

THE IMPERIAL AUDIENCE CEREMONIES  
OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY

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The term "Confucianism" has come to designate, among other things, the world-view and the ceremonial practices of traditional China's class of scholar-officials, i.e., the civil religion of China's ruling elite. Of the two aspects of Confucian civil religion just mentioned, the ideological and the ritual, the first has by far received the most extensive treatment.<sup>1</sup> This conforms to a general trend, almost a phobia, against giving consideration to ritual as a cultural form equal in importance to "belief." Among the sources of this trend, one must certainly include a certain Protestantly rooted anti-ritualism, which has affected not only our perception of non-Western cultures but also that of ourselves.<sup>2</sup> Thus, within the study of civil religion itself, which has focused mainly upon American institutions, there has rarely been any concern with public ceremony as opposed to popular consciousness, the American myth, or the use of the word "God" in presidential speeches.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the comparatively greater role played by ritual in traditional China, it would be an even graver oversight to continue to pay as little attention as has so far been paid to Chinese state ceremonies. Up to now there has been a noticeable dearth of scholarship upon the whole area of Chinese state religion. Of its two main forms, the literati Cult of Confucius and the Imperial cult, the former has been the subject of only one major study and the latter has been dealt with only in piecemeal fashion, never systematically.<sup>4</sup> The present study aims to overcome, in some small way, this scholarly neglect of ritual practises in Confucian civil religion. It will deal with state rites which were part of the Imperial Cult of the Ch'ing dynasty, but which were characterized to a greater extent than its other parts (such as the emperor's worship of Heaven or his imperial ancestors) by literati involvement. Indeed, the most interesting and important feature of this part of the cult--the Ch'ing emperor's "ceremonial" audiences--was that it

existed at the intersection of imperial and bureaucratic authority within the sacred polity of late traditional China.

Below, the first problem to be addressed is that of defining precisely what rites fall under the heading of "ceremonial" audiences and, cojointly, the problem of defining ritual itself. After considering these problems, the second half of the paper will describe the nature and function of the rites of the Ch'ing "ceremonial" audiences, with an eye toward increasing our understanding of the character of Confucian civil religion and the sacred status of the Chinese emperor during late imperial times.

#### Definitional Problems

For purposes of this study, "ceremonial" audiences must be distinguished from "business" audiences. The former term is used to designate the Grand Audience (ta-ch'ao) that was held on three annual occasions (New Year's Day, the Imperial Birthday, and the Day of Winter Solstice) as well as the Ordinary Audience (ch'ang ch'ao) that was patterned upon the above and specified to take place thrice monthly. Their common characteristics were the following.<sup>5</sup> (1) They took place in and around the main throne hall of the "outer court" of the Forbidden City, i.e., the Hall of Supreme Harmony (t'ai-ho-tien).<sup>6</sup> (2) They were held ostensibly, to "congratulate" (ch'ing-ho) the emperor and pay obeisance to him. (3) Yet they also served to honor the others who participated in them, either on a regular basis or for some special occasion such as that of receiving an appointment in officialdom or a civil examination degree. (4) In view of the number and range of officials, nobility, and foreign dignitaries involved, these audiences were clearly large-scale, public events. (5) Finally, the documents associated with them were, on the one hand, special "congratulatory memorials" (ho-piao) that were offered up to the emperor and, on the other hand, very general and far-reaching proclamations (chao) that were handed down by the emperor to announce great and joyous events (an accession, the conferring of imperial names, a general pardon, the remission of a tax, etc.).<sup>7</sup> These documents, like the ceremonial audiences themselves, were not concerned with particular mundane affairs.

Conversely, "business" audiences provided the context for handling routine affairs of state. The most standardized of these were the so-called "morning audiences," which were designated yü-men, an abbreviation for a phrase meaning "the emperor proceeds to the gate to listen and govern" (yü-men t'ing-cheng). Generally held inside the Gate of Cloudless Heaven (ch'ien-ch'ing-men), main entrance to the "inner court" of the Forbidden City, these audiences were attended by a select group of the highest ranking metropolitan officials. Other business audiences, not regularly held at one particular time and place nor attended by any fixed group of officials, have been discussed by Silas Wu under the appropriate name of "special audiences." Stressing the political effectiveness that these audiences derived from their confidential nature, he lists among them the pi-chien ("to be seen on the steps of the imperial throne") and the ju-chin ("to enter the imperial presence").<sup>8</sup> While all of these were to some extent modeled upon the Grand Audience and, of course, included paying obeisance to the emperor, they did not serve in any large-scale, public, and formal way to congratulate the emperor or to confer honor upon others. However, while clearly dwarfed in stature by the elaborate ceremonial audiences, the business audiences were the primary decision-making arena for the government of late imperial China, handling documents that determined its specific laws and policies.

The aim here is not to assess the relative importance of "ceremonial" as opposed to "business" audiences, for the significant thing is that the importance of each was magnified by its relation to the other. Just as the emperors of the Ch'ing period ruled as well as reigned, its business audiences accomplished in concrete terms what its ceremonial audiences effected by means of ritual. To show how this was so leads us, next, into an effort to define ritual itself.

A ritual is an event involving the creation of a symbolic universe, and serving two interdependent functions: one "transformative," the other "confirmative." This means that every ritual is in some sense a rite de passage, entailing a significant transference of power from one domain to another (e.g., from heaven to earth) or a major change of status in an individual, a community, or perhaps the whole cosmos. Because rituals are connected with transitions and the dangers inherent in them, they are generally clothed in symbolism

that recalls the sense of order and the values which a society holds sacred. This latter confirmative dimension of ritual therefore works hand in hand with the transformative one. It would be an error to favor one over the other, stressing exclusively either what a rite "does" in its transitional function or, conversely, what it "says" as a mode of communication.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to offering this definition of ritual, it is possible roughly to characterize the "ritualist" perspective. One noteworthy effort to do just this has been made by British social anthropologist Mary Douglas. She takes ritualism "to signify heightened appreciation of symbolic action. . . . [which is] manifested in two ways: belief in the efficacy of instituted signs, sensitivity to condensed symbols."<sup>10</sup> The first suggests that, for its participants, a rite is not empty formality but rather efficacious manipulation of behavioral forms that are endowed with sacred power. The second tells us that ritualists are sensitive to symbols which point to highly articulated, ordered, and coherent systems of meaning rather than to a realm of diffuse ideas or internal emotive states. As we proceed to look at the rites of imperial audiences, it will be worthwhile to keep in mind an observation concerning the nature of the experience had by those who participated in them. To the extent that these participants were "ritualists," they sensed (with perhaps more wisdom than naïveté) the efficacy of their behavior; they also experienced, in the very process of ritual interaction itself, a further reinforcement of precisely that world-view which had brought them together to pay obeisance to the Chinese emperor.

#### Nature and Function of Imperial Ceremonial Audiences

The definition of ritual given above will determine the course of this analysis of Ch'ing ceremonial audiences. It will treat, first, their confirmative dimension and, second, their transformative one. Treatment of their confirmative dimension will be focused primarily upon the details of the Grand Audience. Here, as in our main source, The Collected Statutes of the Ch'ing Dynasty (Ta-ch'ing hui-tien), the Grand Audience is taken as providing a basic theme upon which variations were performed in conjunction with a number of affairs

of state. When the nature of these state affairs is later considered, the transformative function of the rites of audience will be exposed.

The Grand Audience, held upon the occasion of each of the "three great festivals" (san-ta-chieh),<sup>11</sup> created a symbolic universe of immense proportions, a microcosmic representation of the social-political-cosmic order as understood within the orthodox vision of China's ruling class. It is difficult to determine exactly how many individuals took part in a Grand Audience. Yet, as will shortly be seen, a considerable number were included in the single, rather privileged category of those who held a place in the actual "audience ranks" (ch'ao-pan). There were also four other categories of individuals involved.<sup>12</sup> Listed according to their function, these were comprised of officials who "led the imperial carriage" (tao-chia-kuan), those who "served in the ranks" (shih-pan-kuan), those who "directed affairs" (chih-shih-kuan), and those who "oversaw the ceremonies" (chiu-yi-kuan). The individuals in these ancillary roles, numbering well over one hundred, were assigned to specified positions in and near the Hall of Supreme Harmony. However, space permits that we consider only the positioning of those participants who were actual members of the audience ranks. Their positioning best reveals the sense of order that was generated by an imperial ceremonial audience.

According to one basic but complete description:<sup>13</sup>

The audience ranks [are as follows]. On top of the Imperial Steps (tan-pi) stand the Princes of the Blood of the first degree, the Princes of the Blood of the second degree, the Princes of the Blood of the fourth degree, and the Princes of the Blood of the fifth and sixth degrees. Divided into left and right hand flanks, they stand in two rows on each left and right, facing east and west, with the most highly ranked on the north. [However,] for paying obeisance, they position themselves in four rows on each left and right. In the left flank the most highly ranked stand on the west, and in the right flank the most highly ranked stand on the east. All face north.

Within the courtyard [of the Hall of Supreme Harmony] civil and military officials, divided into their [respective] left and right hand flanks, stand to the outside of the Imperial Regalia.<sup>14</sup> [They stand in] nine rows on each east and west, facing east and west, with the most highly ranked on the north. [However,] for paying obeisance, they position themselves within the Imperial Regalia, forming eighteen rows on each east and west according to the rank markings [built into the courtyard].<sup>15</sup> In the rows on the east, the most highly ranked stand on the west end, and, in the rows on the west, the most highly ranked stand on the east end. Tribute bearers from foreign nations are placed at the end of the western [i.e., military] ranks. All face north.

The focus of this arrangement was, of course, the Imperial Dragon Throne in the Hall of Supreme Harmony. Each of the participants in the ceremony stood at a distance from this sacred center appropriate to his political, geographical, or genetical proximity to the individual who would occupy this throne during the rite. This individual, the Chinese emperor in the guise of the all-auspicious dragon, became not only the focus of a socio-political order represented by humans, but also the center of a natural order that was expressed by the different creatures appearing upon the audience robes of officials in accordance with their rank (animals on military robes and birds on civil ones).<sup>16</sup>

Moving from sacred spatial arrangements to the actual sequence of events at a Grand Audience, one sees a further demonstration of its role in confirming a world-view built upon notions of order, coherence, hierarchy, and the focal sacrality of the Chinese emperor. For a Grand (or Ordinary) Audience, the participants assembled at dawn.<sup>17</sup> They entered the courtyard of the Hall of Supreme Harmony through a gate determined by their status, foreign tribute bearers following upon the heels of the lowest ranking officials. Then, an Imperial Board of Astronomy member, who was stationed at the Gate of Cloudless Heaven, announced that the time

had arrived for the Grand Audience to begin. The emperor was at this point formally invited by the President and Vice-President of the Board of Rites to begin his procession to the Hall of Supreme Harmony. These two officials, who would guide the procession, stood below the steps of the Gate of Cloudless Heaven, while imperial guards stood at the gate itself and at the rear entrance to the Hall of Supreme Harmony. All were instructed "to stand in proper order and wait with due respect" (hsü-li chih-szu). The stage was set for the rite as such to begin, that is, for the moment which formally separates ordinary, profane time from the sacred time of ritual. At this point, the text states:<sup>18</sup>

The bell and drum are sounded at the Meridian Gate. The emperor, in his ceremonial attire (li-fu), ascends his carriage to go forth from his palace. The officials in charge of guiding his carriage reverently lead the way; and the imperial retinue follows. Reaching the Protecting Harmony Hall (pao-ho-tien), the emperor descends from the carriage, proceeds to the Middle Harmony Hall, and takes the throne therein. In front of this hall, those who serve in the ranks, lead and follow the imperial carriage, oversee the rites, and direct affairs [i.e., all those who are not in the actual audience ranks] perform the rite of three kneelings and nine prostrations. Finishing, each hastens out to his position for audience.

Only those in charge of guiding the procession stay and wait for it to resume. As the Chamberlains of the Vanguard lead, the imperial retinue following as previously, the solemn ritual "music of Shun" (chung-ho Shao-yüeh) is played,<sup>19</sup> and the emperor proceeds to the Hall of Supreme Harmony to take his throne, [after which] the music stops. . . .

[A herald] cracks the whip three times and the high imperial court music (tan-pi ta-yüeh) is played. The various noblemen then take their positions for obeisance; and the various officials, passing south around the Imperial Regalia,

turn to enter their positions for obeisance. They stand by rank and face north. [To the commands of heralds] all advance and kneel. The music temporarily stops. . . [and officials come forth to read congratulatory memorials].<sup>20</sup>

The music continues and the various noblemen and officials perform the rite of three kneelings and nine prostrations, rise, and retire to again stand in their positions. The [high imperial court] music stops and [after] three cracks of the whip, the solemn ritual "music of Shun" is played. The imperial procession starts back to the palace, and the various members of nobility and officialdom retire.

This course of events clearly depicts an instance in which the Chinese emperor reigned rather than ruled. He came forth from his palatial seclusion as if a god descending from on high. His movements provided the timing and structure for the ceremony; and the climax of this ritual drama was a series of en masse prostrations before his imperial throne. The spirit of the occasion is captured in a stanza which was recited, in the case of a New Year's audience, as the solemn ritual "music of Shun" was played and the emperor proceeded from the Middle Harmony Hall to his throne in the Hall of Supreme Harmony. The words of this stanza, entitled "Origin of Peace," are as follows:<sup>21</sup>

Encourage Heaven to care for our Emperor.  
Let all within the four seas be at peace.  
The year's beginning stirs up the Triple Yang.  
Countless nations at court properly revere the palace gates.

All the universe manifests fortuitous signs.  
Ride the Imperial Chariot! Hold forth the Imperial Flag!  
This era of harmony, these days of glory, last forever.  
Even those of far off places endure hardships [to come here].

There was in all of this, however, more than reverence for the person of the Chinese emperor. To say that reverence was paid to the imperial "office," rather than to the individual emperor,



conforms to other observations that have been made about Chinese sacred kingship and state religion.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the details already given, other factors suggest that the greatest significance was attached to the pattern, not the person. For example, an Ordinary Audience would occur on its scheduled date (the fifth, fifteenth, or twenty-fifth of the month) although the emperor was unable to attend. In such a case, the members of the nobility formed their audience ranks outside the Gate of Supreme Harmony, and officials did so outside the Meridian Gate. Even when a Ch'ing emperor was away in Mukden, and his throne empty in Peking, his subordinates formed their ranks, offered congratulatory memorials, and, in unison, performed the full kowtow (i.e., the rite of three kneelings and nine prostrations).<sup>23</sup> Moreover, at the time of a Grand Audience, officials in outlying provinces were required to adorn themselves in their full audience attire and "make obeisances towards the capitol" (wang-ch'üeh hsing-li).<sup>24</sup>

Ch'ing imperial Audiences rites thus celebrated something more than the sacred status of one person; they celebrated the sanctity of an entire world-view. This means each ceremonial audience was an event that revered, and reified, the entire pattern of relationships built around the imperial person, a pattern of hierarchical order superimposed upon a well-orchestrated and coherent oneness.

Yet the function which a ceremonial audience had in reinforcing the pattern underlying Chinese imperial rule is only half of the picture, and perhaps the more static half. The dynamic element is seen in the function that the rite had in transforming the imperial form of sacred power into a more operational, bureaucratic form. In Weberian terms, this meant a transmutation of power from a condensed, charismatic state into a more rationalistically evolved and functionally differentiated one.

This theme of the transition of power is expressed in each of the events, as listed in the Ch'ing Collected Statutes, which were held in conjunction with ceremonial audiences. These included commencement exercises for successful examinees at the metropolitan level (ch'uan-lu), the issuance of imperial proclamations (pan-chao),

the presentation of sacred texts to the emperor (chin-shu), the accession of an emperor to the throne (teng-chi), and a number of other events analogous to an accession.<sup>25</sup>

One of the most spectacular and, for our purposes, representative of these events was the issuance of imperial proclamations. When a proclamation was issued in conjunction with a ceremonial audience, additional preparations were involved. These included adding a special terrace to the tower of the Gate of Heavenly Peace (t'ien-an-men) as well as setting up the related paraphernalia that would be needed for lowering the proclamation document down from this terrace to the square below.<sup>26</sup> This document was first presented to Board of Rites officials inside the Hall of Supreme Harmony; and they saw that it was safely and ceremoniously transported out to the Gate of Heavenly Peace to be read, at least figuratively, to the whole empire. The document was transported in a style which would have been appropriate for the emperor himself. The officials who carried it, using a litter called the "cloud plate" (yün-p'an) and being led by the imperial yellow umbrella (huang-kai), raised the document high and guided it through the central opening of the Gate of Supreme Harmony, a sacred portal otherwise reserved solely for the emperor's use. At the Meridian Gate (wu-men), it was placed in a portable "dragon pavilion" and carried by officers of the Imperial Equipage Department, to the sound of imperial processional music (tao-ying-yüeh), the remainder of the way out to the Gate of Heavenly Peace. As the Board of Rites officials again took charge of the document, ascending with it upon a stone path that led to the terrace built onto the gate tower, the pavilions passed through the gate and were placed dead center in front of it.<sup>28</sup>

In the great courtyard in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace, but within the Golden Water River (chin-shui-ho) that spanned it, civil and military officials arranged themselves in proper flanks and rows, as others took places behind them. After everyone had obeyed the command to kneel, the proclamation was read aloud; first in Manchu, then in Chinese. This part of the ceremony concluded with an en masse performance of the rite of three kneelings and nine prostrations.

However, the real climax of this ritual drama had yet to occur. Having been announced to the realm, the imperial proclamation was placed inside a sacred vessel. Suspended on a multi-colored cord, it was then lowered down from high upon the Gate of Heavenly Peace in the mouth of a Golden Feng Bird. Received below by Board of Rites officials and returned to the "dragon pavilion," it was again carried in procession, this time out through the Dynastic Gate (ta-ch'ing men) and on to the offices of the Board of Rites. When it reached this destination, it was placed upon an "incense table" (hsiang-an), after which the President and Vice-President of the Board of Rites led all assembled in a final, rite-concluding performance of the full kowtow. The same care was shown for the sacred power of imperial documents when they were channeled through the ceremonial audience process in the other direction. When such sacred texts as the Veritable Records (Shih-lu) of a former reign period, the Imperial Annals (Pen-chi), or the Jade Scroll (Yü-tieh) of imperial genealogy were prepared for the emperor by the literati, they presented the texts to him at audience. They also made sure, in separate ceremonies, that the texts were delivered to and stored in the proper imperial hall or library.<sup>29</sup> Thus, regardless of the side from which we look at it, the institution of ceremonial audience, like the Hall of Supreme Harmony where it came to life, existed as a sacred portal connecting the imperial palace complex with the outside world, and linking the Chinese emperor to those responsible for exercising his will throughout that world.

### Conclusions

Analogously, taking the entire imperial cult into account, the position of the Chinese emperor was itself a portal through which powers of rulership passed. The Son of Heaven could, in fact, be viewed as a human conduit who, through one part of the imperial cult, received the responsibilities of rulership from natural and supernatural sources (Heaven, Earth, the Imperial Ancestors) and who, through another part of the cult--the imperial ceremonial audiences--was able to pass these responsibilities on to his bureaucratic functionaries. When, for example, the Chinese emperor himself knelt as a subject before Heaven and the Imperial Ancestors,

he was through this act of humility uniquely able to participate in their power. Likewise, the acts of obeisance that others paid to him during audience ceremonies were acts both of humility and privilege. The scholar-officials who performed these acts of obeisance were privileged participants in the powers of rulership which flowed through the Son of Heaven.

In addition, reviewing the confirmative function of the rites of audience, those who took part in them may be said to have experienced and internalized the very pattern of hierarchical order by virtue of which the Chinese emperor held his sacred status. The idea that cultural values are inculcated through ceremonial interaction is not only a hypothesis of modern ritual theory, it is also part of an understanding of human behavior which has roots reaching far back into the Chinese philosophical tradition. Despite their Manchu origins, the Ch'ing emperors understood the value that ritual had been given within that tradition.

In his work Communication and Imperial Control in China, Silas Wu concludes that the Ch'ing emperors developed an ingenious political structure which kept themselves, in a very concrete sense, at the center of things. He compares this structure to an umbrella, one in which "the emperor was the central shaft and the officials the spokes." Through the use of private audiences and secret memorials, he tells us: "Each spoke was firmly attached to the center, yet separated from every other spoke."<sup>30</sup> The Ch'ing emperors also made use of certain symbolic, ritual means for maintaining their focal status, such as the ceremonial audiences which have been the subject of the present paper. However, in doing so, they were not innovating but were rather following that ancient Chinese tradition in which ritual was so highly valued. In this case, the proper metaphor was not that of the umbrella but, instead, that of Confucius' proverbial North Polar Star, "Which remains in place while all the other stars revolve in homage about it" (Lun-yü 2:1).

Notes

1. Confucian ideology was the main focus, for example, of the articles collected in the volumes edited by Arthur F. Wright, The Confucian Persuasion (Stanford University Press, 1960); and, with David S. Nivison, Confucianism in Action (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959). More recently, it has been dealt with under the designation "political culture" in two studies by Thomas A. Metzger: The Internal Organization of the Ch'ing Bureaucracy (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), especially pp. 404-415; and Escape from Predicament: Neo-Confucianism and China's Evolving Political Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977). For works more concerned with state ritual, see note four below.

2. See the discussion entitled "Away from Ritual" in Mary Douglas, Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 19-39.

3. This trend began with the now famous essay by Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," Daedalus 96:1 (Winter 1967), pp. 1-21. A recent effort to deal with public ceremonial as an expression of American civil religion is Ronald L. Grimes, Symbol and Conquest: Public Ritual and Drama in Sante Fe, New Mexico (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976).

4. The single outstanding work on the former subject is, of course, John K. Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius (New York: Paragon, 1966). On the rites of the Imperial Cult, only the articles by E.T. Williams which appeared in various issues of the Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society approach being a systematic treatment of the subject. Especially see "The State Religion of China during the Manchu Dynasty," JNCBRAS 46 (1913), pp. 11-45.

5. This basic information about ta-ch'ao and ch'ang-ch'ao is from two sources: Ta-ch'ing hui-tien ("Collected Statutes of the Ch'ing Dynasty," 1899), 27:1-2, hereafter cited as TCHT; and Ch'in-ting li-pu tse-li ("Imperially Endorsed Regulations of the Board of Rites," 1843), 4 and 7, hereafter cited as LPTL.

6. For the sake of uniform accuracy, the names used in this paper for Peking's various gates and halls are those of Osvald Sirén, The Imperial Palaces of Peking, 3 vols. (Paris and Brussels: G. Van Oest, 1926).

7. Chao can be distinguished from more common imperial legal issuances, such as simple endorsements (p'i), rescripts (chih), and edicts (yü). See Fairbank and Teng, "On Types and Uses of Ch'ing Documents," in Ch'ing Administration, pp. 77, 95-97.

8. Silas H.L. Wu, Communication and Imperial Control in China: The Evolution of the Palace Memorial System 1693-1795 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 22-23.

9. There has always been a tension between those who, on the one hand, view ritual as primarily a kind of language or communication and those who, on the other hand, view it as a vehicle for individual or collective transformation in some actual sense. Mary Douglas' Natural Symbols is a good example of the first approach; the second is represented by Victor Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

10. Douglas, Natural Symbols, p. 26.
11. The Winter Solstice Grand Audience actually occurred the following day because the emperor was at the southern suburban altar worshipping Heaven on the solstice day itself. See TCHT, 27:1a.
12. TCHT, 27:1b-2.
13. TCHT, 27:2a. Here as elsewhere in this paper the translations used for the titles of officials and nobility are from H.S. Brunnert and V.V. Hagelstrom, Present Day Political Organization of China, Revised edition of 1911, tr. A. Beitchenko and E.E. Moran (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen, 1978).
14. The term translated as "Imperial Regalia" is lu-pu, which refers to the imperial insignia or "shield" (lu) and the other items on the "list" (pu). See Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary, Revised American Edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), item 4153. The location and itemization of the regalia set up for this ceremony can be found in TCHT t'u, 26.
15. The term translated as "rank-markings" is p'in-chi-shan. There was a series of these rising slightly from the pavement on both sides of the imperial path that led up to the central stairs of the Hall of Supreme Harmony. A place to stand was thus marked for both the first and second grades of all nine ranks. See Ch'ing-tung jih-hsia chiu-wen k'ao ("Imperially Endorsed Description of the Antiquities of Peking," 1778), 11:3a. Also see TCHT t'u, 26: t'ai-ho-tien ch'ao-ho li-tz'u t'u (which shows where the various participants in the rite stood within the court in front of the Hall of Supreme Harmony).
16. These birds and animals, as they appeared on the so-called "mandarin squares" embroidered on court robes, are listed in Schuyler Cammann, China's Dragon Robes (New York, 1952), Appendix F, pp. 196-97.
17. TCHT, 27:2a. Elsewhere (LPTL, 7:3b), it is reported that, in the case of Ordinary Audiences, the starting time in spring and winter was that of the cyclical ch'en (7 A.M.), and in summer and fall that of the cyclical mao (5 A.M.)!
18. TCHT: 27:2 (the preceding summary as well as the quote that follows).
19. "Shao" was the name of the music of the legendary emperor Shun, of which Confucius was very fond. The musicians who played the chung-ho shao-yüeh were stationed under the front eaves of the Hall of Supreme Harmony. Those who played the tan-pi ta-yueh were set up just inside the Gate of Supreme Harmony (i.e., at the opposite end of the courtyard from the other musicians).
20. TCHT, 27:2b, 4-5a gives details on the process of advancing and reading congratulatory memorials.
21. Ta-ch'ing t'ung-li ("Comprehensive Rites of the Ch'ing Dynasty," 1813), 27:11b.
22. See the comments in Donald H. Smith, "Divine Kingship in Ancient China," Numen 4 (1957), pp. 202-203; and those in Robert S. Ellwood, The Feast of Kingship: Accession Ceremonies in Ancient Japan (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1973), p. 19. Also, especially interesting in this regard is Jeffrey Meyer's study, Peking as a Sacred City (Taipei: Orient Culture Service, 1976). It aims to show that, in contrast to other holy cities such as Mecca or Jerusalem, late imperial Peking's sacred status was derived to a greater extent from a general and repeatable pattern than it was from any individual, specific, or localized holiness.

23. See TCHT, 27:4b-5a. On the differences made necessary by the emperor's absence see TCHT, 27:8b and TCHT shih-li, 295:16b-17a.
24. TCHT shih-li, 296:1. On the translation of the phrase quoted see Matthews' Chinese-English Dictionary, item 1712.
25. Discussion of ch'uan-lu begins on TCHT, 27:3a; pan-chao, TCHT, 27:5a; chin-shu, TCHT, 27:6a; and teng-chi, TCHT, 27:12a. In English, there is a discussion of the ch'uan-lu in Ichisada Miyazaki, China's Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China, tr. Conrad Schirokauer (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1976), pp. 83-85. Also see the description of the Ch'ien-lung emperor's abdication ceremony in Harold L. Kahn, Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien Lung Reign (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 191-99. This event took place in conjunction with the New Year's Day Grand Audience of February 9, 1796.
26. TCHT, 27:5a.
27. TCHT, 27:2b-3a.
28. TCHT, 27:5a-5b. (The remainder of this description of the rite is also summarized from this passage.)
29. TCHT, 27:6-7.
30. Wu, Communication and Imperial Control, p. 121.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

ch'ang-ch'ao 常朝	ju-chin 入覲
chao 詔	li-fu 禮服
ch'ao-pan 朝班	lu-pu 鹵簿
ch'en 辰	mao 卯
ch'ien-ch'ing-men 乾清門	pan-chao 頒詔
chih 旨	pao-ho-tien 保和殿
chih-shih-kuan 執事官	<u>Pen-chi</u> 本紀
chin-shu 進書	pi-chien 陛見
chin-shui ho 金水河	p'i 批
<u>Ch'in-ting li-pu</u> 欽定禮部則例	p'in-chi-shan 品級山
<u>tse-li</u>	san-ta-chieh 三大節
<u>Ch'in-ting jih-hsia</u>	<u>Shih-lu</u> 實錄
<u>chiu-wen k'ao</u> 欽定四庫全書	shih-pan-kuan 侍班官
ch'ing-ho 慶賀	ta-ch'ao 大朝
chiu-yi-kuan 糾儀官	<u>Ta-ch'ing hui-tien</u> , 大清會典
ch'uan-lu 傳臚	<u>t'u, shih-li</u> 圖, 事例
chung-ho Shao-yüeh 中和韶樂	ta-ch'ing-men 大清門
ho-piao 賀表	<u>Ta-ch'ing t'ung-li</u> 大清通禮
hsiang-an 香案	t'ai-ho-tien 太和殿
hsü-li chih-szu 序立祇俟	tan-pi 丹陛
huang-kai 黃蓋	tan-pi ta-yüeh 丹陛大樂

tao-chia-kuan 導駕官

teng-chi 登極

t'ien-an-men 天安門

wang-ch'üeh hsing-li 望闕行禮

yü 諭

yü-men t'ing-cheng 御門聽政

yü-tieh 王燂

yün-p'an 雲盤





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