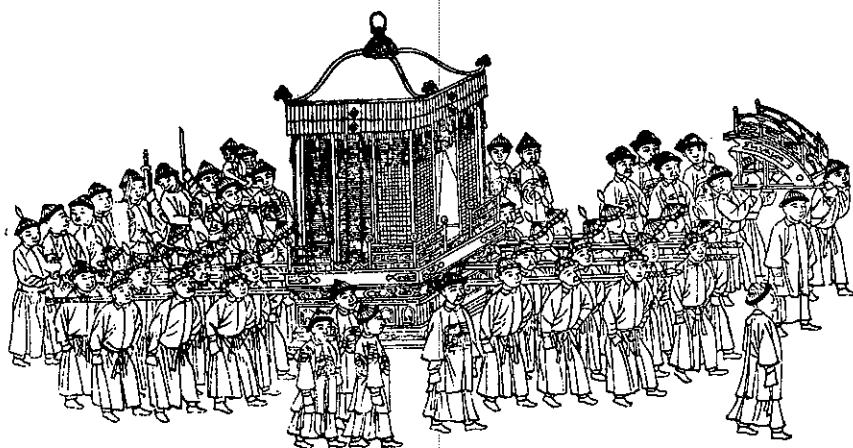


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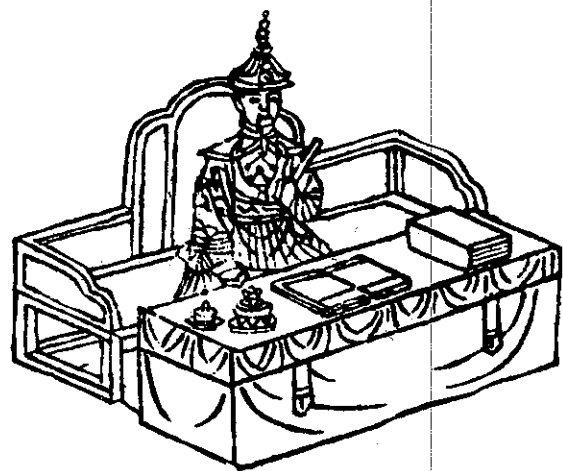
*Emperor of China*

*Self-portrait of K'ang-hsi*  
by Jonathan D. Spence



VINTAGE BOOKS  
A DIVISION OF RANDOM HOUSE  
NEW YORK

*Appendix A*



*Seventeen Letters*

*to Ku Wen-hsing, Chief Eunuch, Spring 1697*

*The following sequence of seventeen letters was written by K'ang-hsi in 1697 to one of his most trusted eunuchs. The letters are here translated in full because they show the Emperor's informal style and the way he bunched his ideas, and are thus a valuable addition to the rest of the book, which is mainly a montage from fragments. Sealed up in a box within the Imperial Palace, the letters were discovered by scholars after the 1911 revolution and were subsequently transcribed and published. Probably no such sequence of letters has survived from any other emperor in China's history.*

*Second Month, Eighth Day*

On the 7th we passed the fork in the road at Pa-ta-ling and camped. On the 8th we camped at Huai-lai hsien. The weather is completely different from that in Peking; I really feel the cold. Some time ago the silk store had two fur coats, one wolf and one desert fox, though they had not been faced. Have these two coats finished, using Yü satin for the sleeves and Ling-ning silk for the bodies; when they are done, send them along with one of the batches of memorials. They musn't be made too tight. Because the lot you sent along with the memorials last time were too tight, they were really uncomfortable. You must be careful.

When I left, the consort Te-fei was slightly ill. Is she quite better now? I hope that the princes who had the measles are all better—and of course that the palaces are now all clear and auspicious.

The camels and horses on this trip are sleek and lovable, and walk well. Ever since leaving the city I've kept on getting the most excellent news. I am in fine health.

*Second Month, Twenty-Second Day*

During this last thirty-day period since I left the City, I've passed through San-yün. To the south I've seen as far as Wei-chou, Ying-chou, Yen-men, and Ning-wu. To the north I've seen as far as P'ien-kuan and Sha-hu-k'ou. I've camped in Huai-jen, Ma-i, and Shou-chou. I have looked at the topography. This is an area of ancient battlefields, now at peace, with carefree people. All, from the white-haired oldest to the youngest being carried, bow down to the ground before my horse, no differently from those on my Southern Tours. The people are sincere in spirit and customs. Because last year's harvest was excellent, there's plenty of grain and fodder.

I'm happy in mind, well in body. It's a little warmer than it was in Ta-t'ung. Part of the river is unfrozen, part still frozen. All the retinue are well. Pass this news on to those in the palace.

*Second Month, Twenty-Eighth Day*

Since sending off my last letter to you, we've been through the area of Ta-shui-k'ou, north of the Ning-wu Pass. We've also passed K'o-lan-chou and Ho-ch'ü, and arrived at San-ch'a-p'u. On the 26th we reached Li-chia-kou. There was no water there, but the local officials at I-ching were ready with three hundred large jars of water. I was moving along the road, when I saw people coming from Li-chia-kou talking excitedly. They said that three days ago the dry river which runs from K'o-lan-chou, and is called the Hsiao-tsun River, had a flash flood which came to within seven miles of Li-chia-kou to the south. The local officials feared that mud would cover the imperial road, so they held it back with a dike. Other people were saying that the three prongs of this dry river today had water that would reach down to Han-chia-lou, and the local people were blocking that up as well.

I truly didn't believe this, and when I got there went to

take a look. It was true. Then I had the dike opened, and by early evening the river water had reached the imperial camp at Li-chia-kou with a depth of two feet. So the three hundred jars were never used.

The 27th we journeyed to Nien-wu village, through 56 *li* of high mountains and peaks linked without a break. I have never been through such unpleasant mountains. Had not the local people heard that I was coming and competed to clear the way, we'd never have been able to get through. The previous day there had been a snowfall; the wind piled it up, drift on drift, along the edges of the road so that the road itself was perfectly all right for those pushing carts. One *li* before the camp there was also a little stream of clear water with a lovely taste. Everyone among the retinue's officials and troops saw for themselves what happened on these two days, and I said: "This is no more than chance; there is nothing so unusual about it."

On the 28th we reached Pao-te-chou, on the bank of the Yellow River. I took a little boat and went fishing; the river was full of *shih-hua* fish—they taste fresh and delicious, one can't describe it in words. There's every kind of food here, but the white noodles are best of all. These are all little details; I don't write about them for outside transmittal, but just let you people in the palace know them.

*Third Month, Fourth Day*

Since crossing the river we've passed through Fu-ku-hsien and Shen-mu-hsien and other places and are now near Yü-lin. The characteristics of these Shensi mountains and rivers make for quite different kinds of scenery—there are fine places and there are unpleasant places. The good aspects are that the customs are pure and honest, the people's hearts are like those of the men of old, the water and soil are good, there are no strange diseases, there's plenty of food, in the mountains pine trees and cedars grow—they are beautiful when seen from a distance.

What I call "unpleasant" places are those that have the [Great] Wall forts on the crests of the hills, while all the villages themselves are in the sides of the broken cliffs—people make caves and live in them. The peaks are not really peaks, the roads are not really roads, it's ridiculous.

To the south I've traveled through Chihli, Shantung, Chiangnan, and Chekiang, as far as Shao-hsing, a distance of 4,000 *li*; to the north I've been over 2,000 *li* to the Kerulen River; in the east I've reached Ula in Kwantung, over 2,000 *li*. Now I have passed through Shansi and Shensi on a western trip of over 2,000 *li*. Rivers, lakes, mountains, deserts, and the Gobi—all deserted—I've been through them all. None of them has the scenery or the prosperous people of the South.

On the 4th we stopped at Shen-mu-hsien, and in the late afternoon some of Galdan's brigands were brought to our camp, and all the Manchus and Chinese, civilian or military, of whatever rank, were excited and pleased. So you can see the truth of the saying that "Everyone has the right to execute treasonous officials and brigands"; how can it just be accidental?

Though I am a traveler in the distant mountain passes, I am determined to wipe out the brigands, concentrating on gaining my goal. Moreover, it's the beginning of the late spring and the ice is not yet melted—the Ch'ing-ming festival is near, but the wind is still cold. I don't know if it's been like this in Peking this year or not.

I'm in very good health, there's ample food and drink on the route, the white noodles are outstanding. Is everyone well in the palace? The Galdan business should be over fairly soon, it's just that I can't give a definite date.

When I was in Shen-mu I got a couple of local delicacies and sent them to the [consorts in the] Yen-hsi and I-k'un Palaces, so they can take a look and smile. Please also offer up a box of the Shen-mu white noodles in greeting.

*Third Month, Fifth Day*

When I get to Ninghsia I'm going to wait for people to come from Galdan before I decide on the use of troops. The camels and horses are sleek; if we have to go somewhere we can move immediately. The Ninghsia area is fine, and everything is very cheap. There are no flowering plants, though.

Both the seal and the box of the last lot of documents you sent me had been opened. So I'm sealing this up on the outside. When you next send some reports, seal them up in the same way.

*Third Month, Seventh Day*

Among the local produce that the Moslems of Hami sent to me along with the [captured] Galdan bandits, only the sun-dried muskmelon had a really beautiful taste. I'm sending off some to you, but as I'm afraid you won't know what to do with it, I'll specifically write it out for you:

After you have washed it clean in either cold or hot water, steep it in hot water (but only for a short time), and then eat it either cold or hot. It tastes fresh and the juice is like the honeyed juice of a dried peach. Where there are holes, fill them up with little grapes.

Tell the consorts about this. This is a trifling matter, but my heart is truly far away with you—don't laugh at me for this.

*Also Third Month, Seventh Day*

When I passed through the Ordos area, a great many Mongol princes' consorts came to greet me. Get one floss silk dress and one cotton dress from each of the consorts and concubines, and send them along with the next batch of documents to me.

My female attendant Hsü and the two other females don't have enough underwear, jackets, middle-length garments, silk

shirts, silk middle-length garments, and satin socks to be worn with boots. Tell the consorts in the Yen-hsi Palace to decide on the amount, and send them along to me with the documents when they're finished.

*Third Month, Twenty-Eighth Day*

Since the last batch of reports were sent, I've been out hunting with the Green Standard troops of the Third Border division. There were an incredible number of hares and birds. On the 22nd, at Hsing-wu camp, the hunting circle was quite filled with hares; I shot 311 of them. On the 23rd, at Ch'ing-shui fort, there were as many hares again but I couldn't shoot them all, and stopped after a hundred or so.

On the 24th we camped at Kuang-ch'eng on the banks of the Yellow River. The 25th we crossed and camped on the other bank. On the 26th we reached Ninghsia. Though the scenery here is not up to that in the South, it's like heaven to earth in comparison with what I've just traveled through. Everything we need is here and food prices are cheap. From the western Ho-lan Mountains to the Yellow River on the east, all the cities are surrounded with paddy fields. Of the nine border divisions fixed by the Ancients I have now visited seven; and, of those I've seen, only Ninghsia bears talking about. I've obtained various local products here in Ninghsia. Offer them to the Empress Dowager. Give the other things to the consorts and concubines, and distribute them according to the list.

I reached Ninghsia on the 26th, and on the 27th sent off P'an Liang-tung with presents of local products. All those that have names on, distribute accordingly. Those without names will be explained orally to you by P'an Liang-tung.

*Intercalary Third Month, Fifteenth Day*

I've been in Ninghsia nineteen days. [Today] I'm going to Pai-t'a, on the bend of the Yellow River—it's 400 li from Ning-

hsia, and is the home of Ha-lun, the Tu-leng duke. Once I get to Pai-t'a I'll assess the situation and make my plans. From now on I'm gradually getting nearer to Peking.

*Intercalary Third Month, Eighteenth Day*

Although the purpose of this expedition was to finish off Gal-dan, I also wanted to deal with the Ölöds beyond the western border. There are many different groups of them and we must curb them if we are to have a lasting peace. At the time of leaving Peking I didn't make a clear statement about this, but since I left I have sent men to every area, announcing my intentions. Besides those I've announced at intervals as having come over to us, the entire tribe of Ölöds who live in or around Hsi-hai have now declared their allegiance, and have already started the journey to come to me. I raise my hands to my forehead, I am so very pleased.

To be virtuous and so be granted the protection of heaven and earth, and without one man being killed to have tens of thousands come over—truly that exceeded my expectations. Everyone in camp who heard about it congratulated each other and thought it a great joy. Because I'm sending a report on this, I write to you also.

*Intercalary Third Month, Twenty-Third Day*

When I was in Ninghsia I grew very tired and depressed, but since going through the pass I've been feeling invigorated. The water and soil are good, I've left behind the scenes of Shansi and Shensi, with their yellow sands and frightening cliffs, and that really makes me happy. We've been moving downstream recently and had many chances to ride in the boats. There are few fish in the Yellow River, but on the banks, among the willows, tall grass, and reeds, there are wild pigs, horses, deer, and other things.

*Intercalary Third Month, Twenty-Sixth Day*

The cucumbers that you just sent me are excellent—you must send some along in future every time there is a delivery of memorials. Also some white radish and eggplant.

I've already reached Pai-t'a and have specially sent Liu Hou-erh to take my greetings to the Empress Dowager; there is no other job for him to do. This man is peculiar and his gall is great. How can he be my personal attendant? He's really loathsome. Don't have him sent back here. Lock him up in the Ching-shih-fang, keep him there and don't let him go home.

*Fourth Month, First Day*

On the 1st I personally reviewed the cavalry. Within the next few days we'll settle the matter of the grain transport, and then choose a day to start back. I'll probably be in Peking around the summer solstice. You shouldn't let many people know about this, just the consorts and concubines.

*Fourth Month, Third (?) Day*

I'm on the edge of the Yellow River; day by day with the Mongols from all the various tribes I play around and laugh. I'm in excellent spirits. I've been on lots of journeys, but never have I been so happy and satisfied. Tell those close to me so that they don't worry. If I take the Chang-chia-k'ou route, it is 900 *li* to Peking; if I follow the Sha River via Ta-t'ung, it is 1,200 *li*.

I've sent people to Ninghsia for food and noodles. The noodles are even better than those for imperial use in the capital. Grapes are very good. We're near the frontier, so have everything. The only sad thing is that the weather is not cold so the river is not frozen, and it's hard to move along. You people at home were afraid I wouldn't like the cold. That's a real joke.

The second-day report said that 50 *li* upstream at Hsi-erha there are two bridges of ice, over one *li* in length. But there's

no other ice either up- or downstream. I have sent someone to check. If it is true, that will be a very strange thing.

*Fourth Month, Seventh Day*

Everything is finished here, and we'll be returning partly on the land route, partly by water, and should reach Peking around the summer solstice.

*Fourth Month, Seventeenth Day*

Previously I wrote the sentence "Determined to wipe out the brigands, concentrating on gaining my goal."

Now Galdan is dead, and his followers have come back to our allegiance. My great task is done. In two years I made three journeys, across deserts combed by wind and bathed with rain, eating every other day, in the barren and uninhabited deserts—one could have called it a hardship but I never called it that; people all shun such things but I didn't shun them. The constant journeying and hardship has led to this great achievement. I would never have said such a thing had it not been for Galdan.

Now heaven, earth, and ancestors have protected me and brought me this achievement. As for my own life, one can say it is happy. One can say it's fulfilled. One can say I've got what I wanted.

In a few days, in the palace, I'll tell you all about it myself. It's hard to tell it with brush and ink—these are just the main points.

*Fourth Month, Twenty-Ninth Day*

On the 29th I passed Sha-hu-k'ou; we'll travel outside the border to Chang-chia-k'ou and so to Peking, arriving probably about the fifth month, fifteenth day. Previously I said we'd arrive at the summer solstice, but I was delayed by stormy waves on the Yellow River. Here beyond the border it's crisp,



not very hot; in the mornings some people even had to wear sleeveless leather jerkins. The water and grass along the route are quite different from those on the western frontier.

I am healthy. All the retinue are well. One can say, "My mind is expanded and my body at ease," and we're coming home.

*Appendix B*

*The "Final" Valedictory Edict*