The Last Dynastic Funeral

Ritual sequence at the demise of the Empress Dowager Cixi

von

Margareta T.J. Griebler (Wien)

In the vast plain of the Eastern Necropole of the Qing dynasty, there is located the
tomb of the Empress Dowager Cixi, the so-called Putuoyu-Mausoleum. A stone
relief containing a symbolic message unprecedented in Chinese history leads up
to the sacrificial hall, the Long’en Dian: The carving shows a phoenix above a
dragon, signifying an empress dowager’s might and power over an emperor. The
phoenix ranking above and dominating the dragon – this unique stone testimony
reflects the superiority of a fascinating woman at the Qing court. The death rites
at her demise showed evidence of her dominant position during lifetime.

I. Introduction: Sources

The following study deals with a particular imperial death ritual at the Qing
court and is based on official documents, such as imperial edicts and memorials
of the various boards and ministries, especially of the Board of Rites, stored in
the Historical Archives of Beijing and eventually published in the Official Gazette,
Zhengzhi guanbao. The Zhengzhi guanbao was a regular official bulletin, publish-
ing imperial edicts, memorials of ministries and local authorities, appointments,
promotions, dismissals and vacations of officials, etc. It only dealt with official mat-
ters and published the documents in their original version without adding critical
comments.

This material has been supplemented by accounts in the various newspapers of
the corresponding period, such as Shuntian shibao (Beijing), Shibao (Shanghai),
etc. which mostly summarized the events in connection with the Empress Dowag-
er’s demise and thus testified the actual ritual sequence as it had been organized
and memorialized, in advance. Though the imperial death ritual was mentioned
extensively, the reports did not provide an informative interpretation of the un-
derlying court politics.

1 This essay is the abstract of my dissertation at the University of Vienna, 1989. Das letzte dy-
nastische Begängnis. Chinesisches Trauerzeremoniell zum Tod der Kaiserinwitwe Cixi. Eine
Studie. The dissertation was recently published as volume 57 of the Münchener Ostasiatische
Studien.
The only western account on the Empress Dowager’s death ritual – despite some casual notes by members of the diplomatic body – was provided by the Times-correspondent G. E. Morrison, who gave a detailed eye-witness description of the funeral procession in 1909.2

Elaborate details on imperial death rituals during the Qing were presented in the Collected Statutes and Precedents, Qinding da Qing huidian shili, and in the Collected Rituals, Qinding da Qing tongli, of the dynasty.3 For basic background information on imperial death rituals in secondary literature, statutory information was provided by J.B. du Halde4, M. Courant5 and J.J.M. de Groot6. It is also very useful to study the following mostly eye-witnessed accounts by A. Semedo7, J. Amiot8, C. Imbault-Huart9 and E. Martin10. Two Chinese accounts fit into the larger context of death ritual at court: the article by Liu Guilin11 and the account by Yue Chao12, which – though witnessed – does not describe a definitely “imperial” death. Finally, the latest publication should be mentioned: Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China, edited by J.L. Watson and E.S. Rawski.

II. Introductory notes on the personality of the Empress Dowager13

Born in the year 1835, the later Empress Dowager Cixi was selected as a low-ranking imperial concubine in 1851. As she gave birth to the heir apparent and only

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2 The Times, 27.11.1909: 7. For additional information on G.E. Morrison, see Lo Hui-min (ed.) 1978.
3 The regulations of the Qing basically corresponded with the Collected Statutes of the Ming, Da Ming huidian. Since until the reign of Yongzheng, the Manchu practiced cremation of their rulers (see Yin Dewen 1985), the Collected Statutes of the Qing present the sinisized version practiced after the reign of Kangxi. See Rawski (2) 1988: 238, n.27.
4 Du Halde 1736:II: 148-154 ”Funérailles“.
5 Courant 1891: 44–52 ”Funérailles impériales“.
6 De Groot 1892–1910:II: 623–638 ”Mourning observed for rulers“.
9 Imbault-Huart 1882 (Empress Xiaozhen, died in 1881).
10 Martin 1882 (Empress Xiaozheng, died in 1881).
11 Liu Guilin 1981 (Empress Xiaoxian, consort of the Emperor Qian-long, died in 1748).
12 Yue Chao 1985 (mother of the Empress Xiaoding [Longyu], died in 1904).
13 These notes basically reflect the traditional image of the Empress Dowager as provided by most Chinese and western accounts. For a re-evaluation of Cixi’s personality, see Chung 1975; also Kwong 1984. The Empress Dowager’s biography (in preparation) by Wang Daocheng (Qingshi yanjiusuo, Beijing) might shed new light on her role at court.
son of the Emperor Xianfeng (1851–1861), the Emperor Tongzhi (1862–1874), her position at court was strengthened. Though not the principal wife of the Emperor, it was her who exercised a strong influence on the state affairs during the following years.

After the death of the Emperor Xianfeng in 1861, Cixi formally took over the regency, forming a joint regency with the Empress Dowager Cian, the principal wife of the late Emperor, but actually consolidating the power of government for herself. During the minority of the Emperor Tongzhi, Cixi reigned from "behind the curtain" until the year 1873. But soon after having reached maturity, the nineteen-year-old Emperor died in 1875, and rumours did not cease accusing Cixi of having plotted his murder. As the Emperor had died without issue, there arose the problem of who was to claim the throne. The general rule of succession provided the (eldest) son of the emperor or a younger brother to inherit the throne; when an emperor died without sons and brothers, an agnate belonging to the next generation should be adopted, so that the ancestral rites and the imperial family relations could be maintained. Cixi brought about a considerable irregularity in the imperial succession, since she designated a cousin of the late Emperor Tongzhi to inherit the throne and thus violated the dynastic law which ordered a member of the younger generation to be installed as heir. Actually, Cixi's dominant position at court was strengthened by this act, since the new Emperor Guangxu (1875–1908) was the son of her sister and Prince Chun (Yihuan), a brother of the Emperor Xianfeng. Her relative position to the new Emperor had Cixi consolidate her power. In reaction to the strong opposition and common resentment heightened by the suicide of a former censor in front of the late Emperor's mausoleum, Cixi promised that the emperor inheriting the throne from Guangxu would be adopted as the successor of both Tongzhi and Guangxu, so that he would be authorized to perform the ancestral rites for both. Some thirty years later, on the day of Guangxu's death, Cixi would issue an edict announcing Puyi, the later Emperor Xuantong (1909–1911), to continue both the imperial lines of Tongzhi and Guangxu.  

The Emperor Guangxu having assumed the throne in 1875, the two Empress Dowagers, Cixi and Cian, took over the regency again. In 1881, Cixi's co-regent Cian died, and rumours told about a box of poisoned cakes which, sent by Cixi, caused Cian's death. For the next years, Cixi was sole regent and finally retired in

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14 For a discussion of Cixi's alleged role in Tongzhi's death, see Xu Yipu 1980.
15 Shangyu (imperial edict) 14.11.1908, in Zhengzhi guanbao, 16.11.1908:3. – For a probably better accessibility, the documents referred to are cited according to their publication in the Official Gazette, Zhengzhi guanbao. For documents not published in the Zhengzhi guanbao reference is made to the very file in the Historical Archives in Beijing. Dates are cited according to the solar calendar.
1889, but resumed the regency in 1898 in consequence of the so-called Hundred-Days'-Reform supported by the Emperor. Again, Guangxu was emperor in name only, and Cixi upheld her authority to interfere in state affairs until her demise.

By her death the Manchu rule over China was greatly weakened: Cixi died on November 15, 1908, less than one day after the demise of the Emperor Guangxu, a coincidence which gave rise to countless rumours about the causes of death of the late Majesties. Yun Yuding, a court official, recorded the Empress Dowager's famous words "I cannot die before him (the Emperor)"\(^{16}\), supporting the rumour that the Emperor had died at the hands of the Empress Dowager. Another story held that Yuan Shikai – the Emperor's enemy since 1898, when he disclosed the Emperor's plot against Cixi – bribed a Chinese physician to get the Emperor out of the way, since the Empress Dowager had actually died first and the Emperor, having restored his authority again, would have been a threat to Yuan Shikai.\(^{17}\) The records of the court physicians justify the belief that the Emperor died a natural death, though some authors like to intimate that special medical treatment and methods employed by years would have brought about the same effect.\(^{18}\) There is probably no way to verify any of these rumours; according to the Medical Records of the dynasty, *Qinggong yian*, both Majesties died a natural death, and there was no reason at all to confirm any suspicions.\(^{19}\)

With her health and that of the Emperor failing, Cixi had appointed Zaifeng, son of Yihuan, for Prince Regent, and his three-year-old son, Puyi, as heir to the throne. Keeping her promise, she had Puyi, the later Emperor Xuantong, adopted as the successor both of the Emperor Tongzhi and the Emperor Guangxu, so that the ancestral rites for both could be continued.\(^{20}\)

Over a period of more than forty years, Cixi exercised influence on state affairs during the reign of her imperial husband, the Emperor Xianfeng, her son, the Emperor Tongzhi, and her nephew, the Emperor Guangxu. After her death, the fall of the Qing dynasty was inevitable.

### III. General comments on Qing imperial death ritual

In Confucian state ideology, ritual, the performance of rites and roles, was conceived of as essential background of order and unity. Rituals explicitly differen-

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\(^{16}\) See Yun Yuding 1926: 486–488; extracts translated in Li Chien-nung 1956: 227–228.

\(^{17}\) See Headland 1909: 323; Sergeant 1910: 302.

\(^{18}\) See Johnston 1985:75.

\(^{19}\) For more detailed accounts on the two imperial deaths, see Zhu Jinfu & Zhou Wenquan 1982, and Zhu Jinfu & Zhou Wenquan 1985.

\(^{20}\) For the corresponding edict see note 15.
tiated the social relations. The correct performance of the prescribed rites functioned as a means to order the family structure, to stabilize the social hierarchy, to consolidate the state, and thus to prevent all these organizations from disorder. Death ritual, in particular, was an elaboration of filiality, the central Confucian value within the family relations, and thus a means to prevent disorder after the death of a family member had struck the hierarchical order of the family. In the performance of the death rites the family structure was maintained, the position of each living member defined.21

The elaborate death ritual at court had a similar stabilizing function and was of great importance to the imperial chief mourner, the heir to the throne. The new emperor had to perform the death rites in filial respect for his predecessor and thus served as an ideal model affirming the basic value of filial piety within family and state. Through the performance of the death ritual he simultaneously reinforced the legitimacy of his reign and symbolically strengthened his own position.22

On the whole, the death rites for a late empress or empress dowager followed those for a late emperor. The washing, clothing and encoffining of the corpse as well as placing the coffin in a palace of the Forbidden City were the first steps of the standard ritual sequence. As the coffin of a late emperor was usually placed in the Qianqing Gong, that of a late empress was placed in the Huangji Dian, the throne hall of the Ningshou Gong, or in the Cining Gong. Since the intervals between the encoffining ceremony and the final placement in the imperial cemetery varied in length and thus could be extremely long, it was common in Qing times to transfer the imperial coffin after the first ceremonies to a hall on Coal Hill, the Shouhuang Dian or the Guande Dian, where about 50 coats of lacquer would be applied to the coffin. The obligatory daily libations and the special sacrifices were continued in front of the coffin until the final removal to the cemetery.

Along with the public notification of death there were also issued the mourning regulations, which – in case of a late empress or empress dowager – were fundamentally the same as those in case of a late emperor, differing only in the length of application. Within these general comments only one of those regulations should be mentioned in detail to point out the striking significance of Cixi’s mourning regulations and the alterations connected therewith: While at the demise of an emperor it was common to use the blue seal instead of the official red one during a hundred-days’ period, in case of a late empress the use of the blue ink could not extend beyond twenty-seven days.

The preparations and ceremonies connected with the removal of the imperial

21 For a more detailed account on (death) ritual within Confucianism, see Rawski (1) 1988.
22 For the Chinese conception of kingship and its ties to ritual, see Rawski (2) 1988.
coffin to a temporary resting-place were basically the same both in case of a late emperor as well as of a late empress or empress dowager.

The last dynastic death ritual at the Qing court in accordance with the Collected Statutes was the funeral of her late Majesty, the Empress Dowager Cixi. Though at the very beginning of the various preparations the ritual prescriptions corresponded to the precedents contained in the statutes, the regulations were altered later to make the Empress Dowager’s funeral an unprecedented event. Another fact created an unprecedented problem to those who were in charge of organizing the death ritual: Never during Qing times, had there occurred two imperial deaths that close together, so that the officials in charge had to memorialize simultaneous ceremonies.

As E.S. Rawski pointed out, "imperial death rituals serve as a fascinating key to personalities and the 'inner story' of the family relations of China's rulers". It is in this sense that Cixi's death ritual is worth studying: On the one hand, the Empress Dowager's dominant position in life was reflected very clearly in her death rites; on the other hand – and that is probably the fundamental reason why her dominance in life was maintained in death – her successors wanted to affirm the legitimacy of their reign in the way they had Cixi's death rites arranged and modified from common imperial ritual.

IV. The Death Ritual for the Empress Dowager Cixi

According to an official announcement, the Empress Dowager Cixi died on November 15, 1908, at the hour of the sheep (1–3 pm). She died in the Yiluan Dian at the Xiyuan west to the Imperial Palace. A blackly shining pearl was put into her mouth which – as the tradition goes – was supposed to retard decomposition, so that the soul of the dead on its way to return might find an intact body for revival. After the washing and clothing of the corpse, xiaolian, on the same day, the remains of the late Empress Dowager were brought to the Imperial Palace for the death rites. The day after, at the hour of the dragon (7–9 am), the corpse was placed in a double coffin, dalian, of "Gold Thread Fragrant Cedar Wood", jinsi nanmu, a special sort of wood from Yunnan province which was known for its imperishable nature and its pleasant smell. A detailed description of the clothings

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23 Rawski (2) 1988: 231.
24 Shangyu 15.11.1908, in Zhengzi guanbao, 16.11.1908: 7.
25 In Gongzhong zajiian (palace memorial miscellany) 467/4–85, no. 2321. The corpse was brought to a side-hall of the Huangji Dian, passing by Xihua Men, Xihe Men, Xiehe Men, Yiqing Men, Huangji Men and Ningshou Men. The documents do not provide any details about the xiaolian rites.
26 In Gongzhong dang'an (palace memorial archive) 145/4–6, no. 51.
of the corpse, of the jewels and treasures enclosed in the coffin was provided by the devote eunuche Li Lianying. The value of all these precious objects was estimated at about 50 million silver taels, not including the personal presents of princes and high dignitaries, of princesses and ladies at court. The coffin was placed in the throne hall of the Ningshou Gong, the Huangji Dian, where the throne had been removed from for that very purpose; the coffin of the late Emperor Guangxu, who had died a day before the demise of the Empress Dowager, had been placed in the Qianqing Gong; both procedures following precedence. The so-called "Nine-Phoenix-Quilt" covered the Empress Dowager's coffin in front of which an altar was erected where the daily libations and other rituals had to take place. Outside the main gate of the Huangji Dian, on the right side, officials of the Imperial Household installed the imperial death streamer. The imperial equipage, yūjia, of the late Empress Dowager and other paraphernalia were arranged in front of the gate.

As there had occurred two imperial deaths close together, the Board of Rites – in charge of the entire organization and preparation of the ceremonies – had to submit two sets of memorials to the Throne, that is to say, to the Prince Regent, since the young Emperor Xuantong during his minority was emperor in name only. Simultaneously – though separately – the Board of Rites presented the organizational prescriptions for the ceremonies both for the late Emperor as well as for the late Empress Dowager.

V. The proposed mourning regulations

The mourning regulations for the late Empress Dowager were first proposed in accordance to precedence: At court, primary mourning, the period of most intense mourning, had to be observed for twenty-seven days; during these days, the official red seal had to be replaced by a blue one. More strict were the regulations for members of the family of the late Empress Dowager, for the Prince Regent himself as chief mourner acting for the three-year-old Emperor, also for those responsible for the death rites and some higher officials who were listed explicitly – they had to observe primary mourning for a hundred days. After the primary mourning, secondary mourning, the requirements of which were not as strict as those for primary mourning, had to be observed for the following twenty-seven months, as usual.

28 See Yu Shanpu, op. cit., p. 167.
29 Signifying that the dead is a female; if the deceased is a man, the death streamer is hung on the left side of the gate, corresponding with the custom at a commoner death ritual.
30 In Gongzhong zajian, op. cit., no. 2321.
The period of public mourning throughout the empire was a hundred days during which all commoners were forbidden to shave their head. Places of entertainment were closed, music was forbidden. There was a one-month ban on marriage.

As for the members of the imperial family, there was a twenty-seven-months' ban on marriage; members of collateral branches and high Manchu and Chinese officials to the third rank had to observe a one-year's ban on marriage, other festivities and music were banned for twenty-seven months. Manchu and Chinese officials from the fourth rank down to the lowest were allowed to arrange marriages after a period of hundred days, festivities and music were banned for one year. As to the members of the Eight Banners in the capital and to the officials in the provinces, marriages, other festivities and music were interdicted for hundred days.

While during the period of primary mourning the princes and officials at court had to assemble three times a day before the libational altar, after the transfer of the coffin in a hall on Coal Hill only once a day, the princesses and ladies at court assembled three times a day during three days and then only once until the celebration of the "First Sacrifice", chuji. During the twenty-seven-days' primary mourning the princes and officials lodged in their Yamen and practiced dietary and sexual abstinence.\(^{31}\)

To prevent disorder or unrest the high officials of the provinces were requested to refrain from personal condolences in front of the imperial coffin.

So far, the proposed regulations of the ritual ceremonies for the late Empress Dowager were according to the dynastic statutes and submitted to the Throne immediately after the death of her Majesty. The proposed regulations corresponded exactly to preceding empress dowagers' rites as they were practiced e.g. at the demise of the Empress Dowager Cian in 1881.\(^{32}\)

VI. The modification of the mourning regulations

Only a few days after the initial proposal of mourning regulations, an imperial decree was issued ordering a special alteration of the mourning rituals in honour of the late Empress Dowager who – over a period of more than forty years – had handled state affairs.\(^{33}\) Referring to this edict the Board of Rites memorialized the

\(^{31}\) All the regulations mentioned above are contained in zouzhe (memorial) 16.11.1908, in Zhengzhi guanbao, 17.11.1908: 9–10.

\(^{32}\) It was only Cian's death ritual which occasionally was referred to during the process of decision making on Cixi's death rites; there was not made reference to any other preceding imperial death ritual, not even within the modified regulations issued some days later.

\(^{33}\) Shangyu 20.11.1908, in Zhengzhi guanbao, 21.11.1908: 3–4. That was the only official explanation for the extraordinary alteration.
considerably modified instructions: On signing edicts the blue ink would be used during the whole period of public mourning, that is to say, for a hundred days—instead of twenty-seven days according to the former proposal and to precedence; during fifteen days, it was forbidden to transmit memorials to the Throne. There was a ban on ancestor worship during the period of primary mourning. The one-year’s ban on marriage was applied to the Manchu and Chinese officials from the forth rank down to the lowest, too; they were forbidden other festivities and music during the following twenty-seven-months.

All these modified regulations—absolutely unusual in the case of an empress dowager’s demise—were equivalent to those observed in the case of an emperor’s death and thus equal to the ritual prescriptions for the late Emperor Guangxu! Besides, the princes and high officials as well as the princesses and ladies at court had to assemble three times a day to attend the libational ceremonies during the whole period of primary mourning, as opposed to the former proposal. Even within the prescriptions for the ritual ceremonies for a late emperor this modification was an unusual one and surpassed the prescriptions for the late Emperor Guangxu.34 In fact, it would not have made any external difference if the hundred-days’ use of the blue ink for imperial seals or the twenty-seven-days’ ban on ancestor worship were to the honour of the late Emperor or to the honour of the late Empress Dowager. But it is striking enough that statutes established through centuries were broken and the Empress Dowager Cixi officially and explicitly raised to the rank of an emperor through the alteration of the mourning regulations.

VII. The placement of the two imperial coffins

During the Qing dynasty it was common to remove the imperial coffin after a few days from the hall within the Palace to a special building on Coal Hill, which housed the coffin until the final removal to the imperial cemetery. This time there arose a problem, for there were two imperial coffins, the coffin of the late Emperor Guangxu at the biers in the Qianqing Gong and that of the late Empress Dowager Cixi in the Huangji Dian. News spread that after the period of primary mourning the coffin of the Emperor would be moved to the Yongsi Dian on Coal Hill, that of the Empress Dowager to the Guande Dian on Coal Hill.35 Actually, the coffin of the Emperor was placed in the Guande Dian on December 9, 1908;36 that of the Empress Dowager remained within the Palace walls in the Huangji Dian. Not until after the removal of the Emperor’s coffin to the Western Necropole of the

34 The modified regulations are contained in zouche 22.11.1908, in Zhengzhi guanbao, 23.11.1908: 7–8.
Qing, Xiling, was the coffin to the late Empress Dowager moved to another hall. Entirely unprecedented, her coffin occupied the throne hall of Ningshou Gong for a full year until the funeral procession with the catafalque left the Forbidden City on November 9, 1909.

VIII. Daily libations and special sacrifices

The interval between encoffining the corpse and the final placement in the Eastern Necropole, Dongling, was characterized by the daily libations in front of the mortuary altar in the Huangji Dian. These libations took place three times a day: in the morning at the hour of the dragon (7–9 am); at noon at the hour of the horse (11 am–1 pm); and in the evening at the hour of the monkey (3–5 pm). The exact time of the libations varied according to the seasonal weather. Owing to his youth the new Emperor was released from his sacrificial duty, a group of princes having been elected to act for his Majesty, among them the Prince Regent, Zaifeng, and two of his brothers, Zaixun und Zaitao.

While the daily libations were continued during the time that the coffin remained at the biers (which in case of the late Empress Dowager lasted a full year), there were – following the established Qing practice – numerous special sacrifices held at the mortuary altar, on which occasions the mourning dress of primary mourning had to be reassumed. On these occasions, including a libational ceremony, there were burnt possessions of the late Empress Dowager such as clothes, furniture, utensils, and paper imitations of servants, mockmoney, etc. all of which the late Empress Dowager might need in the other world. The special sacrifices included the “Great Libation“, yindian, the ”First Sacrifice“, chuji, the ”Grand Sacrifice“, daiji, the ”Monthly Ceremony“, manyue li, and the ”Hundred-Days'-Ceremony“, bairi li, which terminated the period of public mourning. Connected with the removal of the coffin to the imperial cemetery and the final entombment, there were the ”Farewell-Libation“, zudian, the day before the funeral procession left the Forbidden City, the ”Food Sacrifice“, xiangdian, the ”Sacrifice of Removal“, qiandian, and the ”Sacrifice of Repose“, yuji, symbolizing the end of the ceremonial obsequies. All these sacrifices were statutory items of the standard imperial death ritual, and thus were celebrated for the late Emperor, too. There were another three ceremonies celebrated in connection with the Chinese "All-Souls'-Days“, qingming, zhongyuan and mengdong.

37 The Qing emperors and their principal consorts were buried in two imperial cemeteries: one to the east of the capital, the Dongling or Eastern Necropole (including the tombs of the emperors Shunzhi, Kangxi, Qianlong, Xianfeng, Tongzhi), and one to the west of the capital, the Xiling or Western Necropole (including the tombs of the emperors Yongzheng, Jiaqing, Daoguang, Guangxu). In accordance with the required geomantic conditions the burial sites were usually chosen during lifetime. For the selection of tombs, see Rawski (2) 1988: 234–238.
It was up to the Imperial Board of Astronomy to fix an auspicious date for these special sacrifices. The Board of Rites was again in charge of organizing and memorializing the sacrificial program to the Throne.

On the occasion of such a special sacrifice, the preparations for the ceremony started at 5 o'clock in the morning. The altars for the libation and the burnt-offering were arranged as well as the offerings in the prescribed quantity, equipage and paraphernalia of the late Empress Dowager were set up in front of the Huangji Dian. All the princes and high officials assembled and waited for the Prince Regent – or some other prince acting for the Emperor – to give the sign for the mourning wail. After the wailing, prayers compiled by Hanlin scholars were read in front of the coffin; for libation three cups of wine were offered. Thereafter, the princesses and ladies at court under the patronage of the Empress Dowager Longyu, who took part in the ceremony, too, offered another three cups of wine. The libational ceremony having been finished, the prayers, offerings and clothes of the late Empress Dowager were burnt.\footnote{Though the ceremonial program did not vary very much; it was only the quantity of the various offerings which differed according to which sacrifice. It has to be stressed that the quantity of the offerings for the ceremonies held in honour of the late Empress Dowager were equivalent to that for the ceremonies held in honour of the late Emperor. It is assumed that, as before, the prescriptions in connection with the ceremonies for the late Empress Dowager followed the precedents of ceremonies for a late emperor. The following table illustrates the dense program of ceremonies for both the late Majesties.}

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\textbf{IX. Table of ceremonies}

Ceremonial program on the death of the Emperor Guangxu and the Empress Dowager Cixi (according both to the lunar and the solar calendar).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>day</th>
<th>hour</th>
<th>time of day*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lunar</td>
<td>solar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guangxu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.10.21</td>
<td>14.11.1908</td>
<td>Death of the Emperor Guangxu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.22</td>
<td>15.11.</td>
<td>sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.27</td>
<td>20.11.</td>
<td>hare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.28</td>
<td>21.11.</td>
<td>snake</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Death of the Empress Dowager Cixi

Great Libation, \textit{yindian}

Visit of condolence of the diplomatic body

\textit{OE 34, 1991}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.28</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>tiger</td>
<td>Reading of the testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>hare</td>
<td>Reading of the testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>First Sacrifice, chuji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>hare</td>
<td>First Sacrifice, chuji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>Grand Sacrifice, daji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>horse</td>
<td>Libation of Departure, qidian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.16</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>Removal of the coffin to the Guande Dian on Coal Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.19</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>Grand Sacrifice, daji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.21</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>horse</td>
<td>1st Monthly Ceremony, chu manyue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.22</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>1st Monthly Ceremony, chu manyue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.21</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>2nd Monthly Ceremony, er manyue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.22</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>horse</td>
<td>2nd Monthly Ceremony, er manyue</td>
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</table>

**Xuantong**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>dragon</td>
<td>3rd Monthly Ceremony, san manyue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>tiger</td>
<td>3rd Monthly Ceremony, san manyue</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>horse</td>
<td>Conferral of the posthumous title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>Promulgation of the posthumous title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>horse</td>
<td>Conferral of the posthumous title</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hundred-Days'-Ceremony, bairi li</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>11.2</td>
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<td>1st All-Souls'-Day, qingming</td>
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<td>11.2</td>
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<td>1st All-Souls'-Day, qingming</td>
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<td>11.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>hare</td>
<td>Farewell-Libation, zudian</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>horse</td>
<td>Departure of the funeral procession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>sheep</td>
<td>Arrival at Liangge Zhuang (Xiling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>hare</td>
<td>Food-Sacrifice, xiangdian;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(continuation of the Monthly Ceremonies at Liangge Zhuang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>snake</td>
<td>6th Monthly Ceremony, wu manyue</td>
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<td>4.22</td>
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<td>hare</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td>dragon</td>
<td>9th Monthly Ceremony, ba manyue</td>
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7.15. 30.8. snake 2nd All-Souls’-Day, zhongyang
7.15. 30.8. 2nd All-Souls’-Day, zhongyang, at Liangge Zhuang
7.22. 6.9. dragon 10th Monthly Ceremony, jiu manyue
8.22. 5.10. snake 11th Monthly Ceremony, shi manyue
9.22. 4.11. snake 12th Monthly Ceremony, shiyi manyue
9.24. 6.11. Farewell condolence of the diplomatic body
9.25. 7.11. snake Farewell-Libation, zudian
9.27. 9.11. tiger Libation of Departure, qidian
hare Departure of the funeral procession
10.1. 13.11. horse 3rd All-Souls’-Day, mengdong
10.1. 13.11. 3rd All-Souls’-Day, mengdong, at Liangge Zhuang
10.2. 14.11. dragon Food-Sacrifice, xiangdian
10.3. 15.11. hare Sacrifice of Removal, qianqian
10.4. 16.11. snake Etombment
horse Sacrifice of Repose, yuji
10.9. 21.11. horse Installment of the spirit-tablets

* cock = 5–7pm; sheep = 1–3pm; hare = 5–7am; snake 9–11am; tiger = 3–5am; horse 11am–1pm; dragon 7–9am

** intercalary month

X. The conferral of the posthumous title

Another important ritual in the period of ceremonial sacrifices in honour of the dead was the conferral of a posthumous name, shi, to the late Empress Dowager. In answer of a suggestive memorial of the Grand Secretary, an imperial decree was issued promulgating the posthumous title for Cixi:39 To her former titles of honour were added the characters xiaoqin, "filial and respectful", and peitian zingsheng, "equal to Heaven, increasing in holiness", so that her posthumous title counts twenty-two characters all together and holds the position of the longest honorary title within those of the Qing empresses.40 February 12, 1909, at the hour of the


40 Actually, her name counts twenty-five characters all together, but the last three characters of Cixi’s name, xian huanghou, meaning "empress of Xianfeng" (xian being Xianfeng’s posthumous name), are not considered part of the honorary title. In this sense the argument in the corresponding passage of my dissertation is revised. But Cixi’s posthumous title still holds the position of the longest honorary title: Customarily, only sixteen characters were allowed to Qing empresses, some of them not even reaching the maximum (e.g. Cian’s title counts fourteen). For Cixi’s title, see Wan Yi 1985. Cixi seems to outshine the Emperor here as well: Guangxu’s title, including the last two characters reading "emperor", counts twenty-three

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horse (11 am-1 pm), was the date fixed by the Imperial Board of Astronomy for the solemn conferral of the posthumous title.\textsuperscript{41} Three days of abstinence – from February 9 to 11 – and sacrificial prayers at the most important altars preceded the very ritual led by the Prince Regent at the mortuary altar in front of the coffin; the day after, the conferral was officially proclaimed.

\textbf{XI. The funeral ceremonies}

In January 1909, the exact date for the transferral of the coffin to the imperial tomb at the Eastern Necropolis of the Qing, Dongling, was fixed, the mausoleum itself having been designated long before, for Cixi herself had taken an eager interest in the construction of her eternal resting-place: On November 9, 1909, the funeral procession would leave the Forbidden City, on November 16, the coffin would be entombed in the Putuoyu-Mausoleum in the Eastern Necropolis.\textsuperscript{42}

In 1873, the burial site for the two Empress Dowagers, Cian und Cixi, had been designated east of the mausoleum of the Emperor Xianfeng. Six years later, in 1879, the two tombs of nearly the same structure and decoration were completed. They were called Dingdong Ling, the "Tombs east to the Dingling", Dingling being the name of the Emperor's mausoleum.\textsuperscript{43} In 1881, the late Empress Dowager Cian was interred in the western one of the two tombs, and again rumours accused Cixi of a deceitful machination: She would have deprived Cian of her legitimate burial site according to the saying \textit{dong wei da, xi wei xiao}, "east is first, west is second" and thus had her buried in the western mausoleum. But the accusation has to be rejected: Cian as principal wife had to be buried closer to the Emperor Xianfeng and thus was legally buried in the western tomb, which was actually close to the Emperor's mausoleum. In 1894, Cixi ordered the rebuilding of her mausoleum and had the three sacrificial halls pulled down and reconstructed in a much more luxurious way. At her demise the reconstruction was not yet entirely completed.

While all the libations and sacrifices already mentioned were taking place, the ministries and various boards were kept busy by the preparations for the final ceremonies. The actual preliminary arrangements and precautions in advance started in August 1909. The Imperial Equipage Department memorialized the various routes to the imperial cemetery, since the Prince Regent and the Empress Dowager Longyu would take a separate route to receive the coffin at its next resting-place, as prescribed in the Collected Statutes. The Board of Works ordered the streets to

\begin{footnotesize}


\textsuperscript{43} For a detailed account on the erection of the mausolea, see Yu Shanpu (1) 1985.
\end{footnotesize}
be repaired; since the procession would take five days to reach the imperial cemetery, night accommodations for the imperial cortège had to be installed along the route, at Yanxiao, Bairun (Sanhe county), Taohua Si (Jizhou county), Longfu Si (Zunhua county) and at the Putuoyu-Mausoleum.

Three catafalques had to be prepared for the transport of the coffin from the Huangji Dian to the place of its final entombment: a small one à 32 porters, a middle one à 80 porters and a large one à 128 porters, which was held ready at Yanxiao, the first stop and resting-place of the imperial procession. As usual, 7 920 porters were required to do the distance of about 135 km to the Dongling in 60 stages; in addition, another four porters per stage were needed as reserves. These porters had to be recruited out of the districts, the imperial cortège would take its way through, the districts of Daxing, Tongzhou, Sanhe and Zunhua. During the very first stage and the very last stage of the day the coffin had to be born by official, professional porters, because they knew how the coffin had to be placed and arranged for the ceremonies at the stops.\(^{45}\)

All these preparations for the late Empress Dowager’s funeral procession were ordinary procedures. From October 24, porters for the coffin-bearing were drilled outside the gates of the city.\(^{46}\) Outside the Xizhi Men at the Gaoliang Qiao, troops of the fire-brigade accompanying the funeral procession had to exercise.\(^ {47}\) On October 30, a final rehearsal of the funeral procession was held between Huangji Men and Dongzhi Men.\(^ {48}\)

A lot of precautions were taken to ensure tranquillity and order within the city, the police were strengthened and even mounted troops were called in. Additionally, 900 soldiers of the armed police forces were posted along the route of the funeral procession between Donghua Men and Dongzhi Men. As usual for an imperial funeral procession, doors and windows along the route of the procession had to be closed, but additionally, all the doorways, free places and crossroads were closely guarded by soldiers.\(^ {49}\) These extensive safety measures were commonly attributed to the present Empress Dowager’s constant fear of assassination.\(^ {50}\)

In accordance with the funeral arrangements for the late Empress Dowager Cian in the year 1881, each of the ministries and boards in the city was allowed

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\(^{44}\) It was common to install such "travel palaces", xinggong, within or in the vicinity of a temple.


\(^{46}\) According to Shuntian shibao, 26.10.1909 (2306): 7.

\(^{47}\) Shuntian shibao, 2.11.1909 (2312): 7.

\(^{48}\) Shuntian shibao, 30.10.1909 (2310): 7.

\(^{49}\) In Gongzhong dang’an, op. cit., no. 23.

\(^{50}\) According to the Times, 27.11.1909: 7.
to delegate a third of its personal for participation at the procession.\footnote{Zouzhe 5.10.1909, in Zhengzhì guănbaò, 13.10.1909: 5–6.} Because of the cold winter weather, the new Emperor was excused from leading the funeral rites and taking part in the procession.

Early in the morning of November 9, 1909, at 3 o’clock, the Prince Regent—acting for the young Emperor—held the ”Libation of Departure“, qidian; at about 5:15am, the coffin—carefully wrapped in quilts of silk and felt—was moved out of the Huangji Dian in front of which it was mounted onto the middle-sized catafalque. The tablet inscribed with the posthumous name of the late Empress Dowager and her imperial seal were transferred to the ”Yellow Palanquins“, huángtīng, which within the procession had their place behind all the honorific umbrellas. The mortuary altar, incense-burners and other sacrificial utensils were moved to the ”Black Hall“, lùdiàn, a pavilion which housed the coffin during each night on its way to the imperial cemetery.\footnote{According to zouzhe 5.10.1909, op. cit.}

The solemn procession, led by the Prince Regent, left the Forbidden City through the Ningshou Men, Huangji Men, Yiqing Men and Donghua Men in the dawn of the foggy, cold November day. By Beichizi, Shatan and Di’an Men the processon reached the Drum Tower, where it turned to the east in order to leave the city by the Dongzhi Men. For a short distance, the foreign representatives went in front of the catafalque.\footnote{See next paragraph ”The participation of the diplomatic body“.} A quite detailed account of that last imperial procession, which is said to have had a length of 5 km, had been transmitted to the western world by the correspondent of the Times, G.E. Morrison.

”... the catafalque was born by 84 bearers – the largest number which could carry this unwieldy burden through the city gates. Beyond the walls, the coffin was transferred to a larger bier, borne by 120 men. In front walked the Prince-Regent, the Bodyguard of Manchu Princes, and the members of the Grand Council, attended by the Secretariat Staff. Behind rode first a smart body of troops, followed by a large number of camels, whose Mongol attendants carried tent-poles and other articles for use in the erection of the ’matsched palaces’ in which the coffin rests at night at the different stages of the four days’ journey to the Tombs. Behind the Mongols were borne in procession the gaudy honorific umbrellas presented to the ’Old Buddha’ on the occasion of her return from exile at Hsianfu in 1901; all these are to be burnt on the 16th inst., when the body is finally entombed. Following the waving umbrellas came a body of Lama dignitaries, and after them a contingent from the Imperial Equipage Department, bearing Manchu sacrificial vessels, Buddhist symbols, and embroidered banners. Conspicuous in the cortège were three splendid chariots with
trappings and curtains of Imperial yellow silk emblazoned with dragons and phoenix, and two palanquins similar to those used by the Empress Dowager in her journeys in state; these also will be burnt at the Mausoleum. Noticeably figures in the procession were the six Chief Eunuchs, including the notorious Li Lien-ying and the short handsome attendant who usually accompanied the Empress’s sedan chair. The spectacle, as a whole, was most impressive;...”54

At the bridges and gates the imperial procession had to pass, sacrifices were held, the daily libations in front of the coffin were continued even on the way to the cemetery. As usual, all the local officials in the vicinity of about 100 li (about 50 km) assembled along the route at the right side, and while kneeling, awaited the procession for the prescribed mourning wail on the passing of the imperial catafalque.55

On the first day of its journey the funeral procession including the catafalque and the "Black Hall", ludiān, as well as the "Yellow Palanquins", huangting, managed a distance of 86 li (1 li = 0.5 km) to reach the first resting-place at Yanxiao. The distances which had to be covered between the various stops are listed below.56

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.11.1909</td>
<td>86 li</td>
<td>Yanxiao</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.11.</td>
<td>74 li</td>
<td>Bairun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.11.</td>
<td>59 li</td>
<td>Taohua Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.11.</td>
<td>28 li</td>
<td>Longfu Si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.11.</td>
<td>29 li</td>
<td>Dingdong Ling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

276 li = 138 km

As has been mentioned above, not all the mourners took part in the procession including the catafalque. The Prince Regent, the Empress Dowager Longyu and all those who had to care for the orderly precautions and ceremonies at the next resting-place went by a separate route to the next stop.

Upon the arrival at the Putuoyu-Mausoleum of the Dingdong Ling on November 13, the coffin, the mortuary altar and the incense-burners, the name-tablet and the imperial seal were deposited once more in the sacrificial hall, Long'en Dian, of the mausoleum. On November 14, there was a final rehearsal of moving the "Dragon Coach", longchun, into the underground burial chamber.57 After the last

54 In the Times, 27.11.1909: 7.
56 In Gongzhong dang'an, op. cit., no. 23.
57 According to Dongfang zazhi, 1909: 6: 12: 393.
sacrifices had been held as prescribed by the Board of Rites, there came the day of the final entombment, November 16, 1909, one year after the death of the Empress Dowager. At the hour of the tiger (3–5 am), name-tablet and seal of the late Empress Dowager were placed onto the dais within the Jinxuan Men of the burial chamber.\textsuperscript{58} At the hour of the dragon (7–9 am), the "Treasure Well", \textit{jinjing}, the center of the mausolea of Qing times, was filled with the excavated earth, the so-called "Auspicious Earth", \textit{jitu}.\textsuperscript{59} It was exactly upon that "Treasure Well" where the coffin was finally placed at the hour of the snake (9–11 am). The mighty stone doors were closed and sealed. After the dotting of the spirit-tablet\textsuperscript{60} by which the late Empress Dowager was incorporated in the group of Imperial Ancestors, and after the very last of all funeral ceremonies at the tomb, the "Sacrifice of Repose", \textit{yuji}, the spirit-tablet, housing in the "Yellow Tent", \textit{huangwo}, returned to Peking. On November 21, the day of its return to Peking, the spirit-tablet was installed in the Temple of Ancestors, Taimiao, at the hour of the horse (11 am–1 pm).\textsuperscript{61} At the same time, the spirit-tablet prepared for the Hall of Ancestor Worship, Fengxian Dian, was installed in that very hall; at the mausoleum, the third tablet was erected in the sacrificial hall, Long'en Dian. Three days of abstinence had preceded the installing of the spirit-tablets, sacrifices were held at the most important altars of the city.

So far, the funeral ceremonies would have been held to the content of the responsible officials, unless there was a scandalizing event resulting in the discharge of the Viceroy of Zhili, Duanfang, the chief official responsible for the late Empress Dowager's funeral arrangements, "... for allowing subordinate officials to photograph the cortège, also for using trees within the sacred mausoleum inclosure as telegraph poles ..."\textsuperscript{62}

It had been strictly forbidden to take photographs of the funeral ceremonies. Nevertheless, four men were caught taking photos just as the imperial catafalque passed the Long'en Men on its way to the sacrificial hall and two days later, as the catafalque was removed from the sacrificial hall. They declared that Duanfang had asked them to do this job. Though Duanfang replied that the photographing

\textsuperscript{58} In \textit{Gongzhong dang'an}, op. cit., no. 50.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Zouzhe} 19.11.1909, in \textit{Zhengzhi guanbao}, 23.11.1909: 8. For a detailed account on the "Treasure Well" of Qing mausolea, see Wang Qiheng 1986. Cixi took an eager interest in her "Treasure Well": On six occasions between 1879 and 1908, she had it filled with a great amount of valuables; see Yu Shanpu (1) 1985: 281.

\textsuperscript{60} In accordance with precedence three spirit-tablets had to be prepared: two of them were produced at the Putuo-Yu-Tomb, the one of which returned to Beijing after having been dotted; the third one was produced in Fengxian Dian. See \textit{zouzhe} 13.8.1909, in \textit{Zhengzhi guanbao}, 16.8.1909: 6–7.


\textsuperscript{62} The quotation is taken from the \textit{Times}, 22.11.1909: 5.
had been caused by machinations of a corrupt officer he was removed from office.\textsuperscript{63} These photographs might have been destroyed afterwards or carefully hidden away. In course of this study, neither the photos nor any hint of what had happened to them could be traced.

In August 1928, the mighty stone doors which were to have been closed forever were forcibly opened: Cixi’s mausoleum and the tomb of the Emperor Qianlong (1736–1796), the so-called Yuling, were forcibly broken open by troops of Jiang Jieshi under the command of the warlord Sun Dianying (1889–1947). The catafalques were forced open, the corpses carelessly thrown onto the floor, all the manifold wealth plundered.\textsuperscript{64}

**XII. The participation of the diplomatic body**\textsuperscript{65}

Along with the death of the Emperor Guangxu and the Empress Dowager Cixi there took place an up to then unparalleled event: Though since former times, tributary states had send emissaries or special envoys to offer condolences at an emperor’s death and in this sense preceded, this was the first time that all the accredited diplomats were permitted to be present at an official ceremony of condolence at the biers of the late Majesties. It was for the first time that representatives of foreign western countries were officially invited to proceed to the Forbidden City for a personal visit of condolence.

In the afternoon of November 15, 1908, the accredited representatives of the various nations were singly informed in an official note about the death of the Emperor the day before; at about noon of November 16, the death of the Empress Dowager was confirmed. At a meeting in the afternoon of the same day, the members of the diplomatic body decided to wear mourning for twenty-seven days and thus adopted the court’s mourning period.\textsuperscript{66} During this period of the most strict mourning the flags of all the legations were halfmasted. The Doyen of the diplomatic body, the Spanish minister, Manuel de Carcer y Salamanca, was authorized to submit an official note to the Foreign Ministry, expressing condolences,

\textsuperscript{63} The "photograph case" might have been a piece of evidence needed to discharge Duanfang. Contemporary reports held that Duanfang’s dismissal was the result of a court rivalry showing evidence of the increasing power of the Empress Dowager’s family, the Yehenala clan; see the *Times*, 22.11.1909: 5 and 24.11.1909: 5. For a more detailed account on that event, see chapter 4.2.4. of my dissertation.

\textsuperscript{64} Details in Yu Shanpu (2) 1985. Immediately afterwards, members of the imperial court reburied the corpses. After 1949, particularly since 1979, the tombs have been restored and opened to visitors.

\textsuperscript{65} The account on the diplomatic body is, additionally, based on documents of the Austria-Hungarian embassy in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv of Vienna.

\textsuperscript{66} In *Gesandschaftsarchiv Peking*, Fz. 17, "Séance du Corps diplomatique du 16.11.1908".
informing the ministry about the mourning regulations within the legation quarter and asking for a date for the visit of condolence. The Foreign Ministry answered immediately and added a detailed description of the ceremonious program.

On November 21, 1908, at 10 o'clock in the morning, thirty-nine representatives of fourteen nations headed by the Doyen entered the Imperial Palace to offer condolence. 67 The foreign delegates were led to the Huangji Dian first, which might be another significant aspect reflecting the Empress Dowager's dominant position. In front of the coffin of the late Empress Dowager, the Doyen read an address of sympathy, and this address having been translated, the Prince Regent expressed his thanks. Carefully holding to the prescribed ritual program, 68 the foreign representatives left the hall to advance to the Qianqing Gong, where the ceremony was repeated in front of the coffin of the late Emperor Guangxu. A quite detailed account of this official visit of condolence reads as follows:

"... Entre deux haies de gardes, portant les longues lances ornées de queues de léopard, le Corps diplomatique s'avance, têtes découvertes; du plus loin, les larges baies ouvertes laissent entrevoir le catafalque, ... Le trône a été enlevé. A sa place, sous un dai carré de satin noir brodé de dragons d'or, suspendu à moins de trois mètres de terre, dont retombent jusqu'au sol des bandes de soie noire, le cercueil est dissimulé; devant lui est placé une sorte d'autel, qui porte un brûle-parfum et deux flambeaux allumés. Les nombreuses inscriptions qui ornent, en temps habituel, les poutres et les colonnes disparaissent aujourd'hui sous des bandes de papier jaune. ... Le prince Régent est à droite de l'autel, face aux diplomates, qui s'évertuent à meubler leur mémoire de souvenirs, tout en exécutant les nombreuses révérences prescrites par le protocole. ... En sa qualité de doyen des ministres accrédités à Pékin, le ministre d'Espagne prend la parole pour exprimer en quelques mots les regrets causés aux Gouvernements étrangers et à leurs représentants par la disparition de la souveraine. On entend les mots: '... inélectable destin ... perte pour l'empire ... bonheur du peuple ...' Mais on est plus attentif au décor théâtral de la scène qu'à la voix des acteurs qui récitent ou qui traduisent. Le régent, ... répond par des phrases incolores, ... ... La marche à reculons par laquelle on se retire, combinée avec des nouvelles réverences, n'est pas sans causer un certain désordre dans l'ordonnance du cortège, qui se disloque bientôt complètement sous l'affluence des gens du palais, pendant le passage de toutes les

67 List of delegates in gongmen chao (court news) 20.11.1908, in Zhengzhi guanbao, 21.11.1908: 2-3. The following nations were represented: Spain, USA, Austria-Hungary, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Japan, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden.

68 Zhaohui (communication), in Zhengzhi guanbao, 23.11.1908: 6-7; for a German translation, see my dissertation.
enceintes déjà parcourues et qu’il faut traverser en sens inverse pour aboutir au palais où repose l’Empereur, ...“ 69

A few days before the funeral procession left the Imperial Palace, the foreign diplomats were invited again to bid the late Empress Dowager farewell. On November 6, 1909, at 10 o’clock in the morning, ninety-eight representatives of thirteen nations proceeded to the Huangji Dian to perform a ritual resembling that of November 21, one year before. 70

As it was a rare and unique chance, the diplomatic body took an eager interest in the possible participation at an imperial funeral procession. By persistent and obstinate notes to the Chinese Foreign Ministry they finally got the consent – though reluctant – of the authorities: Each nation was allowed to delegate special envoys for the funeral procession. As the late Emperor was the first to leave the city for his temporary resting-place at Liangge Zhuang in the Western Necropole, Xiling, it was this funeral procession in May 1909 the diplomatic body had insisted to take part in.

The Emperor Guangxu is told to have refused to select a burial site during his lifetime, as opposed to custom. Thus, at his demise, a group of geomancers had to be sent to the two imperial cemeteries of the Qing to select an auspicious place for the tomb of the Emperor. A "Committee in Charge of Construction of the Imperial Mausoleum Chongling", Chongling gongcheng chu was appointed by imperial decree in January 1909 supervising and taking control of the construction of the imperial tomb within the area of the Western Necropole, Xiling. The tomb should be completed within five years and the committee would then be dissolved. 71 His mausoleum being not yet completed, the late Emperor found a temporary resting-place at Liangge Zhuang. He was finally entombed on December 13, 1913, together with his wife, the empress Xiaoding (1868–1913).

As to the funeral procession to the Dongling in November 1909, the foreign diplomats apparently were less interested to insist upon another troublesome participation in the procession. This time they did not lay much effort into the negotiations, 72 they even emphatically opposed the early hour, 5 o’clock in the morning, at which they were invited to attend the very last rituals in front of the coffin and to escort the catafalque out of the Forbidden City. It would be too dark then,

69 Quotation from "Le Corps diplomatique et les rites mortuaires ...“ 1909: 29.

70 List of delegates in gongmen chao, 6.11.1909, in Zhengzhi guanbao, 7.11.1909: 2–3. With the exception of Sweden, the represented nations were those mentioned in note 67.

71 See Brunnert & Hagelstrom 1978: 189.

72 The minister of Austria-Hungary, then Doyen of the diplomatic body, Eugen Ritter von Kuczynski, reported that he did not encourage these negotiations, because the Chinese obviously had already hesitated to permit the foreign participation in the Emperor’s funeral. See Administrative Registratur F2/42, Bericht no. 50A, 23.11.1909.
they argued, for maintaining order, forming the cortège, even for recognizing each other.73 So finally, the hour of their participation was changed to 7:30 am. At this time, the foreign representatives assembled at the Beixin Qiao, where they had to await the funeral procession. On the arrival of the catafalque they took their place in front of it and escorted the late Empress Dowager until they left the imperial cortège at the Yuewang Miao. Then they returend to their legations.74

XIII. Conclusion

My intention in this article has been to reconstruct the ceremonial sequence at the last dynastic death ritual at the Qing court and to give a chronological description thereof. Not only had it been an important death ritual since it was the last one in Qing times, but in this case, the death rites were practiced in honour of one of the most fascinating personalities of the late Qing dynasty. Moreover, it is of striking significance that even after death the dominance and superiority of this personality were maintained. The essay tried to point out in which way the death rites for the late Empress Dowager set up an everlasting testimony to her personality.75

The ritual on the death of the Empress Dowager Cixi, basically corresponding with the dynastic statutes, reflected the dominant position of an extraordinary woman at court by the deliberate alterations which, in a certain arrogance, broke with rules established through centuries. In no aspect did the modified mourning prescriptions differ from those for the late emperor: The use of blue ink, the ban on ancestor worship, the suspension of transmitting memorials to the Throne, the rigorous ban on marriages for high- and low-ranking officials were entirely according to the ritual prescriptions for a late emperor, which were even surpassed by the regulation of the three-times'-a-day assemblage for libation during the whole period of primary mourning. Another fact made Cixi’s death ritual an unprecedented one: Her coffin remained within the Forbidden City until the final entombment, though imperial coffins were usually transferred to a hall on Coal Hill.

Though the Empress Dowager Cixi did take a considerable interest in the construction of her mausoleum, it was obviously not her who had prescribed the death

73 The participation of the diplomatic body in the funeral rites was an important affair of state and implied much negotiation. The question arises whether the Chinese had scheduled the foreigners’ participation at that early hour being aware of the fact that the foreigners might oppose; while changing the time of participation to 7:30 they might have appeased the diplomats and simultaneously minimized their own dislike of the foreign participation.

74 Ceremonial program in Gongzhong dang’an, op. cit., no. 23; for a German translation of this document, see my dissertation.

75 Further study will have to explore possible similarities between the death rites for the Empress Dowager Cixi and those for the Empress Wu (684–707) of the Tang dynasty to whom Cixi had often been compared. Besides, a comparison of Cixi’s death ritual to western imperial death ritual of the corresponding period would make an interesting topic, e.g. a comparison to the funeral of Queen Victoria in 1901.
rites to be altered in case of her demise. The documents do not provide any evidence that Cixi might have authored some of her burial rites or the deviation of the usual ritual herself. In her testamentary decree, *yigao*\(^76\), she ordered mourning to be worn for twenty-seven days, in accordance with the established Qing practice; this remark being a quite common closing phrase of imperial testaments and the only reference to her own death ritual.

The argument that because of the two overlapping imperial deaths the rituals for both the late Emperor and the late Empress Dowager were organized similarly to simplify arrangements is far too simple and inadequate in consideration of the importance granted to ritual in Confucian state ideology.

Who, then, initiated the changes of the usual ritual "to honour the late Empress Dowager's merits", as officially explained,\(^77\) and thus elevated her to a status equal to an emperor? And what might have been the reason for this demonstrative elevation?

As an indispensable form of legitimation imperial death ritual served mainly to consolidate the power of the successors. At the demise of the childless Emperor Guangxu, the question of succession had already been settled: Cixi had Puyi, the three-year-old son of Prince Chun (Zaifeng), a younger brother of the late Emperor, installed as heir to the throne; as the youth of the new Emperor involved a long period of regency, Cixi had Prince Chun appointed Regent. She entrusted all the government affairs to the Prince Regent and had him consult the Empress Dowager Longyu in serious questions.\(^78\) While concentrating might and power within the Manchu imperial family, Cixi thus simultaneously strengthened the position of her own family, the Yehenala clan.

During lifetime, it was Cixi's anxious concern to set up her authority and to prove the legitimacy thereof, which – of course – was reflected in her position as empress dowager. According to custom, the emperor owed filial obligations and obedience to the empress dowager. Thus Cixi could bear a certain influence upon state affairs and imperial administration for as long as she maintained her position as empress dowager. Cixi, indeed, was the highest authority and, at least since the death of the Empress Dowager Cian virtually the head of the imperial clan and as regent also the head of the Chinese state, symbolizing the highest authority within the "tripeartite coalition throne".\(^79\) But political opponents preferably pointed to

\( ^{76}\) *Yigao* (testamentary decree) 15.11.1908, in *Zhengzhi guanbao*, 16.11.1908: 6–7.

\( ^{77}\) See above, n. 33.

\( ^{78}\) *Shangyu* 14.11.1908, in *Zhengzhi guanbao*, 16.11.1908: 3; and *shangyu* 15.11.1908, in *Zhengzhi guanbao*, 16.11.1908: 6. The Empress Dowager Longyu was Cixi's niece and thus a member of the Yehenala clan, too.

\( ^{79}\) On the "tripeartite coalition" as the form of the late Qing monarchy, with Cixi as highest
her relatively humble origin and insignificant status at the beginning of her career at court, thus questioning the legitimacy of her imperial power.

The extraordinary death rites were officially explained by the court’s favorable appraisal of Cixi’s long career. But it seems that her successors had intended to set up a final testimony of her legitimacy and authority in order to demonstrate their own legitimacy. Rumours held that it was the concern of the Empress Dowager Longyu and the Yehenala clan to have the Prince Regent organize the death ritual on a grander scale, thus symbolically providing another evidence of Cixi’s legitimacy and, in consequence, consolidating the position of the clan. But it rather might have been the intention of the Prince Regent himself to confirm the last – and, for sure, not undisputed – decision of the late Empress Dowager on the question of succession. The importance of Cixi’s personality and her legitimate authority was stressed by laying special emphasis on her death rites, thus legitimizing the succession of Puyi and simultaneously the installed regency. The extolling death ritual should guarantee the structure and position of the Manchu imperial family and demonstrate the reinforcement of the legitimate inheritance.

The extraordinary death ritual at the demise of the Empress Dowager Cixi rooted in her outstanding career during life and simultaneously was an impressive demonstration of the legitimacy of her successors.

The decline of the dynasty was inevitable. But the stone relief leading up to the sacrificial hall of the Putuoyu-Mausoleum has outlived the dynasty and still testifies the high authority of an empress dowager who – in her death rites – was elevated to a status equal (or almost superior) to the emperor.

authority, the Emperor Guangxu and the favoured princes and ministers, see Kwong 1984: 34–40.

80 According to the Times, 10.11.1909: 5.

81 Yuan Shikai, favouring Prince Pulun for heir to the throne, had striven to increase his influence at court, but was eliminated by this decision and by the concentration of power within the reigning imperial family. See Johnston 1985: 60.
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