perhaps to show her objection to Cixi's intention to destroy Westerners in the siege of the Legation.³⁵³ Some refused the invitation because the repeated audiences and parties made them feel rather bored. Some presented themselves impolitely and even spoke loudly in front of Cixi.³⁵⁴ In addition, there was a significant feature during these meetings: jealousy. Katherine Carl, having such a great privilege of staying in the Palace for one year, says: "In spite of Her Majesty's cordiality and the efforts of the Princesses and Ladies, [at the parties], [t]here seemed an absolute lack of harmony among the ladies of the Legation. Each seemed to watch the other with a jealous eye, in constant fear that some one might overstep her place."³⁵⁵ Derling also says that ladies felt jealous of her because Cixi favoured her. She mentions the words "jealous" and "jealousy" a total of eight times in her book to describe this special phenomenon. Despite not mentioning the word 'jealousy,' Conger writes of herself being much favoured by Cixi. Probably, that some ladies failed to voice support for Cixi or became hostile to her is also related to the fact that they did not feel favoured as much as other ladies favoured by Cixi. Alicia Little, Paula von Rosthorn (a wife to Austrian representative Arthur von Rosthorn) and some others could be of this type.

Mrs. Sarah Pike Conger

Sarah Conger (c.1843-?) from America, who was fifty-five when meeting Cixi for the first time, had also been the most senior among all the ladies and a doyenne of foreign ladies of the diplomatic corps between 1902 and 1905.³⁵⁶ She was often a target mocked by many who disliked Cixi.³⁵⁷ Townley recounts some preparation before the audience of 1902, especially concerning Conger's bossy and conservative ways.

Before the approach of the great day Mrs. Conger, wife of the American Minister, called together in her capacity of "Doyenne" all the ladies of the *corps diplomatique* who were privileged to attend the Imperial Audience, and put us through a sort of dress rehearsal of the ceremonial to be pursued. She was a funny old lady, a Christian Scientist, spoken of as a possible successor to "Mother Eddy," and great was her excitement at the prospect of the morrow. She bade us all curtsy to Her Chinese Majesty, and strangely recommended that we should all wear white embroidered under-petticoats, so that, in the event of our tripping over our feet in the performance of these curtsies, no undue display of stockinged leg should offend the susceptibilities of the surrounding Chinese dignitaries!³⁵⁸

At the dress rehearsal, Paula von Rosthorn also describes how Conger "sat down in a high-backed chair, played the Empress Dowager and demanded that each of us do a Court curtsy before her – which met with outraged refusal by most."³⁵⁹ Conger's conduct made these two ladies uncomfortable. The American lady could obviously not get along with the two European ladies. The unhappy relationship between the two aristocratic ladies and the American republican woman demonstrates a contemporary important fact. During decades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in America, there had been a large extension of the Christian Science church founded by an American lady Mary Baker Eddy. Having her own experience of instantaneous, complete and apparently effortless recovery from a spinal injury incurred from a fall which had left her struggling for life,

Eddy examined the Bible in a scientific way. The scientific way meant that she rejected a view of magic, miracle or prediction and believed in fundamental truths and principles that effective healing works reflected. She reasoned that Christ's works reflected certain conditions of reality that can apply to everyone and always. At the same time Darwin's view of the importance of genetic factors had been more and more acceptable since 1859 in Europe. Like many other imperialists, Townley and Rosthorn were perhaps Darwinian in belief. They surely did not find that the Christian Science of the American Mrs. Conger was inspiring. On the contrary, they had a rather low-key about religion – like the Church of England which had agreed to bury the Genesis-doubting Darwin in Westminster Abbey. Born in Ohio and educated in Illinois – far from the civilized east coast of America – Conger was different from European aristocratic ladies with their nice manners and possibly snobbish and superior tones. Understanding their unfriendly attitude towards her, Conger's correspondence never mentions these two ladies' names.

Conger's first impression of Cixi was that "[t]here was no trace of cruelty to be seen."³⁶⁰ She tried to expel the accusations against Cixi in the press and general opinions and seriously criticized them as showing "darkness of ignorance," "pronounced misrepresentation" and being "many times misleading."³⁶¹ She specially points out Morrison's report (portraying Cixi as an undignified lady who wept on Conger's neck) as misleading and explains Cixi took both her hands and expressed a sincere regret. In other words, in her eyes, the empress' manner was proper, "dignified and earnest."³⁶²

At her meeting with Cixi in 1902, Conger started with a long address to Cixi.³⁶³ In this address, she emphasised female unity: "it is to be hoped that China will join the great sister-hood of nations in the grand march" – implying the nature of women as central to the nations and the female unity as a significant symbol for women having entered the

public domain. Conger challenges the traditional “brotherhood” used in the political domain and in countries’ affairs. She used “sisterhood” not only to exclude men from political affairs and to link up with the reality of the unity between Cixi and many women, but also to build up a conception of transforming from women’s marginalization into a new era of female centrality. Moreover, Cixi’s strength and ability are often emphasized in Conger’s correspondence. Conger suggests that Cixi’s ‘strength’ is derived from ‘womanhood’ (the two words are continuously repeated and connected) as if ‘strength’ and ‘womanhood’ are synonymous.³⁶⁴ She inclines to reveal her view: compared with masculine strength, woman’s beautiful appearance and feminine role is much less important. She starts questioning and challenging the traditional view of women’s role. Deliberately ignoring woman’s feminine nature, Conger focuses on a different aspect:

Cixi’s manner [is] thoughtful, serious in every way, and ever mindful of the comfort and pleasure of her guests. Her eyes are bright, keen, and watchful that nothing may escape her observation. Her face does not show marks of cruelty or severity.³⁶⁵

The ‘thoughtful,’ ‘serious,’ ‘mindful,’ and watchful’ states are not the soft, feminine characteristics on which women were conventionally complimented. So in the new meaning of womanhood, masculine strength replaces feminine beauty. In addition, though neither explaining the reasons nor giving examples of Cixi’s strength and ability, what she tries to say is like this: “how earnestly she was reaching out...to increase woman’s usefulness” and “[t]he history of her days marks the course of a strong woman’s stoppings.”³⁶⁶ What matters to Conger is that Cixi as a woman reaching the topmost and all-powerful position. Her attempting to associate the woman posed in a high position with ability, strength and even success becomes a puzzling question. So-called ability, strength and success here is not the presentation of the good result of the woman’s

professional work, but purely the woman's seizing power – this is what Conger intended to celebrate and why she worshipped Cixi.

Mrs. Mariam Headland

As the wife of Isaac Taylor Headland, a professor of mental and moral science and of the practice of medicine in Beijing University, Mrs. Mariam Headland had been a “physician to the family of the Empress Dowager’s mother, the Empress’ sister, and many of the princesses and high official ladies” for twenty years.³⁶⁷ Conger mentions Mrs Headland several times in a friendly way in her letters and called her “our mutual friend.”³⁶⁸ Isaac Headland in his *Court Life in China* says his wife had a good friendship with royal princesses and that they offered many favours to her. He also frankly confesses, “It is to my wife, therefore, that I am indebted for much of the information contained in this book.”³⁶⁹ So in this book, the views are basically more hers than his. As a professional medical doctor, she should have been perfectly confident in her position to give some opinion on her own. So why did she not write a book herself? Laura R. Prieto clearly points out that professional women at that time often “sought alliances with men.” She argues that “gender” was “an inescapable component” for whether their works could be accepted.³⁷⁰ Prieto also thinks that “the cultural prescriptions of femininity” made it hard for her to present herself and be seen as a professional person.³⁷¹ Headland was probably aware of the phenomenon of masculine dominance and of female opinions being treated as ‘irrational and non-objective, trivial.’ She perhaps realized that it was only from male voices that ideas would be accepted seriously and widely. Because of this awareness, she passed on what she saw and heard in Cixi’s court to her husband. That women can find some ‘special’ ways to express their ideas was not unknown in Western history.

Some women changed their female names into male names such as the English authoress, George Eliot, in the nineteenth century; and some others let their names appear in public using just the initials of their female Christian names, such as J. K. Rowling and P. D. James in the twentieth century, thus appearing to have male names. As Virginia Woolf said, women expressed “what was expected of their sex” by using male pseudonyms.³⁷² So by using male names, an image of a man can be achieved.

In *Court Life in China*, the preface immediately reveals that the author’s main purpose on this book is to defend Cixi. Headland remarks that the “world has biased its judgment” on the great empress and the judgment has been “unjust.”³⁷³ The book focuses on Cixi being portrayed as taking different roles in different periods such as a young girl, a ruler, a reactionary, a reformer, an artist and a woman, as well as playing each role perfectly well. Headland makes the following three significant points. Firstly, she intends to make a distinct contrast between Cixi and Guangxu. Talking about statesmanship, Headland calculates that the empress dowager appointed conservative and progressive officials equally when the empress was in charge in politics. But the emperor got rid of all conservative men and used the radical reformers and third-rank officials like Kang Youwei and his associates.³⁷⁴ Headland says that the emperor’s speed of reform, upsetting so many conservative men, shows his lack of careful thinking. Headland also directly comments on him: “Let us grant that he was not brilliant. Let us rate him as an imbecile.”³⁷⁵ Concerning Guangxu’s nine-year reign, “a series of dire calamities befell the empire.” Headland explains these calamities included “famines as the result of drought, floods from the overflow of ‘China Sorrow,’ war with Japan, filching of territory by the European countries, while editorials appeared daily in the English papers of the port cities to the effect that China was to be divided up among the powers.”³⁷⁶ The other disaster is he was “childless.” He is blamed by Headland who says he did ‘not use his liberty

wisely.³⁷⁷ Finally, he could not win the respect and the hearts of people living in the Court. Many reforms were carried out in the end by Cixi, whereas Guangxu ruined all the reforms at the beginning. This contrast highlights Guangxu's stupidity in contrast with Cixi's intelligence and ability. Secondly, Headland thinks that Cixi did not receive any 'serious' education. Like most girls at that time, Cixi may have only learned some Classics for Girls to know how to be a good daughter and wife. Unlike many biographers – thinking of Cixi as a strong, leading and well-educated character – Headland's claim was indeed unique. In spite of Cixi's limited education, Headland argues that Cixi's later quick learning ability overcame her limitation. Thirdly, Headland points out that some foreigners who had good relationships with Cixi became supportive in the end whereas it was people who never met her became hostile to her. For this reason, she argues that the supportive side, or her side of story, is much closer to the truth. These three points highlighting Cixi's greatness are sufficient to explain Cixi's rather incredible mixture of characteristics.

Katherine A. Carl

Among these foreign ladies, Katherine Augusta Carl (1865-1938), an American painter as well a court portraitist to Cixi for one year, had the most chance to observe Cixi in detail.³⁷⁸ Beautifying Cixi's voice, Carl describes the empress' "musical and exquisitely modulated voice, so fresh and silvery, so youthful, adds to the charm of her Chinese, when she speaks it, it sounds like beautiful rhythmic poetry."³⁷⁹ Cixi's demonstrating her manners and gestures in diplomacy leads to praise of her as "a consummate actress."³⁸⁰ In intellectual development, she says that Cixi was a 'fine scholar,' a "great reader of the classics," and a "fine critic."³⁸¹ Carl not only could see plays with, take the same boat, have a walk with and talk to Cixi in various palaces but

also watched her when she painted her face. So, logically, in Carl's eyes, the image that she had of Cixi should have been much clearer than that of any other ladies. Since the portrait of Cixi made for LPE in 1904 is not the presentation in her eyes (she confesses that four portraits, including the LPE one, did not express what she thought about Cixi), but under strict supervision of Cixi's body politic (more detail is supplied in Chapter Six), her portrait is not discussed in this section. In spite of that, luckily, when she returned to America, she wrote a book to say something about her idea of the empress. By such literary writing, she truly gives her impression of Cixi:

This was the conventional reality, and I had dreamed of painting Her Majesty in one of her Buddha-like poses, sitting erect upon an antique Throne of the Dynasty, with one beautifully rounded arm and exquisitely shaped hand resting on its high side, contrasting in their grace with its severe lines. I should have exaggerated her small stature by placing her upon the largest of these Dynastic Thrones. Her wonderfully magnetic personality alone should have dominated. At the left of the Throne, I should have placed one of those huge Palace braziers, its blue flames leaping into the air, their glow glinting here and there upon her jewels and the rich folds of her drapery; the whole enveloped in the soft azure smoke of incense, rising from splendid antique bronze censers. Across the base of the picture, under her feet, should have writhed and sprawled the rampant double dragon. The Eternal Feminine, with its eternal enigma shining from her inscrutable eyes, should have pierced, with almost cruel penetration, the mystery of her surroundings. Her face should have shone out of this dim interior, as her personality does above her real environment. I should have tried to show all the force and strength of her nature in that characteristic face, exaggerating every feature of it, rather than toning down on line.³⁸²

Cixi's visual image in Carl's eyes appears in her above passage. This is how she wished to paint Cixi. In this passage, Carl would like to arrange a 'largest' dynastic throne, a 'huge' palace brazier on the left throne, and a rampant double dragon under Cixi's feet. She also would like to let Cixi's charming personality and feminine characteristics dominate the whole by 'exaggerating' features of Cixi. There is included significant imagery of "soft azure smoke of incense, rising from splendid antique bronze censurs" in "this dim interior" as a background in order to create a 'mysterious' atmosphere. So a theatrical scene can be seen. Instead of being close to reality, Carl creates a dramatic theatrical scene, involving an 'exaggeration' of objects' size and a person's features and a creation of a 'smoky' world.

Concerning the smoke imagery, in some modern films about China of the past, made by Chinese directors, smoke is often seen. Examples are three native Chinese directors with international reputations – Chen Kaige, Zhang Yimou, and Chen Xiaodong. Chen's *Farewell My Concubine*, Zhang's *Raise Red Lantern*, Chen's *Chinese Ghost Story* and their many other films are full of imagery of smoke in a dim and dark area. Why are these three modern directors so often keen to use smoke? The use of smoke means the audience is unable to see the characters, furniture and other things clearly. The scenes were created with an atmosphere of confusion, ambiguity and mystery. Following this way of portraying scenes, the actual reality is distorted and even disappears. Looking at the past in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the three directors sympathize with Chinese tragic figures in the films and find them to be representations of confusion, ambiguousness and mystery. To people getting involved too much and developing a sympathetic mood, real things become vague. The smoke is exactly the representation of their entire sympathy. In a poem called *zui chui bian* made by the Soong dynasty's Zhang Xian, he writes, "when I first met you in the feast.... Carefully observed,

you have soft, delicate, and slim waist and patterns of your dress are moving. I found you so wonderful and make me want to treasure you as if you are mountains in the mist of sunset because you create a kind of mysterious atmosphere....”³⁸³ This kind description is of an enchanted and bewitched feeling, matching a famous saying “in lover’s eyes, the loved girl will be transformed into Xishi [a Chinese famous beauty].” For many people, the girl would have a normal look. But to the eyes of the person loving her, the girl suddenly becomes ‘the most beautiful’ in the world. Therefore, mystery and mist are an illusion that is generated under charmed circumstances. In Carl’s book, several times, she frankly says that her ‘love’ towards Cixi increased each day – Carl loved to “watch the extreme mobility of her countenance,” to hear her voice which was “most musical, with no indication of age in it,” to see “the charm of her smile,” and so on.³⁸⁴ Unlike Conger, who only emphasized Cixi’s strength, Carl particularly praised Carl’s femininity and beauty of appearance – soft voice, perfectly proportioned figure, beautiful hands, etc – besides liking some of her strong features. Cixi is characterized by her as “the very embodiment of the Eternal Feminine.”³⁸⁵ Such an expression of intimate affection is generated here. Her whole depiction of her imagination about Cixi is one in which Carl was entirely enchanted and involved. She lost her ethnocentrism. Everything that she said would favour Cixi (and more widely the Chinese as well).

Lady Ethel MacDonald

Lady Ethel MacDonald (1857-1941) was the wife of Sir Claude MacDonald, a British Minister during 1896-1900.³⁸⁶ Leaving China, she wrote an account of the scenes of her two meetings with Cixi in her article (one took place in December 1898; the other was in March 1900). These two audiences involved Lady Ethel initiating an idea to meet the empress – naturally, she was a *doyenne* of female diplomatic corp. At the beginning of

her article, talking about the time before the first audience, MacDonald describes what happened:

The Empress was very curious to see us, but her Councillors objected strongly to this new and pro-foreign move, and tried in many ways to block our Audience by conceding as grudgingly as possible. [...] Prince [Qing] said laughingly to me at one of the meetings, that foreign wives seemed almost as difficult to please as Chinese. The negotiations lasted for about six weeks, but we stood firm on all essential points and finally woman's curiosity proved stronger than man's opposition....³⁸⁷

The passage reveals Cixi and foreign ladies uniting as a team to fight against male dominance. Like Conger, MacDonald means to exclude men. She expresses that she was able to experience Cixi's feeling: curiosity, fighting with men, and final triumph. In this article, she did not entirely compliment the empress – for example, she describes that Cixi had “a harsh voice, disagreeable to listen to, and talk[ed] in a louder key than [was] usual for a Chinese lady;” and she also complains that the “conversation [that Cixi made] was of necessity of the most banal.”³⁸⁸ Unlike Carl, Townley and Robert Hart specially giving a compliment on Cixi's ‘soft, feminine, and pleasant voice,’ MacDonald has a different idea. Unlike Conger saying Cixi's conversation was astonishing and pleasing, MacDonald thinks differently.³⁸⁹ Not sure of Cixi's sincerity, MacDonald comments her as “an accomplished actress.”³⁹⁰ In spite of that, MacDonald thinks that general impression of Cixi was pretty good – she acclaimed the first meeting as “a memorable day”; at the second meeting, she praised Cixi as a woman, “certainly genial and kindly, and liked by her immediate surroundings.”³⁹¹ Before the siege of the legation in mid-1900, she was positive about Cixi. After that, she felt puzzled at the discrepancies between Cixi's “courtesy and kindness” and “absolute security and friendliness” towards foreigners that Lady Ethel felt at the meeting in March 1900 and Cixi's order to destroy foreigners three

months later. The discrepancies brought her to question why “[t]he two sides of pictures [were] impossibly dissimilar.”³⁹² Making the same claim as the beginning, she finally preferred to make a conclusion for that: to blame councillors who “are certainly phenomenally ignorant of anything outside the ‘Middle Kingdom,’ and in addition arrogant and anti-foreign.”³⁹³ She blamed the ‘dominant’ councillors, instead of the ‘curious’ Cixi.

Derling

Derling (1885-1944) had been a lady-in-waiting to Cixi for more than two years (1903-5).³⁹⁴ She developed a unique relationship with Cixi. Being an interpreter and translator, she could listen to the conversations between Cixi and these ladies and explain the content of English newspapers to Cixi. Being in charge of Cixi’s jewelry, she could observe Cixi’s process of choosing various colours and patterns of dresses. As Cixi’s close ‘confidante,’ Derling wrote books in English – *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, *Old Buddha: the Empress Tzu Hsi*, *Imperial Incense*, *Kowtow*, and *Golden Phoenix* that have served international readers.³⁹⁵ During 1928 to 1933, she enthusiastically lectured on Chinese culture and her life with Cixi. Her life career was tightly associated with Cixi. Her publications and lectures must have gratified many Westerners’ curiosity.

Unlike other foreign ladies, Derling, having the advantage in languages, could listen to what Cixi truly conveyed in private.³⁹⁶ If Derling and some other foreign ladies’ writings are carefully examined, it will be found that she often used long quotations to record what words Cixi said whereas these other foreign ladies did not precisely record anything that Cixi said to them (or, if so, still very little) – this shows body language is far less important than verbal meaning to Derling. These foreign ladies often had their own interpreters but language barriers still existed. Cixi once complained that she could not

understand some interpreters' oral translations. When Derling was an interpreter, Cixi sometimes asked her not to talk about certain things to these foreign ladies; probably some mistakes or misunderstandings occurred between Cixi and these ladies. It can be imagined why these ladies more focused on Cixi's appearance, dresses, accessories, voice, its tone, and body language rather than on Cixi's verbal productions. Surely, Derling knew many things that those foreign ladies did not know. For example, the interior designs and furniture of every day were different from those during the audiences. Foreign ladies found the designs and furniture were rather Western in style. But Derling says the things that they saw were deliberately arranged for them. Cixi ordered everything to be changed back to a Chinese style after the audiences.³⁹⁷ Derling also said that yellow and blue were what Cixi hated the most, but foreign ladies, like Carl, said that these two colours were her favorites.³⁹⁸ In several long monologues that Cixi made in private, she reveals Cixi's opposition to the West and her reluctance to reform the country. Unlike foreign ladies saying Cixi had a heart to reform the country, Derling portrays Cixi as a conservative ruler.

Depicting Cixi as conservative seems not positive in Western eyes, but Derling frankly says Cixi was "stubborn."³⁹⁹ In spite of this, she adds that "greatest of [all Manchu monarchs] was Tzu Hsi [Cixi]."⁴⁰⁰ In her books, she mainly displays the idea of human-side of Cixi to her readers. There are four aspects as follows. First, Derling is particularly keen on talking about Ronglu's courtly love towards Cixi and Cixi's always reciprocating that love. The whole life of Cixi – from her childhood, her marrying Xianfeng, until her finally appointing Puyi as the emperor when she was nearing death – is linked with their long-term faithful romantic relationship. The romantic relationship becomes the main axis in Derling's *Old Buddha*. Unlike many historians who ignore that Cixi had 'love' in her life and prefer to say that what she was thirsty only for power, Derling constantly believes

that Cixi loved Ronglu deeply. She reaches this conclusion: “there is consolation in the fact – perhaps – that [Ronglu], the faithful slave and vassal of Her Majesty, waits with her there, somewhere behind Death’s impenetrable Curtain – and that the lovers have been united at last, for all eternity!”⁴⁰¹ This shows Cixi was not a woman without feeling, but was like anybody else who longs for love. Secondly, Derling uses negative words such as “careless,” “prevaricating,” “sensational” and “pseudo” to describe the historians accusing Cixi of murdering her own only son Zaichun so as to resume the regency. Derling believes strongly that the accusation is “farther from the truth.”⁴⁰² She says how much Cixi loved her own son. The claim is made in *Old Buddha* (published in 1929) praising Cixi’s mother love towards Zaichun. Derling’s son, Thaddeus Raymond White, was born in 1912, so by the time her books about Cixi subsequent to *Two Years in the Forbidden City* came out, Derling was a mother and was able to reach that additional insight into the old lady. In her other book, *Imperial Incense* (published in 1933), which is dedicated to Thaddeus Raymond’s memory (he died young of pneumonia in 1933), she describes how Cixi wept a lot and stopped in front of the tomb of her son, the Tongzhi emperor, much longer than before the tomb of all other dead Qing emperors, including Qianlong whom Cixi admired the most.⁴⁰³ Both Cixi’s son and Derling’s died at a young age.⁴⁰⁴ There is some possibility that Derling projected her own experience and painful feelings on to Cixi’s life. Grant Menzies, a biographer on Derling’s life, thinks Derling “did project somewhat, which is why her portrayal of Cixi is much more human.”⁴⁰⁵ Thirdly, Derling’s accounts of the empress sometimes highlight Cixi’s funny and comical characteristics. Derling’s knowledge of the modern world and the West was greater than Cixi’s because she was educated in France. Although Cixi was rather old fashioned, instead of denying it, Derling portrays Cixi’s conservatism in a rather appreciative way. In her writing, Cixi’s old fashioned ways are transformed from seeming negative to seeming

friendly and good-humoured. The empress sometimes asked strange questions and argued with ignorance, for example, about Western portraits, Western women's thin waists, Western manners, her opinions towards Queen Victoria and the British parliamentary system, missionaries preaching, etc. – this even makes Cixi look something of a comedian. Fourthly, Derling makes her appear a victim of the Chinese systems and foreign imperialism. Derling describes how Cixi “had been filled with hardships, lacking in happiness” in her childhood (her parents did not specially favour her) and at the palace (she was just a concubine and Prince Gong and other princes bossed her around and treated her in a cruel way).⁴⁰⁶ That the aggressive foreign troops attacked China hurt Cixi's heart. For these reasons, Cixi often cried. In the third and fourth aspects, quite opposite to being a superwoman, Cixi appears so innocent that people could easily stop criticizing her. This third way of portraying Cixi makes people want to befriend Cixi instead of being aggressive to her. Therefore, Derling commends her ‘human-side’ well here: “I recall the fact that I knew Her Majesty as a kind old lady” who was “intensely human despite the weight of her many and arduous responsibilities” and thus she “was the right person in the right place.”⁴⁰⁷ In Derling's point of view, the reason of Cixi's greatness was not being goddess-like, but being perfectly human.

Going from being a confidante to revealing Cixi's secret, could we say that Derling is a loyal servant? Her sister Rongling and their mother Lady Yugen were also with her as ladies-in-waiting. Her brother Xunling also served Cixi as a Court photographer, taking many photos of Cixi.⁴⁰⁸ Keeping silent about Cixi, Derling's family regarded her as linking with cheap commercial business and betraying her mistress Cixi. So they were furious and probably never forgave her.⁴⁰⁹ In modern journalism, many confidantes, who revealed the secrets of their masters or mistresses after leaving them, also did the same thing as Derling. Take an example, Paul Burrell: the late Princess Diana's butler and also

close confidante, published his book about Diana (2003). Burrell was accused by Princes William and Harry of a “cold and overt betrayal” of their mother’s memory. But Burrell himself defended himself, saying he wrote this because he believed Diana would have wanted him to do so.⁴¹⁰ Like Burrell, Derling also made a similar statement and thought that publishing was a mission that Cixi wanted her to undertake; so she recounts what Cixi once said to her: “I wish you to know the truth about me in order that some day, when you return to that other world which is really yours, you may tell the world the truth – the truth which I have so carefully hidden from the world, especially the world of the foreign barbarians!”⁴¹¹

Individual gentlemen

It is not right to say these foreign ladies were the only Westerners to support Cixi. Some male foreign loyalists could be found, such as these ladies’ husbands: Edwin Conger, Prof. Isaac Headland, Sir Claude MacDonald and so on. Consider the example of Sir Claude. Like his wife Lady Ethel, he appreciated Cixi’s diplomatic skill, praising her as “a kind and courteous hostess who displayed both the tact and softness of a womanly disposition.”⁴¹² After meeting Cixi, he wrote:

Another step in the nearer relations of China and foreign nations. I venture to think that the affair will have a very good effect in giving the world a better opinion of the personality and character of the Empress Dowager. Her Majesty has been made the subject of virulent abuse in the press as an anti-foreigner of the most rabid kind. Something has been done to counteract this impression.⁴¹³

In several letters to the Marquis of Salisbury, he gives his view that contact with governmental officials was useless and suggests the only and effective way was to have direct audiences with Cixi.⁴¹⁴ He also believes that Cixi’s conservatism was not because of her liking to be like that, but because of her conservative advisors surrounding her

forcing her to be conservative.⁴¹⁵ About Cixi's support of the Boxer Rebellion, he could not believe that Cixi herself betrayed Westerners in China. Like his wife, he blamed the Councillors.

Some male supporters were not husbands of these ladies. Sir Robert Hart (1835-1911) was one such. He was in China from 1854 until 1908, so his whole career was closely connected with Cixi's reign (1861-1908).⁴¹⁶ During his five decades in China, he saw and learned about Chinese life, politics and ways of thinking. Being able to speak Chinese fluently, he finally developed a deep affection and sympathy with the Chinese, their government reign and Cixi. In his correspondence, Hart several times revealed he would like to resign his position and plan to go back to Britain (sometimes because of tiredness, sometimes from health reasons etc).⁴¹⁷ But Cixi "was very complimentary: I said there were others quite ready to take my place, but she rejoined that it was myself she wanted."⁴¹⁸ Cixi refused to let him leave China at least four times and thus his long continuing stay could be said to have been for the sake of Cixi. His niece Juliet Bredon, a biographer of Sir Robert, describes his working in China as "the romance of a great career."⁴¹⁹

Hart was received in Cixi's Audiences several times from 1902 until 1908. The following passage reveals Cixi's attitude to him – it is from an account by Juliet Bredon who visited Hart while he worked in China.

To him she showed her softest side, melted into kindness and consideration, complimented him in her velvet voice, and went so far as to say, when some question of the future came up, "We owe the possibility of a new beginning to the help you have given our faithful Ministers." Last of all she paid him a greater tribute still. When one enquiring where he lived, and being told by Prince on his knees, and in deeply apologetic tones, "Since the little accident in 1900, when Sir Robert's house was burned, he has been living behind

Kierulff's shop," her eyes filled with tears with real regret in her voice she said,

"How can we look you in the face?"⁴²⁰

Cixi showed a soft side of herself to Hart. Talking of her voice, he praised it as "a sweet feminine voice."⁴²¹ In his correspondence, he also mentioned that Cixi often gave him gifts. He was proud to say how valuable these gifts were and also to say how much he "[fancied]" them and liked to "hold" them.⁴²² Thinking that the canvases that Carl had brought were too small, Cixi immediately thought about asking Hart to get a larger canvas from France and London. In his correspondence, he says, "The Empress D[owager] told [Carl] to get 'Hart' [for a canvas]."⁴²³ Feeling proud, Robert Hart put quotation marks around his own name – this shows he felt much honoured when Cixi specially pointed to him to take responsibility. These audiences, Cixi's soft touch and putting him in her heart indeed made Hart like her. Hart often had parties with foreign ladies and treasured their company. He indeed had special friendships with those ladies. No doubt such female influence also helped to shape Hart's mind to some degree.

However, Hart's attitude had been supportive all along, even before the Audiences. About the papers' harsh criticism of Cixi, he criticizes that these papers "have never, to my mind done any good, and constantly...I know them to do harm: the opportunity to write smartly cannot be resisted, and so good sense has to pay for vanity."⁴²⁴ He wrote several articles in 1900, which were finally collected in *"These from the Land of Sinim"* *Essays on the Chinese Question*, revealing his thoughts about Cixi. The incident when Cixi appointed Da-A-Gc, son of Prince Duan (a figurehead officially supporting the Boxer rebellion), as heir-apparent had been criticised as the action of anti-foreign tendencies. But Hart says that "to my mind it was a good one."⁴²⁵ He even made a guess by saying as following:

... the Empress Dowager had probably said to the Prince [Duan], "You and your party pull one way, Prince [Qing] and his another – what am I to do

between you? You, however, are the father of the future Emperor, and have your son's interests to take care of; you are also a head of the Boxers and chief of the [Beijing] Field Force, and ought therefore to know what can and what cannot be done. I therefore appoint you to the Yamên: do what you consider most expedient, and take care that the throne of your ancestors descends untarnished to your son, and their Empire undiminished! Yours is the power – yours the responsibility – and yours the chief interests!" I can imagine the Empress Dowager taking this line with the Prince, and, inasmuch as various ministers who had been very anti-foreign before entering the Yamên had turned round and behaved very sensibly and actual personal dealings with foreigners would be a good experience and a useful education for this Prince, and that he would eventually be one of the sturdiest supporters of progress and good relations....⁴²⁶

Therefore, he welcomed this appointment as the "best" policy.⁴²⁷ Cixi's supporting the Boxers was the action that most damaged her image and reputation. But Hart argued in a different way. When the Empress and her whole Court escaped to Xi'an, Hart sought a solution for China among partition, change of dynasty, or patching up the Manchu rule. He chose the last one – bringing Cixi back to Beijing and negotiating with her.⁴²⁸ He genuinely believed that Cixi was the only person who could save the country. His supportive view towards Cixi was written by the end of 1900 – before his first meeting with her on 23 Feb, 1902. Whether Hart was received in audiences with Cixi or not is not linked with his view that had been made known already.

Hart often doubts the West's approach towards China including demands to be able to import commercial products and Western civilization. On the other hand, he neither doubted China will make 'much farther' progress than the West expected nor doubted that

Cixi sincerely wished to reform the country. But he warns the West that ‘national’ and ‘patriotic’ sentiment is “a constant factor which must be recognized, and [will] not [be] eliminated.”⁴²⁹ Cixi’s and China’s national sentiment had been regarded as a resistance or stubborn insistence or had been ignored by the contemporary West, but by Hart it was considered a strong force for making China better. In all his articles, he was not an outsider, but seemingly thought of himself like a native Chinese. Hart’s niece Bredon praised him and said that his sympathy with China comes from his unique nature of tolerance and patience.⁴³⁰

Later supporters

The above supporters with various views on Cixi provide a foundation for later arguments. Beyond her first group of supporters, there would be two main divisions: one is a feminist view such as held by Pearl Buck, Charlotte Haldane, and Yoko Ono; the second one is a view of Cixi as a victim, held by Sterling Seagrave.

In one scene of Pearl S. Buck’s (1892-1973) *The Good Earth*, a female leading character, O-lan, is still working hard on the farm while heavily pregnant, cooking meals for her husband and father-in-law, and then using ‘a slim green reed’ as a tool as a knife to cut her umbilical cord without any help when she had given birth.⁴³¹ O-lan is characterised by Buck as having enormous strength and endurance. *The Good Earth* is a book celebrating female strength and showing Buck’s respect and admiration for it. In *Imperial Woman*, providing a fictionalized story of Empress Cixi, Buck, like Conger, was not interested in a girl’s attractive appearance, saying that “such beauty might have been meaningless.”⁴³² Buck still keeps the same tone as that of *The Good Earth* to describe Cixi’s personality as “being self-controlled, her strength apparent in the smoothness of her movements and the calm of her manner.”⁴³³ In telling about Cixi’s encountering

difficulties, Buck states, “[i]n that night and in many nights thereafter, as many nights indeed as she was to live, there came the small dark hours when she faced her destiny with naked eyes and frightened heart, knowing that only in herself was strength enough to meet the dawn again.”⁴³⁴ Every time when she depicts the confrontation between Cixi (Yehonala) and her co-regent, Cian (Sakota), Cixi appears so strong whereas Cian, so ‘foolish’, ‘weak’, ‘fragile’, ‘timid’ and ‘emotional’ woman. At one point, she personalises Yehonala as “a tigress” and Sakota as “a cat.”⁴³⁵ Portraying Cixi, she says: “Yehonala stood strong and handsome as a young cedar tree.” Talking about Cian, she says: “Sakota rose from her chair and stood half bowed, clinging to its arms.”⁴³⁶ In her eyes, being weak, Sakota also easily weeps. This weak feature invites Cixi’s impatience. She writes:

Sakota had a soft stubbornness of her own and would not speak. She continued to sob while [Yehonala] waited, until she, who was never patient long grew too impatient to listen any more to the wailing half-stifled, sobs of the weak woman. ‘Weep,’ [Yehonala] said relentlessly. ‘Cry until you are happy again. I think you are never happy unless the tears are steaming from your eyes. I wonder your sight is not washed away.’⁴³⁷

Buck is excellent at describing using the visually contrasting body postures that can reveal distinct personalities. She used the word ‘strength’ everywhere to describe Cixi in *Imperial Woman*. The reader probably wonders whether Buck looks at Cixi positively or negatively. In the whole book, she seems like an objective outsider to introduce the life of the empress. Yet, at the end of the book, she concludes:

At this time instant the skies opened and rain came down, a cool strong rain, strange in winter but how welcome!

‘A good omen,’ Cixi murmured.

Her ladies ran out to escort her in but she put them aside for one more moment while the rain fell on her. And while she stood a great voice rose from far beyond the walls, the sound of many people crying out together –

‘Old Buddha – Old Buddha – sends the rain!’

... she laughed at their sweet reproaches.

‘I have not been so happy since I was a child,’ she told them....⁴³⁸

Unlike many biographers of Cixi, Buck gives Cixi a victorious ending. The conclusion indicates that she favours Cixi. Like Conger and Lady Ethel, what concerns Buck is Cixi’s womanhood. Buck’s womanhood is argued as more about the nature of motherhood – the issue on which she so much focuses. Concerning Cixi’s motherhood, Buck says:

Yehonala, in concern for her son, determined that she would not allow Sakota to be divided from her...she made every safeguard for [her] child. She commanded Li Lien-ying to buy from the best goldsmith in the city a chain of a small but strong gold links and this chain of small but strong gold links and this chain hung about her son’s neck and she fastened the two ends together with a padlock of gold. Its key she put on a fine gold chain around her own neck, next to her flesh, and she did not take it off, day or night.⁴³⁹

This obsession sounds peculiar. But for Buck this comes naturally, in the case of a mother’s deep attachment to her child – this point is also praised by Derling, defending Cixi and saying that it was impossible for Cixi to murder her son Zaichun (some rumours suggest this possible murder) because Cixi loved her son so deeply. Buck somehow identifies herself as Cixi.⁴⁴⁰ In Buck’s writing, Cixi often confronted a big dilemma: she was trying her best to educate Zaichun, to raise him up, and to help him to be strong

enough to rule the country, but the result made her very disappointed because this child was too fragile. In real life, Buck had a mentally retarded child. In *The Child Who Never Grew*, she frankly confesses her problem, of conflict and finding a solution in the case of her own child. She was obsessed with her child.⁴⁴¹ Like Derling, projecting her own experience on to Cixi's life, Buck puts her personal obsession into *Imperial Woman*. There is another instance of her identifying herself with Cixi, that is, her life choice after her husband's death. In her *A Bridge for Passing*, telling the story of "her hour of trial" after her husband's death, she says:

There was to be no further communication...I was alone in the crowd...
Silence, silence everywhere and only silence, because death is silence. I do not know how long I walked or how far, or even where, except it was beside the sea, so calm that there were no waves, only the long swell of the deep tides....
I saw everything and felt nothing... I would never weep again. I knew now there was no use in tears, nor any comfort to be sought or found. There was only this one – myself.⁴⁴²

She finds a way, that is, being alone. In her *Imperial Woman*, talking about Cixi's future choice after Xianfeng's death, Buck says that Cixi gave up weeping and also has a similar account:

...all saw a new Empress, a strong...lady, who looked no man in the face....
None was her intimate and none know her thoughts and dreams. She lived alone, this Empress, the walls of her courtesy impregnable and inviolate and though in that wall there was no gate.⁴⁴³

Both of them were strong in their hearts; both had weak children; both chose to be 'alone.' A woman's responsibility in protecting and taking care of her own child and her

strength leading to calmness, making her triumphant over passion – all these are what Buck extols.

At the same time as Buck was writing, a British journalist, Charlotte Franken Haldane (1894-1969), also wrote a biography of Cixi. She does not blame Cixi for encouraging the Boxer rebellion even though many Boxers were robbers, did not have discipline and believed superstitions. Her reason for that is that Cixi was resisting Western aggression and defending China's own culture and traditions. Defending Cixi, she negatively portrays Kang Youwei as "an ambitious upstart, whose sole aim in acquiring this presumptuous influence over the Emperor was to make the Son of Heaven the pliable tool of his own advancement."⁴⁴⁴ Haldane does favour Yuan shikai, who betrayed Guangxu and helped Cixi during the coup d'état of 1898, and said his action was "reasonable, practical, and not necessarily dishonourable."⁴⁴⁵ Li Hongzhang and Zeng Kaochun were praised by her as loyal servants to Cixi until her death. She strongly implies her admiration for Cixi by emphasizing that Cixi's loyalists were respected persons and by portraying her enemies as negative persons. Like Lady Ethel and Carl commenting on Cixi as an able "actress," Haldane also praises Cixi's meetings with her foreign ladies – argued by some to be an "instance of typical Oriental duplicity," resembling the "smile of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa" – implying the empress's cleverness.⁴⁴⁶ She argues that the reformers' learning from the West was "a policy of weakness, based on a pessimistic political outlook;" and she puts Cixi's 'duplicity' in a positive light.⁴⁴⁷ Like Conger's emphasis in Cixi's female enduring strength, Haldane also states:

Such a policy [of reformers' weakness] was unlikely to commend itself to the Empress Dowager.... The reactionary methods she adopted when she resumed power in 1898 were based on her temperamental unwillingness ever to admit

defeat, her sense of China's vast superiority over all other nations, and indomitable physical and mental courage. Her unhesitating intention was to govern her country, and meet those who would tear away portions of it, from a position of strength, not weakness.⁴⁴⁸

To Haldane, Cixi's most fascinating quality was to have been born with a strong 'will,' to 'command' people, and to inspire 'fear.' Haldane remarks, "[Cixi] could irresistibly impose her will on nearly everyone."⁴⁴⁹ Cixi's imperious commanding nature, causing 'fear,' impressed this feminist. Haldane is not only a biographer of Cixi, but also of several famous women, such as Marie d'Agoult, George Sand, Céleste Mogador, Queen Pomare (Tahiti's monarch in the early nineteenth century), Marguerite of Valois (Henry of Navarre's wife), and Madame de Maintenon, as well as being a translator for Jean Héritier's *Catherine de Médici* – all these women were either literary figures or ambitious political monarchs. For all the female subjects of her books, she wields a 'feminist' pen to defend these women, most of whom are regarded as unsympathetic figures. She displays her belief that women's virtues and achievements lay not in their marriages but in their works. Haldane tries to strip away the outer tyranny and focuses on their inner world in order to change the image of these female figures into something more admirable. Judith Adamson, the biographer of Haldane, states that "Charlotte had listened to the testimony of women over men in order to reevaluate her subject," that "[i]n telling these lives she reconstituted a female community for herself," and that "[Charlotte] understood that jealousy and envy among women was fostered by men as a way of lessening the power women might achieve, that only by supporting each other's accomplishments could women rewrite that narrative."⁴⁵⁰ Indeed, the mission to which Haldane dedicated her whole life was to back up other female figures – just like Conger.

In the present century, on the cover of *Blueprint for a Sunrise* album (Fig. 44), the portrait of Cixi made by Hubert Vos (Fig. 84) can be seen. Yet the face is transferred into that of Yoko Ono; the object that she is holding is also changed. In an interview with Daniel Rothbart, she sympathetically expresses her feeling that “the Dragon Lady is a beautiful concept because it symbolizes power and mystery” and “Empress [Cixi], the first Dragon Lady, was such an incredible woman, who was very powerful and actually protected China from foreign invasion. I feel very proud that I’m the second Dragon Lady.” Here, clearly, Ono identifies herself with Cixi. She tries to fight with the negative meaning of the term ‘Dragon Lady’ that people understand normally. She transforms this term, giving it a positive connotation. She returns to herself in her note: “Every day I tell myself, / I’ll Survive. / Yeah, I Will” – the lyric is intended to refer both to herself and to Cixi, both of whom suffered from many people’s hostile criticism. Understandably, she shows empathy to the unpopular empress. Like Derling, Ono supports motherhood by finding a similarity between woman’s professional work and creation and “a woman giving birth to a child.” Ono also emphasizes womanhood, using a phrase: “strength as a woman.”⁴⁵¹ In the new album, in lyric lines, she expresses that many nights she dreams and hears numerous women’s screaming and also shows her passion to save the many women who still suffer in a man’s world.⁴⁵² These emphases provide the focus for Conger, Lady Ethel, Buck and Haldane.

Dragon Lady by Sterling Seagrave, a great late-twentieth-century supporter of Cixi, tries to do away with a one-dimensional image of a demonized Cixi. He rehabilitates not only the much-maligned Cixi but also much-maligned foreign ladies. Mariam Headland’s three claims finally become the most important arguments in his view of Cixi. Following her three claims, Seagrave takes the ladies’ works seriously and take their views into his book. He himself expresses that instead of trusting people who never met Cixi and

destroyed her image, he believes what the ladies says because the words of the latter are built on their meetings with Cixi seen with their own eyes.⁴⁵³ Like Headland, he also blames the unwise Guangxu making the wrong judgment in entirely accepting Kang Youwei and his associates' reforms. He strongly condemns these scholars' unsuccessfulness in passing examinations, then scorning the system, then becoming ambitious to break the rules deliberately, then being very noisy and brash, and finally going on to make up brutal and untrue rumours about Cixi.⁴⁵⁴ Cixi's limited literacy gives Seagrave more to say. Unlike the above twentieth-century feminist writers trying believing Cixi was a well-educated ruler (to highlight her ability), Seagrave is convinced by Headland to believe that Cixi was almost illiterate and even an innocent victim.⁴⁵⁵ Obviously, *Court Life in China* is a book which was very influential in shaping Seagrave's view. Besides Headland's three claims, Seagrave is convinced by the MacDonald couple to believe that Cixi was only a puppet trapped and used by other ministers and royal princes – this means that Cixi can be forgiven for China's decline.⁴⁵⁶ Sir Robert Hart was regarded as an ideal man to discuss Cixi, because of his language ability, his long stay in China, his working with Chinese officials, his meetings with Cixi, his fondness towards Cixi and his special far-sighted view predicting Chinese future – he was far from being Euro-centred.

Conclusion

All the supportive views have been considered together. It is found that some are contradictory. Cixi is dreamt of as a Buddha-like immortal by Carl, whereas Derling regarded her as a normal human being. Conger and Ethel MacDonald portray the empress' more masculine side whereas Carl and Robert Hart present a feminine side. Headland thinks Cixi did not receive an intellectual education except some moral and

domestic training for girls; Carl thinks differently. Conger says that Cixi made various good conversations with ladies whereas Ethel has an entirely different view of them. About whether Cixi was conservative or not, Derling had distinct opinions from other foreigners. So they looked at one person but have their different opinions – though all of them supported Cixi. Some supporters, such as Hart, probably already supported Cixi before meeting her; but others fell for her (forgetting the past, forgiving her and defending her) after she started meeting them.

Are the words of people on the supportive side who had friendship with Cixi much closer to the truth? Owing to Cixi's deliberate arrangements, what foreign ladies or male audiences saw in the palaces was not always for real. Also, some ladies (like Carl) were deluded by what they saw, especially concerning the imagery of smoke. Also, some ladies (such as Headland) saw Cixi treating Guangxu cruelly; for example, making him a prisoner, with no liberty of communicating with anyone, etc. Even though they witnessed scenes of Cixi's cruelty, they still failed to question it. Reading their correspondence, articles and books, their personal feelings, experiences and personality can often be found between the lines of their writings. The 'personal touch' results from the situation that they more or less identify themselves with Cixi. These ladies were mocked as "poor little Mrs. So-and-so" and "not very sophisticated women-folk of the foreign community."¹⁵⁷ Do such pronouncements invoke these ladies' biological sex? Many feminists doubtless prefer that criticism against women is explained by invoking their biological sex. There is probably such an element. Yet, the other element should be that their views could not meet the standards of men's rationality, reason and objectivity. For these reasons, the ladies' talks are not taken and used by serious historians as significant evidence. All the ladies were united in a sense of 'sisterhood' to try to make women's opinions central instead of marginal. Within the female enclave, they would not feel so isolated and

alone – as they would when surrounded and given continuous criticism outside the enclave; they had Cixi as their ‘leader’ and could encourage and support each other. Being husbands to these ladies, some gentlemen could have been influenced by their dear wives in their opinion of Cixi. Affections and personal experiences had been invited into a discussion of Cixi’s image. So instead of having a fair-minded and clear picture of Cixi, an ‘illusionary,’ ‘personal’ and ‘biased’ judgement would be generated and thus their flattery and femininities may sometimes have had too little foundation in reality. At least the *criticisms* made by these supporters are likely to be true because the supporters presumably felt the criticisms needed to be admitted – thus the important matter of Cixi’s illiteracy seems likely, as also her engaging in deception and being sometimes herself deceived by her courtiers. As for Sir Robert Hart who is a senior and wise figure whom it is hard to doubt, both Western supporters and Western opponents of Cixi generally respected him. His occasional praise for Cixi and his wish to have her stay in power need not express any special personal admiration. Arguably it shows only his understanding of Chinese politics: the post-Boxer reality was that Cixi would be able to get things done – the situation was rather like Japan’s Emperor Hirohito being kept on by the Americans after Japan’s 1945 defeat and Iraq’s Saddam Hussein retained by the Americans after 1991.

The later feminist supporters Buck, Haldane and Ono constituted a female union among themselves; Cixi was one of very few *female* rulers in the world who is believed to have had real ‘strength’ to fight against the powerful world of men. No matter how the country developed – with success or, as it turned out, with failure – no matter how Cixi’s command indeed induced even worse fears (apparently, such a quality was no longer really enough to be a ruler in the changeable nineteenth century because fear pushed away people who would like to tell the truth and real information about what happened to the

country and the world), it seemed an advanced and praiseworthy idea to these ladies. These writers and artist thus have some flaws – their defence of Cixi is mainly because of Cixi being ‘female.’ It is not necessary that they had read Conger’s, MacDonald’s, Carl’s, Headland’s and Derling’s writings although some probably read them. (At least, Haldane and Buck describe some vivid scenes of foreign ladies’ meetings with Cixi. Possibly, they read these ladies’ published letters, articles and books.). The more direct influence is from the arrival of feminism in the West after mid-nineteenth century. The feminist view has been gradually dominant until the present time. Coincidentally, Cixi’s lifetime was exactly in the crucial period. These Western feminists happily found an extraordinary empress to be their exemplar.

Whereas feminists find their ‘strong’ female exemplar, Seagrave portrays Cixi as an ‘innocent’ female figure, just right for matching the late-twentieth-century dominant political phenomenon of the ‘decline of Eurocentrism’ and the rise of ‘white guilt.’ In the nineteenth century, the spread of imperialism and colonialism (whose built-in idea was rivalry) and emulation meant that the winning side had an advantage and could get less embracement. The West has developed instead in the twentieth century a feeling of criticizing Eurocentric thinking. Westerners are now more likely to embrace and sympathize with the suffering, disadvantaged and oppressed people either of the Third World or of other losing countries. When talking of some well-known non-white such as South Africa’s Nelson Mandela, the present Western political class portrays him almost as a god-like figure. South Africa’s serious unemployment, appalling security, thieving and raping, widespread AIDS etc – the unsuccessful side – are virtually ignored by Westerners who worship him. If looking at Palestine (and the Arab world) and Israel (and America), Western European and American intellectuals stand on the former side rather than on the latter. The winning side – Israel and the American super power – could not win the

sympathy of majority of leading Westerners who affect to be much influenced by their deep guilt about their past imperialist views and actions. Instead, the winning side, appearing strong and competitive, attracts more hatred. At the junction between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – the period in which Cixi's image-making started, the 'losers-will-get-sympathy' theory was never dreamt of. Political philosophy has now been changed. The West now looks sympathetically at the losing side as well. Building a bridge of understanding with China is exactly what these foreign ladies and Hart – Cixi's loyalist supporters – often suggested in their writings. Their views were voiced in a softer and smaller proportion but are now heard. Cixi's image was transformed into more positive by Seagrave in 1992 – exactly resulting from the twentieth-century political philosophy. The present is entering the twenty-first century. How will the West look at her in the new century? In my opinion, the new century will likely continue the victim-favouring tendency of the late twentieth century. Voices on Cixi's side will thus become louder. As a matter of fact, the image-making phenomenon is a changeable one and does not need to walk hand in hand together with 'truth' and 'reality.'

Chapter Five

Reasons behind and Influences on Cixi's Portraiture

Empress Dowager Cixi started having her first oil portraits painted on 5th August, 1903.⁴⁵⁸ Several months later (after April, 1904) she began to be interested in having photographs taken.⁴⁵⁹ Altogether, there are six oil portraits and more than forty photographs of Cixi, almost all of which were made during 1903-1905. Unlike many Western monarchs of those days – for example, Britain's Queen Victoria who had been portrayed in oil for many years and whose royal image was registered in photography from 1860, Cixi had never used these techniques before; so, these two media were novel and strange to her.⁴⁶⁰ A key consideration for discussing the reasons behind her willingness to be portrayed is a central Chinese belief firmly rooted in the views of Confucian philosophy (at least before the end of the Qing Dynasty when there was much Western influence). The ancient published books – the *Four Books* (the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of Mean*, the *Confucian Analects*, the *Works of Mencius*) and the *Five Classics* (the *Books of Changes*, the *Book of History*, the *Book of Odes*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the *Book of Rites*) – which have been regarded as classical collections for Confucius scholars had greatly shaped the beliefs of Chinese people. What these views basically point to is to follow the precepts and examples which ancestors and other people had given before, especially when they had brought prosperity rather than damage. People had to constrain themselves to walk humbly and passively in the paths that had been traced, that is, “to walk in the trodden paths.”⁴⁶¹ Cixi grew up and lived with this kind of teaching and formalism, in which individualism and originality of thinking are crushed out. She was not exceptional in this. Before making some daring step like being painted or

photographed, she must have thought about precedents that she could follow. What were the precedents that inspired her to go forward with her visual image-making? Before her agreement and permission to say 'yes' to being portrayed in two new media, who were the influential figures for her? What were the crucial influential incidents? What was the whole psychological process? This chapter will put these questions into account and discuss them in order to see the whole picture of how it was possible for Cixi to start from the precedents, then to depart from them, and then finally to make her way on her own in the end.

Ladies

Cixi very often invited foreign ladies to come to the Forbidden City from 1898 and she attended to them carefully. Among all these ladies, one was Madame Plancon, the wife of the Russian ambassador to China. During a meeting on 6th March, 1903, this lady presented a miniature portrait of the Czar and his family as a gift from the Czar to Cixi.⁴⁶² This is the earliest record of Cixi seeing or knowing of any Western oil portrait. Unfortunately, there is no record saying how Cixi responded. Although the gift did not apparently lead her to be eager to have her own image made, five months later (in August) Cixi's first oil portrait was begun. There was another lady who was possibly influential: Sarah Conger, the wife of the American ambassador. At the beginning, Conger thought that visual images should be made in the Chinese Court. In her letter to her daughter Laura, dated October 3, 1902, she wrote: the "colourings [of many scenes in the Court] are so dainty, and yet often so...bold in their harmony, that no photograph or painting can do Chinese costumes or Chinese decorations even a partial justice."⁴⁶³ Eight months later, the idea of portraying Cixi came to her. Her great respect and admiration for Cixi led her to be unable to entertain any criticism of the Empress. Thus she had the ambitious idea of

winning Cixi's reputation back through exhibiting a portrait of Cixi in America to be seen by people from all over the world. Through a missionary lady as an interpreter, Conger made overtures to Cixi to be portrayed by an American female portraitist, Katherine Carl, with whom Conger was already acquainted:

Mrs. Conger said that she had something to ask Her Majesty, and told the Missionary lady to proceed...this Missionary lady said: "Mrs. Conger has come with the special object of asking permission to have Her Majesty's portrait painted by an American lady artist, Miss Carl, as she is desirous of sending it to the St. Louis Exhibition, in order that the American people may form some idea of what a beautiful lady the Empress Dowager of China is."⁴⁶⁴

At that stage, the Chinese Court had already planned to send some commercial exhibits for the St Louis Exhibition (which would see the Chinese government's first official participation in a world fair) in 1904.⁴⁶⁵ In 1902, John Barrett, as the world fair commissioner to Asia, Australia, and the Philippines, met Cixi and Guangxu and some other powerful viceroys, including Yuan Shikai, in person. Soon (still in 1902), Barrett sent a cablegram to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company which organized the world fair:

Had audience with Emperor and Empress Dowager [Cixi] Saturday. Emperor confirms China's acceptance. He announces he will appoint an Imperial Commission and issue an edict for the preparation of the exhibit.⁴⁶⁶

From this passage, it appears that Cixi had given her approval for this exhibition. The Court's plan to take part in the world fair came many months before the idea of Cixi's portrait. In her letter to her niece, dated June 20, 1903, Conger delightedly states her motivation and what she did, and Cixi's final permission:

For many months I had been indignant over the horrible, unjust caricatures of Her Imperial Majesty in illustrated papers, and with a growing desire that the

world might see her more as she really is, I had conceived the idea of asking her Majesty's permission to speak her upon the subject of having her portrait painted. I had written to the artist, Miss Carl, and found that she was willing to cooperate with me. The day of the audience seemed to be the golden opportunity for me to speak. With intense love for womankind, and in justice to this Imperial woman, I presented my subject without a doubt or a fear. Her Majesty listened, was interested, and with a woman's heart conversed with me. As a result of this conversation, the Empress Dowager gave consent to allow her Imperial portrait to be painted by an American lady artist for the St. Louis Exposition. The work is to begin in August. Only think of it! That this portrait may present to the outside world even a little of the true expression and character of this misrepresented woman, is my most earnest wish.⁴⁶⁷

There is another arguably significant lady whose name is Derling who was a daughter of Lord Yugen.⁴⁶⁸ Derling, as Cixi's chief lady-in-waiting during 1903-1905, was there as a Cixi's personal interpreter when Conger's request for portraits was made. She recalls that Cixi felt "somewhat shocked."⁴⁶⁹ Cixi also immediately responded – "I cannot decide anything alone...I have to consult with my Ministers before deciding anything of an important character."⁴⁷⁰ According to Lydia Dan, the niece of Derling, no discussion at all was held between Cixi and the Board of Foreign Affairs about the portraits.⁴⁷¹ So what Cixi told to Conger actually implies her rejection in a polite way. Derling soon received Conger's personal letters, pleading with her to persuade Cixi to agree to oil portraits being made. Cixi was unhappy about such a letter. In private, Cixi regarded Western art as being *inferior* to Chinese art – she commented on oil portrait as "rough work."⁴⁷² To persuade her, Derling helped Cixi understand oil portraiture and also showed a portrait of herself, wearing a Western dress, painted in Paris by Carl, the same portraitist put forward to paint Cixi. In spite of Cixi's criticism about Western dress

allowing too much bodily exposure, Cixi found the likeness was indeed remarkable.

Derling's effort finally won Cixi's confidence in Carl's painterly skill.

According to Dan, another reason why Cixi could accept Katherine Carl to paint her was that the painter was female, and thus "more acceptable than a man to come to the Court."⁴⁷³ What Dan suggests is very likely. In 1899 (four years earlier than Cixi's first portrait made by Carl), while visiting China, Hubert Vos, a Dutch-American portraitist, tried his best to ask permission to paint Cixi. Besides his own effort, many principal ambassadors from Netherlands, America, England, Germany, France, and Russia who "were anxious...to show the world the likeness of the great rulers of four hundred million people" sent memorials written in Chinese to the Court, recommending Vos to be a "foremost" portraitist for Cixi. He managed to paint governmental officials in China, including Prince Qing (Fig. 45), Yuan Shikai (Fig. 46), and Li Hongzhang (Fig. 47). Yet he felt that the prevailing atmosphere made painting Cixi impossible.⁴⁷⁴ These ambassadors who backed up Vos were *male* and so was Vos -- these facts could have been an obstacle. As well as being female, Carl also had strong connection with two crucial persons who organised the Chinese exhibition in I.P.E, such as Sir Robert Hart, Inspector General of Chinese Customs, who was the Imperial Chinese Commission's "President *ex-officio*" and Francis A. Carl, Deputy Inspector of the Chinese postal system, who was one of two Imperial Vice-Commissioners -- the former was Carl's British cousin; the latter one was her brother.⁴⁷⁵ More importantly, with preparatory help from the three ladies, Madame Plancon, Sarah Conger and Derling, Katherine Carl could achieve smooth access to Cixi. The ladies can be said to have contributed to persuading Cixi. This solid background of helpful factors meant that Carl became the first Westerner to paint Cixi.

How did the photographic portraits start? The 'memorable' scene of Cixi waving her hand to the crowd in front of a temple was seen through a journalist's eyes in 1902 (Fig.12) (the detailed discussion about that 'memorable' scene can be read in Chapter One). Through the camera, a crucial tool of journalism, the scene could be witnessed not only by a journalist or the crowds, but also, by many other readers reading newspapers in mass circulation. Cixi has experienced not only camera's intrusion but also the trend of journalism.⁴⁷⁶ This was probably the first time that she experienced photography. On another occasion in 1903, Madame Plancon also presented a photograph of the Czar and Czarina to Cixi as a gift.⁴⁷⁷ Like the situation with her portraits, she did not go ahead immediately after the photograph was given her. What was the trigger for Cixi to have her own pictures taken? Derling, an influential figure for Cixi's oil portraits, apparently also played a crucial role in Cixi's photographs.⁴⁷⁸ She depicts that in her room, Cixi happened "to glance into one corner of the room" and there she found the photographs of Derling "were all taken in European dress." And then, Cixi exclaimed:

What are those pictures on the table over there Why, they are all photographs of yourself, and are very much better than the picture you had painted. They are more like you. Why didn't you show them to me before?⁴⁷⁹

Cixi seemed to accept photography naturally without any struggle. Then, Cixi continued, saying,

Now these are good photographs; much better than the portrait you had painted. Still I have given my promise, and I suppose I shall have to keep it. However, if I do have my photograph taken, it will not interfere at all with the painting of the portrait. The only trouble is I cannot ask an ordinary professional photographer to the Palace. It would hardly be the thing.⁴⁸⁰

Cixi complimented the photographs and showed that she wished to have a photographer in the Court. In Dan's record, Cixi next asked Derling's mother, Lady Yugen, about finding a court photographer, saying that "[i]t is always so much to-do to order the Imperial Secretariat to allow a male photographer into the Palace. Does either of your daughters [Derling or Rongling] know how to take pictures?"⁴⁸¹ Lady Yugen solved the problem by recommending her own son, Xunling.⁴⁸¹ Cixi's asking suggests a *female* photographer was preferable according to the Court's rule of courtesy – the situation is much the same as for portraiture in oils (Carl was more acceptable, being a *female* painter). On the same day, Cixi eagerly commanded Xunling to be sent to her. After he came, she asked some questions concerning photography and then decided to have her photograph taken the next morning.⁴⁸² Next morning, Xunling brought his "best cameras, a tripod and a large box containing Daguerro-type glassplates with wooden frames" to the Summer Palace. And he "measured the distance to set up the tripod and selected a camera."⁴⁸³

How could Cixi accept a male photographer in the end? In spite of Xunling being a male photographer, he had a close association with Derling, Rongling and Lady Yugen – Cixi's trusted confidants. When all the photos of Cixi with other people are looked at carefully, the three figures (and royal princesses and foreign ladies) appear by the side of Cixi most of time. None of them was male.⁴⁸⁴ These ladies become a united co-operative group encouraging Cixi to have photos taken. Without them, Cixi's photographic portraits would probably have been unlikely.⁴⁸⁵

The Qianlong Emperor

A successful Manchu predecessor of Cixi was the Qianlong emperor. In 2002, one colourful portrait of Qianlong as the reincarnated Bodhisattva Manjushri from Puning

Temple, Chengde, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, was exhibited in Royal Museum of Scotland (Fig. 9). This portrait depicts Qianlong wearing the hat of high Tulku against a background of the green nimbus of spiritual power; he sits on the throne (*vajrasana*), scoops up the Wheel of Law (*dharmacakra*) with his left hand and is making the teaching gesture used in argument (*vitarka mudra*) with his right hand. In front of him, various ritual objects are placed on an altar table. This is one of many similar portraits showing Qianlong with a sacred image though he was a secular ruler.⁴⁸⁶ Qianlong was a strong supporter of Tibetan Buddhism. His great concern to strengthen the Manchu-Mongol alliance (for territorial expansion of the whole empire union on the one hand as well as for appeasement of Tibetans and Mongols) made him build more Buddhist temples, monasteries and shrines than any other Qing ruler. Concerning this, Pamela K. Crossley states without exaggeration, "Earlier Qing emperors had generally satisfied themselves with hosting the lamas, engaging in the appropriate ritual relationship, and presenting themselves as the earthly successors of Genghis Khan. For the Qianlong emperor, this was insufficient. He intended to make his imperial capital at [Beijing] the spiritual capital of the lamaist realm."⁴⁸⁷ It was believed that Qianlong presented his Bodhisattva-Emperor portraits to sixth Panchen Lama to make propaganda that he, Qianlong, was the true protector of Buddhist religion.⁴⁸⁸ (Before Qianlong, there was an earlier example of a portrait commissioned for a present to a head of other state, that is, a portrait of the Yongle emperor, r. 1403-24, of the Ming period in the Potala Palace in Lhasa, which was presented to a Tibetan Buddhist prelate during the early fifteen century).⁴⁸⁹ Michael Henss thinks that Bodhisattva-Emperor portraits are well-known from the Qianlong period.⁴⁹⁰ It is generally argued that Qianlong was the first Qing ruler to have iconographic images made.⁴⁹¹

Qianlong's iconographic images were made to add a divine element to his secular political power. Harold L. Kahn states that "the emperor was in fact his own best mythmaker."⁴⁹² The self-image mythmaking is something which "conveys a sense of the transcendent and ecumenical nature of imperial power, tied not to earthly, man-made codes, but to a sanctified heavenly trust."⁴⁹³ Qianlong's secular political body was promoted by the sanctification process. He was not the only Qing emperor doing so. However, his scale and quantity of using the sanctification were greater than those of any other emperors.⁴⁹⁴ Besides using iconographic images, Qianlong also made some claim that his imperial power was unique, that is, to adopt sagehood. He compared himself with a legendary sage ruler Yao (r. 2357-2255 B.C.) (Yao and Shun have had an unshaken status and were celebrated as two of the greatest Chinese rulers in history). He remarked: "At the time of his abdication, Yao was eighty-six years old. Thus the age at which I abdicated is the same as Yao's – an auspicious coincidence indeed." The recited verses were distributed in the streets as follows: "Auspicious mists and radiance intertwine before the throne / The heirloom seal of state is personally passed on / The days of Yao and Shun today appear again / With this, this joyous age of peace is rounded to perfection."⁴⁹⁵ Qianlong's abdication after sixty-year reign, the political gesture of supreme style, makes him win a great reputation as "an ethical exemplar, confirmed his claim to ideological infallibility, and above all ensured him a unique place in history."⁴⁹⁶ The spiritual element of sagehood effectively influenced his self-promoted image.

Later, just one Qing monarch also had portraits made of a recognized face, a religious costume, and some ritual objects. This monarch was Empress Dowager Cixi. It is uncertain whether Cixi actually had access to Qianlong's iconographic portraits or not. It is reasonable to assume she did. Apparently, there are at least four portraits and four photographs of Cixi of this kind (Figs 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54 & 55). Cixi mainly acts as

Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (a Buddha of Mercy).⁴⁹⁷ The iconographic genealogy could be a crucial proof that Cixi may have seen some of Qianlong's Bodhisattva-Emperor portraits. If she did see them, when and where did that happen? It probably happened in 1860 when Cixi followed her consort, the Xianfeng emperor, and the whole Court to escape as refugees to Rehe while French and British troops marched on Beijing. Many of Qianlong's Bodhisattva-Emperor portraits were collected in the temples of the summer residence at Chengde, Rehe (this Place had been as a kind of religious metropolis to Mongols and Tibetans in the Qing period). So, it is likely that Cixi saw them at that time. In addition, there is one reference in Derling's *Imperial Incense*. She mentions that she accompanied Cixi to see the imperial cemetery in the Eastern Mausoleums located at the foot of the Changrui mountains whose wide 48 square-km area contains many tombs (including those of Emperors Shunzi, Kangxi, Qianlong, Xianfeng and Tongzhi). Derling also remarks that Cixi was fascinated with Qianlong's life-size 'self-image' at his tomb – Yuling Underground Palace whose construction had been under Qianlong's own supervision.⁴⁹⁸ Michael Henss gives a careful description of the appearance of Qianlong's tomb,

The walls and vaults of this “funeral temple” are completely decorated with white marble carvings of Lamaist iconography such as the five lotus vases with the emblems of mirror, *pipa* (lute), conch shell, fruits, and heavenly robe, symbolising sensual desire, meant to symbolise the practice of no-attachment and thus to attain liberation and enlightenment. Carved lotus mandalas, mandalas of the Five Buddhas, Vajras and the Eight Auspicious Signs, the vase with the Five Jewels, the almost life-size three-metre Four Guardian Kings and Eight Great Bodhisattvas were found in the “funeral temple.” Two stone doors decorated with Bodhisattva figures separating the three rooms

clearly refer to Vajrayana Buddhism that was favoured and patronised by the Qianlong emperor during his life time.

Qianlong's burial chamber is richly adorned with carved images of the Buddha on the walls, three large lotus mandalas on the arched ceiling, and many Tibetan *sutra* texts and Sanskrit *dharani* mantras (written in Dewanagari script), mystical syllables on the walls, apparently prayers for the Cakravartin ruler, already identified as the Qianlong emperor in another context. Similar Sanskrit "texts" can be found on gold-coloured silk woven funerary covers, known as "*dharani* coverlets", which wrapped the bodies of Qing emperors and their consorts or were used as decorative elements on the state-head-dress of the emperor, where they obviously allude to Qianlong's self-image as a Universal Sovereign as well. The carved Sanskrit mantras of the Qianlong crypt most probably relate to an encyclopaedic quadrilingual collection of 10,402 *dharanis* covering 451 *sutras* compiled by imperial command, under the supervision of Rolpai Dorje between 1749-59 and completed as a printed edition in 1773.⁴⁹⁹

Besides being National Preceptor (*guo shi*), Rolpai Dorje was also Qianlong's consultant for his Bodhisattva-Emperor portraits.⁵⁰⁰ Qianlong's impressive 'self-image' on this tomb, showing a distinguished presentation of iconography concerning Buddhism, may have given Cixi some ideas. Like Yao and Shun having an unshaken status in Chinese history, Qianlong was the most successful emperor and incomparably the greatest ruler in Qing history. Cixi chose him as an exemplar by whom Cixi was inspired and whom she admired the most among all the leaders of China. To her, the model ruler with a glorious record was required reading for all who aspired to rule. This was an intensively moving experience, transporting her back into a great period and filling her with admiration for

the abundance of a truly great reign. Cixi learned something about methodology from Qianlong's image-making.⁵⁰¹

When Conger asked Cixi whether an American painter, Carl, could be invited to the Court to portrait Cixi, was it easy or difficult for Cixi to agree? In some of Qianlong's portraits (Fig. 57), by hypothesis, based on the stylistic evidence (his face involving refined and subtle shading), they might have been painted by the Italian Jesuit painter Guiseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining, 1688-1766). In the Qing's imperial record of painting *Guo Chao Yuan Hua Lu*, besides Castiglione, there were other European painters painting Qianlong, such as Jean-Denis Attiret (Wang Zhicheng), Ignatius Sichelbarth (Ai Qimeng), Joannes Damascenus Salusti (An Deyi), Joseph Panzi (Pan Tingzhang) and Ludovicus de Poirot (He Qingtai).⁵⁰² At that time, the practice of 'collaboration' – the co-operation between these European painters and Chinese Court painters – was well-known. In collaborative works, the facial features and the horses were painted by the Western painters while the landscape and buildings were executed by Chinese artists. In the portraits of Qianlong as Bodhisattva and those of Tibeto-Lamaist dignitaries such as the sixth Panchen Lama (1738-80) and National Preceptor (*guo shi*) Rolpai Dorje (1717-86), these facial features are so similar; so they may be attributed to Castiglione, Sichelbarth, or some other European court painter.⁵⁰³ If she saw these portraits, Cixi must have known that Qianlong's Court had Western artists paint Qianlong and his face. This did happen and also went well during Qianlong's period. There was no problem at that time. Cixi's portrait for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition was also a collaborative effort – Carl did most of the portrait but Chinese court painter(s) made some parts of it (more detail will be presented in Chapter Six). Therefore, about the concern of whether the Western painters were proper in the Court or not, when Conger asked Cixi whether she was willing to be

portrayed by Carl in the Court, it was perhaps not too difficult for Cixi to agree because there was a *precedent*.

In addition, to Cixi, there is another precedent about the purpose of Qianlong's Bodhisattva-Emperor portraits. These portraits were made to mark some important events and then were put into Buddhist temples, monasteries and shrines for worship. Typically, Qianlong presented these portraits to the Lama. For instance, one portrait collected in Xumifushou temple at Chengde is believed to be one that Qianlong presented to the Sixth Panchen Lama as a diplomatic gift when this Lama visited Beijing in 1780.⁵⁰⁴ Qianlong gave his own portraits to his guests from afar as part of his 'foreign policy.' Behind the portraits as diplomatic gifts, there was deep political concern. From the imperial point of view, the Emperor was in a strong position and in good control and ready for expansion and unification. From the Tibetans' and Mongolians' points of view, these 'costume' portraits (Qianlong wore the 'foreign' costumes) characterize this secular emperor as *dharma-raja* (King of Religious Law) and *cakravartin-raja* (Universal Sovereign turning the wheel): the former one symbolises the conception of the Emperor-as-Bodhisattva or the reincarnation of Buddha; so Qianlong is a ruler having a sacred and legitimate nature. The latter one is a Universal Monarch setting the worldly universe into motion; so the concept of the universal characteristic of Buddhism that is "not bound to territories and ethnic traditions" is brought into this.⁵⁰⁵ Also, these portraits demonstrate the Emperor's generosity – their own cultures are well accepted and treated by the system of the whole Empire. These images were a reminder of all these for them. Cixi must have well understood the image of a ruler as a diplomatic gift-giver had been conventional. This was not novel. This was why Cixi was willing to give her photograph to the Empress of Germany through the German crown prince during his visit to China in 1904.⁵⁰⁶ Two large photographs of her were also sent to the American President Theodore Roosevelt

and Conger as well as similar photos being given to all the foreign ambassadors represented in Beijing after her portrait was sent to St. Louis.⁵⁰⁷ She also naturally promised (when it was completed by Carl) that her portrait would be presented to the USA government after its exhibition on LPE in St Louis finished.⁵⁰⁸ To Cixi, there had been a *precedent*.

The examples Qianlong set up or used became *precedents* that are like traditions or even excuses and conveniences for Cixi. Qianlong's precedents proved that there was no disaster. Instead, they were proved to go well in his time – bringing him great success. Cixi was restrained in accordance with these precedents for future policies. Following precedents, she could feel safe – her similar action would be perfectly proper and she would not be blamed.

Cixi's Psychology Compared to that of Contemporary Female Monarchs

Cixi was very much aware of the existence of contemporary female monarchs in other countries. In connection with image-making, two female monarchs especially caught her attention. One was Queen Victoria; the other was the Russian Czarina – both were remarked by Cixi although both were themselves so different in their visual images. How did the images of these two female monarchs affect Cixi's decision to have her portraiture done? What was her reaction to their images? Before these questions are analysed, what Cixi's attitude was towards them should be traced first.

Cixi was seemingly inclined to jealousy of the Russian Czarina Alexandra. This can be observed from one occasion: Cixi's favourite statesman, Li Hongzhang (1823-1901), who was a leading statesman of the late Qing period, was sent to Russia to represent China to attend the coronation of the Czar Nicolas II in Moscow, on 14th May, 1896.⁵⁰⁹ He had been charmed by the beauty of the young Russian Czarina and he revealed this

during an audience with Cixi. His praise led to him receiving a punishment. In his memoirs, he says: “[I receive a] notification that I am to forfeit one year’s pay [37,000 taels] for a breach of ceremony at the Palace.”⁵¹⁰ Later, on the same day, he “[received] a copy of the edict conferring upon me the Order of the Golden Dragon.” The copy says the original edict was written by Cixi. Li also remarks, “I am inclined to think my breach of Court etiquette was not serious to her [Cixi’s] private mind.” Haldane comments on this: “[m]ore likely it was the Empress’s private mind that had resented his too obvious admiration for the [Czarina].”⁵¹¹

Cixi also developed a similar feeling towards Queen Victoria. On one occasion with Derling, Cixi compares herself with Victoria,

I have often thought that I am the most clever woman that ever lived and others cannot compare with me. Although I have heard much about Queen Victoria and read a part of her life which someone has translated into Chinese, still I don’t think her life was half so interesting and eventful as mine. My life is not finished yet and no one knows what is going to happen in the future. I may surprise the foreigners some day with something extraordinary and do something quite contrary to anything I have yet done. England is one of great powers of the world, but this has not been brought about by Queen Victoria’s absolute rule. She had the able men of parliament back of her at all times and of course they discussed everything until the best result was obtained, then she would sign the necessary documents and really had nothing to say about the policy of the country. Now look at me. I have 400,000,000 people, all dependent on my judgment. Although I have the Grand Council to consult with, they only look after the different appointments, but anything of an important nature I must decide myself.⁵¹²

The above comparison implies that Cixi thinks herself as more clever, able and powerful than Victoria. Cixi knew well that ‘Britain was one of great powers of the world’; yet, she

ignored the fact of England's success and China's defeat when making her comparison. Her jealous attitude towards Victoria is obvious in the lines of her comparison.

Jealousy is sometimes mixed with curiosity and admiration. Cixi had those contradictory attitudes, especially for Queen Victoria. Although Cixi faced widowhood quite differently (Cixi was strongly involved with politics, Victoria was less active and more secluded and kept away from the contact with outside world and let her mind dwell on her late husband, Albert), she highly admired Victoria and was curious to know all about her. In mid-May, 1898, Cixi met Prince Heinrich of Prussia (1862-1929). This was the first time that Cixi had ever been seen by a foreigner (this meeting happened earlier than her first meeting with the foreign ladies). This first foreign guest, Prince Heinrich of Prussia, was in fact the grandson of Queen Victoria. Seagrave mentions that this prince was "a figure who fascinated Cixi."⁵¹³ Carl also records another occasion when Cixi met another grandson of Victoria – Prince Adalbert of Prussia (1884-1948):

at this Audience of the young Prince she became interested in talking with him, and I heard one of the gentlemen who was present say it was the first time he had seen Her Majesty thoroughly at ease at one of the Audiences for the Diplomatic Corps, and that on that day [Cixi] was perfectly charming, seeming to take the liveliest interest in questioning the young Prince and conversing with him in a motherly way⁵¹⁴

What is the meaning of Cixi's fascination on these occasions? Apparently she desired to see the princes and to understand if any good qualities had been generated in the two royal princes from their blood connection to Victoria.

Did the images of these two female monarchs have any impact on Cixi's decision about her own portraiture? Concerning the miniature portrait and the photograph of the Czar and Czarina and their family, there is no record saying how the Czarina was portrayed and what she looked like in the portrait. From all her surviving photos and

portraits (Fig. 58), it is certain that this Russian Czarina was still a young and beautiful girl at that time when Cixi had turned sixty and became an old lady.⁵¹⁵ Cixi's awareness of her old age may have turned into an anxious desire to keep her good image in the world even if not in the Court. In the LPE portrait of Cixi (Fig. 1), there is no wrinkle and no shadow. Evidently, Cixi's face had been flatteringly treated. This is a *young* face. Carl in her book quotes a whole poem, which praises Cixi's youth and beauty and mainly depicts her face as an extraordinary one, written by an anonymous poet when Cixi was twenty-five.⁵¹⁶ The purpose of Carl's quoted poem was to show that the face on the LPE portrait is that of a twenty-five-year-old girl's. Hubert Vos for whom Cixi became a sitter in 1905 also spotted that and made a remark that how Cixi wanted was to be portrayed as "the empress at [age] twenty-five."⁵¹⁷ Viewing this young monarch's images may have been a great trigger for Cixi's inclination to be portrayed in order that her own beauty and eternity could remain on display.

With respect to Queen Victoria's portrait, in *My Chinese Note-book*, Lady Susan Townley remarks that Cixi "led the way to an apartment where she evidently lives herself, and where I noticed hanging upon the wall a framed portrait of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria."⁵¹⁸ Lady Susan's saw this framed portrait of Victoria hung on the wall in Cixi's apartment around 1902. Cixi put a foreign monarch's image in her own personal room – a remarkable scene that shows Cixi's admiration for this Queen. It is unknown which portrait was hung. Probably this portrait was one of many of Victoria's images which Cixi had seen. Not only can this portrait probably be regarded as an object that became an inspiration to Cixi for political guidance, but also, more important, it is a significant guide to how Cixi represented herself in her own images. In an account of Mariam Headland who had been a female doctor to the family of Cixi's mother, the Empress Longyu's sister

and royal princesses and high official ladies for twenty years as well as a friendly friend to Mrs. Conger, she describes carefully:

When it was first proposed that she have her portrait painted for the St. Louis Exposition, she was dumfounded. After a long conversation, however, in which Mrs. Conger explained that portraits of many of the rulers of Europe would be there, including a portrait of Queen Victoria, and that such a painting would in a way counteract the false pictures of her that had gone abroad, she said that she would consult with Prince [Qing] about the matter. This looked very much as though it had been tabled. Not long thereafter, however, she sent word to Mrs. Conger, asking that Miss Carl be invited to come to [Beijing] and paint her portrait.⁵¹⁹

That a portrait of Queen Victoria would be sent to the exhibition made Cixi feel more interested in joining the 'competition.' Many of Cixi's photographs involve daring and unconventional postures instead of the Qing dynasty's imperial look. For instance, instead of looking at the viewer, Cixi's eyes sometimes look in other directions as Victoria's eyes often did in her own pictures (Figs 59 & 60); instead of being seen in a frontal posture, Cixi is sometimes seen from different angles and only her right or left face is shown (Fig. 61). Many of Victoria's postures are also like this (Figs 62, 63 & 64). Also, instead of hiding her feet, Cixi displays her feet (Figs 65 & 66). The *Spectator* notes Victoria's feet as her special feature:

[Victoria was] dwelling constantly on the beauty...of her feet and even her slippers. The *Chronicle* has more than once of late called attention to the important fact, that "her Majesty's foot and ankle are peculiarly small and elegant."⁵²⁰

Queen Victoria's feet and her "pair of slippers which rival the famous glass slipper of Cinderella" attracted the media's attention.⁵²¹ In many of the Queen's portraits, she shows

her tiny foot with a small shoe to excite the imagination of viewers (Fig. 67). Both Victoria and Cixi showed one of their feet while the other foot remained obscure or hidden. It is likely that Cixi's transformation from traditional poses into more flexible poses derived from her imitation of Victoria. Certainly both of them have very similar dress codes for widowhood (Cixi's is blue; Victoria's is black), they do not use any cosmetics, and they look old, fat and grumpy. The two monarchs' 'political bodies', i.e. their public images, resemble each other in respect of the presentation of widowhood (more discussion has been provided in Chapter Two). By (at least officially) keeping her virtue and chastity after Prince Albert's death, Victoria's images won Cixi's respect and sympathy.

There is one big uncertainty. Did Cixi like the special nature of photography – its verisimilitude – if the photo showed her wrinkles, making her look like an old lady? In her conversation with Derling, Cixi said she felt amazed at the likeness of the photo to the person photographed. Normally, she would not have wanted her oil portraits to show any sign of her old age. In photographs, was she aware of that? In order not to show any defects, some retouching was probably carried out. However, even with retouching, how could Cixi accept her elderly appearance in the photos?⁵²² Cixi saw her heroine Queen Victoria having so many photographs taken in her old age and with a grumpy appearance. She perhaps liked to do the same things (having many photos taken as well as posing in similar postures to Queen Victoria) without considering whether she looked young or not.

Cixi's contemporary female monarchs' images were sent to abroad to be admired. In the same spirit, there were some *precedents* before her. There was no sign of harm coming to these two foreign female monarchs. On the contrary, they were popular. In particular, Queen Victoria's image won much praise in Eastern countries such as China and India.⁵²³ Cixi learned that these two were loved by many. Thus Cixi's complex

psychology towards these two foreign monarchics triggered her to be brave to show herself to many all over the world.

Conclusion

Before being portrayed in oils and by photography, Cixi went through several psychological stages – knowing, refusing, struggling, overcoming, and finally accepting. In 1860, Cixi had escaped to Rehe. This escape may have made her familiar with the images of the Qianlong emperor. Qianlong's images were probably the ones that first made a great impact on Cixi's concept about the Western portraiture. Over forty years later, she had a magnificent march from Xi'an to return to Beijing. This time, she had a special treatment, the same as that of a present celebrity – she saw the flashing of cameras and the crowds' high interest in her. This camera shot gave her the experience of being intruded upon, and let her begin to know the influence of journalism. This woke her up. Then, the Russian Czarina's miniature portrait was presented to Cixi. This female monarch's beauty and youth were what Cixi lacked. This situation probably excited her anxiety to leave a lastingly favourable view of herself. Cixi's psychology may have had a dramatic change. Very soon, Conger's idea – revealing the true Cixi in an oil portrait and sending it out to the USA in order that ill rumors about Cixi could be erased and there would be no more misinterpretation on this empress – appealed to Cixi's heart. This could give Cixi an exceptional chance of fighting back against criticism. Conger's suggestion did not win Cixi's permission at once. She still hesitated. During this time of consideration, three factors weighed with her: Carl was a *female* painter; Derling, as Cixi's *confidante*, was an influential figure helping Cixi make a final decision; Cixi knew a portrait of Queen Victoria towards whom Cixi had deeply contradictory attitudes – jealousy and admiration – which could be seen from the fact that the British monarch's

portrait hung on the wall of the Empress Dowager's apartment. After forty years of preparation, she was happy to be portrayed. As for photography, its quicker speed and the possibility of production in quantity appealed to Cixi. Queen Victoria's having a lot of photographs of her old age taken was also encouraging to Cixi. Once she had overcome the conflict about being portrayed in oils and realized her portrait was successfully exhibited in St Louis, she seemed easily to accept to be portrayed in another medium.

Chapter Six

The Aesthetics of Cixi's Portraiture and its Political Implications

Every portrait is “the product of some composition” and “the result of an agreement between the artist and the sitter, between an aesthetic conditioned by the relatively autonomous precepts or traditions of the genre and the patron’s individual requirements.”⁵²⁴ This chapter, focusing on the aesthetics of Cixi’s public portraiture, will analyze all these *components*, look at the relationship and conflicts between the patron and sitter (Cixi) and her artists, and see how these painters compromised with Cixi and what Cixi insisted on adding to or deleting from her portraits. These aesthetic analyses will show the difference between Chinese and Western portraiture, how Cixi wished to appear and be portrayed, and how Cixi wanted Western audiences to look at her.

The picture for discussion, Katherine Carl’s portrait in the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (LPE), is specially considered because the portrait’s public purpose was explicit (Fig. 1): Cixi knew that this portrait would be sent to St Louis, that people from all over the world would see it. Also, she promised to give it to America as a gift when the exhibition ended, showing that she wanted to leave it in a foreign land.⁵²⁵ So this portrait involves high motivation and political implications. In order to show her idea of presenting her portrait – showing the viewers her values, interests, and intentions – Carl’s other three portraits, Hubert Vos’ two portraits and Xunling’s photographs are also brought in for discussion.⁵²⁶

Comparison between Cixi’s ancestral portrait and her LPE portrait

If two portraits of Cixi, the ancestral portrait (Fig. 11) and the LPE portrait (Fig. 1), are put together, do they look similar or different? At first sight, they probably do not look much different. In the ancestral portrait, Cixi is shown full-length, viewed frontally in a strictly symmetrical way with her hands neatly folded on her lap, seated on her throne and attired in dragon robes, headgear and accessories indicative of her rank. The whole figure makes a triangle shape that is set in the middle of the picture, yielding a mirror image for the right and left halves. Only Cixi's face can be seen, the rest of her body being hidden in costume. Her eyes gaze at us. Her imperial pose and eminent rank arouse feelings of awe, fear, reverence and worship on the part of her subjects. These are presented in a similar way as for other Qing dynasty Empresses. This portrait formed part of a collection in the Temple behind the Coal Hill of Beijing – the place where the Qing Dynasty's ancestral portraits of its monarchs and their wives and concubines were housed for worship by future generations. This collection was not open to the public, but was only to be seen by the imperial family.

How about the LPE portrait? The public portrait still keeps some features of imperial "law of art" that the ancestral portrait meets totally.⁵²⁷ The imperial 'law of art' has four significant features. First, Cixi's full-length body is shown: no part of her body is omitted. The use of the full-length body occurs not only in this portrait, but also in other portraits and photos made under her supervision. The full-length view of the sitter (who is generally an emperor) sitting on the chair/throne had become an authoritative prototype in Chinese portraiture probably since Tang Dynasty – e.g. Yan Liben's (601-673) *Chen Jin Emperor* (one section of *Thirteen Emperors*) (Fig. 68) and Wu Daozi's (c. 689-758) *Accompanying the Emperor Before He Makes His Journey* (whereas the Western authoritative prototype is a three-quarter-length portrayal of the sitter in an upright chair – e.g. Velazquez's image of Pope Leo X, Raphael's image of Pope Julius II [Fig. 69], etc.).

Secondly, Cixi is displayed strictly frontally. The use of the frontal face and figure probably started during the Ming Dynasty (Fig. 70). Before then, in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the emperors' portraits do not show the sitters' frontal pose, but their three-quarter face and body. In the Qing period, the frontal pose became *de rigueur*. The frontal figure is unlike the profile, which gives the sitter an objective, dignified and hieratic air reminiscent of portraits during Classical antiquity of the West, and at a three-quarter angle of view (one-quarter of the face and/or body is invisible and three-quarter face and/or body is seen by the viewer), which shows a little friendliness. If the eyes of the sitter with the view of three-quarter angle are looking at the viewer, the distance between the sitter and the viewer seems shorter – sometimes generating attraction and other effects. Cixi's frontal facial features, her frontally oriented body and the backs of her hands facing the viewer give signs of unfriendliness: the first two indicate formality and stiffness; the latter one, defensiveness (When the backs of the hands shown, it means the person protects or defends himself or herself; when the palms are shown, it means that the hands are ready for embracing somebody or something).⁵²⁸

Thirdly, Cixi's figure is set exactly in the middle of canvas – it is totally centred. The decorations which surround Cixi – like the two plants in big vases, two pairs of cranes, and the patterns on the vases at the sides by the screen – are strictly symmetrical: they are virtual mirror images of each other, and also they are “placed at the exactly equal distances on the either side of the throne.”⁵²⁹ This balancing will lead a viewer to attend to the centre. The reason is: the viewer's gaze goes in the way that the two oblique lines following the heads of persons converge towards the head of Cixi and the other two oblique lines following the feet of persons along lines converging toward the feet of Cixi. If the gaze moves from the outside into the inside quickly, it means that the viewer's focus will immediately be on her. At the same time, the viewer will ignore other figures.

All the people and all the ornaments serve as a background in order to enhance her in her brilliance, greatness and radiance. The strong position in the middle makes her the undoubted focal point of the picture. These substantial features are different from those of Chinese horizontal hand scrolls where it is necessary that the viewers, who properly view from right to left in the reading of paintings, have a sequential visual journey or pictorial narrative. In the case of hand scrolls, there is the voyeuristic gaze since the structure has a sequential development. But in the LPE portrait, the visual journey involves either directly or quite soon a visual focus on Cixi from outside into inside. There is no narrative whatsoever.

Fourthly, Cixi's figure forms a pyramidal shape. The bottom line of her dress is the base of the triangle; her head provides the apex; and the two lines of her sleeves follow the two sides of the triangle. Coincidentally, in the West, pyramidal composition was common in the High Renaissance, especially for sacred groups like the Madonna and Child. Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo and Dürer were artists who used pyramidal structure in important paintings; for example, Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks*, Raphael's *Holy Family with Saints Elizabeth and John* of c.1506 and Michelangelo's *Pietà* statue of 1498-1500. Although there was no evidence showing that there was any connection about this design between the two nations or between different periods, these two nations both found the right shape – the triangle – in universal aesthetics. The Scottish photographer John Thomson's (1837-1921) two photographs – one of a diplomat Yung Tajin; the other of Chinese Mandarins (Figs 71 & 72) – show this form. The first photograph has this diplomat spreading his legs widely (forming the base of the triangle); his exaggerated arms form the sides of the triangle, and his head is the apex. The second has two seated elder Mandarins, their arms spread exaggeratedly and their hands put in their laps while their legs are also spread widely as well – the right arm of the person sitting on the left

and the left arm of the person sitting on the right form the sides of the triangle – and the youngest Mandarin is standing behind them and also in the middle – his head making the apex of the triangle. On the other hand, one can take examples of Thomson's image of another oriental monarch to see whether the same shape is formed or not: in two photos of the King of Siam (Figs 73 & 74), the king's feet are constrained together – finally, his figure does not form a triangle, but a rhombus. From seeing the cases, the triangle is indeed the special aesthetic shape found in China's Qing period.

These above four features together – full-length, frontality, symmetry and triangularity – are crucial in pictorial representation of the Qing Court. Cixi's portrait demonstrates these basic four features. Why do the LPE portrait and the ancestral portraits exhibit substantial similarities? Simply, the LPE follows these four important features. Cixi and her body politic surely intended to imitate traditional ancestral portraits. The similarities having been discussed, next the different features will be explored using the components of Cixi's portraiture – face, figure, costume, accessories, coiffure, throne, ornaments, screen, legend, and frame – respectively to analyze their aesthetics and understand Cixi's political attitudes and intentions.

Face

Is Cixi's face in the LPE portrait like that of the ancestral portrait, giving an entirely true resemblance?⁵³⁰ Carl describes her impression of the face:

a symmetrical, well-formed head, with a development above the rather large ear; jet-black hair, smoothly parted over a fine, broad brow; delicate, well-arched eyebrows; brilliant, black eyes, set perfectly straight in the head; a high nose, of the type the Chinese call "noble," broad between the eyes and on a line with the forehead; an upper lip of great firmness, a rather large but

beautiful mouth with mobile, red lips...a strong chin, but not of exaggerated firmness and with no marks of obstinacy.⁵³¹

In the LPE portrait, Cixi's ears are long, her smooth black hair is well-parted in the centre, her eyebrow is *yi zi mei* (literally meaning 'eyebrow with a strictly horizontal line'), the black eyes make her look gentle, the nose is finely formed, her lips are closed tightly – so as not to expose her teeth (her bottom lip is thick whereas her upper lip is thin and firm), the mouth looks small, her chin is wide, and the face is oval-shaped.⁵³² This head is the exactly as she describes. Comparing this face with the face of her photographs (Fig. 75), her chin, eyes, mouth, and trace of her stroke are especially different. Concerning the chin, whereas her chin is rather narrow and receding in the photos, her chin in the portrait is wide. A person's chin is usually regarded in China as the part that belongs to the earthly region and also reflects their destiny beyond the age of sixty. Generally speaking, a broad and rounded chin is most desirable, as it will bring prosperity in the person's old age. Cixi could have been aware of this traditional face reading, and so Carl painted the chin in this way. About her eyes and mouth, Carl painted Cixi's eyes slanting upward a little bit so that bottom lines and upper lines of the eyes join together in the middle, and also she did not paint the downward slope of junction between the corners of the mouth and cheeks. In the photo, her eyes and mouth droop downward. Hubert Vos remarks that Cixi asked him to "make the eyes go up" and "the mouth full and up, not dropping."⁵³³ Cixi may have given the same instructions to Carl. As for traces of the stroke, Puyi, in his memoir mentions: "As [Cixi] grew older she developed a facial tic and she hated people to notice it."⁵³⁴ In the photo, Cixi's muscular *tic* on the left half of her face that must be the result from the stroke is obvious. But, in Carl's portraits, there is no sign of such imperfection. Cixi's face shows a radiant, healthy, and slightly orange colour -- different from her real-life 'olive' colour.⁵³⁵ There is also neither wrinkle nor shadow. For all these reasons, it is clear that Cixi's face had been manipulated.

Among the several types of flattery by the artist, there are three that are notable: one is the use of shadow; a second concerns wrinkles; the third concerns Cixi's marble-like appearance. It is no exaggeration to say that Cixi's portraits involve a *shadowless* world. Her fear of shadows was obvious: Carl explains "there could be no shadows and very little perspective, and everything must be painted in such full light as to lose all relief and picturesque effect."⁵³⁶ Vos, too, mentions how Cixi required "no shadows under or above the eyes...the nose no shadows, no shadows, no shadows, no shadow, no shadow."⁵³⁷ Supposedly, the application of shadow to one's face was an insult, bringing shame or a bad luck on the sitter and also making the whole picture look 'dirty.'⁵³⁸ The West also had the negative image of shadowing. For example, in the period of England's Elizabeth I, in Nicholas Hilliard's *The Art of Limning*, he also views shadowing as 'like truth ill-told, signifying an ill cause.' Cixi and Elizabeth both hoped that the colour of their face on their portraits would be 'bright,' meaning with *as little shadow as possible*. In his writing, there is a description of Elizabeth's anxious refusal to allow any use of shadow: "her majestie conseed the reason, and therfor chosse her place t sit in for that porposse in the open ally of a goodly garden, where no tree was neere, nor any shadow at all."⁵³⁹ A miniature painted by him in 1572 (Fig. 76) is assumed to be the one he referred to in *The Art of Limning*.⁵⁴⁰ This portrait shows that Elizabeth's requirement was to reduce the amount of shadow. In spite of that, there is some degree of shadowing to capture the three-dimensionality of facial features. As result, there is a *slight shadow* that the viewer can see, appearing only in the arca between Elizabeth's cheek, mouth and nose, between her eyes and eyebrow, and between her mouth and chin. By contrast, Cixi had *not* a single shadow – her portrait was even more flattering and more highly *unreal* than Elizabeth's portrait.

On Elizabeth I's pale face, *very light* lines were also used to mark five facial features due to the strong sunlight when she was sitting for this portrait. Her attitude to the use of light was evidently the same as that of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres' (1780-1867) teaching that portrayed women needed as much light as possible. This means that much sunlight could help the sitter appear with reduced shadow. Besides avoiding shadowing, strong sunlight also solves the problem of wrinkles. No wrinkles are shown in most of the portraits of Elizabeth I. Elizabeth I's preference for strong light is different from Cixi's. Carl often complained of lacking light for her work, "I found the light, in the magnificent hall which had now become my studio, so obscure, even in front of the great plate-glass doors, that it was almost useless to attempt to work."⁵⁴¹ In Cixi's portrait, her face turns up looking so radiant and bright, seeming to have full light. But the reality was opposite. The radiant and bright colour – between yellow and red – in the portrait is totally artificial and without any basis in reality. The room was so *dark* that Carl could not see Cixi's wrinkles and other facial features. This is one way to reduce wrinkles.

According to Carl, Cixi was "looking tired and anxious" at the time when the portrait was made (at the time of the Russo-Japanese conflict over Manchuria in China). But can a viewer see any sign of tiredness, anxiety and worry? No. From this emotionless face, the viewer cannot see her real psychology. Any hysterical facial expressions during conflict are all erased here; what is left on the face is just a hint of 'harmoniousness' which was far removed from reality.

Evidently, there is no true reflection whatsoever. Cixi detested the practice of using shadows to create three-dimensional effects as well as that of being portrayed as having wrinkles. Carl notes that Cixi wanted to be portrayed as 'the empress at age twenty-five.'⁵⁴² Vos also makes the same remark.⁵⁴³ A meticulous concern over her face, resulting from her conscious anxiety about the ravaging effects of old age, ensures that her portraits

stressed rejuvenation and youth, and perhaps even immortality that was triumphant over bodily decay. In addition, without joy or anger, this image is calm, remote and expressionless. Thus, Cixi appears more than a human being – almost goddess-like – and apparently prefers an almost iconic style of representation in her portraits.

Figure

In the LPE portrait, Cixi is sitting on the throne wearing shoes with several-inch-high, stilt-like soles and her feet are resting on a low stool.⁵⁴⁴ Her costume covers her feet and shoes. She “always sits extremely erect, without leaning upon a cushion or the back of the throne.”⁵⁴⁵ This makes her look taller. Carl remarks that “to avoid throwing the knees up higher than the lap she must sit upon cushions, and when she is seated she looks a much larger woman than when standing.”⁵⁴⁶ Her loose dress makes her look larger. This is how Cixi liked to appear – as tall and as large as possible. However, she was actually a tiny woman of no more than five feet and she was also slim.⁵⁴⁷ Moreover, the picture itself had to be large – 284.5cm x 162.6cm. Comparing the size of her canvas with that of the Qianlong emperor – 253 cm x 149.2 cm (Fig. 77), hers is bigger than his. The canvases that Carl brought with her to the palace at the beginning were not big enough for Cixi who insisted that she would not pose until there were large canvases; so Carl asked Sir Robert Hart to arrange for very large canvases to be delivered from France and Britain. All these arrangements are to maximize the impression of height and powerfulness, instead of a short lady with a weak look.

Unlike Cixi’s figure in the ancestral portrait showing everything symmetrical, her two hands are unsymmetrical in the LPE portrait. Carl remarks:

[w]hen Her Majesty saw how the hands looked when they were drawn in, with the palms of the hands hidden by the long fur undersleeves, in the position I

had dared to find fault with at the first sitting, she at once suggested having the four undersleeves taken off, but she still said nothing about changing the position of the hands.... A few days after this, she remarked that my "idea about the position of the hands was not bad," and suggested that the left hand "would look well on a cushion."⁵⁴⁸

This remark proves that Cixi's initial idea was that her hands should be like those in her ancestral portrait which shows an exactly symmetrical imperial pose and the undersleeves covering the hands. According to rules of courtesy, she knew Empresses *should* be presented in this way.⁵⁴⁹ But she changed the presentation of hand gesture into a novel one. The novel representation is like the portraits of Emperors where two seen hands are postured far from the mirror image (Figs 6 & 77). Portraits gave more freedom and flexibility for the Emperors, less for the Empresses. Cixi's determination to show the visible hands and unsymmetrical arrangement which appear like a *male* pose of the traditional ancestral portraits explains her intention to convey her 'masculine' political body rather than traditional feminine confinement.

Costume

About Cixi's costume, whereas Cixi wears a whole set of *chao fu* ('court costume'), including *chao pao* ('formal court robe') (Fig. 78), *chao gua* ('formal court sleeveless coat') (Fig. 79), *pi ling* ('collar') (Fig. 80), *chao qun* ('formal court paired apron') (Fig. 81), *ling tou* ('collar for winter'), in her ancestral portrait, she wears a *chang yi* ('semi-formal domestic robe') in the LPE portrait. Without the pattern of dragons telling her rank, she chose a semi-formal domestic dress to present herself in public. John E. Vollmer, author of *Ruling from Dragon Throne: Costume of the Qing Dynasty*, remarks that "[b]ecause the domestic costume fell outside the consideration of the official court costume edicts, its ornament was often expressive of personal preferences."⁵⁵⁰

However, without consideration of rank, what are Cixi's personal preferences?

Five evident aspects – her attitude towards detail of her dress, the width of costume, the selection of patterns, of colours and that of style – can be found in the LPE portrait. Carl adapted herself to Cixi's ideas about detail, by saying “nor could I paint any folds for the sake of the artistic effect in the drapery.... All artistic sentiment had to be sacrificed for the sake of detail. That is why it has such a stiff look, as if it was made of sheet-iron” and also adding “the figures in the gown had to be worked out in detail.”⁵⁵¹ Cixi paid microscopic attention to *detail* – every detail should be clear, meaning impressive colours, flowing lines, deliberate theatrical glamour and no ambiguity. In the eyes of people living in the 19th and 20th century West, Cixi's focus on detail may seem rather artificial. Her idea was the opposite to modern Western aesthetics, especially those of Paris where Carl was trained and painted in the 1880s and 1890s. Paris had undergone an exciting revolution in painting which challenged the academic conviction that “each object in nature has its definite fixed form and colour which must be easily recognizable in a painting.” The challenge had come from Édouard Manet (1832-83) and his followers, such as Monet (1840-1926), Renoir (1841-1919) and Pissarro (1830-1903). These French artists cared more for the general effect of the whole; they abandoned details and aimed to catch the main immediate impression. The battle between academicians and anti-academicians had lasted for nearly thirty years from 1863.⁵⁵² By the 1890s, in the battle, the anti-academicians were increasingly seen as victorious. Carl must have been strongly affected by the new movement. By contrast, in the battle between Cixi and Carl, Cixi was victorious: Carl compromised herself to Cixi's aesthetic views. Focusing on the detail of her costume shows not only its delicacy of material and magnificence of patterns, but also, more importantly, China's timeless representation no matter how much artistic change of fashion was occurring.

The second aspect concerns Cixi's looseness of costume. In the late Qing period, female costumes at Court (Fig. 82) suddenly became dramatically different from those before Cixi's reign (Fig. 83). The degree of looseness of the costumes reveals how Cixi shaped court aesthetics. Before her, Manchu female dress was already loose and the female figure was obscured. Yet, during her reign, these dresses became even looser. In one of Cixi's surviving dresses, her design style for the attire can be observed to be even looser sleeves and waist than usual – the wider waist resulting in very short sleeves. (It was uncertain that she wore those dresses. That these dresses were said to be hers in many published books suggests that they correspond to her aesthetic style and taste.) Looking at her portraits, made by Carl and Vos and one of her photographs (Figs 1, 84 & 85), a viewer can see the effect to which the loose costumes lead – the wider and shorter sleeves. In the photograph (Fig. 85), comparing with other princesses who show their long sleeves and narrower dresses for their bodies, Cixi's sleeves are much shorter and much wider, obscuring her body a great deal. From the short sleeves, how wide these dresses for Cixi's body actually are can be worked out. The hidden body shape tells her indifferent attitude toward sexuality and her intent to embrace moral and conservative concerns. (A discussion of body shape was provided in more detail in Chapter Two).

The third aspect is patterns: like looseness of costume, patterns show an aesthetic change that Cixi brought about in her Court. Vollmer also notices that the silk workshop by the last quarter of the nineteenth century started producing the fabrics for Cixi's informal attire and those of her ladies-in-waiting bearing 'floral' and 'dazzling' images.⁵⁵³ Her designs made the semi-formal dresses more floral and more interesting. In the LPE portrait, she used a selection of some of the following elements in this dress: the orchid (Cixi's nickname is also Lan-er, literally meaning 'orchid'), wisteria (whose colour – blue or lavender – is connected with widowhood), some characters saying *shou* (meaning long

life), and so on. Cixi selected these types of flowers for her dress patterns in the LPE portrait; but they are rather different from those of the other semi-formal costumes that she designed – which had butterflies and various colourful flowers (Figs 86 & 87). In her surviving paintings (Figs 88, 89 & 90), the themes are these: pine and fungi (these two plants connote long life: the pine lives longer than many other plants; the fungus is regarded legendarily as the herbal medicine for long life) composed into the Chinese character *shou*; bats (the Chinese words ‘bat’ and ‘happiness’ are homophones – their pronunciation is *fu*); cloud (the words of ‘cloud’ and ‘luck’ are homophones – their pronunciation is *yun*); peaches (long life); plum blossoms, bamboo (gentlemen), and so on. These patterns on her dress of the LPE, on her other dresses and in her paintings have something in common: positive, lucky, and prosperous meanings no matter through pronunciations, symbols or metaphors. On the other hand, there is something different. That is: her selection of her other dresses and paintings involved more personal taste and literary meanings. By contrast, the patterns in her LPE costume – ‘orchid’ shows her identity, ‘wisteria’ shows her status as widowhood, *shou* represents extended old age, and so on – refer to Cixi’s imperial status and identity.

The fourth aspect is colour. Half of the colouring of Cixi’s costume on this portrait is in the form of a rich and dignified yellow colour. The other half of the colouring is blue. Cixi once confessed in private, “I don’t like to wear this official robe. It is not pretty, but I am afraid I will have to.... I look too ugly in yellow. It makes my face look the same color as my robe.”⁵⁵⁴ This is how she responded to the yellow colour which she genuinely did not like. Her dresses were not yellow, but other colours when she had audiences with her guests.⁵⁵⁵ Thus, imperial yellow was a colour that had little appeal for Cixi’s aesthetic sense. Carl also held a similar view to Cixi, writing, “[Cixi] has excellent taste in the choice of colour, and I never saw her with an unbecoming colour on, except the Imperial

yellow.⁵⁵⁶ However, Cixi used yellow as a large part of her dress for the LPE portrait. The empress's intention of showing her imperial role is clear. Concerning blue, on the night before an occasion when the American Admiral Robley Evans and his staff had an audience with Cixi, she ordered her furniture and colours in her bedroom to be changed dramatically into blue. Concerning the colour scheme, Derling records this:

[Cixi] said [to me and some other ladies-in-waiting]: "Be sure and fix everything up pretty, change everything in my bedroom, so as not to show them our daily life."...we knew it was going to be a hard task to turn the Palace upside down.... We started to work taking off the pink silk curtains from every window, and changing them for sky blue (the color she hated); then we changed the cushions on the chairs to the same color.... We also took away the three embroidered door curtains, and changed them for ordinary blue satin ones.... We changed her bed from pink color into blue.⁵⁵⁷

According to Derling's *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, Cixi disliked blue.⁵⁵⁸ In another book of hers, *Old Buddha*, Derling states it was lavender that Cixi favoured.⁵⁵⁹ Carl writes that "blue, being the Empress Dowager's favourite colour, is used for all the happenings in the Palaces."⁵⁶⁰ The two ladies were close to Cixi; yet, there is some contradiction between them. The reason is that Carl was not really an insider in the Palace. What she saw and heard is the outcome of Cixi's deliberate manipulation. Cixi would have all the decorations and colourings altered before she had audiences with Western guests.⁵⁶¹ This situation is rather similar to that of the Spanish Ambassador, an outsider to the England, court who heard Elizabeth I saying that "these [black and white] are my colours"—which was also probably only a piece of *propaganda* for creating an image of a Virgin Queen.⁵⁶² Who knows what colours Elizabeth favoured the most? The yellow symbolizes orthodox imperial colour; the blue is the colour for Cixi's widowhood.⁵⁶³ The two colours used in the one costume tell people her legitimate status and its important qualification.

The fifth aspect is the Manchu style of costume. Many of Cixi's contemporary oriental monarchs – such as Japan's Meiji emperor, Thailand's king of Siam, and Hawaii's Queen Liliuokalani – had started dressing in Western outfits for their public images (Figs 91 & 92) in order to represent themselves as reformers. Unlike them, Cixi wanted people to believe that she always wore a Manchu costume. For example, when it was said that she wore Han dress during her escape, she constantly and always strongly denied this accusation though it was proved as a fact.⁵⁶⁴ Cixi decried the Western style as looking 'backward' and 'out of proportion' and never compromised herself to wear 'modern' Western dresses. Wu Hung points out very well that "three things – surname, hairstyle and clothes – must be exceptions" if Qing rulers were willing to borrow anything from other culture.⁵⁶⁵ Costume is a strong sign of the Manchus as a ruling ethnic group. In her public image, Cixi would distance herself from her contemporary Oriental Monarchs. She insisted on her ethnic identity which she identified with and was proud of. This portrait shows this.

Cixi's selection of her costumes does not reflect any very personal taste, but rather her political preferences which were, as a matter of fact, her concern and consideration for morality, conservatism, ethnic identity and political hierarchy. For these reasons, the costume would reduce the degree of her female attractiveness. Wu Hung remarks that "[t]he exemplary women's political and moral significance would not give way to their physical attractiveness."⁵⁶⁶

Accessories – pearls

Unlike Cixi's ancestral portrait, where she wears a court necklace called a *chao zhu*, derived from a Buddhist rosary, the LPE portrait shows the most obvious and rich accessories being worn by her are the 'white' pearls that are on the headdress and

surround her arms and upper body. She was not pleased when she found her pearls had been painted in different colours – some pink and others green.⁵⁶⁷ She was told, “Carl had simply painted the pearls as she saw them, according to the different shades of light...this was simply the tints caused by the light falling on the pearls.”⁵⁶⁸ These various colours are what people see with their eyes – though it has to do with light refraction as well. To Cixi, the colour should have matched people’s preconceived idea of the colours things ought to look like; and it was also what is in ‘the conformity to kind in the application of colour,’ that is, “the actual colour of an object in ordinary daylight” or “the modification of light.”⁵⁶⁹ Cixi could neither imagine nor see that pearls would have any other perceived colour than *white*.

With respect to the *light* influencing the colours, here, Carl repeatedly emphasized a problem that she constantly encountered – *the lack of light* when she was in the early and middle stages of doing her portraits.⁵⁷⁰ Carl describes how “the hall was large and spacious, but the light was false, the upper parts of the windows being covered with paper shades. The only place in the hall where there was any sort of light for painting was in front of the great plate-glass doors.”⁵⁷¹ Apparently, the light was very limited. However, *light* was extremely important to Western artists, especially during the days of change of the artists’ attitude towards light during the period in which Carl had become an artist. Before that, painters asked the models to be stationary and they drew from the plaster casts taken from antique statues or other objects *indoors* on which light fell from a window. They explored the layers of the graduation of light intensity from light to shadow over the surface since ‘light’ is perceived in contrast to ‘less light,’ ‘a little less light,’ ‘much less’ and ‘shadow’ to give the illusion of three-dimensional relief and of roundness and solidity and reach the various densities of shadowing. They were trained to make their paintings based on the relation between light and shadow. In this manner, they used some

light, but not full light. During the later half of the nineteenth century, they preferred the *outdoors* instead of indoors for painting. Thus full light (whose reflection from the surrounding objects had an effect on the colours of the unlit parts – there is no more black and grey showing shadows) was introduced into art. Carl's situation – working in a studio and with light coming through the window – was rather like that of the older academicians. Of course, this was not what she wanted exactly. Carl keenly wanted plenty of light, probably preferring to paint in full-light or outdoors, because of her background of training in France.

Cixi's conception was that colouring should be people's preconceived idea of the colours which objects should have. If Derling's record was correct, Carl should have painted these pearls in pink or green according to their reflection of light from other objects. If these pearls in this portrait are carefully examined, there is neither pink nor green. The pearls surrounding her arm and shoulders are: apparently, on the end are many single strings of pearls in which in the middle are red pearls; the end is blue. The red and blue are the original colours of the pearls. Most of the pearls are 'white' as Cixi wanted. The strange thing is that some colours are much closer to yellow. Carl and Derling did not record what can only be found in the finished portrait: except for these original red and blue pearls, all the pearls (including those surrounding the dress and on the hairdressing) were painted in *white* or *yellow* colours, not the colours pink and green that Derling mentions. Some 'pink,' 'green' and perhaps other colours must have been altered into either yellow or white at Cixi's command at the end. What is the meaning of the 'yellow' brush being added at the final stage? This is evidence that this portrait was carefully manipulated. This presumably also shows Cixi's intention to use this imperial yellow colour.⁵⁷²

Coiffure

Without a formal court hat called *chao guan* in her ancestral portrait, Cixi (whose hair style is called *da la chi*) wears a substituted satin (instead of the hair) with “the wing-like construction” in which “[a] band of pearls, with an immense ‘flaming pearl’ in the center, encircled the coil.⁵⁷³ On either side of the winged bow were bunches of natural flowers and a profusion of jewels. From the right side of the headdress hung a tassel of eight strings of beautiful pearls reaching to the shoulder.”⁵⁷⁴ That shape of hair style – called *bei lou shi* (meaning ‘ceremonial-arch style’) – had also become highly popular in the Court during Cixi’s reign.⁵⁷⁵ It was uncertain whether the hair style was one of the fashions that Cixi introduced to the Court. However, since Cixi shaped Court fashion, it could be assumed that she did. This *ceremonial-arch* style in aesthetics matches the white long horizontal band with eight Chinese characters on the top of the canvas of this portrait that also looks like a ceremonial arch. This horizontal coiffure and a vertical pendant form a right angle. This again proves that she follows the straight or perpendicular that is part of Qing’s imperial ‘law of art.’ What Cixi does is to strengthen Qing’s ‘law of art,’ not weaken it.

Throne

Almost every portrait and photograph of Cixi includes a throne. In these images, Cixi is sometimes seated on the throne and sometimes she stands by its side. The throne is not just simply a comfortable seat, but has symbolic meaning. In the I.PE portrait is a semi-circle-shaped and curved throne. This curved throne is not the same type as the phoenix throne of her ancestral portrait. Carl thinks this throne “did not suit the straight lines of the composition as well as almost any other in the palace would have done.”⁵⁷⁶ The curved line (of the throne) and the Qing ‘law of art’ – using straight lines – cannot

match well. This seemingly opposes Cixi's preference for using strict straight lines. Is there any other purpose to this exceptional use? Before this curved throne was painted, Cixi "thought it [the throne in the portrait] might be reproduced from descriptions and from sketches by the Palace painter who had seen it." But Carl "could not consent to work either from memory or other painters' sketches." Carl insisted on opposing Cixi's idea.⁵⁷⁷ Through the foibles of memory, many facts could be distorted and forgotten by people selecting what they want to remember and ignoring what they do not want to remember. Sometimes, the facts become more sensationalized and colourful from people adding their life experiences.⁵⁷⁸ Though other Chinese painters' sketches must surely have had these painters' individual notes and methods, Carl was not happy to paint the object according to other artists' sketches. It turned out that the throne that Cixi would like Carl to paint at the start was a present from her biological son, the Tongzhi emperor, subsequently lost when foreigners invaded the palace during her escape to Xi'an. Carl "was finally obliged to paint, 'faute de mieux', one of the carved teakwood thrones of which Her Majesty is so fond."⁵⁷⁹ It is unknown whether the curved throne painted on the LPE portrait had the same or similar style to that that her son gave to her. If this is the throne that Cixi wants to show to the world, it is likely that the two thrones were similar.

What is the motivation to use this throne with a style similar to that presented by Tongzhi? One photo shown to Cixi during 1900-1 shows that a foreigner who "sat low on her throne, a leg across either arm of the yellow-cushioned chair, stared idiotically into the camera, while a cigarette was hanging from his long slim fingers." This scene made Cixi extremely "furious."⁵⁸⁰ She also felt furious that many precious treasures and antiques (including the throne) stolen by foreign troops appeared in the shops of London, New York, San Francisco and so on for sale.⁵⁸¹ Cixi heavily blamed these soldiers' robbery and their "destructive and vandalistic" behaviour of destroying, breaking, and

pillaging buildings and objects.⁵⁸² Cixi would never allow any repair of some ruined parts. Remaining ruined, these parts could remind her of “her undying hatred of the foreigners.”⁵⁸³ Could it be that Cixi hoped the throne to be painted on the LPE portrait, which could be of similar style to that stolen by foreign troops, would have the same purpose as the destructive marks remaining in the Palace? Probably, yes. The throne is a symbolic object, not only showing Cixi’s political power, but also, more profoundly, reminding foreigners of their own barbarian behaviour.

Ornaments

In her ancestral portrait, there is no ornament except the dragon throne and stool. However, all the ornaments surrounding Cixi in the LPE portrait are arranged symmetrically. Carl explains, “[t]he vases of flowers and ornaments were also placed at exactly equal distances on either side of the throne, but it was necessary to paint them this way. It would not have been ‘proper’ otherwise.”⁵⁸⁴ These ornaments include two large crane-like stands (symbolising long life), two large vases with trees in them, peacocks feathers (symbolising prosperity) and so on – all these are Chinese.

There is something else that should also be considered: the plants on the two vases flanking the throne at the two sides. About the plants, Carl records, “[t]he vases of flowers and ornaments were also placed at exactly equal distances on either side of the throne.”⁵⁸⁵ But we haven’t been told what kind of plants these trees are. Though looking like small trees with leaves, a viewer could see some small white ‘flowers.’ Generally, Cixi preferred to put apples and lotuses by her side (this can be seen in her many photos and in one portrait by Vos). Yet her unusual ‘flowers’ arrangement for the LPE portrait surely had its own purpose. The shape and colour of the ‘flowers’ look the same as that of the flowers of the real Chinese parasol trees that also have large green leaves and also *small*

white flowers. Furthermore, the ‘nine phoenixes’ on the screen on the portrait, a dominant theme of the portrait, have a strong association with the Chinese parasol trees in Chinese literature – a line of poetry “[phoenix] never rests on anything except the begonia tree [which is the same as a Chinese parasol tree]” which appears in *The Book of Zhuang Zi*.⁵⁸⁶ The association of the phoenix with the parasol tree provides a symbolic metaphor of a person’s loyalty to another person or a place. The two well-thought-out themes – phoenixes and Chinese parasol tree – surrounding Cixi are meant to demonstrate her virtuous and faithful qualities.

Having a Chinese reference, the background cannot be separated from Cixi. In this portrait, Cixi cannot have attention focussed on her as an individual, but attention must be distracted by the context in which she sits. Unlike in her public relations with foreigners (Cixi removed objects with Chinese styles and symbols and brought many Western clocks into the room), Cixi did not introduce any single foreign ornament into this portrait. Instead, all the ornamentation is very ‘Chinese.’ She appears to be a modernizer in the foreign circle (as was discussed in Chapter One). But in this picture, the background – Chinese screen, trees, stands, vases, feathers, and so on in the throne room – speaks of China. Cixi here withdraws to a more conservative position.

Screen (I)

On the screen behind Cixi are “nine life-size phoenix[es], in vigorous colours, on a blue *cloisonné* screen placed almost touching the throne, very difficult to represent, so that they did not seem to be real birds flying around her head.”⁵⁸⁷ As well as these legendary birds, there is also a small pink lotus flower surrounded by green leaves on the screen. This lotus is not specially eye-catching. Carl records: “[Cixi] went over to a great vase, standing near, and took from it a lotus flower; held it up, in a charmingly graceful

way, and asked me if that would not be pretty in the portrait, adding that the lotus was one of her attributes. As the colour did not harmonize that the general scheme, I did not care for this suggestion.”⁵⁸⁸ Although Carl says she did not want the lotus, interestingly, she did in the end include a lotus in her painting. The lotus is not held in Cixi’s hands, but near the throne and on the left of the central screen. Carl once more gave way to Cixi. Do the painted phoenixes and lotuses on the screen have any implication of an allusion or tribute to Cixi’s qualities?

The phoenix, originally derived from the Arab world, was a legendary animal, a symbol of rebirth because of its story of being burned yet later reviving.⁵⁸⁹ After its transfer to the West, the story still carried on in the same way. One of striking images for Elizabeth I that was created in her reign by careful and deliberate propaganda was her embodiment as a phoenix. Her life had the qualities that a phoenix has: Elizabeth suffered from the great difficulties like being called a bastard after her mother was accused of adultery, being a prisoner in the Tower of London and being almost beheaded for plotting, having some illness and almost dying, having terrible times and her life being in danger, being targeted for assassination by the top Catholic countries of Europe, and so on. Despite of all such challenges, she survived and despite economic difficulties at the end of her reign went down in history as a brilliant, freedom-loving, fun-loving and effective Queen.

On the other hand, in China, later on, the image of the phoenix became different. In Chinese literature, the book *Han shi wai zhuan* says the “phoenix’s communication can reach the heaven and also reach the ground. It is in charge of five musical tones and nine virtues.”⁵⁹⁰ Thus it was regarded as an extraordinary and intelligent bird. Concerning the ‘five musical tones,’ there is a Ming court painting, ‘Playing the Flute to Attract Phoenixes,’ a leaf from *A Painted Album of Figures and Stories* (16th century, ink and

colour on paper, Palace Museum, Beijing), that one Ming court painter Qiu Ying (1502-51) used to demonstrate these 'musical tones.' In this painting, the music that a beautiful lady plays for an emperor attracts two flying phoenixes that are so intelligent that they are able to understand the music. Wu Hung thinks these two phoenixes embody the two legendary musicians Xiao Shi and Nong Yu, two ancient lovers who affectionately communicated with each other through the flute. The royal blue phoenixes personifying the loving musicians create beautiful music tones. In this case, the phoenix becomes a symbol of appealing, affectionate and harmonious music. As for the nine virtues, an ideal Chinese musical instrument *qin* is said to possess nine qualities of its music. These nine qualities are *qi* (rareness), *gu* (refine), *tou* (penetrate), *jing* (tranquillity), *run* (richness), *yuan* (completeness), *qing* (clearness), *yun* (harmoniousness), and *fang* (excellence).⁵⁹¹

The personified phoenix can be seen everywhere throughout Qing's imperial palace. The dragon and the phoenix are the principal motifs for decorative designs on the buildings, clothing and articles in daily use in the imperial palace. The throne hall is supported by columns entwined by gilded dragons, the central ramps on marble steps were paved with huge slabs carved in relief with the dragon and the phoenix, and the screen walls display dragons in brilliant colours. Thus phoenixes match dragons in formal Court aesthetics. Nearly all the things connected with the emperor or the empress were preceded by the epithet 'dragon' or 'phoenix.' Whereas Emperors are seated on the dragon-throne, empresses occupy the phoenix-throne. Besides the carved dragon and phoenix, there are written words in official edicts: for example, when empresses died, their edicts would be written down like this: 'the phoenix has flown up to heaven.'

The nine phoenixes here stand for literary and imperial combinations. In the East Jin Dynasty, 'the ground that its communication can reach' was often interpreted as the special relation between able persons and a location. In a famous example, a respected

monk, Shi Huiyuan, who had searched for the ideal life for ages, finally settled in the famous Mount Lu for fulfilling and achieving his highest development of his personality and career. This story is also linked to the idea that phoenix never rests on anything except the Chinese parasol tree. This monk is, therefore, thought to resemble a phoenix; and Mount Lu is like the Chinese Parasol Tree. This simile of the monk to the mountain is phoenix to Chinese parasol tree. On the LPE portrait, Cixi is the personification of the phoenix in the imperial sense. The Chinese parasol tree is the location where the phoenix stops; therefore, this tree symbolizes the country of China. Why are there 'nine' phoenixes on the screen? The 'nine' implies that Cixi owns 'nine virtues' (as described for Chinese music – see above) in the literary sense. Nine wonderful qualities of music are applied to describe a female's nine appealing virtues. Thus, symbolically, not only does Cixi possess these virtues, but she is also loyal to the country.

In respect of one painted lotus, Cixi was keen to have the lotus painted. The lotus flower is associated with two sources: one is with literature; the other, with Buddhist religion. In respect to literature talking about the lotus, the most famous writing is a Song Dynasty poem by Zhou Dunyi, *ai lian shuo* ("Depiction of Lotus Loving"). He writes,

...Among all the followers, I only love the lotus whose nature is emerging from
the sediment at the bottom of a lake and is always very clean.

Lotuses are washed by water. After that, they look elegant, not vulgar.

Their inside is a meandering passage, their outside is straight.

They have no creeping tendrils, no branches.

The further the fragrance goes, the clearer it makes people feel.

They are graceful and calm.

You only can see them from far away and they cannot be treated with
disrespect because of over-intimacy.⁵⁹²

The noble nature of the lotus is recognized in literature. This literary connection may seem to have little to do with Cixi. But Cixi's special preference surely arose from the lotus being linked with the Buddhist religion. She once wrote a religious play called *The Empress of Heaven's Party or Feast to all the Buddhist Priests to eat her famous peaches and drink her best wine*. This play was performed in the Palace. Derling, who once saw this play, describes the first scene of the first act as follows.

I saw a large lotus flower, made of pink silk, and two large green leaves appearing from the bottom of the stage, and as it rose the petals and leaves gradually opened and I saw a beautiful lady buddha (Goddess of Mercy) dressed all in white silk, with a white hood on her head, standing in the center of this flower. As the leaves opened I saw a girl and a boy in the center of them. When the petals of the lotus flower were wide open this lady buddha began to gradually ascend herself, and as she ascended, the petals closed until she seemed to be standing on a lotus bud.⁵⁹³

The image – Buddha standing on the lotus flower – is originally derived from Indian Brahminism's religious scriptures and from the earliest surviving document the *Veda* (around B.C.1500-1200) in which the image of a goddess standing on a lotus is recorded. The lotus, therefore, was early granted a divine nature. Many Buddhist scriptures also describe the divine nature of the lotus; for example, Chapter Fifteen of *She da sheng lun shi* (*Commentary to the Summary of the Great Vehicle*) states: "Lotus has four virtues, the first is fragrance, the second is cleanness, the third is softness, and the fourth is loveliness. If *fa jie* ('the universe') has these four virtues, these often make people happy and purified. Among all the flowers, this is the most excellent. So, it is called as a king."⁵⁹⁴ The other scripture, *Wen shu shi li jing lu jing dao meng pin*, remarks, "the human heart should be clean and spotless although everywhere is dirty. It is like the situation where the sunlight will not be mixed up with the ambiguous night. Lotus is a kind of thing that will not be

spoiled by any dust.”⁵⁹⁵ There are legends saying that the lotus was in full blossom when Buddha was born; also in the world of *ji le* (‘Pure Land’), *zhong sheng* (‘all the people’) are the embodiment of the lotuses. Buddhism is often alluded as ‘the religion of the lotus.’ In order to create the Pure Land, there is a large lake full of lotuses in the Palace. There, Cixi spent much time walking around the lake and appreciating these lotuses.

Inspired by her predecessor, the Qianlong emperor, Cixi had the painter paint her acting as a (female) Buddha of Mercy. In a portrait made by Mr. Guan (Fig. 48), the colour of her costume is not the traditional colour white, but is green – that of *jade*. Regarding the pattern of the willow branches, Cixi is holding a rosary instead of a bottle made of jade and a willow – the two objects that the Buddha of Mercy traditionally held in her two hands. Apparently, the representation is different from the conventional one. Guan tries to combine two elements – the jade bottle and willow – on her dress. In reality, Cixi, who had a *green jade* Buddha that she worshipped every morning, remarked, “I was just like a piece of *pure jade*; everyone admired me for what I have done for my country.”⁵⁹⁶ From this, she hopes people to respect her like pure jade. In reality, she has a venerable nickname ‘Old Buddha’ that she favours being called among all her nicknames. Initially, this name was invented by Chief Eunuch Li Lianying. More importantly, this name starts when the rain suddenly fell after Cixi had spent many days praying for the rain (China, dependent on agriculture, faced a serious drought).⁵⁹⁷ According to the Buddhist script, Buddha’s willow branch is the source supplying the rain. Cixi’s costume with the pattern of willow branches indicates Cixi is a reincarnation of *jiu ku jiu nan guan shi yin pu sa* (‘a Buddha of Mercy who saves all the humans from suffering’). Thus, in this portrait, Guan actually treated Cixi in the way that Cixi wished – that is, Cixi was painted and identified as a Buddha.

The screen with the composition of the lotus with phoenixes shows the hierarchical power of Buddhism and imperialism. The phoenix is the metaphor of Cixi's female imperial hierarchical status. As for the lotus, although Cixi does not act as a Buddha for this LPE portrait, the association of the lotus with Buddhism implies that Cixi is Empress-as-Bodhisattva, connoting that Cixi is a reincarnation of Buddha. So the former phoenix has secular and moral connotation; the latter lotus has more of a sacred nature.

Screen (II)

There are several aesthetic questions about this screen. In each case, some other paintings where there are the painted screens will be introduced for comparison with the LPE portrait to highlight the difference from the traditional representation and the special purpose that Cixi realized on the screen.

First of all, in the LPE portrait, the screen with detailed patterns looks like a *wall* with beautiful wall paper. This illusion on the screen mainly comes from the situation that a viewer can only see a part of the whole screen, not the whole of it (including its frame). If one of Cixi's photos (Fig. 93) is examined, it is seen that the screen has three panels and their proper frames and the screen is free-standing and solidly raised above the ground. The portrait of the Muzong emperor of Ming (Fig. 70) shows the whole screen with three folds and framing – two of which on the two sides are set at an angle of 45 degrees while the three folds bear a pattern of dragons encircling the Emperor sitting on the throne. The framing of the screen creates a boundary between the timeless patterns inside the screen and the reality outside the screen. Also, the screen as a three-dimensional object divides the space. Comparing this Ming portrait with the LPE portrait, the viewer can easily see the difference. In this Ming portrait, there is a division and the viewer can see the emperor is confined into a small area that is encircled. By contrast, in the LPE

portrait, the framing of the screen is omitted and also the screen forms a two-dimensional surface; therefore, there is no division and thus Cixi enjoys a wide space. The screen can guarantee the viewer recognizes this emperor *inside* this painting without any difficulty in the portrait of Muzong (sense of the artificial) whereas the screen of Cixi's portrait highlights Cixi looking alive sitting in front of us (sense of reality) – giving the viewer a feeling of awe.

Secondly, Wu Hung remarks that the screen is a framework of which the main function is to define a space.⁵⁹⁸ In photos of Cixi on the boat (Fig. 94), the screen is set almost in the centre of the boat. The viewer can see the obvious division of space – the screen divides two areas, the front and back. The painting *Viewing Clouds from a Palace Terrace* made by Ma Yuan (Fig. 95) also shows a screen dividing the two areas. In Cixi's photos and *Viewing Clouds*, to the viewer, the area of focus should be scene in front of the screen, not that behind the screen. The significance of the screen relies on the figure's psychological relationship with the scene in front of it – on the photos of Cixi, Cixi on the boat is appreciating the abundant lotuses and the lake; in *Viewing Clouds*, the scholar is enjoying the wide sky and dramatic mountains with tranquillity. These screens guide the viewer to follow the figures' gaze towards the sights they see. So, the figures acquire an unimportant role; what is important is that the landscapes in the front of the screen are seen by the figures. But, turning to the LPE portrait, there is no division of the space (the ornaments beside her are for decoration, not for separation). Her position is parallel to the screen that is also parallel to the viewer. This screen guides the viewer to look at the area that Cixi is looking at. As a matter of fact, she is looking at the *viewer*. Here, Cixi becomes the most important role. She is looking at *you*. Of course, you are looking at *her* as well. So the final focus becomes Cixi herself.

Thirdly, Wu Hung states that traditional figures' faces express little in most Chinese painting; instead, the patterns on the screen may be used to express their minds, emotions, thoughts or feelings.⁵⁹⁹ Cixi's face is emotionless. What is her mind in the LPE portrait? This portrait has only *one* screen. However, many photos of Cixi do not show one screen, but *two* (Figs 65 & 93). The juxtaposition between these two screens involves the inner screen with three painted panels and the outer screen behind it, which are in sharp contrast with each other. On the inner screen is a composition of the branches of trees and peonies. The microscopic details and the framing that separates between the inner timeless image and the outside reality make the patterns of this inner screen look artificial. In front of this screen, there are many imperial artificial objects – the throne and others. The whole nearer scene seems to be set indoors – in an imperial palace. By contrast, on the outer screen, without the framing or folds that the viewer sees in the photos, the pattern has no boundary. There are mountains, a lake, numerous bamboos and misty air – all components which obviously present a natural scene. With the soft brush lines and hazy atmosphere, the scene seems as of a fairytale and ideal world. Susan H. Bush remarks that this kind of arrangement was “conceivably influenced by studies of...philosophical Daoism.” This is a place for a recluse, to escape from secular affairs and enjoy life in a leisured way.⁶⁰⁰ The Daoist tranquillity and idealism is what many *wen ren* ('intellectuals'), like the poet Tao Qian (also Tao Yuanming) in the East Jin and many other followers in Ming and Qing, had wished to search for and proudly possess. About the bamboo forest, from the 17th century, painting bamboos, symbolizing scholarship, became a fashionable trend. Meantime, painting manuals, e.g. the second edition of *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* (1701), made ink-bamboo painting more accessible to an enormous group of intellectual amateurs or professionals.⁶⁰¹ Apart from the bamboo scenes, the colour tones on the screen are blue and green, the exact colours

which can be found in Vos' oil portrait of 'idealist' Cixi (Fig. 106) since the real colours cannot be seen in black-and-white photos. The style of the "decorative" landscape painting in which hills are coloured in cobalt-blue and copper-green is first seen during the Tang dynasty. This kind of landscape style is called by the term *qing lu* ('blue and green'). It was favoured by later dynasties. In the late Tang Dynasty, a school of painting – ink monochrome – was introduced to the "poetic" landscape paintings. Mary Tregear thinks avoiding the use of colour arose during the most colourful and flamboyant period and should be regarded as "a reaction."⁶⁰² China's *wen ren hua jia* ('intellectual painters') preferred ink monochrome.⁶⁰³ The use of monochrome seems contradict to that of green and blue in landscape paintings. However, the contradictory had seemed to be resolved in the Yuan dynasty – for example, Zhao Mengfu's (1254-1322) painting *Thatched Pavilion and Sound from Pine Trees* (Fig. 96) in which the element of 'blue and green' and images of an intellectual or scholarly figure are combined together.⁶⁰⁴

Therefore, in the outer one of double screens shown in many of Cixi's photos, the tall bamboo forest, rocks, lakes, and mountains allude to an exterior environment which contrasts with, and reinforces, the artificiality of the interior space around which all these are carefully arranged.⁶⁰⁵ The large difference between the exterior and the interior atmospheres in Cixi's photos is to say that Cixi holds ideas at two extremes – one is of imperial and secular power (the inner screen's artificiality) and the other is of scholarship, spirituality and reclusiveness (the outer screen's natural representation). So these photos showing two screens demonstrate two distinct elements of her personality and thinking. Differently, in the LPE portrait, there are not two screens showing two minds. Instead, there is only one painted screen conveying the hierarchical power of Buddhism and imperialism – her *solid* and *absolute* mind.

Fourthly, is this screen a work of art? A work of art is for being *appreciated* through the viewer's eyes. Wu Hung states the screen has become an independent work of art since the Han and post-Han periods. The revolutionary change was derived from a story concerning a changed gesture: an emperor or a nobleman did not sit down in front of the screen; on the contrary, he *turned his head back to look at the screen*.⁶⁰⁶ The emperor looks at the screen – he favours enjoying its artistic purpose; so this kind of screen could be regarded as a work of art. Before the Han period, the screen was only for official rituals and audiences where the emperor never looked back to the screen; rather, he always sat down to look at his subjects and servants, and they worshipped the emperor and the screen at the same time. The *Li ji* ('*Book of Rites*') requires in a formal audience and ritual that the emperor is locating himself in front of the screen and sitting in the north and facing southwards – this tradition lasted until the end of the Qing dynasty. In order to match this requirement, the Forbidden City that was originally built in the Ming period follows certain directions. It also followed the principle of the universe in which the Pole Star is fixed in the north and faces the south. Therefore, the ruler is like a Pole Star that remains fixed in its place while all other stars circle reverently around it as it looks down on the human world.⁶⁰⁷ This can explain why Cixi who sits in the throne room of the Forbidden City sits in front of the screen set in the North, facing South. The LPE portrait is "a frontal portrait of [her] likeness within the screen's frame and against the screen's decorated surface."⁶⁰⁸ The screen becomes not only an exterior object, the surface pattern of which – with its nine phoenixes – alludes to her political qualities and creates a sense of continuity for her, but also an extension of her body. So, the area is her domain since the screen and her figure are inseparable. In addition, the emperor does not look at the screen – for a rigid political purpose; so, it should not be treated as a work of art. In the LPE portrait, did Cixi turn her head around to look at the screen? In Carl's account, when

the portrait was completed (the real frame had not then been supplied), Cixi invited the foreign ladies to view this portrait. First of all, Cixi had tea with them in the room when the portrait was not there. When these ladies went to see the portrait in the other room, Cixi disappeared.⁶⁰⁹ After that, when princes and officials came to look at this portrait, Cixi was still not there to join them.⁶¹⁰ During rituals and audiences, Cixi, whose figure is seen within the screen's frame, is not supposed to have looked at her own portrait in front of other people in order to avoid confusion with a different reality, the world. These show that the LPE portrait is not for artistic purpose, but a timeless visual icon for hierarchic political use.

The four features of the screen show a strong political purpose. The effect of this screen is to make Cixi appear totally dominant. How the viewer should act is as a humble worshipper.

Legend: Imperial titles

In the top sixth of the picture, the legend written of Cixi's titles whose direction is read from right to left is put in a horizontal line. These Chinese characters are *Da qing guo ci xi huang tai hou* whose number of characters is eight and whose meaning is literally 'Empress Dowager Cixi of the Great Qing Nation.' There are also seven small characters written *guang xu jia chen nian gong hui*, meaning literally 'painted with respect in the Jia Chen year of the Guangxu emperor' (1904). In addition, there are two seals which also indicate Cixi's titles – the large one, whose location is between the eight characters and Cixi's head and which is carried by a middle phoenix with its peak in red characters on a white ground; the small one, whose location is on the left bar and is also above the seven tiny Chinese characters written in a vertical line, is in white characters on

a red ground. Carl sensed the Court paid careful attention to these characters and seals but she felt discouraged. About this, Carl says:

As [Cixi] has sixteen appellations, represented by sixteen characters, and as they were all to be placed upon the picture, together with her two seals, official and personal, it required some manoeuvring to get them into the space required. This lettering was looked upon a very important detail; there were numbers of models of the characters made before the proper size and style was arrived at. The seals, about three inches long, had to be placed at either end of the sixteen characters, and there was a great deal of deliberation as to the colour in which the characters were to be painted. Red was finally decided upon. The two seals were to be painted, one in red characters on a white ground, and the other in white characters on red ground. As I had not known these appellations were to be placed across the top of the canvas when I began the portrait, I had not allowed for them, and putting them on took away from the space above the head and detracted from the general effect. This was another discouragement. I left the discussion of the lettering to Her Majesty and the writers, and I decided to give the canvas over entirely to the latter for a few days, in order that they might place the characters thereon, and that Her Majesty might have time to decide upon their colour at her leisure.⁶¹¹

From this passage, at once two discrepancies between Carl's statement and the real presentation of the portrait can be observed: one, the portrait shows eight characters, not sixteen characters. The other is that the location of seals on the portrait is different from what Carl states. Carl, who did not do the part of legend because Chinese calligrapher dealt with all these characters, made some error about the legend. Cixi indeed has sixteen appellations – 'Loving and Blessed, Upright and Helpful, Vigorous and Careful, Bright and Pleasing, Decorous and Sincere, Lofly and Reverent, Respectful and Dedicated, Honouring and Brilliant' (*Ci xi duan kang yi zhao yu zhuang cheng shou gong qin xian*

chong xi) – that can be seen in some of her photos, but she did not ask Chinese calligraphers to paint all sixteen appellations, but only eight on this portrait. How did Cixi get the idea of the direct juxtaposition of visual images and literal words indicating the titles? This idea can be traced to the scene of the shrines by at least the second century A.D. in China. For example, in ink rubbing of a stone carving of the story of the story of *Liang the Excellent*, there is a scene at the Wu Liang Shrine at Jiangxiang, Shandong province of 151 A.D. The shrine demonstrates Liang Gaoshin's chastity since she resisted the temptation of money that the ruler offered her for marrying her by sending his servant and she in the end cut off her own nose and refused to remarry. In this scene are characters who identify themselves by each figure – *shi zhe* ('messenger') who is standing and carrying an umbrella; *feng jin zhe* ('a person who giving money') who is holding a plate of gold on his knees; *liang gao xing*, the name of a lady, who is sitting on a solid chair and has a knife in her hand. The other example is the *Seven Sages in Bamboo Groves and Rong Qiqi* of the fourth century (Fig. 97) in which there are seven Daoist thinkers by whose sides are written their individual names in order to identify everyone. The original idea of the text was for identification. Here, in the LPE portrait, the text is also for identification. On the other hand, the text does not indicate the name of the sitter, but demonstrates the titles of the sitter, her position in the Qing Court, and her entitlement to rule the Manchus in the period of the Middle Kingdom. Among all these sixteen appellations, why does Cixi specially choose *Ci xi huang tai hou* ('Empress Dowager Cixi') to put on this portrait? This title is far more important than any others with regard to her power because *Ci xi huang tai hou* is the honorary title that Cixi received in the first year of the Tongzhi reign (1862), meaning at the start of her increasing political power. Like Cixi's costume in a Manchu style, showing her Manchu identity, the *Da qing guo* ('Great Qing Nation') is written to show that the Manchus are a superior race ruling

the whole Middle Kingdom. In the history of China, not all dynasties were ruled by rulers from Han race, majority of population. In order to unify the different races together, the emperors, such as the Qianlong emperor, tried to appear in propaganda as adopting a few habits of other races; for example, many of Qianlong's portraits show that he wears the costumes of Han scholars, Tibetan priests and Mongolian leaders. None of the rulers of China was like Empress Dowager Cixi who was so daring to allude to her superior blood in visual propaganda. So what Cixi tries to achieve through these characters is her political identity and the superiority of her own race.

Frame

The frame of the LPE portrait was designed by Cixi so as to stand solidly on the ground on its own. Why did Cixi choose this kind of frame among all others? Chinese traditional paintings such as horizontal and vertical handscrolls are glued on a larger piece of thicker paper leave margins at the top, bottom, left and right and are hung on the wall. Like the formal portraits of Qing emperors and empresses which are painted on large vertical handscrolls (Fig. 6, 7 & 77), Cixi's ancestral portrait was also arranged in the same way. If the frame is a boundary that gives audiences an impression of dividing the two realities – a timeless scene (inside the frame) and a real world (outside the frame), in this sense, the margins of vertical handscrolls and the frame of the LPE portrait are the same. On the other hand, they have some differences: in the case of handscrolls, the margins are light-coloured blanks that will bring the viewer to focus on the painting itself; yet Cixi's frame has some well-thought-out and well-designed details that form an art work so that it will attract the viewer's attention to the frame. In addition, whereas the vertical handscrolls are much closer to the wall, the large frame needs to have a large area of floor space for its setting. The whole work seems like an enormous sculpture and needs a base.

Besides giving the protection (frame) surrounding this portrait, Cixi also provided a solid base for it (this base is a part of the frame). Cixi does not use the vertical handscrolls that other emperors and empresses preferred to use. Moreover, Lady Susan depicts that in Cixi's apartment there was a framed portrait of Queen Victoria on the wall.⁶¹² From this, Cixi may have known Western framing perfectly well. Carl used canvas, a Western medium, to paint Cixi. If this portrait had been framed in the Western way, it would have matched the nature of the canvas; but Cixi did not use this style.

Abandoning the Western frame, Cixi used a Chinese frame as her solution. One can make a suggestion as to why Cixi selected the special frame for her public portrait: the conception of this frame may have come originally from the Chinese *Gate*. To argue about this assumption, the architectural structure of the gate as well as its history and purpose needs to be brought into the discussion.

First of all, in the Forbidden City, Cixi must have seen numerous gates each day. These gates should have been given some important aesthetic conception to Cixi. Comparing this frame with gates, the similar arrangement can be seen at once. Take an example of one gate, Gate of the Hall for the Cultivation of the Mind, the lintel and sides of this gate is like the frame of Cixi's portrait. Like the sides of the gate that have gloriously carved patterns, the "sides [of the frame] were elaborately carved in designs representing the symbol of 'ten thousand' years with the characters for longevity" and flying dragons.⁶¹³ On the top of this gate (in Chinese termed *men mei*, *gua men bian*, or *shu men e*), the three characters on the tablet (in Chinese, *bian e*) – *yang xin men* ('Gate of the hall for the Cultivation of the Mind') are written in two languages, in Han and Manchu. This tablet is to guide people to know the location. Besides telling the location, some tablets in many houses in China set up on the top of the gates have other various purposes, such as telling the family name (for example, *li xue tang* for the You Family, *ai*

lian tang for the Zhou family). These tablets given by governments could also express for a son or daughter his or her filial piety to parents (*chun xiao ge tian*), express for a daughter-in-law her filial piety to parents-in-law (*jie xiao ke jian*), or honour people often doing something for charities (*re xin gong yi*) and achieving official ranks or academic titles (*wen kui wu kui*). Sometimes shops have the tablets showing their names and their services on the top (*he nian tang* for Chinese herbal shop) that are just like the present time, seen everywhere in all countries. These mainly announce identity and good reputation. On Cixi's portrait, on the top of the frame is the "Double Dragon at the top struggling for the 'flaming pearl' with the character 'shou' on it."⁶¹⁴ The legend has it that the flaming pearl would drop down and strike him dead if anyone who was not a descendant of the Huangdi emperor usurped the throne. Connecting himself or herself to the predecessor(s) who are sometimes previous successful emperors and is even sometimes the first Emperor, became an important proof of legitimacy. For instance, the Qianlong emperor needed his father's blessing. The painting *Spring's Peaceful Message* has been argued by Wu Hung to have been commissioned by Qianlong after his accession.⁶¹⁵ This painting in which Qianlong as a prince received a branch of plum blossom from his father, the Yongzheng emperor, shows a blessing from the previous ruler. The flaming pearl that Cixi remembers to put on the top of the frame during her design becomes a significant symbol and is meant to connect to a descendant of Huangdi – proving herself a legitimate ruler. So the "'flaming pearl' with the character 'shou' on it" is to guide the viewer to look at this powerful Empress in this way.

The second matter is to trace back to the origin of the gate. The frame of Cixi's portrait has two features which are so similar to the composition of *que* (Fig. 98) and *jiang jun men* (Fig. 99). Concerning the first one – *que*, its basic structure is that two vertical thick posts (the left vertical post is *fu*; the right one is *yue*) are solidly fixed on the

ground and a horizontal post connects these two vertical posts. The establishment *que* was probably first recorded during the Epoch of Spring and Autumn (770-403 B.C.). The chapter “Explaining Palace” in an ancient book called *Er ya* (containing commentaries on classics, names, etc.) mentions this term. The other book *Gu jin zhu* says describes, “the *que* is...a label for the gate of the Palace.” Later, the book *Hu tong guan* written by famous Ban Gu (32-92 A.D.), who completed the *History of the Han Dynasty* started by his father, says: “the *que*...is the gate distinguishing something superior from something inferior.” After that, the *que* is often associated with the mark of inherited qualification and experience and distinctive achievements in political power. The chapter “Table for distinguished vassals by meritorious service and the feudal princes in Emperor Gaozu’s reign” of *Shi ji* also notes that the *fa* and *yue* posts should be set in front of the top officials’ outer doors. In the masterpiece of Chinese ancient architecture, *The Methods of Construction (Yin zao fa shi)*, the Song Dynasty author, Li Jie, explains that the development of Han’s *niao tou men* (literally meaning the Gate of the Head of Bird) (Fig. 100) comes from the system *fa* and *yue*. The gate, *niao tou men*, is designed by a bird’s eye view as if this structure of the gate looks like when a bird in the sky looks at the compound with its houses around a courtyard. So, from a bird’s eye, inside the compound, the left and the right form a mirror image. This is the exact thing that the viewer can see in Cixi’s portrait. Inside the frame, most of items, like the pattern of screen and armaments, are symmetrical. Basically, like *que*, the main structure of *niao tou men* is two solid vertical pillars and one horizontal lintel. Differently, there are two pieces of doorsill set connected to the two pillars respectively. This kind of gate is also for the royal princes and officials. Symbolizing the inherited superior status, the gates *que* and *niao tou men* form the long-time unchanged idea of *men fa* (‘a high family standing’).⁶¹⁶ The frame of Cixi’s portrait with the two vertical pillars and the horizontal lintel has the same principle

of the gates of *que* and *niao tou men*. With respect to the other composition of Cixi's frame, *jiang jun men* (Fig. 99), this gate gives a heavy look, bringing about an awe-inspiring air partly because of the stern and symmetrical element, more importantly because of the high doorsill. Looking at the frame of Cixi's portrait, of course, one of the purposes of this base is to support the heavy weight of this large portrait. Besides, the strong and high base becomes a crucial element for severity. The gate *jiang jun men* is a typical one for the royal princes' houses in the South. Yao Chengzu's *The Principles for Methods of Construction (Yin zao fa yuan)* remarks that the level of the *men-kan* (meaning 'doorsill') of *jiang-jun-men* is much higher than normal. The term *gao men kan* (meaning 'high doorsill') is often used as one in which it is almost impossible to reach superior people, organizations, and authorities or to achieve a high-quality career for ordinary people. The high doorsill of the gate is built in the same way as how the high threshold of Cixi's frame is designed and constructed. Thus, Cixi's frame with the two compositions of *que* and *jiang jun men* basically shows the structure of political power in imperial China.

Thirdly, there is the pair of lion statues. During the St Louis' world fair, Cixi's portrait was exhibited in Gallery 18 of the Art Palace in the section for the United States (Fig. 101).⁶¹⁷ The portrait is surrounded with a barrier; inside this barrier and in front of this portrait, there are two lion statues guarding this portrait. This is an interesting scene. Usually, the pair of lion statues – a carved male lion whose right claw is holding a ball (a symbol of power held in the hands) should be on the left; the female one whose left claw is holding the baby lion (a symbol of prosperity and high careers for generations), on the right – should be set up in front of the outer door for a noble family.⁶¹⁸ This is derived from three sources gathered together: first from two chapters "Record of the Zhang emperor" and "Record of the He emperor" of *Hou han shu* is that during Han Dynasty,

the alien countries (*yue shi guo* and *an xi guo*) presented two emperors (the Zhang emperor and the He emperor) lions as gifts.⁶¹⁹ The second is that Wu Family Temple whose epigraph *shi que ming* mentions about the carved statue of lion whose discovery was in the first year of Jianhe (the first year of the reign of East Han Dynasty, in 146 AD). The third from *Luo yang jia lan ji* of North Wei Dynasty, depicts that the Zhuang emperor, witnessed that two tigers and one leopard closed their eyes and did not dare to look at the lion. Thus the lion is treated as the strongest animal. The ferocious appearance of the lions means that people believe that the lions are able to terrify and drive out the evil. There is no doubt that the two guarding statues are put at the basis of the frame regarded as a gate.

Last, there is the sense of a long distance between the viewer and Cixi. Before entering a palace room, people should pass through the gate in front of the room. Its purpose is to let people experience the magnificence from the gates before seeing the real room as well as to give them some time for to sense distance – giving the imagination a sense of mystery about the room – instead of seeing the whole room directly.⁶²⁰ In this Palace, there are the ten important gates – Tianan Gate (*Tian an men*), Duan Gate (*Duan men*), Wu Gate (*Wu men*), Taihe Gate (*Tai he men*), Qianqin Gate (*Qian qin men*), Kunning Gate (*Kun ning men*), Tianyi Gate (*Tian yi men*), Chengguang Gate (*Cheng guang men*), Shunzhen Gate (*Shun zhen men*), Shenwu Gate (*Shen wu men*) from the south to the north (the first five gates are called ‘the Five Gates of the Son of Heaven’ because these five gates belong to the political ruling area) – that form a central south-north-axial line with meridian direction without any slight deviation.⁶²¹ This principle is based on two ancient sources, the *Book of Jin* (*Jin shu*) and the *Book of Changes* (*Yi jing*), that clearly record the position of the seated ruler and that of his subjects – the ruler should sit in the northern position and face towards the south; the subjects should be in an opposite position.⁶²² This central line is generally regarded as “a main line of political

architecture.”⁶²³ To these subjects, before meeting the ruler, they should pass through various gates and rooms (in Chinese, *dian* and *gong*) at a good distance. Cixi’s frame is like the first gate located in the south. Behind the frame, there are more gates. So the frame stands for repetition of many. Cixi is seemingly seated in the throne room located in the far north. The distance between the front gate and Cixi herself is considerable. Therefore, this portrait gives the viewer a feeling that Cixi is very hard to reach.

Conclusion

It is clear that the presentation of the portrait comes from Cixi, or broadly from Cixi’s Court. The portrait represents the idea of Cixi’s body politic and is thus the real voice of her body politic. Cixi’s public portrait is so political (very different from her public relations with foreign representatives, princes, missionaries, and ladies). The relation between the patron Cixi and artist Carl is in strong conflict. Carl’s compromise to Cixi and Cixi’s insistence are for the sake of Qing’s ‘law of art’ – straight line (coiffure, the legend, two thin vertical sticks), symmetrical (ornaments and the nine-phoenix pattern of the screen), full-length (Cixi’s figure), large (the size of her figure), frontal (her face and figure), middle (her position on the canvas), triangle (the shape of her body), and so on – giving an awe-inspiring impression. On the other hand, her different representation from her ancestral portrait shows that she has much that is new to say. For example, the degree of looseness of costume and its selected patterns, colours, and Manchu style show her reaction against Western costume. Sometimes, Cixi sacrifices the law in order to present more of political significance: for example, her unsymmetrical pose and position of her arms and hands show the masculine and political body; the position of a lotus near the throne shows her as an reincarnation of Buddha – a sacred and legitimate leader; the use of the Tongzhi emperor’s throne whose shape is curved reminds people of the

thieving Westerners' brutality; and the legend with several written Chinese characters and seals shows her Manchu race and political identity. In addition, throughout the content of this portrait, not the slightest trace of Western influence can be seen. Thus, Cixi's continuing uncompromising attitude towards the West is evident. The portrait with two lion statues in front of it was exhibited in St Louis. What Cixi wants the Western viewer to see is: she, the Empress Dowager Cixi of Manchu origin and also a leader of China, is sitting on the throne located in the North. She represents China. The viewer seeming like her humble subject is standing outside the enormous gate and looking up to her with awe. At the same time, she also confidently invites the viewer to be able to see China and also to understand this great empire through this portrait. In her visual image, Cixi is surely the last ruler of China that shows resistance to modernization. After her, the ruling leading figures of China, such as the Xuantong emperor (also called Puyi), Yuan Shikai, Sun Yat-sen, and Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Zedong, exhibit a modern appearance in their public images.

Chapter Seven

How the West regards the portrait of China's Dowager

Empress Cixi for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (LPE)

The whole process from the portrait's beginning – from its preparation until its final delivery – was a magnificent ritual carried out at chosen hours and dates for starting the portrait and for its final touches. Carl explains the times and dates chosen involved “much deliberation and many consultations of the almanac, to find the most auspicious time” for the likeness of Her Majesty.⁶²⁴ While being made, the portrait and Carl's various painting materials were kept as if they were “sacred” objects – the portrait was “attached to the wall with yellow cords and covered with a transparent yellow silk;” Carl's paint brushes and palette were also “invested with a sort of semi-sacred [aura].”⁶²⁵ When the portrait was completed but the real frame had not yet been supplied, Cixi invited the foreign ladies to view this portrait despite Carl's preference being that people should only view it after it was framed.⁶²⁶ As a result, Cixi's painted figure was seen in the portrait without a frame. First of all, Cixi had tea with the ladies in a separate room. Then, the ladies went to see the portrait in the other room and Cixi was not there. After that, when princes and officials came to look at this portrait, Cixi was not there to join them, either.⁶²⁷ Why did Cixi deliberately disappear? The reason why she is not supposed to look at her own portrait in front of other people is to avoid viewers confusing the two Cixis. She was aware that the portrait was seen in China as having the same ‘sacred’ function as she herself.⁶²⁸ Before the portrait left the Palace, the Guangxu emperor led the entire Court in a performance of kowtowing to the portrait. Then, this “sacred picture” was ‘enclosed in a satin-lined camphor-wood box, covered with satin of Imperial yellow, and the box was closed with

great solemnity. The pedestal was placed in a similar box. Each box had splendid bronze handles and huge circular locks. The boxes were kept close together; they were lined with the Imperial colours and were finally ready for shipment. The packing cases, containing the framed picture and its carved pedestal, were placed in a flat freight car, which had been elaborately decorated with red and yellow festoons of silk. The boxes were covered with yellow cloth, painted with the Double Dragon.⁶²⁹ Cixi also decreed that this portrait should never be laid down flat during the process of delivery.⁶³⁰ Also, the portrait could not be carried on the shoulders of coolies. Wherever this portrait went, it was received by delegations of high officials and dignitaries. As the portrait passed by, Chinese people were to kneel down as if Cixi in person appeared in front of them.⁶³¹ The portrait was delivered from the Sea Palace to Waiwupu (the Foreign Office) by porters, then to Tianjin by a special train, then to Shanghai by steamer, then to San Francisco, and finally to St. Louis by a special coach at 4:00pm on the afternoon of 13th June 1904.⁶³² Arriving at St. Louis, this portrait was received by Prince Pu Lun in full uniform. Owing to the heavy packaging for this portrait, "this opening of the cases and unveiling of the picture lasted from four o'clock to nine P.M."⁶³³ The five-hour process of unpacking indicates how well this portrait had been packed. Until then, owing to the portrait being in the possession of the Chinese, the portrait was still treated as one having a divine quality.

However, the nature of this LPE portrait became distinctively different after it began to be exhibited in America. On 14th June, 1904, the portrait finally came to the Art Palace. On that day, no visitors were allowed to come to the Main Building because Katherine Carl's brother, Francis A. Carl, "superintended the work of placing the portrait on its pedestal" and the portrait "was veiled and a portion of the inner casing replace[d] in order to protect it from possible injury."⁶³⁴ It was set on the east wall of Gallery 18, located in one of the large front galleries in the Main Building in the American Art

Section (Figs 102 & 103).⁶³⁵ The LPE portrait had no longer a 'divine' nature. Instead, the 'sacred' object was transferred into just an 'artistic' object.

Context of the LPE Portrait Located

in the American Section during the St Louis' World Fair

The portrait of Cixi was located in the American Section during the World Fair. Carl's complete deference to Cixi and Cixi's insistence meant the portraits showed little trace of Western influence. The portrait presents the idea of Cixi's body politic as well as the real voice of her body politic. In spite of Carl's status as an American artist painting this portrait, its theme and its whole content are very Chinese. Thus, a problem arises here – in which Section should the portrait be put, in the American Section or in the area for China?

In a letter written to Professor Halsey C. Ives who was at that time Chief of Department of Art, Carl wrote:

Mr Halsey C. Ives
Director Art Department St Louis

Dear Sir,

I am now painting a portrait of Her Majesty the Empress Dowager of China which His Excellency Mr Angus has requested Her Majesty to send to the St Louis Exposition. I have already obtained permission from Mr Kurtz (Assistant Director who wrote [to] me during your absence in Europe) to send my things direct to St Louis to pass before the jury there instead of the Paris jury when I [belong]. Now, Her Majesty does not wish to send over this portrait except by her own representative to the St Louis Fair, the Lord High Commissioner Prince Pu-Lun, so it will be impossible for me to have it there in time {indecipherable}

for the sitting of that jury. Being the portrait of so exalted a [person's] image and having been requested by our minister Mr Angus for the St Louis Art Department, I am anxious to be assured that there will be no doubt as to its proper reception. As it is an international courtesy, Her Majesty's [deeming] this the first portrait of her ever painted, I feel I am not presuming too much in asking this favour. I have decided to send nothing else though I would much prefer to be represented by work, about which I have been freer as to conception and carrying out, but I {suit} my personal wishes in the decision to have this portrait receive the place that is due to the person represented rather than to the artist....⁶³⁶

From the letter, I would like to mount a debate between two different views. Firstly, the above passage tells of Carl's struggling with herself: she wanted to represent herself in St Louis as the artist for the portrait, but she could not. Cixi determined that she would send Prince Pu Lun to the exhibition to speak about the portrait. Otherwise, Cixi would not send the portrait across the Pacific Ocean. Pu Lun was a prince of royal blood and was appointed by Cixi as the next successor to the Guangxu emperor with whom she felt disappointed because of his reforms of 1898. Since 1867, China had sent many objects to around thirty world fairs; yet no single official participated in these world fairs. The 1904 St Louis exhibition was different. This means that, though other Chinese exhibits did not concern Cixi, this portrait was a key for whether the Prince should be sent to America or not. Carl wanted to present this portrait but did not tell Cixi the whole truth – which was that this portrait would be displayed in the American Section. After Carl completed the portrait, Cixi asked her to stay in the palace to paint one more portrait of her. Thus Carl experienced so much anxiety and agony – as can be sensed in her letter. This letter, talking of the portrait and its close relation with Prince Pu Lun and Carl's uncomfortable situation, is a proof of Cixi's intention to regard the portrait as a representation of China.

One possibility may be inferred: Cixi had always thought that this portrait would be exhibited in the area for China. If this was true, Cixi, who possibly did not have a clear idea about how the St Louis's World Fair would be arranged, had been deceived by Carl and by other people making arrangements for the portrait – for example, by Mrs Conger.

Secondly, in the letter that Carl wrote to Professor Halsey C. Ives, Carl expressed the view that the portrait was so much concerned with Cixi and said she wished that this portrait could be received with the “proper reception” due to Cixi instead of to herself. If this portrait had been chosen to be put in an area for China, there would have been three places where it could possibly have been put. The first possible place was the Chinese Pavilion (a replica of Prince Pu Lun's summer house in Beijing); the second possible place was the Palace of Liberal Arts; the third possible place was the Chinese Village. The third place was not supported by government, but private businessmen; so it was impossible for the ‘nation’ portrait of Cixi to be exhibited in the Chinese Village. The first and second places were decorated with imperial decorations and furniture – which much lower art forms, comparing with Chinese paintings. So the ‘superior’ portrait was unlikely to be put in these two places. One may think that Cixi would not after all have liked the portrait to be exhibited in the areas for China. The portrait exhibited in such a non-Chinese area was probably, in truth, her intention. This particular portrait, so Chinese, was the one that Cixi strongly insisted on sending to the West and through which Cixi would like to address foreign audiences.

Cixi's Body Politic in St Louis

Without Cixi's portrait, Prince Pu Lun would not have come to America. His arrival in America created a sensation. He wore traditional costume, was unable to speak English and had never experienced Western life in the past. He received the courtesies of the port

befitting his royal status when arriving at San Francisco (1st April), then paid his respects to President Roosevelt in Washington, then joined in some activities in New York and then attended the opening day of the exhibition in St Louis (30th April, 1904). Besides attending big social occasions such as dinners and balls, he was provided with a four-horse open carriage during his stay. Although he was said by the press (slightly negatively) as finding it “a little bit difficult to keep abreast of American activities,”⁶³⁷ the press also added something very positive. Not only was he described as following Western ways, such as staying at the George Washington Hotel decorated with American colonial furnishings, eating Western food, seeing the show called *Serenade* in the theatre (the newspaper says that “he adopted our method of clapping his hands loudly”), listening to some pieces of music composed and played by pianist Charles Kunkel), etc., instead of rejecting them, but also he expressed his appreciation and enjoyment.⁶³⁸ He won credit because of his survival of a “strenuous life” that he himself described as “an American life.” His open hearted, “easy-going” nature and accepting attitude meant that the press was convinced that “the Prince is [in America] endeavouring to educate himself in modern progress and American institutions.”⁶³⁹ When he adopted a ‘too Chinese’ appearance – for example, traditional costumes, the queue, etc – and became a target for Westerners’ teasing, Prince Pu Lun was firm enough against such an attitude. It was said that he “deprecates very decidedly the American tendency to regard his peacock feather with three eyes, his yellow jacket and his other very picturesque accessories as a sort of highly diverting side show.” His costumes show an identification with his countrymen; all the decorations surrounding the costumes, his ranking and his status – these were crucial for his identity and he felt proud of them. He was able to voice his thoughts and his detailed schedule during his stay was also paid much attention. So there was no *animus* against him in America at all. His political body presented China’s willingness to step

forward to adopt modernization. This affected the image of Cixi whose top position in China had a symbolic meaning, because Prince Pu Lun represented the whole body politic of Cixi. No single press article mentioned either the disaster of the Boxer Rebellion or the disaster of Cixi's submission to the West. It was as if memory had been erased during the exhibition.

The other eminent Chinese figure in St Louis, a part of Cixi's body politic, also attracted a lot of press attention. He was Wong Kai Kah (an imperial vice-commissioner as well as Prince Pu Lun's interpreter). Wong's Yale degree, mastery of English and familiarity with American manners and customs were much praised. During the time of the exhibition, he gave lectures on Chinese art and philosophy, especially on the teachings of the two great Chinese Sages, Confucius and Mencius. He and his wife stayed in an apartment with Chinese interior decoration. Mrs Wong's refined efforts to present her cooking, tea, style of apartment, dresses and manners – which all were very Chinese – were much applauded. Like Prince Pu Lun, Wong Kai Kah wore traditional costume. The *St Louis Post-Dispatch* gave him a eulogy: "Mr. Wong's double purpose is to acquaint the people of the United States with the higher civilization of China while his large official family is absorbing the best things in American progress." Cixi's portrait depicts everything about Chinese aesthetics, history and philosophy – which Cixi wished the West to know. Despite this portrait also having a Western artist and Western medium (canvas and oil paint), its subject was too Chinese and too alien for spectators to make comments. Wong explained this for Cixi. Unlike the Japanese, whose outfits – shirts, ties, suits, hats, shoes, gloves, canes and even moustaches – were thoroughly Westernized (Fig. 104) Prince Pu Lun and Wong always had their "official robes" in public.⁶⁴⁰ On the other hand, the Prince was opened-minded to learn new things that Americans offered him and Wong was a master at Western language and life style – showing their progress. Although

this portrait was not put in Chinese Section, Cixi's body politics led by Prince Pu Lun presented the *dual* combination – the situation is the same as the dual representations of Cixi's portrait. As Sue Bradford Edwards describes very well, China's purpose in attending the exhibition was “dual, intended both to teach Westerners about China's ancient splendour and to learn Western solutions to her problems.”⁶⁴¹

Before 1900, Hop Alley, St Louis's Chinese district, was a place providing local people with opportunities for examining Chinese ways.⁶⁴² This area was not residential, but for business. Living in non-Chinese areas of the city, the local Chinese visited Chinese shops, groceries and restaurants in Hop Alley every Sunday afternoon. Sue Bradford Edwards thinks that St Louisans at that time had two opposite stereotypes of the Chinese – positive and negative. As to the former, the Chinese were often Christians. Adopting to the American way of life perfectly well, they were in good standing with local banks, could also speak reasonably good English and wore Western clothing. They generally did not appear Chinese. By contrast, with regard to the negative image of Chinese, the Chinese still wore traditional Chinese costumes and kept bad habits, for example, taking opium and gambling.⁶⁴³ Edwards indicates “both those [were] deemed to be ‘deviant’.”⁶⁴⁴ In addition, in the 1860s, some hostile feeling against the Chinese started developing. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act stopped further Chinese immigrants coming to America. Edwards argues that all these above built up to form an unfriendly attitude towards Chinese before the World Exposition in 1904. However, in Prince Pu Lun's and Wong's cases, their ‘Chinese’ appearance did not become a target for criticism. On the contrary, the text for the photo of seven Japanese (Fig. 104) is written as: “The Imperial Japanese Commission.—— Japan accepted early the invitation of the United States to participate. That nation asked and received space most eligibly located. When applications for exhibit room began to crowd in, Japan was asked to release some space.

Not a square foot could be given up. On the contrary the Japanese Commission desired more. Japan's Commission is very strong."⁶⁴⁵ The text content shows Japanese were rather pushy and stubborn – a negative image. So, the facts were not as Sue Bradford Edwards said.

The LPE Portrait categorized within the American Section

What opinions about the LPE portrait were generated during the exhibition? It was set in the United States Section in the category of 'Department of Art.'⁶⁴⁶ In this Section were exhibited works that were classified under three heads. The first one was a contemporary division in which the works produced after the Columbian Exposition of 1893 were by American artists abroad. These new paintings were praised as "thoroughly representative of contemporary art" and as being "not only modern but recent."⁶⁴⁷ The second was a retrospective division where the works produced between 1803 and 1893 were presumed to have had a "distinctive" influence upon the development of art in the nineteenth century. These paintings showed that the American contribution in art was "consecutive."⁶⁴⁸ The third was the loan division where the works, covering various periods, borrowed from private collectors or institutions, included masterpieces of foreign artists such as Rembrandt, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Millet, Franz Hals, Corot, Rousseau, Constable, Gainsborough, Turner, etc – all from European countries. In spite of her Chinese theme, the artist Carl was an American portraitist pursuing an art career in a foreign country. Carl's work – her portrait of Cixi – entirely met the regulations for the first division of American section.

In the first division, these works made by American artists with "international fame" were mainly brought back to America from all over the world. Faced with the charm of Paris and its Salon, which had a Western artistic and cultural lead at that time,

which almost entirely enchanted the imagination of the American art world in the 1880s and 1890s, one European critic harshly commented, “Americans have no art at all!” Responding, many American artists, especially portraitists, went to France for art education in their formative years.⁶⁴⁹ Swept along by fashionable trends during these two crucial decades, Carl was not exceptional. She studied at the Académie Julian with Courtois, Bouguereau and Laurens in Paris of the 1880s (women were not allowed to study at the École des Beaux-Arts until 1897). Besides Cixi’s portrait, exhibited in St Louis’s world fair, Carl’s works were once exhibited in the Salon de la Société des Artistes Françaises in Paris from 1883 to 1893 (winning some awards), the Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts from 1893, the Exposition Universelle in 1900 (achieving an honorable mention), the Art Institute of Chicago in 1897 and 1899, and the Tennessee Centennial 1897 and so on.⁶⁵⁰ Many portrait painters of the turn of the century spent most of their time living abroad. Their experiences and relationships with their American homeland were rather different from those of artists staying in America.⁶⁵¹

The second division of the retrospective showed all the paintings made in the whole nineteenth century – including periods of before, during and after the Civil War (1861-1865). Until around 1840, the style of painting, the use of poses and gestures and the sizes of canvas were most of the time pretty English. By that time, some European compositional elements and background of the Baroque period had been brought into England by several painters such as Anthony Van Dyck, Peter Lely and Godfrey Kneller. These elements naturally impacted on American portraits. The sizes of the portraits included life-sized full-length, the canvases for which measured around 80 x 50 inches, a smaller size for half-length which measured 50 x 40 inches and showed the sitter down to the knees, the size between half-length and three-quarter-length called ‘kitcat,’ 36 x 28 inches (allowing the sitter’s hand – giving some gesture or action – to be seen), and three-

quarter-length, also called 'bust,' 30 x 25 inches, (one hand or no hand shown) which was waist-length.⁶⁵² Oil miniatures were much less popular than large-sized portraits. But also there were some French and other European influences. Compared with landscape painting, portrait paintings were not regarded as 'high and pure' art. But the demand for portraits was high in America in the early nineteenth century, so there was no shortage of portrait trade.⁶⁵³ One painter of the early nineteenth century, Henry Inman, described the situation to Edward Lester who wrote:

I myself have heard Inman say that, in his time, no man could succeed in America except as a portrait painter. "The taste of my 'customer,'" says he, "is limited chiefly to portraits. They will not commission me to execute Landscapes, which would possess a much greater value, and win me an infinitely higher fame. I cannot even get a chance to paint a landscape, unless I stick it into a portrait, where I sometimes manage to crowd in a bit of sky, or some old tree or green bank. Why, I should have starved long ago on any thing but portraits.... The time will come when the rage for portraits in America will give way to a higher and purer taste."⁶⁵⁴

The portrait's dominance largely continued through the whole century. Until the middle of the century, the theory of physiognomy or of phrenology was a prevailing way of interpreting the sitter in a portrait. This was influenced by the books of an eighteenth-century Swiss theologian Johann Kaspar Lavater (judging an individual through his or her shape profile, head and silhouette) being translated into English.⁶⁵⁵ The attitude guided how the portrait was done – avoiding some features, which were assumed as negative ones, in order to give a favourable or flattering image. Meantime, facing the danger of the Native American population becoming extinct, making portraits to record these native people was desired. During 1861 to 1865, the Civil War had little impact on American portraiture. In the Exposition Universelle, Paris, in 1867, American artists maturing

before the Civil War exhibited their works. Most of the artists shown in 1867 were also present in the American pavilion of the Continental Exhibition in 1876. The style remained largely unchanged. After that, American artists had poured into France to take up art education. Apparently, the trend towards the photographic camera did not bother these ambitious artists. The *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (1905) comments on the art phenomenon of the twenty-five years before 1904:

the extraordinary advance of photographic 'processes'... has not interfered with original work. It is true that we do not hear as much about etching as we heard some twenty-five years ago, when the revival was new, and when Hamerton's book was in everybody's hands; but if anyone fancies that the art is declining, or that less real interest is felt in it, let him, on the one hand, reflect on the fancy prices which collectors will now pay for Méryons and Whistlers, and, on the other, examine any twenty or thirty of the etchings here exhibited. Often they are the work of artists whose names are unknown, but how good they are! With what insight, intelligence and technical knowledge they are imbued! Nor have we any reason to be ashamed of the examples of the old and characteristically English art of mezzotint here displayed, whether original or reproductive. It is satisfactory to note that fine work is still being done, and that a certain number of our engravers can impart to their renderings of Romney and Reynolds an interest unattainable by photogravure.⁶⁵⁶

The first division was continuous with the second division – the combination formed an unbroken historical presentation of American art. The third division, involving European masterpieces, indicates America was tightly connected with Europe. In fact, from 1876 to 1904, almost three decades, almost each world fair in America had celebrated progress by marking the anniversary of an event linking America with Europe. For example, the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia of 1876 marked the centenary of the country's independence from Britain; the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893

commemorated Europe's 'discovery' of America; the 1904 I.P.F. celebrated the centennial of American land acquisition from France (the exhibition should have held in 1903 but was delayed by one year). The development of the fairs showed growth and progress, departure from Europe, and the building of a new America. Carolyn Kinder Carr describes it well: "the era between the Civil War and the beginning of World War I, when national pride grew in tandem with America's presence in the international arena, a symbol of America's transformation from a second-rate, agrarian stepchild to a major social and economic force in the international world was its ability to embrace and assimilate myriad facets of European culture."⁶⁵⁷ So under the title of 'American Section,' what the three divisions emphasized in combination was a nationalist interest. This was not a blind nationalism, but a historical concern eager to embrace Europe's good features and not denying America's European origins. At the same time, it emphasized America's excellent development and movement along the path to overtake Europe.

How did this nationalism affect the view of Cixi's portrait? There are two aspects of American nationalism that need discussion. The first is the comparative atmosphere. In the exhibition, besides Cixi providing her own portrait by Carl, the Chinese Pavilion had three rooms (one middle room and two retiring rooms), being a replica of Prince Pu Lun's summer house in Beijing, exhibiting all traditional Chinese imperial decorations and furniture such as carvings, hangings, screens, paintings and porcelains, chairs, bed and a hard pillow. Also, the Chinese Section of the Palace of Liberal Arts was decorated with various kinds of lanterns, Chinese maps and coins from different dynasties.⁶⁵⁸ The *List of our Exhibits at World's Fair Palace of Liberal Arts*, the catalogue for the exhibition, made a list of exhibits such as *cloisonné* articles, silk and woollen carpets, old porcelain, old cloisonné, old bronzes, jade stones, wood carving, red lacquer, pottery, etc. Most of the Chinese objects were displayed in the Palace of Liberal Arts.⁶⁵⁹ The above

two – the Chinese Pavilion and the Chinese Section in Liberal Arts – were prepared and arranged by the imperial Chinese government. There was also a Chinese Village, but this was provided by an association of Chinese merchants of Philadelphia. This Village included a Chinese theatre with native players, a joss house, tea houses, a restaurant, etc. Instead of showing new scientific technology and inventions, all these exhibits organized by both the government and private merchants were old and traditional – one of which was described as “mechanics, painters, and decorators working with their fingers as they have done from time immemorial in the Celestial empire.”⁶⁶⁰ In discussing the American Section of Liberal Arts, there were many exhibits concerning the latest scientific instruments, computing devices and so on.⁶⁶¹ Fifty pieces of Chinese art work were included in the final contest for medals, but the Chinese won very few.⁶⁶² Unfortunately for the Chinese, the exhibition encouraged novel inventions rather than antiques. Barbara Vennman describes matters: “[M]ethods used at American expositions limited spectators’ opportunities for comprehensive understanding, while at the same time the juxtaposition of nations’ objects heightened viewers’ sense of comparison and hierarchy.”⁶⁶³ There is something true in what Vennman says. But, ‘comprehensive understanding’ is hard for people in every culture to look at other different cultures. People see things and use their own experience and knowledge, whatever limited or wide range of experience and knowledge they hold, to make a quick judgment. In the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the judgments were not made mono-directionally (West towards East), but double-directionally (West towards East and East towards West). Westerners holding an imperialist view made their biased judgments on China. Meantime, Chinese people also made their prejudiced and negative views towards West – for example, Cixi regarded Western golden hair as the colour of a ‘monster,’ blue eyes as ‘an evil cat’s eyes,’ Western girls’ slim waists as ‘out of proportion,’ Westerners as ‘foreign devils,’ Western

behaviour as showing 'moral decay.' The West was indeed demonized by China. Therefore, in order to see the whole picture, when scholars examine Western attitude towards the East, they probably also need to consider how the East looks at the West. Like many anti-Orientalism scholars, Venman was right in the sense of focusing on the West's views toward the East alone, but was wrong in the sense of forgetting the other side. Indeed, in the LPE, Chinese 'non-progress' works could not win the competition. On the other hand, in spite of these Chinese exhibits symbolizing old China, some praised their aesthetics and craftsmanship. Some, like the historian J. W. Buel, said that China "is now fast divesting herself of ancient intolerance to change and putting on an appearance of progress."⁶⁶⁴ But, such kind comment was made just for the sake of praise itself. Buel could even link an old Chinese architecture with Western progress. Anything could be associated with "progress" if it was praised. Being an atmosphere created at that time, *progress* became a crucial slogan for the St Louis exhibition.

Francis A. Carl, Deputy Inspector of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, was delighted to say that "visitors to the Chinese section of the St Louis Exposition will see more rare and wonderful and artistic things of China, than they could if they spend thirty years travelling through China."⁶⁶⁵ In response to this, Barbara Venman negatively describes the world fair as a "miniature." She explains: "Such miniature displays appear to bring culture to life, providing a sense of immediacy, of 'presentness,' but it is a present without context, detached from cause or effects. Miniaturization brings the spectator a 'special transcendence,' but it also eliminates the possibility of understanding derived through time."⁶⁶⁶ She tries to argue that it is involved with "temporal and material context" and with lack of knowledge of cultural and historical context because many exhibits from all over the world were brought to one place in order to give spectators some immediate impression. She has a low view of the capitalism that the exhibitions

imply. Relatively, the essence and depth of exhibits became less important. In the miniaturized world fair, spectators were invited to come not only to see exhibits but also to judge them comparatively. Compared with the progressive and technological items in the American Section, the Japanese Section and other European Sections, the exhibits in the Chinese Section, Chinese pavilion and Chinese village had been judged as time-honoured items. However, Cixi's portrait in the American Section had escaped the comparative atmosphere.

The second aspect of American nationalism is the Western cultural context. Richard Brilliant, in his *Portraiture*, discusses the *Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Belley* (c. 1797) painted by Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson (Fig. 105). This is a portrait where a black man, Belley, who was the leader of the Santo Domingo uprising against France dresses himself very much in Western style and leans against a podium supporting a marble bust of the Western anti-colonialist Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal. Brilliant strongly criticizes the intention of Girodet-Trioson as follows:

Towards Belley the artist reveals a prejudiced attitude, governed by typological preconceptions about him that operate beneath a veneer of civilization and employ classical referent order of meaning. Raynal's portrait-within-the-portrait takes the prestigious form of a classical bust, overtly proclaiming its suitability as an image of a white, European intellectual.... Despite the stylishness of his clothing, Belley is portrayed as an outsider whose pose recapitulates that of the *Capitoline Satyr*, a famous Roman copy of a statue by Praxiteles, well-known to the artist's public and traditionally interpreted as the image of an uncivilized being. Belley's relaxed pose, small head, and sloping profile more than hint at the moralising basis of this racial and ethnic characterization with its negative implications.... Girodet-Trioson's impartiality as an observer vanishes in the face of the invidious comparisons

he has set up between Raynal and Belley as historic personages, and between their respective 'characters'. The artist has followed the programme of an old portrait tradition that specified the degrees of resemblance that portraits should strive to achieve: to depict the external features of the model; to reveal the model's special features and to make them stand out from those features that are commonly recognizable; and to generalize the artist's observations by suggesting in a face not only a person but also his heredity, race and, above all, what this transitory being has in common with humanity. In following this tradition, Girodet-Trioson has so obviously differentiated his subjects that a contemporary viewer, however, the painting displays the Eurocentric concept of man typical of an artist of the time, who saw his subjects with a high degree of cultural chauvinism and so interpreted their lives and their personalities within the framework of the aesthetic and moral conventions he shared with his audience.⁶⁶⁷

Brilliant who probably shares the same view with other anti-colonial and anti-nationalist historians and social scientists thinks the portrait claims that the Westerner is civilized whereas the Black is not. The classical reference (of the bust) that has been already regarded as the highest beauty is used to be put by Belley's side – forming a comparison and contrast which invite the viewers to choose which one is more civilized. The non-Western Belley was thus portrayed into the Western aesthetic and historical context.

Looking at the portrait of Cixi, Qing's 'laws of art' are shown – straight line (coiffure, the legend, two thin vertical sticks), symmetrical (ornaments and the nine-phoenix pattern of the screen), full-length (Cixi's figure), large (the size of her figure), frontal (her face and figure), middle (her position on the canvas), triangle (the shape of her body), and so on – giving an awe-inspiring impression. On the other hand, her different representation from her ancestral portrait shows that she has much to say – the degree of looseness of costume and its selected patterns, the colours, and the Manchu style show her reaction against the

Western costume. Sometimes, Cixi sacrifices tradition in order to present something of political significance: for example, her asymmetrical pose and the positioning of her arms and hands show her masculine and political body; the position of a lotus near the throne shows her as a reincarnation of Buddha – a sacred and legitimate leader; the use of the Tongzhi emperor's throne whose shape is curved reminds people of the thieving Westerners' brutality; and the legend with several written Chinese characters and seals shows her Manchu and political identity. In addition, in the content of this portrait, not the slightest trace of Western influence can be seen. Thus, Cixi's continuing uncompromising attitude towards the West is evident. In the photo (Fig. 101) showing the scene of this portrait being exhibited at St Louis, the exhibited portrait was surrounded with a barrier; inside this barrier and in front of this portrait, there were two statues of lions guarding the portrait – presenting itself seemingly as if outside a gate of China's distinguished families. The portrait was exhibited with two lion statues in front of it. What Cixi wants the Western viewer to see is as follows. She, Empress Dowager Cixi of Manchu origin and also a leader of China, is sitting on the throne located in the North. She represents China. The viewer, seeming like her humble subject, is standing outside the enormous gate and looking up to her with awe.⁶⁶⁸ Unlike *Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Belley*, most of whose context is Western, this portrait is one with Cixi's loud and strong voice, speaking of a Chinese historical context. Discussing the relation between Cixi's portrait and Katherine Carl, Barbara Vennman writes as follows.

While Carl acknowledged in her introduction that the portrait and book represented breaks with Chinese tradition and etiquette, these transgressive acts helped to establish her as a unique insider. She claimed to base her interpretations not on "clever Sinologists," whose work she had not consulted, but on her own observations. In doing so, however, she neglected to examine her own role as an observer/participant in presenting truth claims. How, for

example, are her observations and interactions focused and shaped by her own cultural assumptions and her role at the court, and what are the consequences? What are the relationships within the court and with the population, both Chinese and foreign? Both painting and writing are strategies of authority, and the book's central tension, the goal of completing the portrait within the demands of the pleasant life at court, provides a unifying sense of authority in the artist/author's completion of both projects.⁶⁶⁹

What Vennman does not know are: Katherine Carl in *St Louis Republic* says the portraits, except the one exhibited in St Louis, are closer to what she liked to paint with more freedom. Carl's book also emphasizes that this portrait (for St Louis) is where she gave in entirely to the demands of the Chinese court. This is not the portrait of how Carl interpreted, but almost entirely a rendering from a Chinese point of view. In Carl's mind, she did not care much about American nationalism. On the contrary, she often criticised the West and liked China. Thus Cixi's portrait did not fall into the Western cultural context in the way that Brilliant and Vennman depict.

This portrait was reported in quite a few publications at that time.⁶⁷⁰ In these reports, what received the most attention was that "the face was painted without shadow, in accordance with Chinese etiquette" and there was "no perspective."⁶⁷¹ After September, when Carl herself arrived at St Louis, the *St. Louis Republic and World's Fair Bulletin* reported Carl's arrival and her opinions and showed her photos. Carl also wrote an article about the portrait, occupying a half page of the newspaper. The use of 'no shadow' and 'no perspective' became a crucial focus as this portrait was discussed. During interview, asked about the awkward question, Carl defended herself and Cixi:

I was required to paint the portrait which is on exhibition in the Palace of Fine Arts at the World's Fair after the Chinese idea of painting. In the strictest detail and without lights or shadows. It was very hard to do this, and I longed for the

broad field of individuality.... For that reason the portrait, though pronounced by the Foreign Ministers in [Beijing] to be an excellent likeness of the Empress, will seem peculiar to artists educated in the Occidental rather than the Oriental school of art. I painted three other portraits of the Empress and in the other three I followed my own methods. The Empress herself told me that the other portraits were more to her liking, but court customs and etiquette decreed that the one in the Chinese style should be shown to the American people in St Louis.⁶⁷²

In spite of her explanation, its artistic ‘failure’ became a topic for criticism, not only during exhibition but also even after the exhibition – for example, one year later, the *New York Times* said: “Unfortunately, Miss Carl is not an observer or a writer.... The part relating to the Empress, like the portrait, is without perspective.” When meeting Cixi, Vos “was struck very strongly by [Cixi’s] appearance.”⁶⁷³ Then he finally realized what a failure was Cixi’s portrait made by Carl. He made a comment, “I had seen the picture [painted by Kate Carl] in the St Louis exhibition [which] told nothing.”⁶⁷⁴ In addition, its amazingly large size was another important issue when the portrait was discussed. It was described as the “magnificently framed portrait of the Dowager Empress of China” whose size was “seventeen feet high and ten feet wide” while standing on its pedestal.⁶⁷⁵ The location of this portrait was said to be a “popular spot.”⁶⁷⁶ It was also added that this portrait is one of “three notable portraits” and “attracts throngs of visitors at all times” during the exhibition.⁶⁷⁷ Visitors, art critics and others saw it. What were their comments? Only some comments about ‘shadow’ and ‘large size’ were made. Its two characteristics are so obviously different from the contemporary trend of Western portrait painting. Some works of American artists in the contemporary period were related to foreign themes and sitters. With European influence, these American portraitists showed their admiration for the work of the 17th century portraitists such as Diego Velazquez, Rembrandt, Frans Hals

and so on. They were interested in “aestheticism which emphasized the decorative and the successful harmony of formal elements over factual and narrative detail and description.”⁶⁷⁸ Of course, some portraitists commissioned to paint wealthy sitters received some pressure to show the sitters’ wealth, position in society and authority. However, painters who developed a freer spirit than their predecessors also cared less for detail and paid more attention on the sitter’s psychology. Also, they were radical in approach and bravura in technique. Very often, the portraits were modest in scale.⁶⁷⁹ But Carl was not like that. The comments on the portrait made by the press and spectators were to Carl, not Cixi. The theme of the portrait was too alien for the West to comment. Generally speaking, the Western audiences had an indifferent attitude towards its Chinese theme. Under the title of the American section, the target of discussion and even criticism was not Cixi, but the ‘American’ artist who did not made proper portraits in the contemporary aesthetic fashion.

Treatment of the portrait after the LPE

After the LPE had run its allotted seven months (from 30th April to 1st December, 1904), the portrait, which was exhibited from around 15th June to 1st December, was sent to Washington because Cixi had resolved before the picture left China to make an eventual gift of it to America. So the representative of China in America, “[his] Excellency Sir Chentung Liang Cheng, the Chinese minister to Washington, attended by his secretaries, made a formal presentation of the portrait to the President, which Mr. Roosevelt received on behalf of the United States Government.”⁶⁸⁰ The portrait was later installed in the National Museum of American History, the Smithsonian Institute. Later, the portrait was transferred from the National Museum of American History to the American Art Museum in 1960. Several years after this portrait was sent to American Art

Museum, as head of National Museum of History, Bao Zunpeng went to America to attend an international museum conference in 1965 to discuss about the LPE portrait going on permanent loan to Taiwan. Soon, this portrait was sent to NMH, Taipei. Today, the portrait is still in Taipei. Before 2001, this portrait had been exhibited in a well-designed area. After that, it went into storage.⁶⁸¹

A paradox arose in Washington's Smithsonian Institute: whether this portrait should be put in American history section or American art section. Another paradox surfaced after the portrait was sent to Taiwan: whether this portrait should be exhibited or not. Unfortunately, in 2003, curators in Smithsonian Institute and staff in National Museum of History could not find any file for this particular portrait and did not have knowledge and in-depth information about the portrait. In spite of that, there are some assumptions which can be remarked and raised. Firstly, in 1903-4, the portrait exhibited in St Louis symbolizes a confrontation between traditional China and progressive America (or, in a wider sense, the West). Secondly, from 1904 until after the civil war between the Kuomintang (KMT) and Communist Party (before the late 1950s) in China, America still largely retained good relations in diplomatic foreign policy with the Kuomintang. The portrait was kept as a treasured gift from China in the American history section. Thirdly, after the Korean War (1950-53), the relation between China and America started being changed because of intense ideological conflict – for and against Communism. This portrait, with its high connection with China was removed in 1960, probably because it could no longer be represented as a gift from China. Fourthly, after withdrawing to Taiwan and losing political influence in China, Chiang Kai-shek was aware that culture was a symbol of central political power since national collection of antiquities, art treasures and so on were moved to Taiwan when he left China for the island. (As a founder of the Tongying Company mainly focusing on the business of art

works, Zhang Jingjiang, who had been a main patron for China's nationalist movement to which the KMT belonged, had supported Chiang for many years and had a very good friend Li Shizeng who was a chairman of the Palace Museum and was in charge of taking care of the inventory of the imperial Collections. The Green Gang also helped to arrange to remove gold and money and national valuables and major collections across the Strait). In the 1950s, against the Communists, Chiang became a heroic icon. After that, Chiang probably would like this portrait to be sent to Taiwan to be part of the Chinese cultural inheritance supporting his thinking as to which side can represent orthodox or authentic power – the PRC [People's Republic of China] or the ROC [Republic of China]. In his mind, the answer was the ROC which he had formed.⁶⁸² Fifthly, the KMT government's propaganda had still focused on Taiwan representing the true China although the situation had turned sour for Chiang since 1971 when America agreed the PRC as the legitimate representative of China. Until 2000, the portrait was displayed in National Museum of History. After 2000, when the first presidential election was held in Taiwan, the whole political ideology shifted and the ruling party became the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) which is a party aiming to bring Taiwan to develop towards independence. The DPP government removed many Chinese art works into the storage behind the scenes and sharply increased the display of native works made by Taiwanese artists who had been forgotten during Chiang's rule. At this time, the LPE portrait was removed backstage. Are these incidents just coincidence? Or do they play a crucial role in these political changes? For all sorts of possible reasons, when the political situations, periods of time and various locations of the portrait are linked together, I am inclined to make a daring suggestion in spite of lack of full information. Different political ideologies or power struggles provided a crucial background leading to the places where this portrait was put. This portrait can be said to have had high political significance.

Reduced Use of the Portrait

The portrait had been criticised by Hubert Vos, who went to St Louis to see this portrait, which he called "the picture [by Carl which] told nothing."⁶⁸³ Later on, in 1905, Vos himself made two portraits of Cixi – one 'idealistic' (making Cixi look 25 years old) (Fig. 106) and the other 'realistic' (appearing Cixi's true age) (Fig. 84). The latter portrait was never approved by Cixi.⁶⁸⁴ Vos did make some part of it in front of Cixi but she did not like it (that is why he put it aside and made the former one to please her). After finishing the former one, he managed to complete the latter one in his hotel in China and then in America. What does the latter one look like? Besides indicating her age – making a deep hollow of her right eye, her eye bags obvious, her chin double and the part between her eyebrows wrinkled, it shows a defect on her face – the left half of her face had been paralysed when Cixi had a stroke in 1903.⁶⁸⁵ Her tightly closed mouth makes her look mean and unkind. With her obvious long finger-protectors, Westerners immediately think this is a prototype of a witch. Vos also painted her hands as having wrinkles. This makes her image of being a witch still worse – she is an old witch. Behind her is an ambiguous brown dragon. The dragon is what Vos gives Cixi as a simile of literature in his imagination. In the Bible, literature and painting, there is an image of a shining Knight in armour and mounted on a finely caparisoned steed, who transfixes the Dragon through the head. This image is used to say there is a conflict between good and evil and a final triumph of good over evil. The dragon is here an embodiment of the Devil, or Satan. Unlike Carl's 'no shadow, no perspective and large size' portrait, Vos's 'realistic, shadow, perspective and small-size' portrait shows Cixi's strong will and personality. Being a great supporter of Cixi, Sterling Seagrave confesses his dislike of Vos's portrait and his preference for Carl's because Vos made a 'bad' representation of Cixi.⁶⁸⁶

Of the two portraits with their very different interpretations, which one was the more influential? Vos' portrait has been copied and displayed more often than Carl's. For example, besides being exhibited in annual exhibition of the Paris Salon in 1906 and in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University since 1994, prints of the 'realistic' portrait appeared on the cover page of Marina Warner's *The Dragon Empress* and that of Sterling Seagrave's *Dragon Lady*. Yoko Ono also used the image on her *Blueprint for a Sunrise* album. There are several published articles also using the image.⁶⁸⁷ Besides Vos' portrait, Cixi's photos taken by Xunling had been widely distributed. Many of Cixi's photos were not all kept in the Palace while Cixi was still alive. On the contrary, many of them were scattered beyond the walls of the Palace. In 1904, Takano Bunjiro, a Japanese publisher in Shanghai, whose publishing house was called *Yuchenshuchu*, reproduced Cixi's photos as commercial products.⁶⁸⁸ Yamamoto was said to have been to the Court to take a photo of Cixi, then to have made more copies, and then to have distributed them to foreign diplomats in China. One photo of Cixi that Hubert Vos got from a Netherlands ambassador was the one taken by Yamamoto.⁶⁸⁹ The photo was probably distributed to shops and markets in the end. Since owning the two cases of Xunling's glass negatives, Yamamoto had made Cixi's photographic portraits into a commercial proposition. Thus postcards of Cixi and cheap folded albums of her photos started to appear for sale in the Beijing bookstalls once more. In books about photographs showing the history modern China and published in the West, generally speaking, there are some or many photos of Cixi made by Xunling. Although treasuring Cixi's photos, Sarah Conger remarks: "they are all in black and white and void of the rich Chinese colouring."⁶⁹⁰ Seagrave seriously thinks that "the only photographs we have of [Cixi] were taken when she was old and exhausted [and they] have [a] stark [and] desolate quality."⁶⁹¹ The image of Cixi as 'a dragon lady,' 'an old witch,' and 'an unkind empress' that Vos' portrait represents as well

as the image of Cixi as an “old and exhausted” and ‘unimpressive’ empress has become widely accepted. This has been regarded as a truthful representation by the West.

Carl’s ‘kind’ and ‘young’ Cixi became relatively much less used and forgotten. After Cixi’s death in 1908, Sir Edmund Backhouse had wrecked Cixi’s image by portraying her as an image of ‘Medusa’ (the whole argument is in Chapter Five). In addition to the aesthetic concern in which Carl’s portrait has no shadow and no perspective and strangely large-sized which leads to West’s disapproval with Carl’s, that Vos’ portrait and Xunling’s black-and-white photographs more widely accepted than Carl’s could also result from the fact that Vos’, Xunling’s and Backhouse’s ‘negative’ portrayals could be readily associated.

Conclusion

Permitted by Cixi to be sent to St Louis in 1904, attended by nearly 20 million people, Carl’s portrait is of special importance to Cixi herself and also to Chinese history.⁶⁹² This is that China for the first time in history of a government officially participated in a world exhibition. This was Cixi’s pioneering breakthrough: a visual image of China’s *female* empress was for the first time shown in public and even abroad (before that time, all female figures were hidden behind the public scene of the Court). Cixi and her supporters wished this portrait could make a good impression at the St Louis exhibition. Encouragingly, the press did not mention about Cixi’s conservatism and the destructive Boxer Rebellion. With the display of Cixi’s body politic, Cixi was believed to be a genuine reformer. Thanks to the LPE portrait being exhibited in the American section, the portrait did not win compliments, but invited an indifferent attitude to its unfamiliar Chinese content. Its content was less significant because its content could not be fully understood. Targeting the painter, Carl, instead of the sitter, Cixi, the criticism was all

about aesthetics. The aesthetic criticism which Carl's portrait receives, and its content not being fully understood, Hubert Vos' and Xunling's participation in competition and Sir Edmund Backhouse's involvement made Carl's portrait become much less accepted. The result was that it did not cause a big impact at all in the long term. Also, since Carl's portrait was so traditional, it did not have the 'psychological' ingredient normally expected in Western portraiture.

In 1904, this portrait began its glorious journey from Beijing to St Louis. Its subsequent journeys (to Washington and to Taipei) were not as glorious as that from Beijing to St Louis. Each move had political significance, reflecting China's political upheavals. Where will this portrait be moved next? The political argument about Taiwan's independence from or integration into China is still going on. Future political changes will probably decide the fate of the portrait. If the People's Republic of China continues to progress with its 'Confucian Communism' (its mixture of quasi-capitalism with obedience to nominally Marxist authorities), perhaps it will one day wish to recall the glorious 'Old Buddha' who once ruled it and plainly – as in her portraiture – maintained its traditions for so long. But nationalism is also part of the modern Chinese political story (demanding national pride and power and modernity) and that is likely to militate *against* portraiture of an intellectually illiterate, grumpy, superstitious, unsexy and frankly unsuccessful old lady finding an honoured resting-place in Beijing. Cixi's traditionalism meant that she helpfully provided quite a lot of reality about herself in her portraiture; but, so far, neither the Chinese of the mainland nor those of Taiwan have wanted to examine that reality too closely. Ironically, it may be the Japanese who will first wish to rescue Cixi's imagery from obscurity, for it was Cixi who gave Taiwan to Japan – a fact that may need to be recalled if Japan has to come to Taiwan's defense. As

so often, history will be written by the victors; but that doesn't mean that history will not contain large grains of truth, in this case provided by artists.

Conclusion

Chapter One presents a factual paradox: on the one hand, Cixi was represented by some Westerners in her court circle as a gracious, feminine, soft-spoken and beautifully mannered lady. Supposedly, Cixi she did not drive her Western guests to excesses of kowtowing, she loved giving generous gifts to them, she showed her sympathy to them with tears, and she embraced them with close physical touching and invited them to sit on her bed with her. Perhaps she was even a modernizer who was friendly to her own people, once famously waving to a crowd with the open palm of her hand. On the other hand, there is written evidence that 'Old Buddha' was a duplicitous and "consummate actress"; and that, throughout, she declared her "undying hatred" of foreigners and her pride in Chinese civilization as against Western "barbarism."

Chapter Two considers the influence on Cixi's portraiture that came from the circumstance of her widowhood. A widow, genetically unrelated to her late consort, could reach great power through passing tests of virtue. This was regarded as crucial in Chinese/Confucian thinking. Thus a widow who devoted herself to her powerful late consort could expect admiration, not least if she avoided the use of cosmetics and any attempt to form new sexual liaisons. A woman had special power in China in being able to control her son and her daughter-in-law, and Cixi subscribed to that tradition. Passing tests during her youth, waiting for Prince Gong's death, she still had her own obstacles: her limited knowledge and judgement for the changing world that her domestic training instead of intellectual education brought about. (Sadly, intellectual literacy was not expected of the Chinese matriarch.) So an argument is presented that Cixi suffered fundamentally from a mistaken domestic training despite her good intelligence and taste and knowledge of Chinese traditions. The result was that her own councillors fooled her.

Concerning how Cixi's efforts were received in the West, Chapter Three presents the major problem: the hugely defamatory work of the top-drawer British Sinologist, Sir Edmund Backhouse. This possible Oxford pal of Oscar Wilde, not content with his weird mix of veneration for and hostility to major female monarchical figures, decided to flee Britain after Wilde's trial and imprisonment and turn his redoubtable literary talent malevolently on Cixi – accusing her of profligacy, being a cunning ruler, and of bloody murders etc. Backhouse's portrayal – well-established today as fictional – was enormously influential in convincing the West that Cixi was a ghastly Medusa-figure. Cixi, too easily put upon by her councillors, had had problems in real life, notably as the West established its influence; but these real problems for Cixi's image were made infinitely worse by Backhouse, a man eventually cut off by his own distinguished Yorkshire family.

Backhouse's vituperations were exceptional, so Chapter Four presents the supportive attitudes of other contemporary Westerners. Every supporter had his or her own different views of Cixi. All of their views were formed differently – for example, Sarah Conger portrayed Cixi as a feminist; Katherine Carl thought of her as an idealized and dramatised image; Mr & Mrs Headland looked at Cixi as a woman playing each role perfectly; Sir Claude and Lady MacDonald saw Cixi as rather powerless ruler controlled by her councillors; Derling made Cixi's image more human-like, with feeling; Sir Robert Hart, being sympathetic to China all along, gave up Western prejudice and portrayed Cixi politely; etc. Political philosophy has now been changed in recent years. The West is today supposed to look sympathetically at the losing side more and thus to look at Cixi more positively too. Views ignored before are thus now heard.

In Chapter Five, considering the influences on her portraiture, and especially on the centrepiece LPE portrait, it is shown that following traditional formalism was crucial for

Cixi – “to walk in the trodden paths.” There were also feminist and Buddhist influences. Cixi’s respect for an imperial ancestor, the Qianlong emperor, who was the most praiseworthy emperor, making his famous iconographical portraits, in the Qing dynasty, is shown; as is her good-natured rivalry with monarchs of other countries, especially the much-portrayed Empress of India, Britain’s Queen Victoria whose oil portrait Cixi kept prominently in one of her palaces.

In Chapter Six, it is seen that the Chinese empire’s artistic precedents guided Cixi to compel her portraitist Katherine Carl to give up style of American/French training and to paint Cixi (especially in the key LPE picture) with strict symmetry and without use of shadow. Besides following the Qing dynasty’s ‘law of art’ – her body is displayed at full-length, with strict frontality, in the middle of canvas, with symmetry and making a pyramidal shape, Cixi added her own personal ideas: widening her costumes in neglect of the waist-hip ratio (a vital ingredient in female attractiveness) and other elements – colours, screen, throne, gate-like framing, guarding lions, etc. – in the portrait to strengthen the awe-inspiring atmosphere.

Finally, Chapter Seven is concerned with the Western view of Cixi’s portraiture itself – especially the LPE portrait after it arrived in St Louis, where it was exhibited before departing on its century-long career in Washington and Taipei. Not in line with Edward Said’s ‘Orientalist’ ideas, rather, there was positive reverence for ‘Old Buddha’ and criticism was reserved for the American artist bowing to Cixi’s wishes and departing from contemporary Western techniques of portraiture. Nor was Cixi’s substantial attempt to manipulate her image successful – especially in the long term, for a rather ferocious picture of her painted by Vos and dull photographs of Cixi taken by Xunling became much more widely known, partly because they fitted better with the image of Cixi put out later by Backhouse.

This thesis has found and documented a whole set of image-making efforts for China's Empress Cixi, all aimed to get across ideas of her (favorable or unfavourable). Cixi indeed showed her friendly, progressive, and democratic gestures to the West. What is the reality behind Cixi's gestures? What is the effect of Cixi's gestures? The reality and the effect can be summarised as follows.

Firstly, Cixi appeared a friendly empress. Cixi wanted to repair Western respect for her and her country. Cixi made substantial efforts to use democratic body language, to adopt Western manners and display Western furniture and decorations in her palace, and to impress Western guests with her friendliness, informality and modernity. For this reason, she partly sacrificed long-standing political Confucian philosophy. She looked like a reformer. However, a reliable and first-hand informant, Princess Derling, reported that some palace rooms were altered into a Western style before foreign guests' visits and were shifted back to Chinese look after the guests left. Cixi also expressed her "undying hatred" of foreign "barbarians." Cixi had acting ability – her supporters, Ethel MacDonald and Katherine Carl claimed her as an "actress." Her real nature was conservative even though, with her friendly gestures, she succeeded in impressing most of her Western guests.

Secondly, Cixi appeared as a pioneering empress. As far as this research and documents shows, it is likely that Cixi was the first ruler in China to send her portrait across the sea to demonstrate the connection of her image with the country (her portrait as a symbol of the country). The LPE portrait was made on canvas and with paints and brushes and by Katherine Carl – all these are Western features. In the portrait, she did not follow the exactness of traditional female ancestral portraits in some elements. Some could say that this was her breakthrough. However, most themes and elements of the portrait are very Chinese (little influence from the West), and show her emphasis on her

conservative ideas, even hateful views towards the West, and a strong attitude of wanting the West to see Chinese cultural superiority. Her pioneering action indeed got a credit – even George Morrison, an anti-Cixi journalist, showed his support and there was no more criticism about her in the St Louis exhibition of 1904.

Thirdly, Cixi appeared as a feminist empress. She climbed to the top of the greasy pole and demonstrated herself to be the most powerful woman in China. Sarah Conger and Mariam Headland were very much aware of gender. Conger was especially a case of being an early feminist, emphasizing “sisterhood,” women’s “strength,” and exclusion of men. Cixi often invited female guests to come to her palace. She also made her palace a women’s world. It seemed that she made the politics become entirely matriarchical. She benefited all the time from being a widow. However, she was still controlled by her late husband’s traditional values, her brothers-in-law and her counselors. Being a widow, she was unable to be independent from men. Being a woman, she was unable to receive an intellectual education and thus this became her limitation. Her domestic training confined her in a world of moral and conservative virtue. She may have appeared as a powerful feminist. However, behind such an image, she could be said to have been a powerless woman. On the other hand, the effect was influential. Besides Sarah Conger and Mariam Headland, Cixi also inspired several well-known feminists such as Pearl Buck, Charlotte Haldane and Yoko Ono.

From the above facts, the ideas surrounding her political gesture – image-making –, the effects that the ideas bring about – illusion – and the reality behind the political gestures – truth – do not always go together. In this way, Cixi mastered manipulation of media spin of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in which spin doctors help politicians to show as many appealing gestures as possible in order to make people like them. Of course, her gestures did not appeal to everyone. Thus, contradictory opinions on

her have occurred – these strands of thinking percolate down to today, not least because there is insufficient reliable evidence to say which is the more true.

However, her LPE portrait shows matters differently. The portrait shows how Cixi looked at and thought about herself as well as how she wanted the West to look at China. Remarkably, Cixi's LPE portrait is left as probably the closest approximation to reality about her that scholars are likely to find. This serious-looking lady in glorious clothes, reeking of tradition, had understood herself as representing her country's body politic. There is many a slip between cup and lip as ideas and images influence each other. Yet the visual images remain, probably guiding the scholar better than most of the over-heated ideas of the variously flattered, obsequious and sexually perverted Westerners who revolved for a while in Cixi's orbit. Anyone who wants to remember imperial China can look at Cixi's portraiture and – so long as understanding Cixi's dominance and Carl's little part – learn more of reality than from biographies, documents and other literal texts.

**Images, Ideas and Reality:
Empress Dowager Cixi's Self-Image and
Western Understandings of Cixi**

ADDENDA

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Notes on Sources

The followings are the abbreviations for commonly used proper names appearing in the footnotes of this thesis:

BL	British Library, London
SLAM	St Louis Art Museum, St Louis
MHSL	Missouri Historical Society Library, St Louis
FM	Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Boston
FGAAMSG	Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington
NPM	National Palace Museum, Taipei
PM	Palace Museum, Beijing
NMH	National Museum of History, Taipei
I.PE	Louisiana Purchase Exposition
B	Box (for archival collection)
F	Folder (for archival collection)

Endnotes

Introduction:

¹ In Keith Laidler's *The Last Empress: The She-Dragon of China* (Chichester: Wiley, 2003), there is a chapter called "Slicing the Melon."

² Chinese *feng shui* (literal meaning: "wind water") is mainly concerned with the relationships between nature and human. Destroying ancestors' tombs and building railways and churches are contradictory to *feng shui*.

³ Having had a new discovery in 1999, a team led by Liu Qi, the director of the Bureau of Local Chronicles for the City of Changzhi, think that Cixi was possibly not of Manchu origin, but Han⁹ and that the fact that her feet were not bound could be attributed to her being a lower-class Han rather than to her being Manchurian. According to findings of the team, Cixi was born in the Wang family of Han Chinese farmers in Xipo Village, Changzhi County, Shanxi Province. Because life was in extremely poor in the family, at the age of 4, she was sold to the Song family. When she reached 12 years old, she was sold to a low-ranking Manchu official called Huizheng. More can be read in the following website:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empress_Dowager_Cixi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empress Dowager_Cixi). The research led the team to receive a prize from the Art Research Institute of the People's Republic of China in 1999. Whether to believe it or not still needs further examination. What was sure in her childhood was that she certainly had no luxurious life. Cixi had several siblings. One consideration suggests she may have been the eldest daughter. She herself needed to help her parents by taking care of her younger siblings, including carrying them on her back to go to street shops to buy everyday food and materials. "She was compelled to run errands for her mother, going to the shops, as occasion required, for the daily supply of oils, onions, garlic, and other vegetables that constituted the larger portion of their food" (Isaac Taylor Headland's *Court Life in China*, New York: F. H. Revell Co, 1909, 11). Cixi once revealed to Derling: "I have had a very hard life ever since I was a young girl. I was not a bit happy when with my parents, as I was not the favorite. My sisters had everything they wanted, while I was, to a great extent, ignored altogether" (Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, 1924; Reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005, 115). The fact that she felt herself unloved and to have had hardship in her childhood could be used to explain why she was, in her psychology, driven to pursue nothing but power in her life.

⁴ Jung Chang & Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005). In this book, the authors think that 70 million is only conservative number.

⁵ In mid-May, 1898, Cixi met her first foreign guest, Prince Heinrich of Prussia (1862-1929) who was the grandson of Queen Victoria. Cixi's first meeting with the foreign ladies took place on 13th December, 1898. According to Ethel MacDonald, concerning the meeting in 1898, the negotiation took around six weeks and the day and time were finally fixed (Ethel MacDonald, "My Visits to the Dowager-Empress of China," *The Empire Review* 1, no. 3 (Apr. 1901): 247).

⁶ J.O.P. Bland, *Li Hung-chang* (London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1917), 5

⁷ Ibid., 18. Besides Bland's book, another article "The Position in China: From the Chinese Point of View" deals with Chinese views on Western civilization. In the article, its author also remarks:

"Setting aside for the present the consideration of the situation as it affects Great Britain, let us examine the position of Chinese affairs from the internal point of view, regarding them not only in the light of known facts, but also of such evidence of public opinion as is to be found in the native Press and the attitude of the provincial officials. Thus regarded, the storm and stress of the past 18 months have undoubtedly left their mark, giving a distinct impetus to the cause of Western education and civilization. While it is undeniable that many intelligent natives honestly believe this civilization to be nothing more than an extreme development of materialism unsuited to the temperament and unnecessary to the wellbeing of the Chinese race." (*The Times*, 1 Apr., 1902, 6).

⁸ Kang Youwei's associates included Yang Shenxiu, Kang Guangren, Tan Tsitong, Lin Xu, Yang Rui, and Liu Guangdi – these six, called *wu xu liu jun zi* ("Six Wuxu Gentlemen" or "Six Martyrs"), were executed in the Wuxu Year (1898) and became known as young martyrs after they failed to reform the country.

⁹ Der Ling, 166.

¹⁰ Cixi was once proud to state her achievement, "Now look at me. I have 400,000,000 people, all dependent on my judgment" Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1924; reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 164.

¹¹ Actually, the two authorities – Dr Morrison and Mr Bland – speak about China rather differently. The article "Books: Events and Present Policies" published in *The Spectator* (7 Dec. 1912, 965-966) talks about

their differences of opinion. The main difference is that whereas Mr. Bland is doubtful about China's future, especially in the event of China being controlled by "Young China," meaning becoming a Republic, Dr Morrison is confident about it.

¹² Carl painted four portraits of Cixi, all of which were under Cixi's supervision. About these four portraits, see Appendix D. Vos painted two portraits of Cixi. One is an 'idealistic' portrait which was also made under her supervision. The other one was not under her supervision. About these two portraits, see Appendix F. Xunling took many photographs of her. About these photos, see Appendix E.

¹³ Richard Vinograd, "China: Portrait painting," in Vol. 6 of *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 811-814 (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996), 811-2.

¹⁴ Robert E. Harrist, "China: Figure painting," in Vol. 6 of *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 807-811 (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996), 807-8.

¹⁵ Liezhou Yuan, *Zhong guo li dai ren wu hua xuan* (中國歷代人物畫選) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 1985), 243.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹⁷ The term, '*chuan shen*' (transmission of the spirit), is written in Gu Kaizhi's (1470-1528) *Jin shu* (晉書). Bai Juyi (772-846) in his five-character poem writes the term '*xie zheng*' (painting of true likeness). Qing dynasty's Li Dou (d.1817) in Chapter 76 of his *Yangzhou hua fang lu* (*Record of Painting Studios in Yangzhou*, 揚州畫舫錄) uses the term '*chuang zhen*' (transmission of true likeness). However, the term '*xie zheng*' became widely adopted. For example, talking about portrait paintings, the Qing dynasty's official records about painting, *Guo chao yuan hua lu* (*Record of Imperial Paintings*, 國朝院畫錄), uses '*xie zheng*'.

¹⁸ Nanjing Museum, ed., *Ming qing ren wu xiao xiang hua xuan* (明清人物肖像畫選) (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1982), unpaginated.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Penly Kao, *Special Exhibition of Ancestral Portraits & Mandarin Squares – Ch'ing Dynasty* (Taipei: Taiwan Folk Arts Museum, 1995), unpaginated.

²⁵ Jan Stuart & Evelyn S. Rawski, *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits* (Washington, DC: FGAAMSG, 2001), 16, 52.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁷ Stuart, 76.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 76, 170-172.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 55-6, 83-4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 112-4, 137, 139.

³² Kao, unpaginated.

³³ Stuart & Rawski, 25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 93-111.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.

³⁸ Sandra Mathews, "Chinese Photography: Notes towards a Cross-cultural Analysis of a Western Medium," *Afterimage* 10 (Jan. 1982): 4-7. In this article, besides making a good analysis on Chinese photographic portraits and also makes a comparison between Chinese presentation on photos and Western, Mathews also discusses the 'realism' of Chinese funeral photographic portraits.

³⁹ More detail about photographs of Cixi can be read in Appendix E.

Chapter One:

⁴⁰ In the visible sense, Cixi appeared the most powerful figure in China since 1898 until her death. However, in reality, the Grand Council was the key to seeing whether Cixi had the most political power or not. The relationship between Grand Council and Cixi will be discussed in Chapter 2.

⁴¹ Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1924; Reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 65. On 13 Dec. 1898, there were seven ladies guests including Baroness Heyking, Lady MacDonald, Madame Pichon, Madame de Giers, Mrs Conger and so on (Susanna Hoe, *Women at the Siege, Peking 1900*,

Oxford: the Women's History Press, 2000, 1-5). Princess Derling says that Cixi's guests in 1903 included: Mrs. Conger, wife of the American Minister, Mrs. Williams, wife of Chinese Secretary of the American Legation, Madame and Mademoiselle de Carcer, wife and daughter of the Spanish Minister, Madame Uchida, wife of the Japanese Minister, and a few ladies of the Japanese Legation, Madame Almeida, wife of the Portuguese Charge d'Affaires, Madame Cannos, wife of the Secretary of the French Legation, the wives of several French Officers, Lady Susan Townley, wife of the First Secretary of the British Legation, two ladies from the German Legation, wives of German Officers, and wives of a few Customs Officials. Later, Mrs. Evans, wife of American Admiral Robley Evans, also joined the group.

⁴² "China: Reception of Foreign Ladies by the Dowager Empress," *The Times*, 16 Dec. 1898, 5. It recorded every detail of the complete process about Cixi's first audience with these foreign ladies. The detail can also be read in Sarah Pike Conger, *Letters from China: with Particular Reference to the Empress Dowager and the Women of China* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), 39-43.

⁴³ Conger, 42.

⁴⁴ See Footnote 2.

⁴⁵ Harry Hussey, *Venerable Ancestor: The Life and Times of Tz'u hsi, 1835-1906, Empress of China* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971), 307.

⁴⁶ Daniele Varè, *The Last of the Empresses, and the Passing from the Old China to the New* (London: John Murray, 1936), 214. According to Varè's description, many foreign Ministers issued an order, warning their people not to show themselves in the vicinity of the station or along the road where Emperor Guangxu and Empress Dowager Cixi could pass. But no one followed the official order. Varè says that "most of the foreigners who were then in Peking [Beijing] went up on to the wall, above the Ch'ien Mên [Qian Men] gate, in order to watch the procession from the curved lunette that protected the gateway. At the beginning of the siege of the Legations, a fire had occurred in that spot, destroying a line of shops round the outer wall. Of the two towers, that rose from the wall itself and from the lunette, only the former remained standing. The outer tower had been gutted by the flames and only a part of the base remained, with a few deep, square windows, where once the Manchu archers stood at arms. It was here, among the smoke-blackened ruins, that the foreigners congregated."

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 215-6. This quotation is an Italian midshipman Don Rodolfo Borghese's delightful description of Her Majesty's triumphal entry into Beijing. Borghese also witnessed Cixi at the same spot that was mentioned in the previous note.

⁴⁸ Sir Robert Hart, *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, eds. John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner, Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975), 1300. Sir Robert Hart in China started writing letters in 1868 to James D. Campbell once weekly or fortnightly and this lasted until Campbell's death in 1907. Altogether, the correspondence lasted thirty-nine years. Campbell was Sir Robert's "London agent and confidant" (Foreword, xi).

⁴⁹ This photo of Cixi waving her hand to the crowds was published in *L'Illustration*, 20 Nov. 1908, 342.

⁵⁰ Katherine A. Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 258.

⁵¹ Lady Susan Townley, *My Chinese Note Book* (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), 265.

⁵² Hung Wu, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1996), 10.

⁵³ After Taiping Rebellion was defeated by Zeng Guofan in 1864, there was an imperial audience given to him. Cixi sitting behind the curtain had a conversation with him. The account was recorded by a Chinese scribe, Wong Tonghe, in attendance:

Upon entering the Throne Room [Zeng] fell upon his knees as in duty bound, and in that position advanced a few feet, saying "Your servant [Zeng Guofan] respectfully inquiries after Your Majesties' health." Then, removing his hat and performing the kowtow, he humbly returned thanks for Imperial favours bestowed on him. These preliminaries completed, he rose and advanced a few steps to kneel on the cushion prepared for him below the dais. The following dialogue then took place:

Her Majesty [Cixi]: When you left Nanking [Nanjing], was all your official work completed?

[Zen]: Yes, quite completed.

[Cixi]: Have the irregular troops and braves all been disbanded?

[Zeng]: Yes, all.

[Cixi]: How many in all?

[Zeng]: I have disbanded over twenty thousand irregulars and have enrolled thirty thousand regulars. (Naiji Yang, "liang gong chui lian ting zheng ji shi," *The Forbidden City*, no. 22 (1983): 19.

⁵⁴ Wu, 12.

⁵⁵ The imperial palaces that I discuss here means the space where Cixi was confined after she married the Xianfeng emperor. Besides the Forbidden City, she also spent a lot of time staying in the Yihe Yuan (known as the New Summer Palace). The Palace was burnt by English and French troops in 1860. In 1888, Cixi ordered it to be rebuilt. In 1900, its complex was destroyed again. In 1902, she again had it rebuilt.

⁵⁶ Der Ling, 85.

⁵⁷ Barbara E. Scott Fisher, "The Portrait of an Empress," *the Christian Science Monitor*, 23 Jun. 1931, 8. When Katherine Carl was still alive, Fisher had an interview with her and then wrote this article. In the days of the Qianlong emperor, many Western clocks were collected. Cixi continued the interest. Originally, the clocks were put in some other rooms. In order to impress foreigners, she specially ordered eunuchs to bring in eighty-five Western clocks. The clocks were put in a room where Cixi met foreigners.

⁵⁸ Macdonald, 254. Cixi showed the Western diamond to ladies in March, 1900.

⁵⁹ J. L. Cranmer-byng, ed., *An Embassy to China: Being the journal kept by Lord Macartney during his embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-hung 1793-1794* (London: Longmans, 1962), 124.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 122. Similar description can be read in page 124.

⁶² *Ibid.* Also, Rong Zhang and Jian Zhang, "qing dai huang di yu ruyi," *The Forbidden City*, no. 63 (1991): 15-17. Zhang's article deals with the Qing emperors liking to give Ruyi-sceptres to others as gifts.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶⁴ Der Ling, 86.

⁶⁵ Conger, 42, 204, 245, 353, and 370. Sir Robert in his letters often mentions that he received Cixi's gifts (Fairbank, 1304, 1347, and 1436).

⁶⁶ "China: Reception of Foreign Ladies by the Dowager Empress," *The Times*, 16 Dec. 1898, 5.

⁶⁷ Townley, 280.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Conger, 353.

⁷⁰ Kat Carl, "Painter of Empress An's Portrait Tells Her Experience with China's Great Nation," *The St Louis Republic*, 11 Sep. 1904, 6.

⁷¹ "China: Reception of Foreign Ladies," 5.

⁷² Townley, 281-2.

⁷³ "China: Reception of Foreign Ladies," 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Townley, 282.

⁷⁶ Robert K. Douglas, "The Dowager-Empress of China and Her Guests," *The Times*, 21 Dec. 1898, 10. From some Western novels carrying out Chinese stories, Douglas learns that 'cups of tea' were something serving the purpose to poison enemies in order to get rid of enemies and finally concludes that Cixi "[p]lainly [would like] to convince her guests that there was no mischief in their cups."

⁷⁷ Der Ling, 29-30.

⁷⁸ Peter Collette, *The Book of Tells: How to Read People's Minds from their Actions* (London: Doubleday, 2003), 2.

⁷⁹ Collette, 2.

⁸⁰ *Body Talk: Power*, with Peter Collette, Channel 4, UK, 17 May 2004.

⁸¹ Fairbank, 1301. Der Ling, 116 & 166. Conger, 220 and 236. Carl, 194.

⁸² Yi Jin & Yiling Shen, *Wo zai ci xi shen bian de ri zi* (我在慈禧身邊的日子) (Taipei: Zhiku, 2001), 296-300. Rong-cr had served as pipe bearer and pipe lighter for Cixi in her smoking for eight years. After leaving the Palace, she became a servant for the scholar Jin Yi. She told what she saw and heard about Cixi to him. He decided to record the information. It is worth noting: when Cixi escaped to Xi'an, she brought two maidservants, one of whom was Rong-cr. She knew exactly what Cixi wore. She said, "Li Lianying brought a red bag, inside of which were clothes, pants, socks, and shoes of Han style ... there was a black rope for tying hair" (296). These were prepared for Cixi to put on.

⁸³ Der Ling, 166.

⁸⁴ Isaac Taylor Headland, *Court Life in China* (New York: F. H. Revell Co., 1909), 99. Paula von Rosthorn (1873-1967) married Dr Arthur von Rosthorn (1862-1945) in 1895. He was in Beijing from early 1896. Paula joined him in November. She nursed defenders during legation siege and thus was called "Good fairy of the Defence." She was in the end awarded the Order of Elizabeth and Emperor, Franz Joseph's personal medal.

⁸⁵ See Section of "Sir Robert Hart" in Chapter 4.

⁸⁶ The reasons why I categorize Derling as a foreign lady are: in spite of her origin as Manchu on the side of her father Lord Yugen, her grandfather (on her mother's side) was an American businessman whose name was Pearson from, Boston, who went to China doing China clipper trade. Derling herself thus had a quarter of Western genes. She was educated in France (1898-1902) and could speak French and English fluently. (So she became a competent translator between Cixi and her foreign guests and later published her books in the West.). In 1907, she married Thaddeus C. White, an American in the U.S. Consular Service stationed in Shanghai. Derling went to America with her husband in 1928 to settle down permanently until 1944, when she died in a motor car accident. While she lived in America, she lectured about Chinese history and Cixi and published several books in English. Her books were mainly written for Westerners. At the end of *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, she confesses: "At heart I was a foreigner, educated in a foreign country, and, having already met my husband the matter was soon settled and I became an American citizen" (176).

⁸⁷ For example, Lady Ethel MacDonald's "My Visits to the Dowager-Empress of China" published in *The Empire Review* of 1901. Katherine Carl's *With the Empress Dowager of China* published in 1906. Isaac Taylor Headland's *Court Life in China* published in 1909. Sarah Pike Conger's *Letters from China* published in 1909. Derling's published books include *Old Buddha: the Empress Tzu Hsi*, *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, *Impertial Incense*, *Kowtow*, *Old Buddha*, and *Golden Phoenix*.

⁸⁸ Varè, 216.

⁸⁹ Charlotte F. Haldane, *Last Great Empress of China* (London: Constable, 1965), 236.

⁹⁰ This photo of Guangxu was published in *L'Illustration*, 20 Nov. 1908, 343.

⁹¹ Collett, 227-234.

⁹² *Body Talk: Power*.

⁹³ Allen Pease, *Body Language: How to read others' thoughts by their gestures* (Avalon Beach, N.S.W.: Camel Publishing Company, 1997), 31.

⁹⁴ Jin, 191-2. Rong-er, one of Cixi's favourite maidservants, depicted how Cixi's fingernails were well-protected. After her maidservants in charge of bathing washed Cixi's face, hands and arms, they would help her to wash her fingernails. First, she put her fingers into warm water in a medium-size cup in order to soften them. Then, the fingernails would be modified to be more straight (because long nails easily become curved). Then, the fingernails would be washed with a small brush. Then, protective oil was spread over the fingernails. Finally, the protectors (casing) would be put on the fingernails. Fingernails should be thick, hard, bright and resilient – these characteristics are a representation of one's health. Cixi thus paid great attention to her fingernails. Rong-er also said that Cixi's fingernails were very long, especially those on her thumbs, ring fingers and little fingers.

⁹⁵ In the Chinese history of the development of the handkerchief, the term *shou jin* meaning 'handkerchief' is mentioned in a noted poem, in the East Han period, *kong que dong nan fei* ("A Peacock Flying Eastern-southwards"): "A-nu [a girl] who was crying did not make any sound because she covered her mouth making a crying noise with a *shou jin*" (<http://www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/jsncs/extra/extra7c.htm> -- Chinese University of Hong Kong, Faculty of Education). From this, the handkerchief apparently functioned in drying tears and hiding the voice. The other well-known book, in South Song period, *Shi shuo xin yu* (世說新語) records, "Xie is very concentrating and has sweat imperceptibly. Yin ... takes his handkerchief to wipe Xie's face" (<http://www.chinapage.com/big5/literature/nw.htm> -- Literature, China the Beautiful). Here, the handkerchief serves to wipe away perspiration. Drying moisture became a common function for the handkerchief. In the Ming period, the fifth scene of a play *Tao hua shan* (桃花扇) mentions a handkerchief: a wife tells her husband that she becomes a good friend with a famous prostitute; and she describes that she and this prostitute become "handkerchief sisters" (<http://www.mypcera.com/book/gu/gu/tao.htm> -- Book, New Times). Here, the handkerchief does not have any practical function but is mentioned to show a relationship which is close and affectionate.

⁹⁶ Seth Faison, "Madame Chiang Kai-shek died in New York at 105," *National Herald Tribune*, 25 Oct. 2003, 11.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Pease, 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Geoffrey Beattie, *Visible Thought: the New Psychology of Body Language* (London: Routledge, 2004), 30.

¹⁰¹ Collette, 11-12.

¹⁰² Pease, 18.

¹⁰³ Collette, 6-7.

¹⁰⁴ Kaori O'Connor, in Introduction of Carl's *With the Empress Dowager*, uses "the Empress's spell" to describe Cixi's charisma, xxix.

¹⁰⁵ Carl, 278.

¹⁰⁶ Sterling Seagrave, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (London: Macmillan, 1992). In this book, Seagrave implies that people witnessing Cixi are more reliable than those never seeing her.

¹⁰⁷ "China: Reception of Foreign Ladies," 5.

¹⁰⁸ Appendices D, E, & F. Appendix D deals with Katherine A. Carl's four oil portrait of Cixi; Appendix E, with Xunling's photographic portraits of Cixi; Appendix F, with Hubert Vos' two oil portraits of Cixi.

Chapter Two:

¹⁰⁹ Leslie Marchant, "The Wars of the Poppies," *History Today*, May 2002, 42. In this article, Marchant argues that Qing is a revival of Confucianism and calls this period a "Confucian Renaissance."

¹¹⁰ Confucius, *Confucius: the Analects*, trans. D. C. Lau (London: Penguin, 1979), 148. Confucius says, "It is the women and the small men [meaning mean men opposite to gentlemen] that are difficult to deal with. If you are too close to them, they become insolent. If you keep away from them, they will complain." The position of women is inferior, in Confucius view.

¹¹¹ Master Therion, *I Ching*, trans. Aleister Crowley (Hastings M RG, 1984). I Ching can be spelled as Yi Jing. In the hexagrams of the *Yi jing* (易經), the two elemental lines correspond to the two antithetic principles – *Yin* and *Yang*. The fundamental basis of this Chinese conception lies in the two elements: whereas *yin* stands for female, *yan*, for male, based on sexual principles. Thus, heaven, the sun, day, light, etc are thought as the male gender; earth, the moon, night, darkness, etc, as the female.

¹¹² The *yin* and *yang* principles gave rise to an astronomic-cosmological system. When bad incidents happened to China, Cixi's sex and the *ying* element became a target for blame. Lady Susan Townley observes that Cixi was blamed by her people for trying to connect several unlucky incidents with her sex. A comet was regarded as the most unlucky in the astronomic-cosmological system. Cixi's sex became connected with the comet. Lady Susan next states these terrible incidents: "It is customary in China to celebrate with rejoicings every decade of a sovereign's reign after he has reached the respectable age of forty. This custom would have been adhered to in her case also had not every decade of her life been marked by special disaster. She reached her fortieth birthday in 1874, but in that year had the misfortune to lose her only son, [Tongzhi]. In 1884, the empire was deprived of a portion of its territory by the French annexation of Tongking. Again in 1894 all China was bent on rejoicing, and preparations had been made a large scale or celebrating Her Majesty's sixtieth birthday, when lo! The war between China and Japan once more turned rejoicing into mourning. Lately, as the decade again approached, it was determined to try and cheat the Fates by antedating the celebration by one year. The imperial Board of Astronomers accordingly assembled and betook themselves to the City Wall, to where the famous astronomical instruments used to stand before they were carried off by France and Germany, and proceeded to consult the Empress's star with a view to fixing upon an auspicious day in 1903 for the commencement of the festivities. Imagine their horror and dismay when they perceived a comet in the sky with its tail pointing right into the Forbidden City! This comet presaged such shocking bad fortune to the reigning family that it was perfectly evident no celebration could take place that year, and the astrologers retired to consult with the priests, arriving before long at the terrifying conclusion that the ill-omened comet betokened the hidden presence of a high-placed reformer in the neighbourhood of the Empress! Under these circumstances all thoughts of rejoicing were naturally abandoned" (Lady Susan Townley, *My Chinese Note Book* (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), 111-112). This was a superstitious view against Cixi.

¹¹³ Sterling Seagrave, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 21.

¹¹⁴ In the ancient book, *Shan shu* (善書), there is a belief that women are often involved in sexual sins (Wolfram Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 85.)

¹¹⁵ Cixi was once proud to state her achievement, "Now look at me. I have 400,000,000 people, all dependent on my judgment" Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1924; reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 164.

¹¹⁶ Townley, 265.

¹¹⁷ Isaac Taylor Headland, *Court Life in China* (New York: F. H. Revell Co, 1909), 109.

¹¹⁸ Yi Jin & Yiling Shen, *Wo zai ci xi shen bian de ri zi* (我在慈禧身邊的日子) (Taipei: Zhiku, 2001), 141. This kind of red paint on the lips is called 'cherry mouth.' The red patch on the lower part (implying the earth) is much larger than that on the upper part (implying the heaven), suggesting that the earth is covering the heaven. This conveys that earthly and secular beauty.

¹¹⁹ Sometimes she did not really wear blue costumes but lavender ones. At least, these costumes had the blue element.

¹²⁰ Katherine A. Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 46.

¹²¹ Shirley Nelson Garner, "‘Let Her Paint an Inch Thick:’ Painted Ladies in Renaissance Drama and Society," *Renaissance Drama: Essays on Dramatic Transmission*, no. 20 (1989): 133. Garner states that in the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century Elizabethan period, painting cosmetics was regarded as the work of the devil as well as being connected with whores.

¹²² Thomas Tuke, *A Treatise against Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women* (London: Thomas Creed and Barnard Alsop, 1616), 40.

¹²³ Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (London: University of California Press, 1998), 10.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *de* (德) means virtue literally. The followings are the lists of what Confucius talks about ‘virtue,’ which is a great merit in his philosophy, respectively. Confucius says, “The rule of virtue can be compared to the Pole Star which commands the homage of the multitude of stars without leaving its place”(Confucius, 63); “While gentleman always remembers virtue and follows it, the small man cherishes his native land. While the gentleman cherishes a respect for the law, the small man cherishes generous treatment”(73); “Virtue never stands alone. It is bound to have neighbours”(75); “I set my heart on the Way, base myself on virtue, lean upon benevolence for support and take my recreation in the arts”(86), “The virtue of gentleman is like wind; the virtue of the small man is like grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend”(115-6); “A man of virtue is sure to be the author of memorable sayings”(124); “How gentlemanly than man is! How he reverses virtue!”(124); and “A good horse is praised for its virtue, not for its strength”(129) – these demonstrate that virtue is an abstract conception, but of big effect.

¹²⁷ Keith Laidler, *The Last Empress: The She-Dragon of China* (Chichester: Wiley, 2003), 152. This is also published in Henri Cordier, *Histoire des relations de la Chine avec les puissances occidentales* (Paris, 1902), 486.

¹²⁸ Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor’s Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch’ien-lung Reign* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), 8-9.

¹²⁹ Matthew H. Sommer, “Widows in the Qing Chastity Cult: The Nexus of Sex and Property in Law and in Women’s Lives,” in *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 172.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹³² Yu-yin Cheng, trans., “Selected Writings by Lou Rufang,” in *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History*, eds. Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng (London: University of California Press, 2001), 114-5.

¹³³ Nancy Etcoff, *Survival of the Prettiest: the Science of Beauty* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1999), 190-5.

¹³⁴ A painting of a beauty called Xishi (Fig.31) is copied as Illustration 9 of Wang Bochi’s book *Bai mei tu pu* (百美图譜) (between 1796 and 1820, Hebei Art Publisher, Hebei, 1995). This book supplies illustrations of images of all the one hundred collected beauties of Chinese history and has texts for each beauty. Being exotic and attractive, most of them enchanted famous Chinese men, including emperors. When discussing the beauty of Yuan Baoer, which charmed Sui dynasty’s Emperor Yang, Wang remarks: “*yao zhi xian chao* (literal meaning: ‘waist is delicate and small’).” This is recorded in Text 24 of Wang’s book.

¹³⁵ Yong Liu, *Guan song ci* (全宋詞), ed. Fang Zhouzi (Taipei: Taiwan Central Earth 台灣中央興地出版社, 1970), 15.

¹³⁶ Xian Zhang, *Song ci jing pin* (宋詞精品), ed. Wu Xionghe (Beijing: Times Art 時代藝文出版社, 1995), 59.

¹³⁷ Paul F. Rouzer, *Writing Another’s Dream: the Poetry of Wen Tingyun* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 78.

¹³⁸ Karen Hearn, *Marcus Gheeraerts II: Elizabethan Artist: in Focus* (London: Tate, 2002), 41-51.

¹³⁹ Hearn, 42.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁴¹ Mark Henderson, “Experts figure out why men prefer Marilyn,” *The Times*, 5 May 2004, 9. Dr Grazyna Jasienska and his colleagues took saliva from 119 Polish women aged from 24 to 37 over the course of a menstrual cycle and measured their levels of two fertility hormones (oestradiol and progesterone) which are crucial indicators of fertility. Dr. Jasienska says that the “cultural icon of Barbie as a symbol for female beauty appears to have some biological grounding.” The detail of this research results are published in journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society* May 5, 2004.

¹⁴² Isabel Fonseca, "After Years of Seclusion, the waist is finally back." *The Times Magazine*, 6 Sep. 2003, 60.

¹⁴³ Carl, 170.

¹⁴⁴ Der Ling, 43.

¹⁴⁵ Fonseca, 64.

¹⁴⁶ Seagrave, 9.

¹⁴⁷ John Francis Davis, *The Chinese: a general description of the empire of China and its inhabitants* (London: Charles Knight & Co. 1836), 254.

¹⁴⁸ Jung Chang, *Wild Swans: three daughters of China* (London: HarperCollins, 2003), 4.

¹⁴⁹ Nancy Lee Swann, *Pan Chao: Foremost Woman Scholar of China First Century A.D.* (London: The Century Co., 1932), 72-3. Ideally, the young widow should not leave husband's home after her husband's early death. Ban Chao composed essays of seven chapters for teaching married women how to behave. In the fifth section, she teaches that the woman needs to have "whole-hearted devotion" to her husband and even continue doing so after his death, by writing "it is said of husbands as of Heaven, that as certainly as people cannot run away from Heaven, so surely a wife cannot leave [her] husband's home"(87).

¹⁵⁰ Jin, 225-8.

¹⁵¹ "News in Brief: The Powers and China," *The Times*, 24 Jan. 1902, 3. In this brief news, there is a description of the Guangxu emperor as follows: "At their audience today the Ministers were struck by the pathetic appearance of the Emperor, which was marked by physical weakness, sickness of health and profound melancholy." In *New Sources for the Life of the Empress Tzu Hsi*, Maurice Collis announces a source, that is, *The True Records of Ch'ung Ling* written by Yun Yuting [Yun Yuding] who was a tutor to the Guangxu emperor. Yun feels very sympathetic with the unhappy emperor, by saying "[Guangxu] enjoyed none of the endearment natural between mother and son; none of the love between wife and husband; none of the affection between brothers and sisters; nor pleasant ease in the company of his courtiers. Far happier the plain citizen than this first gentleman of the Empire. I was in very intimate attendance upon His Majesty for a long time. An eternal melancholy sat ever upon the Heavenly face. Indeed, there was never an occasion when he raised his eyebrows and smiled, never a moment when he sighed with relief.... I was in attendance every near the Imperial Seat. As silently I thought of [Guangxu's] unfortunate life, my heart became sour, and my nostril bitter, and though I tried my best to suppress them, my tears began to roll down all over my face" (Maurice Collin, *Sources for the Life of the Empress Tzu Hsi* (London: The China Society, 1944), 3).

¹⁵² Garner, 133.

¹⁵³ "Old Buddha" was so named by Chief Eunuch Li Lianying. Cixi liked it best among all the names to which she had a right. In 1889, soon after Guangxu marriage, Beijing had very little rain. No rain caused damage to crops all over North China. Cixi, who was worried, prayed very much to the Buddha of Mercy. This prayer lasted until on the third day the rain really came. Li Lianying was excited and gave a compliment to Cixi: "Rain has come. Your Majesty is great! See how Buddha answers her prayers! It is almost as though she were Buddha herself!" Therefore, he called her "Old Buddha." "Old Ancestress" is called after coming back from Xi'an. (Der Ling, *Old Buddha: the Empress Tzu Hsi* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd., 1929), 184.

¹⁵⁴ Confucius, 107.

¹⁵⁵ John Plunkett, *Queen Victoria First Media Monarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 145.

¹⁵⁶ The newspaper called *Dian shi zhai hua bao* (點石齋畫報) started during the war between China and France in 1884. This magazine employed a Russian journalist to go to French army camps to report the news of this war and asked its journalists to go to the front to know the whole situation of the war. Therefore, at the beginning, this magazine was famous for the start of war correspondence in China.

¹⁵⁷ Martha Ackmann, "Widow's Mandate Demeans Women," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 Nov. 2000, 5.

¹⁵⁸ Lien-sheng Yang, "Female Rulers in Imperial China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 23 (Sep. 1959): 47-61, 48. In many periods of history, from 221 B.C. to 1912 A.D., China was governed by female rulers. Particularly powerful regencies of empress dowagers were specially dominant under the Han, the Northern Wei, the Tang, the Liao, the Song, the Yuan, and the Qing.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 52, 54 & 56. The term *wai qi gan zheng* has its negative meaning. Prohibition and criticism of empresses' or empress dowagers' interference in government happened long time before Cixi's regency. In the Later Han period, a courtier, Du Gen, and his colleagues in 107 criticized Empress Dowager Teng and petitioned that she should return governmental power to the Emperor. Fan Yeh, the other courtier, also criticized the Empress Dowager for her *cheng zhi zhong shen* (her 'life-time regency being able to issue imperial decrees'). In 222 (the 3rd year of Huangzu), an edict issued said that the members of the empress's clan are forbidden to participate in the government. In 1368 (Ming dynasty), Emperor Taizu issued a decree, saying: "Although the empresses and imperial concubines should serve as models of mothers in the empire,

they are not to be permitted to take part in government affairs." Emperor Taizu also ordered the Board of Works to manufacture *hong pai* (red tablets). The red tablets had been placed in empresses' living quarters for warning them not to interfere in governmental affairs. Furthermore, in some cases, powerful empress dowagers would like to keep their power during their lifetime. However, after they died, they faced serious accusation, that is, illegal ruling. For example, Han dynasty's Empress Dowager Lu was in charge of issuing imperial decrees and became a real ruler. But the Later Han's Emperor Guangwu ordered Empress Lu tablet to be removed out from the Temple of Emperor Gaozu to show that her reign was illegal and disapproved. The Tang dynasty's Empress Wu changed the dynastic name from Tang to Zhou and named herself as the Holy Emperor (Shensheng Huangdi). But contemporaries and later generations regarded her as a usurper. Northern Song period's Empress Dowager Liu wished to make her regency pass on to an imperial concubine and thus wrote her wish in her posthumous order in 1033. But that particular part was omitted when the posthumous order was announced. The above facts indicate all the females interfering in government in the end had their ruling treated as negative or illegal. In Cixi's case, her demise led rapidly to Imperial China becoming a republic.

¹⁶⁰ Ackmann, 5.

¹⁶¹ Yang, 50. Yang in the article "Female Rulers in Imperial China" specially mentions Zhao Fengjie's research about regency of China's empress dowagers. It is in a section on "Empress Dowagers as Regents, in a book called *Zhong guo fu nu zai fa lu shang zhi di wei* (中國婦女在法律上之地位), published in 1928. Yang translated one section of Zhao's work from Chinese into English. Zhao thinks that empress dowagers could serve as regents when certain conditions were fulfilled. Zhao argues for the three conditions at least. The three conditions were: the first is "when the emperor was very young." The second is "when the emperor was ill and unable to attend to affairs." The third is "when the emperor died suddenly or left a posthumous edict." Cixi indeed met all of these three conditions.

¹⁶² Robert Hart, *Entering China's Service: Robert Hart's Journals, 1854-1863*, ed. Katherine F. Bruner, John K. Fairbank, and Richard J. Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1986), 237-8.

¹⁶³ Rawski, 200-201.

¹⁶⁴ Suzanne A. Brenner, "Why Women Rule the Roost," in *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and body politics in Southeast Asia*, eds. Aihwa Ong and Michael G. Peletz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 37.

¹⁶⁵ Anne Waltner, "Widows and Remarriage in Ming and Early Qing China," in *Women in China: Current Directions in Historical Scholarship*, eds. Richard W. Guisso and Stanley Johannesen (New York: Philo Press, 1981), 132.

¹⁶⁶ Sommer, 190-199.

¹⁶⁷ Derek Maitland, "Oriental Superwomen: Behind the Mask of helpless[ness] are minds as tough as steel and quick as computer," *The Times*, 20 Apr. 1970, 12.

¹⁶⁸ Der Ling, *Two Years*, 114-5.

¹⁶⁹ Rawski, 197; *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁷⁰ F. Backhouse and J. O. P. Bland, *Annals & Memoirs of the Court of Peking* (London: William Heinemann, 1914), 486.

¹⁷¹ They give three main examples. One was that the same fate befell the last emperor of the Ming Dynasty and also the Qing Dynasty's Guangxu. The second was that, at the end of both the Ming and Qing periods, rampant eunuchs notorious for serious greed and corruption totally ruined China. The third was that Longyu presented herself exactly the same as Cixi.

¹⁷² Backhouse, 496.

¹⁷³ Longyu's death was officially recorded on 22 Feb. 1913.

¹⁷⁴ George Morrison, "Death of the Empress Dowager of China: A Life of Intrigue," *The Times*, 24 Feb. 1913, 5.

¹⁷⁵ "Administration of the Empress Dowager of China," *The Times*, 17 Jun. 1889, 10. This article gives a high praise for Cixi and her remarkable achievement.

¹⁷⁶ Morrison, 5.

¹⁷⁷ If Cixi and Longyu are put together to make comparison, they are different in their degree of loyalty towards their husbands. In Cixi's reign, Manchus united strongly and were loyal to the respected Cixi; however, under Longyu's, Manchus were seriously divided as between the Yehonala clan and the side of Puyi's parents who disrespected Longyu.

¹⁷⁸ Yang, 50. Since Empress Dowager Lu (*r.* BC 195-180) began it, the "dynastic institution" of empress dowagers' regencies was established. See Footnotes 154 & 157.

¹⁷⁹ Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as experience and institution* (London: Virago, 1977), 57.

¹⁸⁰ Aihwa Ong and Michael G. Peletz, eds., *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and body politics in Southeast Asia* (London: University of California Press, 1995).

¹⁸¹ Maitland, 12.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Waltner, 129.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 132-3.

¹⁸⁵ Cixi's three-time regencies included the period of 1861-1872 (during the Tongzhi emperor's minority), that of 1874-1889 (during the Guangxu emperor's minority), and that of 1898-1908 (after the One-hundred-day Reform failed). When Guangxu reached adulthood (17 years old) and was supposed to be in charge of governmental affairs in 1886, a term *xun zheng* ('tutoring the emperor in government') was introduced to justify the continuation of Cixi's regency.

¹⁸⁶ Thomas Taylor Meadows who had worked as an interpreter in China in the middle of the nineteenth century (before Cixi became a regent) ably spotted the position of woman of widowhood combined with motherhood:

Woman is still more of a slave of man among the Chinese than among Anglo-Saxons. The quality of her slavery is, however, much tempered by the great veneration which Confucian principles require sons to pay both parents. The Imperial Government dare not refuse leave of absence to a mandarin if he, as an only son, requires it in order to tend his widowed mother during her declining years; even though the government may know that the real cause of his asking for leave, is to escape from some impending official difficulty. On the other hand, a mandarin dare not (as we may do) as for leave in order to tend a suffering wife, or to visit one from whom official duties have long separated him. Nothing surprises and amuses mandarins more than the frequent reference which foreign functionaries *will* make to their conjugal relations as affecting, in one way or the other, their official avocations and duties. A Chinese will rarely introduce his most intimate male acquaintance to his wife. It is hardly considered a compliment. Introductions to mothers are, on the other hand, not infrequent. The friend introduced then performs the kowtow to the lady, *i.e.* he kneels before her and touches the ground repeatedly with his forehead. The son does not prevent him, but he returns the salute by kneeling and kowtowing to his friend. Thus two men, and often, of course, grey-bearded men of high station, will in China be found knocking their heads against the floor in honour of a woman of their own class in society. Add to this that if a mother accuses her son before the magistrate, the latter will punish him as a black slave is punished in an American flogging-house, *i.e.* without inquiry into the specific offence. The reader will conclude that this great social and legal authority of mothers in China must operate to raise the position of females generally; and this it does in fact, though in the contraction of their own marriages each is but a passive instrument (Thomas Taylor Meadows' *The Chinese and their Rebellions, viewed in connection with their national philosophy, ethics, legislation, and administration*, London: Smith, Elder Co., 1856, 634-5).

¹⁸⁷ Cheng, 114-5.

¹⁸⁸ The honorific titles can be seen in some of her photographs. These titles are written in the Chinese calligraphic way on the wide long band of paper placed horizontally well above her figure in some of her photographs.

¹⁸⁹ Her Majesty *ci xi duan kang yi zhao yu zhuang cheng shou gong qin xian chung ci* the Empress Dowager (慈禧端康頤昭豫莊誠壽恭欽獻崇熙聖母皇太后).

¹⁹⁰ Seagrave, 30-1.

¹⁹¹ R. F. Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City with an Introduction by Pamela Atwell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 262.

¹⁹² Kahn, 85-97.

¹⁹³ Sun Xiaolan and Ding Qi, *Guangxu zhuan* (光緒傳) (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1999), 98.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 40-48. During Guangxu's childhood, Cixi often suggested that the tutor to Guangxu, Wong Tonghe (1830-1904), should focus more on teaching him filial piety.

¹⁹⁵ Sommer, 167.

¹⁹⁶ The Xianfeng emperor had eight brothers. The eldest brother died in 1831. The second and third brothers died at the ages of two and three respectively. After Xianfeng died in 1861, there were still five surviving brothers: Yizong (died in 1889), Yixin (1898), Yihuan (1890), Yihe (1868), and Yihui (1877) by order. Yixin is Prince Gong. Among all the brothers of Xianfeng, Prince Gong is the last one to die.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 190-199.

¹⁹⁸ More detail about the yellow curtain is given in Chapter 1.

¹⁹⁹ Seagrave, 95.

²⁰⁰ Der Ling, *Old Buddha*, 135.

²⁰¹ Yang, 55. Yang, in the "Female Rulers in Imperial China," discusses the precedents of using the curtain as follows. In 344 A.D. (East Jin), a white gauze curtain was placed when the empress dowager and the young emperor at the age of 2 held audiences in the throne hall. Later, Empress Dowager Liu (r. 1022-1033) in Song dynasty came to the hall called *cheng ming dian* with her young emperor to make judgments on governmental affairs behind a curtain. Another example is Empress Dowager Gao (r. 1085-1093): she came to the gate called *ying yang men* with her young emperor once around every five days (on odd-numbered date) and sat behind the curtain. The other example is Empress Dowager Cao (r. 1063-1064) also joined in discussion of governmental affairs behind a screen in a small hall.

²⁰² Headland, 157.

²⁰³ Soon, Prince Gong died, Cixi had an audience with Prince Henry of Prussia. Lady Ethel MacDonald worked to meet Cixi through Prince Henry. She was thus the originator of having the meeting between foreign ladies and Cixi. On 13 December in the same year, Cixi had her first meeting with these foreign ladies. On 9 March 1900, Lady MacDonald led a party of diplomatic ladies to meet Cixi.

²⁰⁴ See Footnote 192.

²⁰⁵ Nancy Lee Swann, *Pan Chao: Foremost Woman Scholar of China, First Century AD* (New York: Century, 1932), 133.

²⁰⁶ Ban Chao's essay "Lessons for Women" is quoted by Swann in her book in pages from 82-99. In the essay, these aphorisms that Ban Chao quoted are from *Book of Changes* (*Yi jing*), *Book of Rites* (*Li qi*), *Book of Poetry* (*Shi jing*), and *A Pattern for Women* (*Nu xian*) – books with profound Confucian teaching. Accepting the concept of *yin* and *yang*, she entirely agrees there are great differences between men and women in nature, saying: "As *Ying* and *Yang* are not of the same nature, so man and woman have different characteristics. The distinctive quality of the *Yang* is rigidity; the function of the *Yin* is yielding. Man is honored for strength; a woman is beautiful on account of her gentleness" (85). Her idea is far from current Western notions of sex equality.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁰⁸ Marina H. Sung, "The Chinese Lieh-nü Tradition," in *Women in China: Current Directions in Historical Scholarship*, eds. Richard W. Guisso and Stanley Johannessen (New York: Philo Press, 1981), 70-1.

²⁰⁹ Swann, 51.

²¹⁰ Fangru Liu and Huazhi Zhang eds., *Blossoming Through the Ages: Women in Chinese Art and Culture from the Museum Collection*, trans. Donald E. Brix (Taipei: NPM, 2003), 103.

²¹¹ Swann, 51

²¹² The most reliable source for Ban Chao's life and writings is found in an ancient book called *Hou Han Shu* compiled by Fan Yeh in the fifth century. There is no single criticism of Ban Chao. Swann quotes an important part about Ban Chao in her book (40-1).

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 43.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 82-3.

²¹⁵ Evelyn Blackwood, "Senior Women, Model Mothers, and Dutiful Wives," in *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and body politics in Southeast Asia*, eds. Aihwa Ong and Michael G. Peletz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 129.

²¹⁶ Maitland, 12.

²¹⁷ Sung, 72. In Ming dynasty, the Taizu emperor issues an edict, saying: "Widows younger than thirty, who remain in their homes maintaining the house and fulfilling their familial responsibilities, if upon reaching fifty years of age have thus maintained themselves, then their families will be honored." After 50, women generally pass the age of fertility. So, 50-year-old is the line that people draw to judge that a woman is a sexual being or not. It means: before fifty years old, a widow is still a sexual being. The widow after 50 can enjoy more independence.

²¹⁸ Chang, 5.

²¹⁹ A rumour says that Alute was pregnant when she died (if this rumour was true, the baby in her womb would have been a future heir). It has been often suggested that Cixi forced her to die because Alute would have become the next regent if she gave a birth to a son (in order to keep power, Cixi murdered her indirectly).

²²⁰ Collis, 2.

²²¹ Jin, 275-290.

²²² Seagrave, 32.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 25.

²²⁴ Headland, 27-8.

²²⁵ Carl, 132.

²²⁶ Yung Wu, *The Flight of an Empress*, ed. Ida Pruitt, trans. Liu Kun (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937), 116.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

²²⁸ Carl, 136. Sarah Pike Conger, *Letters from China: with Particular Reference to the Empress Dowager and the Women of China* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), 245.

²²⁹ The historical setting of the novel was between about 1729 and 1737.

²³⁰ In the novel, there is a powerful character called 'Ancestress.' She is a widow and also represents matriarchy.

²³¹ Xueqin Cao, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, trans. Florence and Isabel McHugh (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1958), 302-311; 116-176.

²³² Shanpu Yu, "ci xi de yu bi shu hua," *The Forbidden City*, no. 69 (1992): 39. In the article, Yu, deputy director of Qing Dongling Tomb Cultural Artifacts Management Office, also gives details of how Cixi created her own paintings.

²³³ Carl, 194-5, 237, 243, 280. Der Ling, *Two Years*, 83, 92, 165-6 & 170.

²³⁴ Der Ling, *Old Buddha*, 245.

²³⁵ Ethel MacDonald, "My Visits to the Dowager-Empress," *The Empire Review* 1, no. 3 (Apr. 1901): 247.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 255.

²³⁷ Yung Wu, 155.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 176.

²⁴⁰ Charlotte F. Haldane, *Last Great Empress of China* (London: Constable, 1965), 123.

²⁴¹ Sir Robert Hart, *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, eds. John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner, Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson., vol. 2 (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975), 1304.

²⁴² Wasima Aikhan (the Islamic Academy of Las Vegas) says, "Ignorance breeds hate." In two articles, "An Organization on the Lookout for Patriotic Incorrectness" (*New York Times*, 24 Nov. 2001) and "People who hate people" (*The Spectator*, 6 Oct. 2002), Emily Eakin and Mark Steyn mention Aikhan's words.

²⁴³ David Coleman (the University of Oklahoma) says, "hate breeds violence and violence breeds death, destruction and heartache." Mark Steyn carries Coleman words in his article, "People who hate people."

²⁴⁴ Der Ling, *Old Buddha*, 225-233. Cixi once expressed her view on the West. She made a long monologue about Western 'immorality' at Der Ling.

²⁴⁵ This phenomenon can be observed from her attendance in the political domain. The relation among imperial objects, geographical position, and the degree of the power was discussed in Chapter 1.

Chapter Three:

²⁴⁶ Sir Edmund Trelawny Backhouse was the eldest son of Sir Jonathan Edmund Backhouse, first baronet, and Florence, the youngest daughter of Sir John Salusbury-Trelawny, ninth baronet. Backhouse was educated at Winchester and at Merton College, Oxford, where he studied classics and English Literature during 1892 to 1895. However, owing to a severe nervous breakdown, he finally left college without taking a degree. He was regarded as a master in several languages, including Russian, Manchurian and Japanese. After arriving in China in 1898, he became a translator at the British Legation and worked as a part-time teacher at Peking University from 1903 to 1913. He built his reputation as a scholar in Chinese and also donated a large number of his rare books, documents, manuscripts, etc., to Oxford's Bodleian Library. Backhouse collaborated with J.O.P. Bland on two historical works – *China under the Empress Dowager* (1910) and *Annals & Memoirs of the Court of Peking* (1914). Later, he also collaborated with Sir Sidney Barton in the revision of Sir W. C. Hillier's *English-Chinese Dictionary of Peking Colloquial* (1918). He remained unmarried for his whole life. About Backhouse's life (summarized by Mrs. Hope Dauby), see Hope Dauby, 'Backhouse, Sir Edmund Trelawny' in *The Dictionary of National Biography 1941-1950*, eds. L. G. Legg and E. T. Williams (London: Oxford University, 1959), 31-32. Concerning his year of birth, in Backhouse's passport, in *Who's Who 1941-1950* (Vol. IV, 1952) and in *Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage, Baronage and Knightage Privy Council, and Order of Precedence* (97th edition, 1939), his birth year is given as 1873. But Backhouse told his final patron, R. Hoeppli (who was also the editor of Backhouse's two memoirs, *The Dead Past* and *Décadence Manchoue*) that his year of birth year was 1872. See E. Backhouse, "Postscript by the Editor" in *The Dead Past*, ed. R. Hoeppli (an unpublished memoir in BL, 1944), 209.

²⁴⁷ Backhouse was depicted as a 'recluse' by Mrs. Hope Dauby. She describes how "he now devoted his whole life to study and writing, becoming a recluse as time went on. In his house in the West City, Peking, he lived the life of a Chinese scholar, even wearing long native robes. Little by little, he gave up all social contacts with his European and American friends, and would receive only two or three of them; thus he

gained the reputation of being something of a mystery man" (Legg and Williams, 31-32). Hoeppli also describes Backhouse's life style as that of a 'recluse:' "[Backhouse] had the reputation of a recluse who particularly disliked contact with foreigners; even queer habits in this respect were reported. He was said to turn around when, walking on the city wall, he saw a foreigner coming towards him, and to cover his face with handkerchief when passing a foreigner in a rickshaw. These reports, even though they may be exaggerated, indicate not only his dislike of foreigners but also an eccentric mind" (Backhouse, 210).

²⁴⁸ Sir Robert Hart, *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, eds. John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner, Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 2: 1189. On 26 February, 1898, Sir Robert Hart, the Ulsterman who effectively created the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs and had worked in China as Inspector General from 1863 until 1908 (his whole stay in China coincided exactly with the period of Cixi's reign), wrote to his agent James Duncan Campbell to recommend Backhouse for his department. Backhouse arrived in China with reference letters from Lord Salisbury (Prime Minister at that time), the Duke of Devonshire (Lord President of the Council) and Joseph Chamberlain (Colonial Secretary). This proves that Backhouse arrived in China in 1898. In the same year, China had its Hundred Days of Reform, dated from 11 June to 21 September (103 days). During the Reform, two hundred or so decrees were issued in quick succession.

²⁴⁹ In 1898, Professor Robert K. Douglas wrote at least two letters to the Editor of *The Times*. His letters were published in *The Times*. In the first letter (published on 3 Oct., 1898, 5), he argued that Cixi was a cold-blooded murderer. He also remarked on Cixi's 'achievement' quite plainly: "There has been nothing more remarkable in her career than the way in which all those of eminence who have opposed her view have disappeared, some on the execution ground, some by 'fatal illness,' and some by banishment to Eastern Turkestan." (In response to this letter, a medical doctor, J. Dudgeon wrote a letter to defend Cixi. This letter was published in *The Times*, 07 Oct., 1898, 8.) In Douglas' second letter (published on 21 Dec., 1898, 10), he criticizes one episode about drinking cups of tea at Cixi's reception for foreign ladies. At the reception, Cixi had a sip of tea from the same cup from which every lady drank. Professor Douglas thinks: "Plainly to convince her guests that there was no mischief in their cups." Meantime, he also feels suspicious about how Cixi showed "an outburst of womanly emotion." Of course, there were people like Professor Douglas who never trusted Cixi. Edmund Backhouse was not the only foreigner who criticizes Cixi, but he was the one damaging Cixi's image the most.

²⁵⁰ J. O. P. Bland and E. Backhouse, *China under the Empress Dowager* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), 2.

²⁵¹ E. Backhouse and J. O. P. Bland's *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking* (London: William Heinemann, 1914), 467. In fact, Backhouse believed in Kang's criticism on Cixi. See Kang Youwei, *Ta Tung Shu: The One-World Philosophy of K'ang You-wei*, ed. Chao Feng-tien (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.), 17 & 287. In this book, Chao Feng-tien, who edited Kang's autobiography remarks, "[Kang Youwei's] story of this affair has been told in English in such writings as Bland and Backhouse's *China under the Empress Dowager*, Meribeth Cameron's *The Reform Movement in China*, and the great biographical dictionary edited by Arthur Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, to name three of the more important studies." From Chao's remark, he believes that Backhouse's understanding of China and Kang's are not different, especially regarding the Hundred Days of Reform and the negative portrayal of Cixi. In addition, in the section "Miscellaneous Materials," Backhouse's Chapters XII-XV of *China under the Empress Dowager*, giving an account of the Hundred Days of Reform, are regarded as taken from Kang Youwei's criticism of Cixi.

²⁵² H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Hermit of Peking: the Hidden Life of Sir Edmund Backhouse* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 63-66.

²⁵³ London's *The Times* had three articles about Empress Dowager after her death: "The Empress Dowager of China," "The Death of the Emperor and the Empress-Dowager of China" and "The Late Empress-Dowager of China" were published on 16 Nov., 1908, p. 8, on 16 Nov., 1908, p. 11, and on 29 Dec., 1908, p. 4, respectively. The three articles portray Cixi negatively in different ways. The first article describes her as "an unscrupulous deceiver," "a shameless opportunist," and "pseudo-reformer." At the end of the article, the conclusion agrees with Mrs. Archibald's view: "future ages will hold the Empress Dowager [Cixi] in even greater horror than the Empresses Lu and Wu, who figured so infamously." The second article compares the Guangxu emperor's generosity, progressiveness, awareness of his people's needs with Cixi's unwise ruling and remarks: "We wish we could say that the rule of the Empress-Dowager was beneficent, but the verdict of history will probably be that her influence was, on the whole, malign." The third article is also another with a negative view on Cixi. She is said to have characteristics of "barbaric cruelties" and "sudden paroxysms of rage alternating with good nature." The author(s) regards Cixi's supporting Boxers and non-reforming policies as "the errors and crimes of China's great ruler." According to Trevor-Roper's account, Bland and Backhouse were in Beijing when Cixi died (in November). "From Our Shanghai

Correspondent" is mentioned below the title of the third article (published in December). The second article is categorized as "Editorials/Leaders." It is uncertain whether all the three articles were written by Bland and Backhouse or not. One thing for sure is that one of articles or more must have written by Bland and Backhouse. The three articles about Cixi have something in common: harsh criticism.

²⁵⁴ Before *China under the Empress Dowager* was published, Bland suggested that Backhouse's name should be mentioned and also come first. However, Backhouse did not want to have such obvious publicity. Also, the publisher refused Bland's suggestion. Therefore, the authors of this book were finally given as "J. O. Bland and E. Backhouse." Unexpectedly, the book sold well. Backhouse could well have been regretful that most of the credits went to Bland and not to himself. By the time the next book, *Annals and Memoirs*, was published, Backhouse preferred the publisher to put his own name first and Bland's name second. So this book was said to be by "E. Backhouse and J. O. P. Bland."

²⁵⁵ In *Annals and Memoirs*, Backhouse described Qingshan's diary as a record of "the inner history of the Court of Peking during the height of the Boxer Crisis and the Siege of the Legations," 442. In *China under the Empress Dowager*, the Qingshan diary translated by Backhouse in Chapter 17 is called 'The Diary of the Excellency Ching Shan [Qingshan]', 251-306. The record of "a certain Doctor of Letters and member of the Hanlin Academy" is translated in Chapter 2 – 'the Flight to Rehe,' 14-29.

²⁵⁶ Trevor-Roper, 70-71 & 87-88.

²⁵⁷ Within eighteen months of the publication of *China under the Empress Dowager*, eight impressions were brought out and the book was translated into several languages.

²⁵⁸ *Spectator*, No. 4295, 22 October, 1910. 'Tzu Hsi' and 'Tzu-hsi' are other spellings for 'Cixi.'

²⁵⁹ "Books: Events and Present Policies," *The Spectator*, 7 Dec. 1912, 965-966.

²⁶⁰ Philip Walsingham Sergeant, "Preface" in *The Great Empress Dowager of China* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1910), vii - viii.

²⁶¹ *Spectator*, No. 4320, April 15, 1911.

²⁶² *Times*, 2 Feb. 1944.

²⁶³ Daniele Varè. *The Last of the Empresses, and Passing from the Old China to the New*. London: John Murray, 1936. There are four quotations here: the first one is in 'Preface,' viii; the second, third and fourth are on page 219.

²⁶⁴ Keith Laidler's *The Last Empress: The She-Dragon of China* (Chichester: Weiley, 2003), *passim*.

²⁶⁵ Backhouse, 209.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁶⁷ Backhouse's memoirs including also his last two works – *The Dead Past* and *Décadence Manchoue* (two unpublished memoirs collected in BL, 1944) – can be read in the Rare Books section of the BL. The numbers of the holdings (BL) for *The Dead Past* and *Décadence Manchoue* are Cup.363.ff.32 and Cup.363.ff.33 respectively. There are four copies of these two books in the world – held in the BL in London, the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the Harvard College Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

²⁶⁸ The first quotation is from "A Tangled Skein" (a short autobiography of Backhouse) in Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 206. The second quotation is from "Foreword to the Reader" in Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, iv.

²⁶⁹ Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, 36.

²⁷⁰ Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 205-207.

²⁷¹ Trevor-Roper, 225-264.

²⁷² Both Sterling Seagrave and Trevor-Roper criticized Dr George Morrison, known as 'Chinese Morrison' and 'Morrison of Peking,' who strongly supported Western imperialism. Seagrave contrasts Sir Robert Hart, who always stood on Cixi's and China's side, with Morrison. Seagrave thinks that Sir Robert was the only person who knew something about Cixi, the history of the Qing dynasty, and the inner stories of the Manchu court and its disgraces. Morrison was a journalist who accepted everything that he heard about Cixi from people who criticized her – for example, Kang Youwei and Backhouse. Trevor-Roper prefers to make a contrast between Bland and Morrison; for example, he remarks, "Bland was very different from the nervous, egocentric, aggressive Morrison," 47. These comparisons highlight their disagreement with Morrison. These criticisms of Morrison can be seen in pages 43-71 and *passim* in Sterling Seagrave, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China*, London: Macmillan, 1992.

²⁷³ Trevor-Roper, 153.

²⁷⁴ In her "Acknowledgement of Sources and Brief Biography," Charlotte Haldane states that "[a]n early stage in my research it became clear how few were the reliable sources on the life of the Empress Dowager [Cixi]." *The Last Great Empress of China* (London: Constable, 1965), 277-278.

²⁷⁵ Robert Twigger, *The Extinction Club* (London: Penguin, 2002), 111-2. Twigger thinks that the two memoirs are not designed to persuade people to believe the stories are true, but designed to "impress and amuse."

²⁷⁶ Hoeppli states, "Whatever the historic value of these stories may be, it seemed regrettable that they should be lost; and in order to preserve them and to have at the same time a good pretext to provide him with additional funds from his private means, the editor suggested to Sir Edmund to write the most interesting of his experiences and to sell the manuscripts to him as would a professional writer." Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 226. Hoeppli also remarks, "With regard to *The Dead Past* and *Décadence Manchoue*, the fundamental question presents itself immediately. How far do the two works present the truth? Do they to some extent possess historic value or are they simply products of the author's fertile imagination?" *Ibid.*, 229.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 234.

²⁷⁸ An art exhibition, *Mad Bad and Dangerous: The Cult of Lord Byron*, held in both the National Portrait Gallery of London and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh respectively in 2003 connected these famous British people together and considered their common Romantic spirit ... though the characters of these famous British figures were not exactly the same.

²⁷⁹ These quotations and descriptions about these famous Britons, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Oscar Wilde, and T. E. Lawrence, are quoted from the inscriptions introducing to different persons in the art exhibition *Mad Bad and Dangerous: The Cult of Lord Byron* held in National Portrait Gallery in London, from 20 Nov. till 16 Feb. 2003 and Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh, from 13 Mar. till 26 May 2003.

²⁸⁰ Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 117-207.

²⁸¹ G. Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Picador, 2003), 261.

²⁸² Trevor-Roper, 24.

²⁸³ Rothenstein, 147.

²⁸⁴ In *The Dead Past*, the reader can sense Backhouse had been preoccupied by Wilde's case.

²⁸⁵ Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Inversion*, vol. 2 of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (New York: Random House, 1936), 63.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 352.

²⁸⁷ Ed Cohen, *Talk on the Wilde Side: Toward a Genealogy of a Discourse on Male Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1993), 99.

²⁸⁸ Regenia Gagnier's *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victoria Public* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1987), 52 & 51-99.

²⁸⁹ Cohen, 136.

²⁹⁰ In this sentence, there are four terms quoted in sources: the first and second terms are from *The Star*, 3 April 1895, and the third and fourth are from *The Star*, 4 April 1895.

²⁹¹ In a copy of the will of Sir Jonathan Edmund Backhouse (Sir Edmund Backhouse's father) that Postal Searches and Copies Department (in York) sent to me, the will says, "In making this Will I first of all wish to testify my deep appreciation and gratitude for the constant love and loyalty of my Daughter and my four Sons also I wish to thank them all for the industry and conduct which has enabled them to be so successful in their various careers I do not mention my eldest Son Edmund Trelawny Backhouse specifically as a beneficiary in this Will beyond the entailed property as I have reason to believe that he is amply provided for outside my legacy from me by his own consistent hard work conduct and industry in China for which I wish to express to him my most sincere gratitude and appreciation.... I devise my freehold properties known as The Rookery with the kitchen garden, The Horndale, The School Oarth and all my property on the School Hill at Middleton Tyas in the County of York (hereinafter called 'the hereditaments first devised') to the use of my Son Edmund during his life"(2-3). The part of the will can be read in Appendix E. As the eldest son, Sir Edmund Backhouse should have been his father's favourite. The reality was that he did not inherit any money. Although he had property, he could not sell it or pass on anything to other people. One can imagine that Backhouse junior must have been very disappointed.

²⁹² Trevor-Roper, 267. M. H. Vetch, a French publisher who had published Backhouse's *China under the Empress Dowager* in the 1939 edition in Beijing and once contacted Backhouse, writes: "[Edmund Backhouse] had little respect for his family in England and [his family], on their side, regarded him as a black sheep, the scapegoat of the Backhouse, packed off to China, a remittance-man." An interesting coincidence is that, in 1994, Sunderland Museum had an exhibition concerning the Backhouse family. The Museum made a slight joke of the contrast between the Backhouse family members on the one hand and Edmund Backhouse on the other, titling the exhibition "Saints and a Sinner." Jessop Les, the present curator of Sunderland Museum wrote to me on 4th August, 2004, "The title was intended as a small joke, not a serious academic statement! The idea was to make a contrast between several members of the Backhouse

family who were very devout Quakers and Edmund Backhouse, whose behaviour was not typical of a devout Quaker.”

²⁹³ During the trials, the press and the lawyers used the negative words to characterize Wilde.

²⁹⁴ Before Backhouse's *China under the Empress Dowager* was published, the publisher, Heinemann, had been advised by Morrison that the diary of Qingshan was made by Backhouse's 'boy' (that refers to his servant). Morrison had worked with Backhouse for a long time and was the first person able to make a right judgement on inauthenticity of the diary. That Backhouse favoured having relationships with servants would have been known by Morrison. In view of his former Oxford ideal of Greek love (between older men and younger men), Backhouse surely had some such tendency. W. E. Soothill, who finally replaced Backhouse and became a professor at Oxford, several times visited Backhouse in China. He wrote in a letter, 'Privately I may say that Backhouse is believed to be entirely under the thumb of a Chinese servant who evidently has some power over him' (Trevor-Roper, 159). Havelock Ellis in his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Sexual Inversion* of 1897 states, "in China, for instance, it seems that there are special houses devoted to male prostitution... When a rich man gives a feast he sends for women to cheer the repast by music and song and for boys to serve at table and to entertain the guests by their lively conversation. The young people have been carefully brought up for this occupation, receiving an excellent education, and their mental qualities are more highly valued than their physical attractiveness. The women are less carefully brought up and less esteemed. After the meal, the lads usually return home with a considerable fee. What further occurs the Chinese say little about. It seems that real and deep affection is often born of these relations, at first, platonic, but in the end becoming physical – not a matter for great concern in the eyes of the Chinese. In the Chinese novels, often of a very literary character, devoted to masculine love, it seems that all the preliminaries and transports of normal love are to be found, while physical union may terminate the scene." Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Sexual Inversion*, Vol. 1 (London: Watford, 1897), 6. When Ellis' book on his understanding on Chinese paedophiles was published, Backhouse was in his 'three blank years' and seriously thinking about his future. It was not known whether Backhouse read this book. In spite of the limitation on knowledge of paedophilia in the Far East, the above statement probably reflects many British people's general knowledge of this issue at the time. For Backhouse, China was probably a new place where he could indulge his paedophilic sexual proclivities.

²⁹⁵ Robb, 37.

²⁹⁶ Henry Maudsley, "Illustration of a Variety of Insanity," *The Journal of Mental Science* 14, no. 66 (July, 1868): 153-4. "His mental energy is sapped, and though he has extravagant pretensions and often speaks of great projects engendered of his conceit, he never enters seriously into any occupation nor works systematically at the accomplishment of any object, but spends all his time in indolent and solitary self-brooding, and is not wearied of going one day after day in the same purposeless and idle life. Hypochondriacally occupied with his health, his sensations, his feelings, he imagines that his relatives are hostile to him because they do not take the estimate of him which he makes of himself. His own family are especially hostile to him, because they are distressed by his indolence and pretension, and try to instigate him to do something. If they speak of the impossibility of always maintaining him in complete idleness, they are unfeeling and do not understand him. His manner is shy, nervous, and suspicious ... there is a want of manliness of appearance as of manliness of feeling ... they are not doing any good at the business to which they have been put, and their masters complain that they can make nothing of them. They show no interest, and put no energy, in what they are set to do; they are forgetful, moody, careless, abstracted, perhaps muttering to themselves, and waste a long time in doing badly very simple things, or fail to do them. It is a thought at first that their conduct is the result of laziness, viciousness, and a desire to shirk work; but after a while it becomes apparent that there is something wrong in them, and those who have the superintendence of them are convinced that there is some failure of mind. Meanwhile, at home they are selfish, irritable, exacting, very deceitful, and passionate; they are entirely wanting in reverence for their parents, or proper feeling for others; and their pretensions are outrageous. They themselves by no means admit that they give any just ground of complaint; but make some excuse for their conduct by putting the blame of it on persons or circumstances, or deny it altogether."

²⁹⁷ Robb, 48.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁰² Robb, 39.

³⁰³ Robb, 89-121.

³⁰⁴ Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, 2. This is based on Algernon Swinburne's poem *Dolores*. The actual lines in the poem are: "We shall see whether hell be not heaven, / Find out whether tares be not grain, / And

the joys of the seventy times seven, / Our Lady of Pain.” Backhouse made a slight mistake in transcribing some words of this poem.

³⁰⁵ Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 1.

³⁰⁶ Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 108-113.

³⁰⁷ Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, 32.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 58, 124, 160, 72, 416, & 421.

³⁰⁹ Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 1.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 1-2.

³¹³ Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, 41.

³¹⁴ Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 124.

³¹⁵ Backhouse and Bland, 419-442; *Ibid.*, 466.

³¹⁶ *Passim* in the two books *China under the Empress Dowager* and *Annals & Memoirs*.

³¹⁷ *Passim* in Bland and Backhouse, *China under the Empress Dowager*.

³¹⁸ Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, 111.

³¹⁹ Plato, ‘Phaedo’ (‘The Death of Socrates’), trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpiece*, Eds. Mack, Maynard, et al. 6th ed., vol. 1 (New York & London: Norton, 1992), 830.

³²⁰ Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 2.

³²¹ Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, 410-411.

³²² Steven R. Wilk, *Medusa: Solving the Mystery of the Gorgon* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 186.

³²³ Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, 116

³²⁴ Backhouse, *Décadence Manchoue*, 102-105. Backhouse took three pages to write of the resemblance between the relationship of Queen Victoria and her horseman Mr. Brown and the relationship of Empress Cixi and Eunuch Li Lianying.

³²⁵ Backhouse’s sensational pornographic fictions occupy pages 102-414 of *Décadence Manchoue*. In this pornographic part, Backhouse starts with Cixi’s supposed curiosity about Queen Victoria’s relationship with John Brown, about whether Victoria abused her own daughters-in-law, and about whether the Queen – in reality famous for her devotion to her husband, Albert – had many lovers. Next, Cixi is said to have ordered her chief eunuch, Li Lianying, to make Backhouse drink a “very pungent and aromatic crimson fluid” which Backhouse says he did drink in the end. Backhouse likens himself to Socrates, who drank poison and died. Backhouse says that his lower limbs became soft; then he felt for Cixi a “real libidinous passion such as no woman has ever inspired in my perverted homosexual mind before nor since;” and finally he had sex with her. He goes on to describe how he enjoyed having sex with her and their various positions in which they had sex. Then he says that Cixi also had many sexual encounters with him and other eunuchs and that she also enjoyed watching homosexual intercourse. He also describes how many weird sexual relationships went on at Court – for example involving animals such as chickens, dogs, monkeys and foxes. Backhouse was certainly an imaginative, stylish and amusing writer of pornography.

³²⁶ Backhouse, *The Dead Past*, 228.

³²⁷ Leo McKinsry, *Rosebery: Statesman in Turmoil* (London: John Murray, 2005), 59.

³²⁸ Andrew Robert, “Nightmare on Downing Street,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, 5 June 2005, Review 17.

³²⁹ Seagrave, 13.

Chapter Four:

³³⁰ In Chapter 1, I have discussed the ways in which Cixi treated these foreign ladies. The details can be found in the chapter.

³³¹ Lady Susan Townley, *My Chinese Note Book* (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), 282.

³³² Lady Susan Townley, *‘Indiscretions’ of Lady Susan* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1922), 92.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

³³⁵ Townley, *My Chinese Note Book*, 323.

³³⁶ George Ernest Morrison, *The Correspondence of G. E. Morrison*, ed. Lo Hui-min, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 1: 280. Morrison describes how the English Legation had some wonderful couples by writing of “a very fine man Townley with a charming wife.”

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 230. Townley, *‘Indiscretions’ of Lady Susan*, 86-7.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 94-97.

³³⁹ Morrison wrote a passionate defence of Yuan, “Yuan Shi-kai on the Crisis: A Limited Monarchy or a Republic. The Danger of Disruption” in *The Times* (21 Nov. 1911, 6). He says, “The main facts of the story

arc well known but the Prime Minister declares that the statements published in the public press purporting to describe this participation in the episode are largely misrepresentations of [the] facts.”

³⁴⁰ Townley, *Indiscretions of Lady Susan*, 99.

³⁴¹ George Morrison, “Latest Intelligence: China,” *The Times*, 3 February 1902, 5.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1924; reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 168.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

³⁴⁵ Susanne Hoe, *Women at the Siege, Peking 1900* (Oxford: the Women’s History Press, 2000), 340. Alicia Helen Neva Bewicke was born in Madcira, moving to London in her early twenties. She spent the next two decades writing novels and essays and participating in the London women’s rights scene. In 1886, she married Archibald Little, a successful tea merchant who had already spent twenty years in China. Arriving in China at the beginning of 1887, she began writing again, under either Alicia Bewicke Little or Mrs. Archibald Little. During her twenty years in China, Little wrote three novels, five travelogues, a guide to Peking, dozens of articles, edited two of her husband’s books on China, was active in the Shanghai Women’s Society, and founded an anti-footbinding organization.

³⁴⁶ Mrs. Archibald Little, *Round about My Peking Garden* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), 56.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁴⁸ Mrs. Archibald Little, *Intimate China: The Chinese as I have seen them* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1899), 571.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 570-615. Kang’s view was very influential for Little. This influence can be seen in the whole chapter called *The Coup D’etat*.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 518-9.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 515-531.

³⁵² Little, *Round about My Peking Garden*, 57.

³⁵³ Hoe, 335. Lucy Ker born in Canada married William Pollock Ker (1864-1945) in 1897. Her husband worked for the British Consular service, then as an Assistant Chinese Secretary, then Commercial Attaché, and next as Consul General in China. She arrived in China in 1897.

³⁵⁴ Katherine A. Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 169.

³⁵⁵ Carl, 169.

³⁵⁶ In 1898, Cixi had her first meeting with the ladies. Conger was there but she was not in charge. At that time, Lady Ethel MacDonald ran the meetings. In 1900, MacDonald also organized another meeting with Cixi. At that time, Conger was journeying in America.

³⁵⁷ Sarah Pike was born in Ohio c. 1843 and graduated from Lombard College in Illinois in 1863. She married her childhood sweetheart, Edwin Hurd Conger (1843-1907) in 1867. A Civil War veteran, lawyer, Congressman (1884-90) and Minister to Brazil (1890-97), Mr. Conger was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to Beijing, China by President McKinley in 1898. Mrs Conger followed her husband to China. Both of them stayed there until 1905. She had two children, one of whom was called Laura. During the legation siege, she was known as “the Fairy God-Mother.”

³⁵⁸ Townley, *Indiscretions of Lady Susan*, 86-87.

³⁵⁹ Gerd Kaminski & Unterrider Else, *Ware Ich Chinese, so Ware Ich Boxer* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1989), 104-7.

³⁶⁰ Sarah Pike Conger, *Letters from China: with Particular Reference to the Empress Dowager and the Women of China* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), 41. After meeting Cixi in 1898, Conger immediately wrote to her sister to give her first impression of the empress.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, “darkness of ignorance” and “pronounced misrepresentation” from the page viii in Foreword; “many times misleading” from the page 235.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 235-6.

³⁶³ As a *doyenne*, Conger made a rather long speech on 1 Feb, 1902. For this reason, Cixi grew impatient. Eventually, Cixi asked an interpreter to stop it (Kaminski, 104-7). By contrast, Lady Ethel MacDonald made a much shorter speech: “We rejoice that your Imperial Majesty has taken this first step towards a personal acquaintance with the ladies of Foreign nations. We venture to express the hope that your august example will be followed by the ladies of China, and that the peoples of the East and West will continue to draw nearer to each other in social intercourse.” Quoted in Ethel MacDonald, “My Visits to the Dowager-Empress of China,” *The Empire Review* 1, no.3 (Apr.1901): 248.

³⁶⁴ Conger, 376-7.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 221.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 376-7.

³⁶⁷ Isaac Taylor Headland, *Court Life in China* (New York: F. H. Revell Co, 1909), 2.

- ³⁶⁸ Conger, 304.
- ³⁶⁹ Headland, 2-3. Professor Headland also says that it was his wife who helped him to collect information and prepare everything for this book.
- ³⁷⁰ Laura R. Prieto, *At Home in the Studio: the Professionalization of Women Artists in America* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3.
- ³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ³⁷² Virginia Woolf, *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie, 4 vols. (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1987), 2: 180.
- ³⁷³ Headland, 2.
- ³⁷⁴ Headland, 35-84; 131-148.
- ³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 132.
- ³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 153.
- ³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 143.
- ³⁷⁸ See Footnote 519.
- ³⁷⁹ Carl, 133.
- ³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 278.
- ³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 131.
- ³⁸² *Ibid.*, 163.
- ³⁸³ A classical poem called *zui chui bian* (醉垂鞭) made by Zhang Xian which can be read at <http://cls.hs.yzu.edu.tw/ORIG/> (Chinese poetry website).
- ³⁸⁴ Carl, 51.
- ³⁸⁵ Carl, 101.
- ³⁸⁶ Lady Ethel MacDonald was married to Major Claude Maxwell MacDonald (1852-1915). He was Envoy-Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Beijing during 1896-1900 and was appointed Minister in Tokyo in 1900.
- ³⁸⁷ MacDonald, 247.
- ³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 250.
- ³⁸⁹ Conger, 236. Mrs Conger admiringly says of Cixi: "I was seated for more than one hour with Her Majesty and was astonished and pleased with her varied conversation and courtesies."
- ³⁹⁰ MacDonald, 255.
- ³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 253, 254.
- ³⁹² *Ibid.*, 254.
- ³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 255.
- ³⁹⁴ Derling and her sister were each granted the royal title of *chun chu yi deng nu kuan*, the literal translation of which is 'princess, first class female official.' The biographer of *Daughter of Heaven, Daughter of Earth: the Life of Princess Der Ling*, Grant Menzies, kindly explained to me about the problematic situation of her title as follows: "[this title] was interpreted by Der Ling to emphasize the rank of 'court princess,' which accorded with several of the Empress Dowager's off-hand comments leaning in that direction. In fact, the Chinese title carries a great deal more weight than the rather fluffy 'princess,' with its connotation of royal connection, which in any case would be written as *gong chu* rather than *chun chu* (*chun chu* was a courtesy title usually accorded unmarried female cousins of the emperors.) The name, the title and the date were brushed by an unknown Hanlin Academy scribe on the sides of the silk calligraphic scroll, painted for Der Ling by the Empress Dowager with the character 'shou.' The scroll was later reproduced in a publicity brochure for Der Ling's Chautauqua lecture series in the late 1920's." Derling's several books were published either under the name of Princess Der Ling or under Mrs. Thaddeus C. White. Her publishers preferred her to use the title of 'Princess' instead of that of 'Mrs' for commercial reasons. All these considerations help explain why Derling was accused of being a liar – especially regarding her title, as Hugh Trevor-Roper proposed in *Hermit of Peking: the hidden life of Sir Edmund Backhouse*.
- ³⁹⁵ About the reasons why Derling is categorized as a Western lady, read Footnote 82.
- ³⁹⁶ Derling says, "For almost three years, I was a favorite of Her Majesty, and I say this without egotism, in an attempt to show my own right to tell the story I have told here. Old Buddha made me her confidante on many occasions" (*Old Buddha: the Empress Tzu Hsi*, London: John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd., 1929, vii).
- ³⁹⁷ More details are given in Chapter 1.
- ³⁹⁸ Carl, 35, 137. About blue, Carl says: "Blue, being the Empress Dowager's favorite colour, is used for all the hangings in the Palaces." About yellow, Carl describes how Cixi had excellent taste in choosing colours that she liked, but Carl was puzzled why Cixi so much liked imperial yellow which is, Carl believed, "unbecoming" to Cixi.
- ³⁹⁹ *Old Buddha*, 346.
- ⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 296.

- ⁴⁰¹ *Old Buddha*, 347.
- ⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 170-1.
- ⁴⁰³ Princess Der Ling, *Imperial Incense* (London: Stanley Paul & Co. Ltd., 1934), 138. More details about Cixi's admiration for Qinglong are in Footnote 495.
- ⁴⁰⁴ Derling's son died at the age of 21 (1912-1933). Cixi's son Tongzhi died at the age of 19 (1856-1875).
- ⁴⁰⁵ Grant Menzies' personal correspondence dated on 8th Dec. 2004.
- ⁴⁰⁶ Der Ling, *Old Buddha*, 180.
- ⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 316.
- ⁴⁰⁸ See Appendix E.
- ⁴⁰⁹ Lydia Dan, "The Unknown Photographer" (an article of four pages written in 1982), collected in FGAAMSG Archives.
- ⁴¹⁰ Paul Burrell: *In His Own Words*, with Paul Burrell, Channel 4, UK, 16 December, 2004.
- ⁴¹¹ Der Ling, *Old Buddha*, 316.
- ⁴¹² Carl, 277.
- ⁴¹³ Sir Claude MacDonald, *The Siege of the Peking Embassy, 1900: Sir Claude MacDonald's Report on the Boxer Rebellion* (London: The Stationery Office, 2000), 53.
- ⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.
- ⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 35..
- ⁴¹⁶ Cixi and Sir Robert Hart were born in the same year. After arriving in China in 1854, Hart had been student interpreter in Hong Kong, British Consulate in Ningpo, a secretary to the Allied Commission in Guangdong, an interpreter at the British Consulate in Guangdong, Deputy-Commissioner of Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, and then Inspector General of Customs. He left China for England in 1908 – the same year when Cixi died. His whole career is thus very much connected with Cixi's reign.
- ⁴¹⁷ On 8 March, 1902, he wrote: "The Audience went off well, but whether it is to have further results remains to be seen. The Chinese official world has many 'buttons' [meaning high-ranking Qing officials] in it that don't want me to gain the ear of the Empress Dowager, but there are others who desire it as the best thing that could happen. I myself funk it: I want to get away and so do not wish for any temptation to stay on, and, on the other hand, the chance of doing something really useful to wind up with may be not only tempting but [too] wicked to throw away. As I said to poor old Li one day, nothing would please me more than for the Chinese Govt. to relieve me of the responsibility, even were it to say 'Go—we've had quite enough of you!' The old lady talked in a sweet feminine voice, and was very complimentary: I said there were others quite ready to take my place, but she rejoined that it was myself she wanted." (1304). On 19 February 1905, he wrote: "I was at Audience on the 15th and was well received but nothing special was said, except that the Emp. Dow. Said 'You are now acclimatised in China, and you had better stay where you are!'" (1453). On 21 May 1905, he wrote: "I saw the Minister Na Tung last Wednesday recurred to my desire to get away on leave: his reply was 'After what the Empress Dowager said (that I could not go), are you at it again?' I really don't know what to do, and, as far as I can learn here, the British Legation will oppose B's appointment, and, as the Chinese look to me to give them a quiet time, I am naturally perplexed. I want to hand over all work to the D.I.G. and yet can't do so with th[is] uncertainty ahead. I allow worry to trouble me as little as any man, but this state of affairs disturbs my stomach and at my age that is not good for health!" (1469). On 29 September 1907, he wrote: "China is going in for new methods, new measures, and new men, and it would be interesting to remain provided one was fit to take an acting part in the doings of the day; that, however, is not my cause and I ought to stop aside. So far I am told the Government will not hear of my departure" (1533). These writings are compiled in Sir Robert Hart's *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, eds. John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner, Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975).
- ⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1304.
- ⁴¹⁹ This is the book title of Juliet Bredon's biography of Hart.
- ⁴²⁰ Juliet Bredon, *Sir Robert Hart: the Romance of a Great Career* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1909), 229-230.
- ⁴²¹ Hart, 1304.
- ⁴²² *Ibid.*, 1347, 1437.
- ⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 1370-1.
- ⁴²⁴ Hart, *The I.G. in Peking*, 1180.
- ⁴²⁵ Sir Robert Hart, "These from the Land of Sinim:" *Essays on the Chinese Question* (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd, 1903), 21.
- ⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 21-24.
- ⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 49-51.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 49.

⁴³⁰ Bredon, 74.

⁴³¹ Pearl S. Buck, *Good Earth* (London: Mandarin, 1994), 30-32. The following is the excerpt about O-lan's remarkable endurance and strength:

[O-lan] was working beside [her husband Wang Lung] in the harvest field.... Together they cut the sheaves all day, bending and cutting with short-handled scythes.... She stopped and stood up then, her scythe dropped. On her face was a new sweat, the sweat, the sweat of a new agony.

'It is come,' she said. 'I will go into the house. Do not come into the room until I call. Only bring me a newly peeled reed, and slit it, that I may cut the child's life from mine.'

She went across the fields towards the house as though there were nothing to come When he reached the house he found his supper hot on the table and [his old father] eating. She had stopped in her labour to prepare them food! He said to himself that she was a woman such as is not commonly found. Then he went to the door of their room and he called out:

'Here is the reed!'

He waited, expecting that she would call out to him to bring it in to her. But she did not. She came to the door and through the crack her hand reached out and took the reed. She said no word

But Wang Lung stood listening at the door to those heavy animal pants. A smell of hot blood came through the crack, a sickening smell that frightened him. The panting of the woman within became quick and loud, like whispered screams, but she made no sound aloud. When he could bear no more and was about to break into the room, a thin, fierce cry came out and he forgot everything.

'Is it a man?' he cried importunately, forgetting the woman. The thin cry burst out again, wiry, insistent. 'Is it a man?' he cried again, 'tell me at least this - is it a man?'

And the voice of the woman answered as faintly as an echo, 'A man!'

⁴³² Pearl S. Buck, *Imperial Woman* (London: White Lion, 1977), 5.

⁴³³ Ibid., 6.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 69.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 325.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 73.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 325.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 432.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁴⁰ Pearl S. Buck, *My Several Worlds* (London: Methuen, 1955), 7. Buck frankly says: "When I think of that world of my early childhood, I remember the Empress Dowager was the central figure and one as familiar to me though I had seen her myself." What characteristic of Cixi made Buck so feel admired at the empress? Buck says that "[Cixi] was proud and wilful and her eyes could make anyone tremble."

⁴⁴¹ *Passim* in Pearl S. Buck, *The Child Who Never Grew* (Bath: Cedric Chivers Ltd., 1973).

⁴⁴² Pearl S. Buck, *A Bridge for Passing* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963), 167-8.

⁴⁴³ Buck, *Imperial Woman*, 197.

⁴⁴⁴ Charlotte Franken Haldane, *Last Great Empress of China* (London: Constable, 1965), 149.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 165.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 166.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 167.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁵⁰ Judith Adamson, *Charlotte Haldane: woman writer in a man's world* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 194-5.

⁴⁵¹ The whole interview, conducted in 2002, can be read at <http://www.semioticstreet.com/YOKO.html>.

⁴⁵² Yoko Ono, *Blueprint for A Sunrise* (LA: EMI-Capitol Entertainment Prop, 2001), CD.

⁴⁵³ Sterling Scagrove, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 12-3.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 197-272.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 316, 418.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 207-220.

⁴⁵⁷ Daniele Varè, *The Last of the Empresses, and Passing from the Old China to the New* (London: John Murray, 1936), 219.

Chapter Five:

⁴⁵⁸ More detail of Cixi's portraits can be read in Appendices D and F.

⁴⁵⁹ More detail of Cixi's photographs can be read in Appendix E.

⁴⁶⁰ John Plunkett, *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003), 144. John Plunkett says that the royal image went photographic from August 1860. It was then that John Edwin Mayall, a leading photographer on London's Regent Street, was permitted to publish his *Royal Album* which included fourteen *carte-de-visite* portraits of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their children.

⁴⁶¹ "China," *The Encyclopedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature*, 1876 ed.

⁴⁶² Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1924; Reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 23.

⁴⁶³ Sarah Pike Conger, *Letters from China: With Particular Reference to the Empress Dowager and the Women of China* (Chicago: the Lakeside Press, 1909), 240.

⁴⁶⁴ Der Ling, 91.

⁴⁶⁵ This is officially called Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

⁴⁶⁶ Irene E. Cortinovis, "China at the St Louis World's Fair," *Missouri Historical Review* 72, no. 1 (Oct, 1977): 60-61.

⁴⁶⁷ Conger, 247-8.

⁴⁶⁸ Derling, a daughter of Lord Yugen, entered the Court to be one of Cixi's ladies-in-waiting with her sister (Rongling) and mother from 1903 until 1905. More about her is in Footnote 82.

⁴⁶⁹ Der Ling, 91. Derling states, "I noticed that Her Majesty was somewhat shocked" when the request to be portrayed was made to her.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴⁷¹ Lydia Dan, a niece of Derling and of Xunling, in 1982 wrote an unpublished article, "The Unknown Photographer," explaining how Xunling took many photos of Cixi in the Palace and how the world has failed to recognize this important photographer. On her page 2, she states, "the royal assent [to be portrayed in oil by Katherine Carl] was given without protracted discussion with the Broad of Foreign Affairs." This article is kept in the Archives of the Smithsonian, in the FGAAMSG. Dan's letter making the same claim as the article "The Unknown Photographer" was published in "Hsün Ling, Photographer: Correspondence from Lydia Dan," *History of Photography* 8, no. 4 (Oct, 1984): 345.

⁴⁷² Der Ling, 96.

⁴⁷³ Dan, 2.

⁴⁷⁴ Hubert Vos, "Autobiographical Letter by Hubert Vos, written in October, 1911," *Hubert Vos Maastricht 1855-1935 Newport*, ed. István L. Széniássy, 11. In the autobiographical letter, he describes the whole process of how he could not reach Cixi in 1899 and how he could finally paint her in 1905 (Because English was not his mother language, he sometimes made grammatical or linguistic mistakes in writing English.): "...Tientsien, where it was my good fortune to get acquainted with one of the most charming men I ever met in my life, and who has always remained one of my very best friends. At that time, Colonel Norman Munthe, aide-de-camp to H. E. Yuan-Shi-Kai, viceroy of Pechili, was general instructor of the New Chinese Imperial Army.... He is at present General Munthe and at the head of the Custom House service of Tientsien, the seaport of Peking, and general adviser to the Chinese Government. He speaks, reads and writes Chinese.... If I came to a deadlock in my researches, he found a way to get me through.... He took me all the way inland to the principal Chinese military camp, strictly guarded, introduced me to H. E. Yuan-Shi-Kai and disposed him to sit for me for his portrait. He stayed with me in camp a whole week, in order to protect me against the anti-foreign feeling, very strong at that time, which was a few months before the boxer uprising. The sittings were in the morning, in the afternoon we used to play Poker with the Chinese army Doctor and another Chinese Secretary and interpreter, who were both graduates from American Universities, in the evening we dined officially in the Tsing-Li-Yamen, a dinner of thirty-three courses, with the military band playing outside, sometimes playing outside, sometimes playing Sousa marches, sometimes they gave us a great display of Chinese fireworks; and at night we barricaded ourselves securely in Mr. Munthe's little house with loaded revolvers and guns close at hand, for we felt, although the Chief was our friend, the common soldier might like to send us to Kingdom come. I tried very hard at that time to obtain the permission to paint the Emperor of the Empress Dowager, but the prejudice against being reproduced and the Emperor and the Emperor Dowager [ap]proach for a foreign to get even inside the Sacred city, far

less than to come in their august presence, made my quest nihil. I was warmly scconded by the principal Ministers of the different countries who sent memorials drawn up in Chinese by their Chinese Secretaries to the Court, saying that I was a foremost portrait painter in Europe, and that they were anxious that I should show the world the likeness of the great rulers of four hundred million people, etc., etc., it was of no avail. Mr. Knobel, the Minister of the Netherlands, and Mr. Conger, the Minister of the United States, to whom I was specially recommended as well as the English, German, French and Russian Ministers, with whom I was on very friendly terms, all did all they could, but did not succeed. It was when my friend, General Munthe, came with a letter from his Chief, Yuan-Shi-Kai, that the doors of the palace were partially opened and, thanks to the British Minister, Sir Claude McDonald, I obtained a few sittings from His Excell. Prince [Qing], the uncle of the Emperor and the 'Premier' of China. After my portrait was completed, I presented His Highness with a copy of my portrait. And it was several years later, when Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress Dowager, saw my portrait in Prince [Qing's] Palace, that she [relaxed] the protocol to allow me to come all the way back to China from New York (to where I had returned), to paint a life-sized full length portrait of Her Majesty for her Summer Palace." However, Vos does not mention how he met Li Hongzhang and painted his portrait.

⁴⁷⁵ Barbara Venman, "Dragons, Dummies, and Royals: China at American World's Fairs, 1876-1904," *Gateway Heritage* 17, No. 2 (fall 1996): 25.

⁴⁷⁶ Photographic portraits were first made in the imperial palace in 1844. Qiying, a Chinese governor of Guangdong and Guangxi and also in charge of trade with foreigners in five ports, received some photographs of a British ambassador Sir Henry Pottinger (1789-1856) and his wife and their daughter as diplomatic gifts during 1841-4. He was aware that giving personal photographic portraits was becoming a necessary diplomatic practice. Therefore, he had four photos of one pose of himself taken by French Jules Itier and the four copies were distributed to diplomats from Italy, Britain, America and Portugal when he went to Macao to sign a treaty with Monsieur Theodore Marie Melchior Joseph de Lagrene (1800-1862) in August 1844. After that, Qiying mentioned this photo experience in a written report that he gave to the Daoguang emperor. In the report, he called the photo as *xiao zhao*. (Above is from Shen Chen, et al., *History of Photography in China: 1840-1937* (Taipei: Photographer Publications, 1990), 29). This did not have any effect in the imperial Court. Later, after mid-nineteenth century, taking photos came into high favour with the princes, dukes and ministers of China. Chonghou, the vice-minister of the War Board, gave a compliment on it for "revealing image secrets covered for thousands of years." Chongshi, minister of the Punishment Board, also praised it in his poem: "Optics produces images through chemistry. The Westerners have unique ways of exploration. Owing to the magic of illustrating lens, the great land can no longer escape from reproduction." (Above quotations are from Ling Jing, *The Photographs of Cixi in the Collection of the Palace Museum* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 2002), 4-6). In addition, Yixin (Prince Gong), one of the Xianfeng emperor's brothers, invited John Thomason to take some photos for him. (Earlier, in November, 1860, Yixin, as a Signer of the Treaty of Beijing, was taken by Felice Beato who came to China as a semi-official photographer to follow the Anglo-French North China Expeditionary Force. He was a sad young man at that stage when China was defeated. At that time, he was taken reluctantly. Another brother of the Xianfeng emperor, Yixuan (Prince Chun), was also photographed in various years (from 1863 to 1889). In 1886, he presented photos which had been taken recently to the Guangxu emperor for him to see them. Despite some officials liking to have their photos taken, photographic portraiture still caught on only slowly inside the Imperial Palace. There is no record that Cixi saw those photographs.

⁴⁷⁷ Der Ling, 25.

⁴⁷⁸ About portraiture, Derling herself was confident that she herself was the crucial person to change Cixi's mind. After leaving the Forbidden City, Derling wrote four books, all about Cixi: *Two Years in the Forbidden City*; *Imperial Incenses*; *Kowtow*; *Old Buddha, Son of Heaven: a Life of the Emperor Kung-hsu* (all published in English). H. R. Trevor-Roper in his *Hermit of Peking: the Hidden Life of Sir Edmund Backhouse* questions Derling partly because she was a female whose writing was not entirely logical and intellectual, unlike male writing, and partly because she called herself as 'princess,' the title which Cixi never gave to her. To me, Derling's claim to be a princess shows that Derling was a little self-promoter. What she tried to do was promote herself as an important, clever, and smart reformer who contributed to removing Cixi's conservative ideas from the Court. Otherwise, her remarks in her books are most likely reliable, especially when she talked about the aesthetics of portraits. Her records of Cixi's attitude toward portraits and the process of Cixi being portrayed are highly valuable. Conger and Carl in their books also mentioned Derling's important role in Cixi's image making. There is no doubt that Derling was a significant contributor.

⁴⁷⁹ Der Ling, 98.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

⁴⁸¹ Dan, 2. Xunling was the second son of Lord Yugen, who served as Chinese ambassador in Japan (1895-8) and France (1899-1902) with third rank in Chinese bureaucratic hierarchy. He started learning his photography skill in Japan. It was Lady Yugen who recommended her son to Cixi by saying, "my elder son [Xunling] learned how to take pictures while we were in Japan. He has made it a hobby. He has been perfecting it for the last eight years...."

⁴⁸² Der Ling, 99-100.

⁴⁸³ Dan, 3.

⁴⁸⁴ In some of Cixi's photographs, there were some male eunuchs. Because their castration led to their feminization, they were no longer fully male.

⁴⁸⁵ Cixi increasingly liked to have photos taken. Her acceptance of photography did not involve any conflict – it was seemingly much easier than her acceptance of Western-style oil portraits. There are three possible reasons for that. First, she could have heard or discovered a little about it previously. The natural response to these photos in the corner of the room is that Cixi had seen or known photos before. Madame Plancon's gift was probably the one that gave Cixi the idea of having her own photo taken. Second, according to Carl, Cixi happily accepted photography because, the "precedent having been established, the idea of a representation of the Sacred Person of a Chinese Majesty being seen by the world have been accepted, the paintings of Her Majesty's first portrait not having been followed by the dire results that the Chinese had prophesied, the traditional prejudice was overcome." This is a crucial point. That her portrait's being viewed by the public in St Louis went successfully proved that all original worries about ill outcomes were unnecessary. The precedent became her back-up to let her carry on another further daring action, i.e. to be photographed. Third, when seeing Derling's photos, Cixi was already a sitter for Carl. In her mind, she made a comparison between photographs and oil portraits. Her immediate comment to Derling's photos was, "Why, they are all photographs of yourself, and are very much better than the picture you had painted. They are more like you." She found photos be 'better' and have 'more likeness' than oil portraits. She once expressed a dim view of oil portraits, "Such rough work I never saw in all my life." Concerning the nature of comparison, Carl remarks:

when [Cixi] saw how quickly the photograph was made of the portrait, and how satisfactory it was, she decided she would have the photographer try one of herself, and she was not one to stop at a single trial. After waiting sixty-eight years to see a counterfeit presentment of herself, I know she will now indulge this new fantasy of hers to its fullest extent (Carl, 305).

The new medium was easier, faster, and a more faithful reproduction, and seemed to confirm the old-fashioned nature of the painted portrait in oil that needs time-consuming sitting and laborious sketches which tired Cixi. That Cixi was keener about photography than oil portraits made her immediately change to the new art form – photographic portraits.

⁴⁸⁶ There are at least seven portraits showing Qianlong with the sacred image of a secular ruler. One (ink and colour on silk; 113.5 x 64 cm), painted around 1766, is located in Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M Sackler Gallery, Washington DC. This is the only imperial portrait of this kind existing outside China. The second (cotton; 108.5 x 63 cm), painted around 1766, is collected in PM, Beijing. This portrait was originally collected in Pule Temple, Chengde. The third (cotton; around 110 x 65 cm), painted around 1762 is now housed in Tibetan Autonomous Region, Potala Palace. The fourth (painted on silk; 108 x 62. cm) painted after 1755 is housed in PM, Beijing. This portrait was originally located in Puming Temple, Chengde. The fifth (around 110 x 60 cm) is collected in Yonghegong, Beijing. The sixth (painted on paper; 111 x 64.7 cm) painted around 1780 is collected in PM, Beijing. This portrait was originally collected in Xumiushou, Chengde. The seventh (painted on paper; 110 x 66 cm), painted around 1780 is collected in Yonghegong Temple, Beijing.

⁴⁸⁷ Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 113.

⁴⁸⁸ Michael Henss, "The Bodhisattva-Emperor: Tibeto-Chinese portraits of Sacred and Secular Rule in the Qing Dynasty Part I," *Oriental Art* 47, no. 2, (2001), 9.

⁴⁸⁹ Jan Stuart & Evelyn S. Rawski, *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits* (Washington, DC: FGAAMSG, 2001), 140.

⁴⁹⁰ Henss, 13.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹² Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung reign* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), 9.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 201

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁴⁹⁷ Here, I only discuss Qianlong's influence on portraits of Cixi acting as a Buddha of Mercy. However, in a portrait made by Mr Guan (Fig. 48), Cixi acts as a dignified Buddha of Mercy (also called the Bodhisattva Guanyin). There is another portrait of a Buddha of Mercy, which had been hung on the wall of Cixi's room, made by a female court painter, Xing Cijing, who was active during the Ming Dynasty (Fig. 56). Put together, the two figures in the two portraits look rather similar. For example, both wear a similar hood and dress; they have long hair spreading on their chests; their hands are folded in the same way; their hands are holding a string of rosary beads; they are rather podgy – with fat faces and double chins; they are standing on the waves of the sea; there is an easterly wind westwards since their dresses spread out in a westerly direction. These prove that Guan's portrait received a strong influence from Xing's which Cixi must have favoured very much since it was hung in her own room. It is likely that Cixi asked Guan to imitate this portrait. Besides this likely reason, there is also another one: in one famous play called *Mu dan ting* (牡丹亭) written by Tang Xianzu in 1598, in the twenty-sixth scene, a self-portrait of a girl Du Liniang shows not only a likeness of the girl, but also that of Buddha of Mercy (Xianzu 'Tang, "P'cony Pavilion: Selected Acts." in *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginning to 1911*, ed. & trans. Stephen Owen (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 892-6). Since this is a famous play and Cixi loves seeing plays so much, she probably also got inspiration from this idea.

⁴⁹⁸ Der Ling, *Imperial Incense* (London: Stanley Paul & Co. Ltd., 1934), 138-9.

⁴⁹⁹ Michael Henss, "The Bodhisattva-Emperor: Tibeto-Chinese portraits of Sacred and Secular Rule in the Qing Dynasty Part II," *Oriental Art* 47, no. 3, (2001), 80-81.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁰¹ Yi Jin & Yiling Sheng, *Wo zai ci xi shen bian de ri zi* (我在慈禧身邊的日子) (Taipei: Zhiku, 2001), 59. This book presents what Cixi's favourite maidservant Rong'er narrated to Professor Jin Yi about Cixi's life. Rong'er had served as pipe bearer and pipe lighter for Cixi for eight years. She concluded, "Cixi thought of herself as a Qianlong emperor in every way." There are several ways in which Cixi imitated Qianlong. First, Cixi in her later life liked to stay in Leshou Hall where Qianlong liked to stay during his retirement. Second, both of them specially improved the position of court painters. About this, Qianlong issued an edict, saying, "in the future, the person in the Ruyi Guan [Hall of Fulfilment of Wishes, where court painters lived there during Qing dynasty] should not be called "southern craftsmen" (*nan jiang*), but rather "painters" (*hua hua ren*)." *Huang chao wen xian tong kao* (皇朝文獻通考) also states that some painters such as Zhang Zongchang, Xu Yang, and Yang Ruilian were conferred by Qianlong with official titles. Similarly, Cixi also lifted the position of painters. The name "painter" (*hua hua ren*) was changed to "painter-scholar" (*hua shi*). Besides conferring on them official titles, she also offered them with a very high salary – highest for the court painters in Chinese history. Details can be read in the article (Ti Li, "cixi kuan hui hua ji gong yin nu hua jia" (慈禧款繪畫及宮掖女畫家)," *The National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art*, Feb. 1999, 92-99).

⁵⁰² Jing Hu ed., Vol. 1 of *Guo chao yuan hua lu* (國朝院畫錄) (Taipei: Mingwen, 1985), 219-296.

⁵⁰³ Henss, "The Bodhisattva-Emperor: Tibeto-Chinese portraits of Sacred and Secular Rule in the Qing Dynasty Part I," 5.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁰⁵ Henss, "The Bodhisattva-Emperor: Tibeto-Chinese portraits of Sacred and Secular Rule in the Qing Dynasty Part II," 79-80.

⁵⁰⁶ Lily Keeskes, "Photographs of Tz'u-Hsi in the Freer Gallery Archives," *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin*, no. 101 (Dec. 1993): 88.

⁵⁰⁷ Isaac Taylor Headland, *Court Life in China* (New York: F. H. Revell Co, 1909), 74.

⁵⁰⁸ Katharine A. Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 299.

⁵⁰⁹ Li Hongzhang was considered by John A. Logan, Jr., who was present at the coronation, as a distinguished foreign guest on the coronation day. Logon describes Li as a 'tall, delightful, entertaining, astute and polite' statesman. John A. Logan, Jr., *In Joyful Russia* (London: C. Arthur Pearson & Co., 1897), 157.

⁵¹⁰ Charlotte F. Haldane, *Last Great Empress of China* (London: Constable, 1965), 123.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁵¹² Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, 163-4.

⁵¹³ Sterling Scagrave, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 257.

⁵¹⁴ Carl, 277.

⁵¹⁵ In an exhibition *Nicholas and Alexandra: The Last Tsar and Tsarina* held in Royal Museum of Scotland during 14 July to 30 October, 2005, all her photos and portraits showed her exceptional beauty.

⁵¹⁶ Carl, 26.

In the firmament of the Son of Heaven
A brilliant new star has risen!
Supple as the neck of the swan
Is the charm of her graceful form.

From the firm contour of charming chin
Springs the faultless oval of her fair face,
Crowned by the harmonious arch
Of a broad and noble brow.

The stately profile, chiselled clear,
Is dominated by the pure line of noble nose
Straight and slender and singularly mobile,
Sensitive to all the impressions of the soul.

Dewy lips with gracious curves
Are the portals of a dainty mouth
Where often blooms the sweet flower
Of a most alluring smile.

Her face is lit by black and sparkling eyes,
Whose flames, in hours of ease,
With oblique caress, envelop and thrill
That happy mortal allowed to see.

When stern circumstance demands,
Her graceful form an attitude of firmness takes,
The soft glow of her brilliant eyes
Grows penetrating and holds one with proud authority.

O beauty Supreme! O brilliant Star
Shinning but for the Son of Heaven!
From thy glowing soul radiate
Love, daring, hope, intellect, ambition, power!

⁵¹⁷ Seagrave, 416. Seagrave had a chance to meet Hubert Vos' grandson, Mr Hubert D. Vos in Santa Barbara, California, before 1992 and read Vos' letters. Seagrave quotes some part of his diary about Vos' encounter to Cixi and how he portrayed her. This is a valuable diary for historians who would like to understand Vos' portraits on Cixi. However, seeing a file about the portrait of Cixi made by Vos in Archives of the FM, Harvard University in Feb, 2004, I found that some documents state that the FM tried to contact Vos' grandson by mail but the mail was sent back to the Museum. The reason remains unknown. So today, contact with Vos' descendants is difficult.

⁵¹⁸ Lady Susan Townley, *My Chinese Note Book* (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), 280.

⁵¹⁹ Headland, 105.

⁵²⁰ "Postscript: the Reginamania," *Spectator*, 6 Jan. 1838, 9.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

⁵²² At that time, there were two kinds of retouching. One is 'technical,' intending to hide imperfections on negative with slightly gummed India ink; the other is 'artistic,' radically altering the print itself by using pencils, brushes, Indian ink, watercolours or pastels. See Quentin Bajac, *The Invention of Photography* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002), 63.

⁵²³ Why Queen Victorian's image as a melancholic old widow was so well-favoured is explained in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Chapter Six:

⁵²⁴ Norbert Schneider, *The Art of the Portraits: Masterpieces of European Portrait Painting* (London: Taschen, 1999), 20.

⁵²⁵ Katherine Augusta Carl (also Catherine, Kate) was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in around 1865 and died in 1938. She was an oil painter, watercolorist and writer in Paris, China, London, Algeria, and New York City. Besides being commissioned by Cixi to paint her portrait that was sent to St Louis for exhibition

in 1904 (and also being awarded with Order of Double Dragon and Manchu Flaming Pearl, Third Class of Second Division, by Cixi), the painter studied at Académie Julian with Courtois, Bouguereau and Laurens in Paris in 1880s (women were not allowed to study at the École des Beaux-Arts until 1897). Her works were once exhibited in Salon des Artistes Français in Paris during 1883 to 1893 (winning some awards), Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts from 1893, Exposition Universelle in 1900 (having honorable mention), Art Institute of Chicago in 1897 and 1899, and Tennessee Centennial 1897. These details about Carl's career are from the following books: Chris Petteys' *Dictionary of Women Artists: an international dictionary of women artists born before 1900* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1985), 121. Peter Hastings Falk's *The Annual Exhibition Record of the Art Institute of Chicago 1888-1950* (Madison: Sound View Press, 1990), 187.

⁵²⁶ Carl painted four portraits of Cixi, all of which were under Cixi's supervision. About these four portraits, see Appendix D. Vos painted two portraits of Cixi. One is an 'idealistic' portrait which was also made under her supervision. The other one was not under her supervision. About these two portraits, see Appendix F. Xunling took many photographs of her. About these photos, see Appendix E.

⁵²⁷ In Scottish photographer John Thomson's (1837-1921) record of what a Chinese photographer, A-hung, told him in 1872, he explains why Westerners' expectations were different from Chinese 'elite' people's minds in respect to representation in photographs. The following is Thomson's record:

A-hung: You foreigners always wish to be taken off the straight or perpendicular. It is not so with our men of taste; they must look straight at the camera so as to show their friends at a distance they have two eyes and two ears. They won't have shadows about their faces, because, you see, shadow forms no part of the face. It isn't one's nose, or any other feature; therefore it should not be there. The camera, you see, is defective. It won't work up to that point; it won't recognise our law of art.

Thomson: [If] you had no shadow, the face would be a blank.

A-hung: Oh, no; our artists know better, for they give you the features complete, without the shadow.

A-hung's 'law of art' is the same sense as what I try to explain here. (This dialogue can be found in "Hong-Kong Photographers" in *British Journal of Photography* 19, no. 656 (1872): 569.)

⁵²⁸ Showing the two sides of hands and its implications was discussed in "Outdoors as a space for face-to-face contact with the public" of Chapter 1.

⁵²⁹ Katherine A. Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 238.

⁵³⁰ In Qing period imperial ancestral portraits, all the faces are portrayed very realistically. In the ancestral portrait of Cixi, the face shows her old look.

⁵³¹ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 19.

⁵³² Cixi's eyes are unlike Cixi's co-Regent and also her rival Cian who has the attractive eyes with curved almond shape and with the outer corners higher than the inside corners that are erotic to the men.

⁵³³ Sterling Seagrave, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 416. In Vos' version, Cixi's eyes go up too much so that her eyes make her look erotic and sexy.

⁵³⁴ Puyi, *From Emperor to Citizens: the Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi* [*Wo de jian ban shen* (我的前半身)], trans. W. J. F. Jenner (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1964-5), 9.

⁵³⁵ Isaac Taylor Headland, *Court Life in China* (New York: F. H. Revell Co, 1909), 109.

⁵³⁶ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 161.

⁵³⁷ Seagrave, 416.

⁵³⁸ Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "The Migration of Forms in the Art of the Jesuit Missions in Japan and China," *Oriental Art* 47, no. 5 (2001): 9-10.

⁵³⁹ The copy of *the Arte of Limning*, 1624, at special collection in Edinburgh University.

⁵⁴⁰ Charles Saumarez Smith, *The National Portrait Gallery* (London: NPG, 2000), 44.

⁵⁴¹ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 214.

⁵⁴² Carl quotes a Chinese poet's poem depicting the beauty of Cixi at age of 25. Cixi's appearance at twenty-five is what she always remembered and also wanted to be remembered. The poem is in the Footnote 510.

⁵⁴³ Seagrave, 416. Hubert Vos also further comments that Cixi liked to remember being 25 because at that time she gave birth to an heir and then Xiangfeng's death brought about her increasing political power – her glorious past.

⁵⁴⁴ Lin Shuxin, *Costumes of the Ch'ing Dynasty: A Display of the Beauty of Embroidery* (Taipei: NMH, 1988), 74. This kind of high shoes is called "flower-vase shoes." Such shoes contains very high heel on the centre of the shoe base. Its height could reach as high as 14.5 cm.

⁵⁴⁵ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 35.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁵⁴⁷ Lady Susan Townley, *My Chinese Note Book* (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), 278. One time, when standing with Cixi, Lady Susan found Cixi much shorter than her. She depicts, "When we [Lady Susan and Miss Russell] had eaten our fill the Empress-Dowager [Cixi] conducted us to the garden, leaning the first part of the way upon my arm and laughing at the comparative difference in our heights, for she barely reached to my shoulder (my height is 5 ft. 8 in.), though she wore Manchu shoes with a wooden heel under the centre of the foot at least three inches high."

⁵⁴⁸ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 280.

⁵⁴⁹ Cixi's eyes gaze at us. Her imperial pose and undoubted status would have stirred up feelings of awe, fear, reverence and worship on the part of her subjects. This is the style of other Qing dynasty Empresses. This portrait formed part of a collection in the Temple behind the Coal Hill of Beijing – the place where the Qing Dynasty's ancestral portraits of its monarchs and their wives and concubines were brought together for the worship of future generations. This collection was not open to the public, but only to Qing royal imperial families.

⁵⁵⁰ John E. Vollmer, *Ruling from the Dragon Throne: Costume of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)* (Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press, 2002), 125.

⁵⁵¹ Carl, *The St Louis Republic*.

⁵⁵² E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 16th ed. (London: Phaidon, 2001), 514.

⁵⁵³ Vollmer, 129.

⁵⁵⁴ Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1924; Reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 86.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.* After Cixi found the yellow robe was not becoming to her, she ordered that her different gowns with different colours should be brought in and selected one.

⁵⁵⁶ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 137.

⁵⁵⁷ Der Ling, *Two Years*, 85.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁹ Der Ling, *Old Buddha: the Empress Tzu Hsi* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd., 1929), 24.

⁵⁶⁰ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 35.

⁵⁶¹ Details can be read in the Section "The palace as a setting for politics and diplomacy" in Chapter 1.

⁵⁶² Black signifies constancy (her famous motto *Semper Eadem*, translated as 'always the same', also shows her wish to stress constancy); white, virginity – together, they stand for perpetual and unsullied virginity.

⁵⁶³ The topic of Cixi's widowhood is dealt with at length in Chapter 4.

⁵⁶⁴ Der Ling, *Two Years*, 82.

⁵⁶⁵ Hung Wu, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1996), 215.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁵⁶⁷ Der Ling, *Two Years*, 140. Cixi said to Derling: "After all the trouble we have had over this picture, I am afraid it is not going to be anything very wonderful. I notice that the pearls in my cape are painted in different colors; some look white, some pink, while others are green. You tell her about it."

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁹ Hui Yu, "Collaborative Painting at the Qianlong Court," *The Qianlong Emperor: Treasures from the Forbidden City* (Edinburgh: NMS, 2002), 169; Schneider, 109.

⁵⁷⁰ At the last stage, Carl told Cixi in person. Cixi immediately gave permission to have a window made in the ceiling. Before that, Carl asked eunuchs to pass the message to Cixi. The message seemed not to reach Cixi.

⁵⁷¹ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 7.

⁵⁷² Before the Qing dynasty, the yellow colour had become a noble colour. At Court, the yellow robe was sometimes regarded as formal dress, and sometimes not. The situation was flexible. But under the Qing dynasty, the rules became very strict. The yellow robe was taken very seriously and promoted to be the main imperial dress. The various tones of yellows indicated different statuses during the Qing period: the Emperor, Empress, Empress Dowager, 1st-rank Consort wore robes with *ming huang* ('bright yellow'); Heir Apparent and wife of heir, with *heng huang* ('orange yellow'); 2nd and 3rd Consorts and Imperial Sons, *jin huang* ('golden yellow'); 4th-rank Consort, wives and daughters of imperial sons and 1st-2nd-rank princes and 1st-2nd-rank princesses, *xiang se* ('tawny yellow'). Jan Stuart & Evelyn S. Rawski, *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits* (Washington, DC: FFAAMSG, 2001), 132.

- ⁵⁷³ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 9.
- ⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁵⁷⁵ Shanpu Yu, "cixi de liang ba tou he gao de xie," *The Forbidden City*, no. 68 (1992): 35.
- ⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 238.
- ⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 237.
- ⁵⁷⁸ Frederic C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 197-214.
- ⁵⁷⁹ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 237.
- ⁵⁸⁰ Der Ling, *Old Buddha*, 289.
- ⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 290-1.
- ⁵⁸² Towney, 284-5.
- ⁵⁸³ Der Ling, *Old Buddha*, 293.
- ⁵⁸⁴ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 238.
- ⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸⁶ Zi Zhuang, *The Book of Chuang Tzu*, trans. Martin Palmer (London: Arkana, 1996), 147. In the chapter called "Season of Autumn Floods," Zhuang Zi states, "In the south there is a bird known as the Young Phoenix, do you know about this, Sir? This bird, it arises in the Southern Ocean and it never rests on anything except the begonia tree, never eats except the fruit of the melia azederach and never drinks except from springs of sweet water."
- ⁵⁸⁷ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 238.
- ⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ⁵⁸⁹ "Phoenix." *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 2002 ed.
- ⁵⁹⁰ Ying Han, *Han shi wai zhuan* (韓詩外傳), Ch. 8, Vol. 8, which can be read at <http://cls.hs.yzu.edu.tw/ORIG/> (Chinese Poetry website).
- ⁵⁹¹ These nine qualities are *qi* (奇), *gu* (古), *tou* (透), *jing* (靜), *run* (潤), *yuan* (圓), *qing* (清), *yun* (勻), and *fang* (芳).
- ⁵⁹² Dunyi Zhou, "ai lian shi," (愛蓮說), which can be read at <http://cls.hs.yzu.edu.tw/ORIG/> (Chinese Poetry website).
- ⁵⁹³ Der Ling, *Two Years*, 15.
- ⁵⁹⁴ *She da sheng lun shi* (攝大乘論釋) (Reprint, Taipei: Zhufeng Publisher, 2003), 67.
- ⁵⁹⁵ *Wen shu shi li jing lu jing dao men pin* (文殊師利淨住經道門品) (Reprint, Taipei: Zhufeng Publisher, 2003), 150.
- ⁵⁹⁶ Der Ling, *Two Years*, 166.
- ⁵⁹⁷ Der Ling, *Old Buddha*, 184.
- ⁵⁹⁸ Hung Wu, 10.
- ⁵⁹⁹ Hung Wu, 21.
- ⁶⁰⁰ Susan H. Bush, "China: Painting Theory and Criticism: Critical Biographies," in Vol. 6 of *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996), 825.
- ⁶⁰¹ Maggie Bickford, "China: Painting: Bamboo, plum and ink-flowers," in Vol. 6 of *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996), 807.
- ⁶⁰² Mary Tregear's *Chinese Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 97.
- ⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, 824. Su shi in the Song period coined the term *shi ren hua* ('scholars' painting') to apply to the paintings of educated men. Then, Dong Qichang coined another term *wen ren zhi hua* ('literary men's painting') to refer to the ink landscape of noted scholars who were also amateur painters. Now, *wen ren zhi hua* or *wen ren hua* is generally used in Su Shi's broader meaning, which I prefer to translate it as 'intellectual painting' (although Bush translates it as 'literati painting'). So, *wen ren hua jia* should be translated as 'intellectual painter.'
- ⁶⁰⁴ The painting is housed in the NPM, Taipei (<http://www.npm.gov.tw/english/exhibition/lig9910/8.htm>).
- ⁶⁰⁵ Ann Barrott Wicks, "China: Literati painters and instructions," in Vol. 6 of *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996), 820. Wicks remarks that intellectual paintings became dominant in the Qing imperial painting academy.
- ⁶⁰⁶ Ye Fan, *Hou han shu* (後漢書) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965), 904-5.
- ⁶⁰⁷ Petra Klose, "China: Imperial," in Vol. 6 of *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996), 681.
- ⁶⁰⁸ Hung Wu, 12.
- ⁶⁰⁹ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 294.
- ⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 295.
- ⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 171-2.

⁶¹² Townley, 280.

⁶¹³ Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China*, 288

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Hung Wu, 224-231.

⁶¹⁶ Yucheng Wu, *Zhong guo de men wen hua* (中國的門文化) (Tianjin: Tianjin People Press, 2004), 50.

⁶¹⁷ Colin M. Selph, ed., "Portrait of Empress Dowager of China Now in Art Palace World's Fair," *World's Fair Bulletin* 5, no. 9 (July 1904): 28. Mark Bennett, ed., *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (St Louis: Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1905), 502. LPE, *Official Catalogue of Exhibitors: Universal Exposition, St Louis, U.S.A. 1904: Division of Exhibits* (St Louis: Official Catalogue Company, 1904), 50. The portrait was exhibited against the east wall of the Gallery 18 in 1904. The Gallery 18 (Fig. 102) is currently Room 214 (for French Impressionism) of the SLAM (Fig. 103).

⁶¹⁸ Yucheng Wu, 105.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid, 256.

⁶²⁰ Jan Fontein, "China," Vol. 3 of *Encyclopedia of World Art*, eds. Robert W. Crandall et al. (London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), 426-8.

⁶²¹ Ibid. The arrangement of all these gates in the Forbidden City can be seen in Appendix C.

⁶²² The chapter "tian wen zhi" ("天文志; records of astronomy) of the ancient book – *Jin shu* (晉書; *Book of Jin*) – states, "Heavenly Palace is surrounded by fifteen stars. Among fifteen stars, seven stars stand for Western barbarians; eight stars stand for Eastern barbarians. On the north of the Plough, there is *zi wei* (紫微; Pole Star) Great Emperor sits." The Chinese pronunciation of the Forbidden City is *zi jin cheng* (紫禁城) that means Purple Forbidden City literally. The palace complex lies to the north of *Tianan men* (the Gate of Heavenly Peace). Emperors sit in the north, facing the south.

⁶²³ Yucheng Wu, 219.

Chapter Seven:

⁶²⁴ Katherine A. Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 3.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 89.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 294.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 294-6.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 295.

⁶²⁹ Carl, 297-8.

⁶³⁰ C. F. Haldane, *Lust Great Empress of China* (London: Constable, 1965), 240.

⁶³¹ Barbara E. Scott Fisher, "The Portrait of an Empress," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 Jun. 1931, 8. Fish wrote this article in the ProQuest Historical Newspaper after interviewing Katherine Carl.

⁶³² Carl, 297-8. This date remains in question. Carl says that this portrait arrived in St Louis on 19 June, 1904. However, another record shows that "June 14th Mr. Francis A. Carl, Vice-Commissioner of the Imperial Chinese Commission, a brother of Miss Kate Carl, the American artist who painted the picture, superintended the work of placing the portrait on its pedestal." Quoted in Colin M. Selph, ed., "Portrait of Empress Dowager of China Now in Art Palace World's Fair," *World's Fair Bulletin* 5, no. 9 (July 1904): 28.

⁶³³ Ibid., 299.

⁶³⁴ Selph, 28.

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ This letter was written by Carl to Professor Halsey C. Ives, in charge in Department of Art, on 2nd January, 1904. The whole letter is collected in Archives, SLAM (B.1, F.35). A photocopy can be seen in Appendix G-2.

⁶³⁷ "Prince Pu Lun Arrives Today," *The St. Louis Republic*, 28 Apr. 1904, unpagged.

⁶³⁸ Ibid. Something about the crown prince listening to music of a pianist Charles Kunkel is recounted in "Prince Pu Lun Enjoys Ragtime," *The St. Louis Republic*, 9 May 1904, 8.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ N. D. Thompson, "China's Debut at a World's Fair," *The Forest City* 1, no.1 (1904): 19.

⁶⁴¹ Sue Bradford Edwards, "Imperial East Meets Democratic West," *Gateway Heritage* 17, no. 2 (fall 1996): 41.

⁶⁴² Ibid., 35. Hop Alley was located off the east side of Eighth Street between Market and Walnut.

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁶⁴⁵ N. D. Thompson, "The Imperial Japanese Commission," *The Forest City* 1, no.2 (1904): 29.

⁶⁴⁶ The Department of Art includes three Sections: the American (United States) Section, a section for each Foreign Country which is represented by a Government Commission or by a National Committee, and a

section comprising exhibits from Private Collection, and the works of artists of non-represented Foreign Countries.

⁶⁴⁷ Mark Bennett ed., *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (St Louis: Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1905), 483.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁹ Lois Marie Fink, *American at the Paris Salons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xiv-xix.

⁶⁵⁰ Details of Katherine Carl's career can be read in Footnote 519.

⁶⁵¹ Laura R. Prieto, *At Home in the Studio: the Professionalization of Women Artists in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 7-11.

⁶⁵² Ellen G. Miles, "Fame and the Public Self in American Portraiture, 1725-1865," *A Brush with History: Paintings from the National Portrait Gallery* (Washington: National Portrait Gallery, 2001), 32-3.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁵⁴ C. Edwards Lester, *The Artists of America: A Series of Biographical Sketches of American Artists; with Portraits and Designs on Steel* (New York: Baker & Scribner, 1846), 43.

⁶⁵⁵ Miles, 24.

⁶⁵⁶ Bennett, 506-7.

⁶⁵⁷ Carolyn Kinder Carr, "Painters, Patrons, and the Changing Face of American Portraiture, 1865-1999," *A Brush with History: Paintings from the National Portrait Gallery* (Washington: National Portrait Gallery, 2001), 41.

⁶⁵⁸ David R. Francis, *The Universal Exposition of 1904* (St Louis: LPE Co., 1913), 317.

⁶⁵⁹ The *List of our Exhibits at World's Fair Palace of Liberal Arts* is collected in Archives, SLAM (B.11, F.55). A photocopy can be seen in Appendix G-4.

⁶⁶⁰ Francis, 598.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 373.

⁶⁶² Bennett, 496-7. For their design of the Chinese Government pavilion, Atkinson and Dallas were awarded a commemorative gold medal and diploma. For original objects of art workmanship, gold medals went to Chun Kwan Kee and Shen Saho An Shoo Kee and silver medals to Shu Lien Chi and Lee Chin Chin. They were the only winners for Chinese items in the exhibition.

⁶⁶³ Barbara Venman, "Dragons, Dummies, and Royals: China at American World's Fairs, 1876-1904," *Gateway Heritage* 17, no. 2 (fall 1996): 26.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁶⁵ Colin M. Selph, ed., "China's Display," *World's Fair Bulletin* 5, no. 6 (Apr. 1904): 56.

⁶⁶⁶ Venman, 19.

⁶⁶⁷ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 35-6.

⁶⁶⁸ More detail of Qing 'laws of art,' gates and lions can be read in Chapter 6.

⁶⁶⁹ Venman, 29.

⁶⁷⁰ It is notable that, in many newspaper and magazine articles about the LPE, the sitter, Empress Dowager Cixi, was mistakenly called 'Empress Dowager An.'

⁶⁷¹ "China at the St Louis World's Fair," *Missouri Historical Review* 72, no. 1 (October, 1904): 64.

⁶⁷² "Chinese Empress's Painter Arrives," *The St. Louis Republic*, 6 Sep. 1904, 6.

⁶⁷³ Sterling Seagrave, *Dragon Lady: the Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (London: MacMillan, 1992), 415. Seagrave had a chance to meet Hubert Vos' grandson, Mr Hubert D. Vos in Santa Barbara, California, and to read Vos' letters, some of which deal with his encounter with Cixi and how he portrayed her (Luckily, Seagrave himself quotes the important part in his book.). These are valuable for historians who would like to understand Vos' portraits on Cixi. However, seeing a file about the portrait of Cixi made by Vos in Archives of the FM, Harvard University in Feb, 2004, I found that some documents state that the FM tried to contact Vos' grandson by mail but the mail was sent back to the Museum. The reason remains unknown. So today, contact with Vos' descendants is apparently extremely difficult.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 415.

⁶⁷⁵ Frank Parker Stockbridge, ed., *The Art Gallery of the Universal Exposition: Illustrated with Three Hundred Photo-Engravings of Paintings and Sculpture* (St Louis: Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1905), 31.

⁶⁷⁶ Bennett, 502.

⁶⁷⁷ Colin M. Selph, ed., "Art," *World's Fair Bulletin* 6, no. 1 (Nov. 1904): 3.

⁶⁷⁸ Carr, 47.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 47-8.

⁶⁸⁰ Carl, 299.

⁶⁸¹ The history of the LPE portrait of Cixi made by Katherine Carl can be read in Appendix D.

⁶⁸² Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the China he Lost* (London: the Free Press, 2003), 490-505.

⁶⁸³ Seagrave, 415.

⁶⁸⁴ More details can be read in Appendix F.

⁶⁸⁵ Working under Cixi's scrutiny, Carl and Vos, who had a similar attitude to Cixi's examination of their work, did not feel satisfied with the portraits that they made but did not argue with Cixi while making the portraits. Basically, the relationship superficially maintained maximal harmony. However, they had different reactions and attitudes behind Cixi's back. Carl never did any portraits of Cixi again after leaving China. But Vos did one 'realistic' portrait of Cixi after his return to America. Away from Cixi's control, Vos' other portrait looks highly realistic with Cixi looking her real age – seventy. Thus Vos arrived later at his 'disloyal', negative and destructive portrayal of Cixi. From the different attitudes of the two artists, it is clear that, although much troubled, Carl did not feel like being disloyal to Cixi by making a portrait that Cixi would not like. Carl had sympathy for Cixi.

⁶⁸⁶ Seagrave, 97.

⁶⁸⁷ For example, Emily MacFarquhar's "The Dowager Got a Bad Rap" published in *The New York Times Book Review* (3 May 1992), 12; John Fraser's "The Wicked Witch of the East" published in *Saturday Night* (June 1993), 10-11.

⁶⁸⁸ Lily Kecskes, "Photographs of Tz'u-Hsi in the Freer Gallery Archives," *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin*, no. 101 (Dec. 1993): 91.

⁶⁸⁹ In Vos' letter to his family, he writes that he "saw a photograph taken by [a] Japanese photographer." before he went to the Imperial Court to meet Cixi. He also explains that he got the photo "on a secret loan from the Dutch minister [which now means ambassador]." Seagrave, 415.

⁶⁹⁰ Sarah Pike Conger, *Letters from China: with Particular Reference to the Empress Dowager and the Women of China* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), 352.

⁶⁹¹ Seagrave, 97.

⁶⁹² Colin M. Selph, ed., *World's Fair Bulletin* 6, no. 2 (Dec. 1904): 44-45.

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A

Glossary

Ordered alphabetically

A

<i>ai lian shuo</i>	愛蓮說
<i>ai lian tang</i>	愛蓮堂
Ai Qimeng	艾啓蒙
Alute	阿魯特
An Dehai	安德海
An Deyi	安德義
<i>an xi guo</i>	安息國
<i>ao tu</i>	凹凸

B

Bai Juyi	白居易
<i>bai miao</i>	白描
Ban Chao	班昭
Ban Gu	班固
<i>bei lou shi</i>	碑樓式
Beijing	北京
<i>bian e</i>	匾額
Bochen	波臣

C

Cao Shou	曹壽
----------	----

<i>cao shu</i>	草書
Cao Xueqin	曹雪芹
<i>ce</i>	策
<i>chang</i>	常
<i>chang yi</i>	常衣
Changsha	長沙
Changzhi	長治
<i>chao fu</i>	朝服
<i>chao gua</i>	朝掛
<i>chao guan</i>	朝冠
<i>chao pao</i>	朝袍
<i>chao qun</i>	朝裙
<i>chao zhu</i>	朝珠
<i>che</i>	側
Chen Hongshou	陳洪綬
<i>Cheng guang men</i>	承光門
<i>cheng ming dian</i>	承明殿
<i>cheng zhi zhong shen</i>	稱制終身
Chengde	承德
Chiang Kai-shek	蔣介石
<i>chuan shen</i>	傳神
<i>chuan zhen</i>	傳真

<i>chui lian ting zheng</i>	垂簾聽政
Chun, Prince	醇親王 (奕(言)𣎵)
<i>chun xiao ge tian</i>	純孝格天
<i>ci</i>	慈
<i>Ci xi duan kang yi zhao yu zhuang cheng shou gong qin xian chong xi</i>	慈禧端康頤昭豫莊誠壽恭欽獻崇熙
Cian	慈安
Cixi (Tzu-hsi, or Tz'u-Hsi)	慈禧
<i>cun ca</i>	皴擦
Cun, Prince	惇親王 (奕詝)

D

<i>Da qing guo</i>	大清國
<i>Da qing guo ci xi huang tai hou</i>	大清國慈禧皇太后
Daoguang, Emperor	道光皇帝
<i>de</i>	德
Derling (or Der Ling)	德齡
<i>dian</i>	殿
<i>Dian shi zhai hua bao</i>	點石齋畫報
Du Gen	杜根
<i>Duan men</i>	端門

E

<i>Er ya</i>	爾雅
--------------	----

F

<i>fa</i>	闕
<i>fa jie</i>	法界
<i>fa qu xian xian yin</i>	法曲獻仙音
Fan Ye	范曄
<i>fang</i>	芳
<i>feng shui</i>	風水
<i>fu</i>	福

G

<i>gao men kan</i>	高門檻
Gaozong	高宗
Gaozu	高祖
<i>gong</i>	宮
Gong, Prince	恭親王
<i>gu</i>	古
Gu Kaizhi	顧愷之
<i>gu ming ba da chen</i>	顧命八大臣
<i>gua men bian</i>	掛門匾
<i>guang xu jia chen nian gong hui</i>	光緒甲辰年恭繪
Guangxu, Emperor	光緒皇帝
Guanyin	觀音
<i>gui fan</i>	規範
<i>Guo chao yuan hua lu</i>	國朝院畫錄

<i>guo shi</i>	國師
H	
Han	漢族
Han Gan	韓幹
<i>Han shi wai zhuan</i>	韓詩外傳
He Qingtai	賀清泰
He Ronger	何榮兒
<i>hong ran</i>	烘染
Hongli	弘歷
<i>Hou han shu</i>	後漢書
<i>hu li jing</i>	狐狸精
<i>Hu tong guan</i>	虎通關
Hua Guan	華冠
<i>hua hua ren</i>	畫畫人
<i>hua shi</i>	畫士
Huang Shen	黃慎
Huangdi	黃帝
Huizheng	惠征
Hunan	湖南
<i>huo gua fu</i>	活寡婦

J

Ji Huang	嵇璜
<i>ji le</i>	極樂

Jia Baoyu	賈寶玉
<i>jiang jun men</i>	將軍門
Jiang Shaowen	姜紹聞
Jianhe	建和 (東漢桓帝的年號)
Jiaqing, Emperor	嘉慶皇帝
Jie	桀
<i>jie xiao ke jian</i>	節孝可見
<i>Jin shu</i>	晉書
Jin Tingbiao	金廷標
Jin Yi	金易
<i>jing</i>	靜
<i>jiu ku jiu nan guan shi yin pu sa</i>	救苦救難觀世音菩薩
<i>jun zi</i>	君子

K

Kang Guangren	康廣仁
Kang Youwei	康有為
Kangxi, Emperor	康熙皇帝
<i>kong meng si xiang</i>	孔孟思想
<i>kong que dong nan fei</i>	孔雀東南飛
<i>Kong zi jia yu</i>	孔子家語
<i>Kun ning men</i>	坤寧門
Kuomintang (or KMT)	國民黨

L

<i>lan</i>	蘭
Lan-er	蘭兒
Lang Shining	郎世寧
<i>le</i>	勒
Li Dou	李斗
Li Gonglin	李公齡
Li Hongzhang (or Li Hung-chang)	李鴻章
<i>Li ji</i>	禮記
Li Jie	李誠
Li Lienying	李連英
Li Rihua	李日華
<i>li xue tang</i>	立雪堂
<i>liang ba tou</i>	兩把頭
Liang Kai	梁楷
Lin Xu	林旭
Liu Guandao	劉貫道
Liu Guangdi	劉光第
Liu Qi	劉奇
<i>liu yao</i>	柳腰
<i>liu yao hua rui jiao yan li</i>	柳腰花蕊嬌豔力
<i>liu yao qing</i>	柳腰輕
Liu Yong	柳永

Longyu	隆裕
Lu, Mt.	廬山
<i>lue</i>	掠
<i>Luo yang jia lan ji</i>	洛陽迦藍記

M

Mao Zedong	毛澤東
<i>men fa</i>	門閥
<i>men kan</i>	門檻
<i>men mei</i>	門楣
Mencius	孟子
Ming dynasty	明朝
<i>mo gu</i>	墨骨
Muzong, Emperor	穆宗

N

<i>nan jiang</i>	南匠
Nanjing	南京
<i>niao tou men</i>	烏頭門
<i>nu</i>	努
<i>Nu fan</i>	女範
<i>nu jie</i>	女誠
<i>Nu lun yu</i>	女論語
<i>Nu shi</i>	女史
<i>Nu xiao jing</i>	女孝經

<i>Nu xue</i>		女學
	O	
Ou Yangxiu		歐陽修
	P	
Pan Tingzhang		潘廷璋
Puning Temple		普寧寺
Puyi		溥儀
	Q	
<i>qi</i>		奇
<i>Qian qin men</i>		乾清門
Qianlong, Emperor (or Ch'ien-lung)		乾隆皇帝
<i>qing</i>		清
Qing, Prince		慶親王
Qing dynasty (or Ching dynasty)		清朝
Qiu Ying		仇英
Qiying		耆英
<i>que</i>		闕
	R	
<i>re xin gong yi</i>		熱心公益
Rehe		熱河
Ren Xiong		任熊
Ren Xun		任薰
Ren Yi		任頤

Rong-er	榮兒
Rongling	容齡
Ronglu	榮祿
<i>run</i>	潤
S	
Shandong	山東
Shang	商
Shanxi	陝西
Shen Shao	沈韶
<i>Shen wu men</i>	神武門
Shen Yiling	沈義羚
Shen Zongxian	沈宗騫
Shensheng Huangdi	神聖皇帝
<i>shi que ming</i>	石闕銘
<i>shi zhe</i>	使者
<i>shou jin</i>	手巾
<i>shu men e</i>	署門額
<i>Shun zhen men</i>	順貞門
<i>Shi ji</i>	史記
<i>Shi shuo xin yu</i>	世說新語
<i>shou</i>	壽
Shun	舜
Shunzhi, Emperor	順治皇帝

Song dynasty	宋朝
Song Meiling (Madam Chiang)	宋美齡
Sun Yat-sen	孫逸仙 (孫中山)
Sushun	肅順

T

<i>Ta T'ung Shu</i>	大同書
<i>Tai he men</i>	太和門
Taiping	太平
Tan Tsitong	譚嗣同
Tang dynasty	唐朝
Tao Yuanming (or Tao Qian)	陶淵明 (陶潛)
<i>ti</i>	趨
<i>Tian an men</i>	天安門
<i>tian wen zhi</i>	天文志
<i>Tian yi men</i>	天一門
Tongzhi, Emperor	同治皇帝
<i>tou</i>	透

W

Waguan	瓦棺
<i>wai qi gan zheng</i>	外戚干政
Wang Zhenpeng	王振鵬
Wang Zhicheng	王致誠
<i>wen kui wu kui</i>	文魁武魁

<i>wen ren</i>	文人
<i>wen ren hua</i>	文人畫
<i>wen ren hua jia</i>	文人畫家
Wong Tonghe	翁同龢
Wu Daozi	吳道子
<i>Wu men</i>	午門
Wu Xingzeng	吳省曾
<i>wu xu liu jun zi</i>	戊戌六君子
Wuxu	戊戌
Wu Yung	吳永
X	
Xi'an	西安
Xianfeng, Emperor	咸豐皇帝
<i>xiao</i>	孝
Xiao Qin Xian Huanghou	孝欽顯皇后
<i>xie yi</i>	寫意
<i>xie zhen</i>	寫真
<i>xin</i>	心
Xing Cijing	刑慈靜
Xipo	西坡
Xuantong, Emperor	宣統皇帝
Xue Chengji	薛承基
<i>xun zheng</i>	訓政

Xunling (or Hstü Ling)	勛齡
Y	
Yan Hui	顏輝
Yan Liben	閻立本
<i>yang</i>	陽
Yang Rui	楊銳
Yang Shenxiu	楊深秀
<i>Yang xin men</i>	養心門
Yangzhou	楊州
Yao	堯
Yao Chengzu	姚承祖
Yi	懿 (懿嬪, 懿妃, 懿貴妃)
<i>Yi jing (or I Ching)</i>	易經
<i>yi zi mei</i>	一字眉
Yihe	奕詒
Yihe Yuan	頤和園
Yihuan	奕(言寰)
Yihui	奕謨
<i>yin</i>	陰
<i>yin zao fa shi</i>	營造法式
<i>yin zao fa yuan</i>	營造法原
<i>Ying yang men</i>	迎陽門
<i>ying ying miao wu yao zhi ruan</i>	英英妙舞腰肢軟

<i>yong zi ba fa</i>	永字八法
<i>yue shi guo</i>	月氏國
<i>yun ran</i>	暈染
Yixin	奕訢
Yizong	奕(言宗)
<i>yong</i>	永
Yongzheng, Emperor	雍正皇帝
<i>yuan</i>	圓
Yuan Baoer	袁寶兒
Yuan Shikai	袁世凱
<i>yue</i>	閱
Yugen	裕庚
<i>yun</i>	運
<i>yun</i>	勻
Yun Yuding (or Yun Yuting)	惲毓鼎
Yushi, Monk	語石和尚

Z

Zaichun	載淳
Zaitian	載湉
Zen Guofan	曾國藩
Zeng Jing (Zeng Bochen)	曾鯨(曾波臣)
Zhang Geng	張庚
Zhang Wo	張渥

Zhang Xian	張先
Zhang Yuanfu	張元福
Zhao Mengfu	趙孟頫
Zhao Zong	趙縱
<i>zhe</i>	礫
<i>Zhen shun men</i>	貞順門
<i>zheng da guang ming</i>	正大光明
<i>zhong sheng</i>	眾生
Zhou [1]	紂
Zhou [2]	周
Zhou Dunyi	周敦頤
Zhou Fang	周昉
<i>zhuo</i>	啄
<i>zi jin cheng</i>	紫禁城
<i>zui chui bian</i>	醉垂鞭
Zuo Zongtang	左宗堂

B

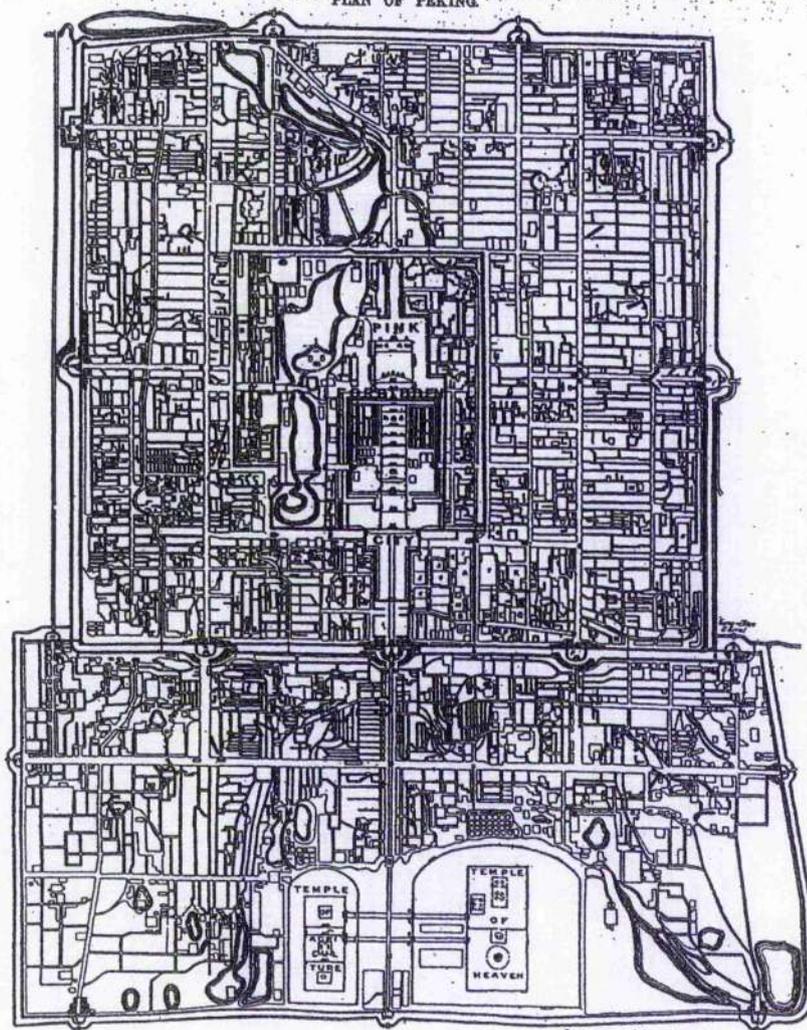
Emperors of the Qing Dynasty and the Years of their Reigns

	Life years	Reign years
The Shunzhi emperor	1638-1661	1643-1661
The Kangxi emperor	1654-1722	1661-1722
The Yongzheng emperor	1678-1735	1722-1735
The Qianlong emperor	1711-1799	1735-1795
The Jiaqing emperor	1760-1820	1796-1820
The Daoguang emperor	1782-1850	1821-1850
The Xianfeng emperor	1831-1861	1850-1861
The Tongzhi emperor	1856-1875	1861-1875
The Guangxu emperor	1871-1908	1875-1908
The Xuantong emperor	1906-1967	1908-1911

C

Map of the Forbidden City

THE TIMES, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1900.
PLAN OF PEKING.



FOREIGN BUILDINGS.

- A. British Legation
- B. Russian Legation
- C. American Legation
- D. Spanish Legation
- E. Japanese Legation
- F. German Legation
- G. French Legation
- H. Austrian Legation
- I. Italian Legation
- J. Belgian Legation
- K. Imperial Maritime Customs and residence of Sir Robert Hart
- L. Church of England Mission & Hospital
- M. London Mission & Hospital
- N. American Mission & Hospital
- O. Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank
- P. Messrs. Jardine Matheson's office
- Q. Postal Club
- R. Roman Catholic Northern Cathedral (closed) and large active mission building
- S. Roman Catholic Southern Cathedral
- T. Roman Catholic Russian Cathedral
- U. Foreign (German) Embassy, formerly Consular Buildings

CITY GATES.

Outer Gates of the Tartar City.

- a. Ting-ai Min
- b. Hsueh-shi Min
- c. T'ih-shi Min
- d. An-ting Min
- e. Tung-chih Min
- f. T'ien-an Min

Outer Gates of the Chinese City.

- g. Tung-pien Min
- h. Shou-wei Min
- i. T'ung-shan Min
- j. Tung-ching Min
- k. Hsiao-shi Min
- l. Chiao-chi Min
- m. Hsiao-pien Min

Inner Gates between Chinese and Tartar Cities.

- n. Hsiao-ching Min
- o. Chien Min
- p. Hsiao Min

CHINESE BUILDINGS.

- 1. Hsiao College & Library of Architects
- 2. Carriage Park
- 3. Board of War
- 4. Board of Works
- 5. Board of Office
- 6. Board of Revenue
- 7. Treasure Palace
- 8. Colonial Office
- 9. Board of Finances
- 10. Tung H Temple (Foreign Office)
- 11. Examination Hall
- 12. Imperial Granaries
- 13. Great Buddhist Lama Temple
- 14. Ming-shi Palace
- 15. North Bridge over Canal
- 16. Legation Street
- 17. Customs Street
- 18. Hsiao Min Road
- 19. Chien Min Road
- 20. Canal gateway through the Tartar City past the British Legation from the Chinese into the Imperial City

Source: "The Siege of the Peking Legations," *The Times*, 13 Oct. 1900, 5.

D

**History of the Portrait of Empress Dowager Cixi
made by Katherine Carl for the St Louis' Louisiana Purchase
Exposition (LPE), and of Carl's other three Portraits of Cixi**

This appendix D deals with the history of the portraits of Cixi by her first foreign portraitist, Katherine A. Carl.¹ During her stay in palaces with Cixi in 1903-4, Carl painted altogether four oil portraits of Cixi.² Among the four portraits, one was of special importance to Cixi herself and also to Chinese history, that is, the one that was permitted by Cixi to be sent to Louisiana Purchase Exposition (LPE) in St Louis in 1904, attended by nearly 20 million people (Fig.1).³ This is when China for the first time in history as a government officially participated a world exhibition.⁴ Its importance is Cixi's pioneering breakthrough: a visual image of China's monarchy for the first time being shown abroad. Before that, monarchs' portraits were never shown outside the country. The other breakthrough was that Cixi was the first *female* empress who showed her own image in public. Before that, all female figures were hidden behind the public scene of the Court. Compared with this LPE portrait, the other three portraits are relatively less significant. In spite of that, the three are helpful to the analysis of the LPE portrait. Here, this appendix will discuss the history of the three that were made in similar time a LPE portrait (within a

¹ Katherine A. Carl, an American painter, was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in c. 1862. She was trained under J. P. Laurence and Gustave Courtois in Paris. She received praises in the Paris Salon (1890) and Paris Exhibition (1900). She had stayed in Mansion of Prince Chun. Three ladies, Madame Yungeng and her two daughters Rongling and Derling, were ordered to keep eye on Carl in order to prevent from being close contact with the Guangxu emperor. Carl spent around eleven months in making oil portraits and some other drawings of Cixi. She died in 1938.

² Katherine Augusta Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 306. Carl states, "Before I finished the first one, she [Cixi] told me she wanted 'many,' and suggested my passing the rest of my life out in Peking. I painted four."

³ Colin M. Selph, ed., *World's Fair Bulletin* 6, no. 2 (Dec. 1904): 44-45.

⁴ Prince Pu Lun (Imperial High Commissioner) and Wong Kai Kah (Imperial Vice-Commissioner) attended the World Affair in St Louis. Prince Pu Lun arrived at St Louis on 28 April, 1904.

year) but mainly focus on the beginning, process, and ending of the LPE portrait making. How this portrait was treated during the exhibition, after the exhibition and until now, will also be discussed.

How did the portrait of Empress Dowager Cixi for LPE start? One of the female foreign ladies, Madame Plancon (the wife of Russian Minister to China), presented a miniature portrait of the Czar and his family as a gift from the Czar to Cixi during a meeting on 6th March, 1903.⁵ This is the earliest record of Cixi seeing or knowing of any Western oil portrait. The gift did not lead her to be eager to have her own image made. The idea of asking Cixi to be portrayed started with Sarah Conger, who was well acquainted with Carl:

Mrs. Conger said that she had something to ask Her Majesty, and told the Missionary lady to proceed... this Missionary lady said: "Mrs. Conger has come with the special object of asking permission to have Her Majesty's portrait painted by an American lady artist, Miss Carl, as she is desirous of sending it to the St. Louis Exhibition, in order that the American people may form some idea of what a beautiful lady the Empress Dowager of China is."

Miss Carl is the sister of Mr. F. Carl who was for so many years Commissioner of Customs in Chefoo.⁶

Conger started the idea that visual images should be made in the Chinese Court. In her letter to her daughter Laura, dated October 3, 1902, she wrote: the "colourings [of many scenes in the Court] are so dainty, and yet often so ... bold in their harmony, that no photograph or painting can do Chinese costumes or Chinese decorations even a partial justice."⁷ Eight months later, the idea of portraying Cixi came to her. Her great respect and admiration for Cixi led her to be unable to bear criticisms of the Empress. Thus

⁵ Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1924; Reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

Conger had the ambitious idea of winning Cixi's reputation back through exhibiting a portrait of Cixi in America to be seen by people from all over the world. In one of her letters to her niece, dated June 20 of 1903, Conger states her motivation and what she did, and Cixi's final permission:

For many months I had been indignant over the horrible, unjust caricatures of Her Imperial Majesty in illustrated papers, and with a growing desire that the world might see her more as she really is, I had conceived the idea of asking her Majesty's permission to speak her upon the subject of having her portrait painted. I had written to the artist, Miss Carl, and found that she was willing to cooperate with me. The day of the audience seemed to be the golden opportunity for me to speak. With intense love for womankind, and in justice to this Imperial woman, I presented my subject without a doubt or a fear. Her Majesty listened, was interested, and with a woman's heart conversed with me. As a result of this conversation, the Empress Dowager gave consent to allow her Imperial portrait to be painted by an American lady artist for the St. Louis Exposition. The work is to begin in August. Only think of it! That this portrait may present to the outside world even a little of the true expression and character of this misrepresented woman, is my most earnest wish.⁸

Before Cixi's permission to proceed with the portraits, Derling (a significant figure encouraging Cixi to be portrayed) recalled that Cixi felt "somewhat shocked" and did not have any idea of what the Western portrait would look like.⁹ When Conger's request for portraits was made, Cixi's response — "I cannot decide anything alone" and "I have to consult with my Ministers before deciding anything of an important character" — shows her polite rejection.¹⁰ According to Lydia Dan, the niece of Derling, no discussion at all

⁷ Sarah Pike Conger, *Letters from China* (Chicago: the Lakeside Press, 1909), 240.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 247-8.

⁹ Der Ling, 91. Derling states, "I noticed that Her Majesty was somewhat shocked" when the request of being portrayed was made to her.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

was held between Cixi and the Board of Foreign Affairs about the portraits.¹¹ In private, Cixi's belief in Western art being *inferior* to Chinese art made her reluctant to be portrayed.¹² Derling, who received Conger's personal letters to ask her to persuade Cixi to agree with oil portraits being made, explained portraits in oils to Cixi to help her understand Western portraiture. In order to be more convincing, Derling also showed a portrait of herself, wearing a Western dress, painted in Paris by Carl, the same portraitist put forward to paint Cixi. Another influential reason, according to Dan, was that the painter, Carl, was a female painter, thus "more acceptable than a man to come to the Court."¹³ The whole female group, including Madame Plancon, Sarah Conger, a Missionary lady, and Derling, can be said to have contributed to persuading Cixi. Finally, Cixi agreed.

Katherine Carl made four portraits of Cixi during the eleven months from August, 1903 to July, 1904. The length of the time for making the portraits was unexpected at the beginning, for originally Cixi only promised to give Carl "but two sittings."¹⁴ After one sitting, however, Cixi was willing to pose more. Carl states that Cixi "asked me, looking straight into my eyes the while, if I would care to remain at the Palace for a few days, that she might give me sittings at her leisure."¹⁵ And then, again Cixi invited Carl to stay even longer to complete the portraits. The first portrait, which was not for the LPE, started at eleven o'clock on 5th August, 1903, "that hour, as well as the day and the month, having been chosen, after much deliberation and many consultations of the almanac, as the most

¹¹ Lydia Dan, a niece of Princess Derling and of Xunling, in 1982 wrote an unpublished article, "The Unknown Photographer," explaining how Xunling took many photos of Cixi in the Palace and how the world has failed to recognize this important photographer. In the page 2, she states, "the royal assent [to be portrayed in oil by Katherine Carl] was given without protracted discussion with the Board of Foreign Affairs." This article is collected in Archives, Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Dan's letter having the same claim as the article "The Unknown Photographer" was published in "Hsin Ling, Photographer: Correspondence from Lydia Dan," *History of Photography* 8, no. 4 (Oct, 1984), 345.

¹² Der Ling, 96.

¹³ Dan, 2.

¹⁴ Carl, 8.

auspicious for beginning work on the first likeness ever made of Her Majesty.”¹⁶ The time and date are mentioned above and have often been mistakenly thought to apply to the St Louis portrait. The first portrait is the one where Cixi sits on “one of her favorite Cantonese carved Thrones;” her left hand “lay over a yellow pillow;” her right shoe, “with its jewelled, white kid sole resting on a dragon footstool, showed under the hem of her gown;” her head was positioned in “a three-quarters view, with the eyes looking at the observer;” and “[a] *jardinière*, with her favorite orchid, stood behind the Throne at the right.” Thus far, Carl’s description of the first portrait *seems* exactly the same as the content of the portrait (Fig. 66); so, Fig. 66 should be the first portrait of Cixi made by Carl. However, there is a problem about this portrait: while describing the first portrait, Carl also mentions “[i]n one hand, she held a flower.”¹⁷ The truth is that in neither of Cixi’s hands in the portrait is there a flower in Fig. 66. A photo was taken by Xunling (Fig. 107) soon after this portrait was finished and was thus the original image.¹⁸ In this photo, the portrait ambiguously shows what may be the *flower*. This ambiguous spot could be the flower or it could be just a bad photo. However, if this spot on Cixi’s part on her stomach is really this flower, Carl’s memory will be right. In this case, the portrait that people can now see in the Forbidden City had been modified. Someone must have changed this flower (hold by Cixi) into lavender (a part of the pattern of her costume). This transformation has not been mentioned in any source as yet. As for the second portrait, that was not for St Louis either and Carl had more freedom, meaning she was “not obliged to be ‘according to tradition’.”¹⁹ Cixi even permitted Carl to “paint her two favourite dogs lying beside her foot stool, the blond ‘Shadza’ and dusky ‘Hailo’ ...

¹⁵ Ibid., 12

¹⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., 162-3.

¹⁸ Carl in her *With the Empress Dowager of China* mentions that Xunling took a photo of the first portrait after the portrait was finished. This glass-plate is collected in Archives, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

¹⁹ Ibid., 172.

'Hailo' was ordered to be decorated in his 'gala costume.' This consisted of two huge chrysanthemums tied in his hair over his ears. 'Shadza', the Pekingese pug, resented any such accoutrement and was painted in his natural state.²⁰ During the two portraits made in the Summer Palace, some interruptions meant that Carl unable to work quietly and efficiently: she was "always surrounded by the whole court, with eunuchs coming and going" and also spent much time at leisure with Cixi – having a walk, watching plays, taking a boat, etc.²¹ Carl thought she spent too little time painting – the portraits took her an hour in the morning and a half-hour in the afternoon each day. After moving to the Winter Palace, Carl began making the St. Louis portrait despite the first two portraits remained unfinished. In fact, the two first portraits were a kind of *preparatory* work for the third portrait which is also the one for Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St Louis.

When did Carl start the LPE portrait? The exact time and date is unknown. Since she started painting it in the Winter Palace, it must have been in wintertime, that is, between October 1903 to January 1904.²² According to Carl, this portrait went very well and quickly, probably because of her earlier study on Cixi and her two preparatory portraits. How did Cixi avoid feeling tired with sittings – which ranged from fifteen minutes to over one hour? There were no actors playing for her entertainment during her sittings. What Cixi was doing during the sittings was this: she would like to ask some question such as 'What of part of portrait was Carl working on?'; she "took tea and conversed"; "the eunuchs or some of the Princesses brought her either the graceful water-pipe, from which she would take a few [puffs], or she would [smoke] European

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 173.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 50. In a newspaper called *The St Louis Republic*, an article written by Carl says: "Cixi was not keen on Carl's spending too much time painting by saying to her, "Come, you must go for a walk. You must not paint so long. You must not work so hard. You will get thin, and thin people are not pretty" (Kate Carl, "Painter of Empress An's Portrait Tells Her Experience with China's Great Woman," *The St Louis Republic*, 11 Sep. 1904, 6).

²² In Carl's letter to Chief of the Department of Art at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (dated on 2nd January, 1904, she mentioned that she was making the portrait for LPE. So this portrait should have been started by January, 1904. See Appendix G-2.

cigarettes.”²³ Cixi kept her head unnaturally stiff, in the same position just like a statue, and she would apologise to Carl when she moved despite the fact that Carl actually preferred her to be more natural.²⁴ There is an assumption here: before being portrayed for this St Louis portrait, Cixi already started being photographed by Xunling.²⁵ The special stiff pose is caused possibly because people who were photographed in those days could not move while the photographer achieved a long enough exposure. Cixi possibly applied the same way of posing for photography to when she was portrayed in oil. For this reason, she appeared like a still and unnatural statue. She was highly concerned about this portrait which would be seen by the American public, and “as the portrait neared completion she came very often to the studio and watched over the painting.”²⁶ It is also important that Carl noticed during making of this portrait that Cixi “came, with her usual retinue, to pose, but it was not at fixed times, and was often when I did not expect her. She was looking more and more anxious these days.” Carl often emphasises Cixi’s anxiety during the period when she made this LPE portrait. Her anxiety resulted from the war between Russia and Japan.²⁷ Cixi gave Carl better conditions to let her concentrate on this portrait. So, Carl was given more private time and nice and quiet personal studios with plenty of

²³ Carl, 20.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁵ Der Ling, 98. Derling was afraid that Cixi would not like to be painted in oil if she knew something about photography. Derling was also afraid that this could mean that the LPE portrait could not be successfully completed. So, she did not want to tell Cixi. Unexpectedly, Cixi went to Derling’s room one day and discovered the photos of Derling taken in Paris. Next day, she immediately wanted herself to be photographed. Cixi’s starting to be photographed should have happened between the portraits of Cixi starting to be made and the LPE portrait starting to be painted.

²⁶ Carl, 287.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 280.

light.²⁸ She completed this largest portrait in the Sea Palace at 4:00 pm on 19 April 1904, the exact time that Cixi asked for.²⁹

Before the portrait left the Palace, the Guangxu emperor led the entire Court in a performance of kowtowing to it. Cixi also decreed that this portrait should be never laid down flat during the process of the delivery.³⁰ Also, the portrait could not be carried on the shoulders of coolies. Wherever this portrait went, it was received by delegations of high officials and dignitaries. As the portrait passed by, Chinese people were to kneel down as if Cixi in person appeared in front of them.³¹ The portrait was delivered from the Sea Palace to Waiwupu (the Foreign Office) by porters, then to Tianjin by a special train, then to Shanghai by steamer, then to San Francisco, and finally to St. Louis by a special coach at 4:00pm on the afternoon before 14th June 1904.³² Arriving at St Louis, this portrait was received by Prince Pu Lun in his uniform. This "sacred picture" was 'enclosed in a satin-lined camphor-wood box, covered with satin of Imperial yellow, and the box was closed with great solemnity. The pedestal was placed in a similar box. Each box had splendid bronze handles and huge circular locks. The boxes were kept close together; they were lined with the Imperial colours and were finally ready for shipment. The packing cases, containing the framed picture and its carved pedestal, were placed in a flat freight car, which had been elaborately decorated with red and yellow festoons of silk.

²⁸ Cixi felt annoyed about oil portraitist requiring so much light. She once remarked, 'What a bother. I can paint pictures myself in any kind of light, and she [Carl] ought to be able to do the same' (Der Ling, 97). Carl in her book often complains that she could neither have a quiet place nor get enough light. After New Year 1904 when Cixi moved from the Winter Palace to Sea Palace, Carl also had to follow Cixi. This time, Carl had "a magnificent pavilion on the lake with a perfect light for painting" and also complimented, "it was the best working-room I had ever had at any of the Palaces" (Carl, 281-2).

²⁹ Carl, 287.

³⁰ C. F. Haldane, *Last Great Empress of China* (London: Constable, 1965), 240.

³¹ Barbara E. Scott Fisher, "The Portrait of an Empress," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 Jun. 1931, 8. Fish wrote this article in the ProQuest Historical Newspaper after interviewing Katherine Carl.

³² Carl, 297-8. Carl says that this portrait arrived at St Louis on 19 June, 1904. However, this date remains in question. The record shows that "June 14th Mr. Francis A. Carl, Vice-Commissioner of the Imperial Chinese Commission, a brother of Miss Kate Carl, the American artist who painted the picture, superintended the work of placing the portrait on its pedestal." Quoted in Colin M. Sciph, ed., "Portrait of Empress Dowager of China Now in Art Palace World's Fair," *World's Fair Bulletin* 5, no. 9 (July 1904): 28.

The boxes were covered with yellow cloth, painted with the Double Dragon.³³ Owing to the heavy packing for this portrait, "this opening of the cases and unveiling of the picture lasted from four o'clock to nine P.M."³⁴ On 14th June, there were no visitors allowed in the Main Building of the Art Palace because Katherine Carl's brother, Francis A. Carl, "superintended the work of placing the portrait on its pedestal" and the portrait "was veiled and a portion of the inner casing replace[d] in order to protect it from possible injury."³⁵

The "magnificently framed portrait of the Dowager Empress of China" whose size was "seventeen feet high and ten feet wide" while standing on its pedestal was exhibited on the east wall of the Gallery 18, located in one of the large front galleries in the Central Building of the Art Palace for the American Art Section.³⁶ The location of this portrait was said to be a "popular spot."³⁷ The portrait was surrounded with a barrier; inside this barrier and in front of this portrait, there were two lion statues guarding the portrait. The *World's Fair Bulletin* says that this portrait "attracts throngs of visitors at all times" during the exhibition.³⁸ This portrait was reported in quite a few publications at the time. What got the most attention about this portrait was "the face was painted without shadow, in accordance with Chinese etiquette."³⁹ The sitter, Empress Dowager Cixi, was often mistaken for 'Empress Dowager An.'⁴⁰ After the Louisiana Purchase Exposition had run its allotted seven months (from 30th April to 1st December, 1904), the portrait, which was exhibited from around 15th June to 1st December, was sent to Washington because Cixi had resolved before the picture left China to make an eventual gift of it to America. So,

³³ Carl, 297-8.

³⁴ Ibid., 299.

³⁵ Selph, 28.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Mark Bennett, ed., *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (St Louis: Universal Exposition Publishing Co., 1905), 502.

³⁸ Colin M. Selph, ed., "Art," *World's Fair Bulletin* 6, no. 1 (Nov. 1904): 3.

³⁹ Ibid.

the representative of China in America, “[his] Excellency Sir Chentung Liang Cheng, the Chinese minister to Washington, attended by his secretaries, made a formal presentation of the portrait to the President, which Mr. Roosevelt received on behalf of the United States Government.”⁴¹

After finishing this St Louis portrait, Carl went on staying in the Summer Palace in order to complete the other two unfinished portraits, a sketch, and another big portrait. About the fourth and last portrait, Carl remarks, “Her Majesty concluded she liked it much better than the one which had been sent to St Louis. She said it would make me ‘famous’.”⁴² This portrait, too, was brought to America.

According to Carl, the LEP portrait and the fourth one were sent to America. There is some discrepancy in the record of the Smithsonian Institute. Combining Carl’s explanation with the database of Inventories of American Painting and Sculpture of Smithsonian Institute, the LPE portrait and fourth portrait should be collected in Smithsonian Institute.⁴³ The database shows there are two portraits of Cixi made by Carl: one is in the Smithsonian American Art Museum; the other one is in the “Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History.” Either the former one or the latter one is the LPE portrait and the other must be the fourth one. After inquiring of Richard Sorensen, in charge of photography at the American Art Museum, I received a definite answer, that is, the portrait collected in the American Art Museum is the LPE one which the Smithsonian Institute put on permanent loan to Taipei’s National Museum of History

⁴⁰ Ibid. Also, this mistake can be seen in the article, “China at the St Louis World’s Fair,” *Missouri Historical Review* 72, no. 1 (October, 1904): 64.

⁴¹ Carl, 299.

⁴² Ibid., 305.

⁴³ The database of Inventories of American Painting and Sculpture of Smithsonian Institute is on its official website: <http://sirius-artinventories.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=VS75483154701.164&profile=arial&uri=link=3100006@!218703@!3100001@!3100002&aspect=Browse&menu=search&ri=1&source=160.111.100.112@!siartinventories&term=Carl%2C+Katherine+Augusta%2C+ca.+1862-1938%2C+painter.&index=PAUTH#focus>. The database is also confirmed by Robin T. Dettre in *Inventories of American Painting and Sculpture*.

in 1976.⁴⁴ I did see this portrait hung in a small and dime-light confined room (whose size is the slightly bigger than that of this portrait) of National Museum of History in 2001.⁴⁵ But, inquiring of Dr Larry Bird, a curator in the Division of Political History at the National Museum of American History, I received an ambiguous answer, that is, there is no file about the portrait of Cixi made by Carl in his department. I carried on making a further inquiry to Dr Bird. After trying to re-work the matter and doing a little more digging, he told me that the portrait that I inquired had been transferred from the National Museum of American History to American Art Museum in 1960. Meantime, he also showed me the photo, which is exactly the same as the LPE portrait, taken in the Arts & Industries Building before the establishment of the American Art Museum. Now, in any event the American Art Museum is the authority on the subject. Therefore, the two portraits that the database of Inventories of American Painting and Sculpture shows are actually meant the same one – the LPE portrait. The fourth one is not collected in the Smithsonian Institute. Where the fourth one is collected and who owns it remains obscure.

⁴⁴ Mr Zunpeng Bao who was Head of National Museum of History went to America to attend an international museum conference in 1965 to discuss about the LPE portrait sending to Taiwan.

⁴⁵ The portrait is temporarily collected in storage at this moment, not seen by the public. Zhang Cian who is working in Collection and Preservation Division, National Museum of History, explained to me that the enormous size of the portrait would be seen only for special exhibition in the future.

E

History of the Photographs of Empress Dowager Cixi taken by Xunling

This appendix E concerns the history of the photographs of Cixi that were taken by her Court photographer Xunling (1874-1943). Most of the surviving photos of Cixi seen in publications were taken between 1903 and May, 1905, by Xunling. For many years, few people really knew who had taken these photos and the photographer was widely regarded as being anonymous. Some thought that the photographer was called 'Yu,' probably using the first part of his father's name (Yugen). Some thought that the photographer was a Japanese called Sanshichiro Yamamoto who was said to have also taken a photo of Cixi in the Summer Palace and been paid a huge sum in gold.¹ Even his own sister Derling did not note in her books that the photographer was her brother. The situation was not changed until Lydia Dan, Xunling's niece, came forward. Writing an article "The Unknown Photographer" in 1982 and sending correspondence to the journal *History of Photography* in 1984, Dan defends her uncle by saying "the lack of recognition...is particularly poignant, since [Xunling] suffered much for his photography. His hands were damaged by the chemicals used to develop the glass negatives, and medication to relieve the pain was not available."² Since then, Xunling's name and his contribution are usually acknowledged in books introducing photographs of China.

Xunling was the second son of Lord Yugen, who served as Chinese ambassador in Japan (1895-8) and France (1899-1902) with third rank in the Chinese bureaucratic hierarchy. Xunling had one brother, called Xinling (who was appointed to the newly established steamship department), and two sisters, one being Derling and the other being

¹ Yu Shanpu, "cixi zhao pian he qi duo," *The Forbidden City*, no. 47 (1988): 15. The Japanese photographer was introduced to the imperial court to take a photo of Cixi through Prince Qing. Prince Qing and the Court both gave him gold.

² Lydia Dan, "Hsiin Ling, Photographer," *History of Photography* 8, no. 4 (Oct. 1984): 345.

Rongling (both of whom served as ladies-in-waiting for Cixi during 1903-4, together with their mother).³ Xunling got married at an early age, 15, and had one son and one daughter. He started on his hobby of amateur photography when he was in Japan and France (where he accompanied his father). Meantime, he was also his father's private secretary, and, subsequently, was appointed to the electricity department of the Palace. In 1903, Xunling, following his whole family, brought an entire set of camera equipment with him to China. He later became a professional Court photographer soon after being highly recommended to Cixi by his mother, Lady Yugen.⁴ He is said to have been "not [an] ambitious man" because he "was content with whatever fate" came to him. His lack of ambition made his family look "upon [him] as being *stupid*."⁵ Unlike his sister Derling who was obviously a self-promoter by publicizing her books and giving a lot of lectures in America to connect herself as a crucial figure in Cixi's later-life and reforming attitudes, Xunling was not enthusiastic to promote himself. Instead, he always kept quiet about his achievement, even though his sitter was one of the most remarkable figures in the world – the Empress Dowager of China. Thus it can be understood how he was not recognized for a long time.

Photographic portraits were first made in the imperial palace in 1844. Qiyong, a Chinese governor of Guangdong and Guangxi and also in charge of trade with foreigners in five ports, received some photographs of a British ambassador Sir Henry Pottinger (1789-1856) and his wife and their daughter as diplomatic gifts during 1841-4. He was aware that giving personal photographic portraits was becoming a necessary diplomatic practice. Therefore, he had four photos of one pose of himself taken by French Jules Itier and the four copies were distributed to diplomats from Italy, Britain, America and Portugal when he went to Macao to sign a treaty in Macao in August 1844. After that, Qiyong

³ Lydia Dan, "The Unknown Photographer" (an article of four pages written in 1982), Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, 3.

⁴ Ibid., 2. Lady Yugen said to Cixi "[Xunling] has been perfecting it for the last eight years."

⁵ Ibid., 1.

mentioned this photo experience in the memorial that he gave to the Daoguang emperor (he called the photo as *xiao zhao*).⁶ This did not have any effect in the imperial Court. Later, after mid-nineteenth century, taking photos came into high favour with the princes, dukes and ministers of China. Chonghou, vice minister of the War Board, gave a compliment on it for "revealing image secrets covered for thousands of years." Chongshi, minister of the Punishment Board, also praised it in his poetry: "Optics produces images through chemistry. The Westerners have unique ways of exploration. Owing to the magic of illustrating lens, the great hand can no longer escape from reproduction."⁷ In addition, Yixin (Prince Gong), one of the Xianfeng emperor's brothers, invited John Thomason to take some photos for him. (Earlier, in November, 1860, Yixin, as a Signer of the Treaty of Beijing, was taken by Felice Beato who came to China as a semi-official photographer to follow the Anglo-French North China Expeditionary Force. He was a sad young man at that stage when China was defeated. At that time, he was not taken actively, but passively). Another brother of the Xianfeng emperor, Yixuan (Prince Chun), was also photographed in various years (from 1863 to 1889).⁸ In 1886, he presented photos which had been taken recently to the Guangxu emperor for an imperial view. Despite some officials liking to have their photos taken, photographic portraiture still caught on only slowly inside the Imperial Palace.

How did Cixi start to get know photography? Cixi went to Derling's room. Derling vividly depicted how Cixi had happened to learn about photographs and what response she had to them:

⁶ Chen Shen, et al., *History of Photography in China: 1840-1937* (Taipei: Photographer Publications, 1990), 42. *Xiao zhao* is an old-fashioned term for photographic portraits. Initially, the term was applied to Chinese portrait paintings. When the photography was introduced in around the middle nineteenth century, people still used this term for photographic portraits. In a memorial presented by Qiying to the Emperor, he mentions the term.

⁷ Jing Lin, *The Photographs of Cixi in the Collection of the Palace Museum*, trans. Shaoyi Li (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 2002), 4-6.

⁸ Li Guoqiang, "yixuan zhao pian ba zhen," *The Forbidden City*, no. 41 (1987): 6-11.

After she [Cixi] had finished her tea, she got up and went around the room, examining everything, opening up all my bureau drawers and boxes in order to see whether I kept my things in proper order. Happening to glance into one corner of the room she exclaimed: "What are those pictures on the table over there," and walked across to examine them. As soon as she picked them up, she exclaimed in much surprise: "Why, they are all photographs of yourself, and are very much better than the picture you had painted. They are more like you. Why didn't you show them to me before?" ... After examining the photographs for sometime, which by the way, were all taken in European dress, Her Majesty said: "Now these are good photographs; much better than the portrait you had painted. Still I have given my promise, and I suppose I shall have to keep it. However, if I do have my photograph taken, it will not interfere at all with the painting of the portrait. The only trouble is I cannot ask an ordinary professional photographer to the Palace. It would hardly be the thing." My mother [Lady Yugen] thereupon explained to Her Majesty that if she desired to have her photograph taken, one of my brothers, who had studied photography for some considerable time, would be able to do all that was necessary.... She gave orders to send for my brother at once. On his arrival Her Majesty said to him: "I hear that you are a photographer. I am going to give you something to do." My brother was kneeling.... Her Majesty asked my brother when he would be able to come and take her photograph, and what kind of weather was necessary. My brother said that he would go back to Peking [Beijing] that night, to fetch his camera, and that he could take the photograph at any time she desired, as the weather would not affect the work. So Her Majesty decided to have her photograph taken the next morning.⁹

⁹ Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1924; Reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 98-99.

Cixi was really keen to have photos taken. Xunling brought his "best cameras, a tripod and a large box containing aguerrro-type glassplates with wooden frames" to the Summer Palace. And he "measured the distance to set up the tripod and selected a camera."¹⁰ After that, Cixi increasingly liked to have photos taken.

Her acceptance of photography seemed quite natural and without any struggle. There are two possible reasons for that. First, she heard or knew a little about it before. The earliest record showing that Cixi knew the new way of keeping a person's image is that Madame Plancon presented a photograph of the Czar and Czarina to Cixi as a diplomatic gift during an audience.¹¹ Although Cixi did not immediately go ahead to take photos of herself after the photo of the Russian monarchs was presented, the incident could explain her natural response to Derling's photo. Second, when seeing Derling's photos, Cixi was being a sitter for the American portraitist Katherine Carl. In her mind, she made a comparison between photographs and oil portraits. Her immediate comment to Derling's photos was, "Why, they are all photographs of yourself, and are very much better than the picture you had painted. They are more like you."¹² She found photos be 'better' and have 'more likeness' than oil portraits. Cixi once expressed a dim view on oil portraits, "Such rough work I never saw in all my life."¹³ About the nature of comparison, Carl remarks:

when she [Cixi] saw how quickly the photograph was made of the portrait, and how satisfactory it was, she decided she would have the photographer try one of herself, and she was not one to stop at a single trial. After waiting sixty-eight years to see a counterfeit presentment of herself, I know she will now indulge this new fantasy of hers to its fullest extent.¹⁴

¹⁰ Dan, "The Unknown Photographer," 3.

¹¹ Der Ling, 25.

¹² Ibid., 98.

¹³ Ibid., 96.

¹⁴ K. C. Carl, Carl, *With the Empress Dowager of China* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 305.

The new medium was easier, faster, and a more faithful reproduction, and seemed to confirm the old-fashioned nature of the painted portrait in oil that needs time-consuming sitting and laborious sketches which tired Cixi. That Cixi was keener about photography than oil portraits made her immediately change to the new art form – photographic portraits – without a struggle.

In order to have success with photography, there were four ways in which the Court needed to break with Chinese traditional fashions. The first concerns background. All the furniture, screen, throne, plants, and other things that could be seen in the throne room were moved to the outdoors and then re-arranged exactly the same as in the throne room. All were well-thought-out and well-arranged in front of camera. The settings, which could be in different palaces and on special occasions, were ready before Xunling set up his camera equipments. The upheaval operation for the settings could be because of the lack of natural light indoors.¹⁵ During Carl's portrayal on Cixi in 1903-4, Carl suffered from little light and explained to Cixi the importance of natural light. At that time, the Court had not thought that they could move all the interior background outdoors. Instead, what they tried to do was to make the windows through the ceiling in order to let natural light come into the room from above.¹⁶ For the photographs of 1904-5, the Court decided to have everything done outdoors. (Later, in 1905 when the portraitist Hubert Vos came into the Palace to take photos of and to paint Cixi, he was guided to the spot outdoors where the setting had been arranged in advance.¹⁷)

¹⁵ The other concern why the setting was outdoors is the shadowing on the face. According to Jing Lin, a well-known Chinese historian, to avoid half-dark and half-light face which Cixi regarded as a sign of bad luck, the Court decided to use natural diffused light. See Jing Lin, "gong cang jiu zhao: ci xi wan nian sheng huo zhao pian tan gai," *The Forbidden City*, no. 42 (1987): 13-14. Baron Stillfried, a photographer in late Qing China, observed a typical view of Chinese regarding shadowing, "In [having photos taken], the face must be as white as possible; indeed it is usual to place the sitter in direct sunshine." See *The Photographic News* (29 Feb. 1884): 129.

¹⁶ Carl, 281.

¹⁷ Sterling Scagrove, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 415.

The second break concerns rules of courtesy. Xunling encountered two difficulties during the photo sessions with Cixi: at the beginning when taking pictures of Cixi, he needed to drop to his knees. This position certainly made him unable to reach the camera lens; holding his spectacles in his hand, he looked up abjectly at the camera. Li Lianying, Cixi's chief eunuch, who had watched him setting up the tripod guessed the problem and immediately ordered that a bench needed to be brought there for the photographer to kneel on. By now, Cixi was tired of waiting. Grasping the problem, she commanded that Xunling 'be permitted not to kneel when taking our picture.' The other difficulty was that Xunling was nearsighted and Court etiquette forbade anyone to wear glasses in the sovereign's presence. Without glasses, Xunling could not focus his lenses and check the light. He told this to Li Lianying who came to hurry him. Again, this was reported to Cixi and then she gave permission that Xunling be allowed to put on his glasses.¹⁸

The third break with tradition concerns postures. In Cixi's photos, she had herself photographed on the throne in the front of the screen, on a boat, acting as Buddha, and in a royal procession. Sometimes she was alone; sometimes she was with several favourite ladies; and sometimes she was with her eunuchs. Her different postures were also shot, such as sitting, standing, profile (left and right), taking a look at herself in a mirror, and so on. D. K. Griffith who stayed in China as a well-known portrait and landscape photographer for nearly twenty years describes Chinese perception of classical standards idealized in Chinese Qing portraiture and its application to the photographic portraits: "A direct front face must be taken, so as to shadow both his ears, and each side of his face of the same proportions; both feet must be arranged so that they are of equal length."¹⁹ Unlike the traditional imperial posture where the whole body is frontal and symmetrical, Cixi's poses are unconventional.

¹⁸ Lin Jing, *The Photographs of Cixi in the Collection of the Palace Museum*, 27. The two problems about rules of courtesy are recorded in Yungling Yu's *qing gong suo ji* (*Trivial Record of Qing Court*).

¹⁹ D. K. Griffith, *The photographic News* (28 May, 1875): 260.

The fourth break concerns superstition. That photography is some kind of 'trick of witchcraft' was generally believed.²⁰ Griffith, a photographer, observed this phenomenon in China, "[The] unfortunate hostility to photographic manipulations is due to a strange belief ... that the photographic image is the soul of the original, the withdrawal of which from the body very naturally produces death."²¹ The superstitious belief drove Chinese to have a hostile attitude towards cameramen and to regard the camera as an 'evil eye.'²² Griffith details incidents which happened when he practiced his "art-science" (he called photographing as "our art science"): "...the crowd, having satiated its curiosity, got less pacific, and resorted to the playful pastime of pelting me with stones behind my back...jeering calls sounded on all sides of me, until the grand tableau was completed by a huge missile passing my head while in the act of focusing [and] smashing the glass to atoms."²³ He also remarks, "I have had my chair torn to pieces on the road, my coolies beaten, and my camera broken." As for native photographers, he continues saying that these Chinese cameramen had very "little support from their countrymen" and "would have fared much worse [than me]."²⁴ In addition, the black colour – shadowing – on the face on the photos was another superstitious problem. Black had been associated with evil, darkness, death, and back luck at least by the Tang Dynasty. The 'black shadowing' once made Cixi feel frightened, leading her to reject it: when Carl and Vos painted some shadows as they portrayed Cixi in oil, Cixi seriously corrected them and required the shadowing reduced to zero.²⁵ In photos, during Xunling's developing the negatives, Cixi

²⁰ Lily Keeskes, "Photographs of Tz'u-Hsi in the Freer Gallery Archives," *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin*, no. 101 (Dec. 1993): 87.

²¹ Griffith (28 May, 1875), 260.

²² Clark Worswick, "Photography in Imperial China," in *Imperial China: Photographs in 1850-1912*, eds. Clark Worswick and Jonathan Spence, 134-146 (New York: Penwick, 1978), 139.

²³ Griffith (29 October, 1875): 524.

²⁴ Griffith (28 May, 1875): 260.

²⁵ Before her permission to be portrayed in oil, when she took a look at Derling's portrait made by Carl in order to understand the Western portraits, she was not pleased to see the 'black' colour (for shadowing to highlight the three-dimension) and remarked, "Why is it that one side of your face is painted white and the other black? This is not natural—your face is not black. Half of your neck is painted black, too. How is

watched his actions. Meantime, seeing the black, she was so scared, "...why is it that my face [is] dark?...Why has this gone black? Is it bad luck?"²⁶ She in the end accepted the black shadowing although still preferring to reduce it as much as possible. The two superstitious taboos that the Chinese had avoided were, in the end, ignored. Cixi did break these traditions concerning setting, rules of courtesy, conventional postures and superstitious taboos and made a compromise with the new technique of photography. In these aspects, Cixi was something of a reformer and pioneer in royal photographic portraiture.

How many photos did Xunling take for Cixi? *Shengrongzhang (Record of the Sacred Empress' Appearance)* included in *gong zhong dang bu (Palace Documents)*, lists 786 items with Cixi's thirty-one different poses. The content is following as:

- 16 Large Imperial Portraits with Crown and in Flowery Dress, with Box
- 19 Large Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration
- 1 Large Half-Length Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration
- 59 Imperial Portraits with Small Hair Decoration and Round Fan and in Flowery Dress and Sedan Chair
- 57 Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Small hair Decoration and Round Fan
- 60 Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration and Folding Fan
- 47 Imperial Portrait in Flowery Dress and with Small hair Decoration and Folding Fan
- 77 Imperial Portraits with Crown and in Flowery Dress
- 47 Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Small Hair Decoration
- 63 Imperial Portraits with Coronet and in Dragon Robe
- 103 Imperial Portraits in Plain Dress and with Hair Decoration and Round Fan

it? ... Do you think that this Artist lady will paint my picture to look black also? It is going to America, and I don't want the people over there to imagine that half of my face is white and half black" (Der Ling, 211). In the end, Cixi forbid Carl and Vos to paint shadowing.

²⁶ Der Ling, 102.

- 71 Imperial Standing Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Small Hair Decoration and Folding Fan
- 41 Imperial Standing Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Small Hair Decoration, Pearl Tassels and Folding Fan
- 12 Horizontal Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration and Pearl Tassels
- 48 Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration and Pearl Tassels
- 13 Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration and Pearl Tassels, Along with Princesses
- 10 Imperial Portraits with Five-Buddha Crown
- 1 Middle-Sized Imperial Portrait in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration
- 3 Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration and Pearl Tassels, Along with the Wife of Conger, the US Envoy to China
- 3 Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration and Pearl Tassels, Along with the Wife of Yugen
- 1 Imperial Portrait in Dragon Robe and with Crown
- 3 Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration
- 2 Imperial Portraits in Plain Dress and with Hair Decoration
- 3 Imperial Portraits in Boat
- 2 Large Imperial Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration Hung in the Middle Room of the Hall of Happiness and Longevity in the Summer Palace
- 1 Imperial Standing Portrait in Flowery Dress and with Small Hair Decoration Hung in the West Room of the Hall of Happiness and Longevity in the Summer Palace
- 1 Imperial Portrait in Flowery Dress and with Hair Decoration Hung in the West Chamber of the Hall of Happiness and Longevity in the Palace of Tranquility and Longevity
- 1 Small Imperial Portrait with Crown Hung in the Hall of Calm Sea
- 1 Small Imperial Portrait with Small Hair Decoration and Fan Hung in the Hall of Calm Sea

10 Imperial Front Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Large Hair Decoration and 0.6-Meter-Long Frame Reverently Presented by Zaizhen on August 20, the 32nd Year of the Guangxu Reign [1906]

10 Imperial Front Portraits in Flowery Dress and with Large Hair Decoration and Frame Reverently Presented by Zaizhen on September 5, the 32nd Year of the Guangxu Reign [1906]²⁷

All of her photos served various social, ritual and diplomatic functions. Some of Cixi's photographs were enlarged, duplicated, and displayed in some rooms of several palace halls. Some were enlarged, framed, and hung in the palace halls during her seventieth birthday celebration (1905). Some were distributed to government officials as gifts. In 1904, she presented one of her photos to the Queen of Germany through the German crown prince during his visit to China.²⁸

The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives holds 44 glass-plate photo negatives and a lot of photographic images (every negative has its many copies of photos). In the file, I counted that there were around 35 negatives featuring Cixi. Several have ambiguous images of Cixi and should be called failed photos. Some of them are the images of Puyi and his wife which should be taken after 1920s at least. According to Dan, Xunling left the Palace in May 1905 when his father Lord Yugen died. She explains it is "customary for sons to resign from any official position and observe a 27-month mourning period." Since then, he never went back to the Palace again.²⁹ Although not all the photo negatives that the Archives collects are entirely ones taken by Xunling, most of them were taken by him. The Archives own either most of or all of the negatives of the thirty-one kinds of poses that *Shengrongzhang* (*Record of the Sacred Empress' Appearance*) lists. According to the record of the Archives, 12 photos of Cixi and some

²⁷ Lin Jing, *The Photographs of Cixi in the Collection of the Palace Museum*, 14-20.

²⁸ Kecskes, 88.

²⁹ Dan, "the Unknown Photographer," 3.

members of the Court were purchased by John Alexander Pope, Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, from Mrs. Ernst von Harringa (living in Los Angeles) on 8 November, 1963; later, in 1964, he purchased 44 negatives (size of 24 of them is 7" x 9-3/4" and that of 20 of them is 3" x 5" size) of Cixi from Mrs. Harringa who had acquired the glass negatives from T. C. White, Derling's husband (Mrs. Harringa probably got these negatives after Derling died in a car accident in 1944).³⁰ According to Dan who wrote an article in 1982, one day in 1931, as Rongling was preparing to leave her house in Beijing, she noticed that the sitting-room door in the outer courtyard was left open. Rongling went in to have a look at the furniture and noticed a couple of wooden cases stacked up in a corner. She asked the housekeeper what they were. The housekeeper answered, "They belong to Master [Xunling]. They contain the glass-plate photo negatives." Then Rongling ordered, "Throw them away." At that time, Xunling had already gone to Honan to be with his son who was an engineer in the Railway Department.³¹ (Why were those two cases of negatives in his sister's house? Probably, the glass-plate photo negatives were so heavy that he could not carry them to Honan, far from Peking, and so decided to leave them in his sister's Beijing home.) Instead of obeying Rongling's order, the servant(s) sold these negatives into the hands of Yamamoto, the owner of a Japanese photo studio in Beijing, who could recognize their value.³² Putting the two records – the Freer Archives and Lydia Dan – together, the gap could be filled: Yamamoto probably handed the two cases of negatives to Derling or Derling's husband.

³⁰ The Archivist of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Linda Raditz, kindly gave me a copy of "Empress Dowager Tz'u-Hsi [Cixi] Photographs Time Line," listing some important events about Xunling's photos. In John A. Pope's letter to Mrs. Harringa in 1964, he writes that he came "to [the] conclusion that there was only way to preserve those negatives in a safe place where they can be used by historians of the future. I am therefore going to buy them for the study collection of the Freer Gallery of Art."

³¹ Dan, "the Unknown Photographer," 4.

³² Ibid. Lydia complimented this Japanese photographer, S. Yamamoto, who was professional photographer in China during Boxer Rebellion. She thinks that he recognized the value of the negatives and thus made prints for local sale and attracted offers from international publishers, authors and museums. She says that he was very honest because he never said these negatives were his own work.

Many of Cixi's photos were not all kept in the Palace while Cixi was still alive. On the contrary, many of them were scattered beyond the walls of the Palace. In 1904, Takano Bunjiro, a Japanese publisher in Shanghai, whose publishing house was called *Yuchenshuchu*, reproduced Cixi's photos as commercial products.³³ Yamamoto was said to have been to the Court to take a photo of Cixi, then to have made more copies, and then to have distributed them to foreign diplomats in China. One photo of Cixi that Hubert Vos got from a Netherlands ambassador was the one taken by Yamamoto.³⁴ The photo was probably distributed to shops and markets in the end. Since owning the two cases of Xunling's glass negatives, Yamamoto had made Cixi's photographic portraits into a commercial proposition. Thus postcards of Cixi and cheap folded albums of her photos started to appear for sale in the Beijing bookstalls once more.

³³ Keeskes, 91.

³⁴ In Vos' letter to his family, he writes that he "saw a photograph taken by [a] Japanese photographer." before he went to the Imperial Court to meet Cixi. He also explains that he got the photo "on a secret loan from the Dutch minister [which now means ambassador]." Seagrave, 415.

F

History of Josephus Hubert Vos' two portraits of Dowager Empress Cixi

This appendix F deals with history of two portraits of Cixi made by a Dutch-American portrait painter, Josephus Hubert Vos. He was the first Westerner to be *invited* to paint portraits of China's Empress Dowager Cixi, as well as the first *male* Westerner to paint Cixi. In 1905, Vos succeeded in having Cixi as his sitter in the Palace. He first painted one relatively 'realistic' portrait (Fig.84), but, in keeping with traditional imperial portraiture, he was instructed to produce a second one giving a more 'idealized' image of Cixi (Fig.106). (The 'realistic' one showing Cixi's real age, 70, is currently housed in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; the 'idealized' one, showing her in her youth, aged 25, is in the Summer Palace, Beijing).¹

Hubert Vos was born in Maastricht, Holland, on 15 February, 1855 and died in 1935.² Early in his artistic career, he discovered his forte, which was for portraits. Although Impressionism was by then accepted widely as well as photography, there was little influence on him from the new fashions. His father's early death forced him to start a business of printing, publishing and book selling so as to earn a living. Soon, for some reason, he gave up the business. He then went to the Académie Royale de Bruxelles where he was first encouraged to study art under Jean François Portaels. Then, he studied under an Orientalist, Fernan Cormon (1854-1924), who would have great influence on Vos' art in Paris. Later, he went to study art in Rome and then came back to Brussels

¹ Cixi's 'idealistic' portrait made by Hubert Vos is housed in the Summer Palace, Beijing. Its dimensions are 233.68 x 137.16 cm. Cixi's 'realistic' one is housed in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. Its dimensions are 138.4 x 91.8 cm.

² István L. Szénássy, "Addenda H. Vos," *Hubert Vos Maastricht 1855-1935 Newport*, ed. István L. Szénássy (a catalogue of exhibitions at Stamford Museum, Stamford, Conn. USA, 15 Jun. to 15 Aug. 1979 and at Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht NL, the Netherlands, 28 Sep. to 28 Oct. 1979), 20. Here, Szénássy says that the family pedigree, provided by the Municipal Archives of Maastricht mentions 1st February as Hubert's birthday. But in an autobiographical letter, he himself mentions his birthday was 17th February.

where he studied with Blanc-Garin. Soon after this training, his works brought him a stream of successes in many exhibitions and won him gold medals in Paris and Amsterdam. He ran a large studio in London for ten years. Meantime, he joined artistic societies and founded some art societies as well. He also made portraits of many famous people. He came to America in 1892 as commissioner representing Holland at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. America, which he called "a land of Hope and Opportunity," had enchanted him and soon he decided to become an American citizen. The exotic displays at the World Fair in Chicago incited his interest in developing his 'composite' portraits of people from different races. His first ethnic portrait was *South American Indian of British Guiana*, made in 1893. Since then, it took over a decade for him to venture to the remote and alien locales of South America, Hawaii, Japan, Java, China and Korea. In his later life, he increasingly devoted himself to still-life pictures featuring Chinese porcelain.³

How was Hubert Vos enabled to come into the Summer Palace to paint Cixi? Before his success reaching Cixi in 1905, Vos tried his best to ask permission to paint the Guangxu emperor and Empress Dowager Cixi in 1899. Besides his own effort, many principal ambassadors from Netherlands, America, England, Germany, France, and Russia who "were anxious ... to show the world the likeness of the great rulers of four hundred million people" sent memorials written in Chinese to the imperial Court, recommending Vos to be a "foremost" portraitist for Quangxu and Cixi. However, he felt that the prevailing atmosphere made the situation impossible: "the prejudice against being reproduced and the Emperor and the Emperor Dowager [ap]proach for a foreign[er] to get even inside the Sacred city, far less than to come in their august presence, made my quest

³ Hubert Vos, "Autobiographical Letter by Hubert Vos, written in October, 1911," *Hubert Vos Maastricht 1855-1935 Newport*, ed. István L. Szénássy, 9-12. I also learn about Vos's artistic life from the same catalogue: Robert P. Metzger, "Hubert Vos," 14-16.

nihil."⁴ The Court's xenophobia defeated him. But, he managed to paint governmental officials in China, including Prince Qing (Fig.45), Yuan Shikai (Fig.46), and Li Hongzhang (Fig.47). According to H. de W. F., Cixi was not satisfied with portraits made by a female portraitist Katherine Carl who had stayed with Cixi in the Court during 1903-4.⁵ After she had seen Vos' portrait of Prince Qing (the uncle of the Guangxu emperor), Cixi relaxed protocol to allow Vos to paint a portrait of Cixi for her Summer Palace. Then, she ordered a letter to be written, addressed to 'Hubert Vos, America,' summoning him to come back to China to paint her. The letter finally reached Vos of New York through the

⁴ Ibid., 11. In the autobiographical letter, he describes the whole process of how he could not reach Cixi in 1899 and how he could finally paint her in 1905, "...Tientsien, where it was my good fortune to get acquainted with one of the most charming men I ever met in my life, and who has always remained one of my very best friends. At that time, Colonel Norman Munthe, aide-de-camp to H. E. Yuan-Shi-Kai, viceroy of Pechili, was general instructor of the New Chinese Imperial Army.... He is at present General Munthe and at the head of the Custom House service of Tientsien, the seaport of Peking, and general adviser to the Chinese Government. He speaks, reads and writes Chinese.... If I came to a deadlock in my researches, he found a way to get me through.... He took me all the way inland to the principal Chinese military camp, strictly guarded, introduced me to H. E. Yuan-Shi-Kai and disposed him to sit for me for his portrait. He stayed with me in camp a whole week, in order to protect me against the anti-foreign feeling, very strong at that time, which was a few months before the boxer uprising. The sittings were in the morning, in the afternoon we used to play Poker with the Chinese army Doctor and another Chinese Secretary and interpreter, who were both graduates from American Universities, in the evening we dined officially in the Tsing-Li-Yamen, a dinner of thirty-three courses, with the military band playing outside, sometimes playing outside, sometimes playing Sousa marches, sometimes they gave us a great display of Chinese fireworks; and at night we barricaded ourselves securely in Mr. Munthe's Little house with loaded revolvers and guns close at hand, for we felt, although the Chief was our friend, the common soldier might like to send us to Kingdom come. I tried very hard at that time to obtain the permission to paint the Emperor of the Empress Dowager, but the prejudice against being reproduced and the Emperor and the Emperor Dowager [approach for a foreign to get even inside the Sacred city, far less than to come in their august presence, made my quest nihil. I was warmly seconded by the principal Ministers of the different countries who sent memorials drawn up in Chinese by their Chinese Secretaries to the Court, saying that I was a foremost portrait painter in Europe, and that they were anxious that I should show the world the likeness of the great rulers of four hundred million people, etc., etc., it was of no avail. Mr. Knobel, the Minister of the Netherlands, and Mr. Conger, the Minister of the United States, to whom I was specially recommended as well as the English, German, French and Russian Ministers, with whom I was on very friendly terms, all did all they could, but did not succeed. It was when my friend, General Munthe, came with a letter from his Chief, Yuan-Shi-Kai, that the doors of the palace were partially opened and, thanks to the British Minister, Sir Claude McDonald, I obtained a few sittings from His Excell. Prince Ching [Qing], the uncle of the Emperor and the 'Premier' of China. After my portrait was completed, I presented His Highness with a copy of my portrait. And it was several years later, when Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress Dowager, saw my portrait in Prince [Qing's] Palace, that she [relaxed] the protocol to allow me to come all the way back to China from New York (to where I had returned), to paint a life-sized full length portrait of Her Majesty for her Summer Palace." Here, Vos does not mention how he met Li Hongzhang and painted him. Despite the autobiographical letter shows Vos' English was somewhat poor, he did explain the process the whole situation well. Vos does not mention how he met Li Hongzhang and painted him.

⁵ H. de W. F., *Rulers of the Far East: an Exhibition of the Works of Hubert Vos* (a catalogue of an exhibition at Ten Rockefeller Plaza, New York, 1944), unpagued.

Netherlands Legation in Washington.⁶ So, without his first journey to China in 1899, his meeting Cixi in 1905 would have been impossible.⁷

Vos's journey to America in 1892 opened his eyes: he saw ethnological detail and pictorial illustrations at the "living ethnological villages" of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He had felt fascinated about Oriental peoples and predominately developed his portraits in ethnographical paintings concerning different racial physical types and cultural materials and scenery.⁸ So, when coming to China in 1905, he had already painted portraits of South American Indians, Hawaiians, the Korean emperor, princes and other nobles, a Tibetan priest, Chinese, Javanese, Sudanese, and so on. In 1911, Vos remarked,

It was during the World's Fair in Chicago, where the officials had brought together the greatest collection of the different people of the Globe ever reunited in one spot at a tremendous expense, that I began to study the works I could get hold of on Ethnology and was shocked to see what poor specimens the principal authors ha[d] to illustrate their very superior works. I thought it might be possible to establish a type of beauty of the different original aboriginal races before they became too much mixed or extinct and soon got to work.⁹

Unlike other contemporary scientific approaches which seemed to him to emphasize the 'poor' features of different races, Vos often selected either healthy young boys or girls

⁶ Vos, 11.

⁷ In 1905, when he came to China, he thought that he would paint officials of the Foreign Office. He finally realized that his sitter would be Empress Dowager Cixi. So, he declared, "I might have doubled my price" if he had known earlier. Sterling Seagrave, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 414. Seagrave had a chance to meet Hubert Vos' grandson, Mr Hubert D. Vos in Santa Barbara, California, and read Vos' letters. Seagrave quotes some part of his diary about Vos' encounter to Cixi and how he portrayed her. This is a valuable diary for historians who would like to understand Vos' portraits on Cixi. However, seeing a file about the portrait of Cixi made by Vos in Archives of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University in Feb, 2004, I found that some documents state that the Fogg Museum tried to contact Vos' grandson by mail but the mail was sent back to the Museum. The reason remains unknown. So today, contact with Vos' descendants is impossible.

⁸ "Hubert Vos Dead: Portrait Painter," *The New York Times*, 9 Jan. 1935, 19.

⁹ Vos, 9-10.

approaching their adulthood or high-born nobles. What he wanted to establish was “a type of beauty in man and woman of the different races of the Globe.” He further expresses that as a portraitist, he aimed “to depict the characteristic, the purified, the noble, and overlook the blemish[ed], the uninteresting, the accidental.”¹⁰

Before Vos saw Cixi, he had some idea of what she looked like. In his letter to his family, he says, “I had seen the picture in the St Louis exhibition [which] told nothing. I saw a photograph taken by [a] Japanese photographer.” In 1904, he became a Commissioner adjoin and member of the Jury at the International Exhibition of St Louis. Certainly, he must have seen the enormous portrait of Cixi made by Carl (Fig.1). For Vos, Carl’s work “told nothing” – he was critical of it. His portraits always concern his sitters’ minds and have thus been regarded as “psychological studies.”¹¹ In Carl’s portrait of Cixi for the St Louis exhibition, the Empress Dowager’s face does not show any psychology or character. Vos was quite right about this. There is nothing that the viewer can interpret.¹² In addition, Vos saw a photograph taken by a Japanese photographer, Yamamoto, who developed many copies and gave them to all the diplomats and foreign royal houses. Vos got one photo of Cixi “on a secret loan from the Dutch minister [which now means ambassador].” With Carl’s portrait and Yamamoto’s photo, he was able to do some practice, making “a drawing on a small canvas ... to get familiarized with the subject before I will be allowed to gaze upon her countenance.”¹³

Cixi’s first appointed sitting for Vos was on 20th June. He was told that he would bring all his painting equipments and be at house of the Foreign Minister Wu Tingfang early in the morning, at 4:30a.m. Cixi’s ideal time for posing was at five-o’-clock sharp. No doubt, the choice of this unusual early time was made after the lunar calendar was

¹⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹¹ “Hubert Vos Dead: Portrait Painter” 19.

¹² In Chapter Six, I analyze the whole image of the LPE portrait of Cixi made by Carl. My conclusion about her face is that it was a ‘fake.’

¹³ Seagrave, 415.

consulted.¹⁴ In the early morning, Vos first took “rickshaws” to Wu Tingfang’s place. Then Prince Zaichen, the Minister of Commerce and also a son to Prince Qing, took Vos to the Palace. He was guided to a spot where he set up his equipment. In front of him was a throne behind which was a large screen representing a bamboo grove, misty water and mountains, looking like a dream-world paradise. On the two sides of the throne were pyramids of fruit on the desks and plants in pots. This setting had been arranged in advance. Then Cixi entered. When Vos saw her, he felt “struck very strongly by her appearance.” He “found her different [from the representations of Carl’s portrait of Cixi and of Yamamoto’s photo]” and “fell straight in love with her.”¹⁵ Beside his admiration towards her, he also felt awe as well, saying to his family in a letter, “Neither on any man’s nor woman’s face have I seen greater will power expressed than on that of Her Imperial Highness. You may not believe me but I felt more than shy – I felt a wave of awe pass over me as I saw [her].”¹⁶ Then, he took six or seven photos of Cixi. (After not doing well with the first photo because he dared not make her look at him, he let her favorite eunuch stand behind the camera so that she could look at him.) Vos took photos without using his eyes to look at her. He was ordered to keep these photos secretly and to destroy them after the portrait completed. On the second day, Vos started painting Cixi at 5am. Vos spent forty-five minutes painting her until she felt tired. Then she looked at his work and “talked and pointed at different parts of [his] picture.” Wu Tingfang translated into English. Wu explained to him to “make eyes up, no shadows under or above the eyes, the eyes wide open, the mouth full and up, not drooping, the eyebrows straight, the nose no shadows, no shadows, no shadows, no wrinkles!” Reluctantly following the instruction, Vos wrote, “I began to understand that I was not allowed to paint realistically.” This

¹⁴ When Katherine Carl made portraits for Cixi in 1903-4, Cixi consulted her lunar calendar to choose the lucky dates and time for starting and ending the portraits. Cixi was generally superstitious in her life.

¹⁵ Seagrave, 415.

¹⁶ “Hubert Vos Dead: Portrait Painter” 19.

realization grieved him. He frankly expresses his artistic principle in his autobiographical letter to Dr Ten Kate, "The picturesque, the exalted technique, the impressionistic, the sentimental, has to be very sparingly used for fear of being less truthful. What is useful to science is fact, not fancy."¹⁷ He also told to a representative of the Dutch magazine *Op de Hoogte*: "You may call me a realistic with sentiment. I hate everything theatrical."¹⁸ Searching for reality, truth, and character was a creed to him. The Court's and Cixi's demands made him depart from his creed. But did Vos give up his principle? The same day, he arrived back at his hotel room before half-past-nine in the morning. He had a cold bath, and drank whisky and soda to start with "a new head."¹⁹ He worked with a new sketch until four in the afternoon. The unfinished work transferred Cixi as an old lady into a girl of *twenty five*. On the third day, still the same time, at 5 a.m., Vos brought the first sketch and the new one with him. When he showed *the new one* to Wu Tingfang, Prince Zaichen, and eunuchs, all of them felt "immensely impressed." The portrait was also sent to Cixi and her court ladies to take a look. A while later, he was told that Cixi felt pleased. Then, he altered some details, but very little, and also took some notes in his small note book. At the same time, Cixi showed him to "the eyes more up, more slanting." When he drew some sketches of the mouth, eyes and nose, Cixi stood up, walked near him, took his pencil and then made a line on his notebook that he was holding. What Cixi tried to alter on the sketch was her eyebrows in order to suit Chinese fashions. He felt so amazed at Cixi being so close to him. Later, when leaving, Cixi turned round and smiled at him. He writes, "The first smile I got."²⁰ On the fourth day was Cixi's final sitting for him. Cixi

¹⁷ Vos, 10.

¹⁸ H. de W. F., unpagcd. In a conversation, during the spring of 1928, he expressed his attitude towards his work to a representative of the Dutch magazine at his summer studio at Newport, Rhode Island.

¹⁹ Seagrave, 416.

²⁰ Ibid.

bowed gracefully to him for greeting. After sitting, she several times took trouble to say 'very good' with a smile.²¹

These sittings over four mornings gave Cixi satisfaction, but not Vos. Vos says, "I resolved to paint her as if I were a Chinese myself."²² He also remarks that "the difficulties of my work [on portrait of Cixi gave me] no room in [my] ethnological research."²³ What he wished initially was to use a Western point of view to look at Cixi, not to look at her with Chinese eyes. But, he compromised himself in the end for the sake of the manners governing Chinese traditional portraiture. He let Cixi appear dignified and at the same time endowed her with a great deal of vanity and flattered her. During Cixi's four sittings, Vos only did sketches of her on a small canvas. He then used them as models when he painted on the large canvas in his studio in the hotel. He continued with this 'idealized' portrait until it was finished on 18th August and then handed it into the Court. Then, he went back to New York to complete the other one. Away from her control, Vos enjoyed much freedom. He could paint something which was very different from the 'idealised' one. He would paint what he saw in Cixi: she was "erect and a tremendous will power, more than I have ever seen on a human being, hard firm will and thinking lines."²⁴ As a result, Cixi's tremendous and firm will is shown on her face and a striking dragon is portrayed on the screen. Her face shows her determination and her 'thinking lines' whereas the painted large brown dragon on the screen behind Cixi was actually not there but was put there by Vos to symbolize her great power. In addition, this 'realistic' portrait also shows a defect on her face: the left half of her face had remained paralysed after Cixi had a stroke. Puyi (also the Xuantong emperor), in his memoir, *The Last Emperor*, mentions, "When Cixi became an old-aged woman, her face had a muscular tic. She was

²¹ Ibid., 417.

²² "Hubert Vos Dead: Portrait Painter" 19.

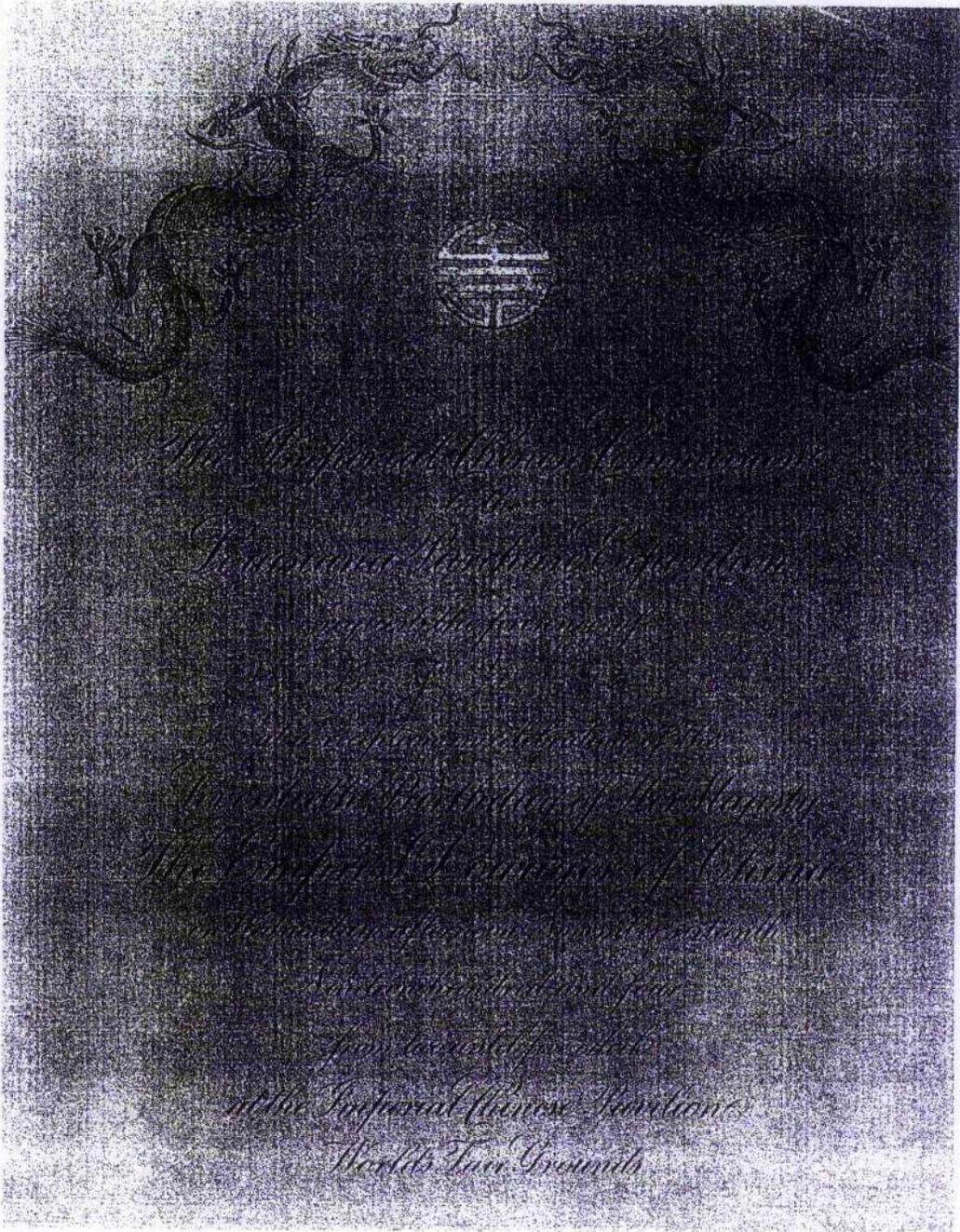
²³ Vos, 11.

²⁴ Ibid., 415.

very much reluctant to let other people notice that.²⁵ Her muscular *tic* must have been the result of her stroke. Cixi was actually suffering from facial palsy and did not want other people to know it. This is an unflattering portrait – sad-eyed, strong-willed, and imperfect faced – giving a negative and destructive portrayal of Cixi. This ‘realistic’ portrait was sent to the Paris Salon for exhibition in 1906. Grenville L. Winthrop purchased it at Kende Galleries, New York in 1940 and kept it until 1943. In 1944, Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University acquired the ownership of this painting, retaining it to the present day.

²⁵ Puyi, *The Last Emperor: autobiography of Puyi* (Tainan: Xibei Publishing Co., 2001), 8.

**G-1: Invitation to reception from the Imperial Chinese Commission to
the LPE to celebrate Empress Dowager Cixi's seventh birthday**



Courtesy of Archives, Missouri Historical Society Library, St Louis

G-2: Katherine Carl's letter to Professor Halsey C. Ives

Jan 2nd 1904LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
PEKIN, CHINA.

Mr. Halsey C. Ives
Director Art Dept. St. Louis
Dear Sir.

I am now painting a portrait of Her Majesty the Empress Dowager of China which His Excellency Mr. Cuyler has requested Her Majesty to send to the St. Louis Exposition. I have already obtained permission from Mr. Smith (Assistant Secretary in Europe) to send any things which to St. Louis to pass before the jury that consists of the Paris Jury whom I belong. Now, Her Majesty does not wish to send over this portrait except by her own representative to the St. Louis

fair the Lord High Commissioner Pierre Paul-Lun so it will be impossible for me to have it there in time even for the sitting of that jury. Being the portrait of so exalted a personage & having been requested by our Minister Mr. Cuyler for the St. Louis Art Dept. I am anxious to be assured that there will be no doubt as to its proper reception. As it is an international courtesy Her Majesty's sending this the first portrait of her has painted, I feel I am not presuming too much in asking this favor. I have decided to send nothing else though I must make a effort to be represented by

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books, about which I have been free as to ac-
 cepting or carrying out, but I dislike any personal
 bias in the decision than this picture has
 the place that is due to the person represented
 rather than to the artist. I am a member of
 the Société Nationale of Paris & was in it, I think
 for several years before I went over to the Champ
 & Mess at the old Champs Elysees Saloon.
 On hearing from you I will send you the best
 dimensions of the picture. My Brother Mr. Francis
 A. Carl, one of the Vice Commissioners for China,
 is to leave for St. Louis this 20th inst & will call
 upon you also as to this subject. Please reply
 at my leisure as soon as possible addressing

Care of St. L. W. Conner N. S. Lyakin Oeking, My
 Brother may, on seeing you, telegraph me your desire
 if he finds it will reach me more quickly than your
 letter, which I trust you will forward as quickly
 as possible -

Thanking you in advance for the trouble
 I am obliged to give you

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully

Katherine Carl

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G-3: Professor Halsey C. Ives' letter to Katherine Carl

File

March 2, 1904.

Miss Kate A. Carl,

in care, Legation of the United States of America,
Pekin, China.

Dear Madame:

Your letter of January 2nd was received at this office during my absence. I hasten to answer it, although I feel that it is now too late for my reply to reach you in time to bring your work before the National Jury of Selection at its meeting here. Of necessity, we have been forced to delay the date far beyond the time originally fixed - in February, I doubt now if the examination will take place before the first week in April. Should the work be sent over with the Imperial Commissioner for China, I fancy some position may be found for it; though, from the fact that it has not passed the Jury, it would as necessity be excluded from examination by the International Jury on awards. You may rest assured, I will do all in my power to aid you in this matter.

Wishing your work may reach here before the Jury meeting, I am, with good wishes for your success,

Very truly yours,

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Chief, Department of Art.

Courtesy of Archives, St Louis Art Museum

G-4: The List of Our Exhibits at the World Fair Palace of Liberal Arts

List of Our Exhibits at World's Fair, Palace of Liberal Arts

PRICES MODERATE → → ORDERS TAKEN AND PROMPTLY EXECUTED

Cloisonné Articles	Jade Stones
Silk and Woolen Carpets	Ivory Carving
Old Porcelain	Wood Carving
Old Cloisonné	Red Lacquer
Old Bronze	Pottery

PEKING INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTE PEKING, CHINA

PAMPHLETS
A - - - - - SUBJECT



LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION
LIBERAL ARTS BUILDING
CHINESE SECTION
ST. LOUIS, U. S. A.

PROPERTY OF :

HALSKEY C. IVES.

Young workmen hold between their hands threads of copper wire flattened out into fine ribbons, and prepare with tweezers the details of design. (Fig. II, on left.)

Then place the ribbons on the object to be cloisonné, fastening it momentarily with a special paste or glue as you proceed. (Fig. III, on right.)



FIG. II

Then the whole is powdered with a composition of silver, copper and borax, and is heated in a furnace. The fillings melt rapidly, giving a perfect soldering, and then it is washed in a decoction of dried apricots.

Now it is ready to receive the colors, which are of crystals with a base of saltpetre and a sort of calcareous sandstone. These crystals are pulverized and mixed with clear water. The divers colors are obtained by adding pyrites of iron, oxide of iron, copper or salt of lead.

The workmen introduce the colors on the object with a little trowel-like instrument. (Fig. III.)

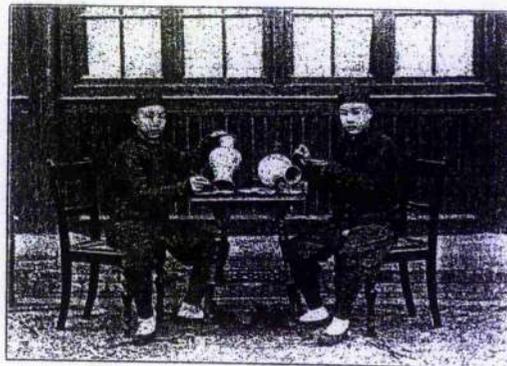


FIG. III

The first coloring being finished, the article is placed in a sleeve of iron, which is in the middle of a woven wire cage filled with heated charcoal kept at a red heat by fans. (Fig. IV.)

Drawn from the fire, the article is colored a second time and heated again as before. It generally demands three or four bakings, each of which necessitates the work of polishing and retouching.

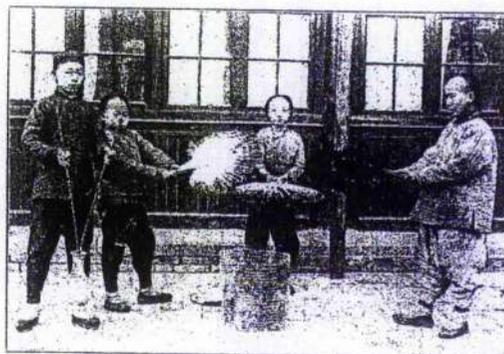


FIG. IV

Next comes the polishing. First it is smoothed with a steel file. (Fig. V, right.)

Then it is polished with sandstone and charcoal in a tub of water. (Fig. V, left.)

When the workman is satisfied with the tones and gradations of colors given to the object, there remains only the gilding. For this purpose the galvanic battery is now used, which replaces the old system of glazing by mercury.

In the preceding notes we have only described the simplicity of tools and procedure. It remains to show the attentive patience of the workmen, and the sentiment of art, original and personal, they possess, and which they reveal even when imitating the conceptions of western artists.

An ordinary article, *e. g.*, a vase one foot high, takes about six workmen to manufacture, and consumes three to four weeks' time.



FIG. V

CARPET-MAKING

A loom is provided in the working-room, consisting of wooden poles, on which are hung the cotton threads as a background of the carpet. In front of the loom are benches on which sit the weavers, beside whom are hung the woolen threads of different colors. Taking these colored woolen threads in hand, the weavers commence weaving the background from special designs by tying knot after knot with great rapidity. Afterwards the threads are cut even with scissors. (Fig. VI.)

Carpets are of many qualities; different in material as well as in workmanship. The first or best quality is made from pure sheep's wool, and there are about ninety threads to a foot; the second quality consists of about seventy threads to a foot; third quality, fifty threads to a foot; and fourth quality, thirty threads to a foot. With regard to color, the Peking vegetable dye is famous for its durability. Regular workmen can complete 6 inches square on an average per day.

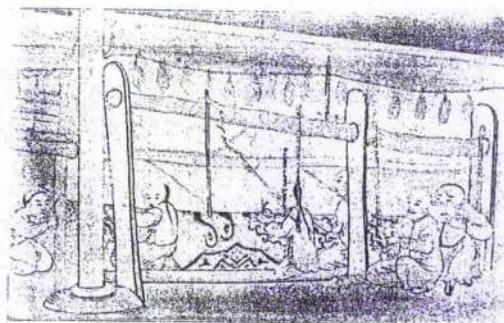


FIG. VI



HIS EXCELLENCY HWANG SEE-YUNG
Director-General
Peking Industrial Institute

INTRODUCTION

THIS Institute was organized in Peking, the capital of China, in July, 1901, by His Excellency Hwang See-Yung, a high metropolitan mandarin, with the assistance of his distinguished son, Hon. Hwang Chung-huei, who for two years was associated with Minister Wu Ting Fang in Washington, D. C., and afterwards became Consul to Lima, Peru. It was organized with funds raised by the sale of shares. The object of this organization is to furnish employment to the artisans who were thrown out of employment during the crisis of 1900; to instruct young pupils from poor families and others, and give them the benefits of a thorough technical education in a manual training school.

The principal departments of the Institute are as follows: Cloisonné Department, Silk and Woolen Carpet Department, Carpenter Department, Metal Work Department, Carving Department, and Soap Manufacturing Department. Each department has an instructor looking after the conduct of the men and boys in his department. There is a central office, consisting of twelve members, who manage the accounts, do the purchasing of materials and dispose of the articles produced. The Director takes general control.

This Institute, charitable in character and business in form, has met with remarkable success. Ever since its opening the number of men and boys has been increasing until we now have four hundred souls employed in the various departments.

NOTES ON THE MANUFACTURE OF CLOISSONNÉ IN PEKING

Peking, since about thirty years, has seen its ancient art of Cloisonné enamel reborn. Some attribute its introduction to the Jesuits, from whence the common appellation "fa lan." Others, on the contrary, believe its invention to be purely Chinese. Coincidences of dates appear to give reason to the latter. The Jesuits, in fact, did not arrive in China until toward 1580 and the Cloisonné art had well before this acquired a brilliant reputation, especially under the reign of Ching T'ai, the seventh emperor of the Ming dynasty, 1450. So true is this that the correct Chinese expression for designing Cloisonné is "Ching T'ai lan," drawn from the name of this emperor.

The following descriptions and illustrations will show the actual processes used by the students of the "Peking Industrial Institute," Peking, which city is the seat of this Oriental Art in China.

To begin with, foundations are made in copper for vases, plates or whatever object. (Fig. 1.)

Artists represent on paper the designs or arabesque which by means of the stylus are to be reproduced on the object.



FIG. 1

Pages 7 & 8 of *List of Our Exhibits at the World Fair Palace of Liberal Arts*

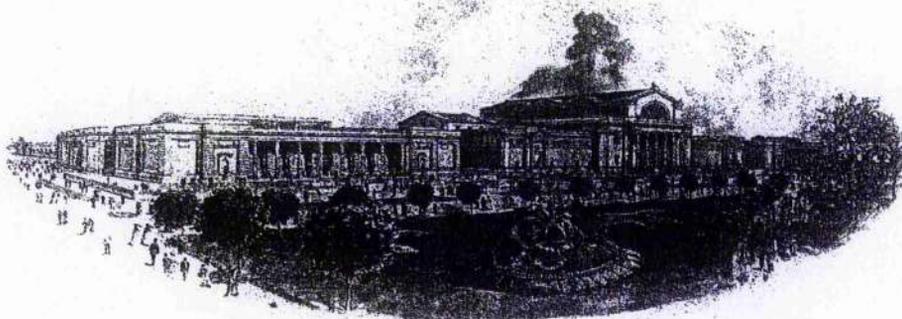
Courtesy of Archives, St Louis Art Museum

G-5: List of Foreign Commissioners for LPE

- ✓ *Mr. Eduardo Schuffino* ~~Director~~ *Commissioner of the Pavilion*
~~Dr. Jose V. Lombardo, Commissioner General, Argentine Nat. Pavilion.~~
~~Mr. Adolph von St. Gern, Commissioner Gen. for Austria, Aus. Imp. Pav.~~
 - ✓ ~~Mr. Jules Verbeke, Commissioner Gen. for Belgium, Roy. Belgian Pav.~~
~~Mr. J. ...~~
~~Mr. ...~~
 - ~~Mr. ...~~
 - ~~Mr. ...~~
 - ~~Dr. Theodor Lewald, Imperial Com. General for Germany, 4936 Lindell Bldg.~~
 - ~~Mr. Geo. de Szogyeny, Com. Gen. for Hungary, Hungarian Sec. Manufactures Bldg.~~
 - ~~Mr. G. Branchi, Com. Gen. for Italy, Italian Royal Pav.~~
 - ~~Mr. Seiichi Tejima, Commissioner Gen. for Japan, Japanese Imp. Pavilion~~
 - ~~Mr. Albino R. Nuncio, Com. General for Mexico, Mexican Natl. Pav.~~
 - ~~Mr. *Willy ...* *of ...* Com. Gen. for the Netherlands, 1103 Jackson Pl. Cit.~~
 - ~~Mr. Visconde De Alte, Portugese Min. at Washington, Commissioner Gen. Washington, Hotel, City.~~
 - ~~Commissioner of Art Godberg, Russian section, Art Bldg.~~
 - ~~Mr. ... *for ...* Com. Gen. for Sweden.~~
- Carol*
- R*
- Canada*
- ...*

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G-6: Prints of Buildings of Palace of Arts and Palace of Liberal Arts



ISAAC S. TAYLOR,
DIRECTOR OF WORKS.

PALACE OF ARTS.

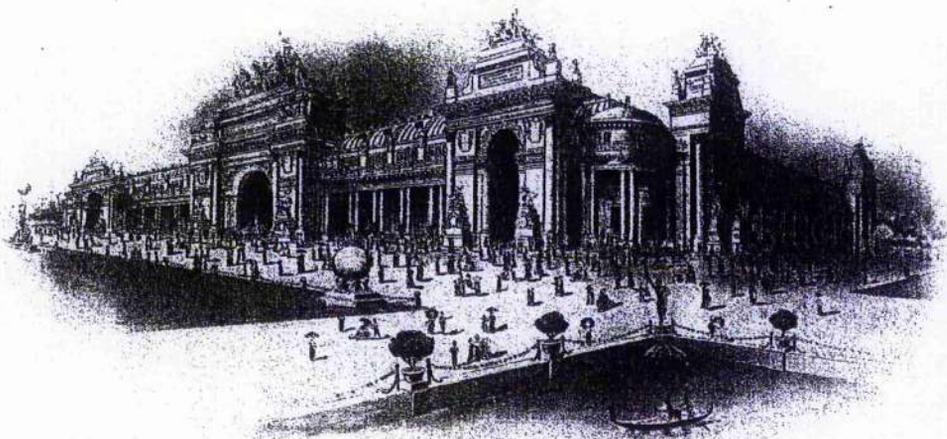
CASS GILBERT,
ARCHITECT.

Consisting of three separate structures, having a frontage of 836 feet and one of them of a depth of 180 feet. Cost, \$1,000,000. Builders,
William Goetz & Sons Company.

FREDERICK J. V. SKIFF,
DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITS.

MALSEY C. IVES,
CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT OF ART.

LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION, ST. LOUIS, U. S. A., 1904.



ISAAC S. TAYLOR,
DIRECTOR OF WORKS.

PALACE OF LIBERAL ARTS.

BARNETT, HAYNES & BARNETT,
ARCHITECTS.

Dimensions, 215 by 750 feet. Will contain the exhibits of typography and printing, photography, medicine and surgery, musical instruments,
chemical arts, paper making, civil engineering, public works, architectural engineering, etc. Cost, \$460,000.

FREDERICK J. V. SKIFF,
DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITS.

LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION, ST. LOUIS, U. S. A., 1904.

JOHN A. OCKERSON,
CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT OF LIBERAL ARTS.

Courtesy of Archives, St Louis Art Museum

H-1: Backhouse Family Tree

Jonathan Backhouse = Anne Pease
1747 - 1826

Jonathan Backhouse = Hannah Chapman
(of Polam, Darlington) (daughter of Joseph Gurney, of Lakenham Grove, Norfolk)
1779 - 1842 d. 1850

Jane Gurney = Robert Barclay Fox Anne = John Hodgkin
(of Falmouth, Cornwall) (of London)
d. 1860 d. 1855 d. 1845

Edmund Backhouse = Juliet Mary
(of Trebah, Falmouth) (only daughter of Charles Fox, of Trebah)
1824 - 1906 d. 1898

Sir Jonathan Edmund Backhouse = Florence
(1st Baron, of The Rookery, youngest daughter of Sir John Salusbury -Trelawny, 9th Baron)
Middleton Tyas, N R Yorks) d. 1902

1849 - 1918

Sir Edmund Trelawny Backhouse Roland Charles Oliver = Margaret Susan
(2nd Baron, of Uplands) (elder daughter of Charles William Dyson Perrins, of Ayrross, Ross-shire and Davenham, Malvern)

1873 - 1944 1874 - 1877 1876 - 1943 1873 d. 1973 1878 - 1943 1876 - 1943 1877 1874 - 1877

Sir John Edmund Backhouse = Jean Marie Frances
(3rd Baron) (only daughter of Lt-Col Gavin Robert Vernon Hume Gore)

1909 - 1944

Sir Jonathan Roger Backhouse = Sarah Ann
(4th and present Baron) (daughter of James Scott, of Cromer, Norfolk)

1939 -

Alfred James Scott Eleanor Jane Scott
2002 - 1998 -

Jonathan Backhouse = Anne Pease
1747 - 1826

Jonathan Backhouse = Hannah Chapman
(of Polam, Darlington) (daughter of Joseph Gurney, of Lakenham Grove, Norfolk)
1779 - 1842 d. 1850

Jane Gurney = Robert Barclay Fox Anne = John Hodgkin
(of Falmouth, Cornwall) (of London)
d. 1860 d. 1855 d. 1845

Charles Hubert = Maude Constance Sarah Juliet = Horatio Noble Pym Millicent Evelyn = Rev. William Frederick
(daughter of Henry Ritchie, of Ceylon) (of Foxwood, Kent)

1856 - 1924 d. 1931 1880

Sir Roger Roland Charles = Dora Louisa Miles Roland Charles = Olive
(6th daughter of John Ritchie Findlay, of Aberlour, DL.) (2nd daughter of Geoffrey)

Harriet Jane = Sir John Ritchie Findlay

1878 - 1962 d. 1958 1878 - 1962 d. 1954 1880 - 1954 d. 1930

Richard Miles Florence Ruth Dora Barbara Constance Joan Margaret Backhouse III Roger Trolawny Jonathan Wilfrid Jasper Una Patricia
(only daughter of Lt-Col Gavin Robert Vernon Hume Gore)

1911 - 1969 1908 - ? ? - ? d. 1968 ? - ? 1905 - 1977 1907 - 1993 1913 - 1980 1911 -

Oliver Richard Jennifer Ann Jane Elizabeth Judith Mary

1941 - 1938 - 1943 - 1946 1945 -

Source: Burke, Sir Bernard Burke's "Backhouse," Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History
the Peerage Baronetage and Knightage Privy Council, and Order of Precedence. 1939 ed.

H-2: Sir Jonathan Edmund Backhouse's will

- Minchin of 4 Stone Buildings Lincoln's Inn London Solicitor my Son-in-Law Sir John Ritchie Windley Baronet and my Son Captain Oliver Backhouse C.B.R.N. and I leave to each of them who shall prove my Will a legacy of Fifty pounds
2. I also appoint the said Trustees to be Trustees of the Settlements hereby made for the purposes of The Conveyancing Acts 1881 to 1911 and of The Settled Land Acts 1882 to 1890 and a sole Trustee shall be competent to act for all the purposes of the said Acts including the receipt of Capital moneys and notices
3. My children are Edmund Trelawny Backhouse the said Oliver Backhouse Captain Roger Roland Charles Backhouse C.B.R.N. Colonel Miles Roland Charles Backhouse D.S.O. and Lady Harriet Jane Findlay Wife of the said Sir John Ritchie Findlay and for brevity hereinafter called them by their first or only Christian names
4. In making this Will I first of all wish to testify my deep appreciation and gratitude for the constant love and loyalty of my Daughter and my four Sons also I wish to thank them all for the industry and conduct which has enabled them to be so successful in their various careers I do not mention my eldest Son Edmund Trelawny Backhouse as a beneficiary in this Will beyond the entailed property as I have reason to believe that he is amply provided for outside any legacy from me by his own consistent hard work conduct and industry in China for which I wish to express to him my most sincere gratitude and appreciation
5. In exercise of all special powers vested in me under any Settlements or otherwise and enabling me in this behalf I appoint that properties subject thereto shall be held in trust for my children in equal shares without liability to bring into hotch-pot and account for any property already appointed by me
6. (a) I give to my Daughter Harriet all my furniture linen china glass books manuscripts prints pictures (other than those made heirlooms) photographs musical instruments articles of vertu watches jewellery and all other articles of domestic household or personal use or ornament except things otherwise disposed of by me I should like my Daughter to distribute to other members of my family as she considers desirable such of the things given to her as she does not wish to keep and to distribute my wearing apparel among old soldiers if she so thinks fit
- (b) I leave to my Son Oliver all my presentation plate
- (c) I leave to my Son Roger my ordinary plate and plated articles
7. I declare that all legacies hereinbefore given by my Will shall be free of duty
8. I hope that my Daughter and Sons between them will settle any question of legacy or pension to any of my Servants who may seem to them worthy of such pecuniary aid especially mentioning Thomas Fruswell my valued Butler and Valet and William Corps my invaluable Coachman who both deserve some mark of their constant and willing services to me
9. I wish that my descendants should live in this Village of Middleton Tyas for at least three generations
10. I devise my freehold properties known as The Rookery with the Kitchen garden The Harndale The School Garth and all my property on the School Hill at Middleton Tyas in

Page 2 of the last will and testament of Sir Jonathan Edmund Backhouse Baronet of
the Rookery Middleton Tyas in the County of York

Courtesy of Postal Searches and Copies Department, Probate Registry, York

Plates



Figure 1

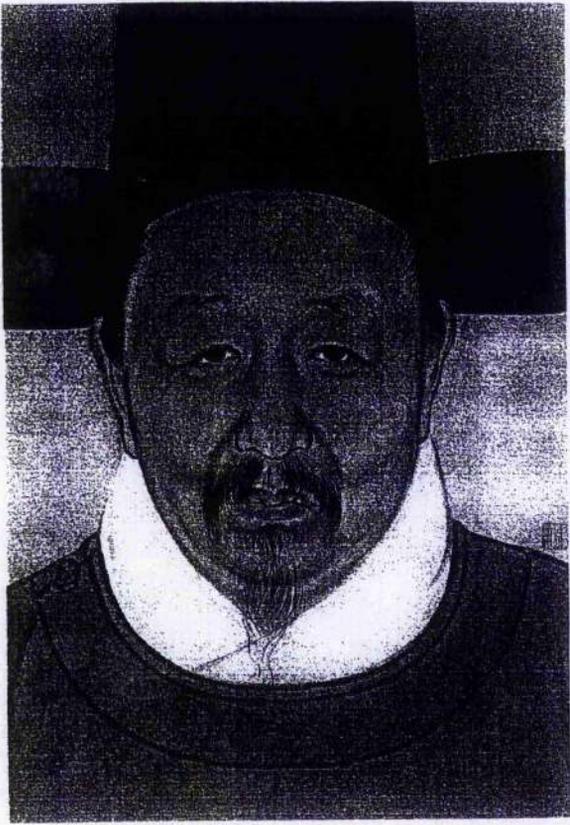


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

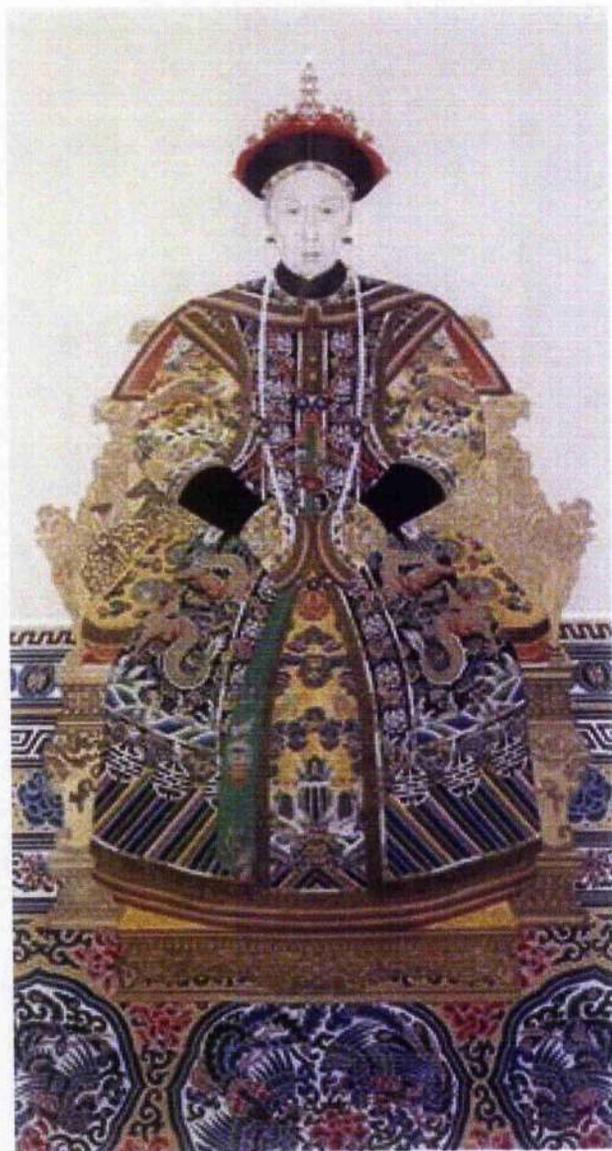
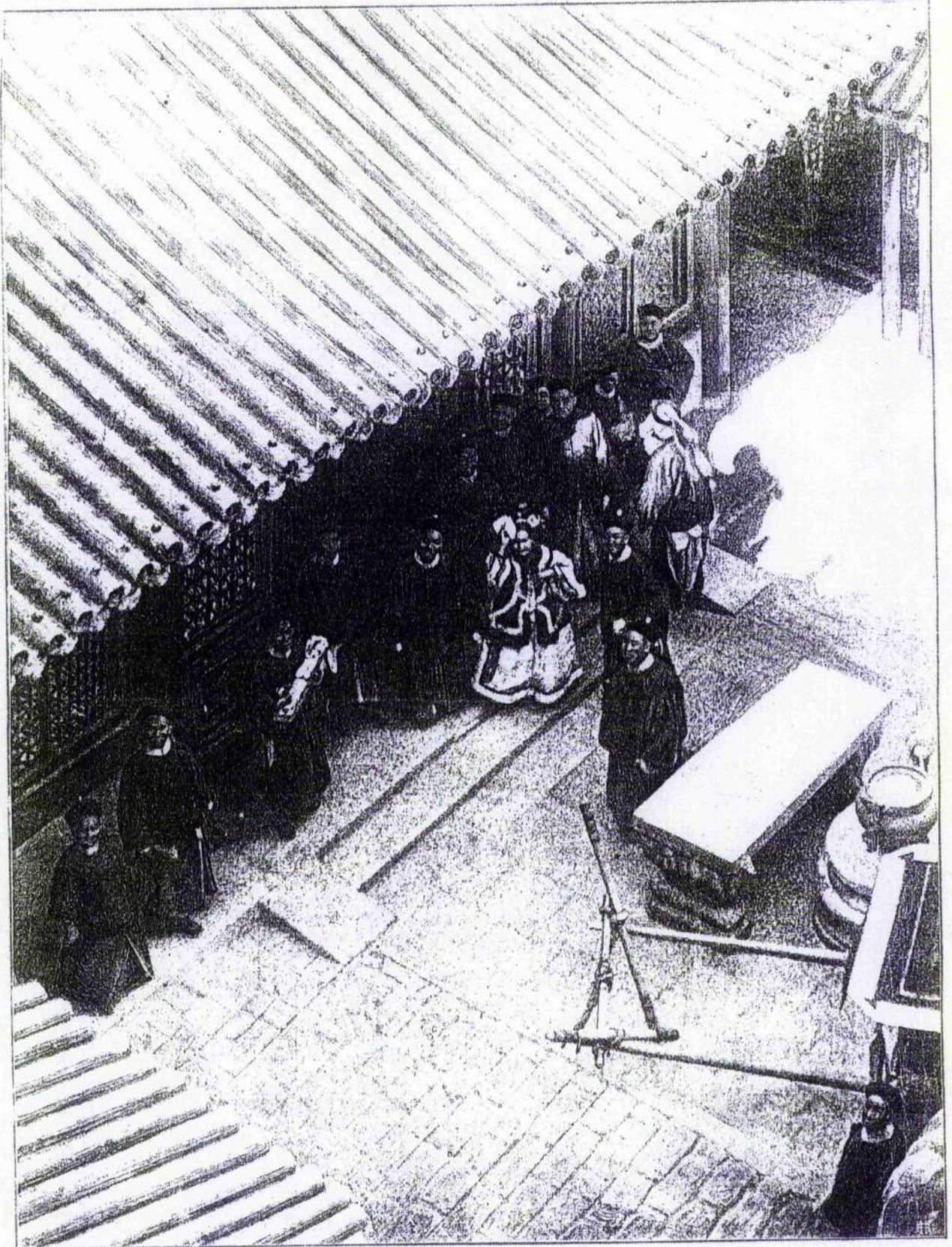


Figure 11



UNIQUE INSTANTANÉ DE LA FEUE IMPÉRATRICE DOUAIRIÈRE DE CHINE

Rentrant à Péking en 1902, l'impératrice Tsou-Hsi agite son mouchoir pour saluer les dames européennes groupées sur la muraille de la Ville Tartare
Voir l'article, page 344

Figure 12.

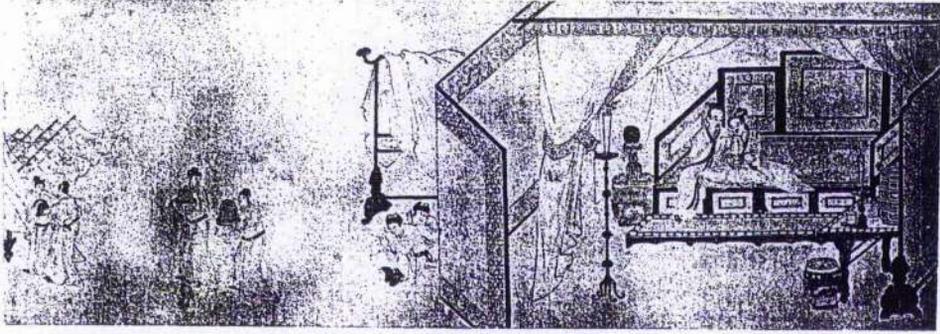


Figure 13

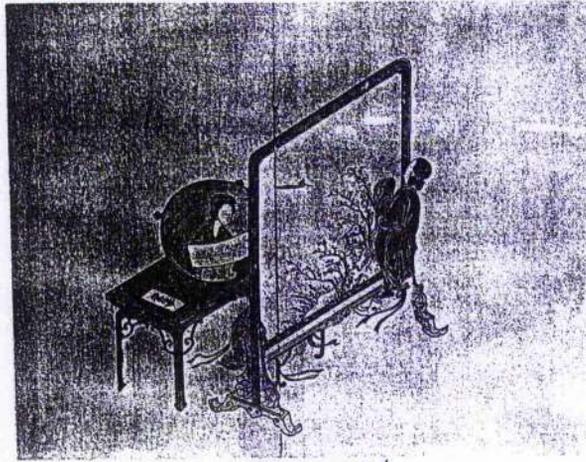


Figure 14

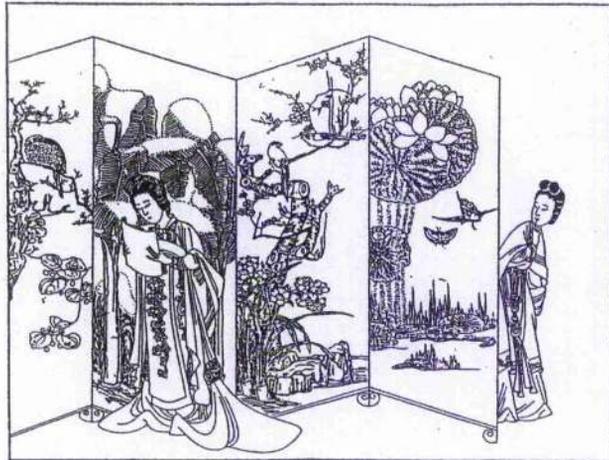
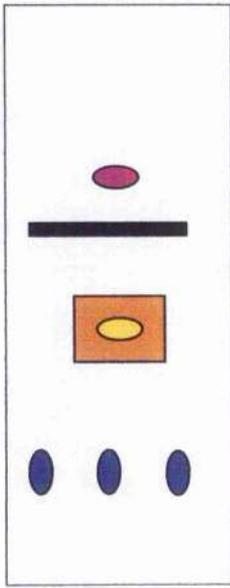
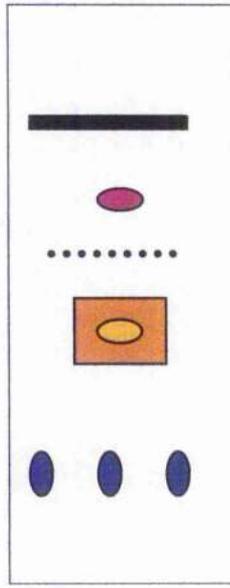


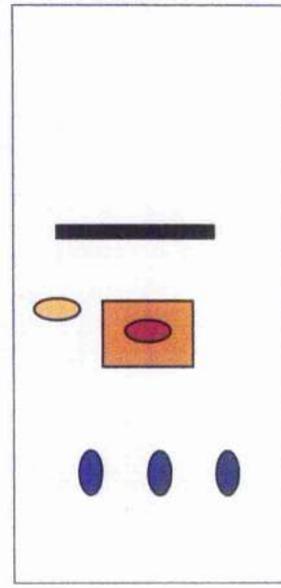
Figure 15



before 1861
(before Xianfeng's death)



between 1861 and 1889



after 1898 until her death



Cixi



Tongzhi or Guangxu



officials



Screen



curtain



throne

Cixi's geographical position relative to the throne forms a crucial demonstration of her power

Figure 16



UNIQUE INSTANTANÉ DE FEU L'EMPEREUR KOWANG-SU

L'empereur Kowang-Su descend de sa litière entre les deux brancards d'avant; deux mandarins soutiennent la portière; d'autres sont agenouillés.

Walt Funtz à la page suivante

Figure 17

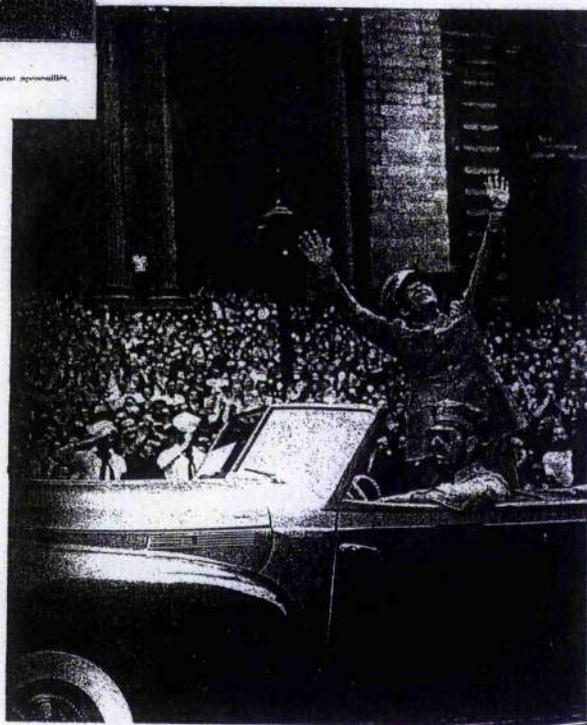


Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



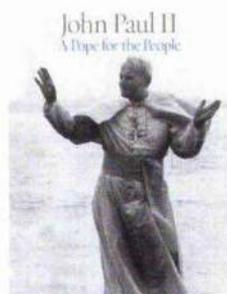
Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24

**Figure 25****Figure 26****Figure 27****Figure 28****Figure 29**

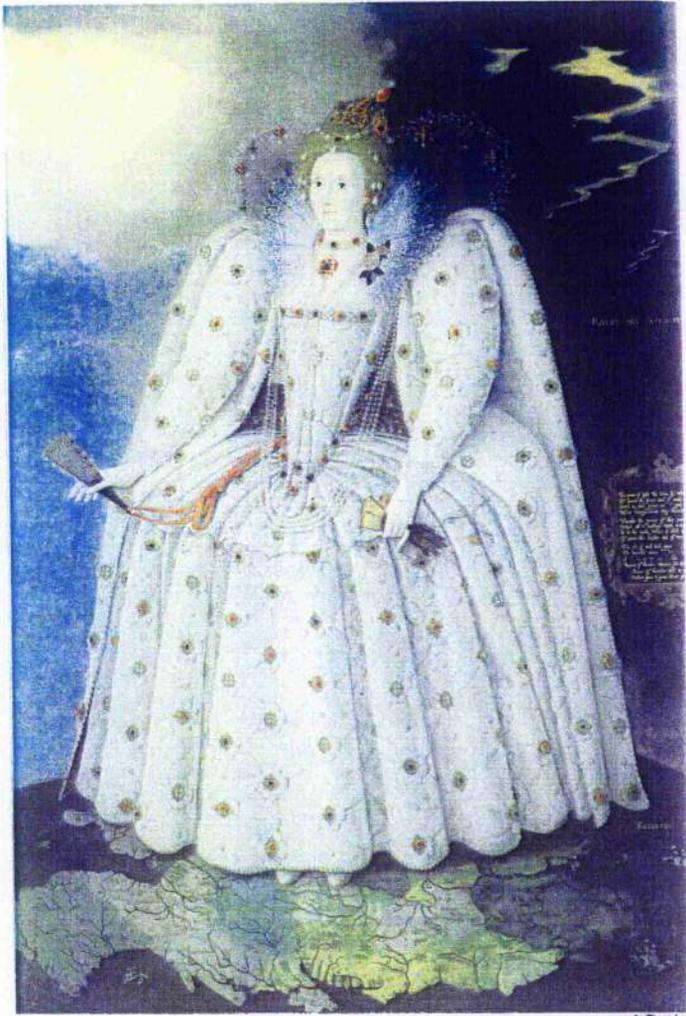


Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37

Figure 38

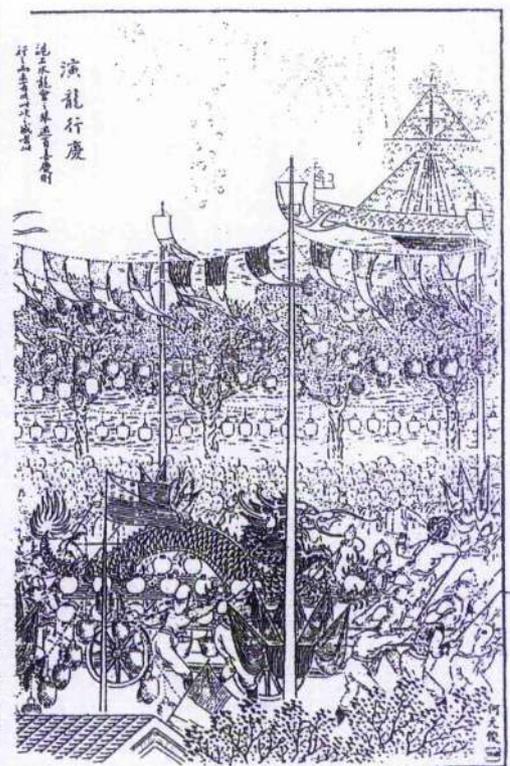
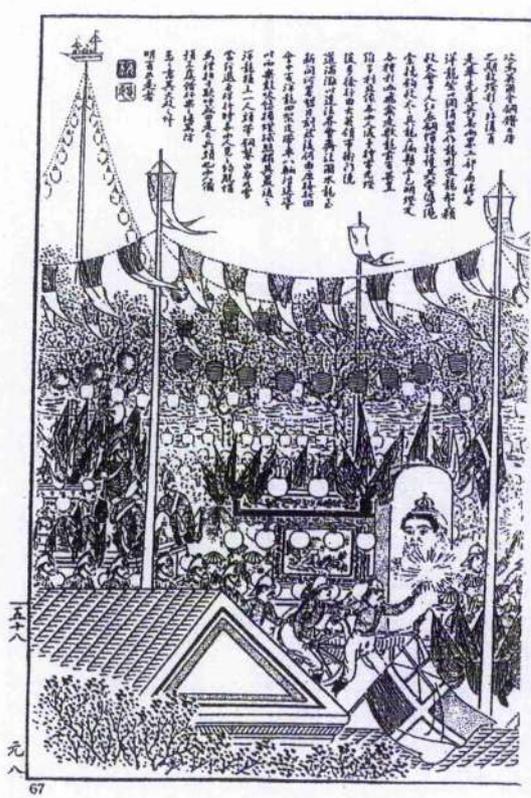




Figure 39



Figure 40

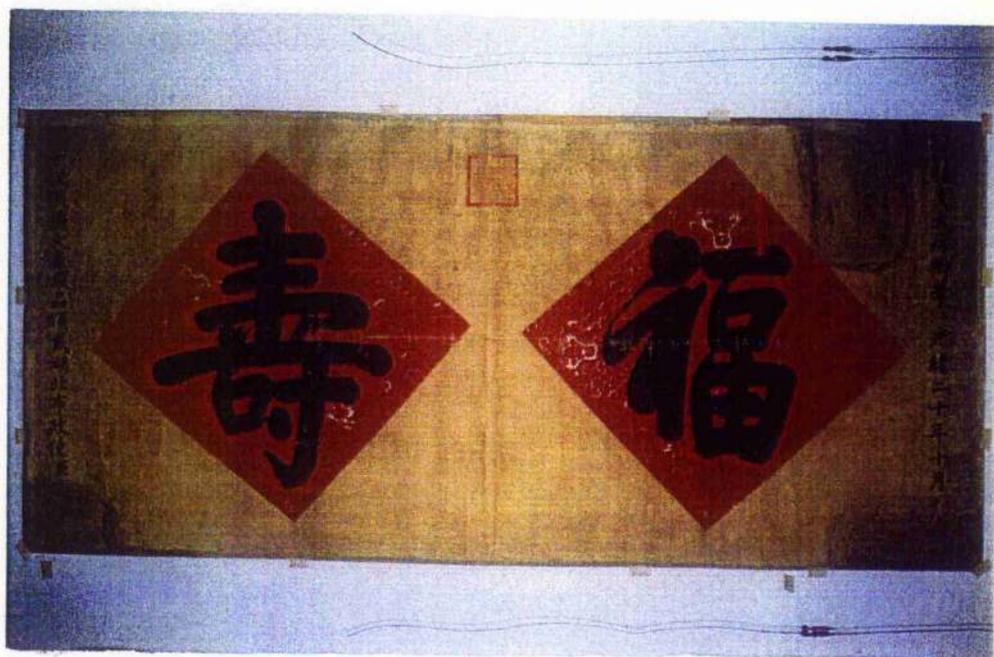


Figure 41

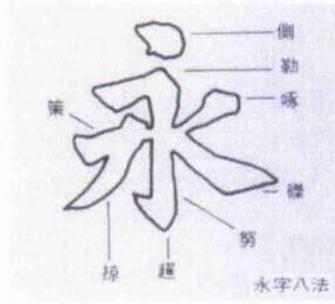


Figure 42



Figure 43



Altered image of H.E.H., the Empress Dowager of China. Ti'a-hai, oil on canvas, by Hubert Van den Veld with permission of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, MA. © 2004 YORO OGD. Courtesy Louisa Photo Archive.

Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



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Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
America

Figure 52



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Trust Gallery of Art
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
America

Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55

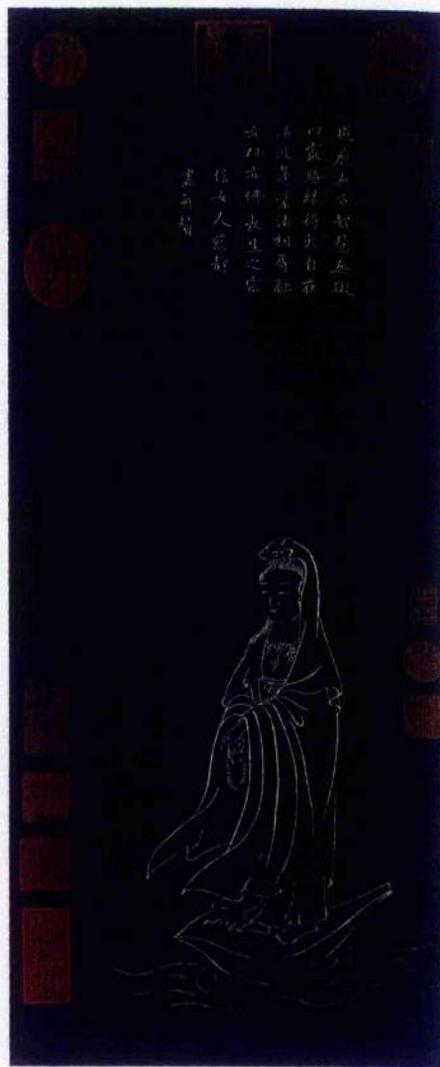


Figure 56



Figure 59



Figure 60

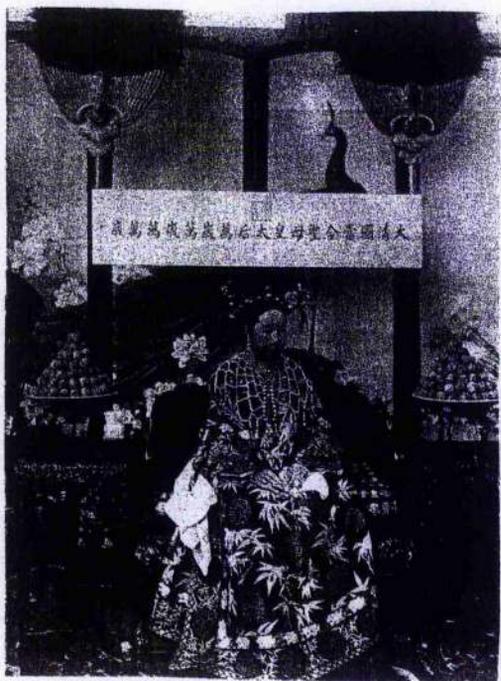


Figure 61



Figure 62

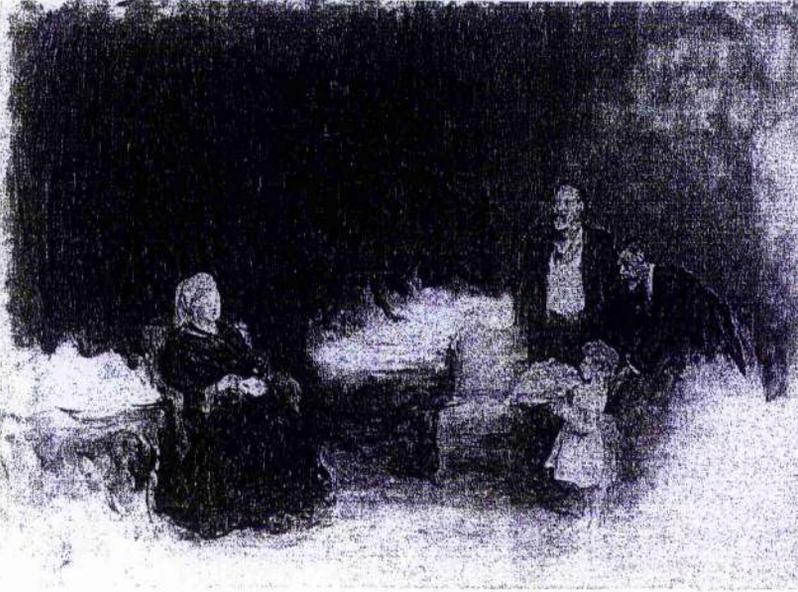


Figure 63



Figure 64

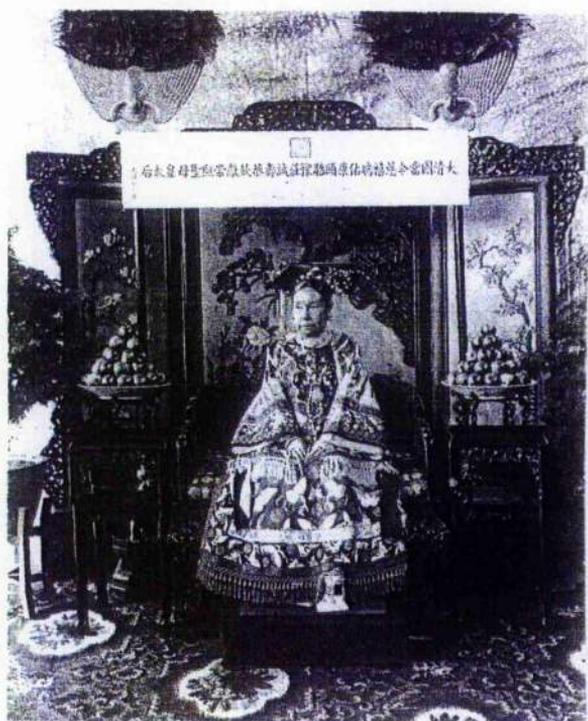


Figure 65



Figure 67



Figure 66



Figure 68

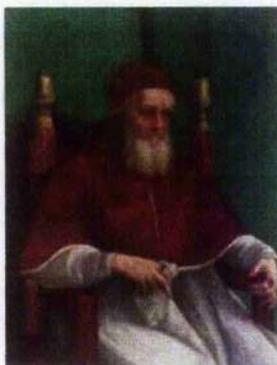


Figure 69



Figure 70



Figure 71



Figure 72



Figure 73

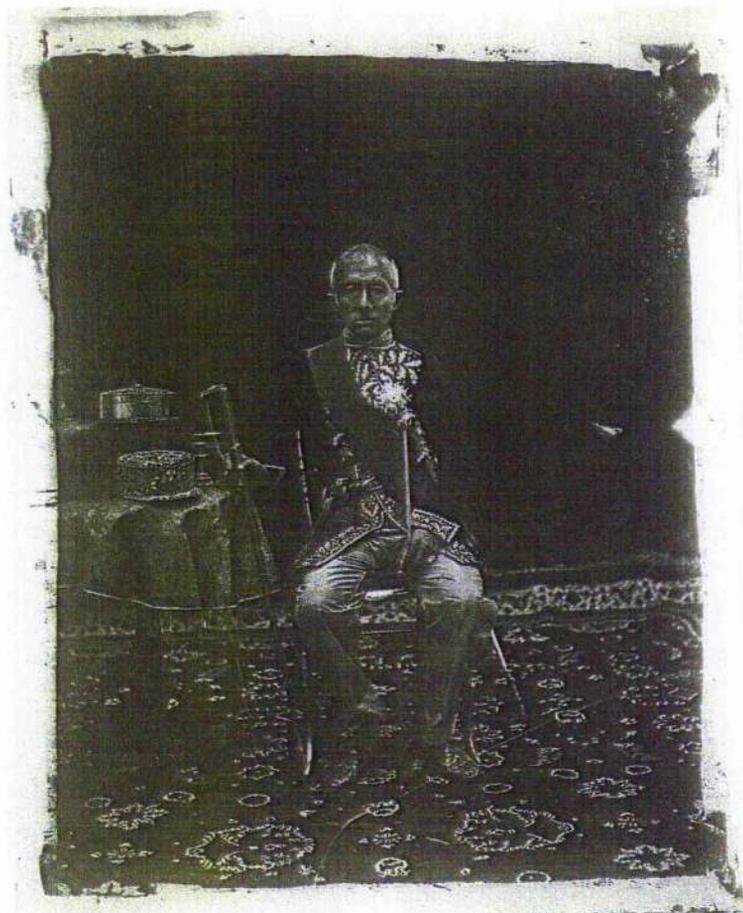


Figure 74



Figure 75



Figure 76



Figure 77



Figure 78

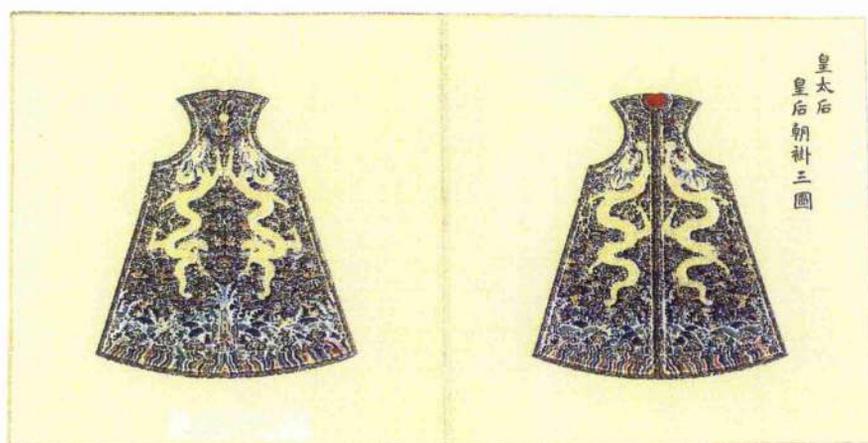


Figure 79



Figure 80



Figure 81



Figure 82



Figure 83



Figure 84



Figure 85



Figure 86



Figure 87



Figure 91



Figure 92



Figure 93



Figure 94



Figure 95



Figure 96

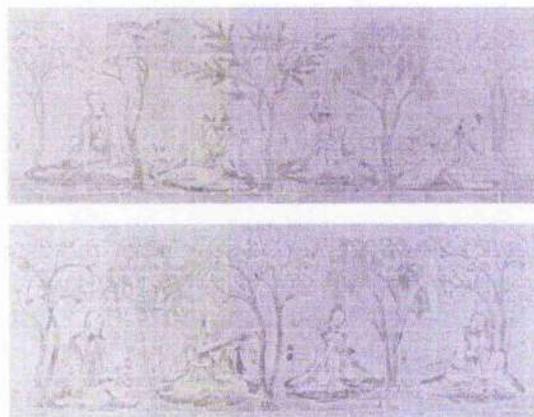


Figure 97

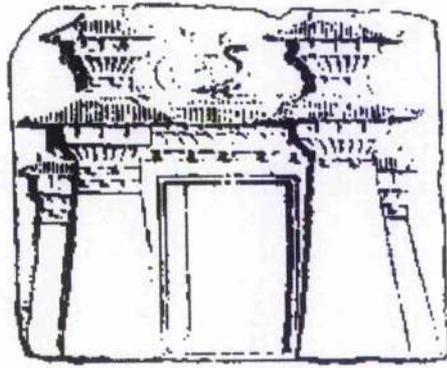


Figure 98

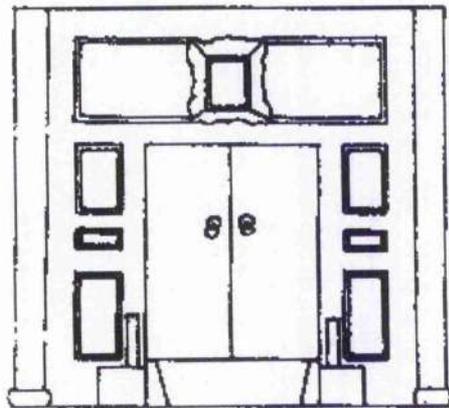


Figure 99

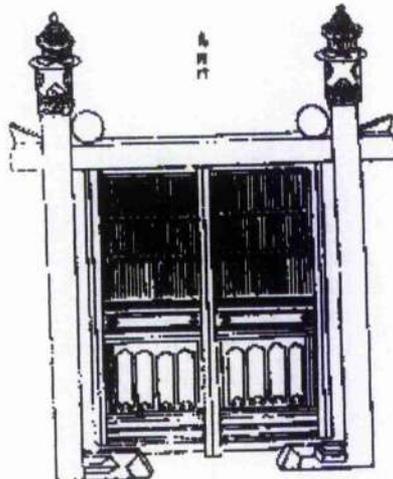


Figure 100

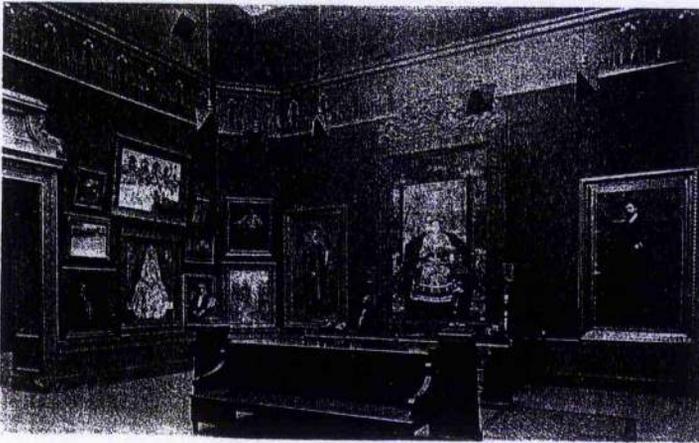


Figure 101

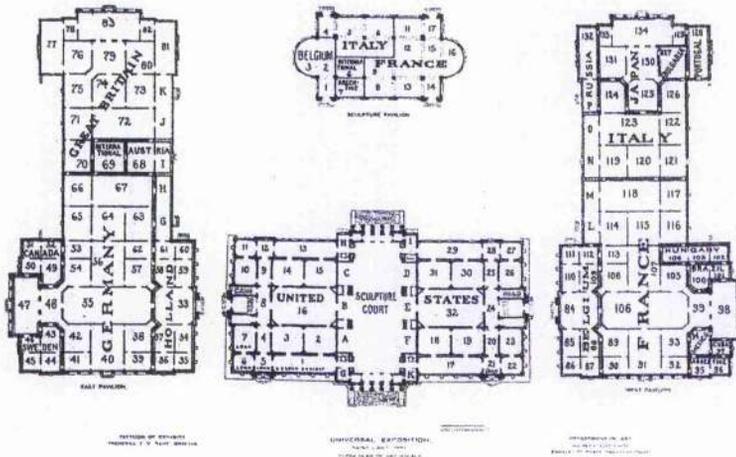


Figure 102

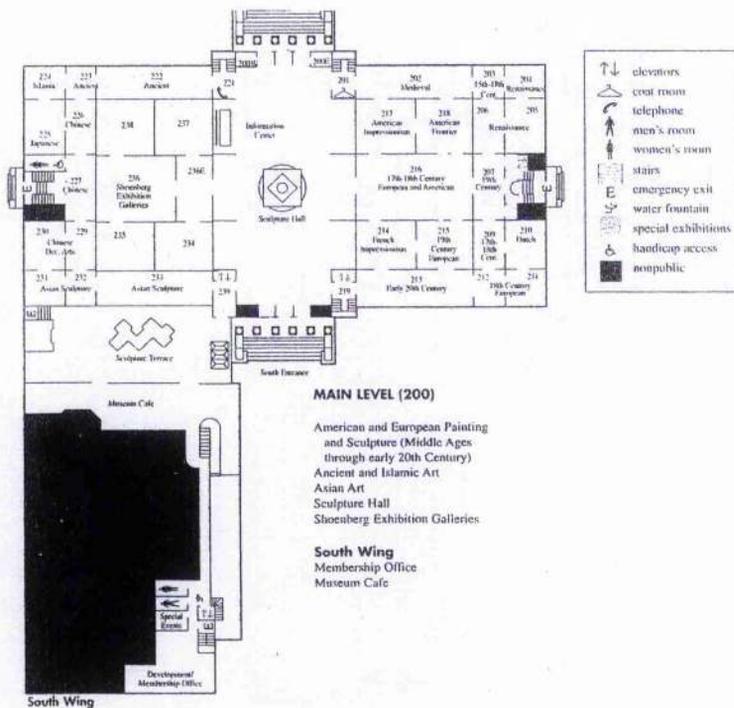


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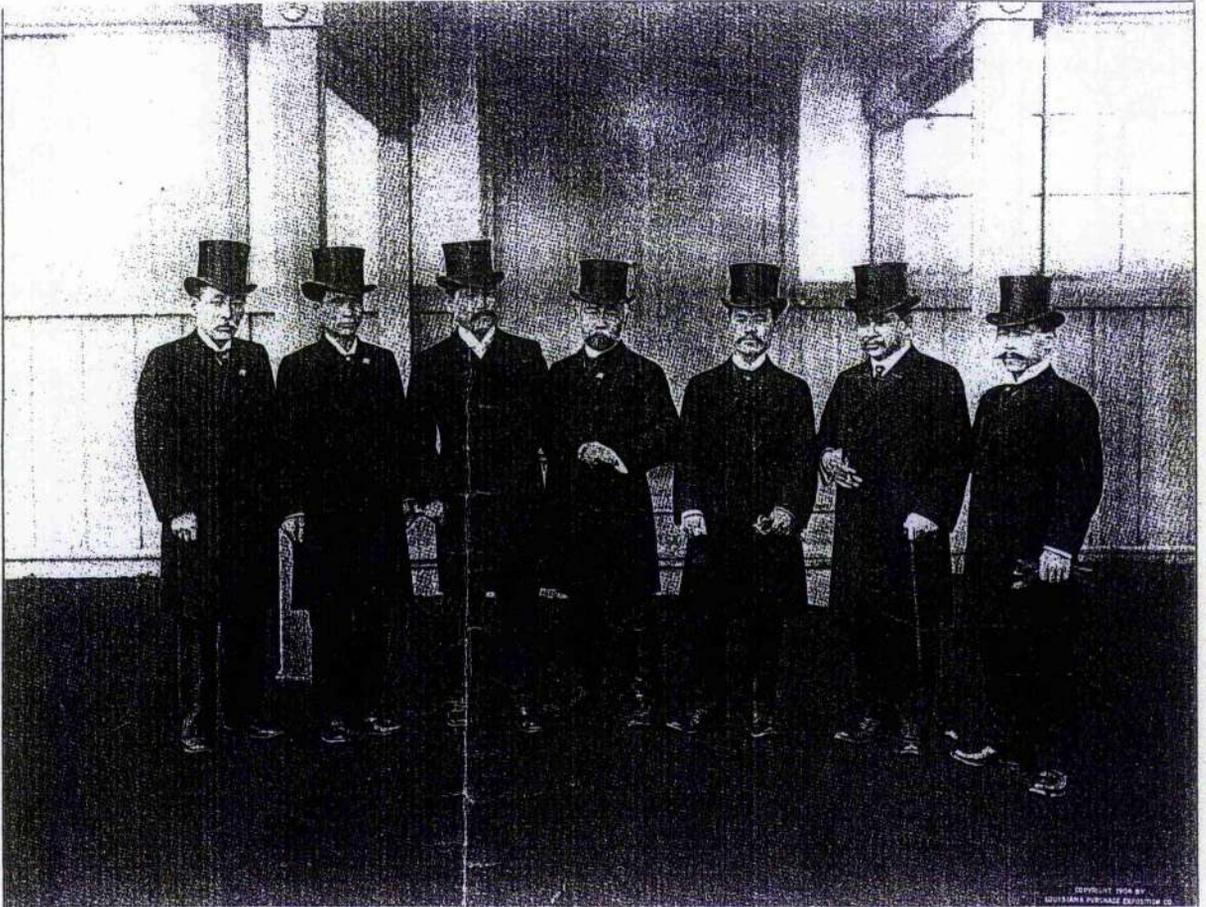


Figure 104



Figure 105

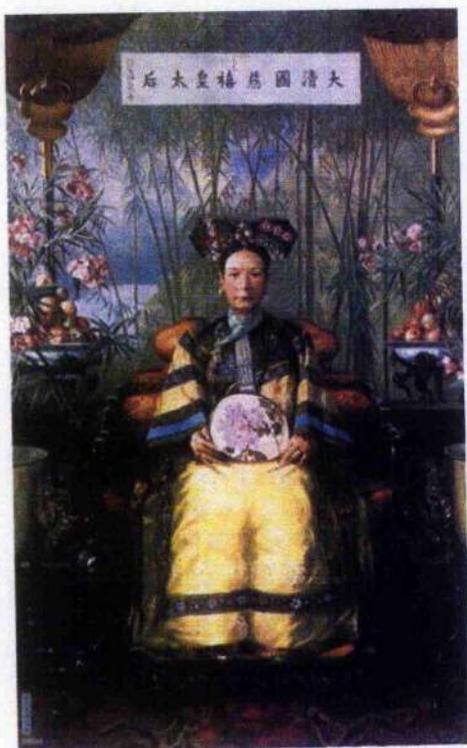


Figure 106



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Figure 107

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