

## Accession and Abdication

On the evening of November 13, 1908 the mansion of Prince Chun was in chaos. My grandmother fainted before hearing the end of the Dowager's decree that had been brought back by the new Prince Regent. Eunuchs and serving women were pouring ginger tea and sending for doctors while on the other side of the room a child was crying and adults were trying to pacify it. My father, the regent, was rushing all over the place: entertaining the Grand Councillor and the eunuchs who had come with him from the palace; telling people to get the child dressed; forgetting that the old lady had fainted; being called in to see her; and then forgetting that the Grand Councillor and eunuchs were waiting to take the future emperor into the palace. During this confusion the old lady came round and was helped into an inner room where the future emperor was still "resisting the edict", howling and hitting the eunuchs as they tried to pick him up. The palace eunuchs were forcing themselves to smile as they waited for the Grand Councillor to tell them what to do next while the Councillor was helplessly waiting for the Prince Regent to deal with the situation. But all the regent could do was to nod....

Some of the older members of the household described this scene to me later; my memory of it disappeared long ago. They said that the confusion was ended by my wet-nurse who gave me the breast and thus ended my cries. This action of hers brought my father and the Councillor to their senses: they decided that she should take me to the palace before handing me over to the eunuchs who would carry me in to see Tzu Hsi.

I still have a dim recollection of my meeting with Tzu Hsi, the shock of which left a deep impression on my memory. I remember suddenly finding myself surrounded by strangers, while before me was hung a drab curtain through which I could see an emaciated and terrifyingly hideous

face. This was Tzu Hsi. It is said that I burst into loud howls at the sight and started to tremble uncontrollably. Tzu Hsi told someone to give me a string of candied haws, but I threw it on the floor and cried, "I want nanny, I want nanny", to Tzu Hsi's great displeasure. "What a naughty child," she said. "Take him away to play."

Two days after I entered the palace Tzu Hsi died, and on December 2, the "Great Ceremony of Enthronement" took place, a ceremony that I ruined with my crying.

The ceremony took place in the Hall of Supreme Harmony (Tai Ho Tien). Before it began I had to receive the obeisances of the commanders of the palace guard and ministers of the inner court in the Hall of Central Harmony (Chung Ho Tien) and the homage of the leading civilian and military officials. I found all this long and tiresome; it was moreover a very cold day, so when they carried me into the Hall of Supreme Harmony and put me up on the high and enormous throne I could bear it no longer. My father, who was kneeling below the throne and supporting me, told me not to fidget, but I struggled and cried, "I don't like it here. I want to go home. I don't like it here. I want to go home." My father grew so desperate that he was pouring with sweat. As the officials went on kotowing to me my cries grew louder and louder. My father tried to soothe me by saying, "Don't cry, don't cry; it'll soon be finished, it'll soon be finished."

When the ceremony was over the officials asked each other surreptitiously, "How could he say 'It'll soon be finished'? What does it mean, his saying he wanted to go home?" All these discussions took place in a very gloomy atmosphere as if these words had been a bad omen. Some books said that these words were prophetic as within three years the Ching Dynasty was in fact "finished" and the boy who wanted to "go home" did go home, and claimed that the officials had a presentiment of this.

What really gave them forebodings, of course, was much more than a couple of chance sentences. The records of the time show that the rising anti-Manchu storm, serious enough in the last years of Kuang Hsu, became ever more menacing during my reign. Later, the increasing power of Yuan Shih-kai was another headache for some high officials and

members of the royal clan who saw that outside the government they had to reckon with the revolutionaries while inside they had to reckon with Yuan Shih-kai; they regarded my reign as one of the most ill-omened in history.

After making a very poor show as emperor for three years I made a very poor show of abdicating. One incident of those last days stands out clearly in my memory. The empress dowager Lung Yu was sitting on a *kang*\* in a side room of the Mind Nurture Palace (Yang Hsin Tien) wiping her eyes with a handkerchief while a fat old man knelt on a red cushion before her, tears rolling down his face. I was sitting to the right of the Dowager feeling rather bewildered and wondering why the two adults were crying. There was nobody in the room besides us three and it was very quiet; the fat man was sniffing loudly while he talked and I could not understand what he was saying. Later I learnt that this fat man was Yuan Shih-kai. This was the only time I ever saw him and his last meeting with the Dowager. If what I have been told is right, this was the occasion on which Yuan directly brought up the question of abdication. After this meeting Yuan Shih-kai used the pretext of an attempt that had been made on his life not to come to court again.

The Wuchang rising sparked off responses all over the country, and when the Manchu commander-in-chief of the imperial forces proved incapable of directing the Peiyang Army against the Republican forces the Prince Regent had no choice but to bring back Yuan Shih-kai. Yuan, who knew how to wait for his price and was kept well informed of developments in the capital, repeatedly declined the offers of reinstatement until he was offered the premiership and supreme military command. Only then did he accept the imperial edict and order the Peiyang Army to advance on the Republicans. After recapturing Hanyang he halted his troops and returned to Peking for audiences with the Prince Regent and the empress dowager Lung Yu.

Yuan Shih-kai was no longer the Yuan Shih-kai of before. In addition to his political and military power he had obtained some things even

\*A *kang* is a low brick platform on which people sit or sleep; it can be heated in winter, and is very common in north China.

more valuable: some foreigners, including the British minister at Peking, were interested in him and he also had friends on the Republican side, including Wang Ching-wei\* who had been captured after his unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the Prince Regent but whose life had been spared through the intercession of some Japanese who made it clear that Japan would be displeased to see him executed. Wang was released from jail after the Wuchang Rising and served as a link between Yuan Shih-kai and some of the Republican leaders; he also kept him well-informed on developments in the revolutionary camp, and some of the constitutional monarchists were beginning to feel well disposed towards Yuan.

With all his new and old friends and his clear intelligence picture Yuan's position was stronger than ever. Within a month of his return to Peking he used Prince Ching to get the regent dismissed. Then he took over the palace treasury of the empress dowager Lung Yu on the pretext that it was needed to meet military expenses, and at the same time made the members of the royal family and the nobility hand over funds for the army. With political, military and financial power in his hands he went on to arrange for the Chinese diplomatic envoys in Russia and other countries to telegraph the Ching court requesting the emperor's abdication, while at the same time he presented the Empress Dowager with a secret memorial in the name of the whole cabinet saying that a republic was the only solution. He must have presented the memorial on the occasion when I saw him, and this would explain why Lung Yu was weeping so copiously as the memorial said that there was no hope for the dynasty even in flight and that delay in abdicating might lead to a fate similar to that suffered by Louis XVI and his family in the French revolution.

The terror-struck Dowager called an emergency meeting of the imperial council to hear the opinions of the members of the royal family. When they were told of the secret memorial and of what Yuan Shih-kai

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\* Wang Ching-wei later became a notorious Kuomintang leader and pro-Japanese traitor. He openly surrendered to the Japanese invaders in December 1938 when he was vice-chairman of the Kuomintang and chairman of its People's Political Council. In March 1940 he became president of the puppet central government then formed in Nanking. He died in Japan in November 1944.

had said they were very alarmed, not by the reference to Louis XVI but by the sudden change in Yuan's loyalties.

At first Yuan Shih-kai had opposed the setting up of a republic and had advocated a constitutional monarchy in the negotiations with the Republican side. Later the Ching and Republican sides had agreed in principle that the question of the state structure should be decided by a provisional national assembly; but obstruction from the Ching side had prevented agreement on its composition, time and place. With these questions still unresolved the Republicans set up a Provisional Government at Nanking and elected Sun Yat-sen as Provisional President. This prompted Yuan Shih-kai to withdraw the credentials of his delegate in the negotiations and to deal directly with the Republican representatives by cable. The suggestion of Yuan's cabinet that the dynasty should abdicate at a time when the structure of the state was still undecided naturally came as a severe shock to the royal house.

Yuan Shih-kai already had foreign support and he now had enough friends on the Republican side to be able to influence its actions. Those among the revolutionaries who had originally been constitutional monarchists had for some time been aware that Yuan was their hope, and their attitude had infected some of the more naive of the Republicans. Thus it was that the Republican side decided that if Yuan consented to it a republic could be rapidly achieved and that Yuan should be invited to be the first president. This was just what Yuan wanted; he knew, moreover, that the former Prince Regent was surrounded by a group implacably hostile to himself who intended to eliminate him whether he succeeded in defeating the revolutionaries or not. He had decided to accept the Republican offer and was considering how to deal with the Ching house when the unexpected news that Sun Yat-sen had taken office as Provisional President in Nanking made a solution to the question much more urgent. If the Republicans went on to set up a national assembly in the south it would be impossible for him to get rid of it; he decided therefore to put pressure on the imperial house by frightening the empress dowager Lung Yu while at the same time offering her the bait of the Articles of Favourable Treatment. In this way he hoped that she would announce the abdication voluntarily and give

him full powers to organize a provisional government. This, then, was the explanation for Yuan Shih-kai's sudden volte-face.

Although Yuan had betrayed the Ching house one would never have guessed it from his tearful countenance at his private audience with the empress dowager Lung Yu. But even the members of the royal house who had trusted Yuan Shih-kai before knew that they had been betrayed.

Some of the princes and nobles who had always been anti-Yuan were in favour of putting up a desperate last-ditch fight and of avenging the slaughter of Manchu bannermen that had taken place in some parts of the country, and when the empress dowager Lung Yu called the first meeting of the imperial council the atmosphere was charged with anger. A proposal by Yuan Shih-kai's old ally Prince Ching and others that the court should agree to abdicate was fiercely attacked. Prince Ching did not come to court the next day and his chief supporter in the council changed his tune.

This situation did not last long. From various accounts one can tell that one of the long series of imperial council meetings went approximately as follows. Having established that all present were in favour of the monarchy and opposed to a republic the Dowager went on to say that she had been told by Prince Ching that the imperial forces were incapable of defeating the Republicans and that the foreigners would come to the help of the Ching government after the Prince Regent resigned.

Pu Wei, a leader of the anti-Yuan group among the nobility, protested that this was obviously a lie as the regent had already resigned and the foreigners had done nothing to help them. He and others then said that the rebels were nothing to be afraid of and reported that Feng Kuochang, a Peiyang general, maintained that three mother's military funds would be enough to defeat them. But, as the Dowager pointed out, Yuan Shih-kai had taken over the funds of the Palace Treasury so that she had no money. "Besides," she went on, "what if we lose? Surely we won't be able to fall back on the Articles of Favourable Treatment then?"

Pu Wei objected that the Articles were a trick, but when the Dowager asked about the state of the army she only got a noncommittal reply.

As one inconclusive meeting of the imperial council followed another

the advocates of fighting it out became fewer and fewer. Tuan Chi-jui, another Peiyang General, sent a telegram requesting the abdication of the Ching emperor. Two leaders of the war party in the royal family left Peking. One hastened to German-occupied Tsingtao and the other to Japanese-held Lushun, but they were prevented from going on to plead the imperial case in Germany and Japan by the local officials of the two countries.

On February 12, 1912 the empress dowager Lung Yu proclaimed my abdication. Some of the royal family and the nobility fled to the Legation Quarter while Prince Ching took his family and his valuables to the foreign concessions in Tientsin. My father, who had said not a word throughout the imperial council meetings, returned home to "hug his children". Yuan Shih-kai meanwhile was organizing a provisional Republican government as he had been ordered to by the Empress Dowager while at the same time he acted on an agreement with the revolutionaries and changed from premier of the cabinet of the Great Ching Empire to Provisional President of the Republic of China. And I became the President's neighbour as I started my life in the "Little Court" according to the articles providing for the favourable treatment of the Ching house.

These articles, the "Articles providing for the Favourable Treatment of the Great Ching Emperor after his Abdication", were as follows:

1. After the abdication of the Great Ching Emperor, his title of dignity is to be retained and not abolished. The Republic of China will treat him with the courtesy due to a foreign sovereign.
2. After the abdication of the Great Ching Emperor he shall receive an annual allowance of four million taels, or four million dollars after the minting of the new currency. This allowance shall be paid by the Republic of China.
3. After the abdication of the Great Ching Emperor he may live temporarily in the Imperial Palace; later he shall move to the Summer Palace. He may retain his usual bodyguard.
4. After the abdication of the Great Ching Emperor the sacrifices at his ancestral temples and the imperial tombs shall be maintained for ever. The Republic of China shall provide guards to ensure their protection.

5. The uncompleted tomb of Te Tsung (Emperor Kuang Hsu) shall be finished according to the original plan. The funeral ceremonies shall be observed in accordance with the ancient rites. The actual expenses shall be borne by the Republic of China.

6. All the persons of various grades working in the palace may continue to be employed as before; with the provision that no further eunuchs be engaged.

7. After the abdication of the Great Ching Emperor his existing private property shall receive the special protection of the Republic of China.

8. The existing Palace Guard shall be incorporated into the Army of the Republic of China; its numbers and salary shall be continued as before.

## Living as an Emperor

The "Articles for Favorable Treatment" stipulated that I could live temporarily in the Imperial Palace without fixing any definite time limit. Apart from three large halls that were handed over to the Republic, the rest of the Forbidden City continued to belong to the Imperial Palace. It was in this tiny world that I was to spend the most absurd childhood possible until I was driven out by the soldiers of the National Army in 1924. I call it absurd because at a time when China was called a republic and mankind had advanced into the twentieth century I was still living the life of an emperor, breathing the dust of the nineteenth century.

Whenever I think of my childhood my head fills with a yellow mist. The glazed tiles were yellow, my sedan-chair was yellow, my chair cushions were yellow, the linings of my hats and clothes were yellow, the girdle round my waist was yellow, the dishes and bowls from which I ate and drank, the padded cover of the rice-gruel saucepan, the material in which my books were wrapped, the window

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curtains, the bridle of my horse ... everything was yellow. This colour, the so-called "brilliant yellow", was used exclusively by the imperial household and made me feel from my earliest years that I was unique and had a "heavenly" nature different from that of everybody else.

When I was ten my grandmother and mother started to come and visit me on the orders of the High Consorts\* and they brought my brother Pu Chieh and my first sister to play with me for a few days. Their first visit started off very drearily: I and my grandmother sat on the *kang* and she watched me playing dominoes while my brother and sister stood below us very properly, gazing at me with a fixed stare like attendants on duty in a yamen. Later it occurred to me to take them along to the part of the palace in which I lived, where I asked Pu Chieh, "What games do you play at home?"

"Pu Chieh can play hide-and-seek," said my brother, who was a year younger than me, in a very respectful way.

"So you play hide-and-seek too? It's a jolly good game." I was very excited. I had played it with the eunuchs but never with children younger than myself. So we started to play hide-and-seek and in the excitement of the game my brother and sister forgot their inhibitions. We deliberately let down the blinds to make the room very dark. My sister, who was two years younger than me, was at the same time enraptured and terrified, and as my brother and I kept giving her frights we got so carried away that we were laughing and shouting. When we were exhausted we climbed up on to the *kang* to get our breath back and I told them to think of some new game. Pu Chieh was thoughtful for a while, then started to gaze at me wordlessly, a silly smile on his face.

"What are you grinning at?"

He went on grinning.

"Tell me! Tell me!" I urged him impatiently, thinking that he must certainly have thought out some new game. To my surprise he came out with, "I thought, oh, Pu Chieh thought that Your Majesty

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\*Dowager Consorts of the first degree, widows of the emperors Tung Chih and Kuang Hsu.

would be different from ordinary people. The emperors on the stage have long beards...." As he spoke he pretended to be stroking his beard.

This gesture was his undoing. As he raised his hand I noticed that the lining of his sleeve was a very familiar colour. My face blackened.

"Pu Chieh, are you allowed to wear that colour?"

"But ... bu ... but isn't it apricot?"

"Nonsense! It's imperial brilliant yellow."

"Yes, sire, yes, sire...." Pu Chieh stood away from me, his arms hanging respectfully by his sides. My sister slipped over to stand with him, frightened to the point of tears.

"It's brilliant yellow. You have no business to be wearing it."

"Yes, sire."

With his "yes, sire" my brother reverted to being my subject. The sound "yes, sire" died out long ago and it seems very funny when one thinks of it today. But I got used to it from early childhood, and if people did not use the words when replying to me I would not stand for it. It was the same with kneeling and kotowing. From my infancy I was accustomed to having people kotow to me, particularly people over ten times my own age. They included old officials of the Ching Dynasty and the elders of my own clan, men in the court robes of the Ching Dynasty and officials of the Republic in Western dress.

Another strange thing which seemed quite normal at the time was the daily pomp.

Every time I went to my schoolroom to study, or visited the High Consorts to pay my respects, or went for a stroll in the garden I was always followed by a large retinue. Every trip I made to the Summer Palace must have cost thousands of Mexican dollars: the Republic's police had to be asked to line the roads to protect me and I was accompanied by a motorcade consisting of dozens of vehicles.

Whenever I went for a stroll in the garden a procession had to be organized. In front went a eunuch from the Administrative Bureau whose function was roughly that of a motor horn: he walked twenty or thirty yards ahead of the rest of the party intoning the sound

“chir ... chir ...” as a warning to anyone who might be in the vicinity to go away at once. Next came two chief eunuchs advancing crabwise on either side of the path; ten paces behind them came the centre of the procession—the Empress Dowager or myself. If I was being carried in a chair there would be two junior eunuchs walking beside me to attend to my wants at any moment; if I was walking they would be supporting me. Next came a eunuch with a large silk canopy followed by a large group of eunuchs of whom some were empty-handed and others were holding all sorts of things: a seat in case I wanted to rest, changes of clothing, umbrellas and parasols. After these eunuchs of the imperial presence came eunuchs of the imperial tea bureau with boxes of various kinds of cakes and delicacies, and, of course, jugs of hot water and a tea service; they were followed by eunuchs of the imperial dispensary bearing cases of medicine and first-aid equipment suspended from carrying poles. The medicines carried always included potions prepared from lampwick sedge, chrysanthemums, the roots of reeds, bamboo leaves, and bamboo skins; in summer there were always Essence of Betony Pills for Rectifying the Vapour, Six Harmony Pills for Stabilizing the Centre, Gold Coated Heat-Dispersing Cinnabar, Fragrant Herb Pills, Omnipurpose Bars, colic medicine and anti-plague powder; and throughout all four seasons there would be the Three Immortals Beverage to aid the digestion, as well as many other medicaments. At the end of the procession came the eunuchs who carried commodes and chamber-pots. If I was walking a sedan-chair, open or covered according to the season, would bring up the rear. This motley procession of several dozen people would proceed in perfect silence and order.

But I would often throw it into confusion. When I was young I liked to run around when I was in high spirits just as any child does. At first they would all scuttle along after me puffing and panting with their procession reduced to chaos. When I grew a little older and knew how to give orders I would tell them to stand and wait for me; then apart from the junior eunuchs of the imperial presence who came with me they would all stand there waiting in silence with their loads. After I had finished running around they would form up

again behind me. When I learnt to ride a bicycle and ordered the removal of all the upright wooden thresholds in the palace so that I could ride around without obstruction the procession was no longer able to follow me and so it had to be temporarily abolished. But when I went to pay my respects to the High Consorts or to my schoolroom I still had to have something of a retinue, and without it I would have felt rather odd. When I heard people telling the story of the last emperor of the Ming Dynasty who had only one eunuch left with him at the end I felt very uncomfortable.

The type of extravagant display that wasted the most effort, money and material was meals. There were special terms to refer to the emperor's eating and it was absolutely forbidden to fail to use them correctly. Food was called not "food" but "viands"; eating was called "consuming viands"; serving the meal was "transmitting the viands"; and the kitchen was the "imperial viands room". When it was time to eat (and the times of the meals were not set but were whenever the emperor felt like eating), I would give the command "Transmit the viands!" The junior eunuchs of the presence would then repeat "Transmit the viands" to the eunuchs standing in the main hall of the palace in which I lived and they would pass it on to the eunuchs standing on duty outside the hall; these would in turn call it out to the eunuchs of the "imperial viands room" waiting in the Western Avenue of the Forbidden City. Thus my order went straight to the kitchens, and before its echoes had died away a procession rather of the sort that used to take a bride's trousseau to her groom's house had already issued from the "viands room". It was made up of an imposing column of several dozen neatly dressed eunuchs hurrying to the Mind Nurture Palace with seven tables of various sizes and scores of red-lacquered boxes painted with golden dragons. When they reached the main hall they handed their burdens over to young eunuchs wearing white sleeves who laid out the meal in an eastern room of the palace.

Usually there were two tables of main dishes with another one of chafing-dishes added in winter; there were three tables with cakes, rice and porridge respectively; and there was another small table of salted

vegetables. All the crockery was imperial yellow porcelain with dragon designs and the words "Ten thousand long lives without limit" painted on it. In winter I ate from silver dishes placed on top of porcelain bowls of hot water. Every dish or bowl had a strip of silver on it as a precaution against poison, and for the same reason all the food was tasted by a eunuch before it was brought in. This was called "appraising the viands". When everything had been tasted and laid out and before I took my place a young eunuch would call out "Remove the covers". This was the signal for four or five other junior eunuchs to take the silver lids off all the food dishes, put them in a large box and carry them out. I then began to "use the viands".

And what was the food laid out "ten cubits square"? The empress dowager Lung Yu would have about a hundred main dishes on six tables, an extravagance inherited from the empress dowager Tzu Hsi. I had about thirty. But these dishes which were brought in with such ceremonial were only for show. The reason why the food could be served almost as soon as I gave the word was that it had been prepared several hours or even a whole day in advance and was being kept warm over the kitchen stoves. The cooks knew that at least since the time of Kuang Hsu the emperor had not eaten this food. The food I ate was sent over by the Empress Dowager, and after her death by the High Consorts. She and each of the High Consorts had kitchens of their own staffed by highly skilled chefs who produced twenty or more really delicious dishes for every meal. This was the food that was put in front of me, while that prepared by the imperial kitchens was set some distance away as it was only there for the sake of appearances.

To show how they loved and cared for me the High Consorts also sent a responsible eunuch to report on how I had "consumed viands". This too was a pure formality. No matter what I had really eaten, the eunuch would go to the quarters of the High Consorts, kneel before them and say:

"Your slave reports to his masters: the Lord of Ten Thousand Years consumed one bowl of old rice viands (or white rice viands), one steamed breadroll (or a griddle cake) and a bowl of congee. He

consumed it with relish."

At Chinese New Year and other festivals and on the birthdays of the High Consorts my kitchen sent a spread of food to the Consorts as a mark of my filial piety. This food could be described as expensive and showy without being good, and was neither nutritious nor tasty.

According to the record of one month of the second year of my reign, the empress dowager Lung Yu, the four High Consorts and myself used up 3,960 catties of meat (over two tons) and 388 chickens and ducks every month, of which 810 catties of meat and 240 chickens and ducks were for me, a four-year-old child. In addition there was a monthly allocation for the numerous people in the palace who served us: members of the Grand Council, imperial bodyguards, tutors, Hanlin academicians, painters, men who drew the outlines of characters for others to fill in, important eunuchs, *shaman* magicians who came every day to sacrifice to the spirits, and many others. Including the Dowager, the Consorts and myself, the monthly consumption of pork was 14,642 catties at a cost of 2,342.72 taels of silver. On top of this there were the extra dishes we had every day which often cost several times as much again. In the month in question there were 31,844 catties of extra meat, 814 catties of extra pork fat and 4,786 extra chickens and ducks, to say nothing of the fish, shrimps and eggs. All these extras cost 11,641.07 taels, and with miscellaneous items added the total expenditure came to 14,794.19 taels. It is obvious that all this money (except what was embezzled) was wasted in order to display the grandeur of the emperor. This figure, moreover, does not include the cost of the cakes, fruit, sweets and drinks that were constantly being devoured.

Just as food was cooked in huge quantities but not eaten, so was a vast amount of clothing made which was never worn. I cannot now remember much about this, but I do know that while the Dowager and the High Consorts had fixed yearly allocations there were no limits for the emperor, for whom clothes were constantly made throughout the year. I do not know what exactly was made, but everything I wore was always new. I have before me an account from an unspecified year headed "List of materials actually used in making

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clothes for His Majesty's use from the sixth day of the tenth month to the fifth day of the eleventh month." According to this list the following garments were made for me that month: eleven fur jackets, six fur inner and outer gowns, two fur waistcoats, and thirty padded waistcoats and pairs of trousers. Leaving aside the cost of the main materials and of the labour, the bill for such minor items as the edgings, pockets, buttons and thread came to 2,137.6335 silver dollars.

My changes of clothing were all laid down in regulations and were the responsibility of the eunuchs of the clothing storerooms. Even my everyday gowns came in twenty-eight different styles, from the one in black and white inlaid fur that I started wearing on the nineteenth of the first lunar month to the sable one I changed into on the first day of the eleventh month. Needless to say, my clothes were far more complicated on festivals and ceremonial occasions.

To manage all this extravagant pomp there was, of course, a suitable proliferation of offices and personnel. The Household Department, which administered the domestic affairs of the emperor, had under its control seven bureaus and 48 offices. The seven bureaus—the storage bureau, the guard bureau, the protocol, the counting house, the stock-raising bureau, the disciplinary bureau and the construction bureau—all had storerooms, workshops and so on under them. The storage bureau, for example, had stores for silver, fur, porcelain, satin, clothes and tea. According to a list of officials dating from 1909, the personnel of the Household Department numbered 1,023 (excluding the Palace Guard, the eunuchs and the servants known as "sulas"); in the early years of the Republic this number was reduced to something over 600, and at the time I left the Imperial Palace there were still more than 300. It is not hard to imagine an organization as large as this with so many people in it, but the triviality of some of its functions was almost unthinkable. One of the forty-eight offices, for example, was the As You Wish Lodge (Ju Yi Kuan). Its only purpose was to paint pictures and do calligraphy for the Empress Dowager and the High Consorts; if the Dowager wanted to paint something the As You Wish Lodge would outline a design for her so that all she had to do was to fill in the colours and write a title on it. The

calligraphy for large tablets was sketched out by the experts of the Great Diligence Hall or else done by the Hanlin academicians. Nearly all late Ching inscriptions that purport to be the brushwork of a dowager or an emperor were produced in this way.

The buildings all around me and the furniture of the palace were all a part of my indoctrination. Apart from the golden-glazed tiles that were exclusively for the use of the emperor, the very height of the buildings was an imperial prerogative that served to teach me from an early age that not only was everything under heaven the emperor's land, but that even the sky above my head belonged to nobody else. Every piece of furniture was "direct method" teaching material for me. It was said that the emperor Chien Lung once laid it down that nothing in the palace, not even a blade of grass, must be lost. To put this principle into practice he put some blades of grass on a table in the palace and gave orders that they were to be counted every day to see that not a single one of them was missing. This was called "taking the grass as a standard". Even in my time these thirty-six withered blades of grass were still preserved in a cloisonné canister in the Mind Nurture Palace. This grass filled me with unbounded admiration for my ancestor and unbridled hatred for the Revolution of 1911.

There is no longer any way of calculating exactly the enormous cost of the daily life of an emperor, but a record called "A comparison between the expenditure of the seventh year of Hsuan Tung (1915) and the past three years" compiled by the Household Department shows that expenditure in 1915 topped 2,790,000 taels, and that while it dropped in each of the following three years it was always over 1,890,000 taels. Thus it was that with the connivance of the Republican authorities we continued our prodigious waste of the sweat and blood of the people in order to maintain our former pomp and continue our parasitic way of life.

Some of the rules in the palace were originally not simply for the sake of show. The system by which all the food-dishes had strips of silver on them and the food was tasted before the emperor ate it, and the large-scale security precautions whenever he went out were

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basically to protect him against any attempt on his life. It was said that the reason why emperors had no outside privies was that one emperor had been set upon by an assassin when going out to relieve himself. These stories and all the display had the same effect on me: they made me believe that I was a very important and august person, a man apart who ruled and owned the universe.

## Mothers and Son

When I entered the palace as the adopted son of the emperors Tung Chih and Kuang Hsu all their wives became my mothers. Strictly speaking, I became the adopted son of Tung Chih while only "continuing the sacrifices" to Kuang Hsu. This meant that I was now primarily the son of Tung Chih and only secondarily the son of Kuang Hsu. But Kuang Hsu's empress, the empress dowager Lung Yu, ignored this and used her authority as dowager to push the three high consorts of Tung Chih into the background for daring to argue this point with her. For the rest of her life they were not really numbered among my mothers, and Kuang Hsu's Chin Consort did not get the treatment of a secondary mother as she should have done either: when we ate together she had to stand while Lung Yu and I sat. After the death of Lung Yu the three consorts of Tung Chih combined with Kuang Hsu's consorts to put their case to the princes and members of the nobility and succeeded in getting the titles of High Consorts. From then on I addressed all of them as "August Mother".

Although I had so many mothers I never knew any motherly love. As far as I can remember today the greatest concern they ever showed for me was to send me food at every meal and hear the report of the eunuch that I had "consumed it with relish".

In fact I was unable to "consume it with relish" when I was small as I had a stomach ailment, a condition that was probably caused by

their "motherly love". Once when I was five I stuffed myself with chestnuts and for a month or more afterwards the empress dowager Lung Yu only allowed me to eat browned rice porridge; and although I was crying with hunger nobody paid any attention. I remember that one day when I was going for a walk by the side of one of the lakes in the palace the Dowager told them to take some stale steamed breadrolls for me to feed to the fish. I could not restrain myself from cramming one of them into my mouth. So far from feeling any regret at my display of hunger, Lung Yu actually tightened up her restrictions; but the tighter they got the stronger grew my desire to steal food. One day I noticed that the tribute food sent by the princes to the Dowager had been put down in the Western Avenue of the palace, so I made straight for one of the food containers, opened it, and saw that it was full of cold pork. I grabbed a piece and sank my teeth into it. The eunuchs with me turned pale with horror and rushed up to snatch it from me. I put up a desperate resistance, but as I was small and weak the delicious morsel was snatched away almost as soon as I had put it into my mouth.

Even after I was allowed to eat normally again I still got into trouble. Once a senior eunuch observed that I had downed six pancakes and, afraid that I had overeaten, thought up a way of helping me digest them. He had two other eunuchs pick me up by the arms and bring me hard down on to the floor as if they were ramming earth with me. Later they were very pleased with themselves and said that it was thanks to their cure that I had suffered no ill effects from the pancakes.

This may seems rather unreasonable, but there were other things more unreasonable still. Whenever I got impatient or lost my temper before I was seven or eight the chief eunuch would make the following diagnosis and prescription: "The Lord of Ten Thousand Years has fire in his heart. Let him sing for a while to disperse it." I would then be shut into some small room, usually the room in the schoolroom palace where my commode was kept. Once I was in there by myself it made no difference how much I cursed, kicked the door, implored or wailed: nobody would pay any attention. Only when I

had finished howling, or, as they put it, finished "singing" and "dispersed the fire" would they let me out.

This strange cure was not an invention of the eunuchs nor, for that matter, of the dowager Lung Yu: it was a family tradition from which my brothers and sisters also suffered in my father's house.

When I was seven the empress dowager Lung Yu died. All I can remember about her "motherly love" is what I have related above.

I lived rather longer with the four High Consorts. Normally I saw very little of them and I never sat and talked with them in an ordinary, friendly way. Every morning I would go to pay them my respects. A eunuch would put down a hassock covered with yellow silk for me to kneel on, and after kneeling to them for a moment I would get up and stand to one side waiting for them to make their usual remarks. At this time of day they were having their hair combed by eunuchs and they would ask me, "Did the emperor sleep well?" or advise me to dress warmly as the weather was cold, or inquire how far I had got in the book I was studying. It was always the same—a few dry and stereotyped remarks; sometimes they would give me a few clay toys or something of the kind and then they would say, "Go away and play now, Emperor." This would be the end of our meeting and I would not see them again for the rest of the day.

The Dowager and the four High Consorts addressed me as "Emperor", as did my real parents and grandmother. Everyone else called me "Your Majesty". Although I had an ordinary name as well as a "milk name"\*, none of my mothers ever used them. I have heard others saying that when they think of their "milk names" they are reminded of their childhood and their mother's love. Mine has no such associations. I have also been told by some people that whenever they fell ill when studying away from home they would think of their mothers and of how their mothers comforted them when they were ill as children. I have often been ill in my adult life, but the thought of the visits I had from the High Consorts when I was sick as a child has never made me feel at all nostalgic.

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\* "Milk name" is a name used in childhood.

I always caught colds or flu when the weather turned chilly. Whenever this happened the High Consorts would come to see me one after another. Each of them would ask the same question: "Is the emperor at all better? Have you had a good sweat?" and before two or three minutes were up she would be off again. I have a rather stronger memory of the swarms of eunuchs who accompanied them and crowded into my little bedroom. They would come and go again all within the space of a few minutes, thus disturbing the atmosphere in my room. As soon as one High Consort had gone another one would arrive and the room would be packed again. With four visits in a single day the atmosphere would be disturbed four times. Fortunately I always got better on the following day, and my bedroom would be quiet again.

When I was ill my medicines were made up by the dispensary in the palace of the high consort Tuan Kang, who after the death of the dowager Lung Yu managed, with the help of Yuan Shih-kai, to be made the senior of the four High Consorts and thus my chief mother.

Thus I grew to the age of twelve or thirteen under the "care" of my four mothers. Like any other child I was very fond of new toys, and some of the eunuchs tried to please me by buying me amusing things from outside. Once a eunuch had a replica of the ceremonial uniform of a general of the Republic made for me with a plume in its cap like a feather duster and a military sword and belt. When I put it on I felt very pleased with myself, but when the senior high consort Tuan Kang heard of this she was furious. She ordered an investigation, which also revealed that I had been wearing foreign stockings bought outside the palace by one of the eunuchs. She regarded all this as intolerable and summoned the two eunuchs responsible to her quarters, had each of them given two hundred strokes of the heavy rod and demoted them, sending them to the cleaning office to work as menials. Having dealt with them she sent for me and lectured me on the disgracefulness of the Great Ching Emperor wearing the clothes of the Republic and foreign stockings. I had no choice but to put away my beloved uniform and sword, take off my foreign

stockings and change back into court clothes and cloth socks embroidered with dragon designs.

If the high consort Tuan Kang had limited her control over me to uniforms and foreign stockings, I would not have rebelled against her later. After all, such control as this only made me even more aware of my uniqueness and reinforced the lessons I was learning in my schoolroom. I think that it was for the sake of my education that she had the eunuchs beaten and gave me that scolding.

Tuan Kang took the empress dowager Tzu Hsi as her model and strove to emulate her, although Tzu Hsi had been responsible for the death of her own sister. The lessons she learnt from Tzu Hsi did not end with the savage flogging of eunuchs: she also sent eunuchs to spy on the emperor. After dealing with some eunuchs of mine she sent over a eunuch of her own to wait on me. He would go to her daily and report on my every action. This was just how Tzu Hsi had treated Kuang Hsu. Whatever her motive was, it hurt my pride, and my tutor Chen Pao-shen, who was very indignant about it, explained to me the theory about the difference between first wives and secondary wives, the category into which Tuan Kang fell. I seethed with repressed anger.

The explosion came not long later when one of the Imperial Physicians was dismissed by Tuan Kang. The affair really had nothing to do with me as the doctor in question was one of those attending to Tuan Kang, but I had heard some inflammatory suggestions such as the remark of my tutor, "Although she is only a consort, her high-handed behaviour is going too far." And one of the eunuchs had said to me, "Is not the Lord of Ten Thousand Years becoming another Kuang Hsu? The affairs of the College of Physicians should only be settled by the Lord of Ten Thousand Years. Even your slave cannot bear to see such things happen." Raging with fury I stormed over to the palace of Tuan Kang. As soon as I saw her I shouted, "Why did you dismiss that doctor? You're too highhanded. Aren't I the emperor? Who gives the orders? You've gone too far."

I did not wait for Tuan Kang, whose face had gone white from anger, to reply and went straight out again with a flick of my sleeve.

When I returned to my schoolroom my tutors covered me with praises.

The furious Tuan Kang sent for my father and several other princes and with tears and sobs asked for advice, which none of them ventured to give her. When I was told that they had come I called them to my study and said to them with great spirit:

"Who is she? She's only a consort. Never in the history of our house has an emperor had to call a consort 'mother'. Are we to maintain no distinction between principal and secondary wives? If not, why doesn't my brother call the prince's secondary wives 'mother'? Why must I call her 'mother'? Why should I obey her?"

The princes received my tirade in silence.

Another of the High Consorts, who was on bad terms with Tuan Kang, came over specially to tell me that Tuan Kang was inviting my real mother and grandmother to come and see her, and so I had better be careful. They did in fact come, and where Tuan Kang had got nowhere with the princes her rantings had some effect on them: my grandmother in particular was terrified and ended up kneeling on the ground with my mother imploring Tuan Kang to desist from her wrath and promising to persuade me to apologize. I saw my mother and grandmother in a wing of the Lasting Peace Palace (Yung Ho Kung) in which Tuan Kang lived and heard that the High Consort was still raging in the main hall. I had originally wanted to go and have it out with her, but unable to hold out against the tears and desperate entreaties of my mother and grandmother I relented and promised that I would apologize to Tuan Kang.

I resented making that apology. I went and greeted Tuan Kang without even looking at her, mumbled, "August Mother, I was wrong", and went away again. Her face restored, Tuan Kang stopped weeping. Two days later I heard that my mother had killed herself.

My mother had never before been scolded in her life. She had a headstrong personality and this shock was too much for her: when she returned from the palace she swallowed a fatal dose of opium. For fear that I might go too thoroughly into the circumstances of my mother's death Tuan Kang changed her treatment of me com-

pletely: she no longer restricted my activities in the least and became very accommodating. With this my family life in the Forbidden City was peaceful again and the High Consorts and myself were once more mothers and son. But for this my mother's life had to be sacrificed.

## Studying in the Yu Ching Palace

When I was five the empress dowager Lung Yu chose a tutor for me and ordered an astrologer to select an auspicious day for me to begin my studies. This day was September 10, 1911.

My first schoolroom was on an island in one of the palace lakes but later I changed to the Yu Ching Palace (Palace of the Cultivation of Happiness), a rather small building inside the Forbidden City. It contained two studies which were furnished more simply than most other rooms in the palace. Under the southern window was a long table on which stood hat-stands and vases of flowers. By the west wall was a *kang* on which I studied at first with the low *kang* table for a desk. Later I sat at a table. There were two more tables by the north wall with books and stationery on them. On the walls hung scrolls that my grandfather, the first Prince Chun, had written out for his son the emperor Kuang Hsu. The most eye-catching thing in the room was a huge clock about two metres in diameter whose hands were longer than my arms. Its mechanism was on the other side of the wall, and to wind it up you had to go into the next room and use a thing like the starting handle of a car. Where this strange and enormous object came from or why it was there I cannot remember, nor can I recall what sort of sound it made or how loud were the chimes at the hour.

But despite the colossal size of the clock in the Yu Ching Palace the boy who studied there had no idea of time, as could be guessed from the books I read. My principal texts were the Thirteen Classics, and I also read such books as the maxims and exploits of my ancestors

and histories of the foundation of the Ching Dynasty. When I started English at thirteen the only two texts I used apart from an English reader were *Alice in Wonderland* and an English translation of the Chinese classical *Four Books*. I had some basic lessons in Manchu, but before I was even able to use the alphabet my teacher Yi Ko Tan died and my lessons stopped. So from 1911 to 1922 I learnt nothing of mathematics, let alone of science. As for my own country, I read only about such events as the "Tung Chih and Kuang Hsu Restoration"; my knowledge of foreign countries was limited to my trip with Alice to Wonderland. I was totally ignorant of George Washington, Napoleon, Watt's invention of the steam engine, and Newton and his apple. All I knew about the universe was that "the great Pole produced the two Forms, the two Forms produced the four Symbols, and the four Symbols produced the eight Trigrams."\* If my tutors had not been prepared to chat with me about things that were not in the texts and had I not read more widely myself I would not even have known where Peking was in relation to the rest of China or that rice grew in the ground. In history no one dared to explode the myths about the origins of the ancestors of the Ching house, and as for economics, I had no idea of the price of a catty of rice. So for a long time I believed that my earliest ancestor was born after the goddess Fokulun swallowed a red fruit, and that the common people always had a table covered with dishes at every meal.

As I read a considerable number of ancient books over quite a long period of time I should have known classical Chinese very well. In fact I did not as I was not in the least conscientious. Apart from using minor illnesses as pretexts, I would sometimes tell a eunuch to inform my tutors that they were to take a day's holiday if I was not feeling like studying and had no better excuse. Up to the age of ten I was far more interested in a big cypress tree that grew outside the Yu Ching Palace than in my books. In summer there were always ants crawling up and down this tree. I got very interested in them and would often squat by their tree so absorbed in watching them

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\*A quotation from the ancient classic, *Book of Changes*.

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or feeding them crumbs of cake and helping them to move their food that I would forget my own meals. Later I developed an interest in crickets and earthworms, so I had many an ancient porcelain bowl and urn brought over for me to keep them in. I was never very keen on my schoolbooks, and when reading them became intolerably tiresome my only thought was of going out to see those friends of mine.

In my early teens I began to understand that my textbooks had something to do with me and grew interested in how to be a "good emperor", in why an emperor was an emperor, and in what heavenly significance there was in this. It was the content rather than the language of the books that held my attention, and the content was far more concerned with the emperor's rights than with his duties. One of the sages did, it is true, say, "The people are important, the spirits of the land and grain come next and the sovereign is unimportant", "If the sovereign regards his subjects as so much grass the subjects will regard the monarch as their enemy", and other things of the kind. Far more of their admonitions, however, were directed at the ministers and common people. An example of this is the saying, "The ruler should be a ruler, the subjects should be subjects, the fathers should be fathers and the sons should be sons." The very first textbook, the *Classic of Filial Piety*, laid down the moral principle that one should "start by serving one's parents and end by serving one's sovereign". Before I started to read about this morality which seemed so delightful to me I had heard about it from the conversation of my tutors and later on they had even more to say about it than the texts. Ancient literature did not make nearly so deep an impression on me as their ancient talk.

Many of the people who studied in old-fashioned schools had to learn books by heart, and the great efforts involved are said to have had some good results. I never enjoyed any of these benefits as my tutors did not make me memorize my texts, being content with making me read them through a few times.

Perhaps it was to help me remember what I had read that they decided that I should read my text aloud to the dowager Lung Yu when I went to pay my respects to her and that the chief eunuch

should stand outside my bedroom when I got up in the morning and read out the previous day's lessons several times. Nobody was interested in how much I remembered or in whether I wanted to remember it or not.

My teachers never examined me on my work and set me no compositions to write. I remember that I wrote some couplets and verses but the tutors would never comment on them, let alone correct them. Yet I was very keen on writing things when I was a child. As the tutors did not think much of such trifles I wrote them secretly for my own amusement. From the age of twelve or thirteen I read a lot for pleasure. I read most of the books of essays and the unofficial histories of the Ming and Ching Dynasties, the historical romances, tales of knights and fighters with magic powers and detective stories of the late Ching and early Republican period and the series of novels published by the Commercial Press. When I was a little older I read some English stories. Imitating all these works, Chinese and Western, ancient and modern, I concocted and illustrated many romances out of my daydreams just for my own enjoyment. I even submitted them for publication under assumed names, but I was nearly always disappointed. I remember that I once copied out a poem by a Ming writer and sent it to a small newspaper under the pseudonym of "Teng Chiung-lin". The editor was taken in and printed it. He was not the only person to be deceived: my English tutor Reginald Johnston translated it into English and put it into his book *Twilight in the Forbidden City* as evidence of his pupil's "poetic gifts".

The subject at which I was worst was Manchu: I only learnt one word in all the years I studied it. This was *yili* (arise), the reply I had to make when my Manchu ministers knelt before me and said a set phrase of greeting in the language.

When I was eight they thought of another way of making me study better: I was provided with some fellow-students. Each of them received a stipend of the equivalent of eighty taels of silver a month and was granted the coveted privilege of being allowed to ride a horse in the Forbidden City. Although it was the time of the Republic this was still regarded as a great honour by the young men of the imperial

clan. The three recipients of these favours were my brother Pu Chieh, Yu Chung (a son of my cousin Pu Lun), and Pu Chia, the son of my uncle Tsai Tao. Yet another honour conferred on these three was that of being scolded on behalf of their emperor in the schoolroom: when I made a mistake in reading out my lessons the teacher would tell one of my fellow-students off. As Pu Chieh was my brother the victim was nearly always Yu Chung, whose studies naturally suffered when he found himself being scolded whether he read well or badly.

When I had no fellow-students I was very naughty. If I felt like it I would take my shoes and socks off while I was reading and put the socks on the table. The tutor had to put them back on for me. Once I took a fancy to the long eyebrows of my tutor Hsu Fang and told him to come over so that I could stroke them. When he came obediently with his head bowed I suddenly plucked a hair from them. When he died later the eunuchs all said that this was because the "Lord of Ten Thousand Years" had pulled out his eyebrow of longevity. Another time I made my tutor Lu Jun-hsiang so angry with me that he forgot the distinction between ruler and subject. I was refusing to read my text as I wanted to go out into the garden and watch my ants. At first Lu tried to persuade me to pay attention by quoting such classical tags as "One can only be a true gentleman when one has both polish and substance", but I could not understand what he was talking about and went on fidgeting and looking around the room. Seeing that I was still unsettled my tutor went on to cite another classical saying: "If the gentleman is not serious he carries no authority; his learning will not be solid", but I naughtily got up and was about to go away from the table when suddenly he lost his temper and roared at me, "Don't move!" I started with fright and did in fact behave a little better, though it was not long before I was thinking of my ants and fidgeting again.

When I had some fellow-students, things were rather better and I was able to bear sitting in the schoolroom. My teachers had ways of reprimanding me when I misbehaved: I remember one occasion when I came scampering into the classroom and the teacher said to Yu Chung, who was sitting there like a good boy, "Look how frivolous you

are."

I studied Chinese every day from eight to eleven in the morning and English in the afternoon from one to three. At eight o'clock every morning I would be carried in a yellow-canopied sedan-chair to the Yu Ching Palace. At my command of "Call them" a eunuch would go and call out the tutor and the fellow-students from a waiting room. They always went into the schoolroom in a set order: first a eunuch carrying books, then the tutor for the first lesson, and finally my fellow-students. Once through the door the tutor would stand and gaze at me as a form of greeting. By the rules of protocol I was not obliged to return his salutation as although he was my teacher he was still my subject, and although I was his pupil I was still his sovereign. Then Pu Chieh and Yu Chung would kneel and pay their respects to me. These formalities over, we would all sit down. I sat by myself at the north side of the table, facing south, the teacher faced west and my fellow-students sat beside him. The eunuchs arranged the others' hats on the hat-stands and filed out. With that the lesson began.

I came across some pages of my diary dating from 1920, when I was fourteen. An excerpt may serve to give an idea of the life I led while I was studying.

27th. Fine. Rose at four, wrote out eighteen sheets of the character Prosperity in a large hand. Classes at eight. Read *Analects*, *Chou Ritual*, *Record of Ritual*, and Tang poetry with Pu Chieh and Yu Chung: listened to Tutor Chen lecturing on the *General Chronological History with Comments by Emperor Chien Lung*. Finished eating at 9:30, read *Tso Commentary*, *Ku Liang Commentary*, heard Tutor Chu on the *Explanation of the Great Learning*, wrote couplets. Lessons finished at 11, went to pay respects to four High Consorts. Johnston did not come today as he had mild flu, so returned to Mind Nurture Palace and wrote out thirty more sheets of characters Prosperity and Longevity. Read papers, ate at four, bed at six. Read *Anthology of Ancient Literature* in bed: very interesting.

My tutor Lu Jun-hsiang, a Kiangsu man, was a former Grand Secretary who died before he had been teaching me for a year. Yi

Ko Tan, who taught me Manchu for over nine years, was a Manchu of the Main White Banner who had qualified in the palace examination as a translator of Manchu. Chen Pao-shen, a Fukienese who came at the same time as Lu Jun-hsiang and Yi Ko Tan, had been a sub-chancellor of the Grand Secretariat and Vice-President of the Board of Rites; of all my tutors he was the one who was with me longest. After the death of Lu Jun-hsiang I had three more teachers of Chinese: the deputy head of the imperial academy Hsu Fang, Hanlin academician Chu Yi-fan, and Liang Ting-fen who became famous for planting trees at the tomb of Kuang Hsu.

The tutor who had the deepest influence on me was Chen Pao-shen; the next most influential was my English tutor Reginald Johnston. Chen had a considerable reputation as a scholar in his native Fukien. On passing the palace examination during the Tung Chih period he had been appointed a Hanlin academician at the age of nineteen, and after entering the Grand Secretariat he made a name for himself with his remonstrances to the empress dowager Tzu Hsi. As he did not show Chang Chih-tung's willingness to trim his sails to the political winds he was demoted five grades in 1891 and on a pretext of incompetence returned home to live in retirement for twenty years. On the eve of the 1911 Revolution he was reinstated and was appointed governor of Shansi, but before he left to take up his post he was kept at Peking as my tutor. From then until I went to the Northeast he never left me. He was regarded as the most stable and careful of the Ching veterans in my entourage, and at the time I thought him the most loyal to myself and the "Great Ching". Before I regarded his caution as too much of an encumbrance to me he was the one and only authority to whom I referred all matters whether great or trivial for decision.

"Although the king is small he is a worthy Son of Heaven," was a phrase that Chen Pao-shen often quoted in approval of me, smiling till his eyes became slits behind his spectacles and stroking his thin, white beard.

I always found his conversation interesting. As I began to grow up I asked him almost every day to tell me the latest news about the

Republic. When he had finished discussing this he would nearly always go on to talk about "the Tung Chih and Kuang Hsu restoration" and "the Golden Age of Kang Hsi and Chien Lung". He was, naturally enough, particularly fond of telling stories about how he had remonstrated with the empress dowager Tzu Hsi. Whenever he referred to former Ching officials who were now serving the Republic it was always with indignation as he regarded them as turncoats. He spoke as if the Revolution and the Republic were the roots of all evil, and the people associated with them were no better than brigands. "Those who defy the sages have no law; those who defy filial piety have no parents: this is the source of great disorder" was his general conclusion about everything that displeased him. He told me the story of the king of the defeated state of Yueh who slept on firewood and frequently tasted gall to remind himself of his humiliation, and explained the principle of retiring from public affairs and waiting for one's opportunity. After explaining the current situation he would almost invariably come up with this opinion: "The Republic has only been in existence for a few years, but both heaven and the people have from the beginning been angry and dissatisfied with it. Because of the great goodness and bounty of the dynasty over more than two hundred years the people think of the Ching in their hearts: heaven and the people will inevitably end by returning in to power."

Of my other tutors Chu Yi-fan liked to play mahjong all night with the result that he tended to lethargy during the day, and Liang Ting-fen was fond of telling stories about himself. I used to find the bookish air of my tutors intolerable at times; they showed nothing of the scholar's ignorance of profit, however, when I invited them to choose themselves presents from the palace's collections of antiques and art treasures. They were also expert at fishing for honours, and knew how to wheedle congratulatory scrolls out of me.

All these tutors received posthumous titles after their deaths that were the envy of the other Ching survivals. One might almost say that they got whatever they wanted out of me and that they gave me whatever they wanted to in return. My achievements under their coaching were never tested in any examination, but there was one

matter—a judgement on “loyalty”—in which I gave them great satisfaction when I was eleven.

The year Prince Ching died his family submitted a request that he be granted a posthumous title, and the Household Department sent me a list of suggestions. Normally such a matter should have been discussed with the tutors, but as I was ill with flu at the time I had not gone to class, so I had to make a decision by myself. As I found the Household Department's list completely unsatisfactory I tossed it aside and wrote out a list of very offensive titles which I sent back. This brought my father over to see me, and in his stammering voice he begged me to remember that the prince belonged to the imperial family. I adamantly refused on the grounds that Prince Ching had been a traitor to the dynasty.

When I went to the schoolroom the next day and told Chen Pao-shen about the affair he was so delighted that he smiled until his eyes were mere slits, and expressed his whole-hearted approval of the way I had stood up to my father. The title finally chosen for Prince Ching was one which I originally thought insulting but which, as I found out too late, implied that I had pardoned him.

## Eunuchs

No account of my childhood would be complete without mentioning the eunuchs. They waited on me when I ate, dressed and slept; they accompanied me on my walks and to my lessons; they told me stories; and had rewards and beatings from me. There were times when other people did not have to be with me, but they never left my presence. They were the main companions of my childhood; they were my slaves; and they were my earliest teachers.

While I am not sure when the employment of court eunuchs began, I do know exactly when it ended: the day on which I was