1 Rulers: position versus person

Princes are like to heavenly bodies, which cause good or evil times, and which have much veneration, but no rest. All precepts concerning kings are in effect comprehended in those two remembrances: *Memento quod es homo*, and *Memento quod es Deus*, or *vice Dei*: the one bridleth their power, and the other their will.

Francis Bacon, 'Of Empire', in *The Essays*, ed. John Pither (London, 1985), 119.

For even if I wear the purple, none the less I know this, that like unto all men, I am altogether clothed with frailty by nature.

Ivan IV, in *The Correspondence between Prince A.M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia*, ed. J.L.I. Fennell (Cambridge, 1963), 122–3.

Do not disclose the secret to anyone. Indeed, we have strolled the earth and found no confidant.

Muḥammad Bāqir Najm-i Sānī, *Advice on the Art of Governance*, ed. Sajida Sultana Alvi (New York, 1989), 56.

The ideal king

What traits characterise the good ruler? A rich contemporary literature discussed this question, admonishing rulers and presenting to them the lives of past paragons of rulership. An extension of the power of the *pater familias*, dominion by a single male person, was usually seen as the natural and most desirable form of power. Kingship was supported wholeheartedly, though nagging doubts about the wrongdoings of individual figures on the throne form a persistent part of this conviction. Distinct ideals of legitimate rulership have been outlined for Christian Europe, for Muslim West Asia, for Indic kingship in various religious guises, and for China's imperial tradition.[1] African kingship, itself at least as diverse as each of the

[1] Louise Marlow, 'Advice and advice literature', in Kate Fleet et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*, Brill Online Reference Works (Leiden, 2007–) (accessed 4 July 2014); Anthony Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250–1450* (Cambridge and New York, 1992); S.A.A. Rizvi, 'Kingship in Islam: a historical analysis', in A.L. Basham (ed.), *Kingship in Asia*

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

other traditions, had its own partly overlapping models. No single description of the ideal ruler holds universal validity. However, one prime responsibility seems to recur in most traditions: safeguarding harmony among the populations as well as between heaven (ancestors, spirits, deities, god) and earth. Likewise, one hazard inherent in kingship can be encountered in most traditions: the cruel and pleasure-loving ruler who pursues the interests only of his inner circle.

Numerous texts survive with advice to rulers: by ruling princes themselves preparing their sons for supreme office, by high-ranking advisors close to the practice of ruling, or by somewhat more distant clerics, religious scholars, and learned outsiders. In Europe and West Asia advice literature formed a literary genre, often called the 'princely mirror' or *speculum principis*. In South and East Asia, a variety of texts outlined the qualities and duties of the ruler, some of them adopting the familiar mirror metaphor.[2] Such texts reflect not only particular positions (ruler, vizier/minister, scholar/cleric/monk) and political constellations (in power, threatened, retired, distant), but also position themselves in an ongoing literary discourse. Only by looking at the genre as a whole is it possible to differentiate between reiterated clichés and distinctive opinions. It is clear, however, that some authors adopted an outspoken didactic tone, admonishing rulers and underlining their religious and moral duties, whereas others were more willing to accept the daily realities of power, mixing moral precept with practical advice.

The first part of this chapter traces ideals of kingship in Europe, West Asia, and East Asia, showing how regional traditions and religions shaped views of the virtuous prince. At the same time, it introduces a miniature

and Early America (Mexico City, 1981), 29–82, and other shorter contributions in this book on Asian and pre-Columbian American kingship; Linda Darling, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization* (New York, 2013); Roger T. Ames, *The Art of Rulership: A Study in Ancient Chinese Political Thought* (Albany, NY, 1994). On Africa, see e.g. M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard (eds.), *African Political Systems* (London, 1940); Tardits (ed.), *Princes & serviteurs*. On rulers themselves writing, see Pierre Monnet and Jean-Claude Schmitt (eds.), *Autobiographies souveraines* (Paris, 2012); some notable examples: Denis Twitchett, 'How to be an emperor: T'ang T'ai-tsung's vision of his role', *Asia Major*, 3rd series, 9 (1996), 1–102; Babur, *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York and Oxford, 1996); Louis IX, Saint Louis, *The Teachings of Saint Louis: A Critical Text*, ed. David O'Connell (Chapel Hill, NC, 1972); Louis XIV, *Mémoires, suivis de Manière de montrer les jardins de Versailles*, ed. Joël Cornette (Paris, 2007).

[2] Tang Taizong's 'Golden Mirror' (628) translated in Twitchett, 'How to be an emperor'; Sima Guang's (1019–86) *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*; Zhang Juzeng's (1525–82) *The Emperor's Mirror Illustrated and Discussed*; see quotations and comments in Patricia B. Ebrey, 'Remonstrating against royal extravagance in imperial China', in Duindam and Dabringhaus (eds.), *Dynastic Centre*, 127–49. On Islamic advice mirrors or *siyasetname*, see Jocelyne Dakhlia, 'Les miroirs des princes islamiques: une modernité sourde?', *Annales: histoire, sciences sociales*, 72/5 (2002), 1191–206; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Another Mirror for Princes: The Public Image of the Ottoman Sultans and its Reception* (London, 2008).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

history of kingship in its various regional guises. Africa, America, and Polynesia, where traditions were not enshrined in equally extended literary heritages, are fitted into the framework more loosely. This overview of regional traditions provides the groundwork for the subsequent chapters which are based on questions rather than on areas.

Discussions of kingship in late medieval Europe from Aquinas to Erasmus stress the need for kings to be devout, honest, just, and merciful. They expect the populace to submit willingly, the king to reciprocate by showing grace and benevolence. Kings form part of a Christian community with its own ecclesiastical structures and leadership, exerting a powerful influence over the practices as well as the ideals of rulership. Nominally worldly rulers were bound in a hierarchy under pope and emperor, a notion never universally embraced and permanently challenged. All worldly rulers were in principle seen as instituted by God, a position often expounded by citing Paul's epistle to the Romans (13:1–7):

> Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.

Kings derive their authority from God, but need to defend the *bonum publicum*: protect the true religion, punish wrongdoers, listen to wise counsel, overcome faction in the country, and further the well-being of the people as a whole. Ruling demanded treating all groups equitably but not necessarily equally: ruling clans occupied privileged positions; priests, soldiers, peasants, and merchants could expect to be treated in different ways, as could regions or ethnicities.[3]

This harmonious ideal of kingship did develop a critical edge by integrating Aristotle's tripartite scheme of forms of government by one, few, and many (monarchy–aristocracy–polity) and more particularly by his criticism of the corrupted forms of these modes of government

[3] Black, *Political Thought in Europe*, 24–8, on the common good, chap. 5 on 'Kingship, law and counsel'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(tyranny–oligarchy–democracy). Abusing their subjects and unduly enriching themselves along with their followers, kings turned into tyrants and forfeited popular support. Tyranny was attacked sharply, yet on the whole resistance by the population was not accepted as legitimate. Public welfare depended on the benevolence of the ruler and the fidelity of the people, and no easy solution was available when matters went awry on either side. Bad rulers were to be punished only by the divine power sanctioning their regimes.[4]

Justice appears both as a key value and as an important mechanism to maintain or restore the balance between the sovereign and his peoples. Jean de Joinville, companion to the French crusader-king Louis IX (1214–1226–1270; later Saint Louis), describes an instance of royal justice that has become iconic:

> During the summer he often went and sat in the woods of Vincennes after Mass. He would lean against an oak tree and have us sit down around him. All those who had matters to be dealt with came and talked to him, without the interference of the ushers or anyone else. He himself would ask 'Is there anyone here with a case to settle?' Those who did have a case stood up, and he said to them, 'Everyone be quiet and you will be given judgement, one after another' . . . On some summer days I saw him go to the gardens in Paris to render justice to the people . . . He had carpets laid out so that we could sit round him. Everyone who had a case to bring before him would gather around him at first, and then the king had judgement delivered in the same way as I said took place in the wood at Vincennes.[5]

It is not easy to verify whether this idealised scene was ever performed in practice, let alone to establish its frequency. Nevertheless, a stress on direct and personal royal justice can be found in many other places and times, in practice as well as in stylised representations. Kings allowed ordinary subjects to approach them and present their grievances, circumventing formal procedure and intermediary powers. They did so most often in the context of devotion, on their way to the chapel or after Mass: moments they themselves were publicly made aware of the humility of all in the face of God.

The just king, ostentatiously siding with his weaker subjects, occupied high moral ground and could more easily reprimand the mighty. Princely

[4] See similar statements in Barbara Watson Andaya, 'Political development between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries', in Nicholas Tarling (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. I: *From Early Times to c. 1800* (Cambridge, 1992), 402–59, at 421.

[5] Jean de Joinville and Geffroy de Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, ed. Caroline Smith (London and New York, 2009), 157; see Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris, 1996), on Joinville and the king (481–7), on princely mirrors (402–31), and on the three roles of the ideal king (642–73): the just and peaceful king, the warrior, and the king providing for his peoples, citing George Dumézil's *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens* (Brussels, 1958).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

adjudication confirmed to the populace the just and legitimate nature of their sovereign, while at the same time it helped to check the actions of notables or agents in the service of the king. The double-edged sword of supreme justice was dear to the heart of most kings; they were able to pardon subjects as well as to punish predatory elites.[6] In the declaration left in the Tuileries palace on the eve of his departure from Paris in June 1791, Louis XVI (1754–1774–1792*) emphatically stated his paternal vision of kingship, deploring the loss of: 'one of the fairest prerogatives everywhere attached to royal power, that of pardoning and commuting penalties'. Taking away this prerogative, he continued, the National Assembly 'diminishes the royal majesty in the eyes of the people so long accustomed to have recourse to the king in their needs and in their difficulties, and to see in him the common father who can relieve their afflictions'.[7] Traditional monarchs invariably left room for petitioning the king and his ministers, often through direct physical contact, gradually in more distant procedural form. Louis XIV (1638–1643–1715) somewhat overconfidently stated in his memoirs that his subjects, without exception, could address him at any time with their requests.[8] In the eighteenth century Frederick II of Prussia at times conspicuously supported lesser subjects against their powerful neighbours. His admirer Joseph II of Austria, reforming most traditional court practices, made a point of being accessible to simple Viennese, listening to their complaints at the servants' entry of the Hofburg palace as well as during his numerous travels.[9]

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) separated sharply the reputation the ruler needed to establish from his actual behaviour or dispositions, underlining the instrumental aspects of images of devotion, justice, and clemency. *Il Principe* famously subverted the highly idealised and static portrayal of rulership, arguing that force and fraud were necessary for rulers. Leadership guided solely by moral categories would end up making things worse for everybody. Exacerbated by the religious and political

[6] See Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, 134–5, underlining the second aspect.

[7] Louis XVI's declaration of 20 June 1791, upon his flight from the Tuileries, in Frank Maloy Anderson (trans.), *The Constitutions and Other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France, 1789–1907* (Minneapolis, MI, 1908), 47; see another translation in Paul Beik (ed.), *The French Revolution* (London, 1970), 158–67; the French original is available through Gallica: Louis XVI, *Mémoire du Roi, adressé à tous les François, à sa sortie de Paris* (Paris, 1791). On pardoning, see Neil Murphy, 'Royal grace, royal punishment: ceremonial entries and the pardoning of criminals in France, c. 1440–1560', in Jeroen Duindam et al. (eds.), *Law and Empire: Ideas, Practices, Actors* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2013), 293–311.

[8] Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, ed. Cornette, 64.

[9] Derek Beales, *Joseph II*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1987–2009), 432–8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

crisis of the Reformation, Machiavelli's challenge triggered a sophisticated discussion which tried to establish a balance between moral ambitions and the daily requirements of rule – surely an unending quest. This acknowledgement of the dilemmas inherent in political power did not, on the whole, alter the ideals of kingship. High-handed statements of royal power, such as those by Louis XIV's orator and bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704) or by the Sun King himself, reiterated the notion of divine sanction, but consequently also accepted the moral strictures of the king's role as paternal protector of his *peuples*.[10] The genre of the princely mirror, however, seems to have dissolved into more differentiated and specialised discourses on statecraft, sovereignty, and forms of government. At the same time, increasing numbers of rulers left 'political testaments' for their successors, only rarely made available to a wider public. These works, too, pay homage to the moral-religious agenda of rulership, but they mostly offer practical advice, on finances, on the selection of advisors, and often on individual figures and families around the throne.[11]

Not only was there an evident tension between the ideals and the practices of rulership. The religious-moral categories of kingship never entirely fitted the noble way of life usually shared by the king as *premier gentilhomme* of his realm. A good king was not only devout and just, he was also a valiant knight and a war leader. Protecting the realm against threats was a necessary accomplishment. Yet the crucially important noble quality of valour could easily lead to military adventurism, causing the death of numerous men and emptying the treasury. Likewise, hospitality and generosity, key qualities for any high-placed nobleman, needed to remain within bounds. A king valiantly fighting for military glory, lavishly entertaining his people, and liberally supporting the poor, could in the end turn out to be a disaster, leading to forced loans and raised taxes. Conversely a cowardly or miserly figure could never be accepted as the ideal ruler: largesse and prowess surely ranked high among the popularly acclaimed qualities of kingship. The key quality of moderation was necessary to balance these contradictory requirements. Different advisors, moreover, were pulling in different directions, with high noble soldiers, clerics, and financial administrators often in opposed roles – a predicament familiar to modern politicians.

[10] Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture sainte* (Paris, 1709); see Frederick II of Prussia's response to Machiavelli: *Anti-Machiavel, ou essai de critique sur Le Prince de Machiavel* (Brussels, 1740).

[11] Heinz Duchhardt (ed.), *Politische Testamente und andere Quellen zum Fürstenethos der Frühen Neuzeit* (Darmstadt, 1987); Georg Küntzel and Martin Hass (eds.), *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern nebst ergänzenden Aktenstücken* (Stuttgart, 1911).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Several of the contradictory ideals cited here were present in Muscovy, which combined Byzantine traditions conveyed through Kievan Rus' (882–1283) with influences arising from the Mongol Golden Horde overlordship which lasted until 1480. The tsar was pictured as a strong autocratic ruler protecting his subjects against foreign powers and guarding the order of the realm. Defending the Orthodox Church and generously protecting the weak were key obligations. The same works that praised the powerful autocrat endorsed another ideal: the meek and merciful tsar, more interested in piety than in worldly success. The son of Ivan IV 'the Terrible' (1530–1547–1584), Feodor Ivanovich (1557–1584–1598) was nicknamed the 'Bell Ringer' because of his unceasing church attendance. Although this tsar was feebleminded and took no part in government, he was applauded as a saviour:

> For this cross-bearing tsar was very pious, merciful to all, meek, gentle, and compassionate; he loved the humble and accepted suffering, and moreover was generous to widows and orphans, had mercy on all who grieved and helped those in misfortune ... He conquered all the neighboring countries of unbelieving nations that rebelled against the pious Christian faith and his God-preserved royal state – not with military troops or with the sharpness of a sword, but with the all-night vigil and ceaseless prayers to God did he finally conquer them.[12]

At the same time, debauched tsars or erring tsars failing to listen to their advisors were frowned upon. Any tsar actively undermining the Orthodox Church was no longer regarded as a tsar, but as an anti-tsar or 'tormentor' who deserved to be overthrown. In this different context, we again encounter clashing images.[13] A major shift in the presentation and practice of rule was initiated by Peter I (1672–1682–1725), who strengthened his position vis-à-vis the Orthodox Church and the high nobles or *boyars*. These changes formed a starting point for eighteenth-century tsaritsas who moved the Russian court, army, and administration closer to the European mainstream.[14]

West Asia between 1300 and 1800 cannot be subsumed under any single category, but the ideals of rulership reflect familiar ingredients mixed in differing proportions. West Asian and European advice literature shared the influences of Greek exemplary stories and philosophy represented by, among others, Alexander the Great and Aristotle. The Persian tradition of kingship exerted a dominant influence throughout the

[12] Daniel Rowland, 'Did Muscovite literary ideology place limits on the power of the tsar (1540s–1660s)?', *Russian Review*, 49 (1990), 125–55, at 134–5.
[13] Ibid.
[14] On the changes at court, see Ernest A. Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority at the Court of Peter the Great* (Ithaca, NY, 2004); and Paul Keenan, *St Petersburg and the Russian Court, 1703–1761* (Basingstoke, 2013).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

region in political thinking and administrative practice as well as in the notion that true kings held a divine radiance (*farr*). Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāmeh* or *Book of Kings*, written around 1000 but reflecting the legendary history of pre-Islamic kings and heroes, ranks among the most powerful repositories of Persian tradition. Islam introduced a relatively egalitarian worldview and instituted a dominant position for the holy law or *shari'a*: a power above the reach of any ruler. The shari'a and the *ulema*, the legal scholars responsible for its interpretation, redefined the balance between religious and secular power and had a lasting influence on advice literature.[15] The position of the supreme religious and political leader of Islam, the caliph, proved less resilient. Rival claimants soon challenged the caliphate's pretensions of overlordship. The power of the caliphs waned with that of the Abbasids before succumbing to the Mongol onslaught on Baghdad (1258): caliphs now subsisted under Mamluk protection in Egypt, maintained largely as a source of legitimacy for the sultans.

Turkic slave-soldiers rising in the service of the Abbasid caliphs came to power in a series of independent dynastic polities. These Turkic steppe peoples added their share of practices to the mixture of Persian and Islamic models, including an outspokenly martial view of rulership and an ideal of sovereignty shared among clan leaders rather than monopolised in the hands of a single figure. From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, this steppe impact would be reinvigorated in successive waves of conquest by Chinggisids and Timurids. On the whole, Persian and Islamic models remained dominant influences throughout West and South Asia, yet they were not necessarily adopted wholesale: the terms 'Persianate' and 'Islamicate' indicate the selective adoption of elements from Persia and Islam by dynasties also cultivating other styles. Islamicate dynasties in South Asia and Southeast Asia, for example, cultivated numerous habits that hardly fitted Islamic orthodoxy.[16]

Advice literature was written from different angles and social positions, roughly equivalent to those in Europe. Occasionally rulers wrote for their sons: Kaykāʾūs (d. 1083), king of a minor dynasty, expected his son to be subjected to the Seljuq Turks and advised him about government as well

[15] Saïd Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago, IL, 1984), 85–100, stresses the relatively secular nature and continuity of Persian attitudes; see also Arjomand, 'The salience of political ethic in the spread of Persianate Islam', *Journal of Persianate Studies*, 1/1 (2008), 5–29; on the tension between religious attitudes and statements in books of political wisdom, see Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh, 2001), 93.

[16] The term is frequently used in Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago, IL, 1974), followed by many other works.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

as about alternative careers. More often men in government, such as Niẓām al-Mulk (1018–1092) serving the Seljuqs as vizier (*wazīr*), wrote tracts on rulership. Scholars, many of them from the ranks of the *ulema* (Muslim legal scholars), form the most important group. The prolific Persian writer Al-Ghazālī (*c.* 1058–1111), whose *Book of Counsel for Kings* occupies a minor position in the extended oeuvre of the author, ranks as a prime example of this group.[17] Although the ulema cannot be seen as priests in the Christian sense, they did contribute an outspoken religious-moral voice to the advice literature. Leaving aside the particulars of these numerous texts and concentrating on their shared ideas, a set of princely virtues can be detected that shows a more than superficial resemblance to the ideals outlined for Europe.[18] In addition, some familiar concerns emerge about men in power and their fickle temperaments. Piety is a precondition of good rulership; rulers are expected to defend the believers and help expand the community of Muslims or *umma*. Honesty, courage, wisdom, and justice appear as the key virtues, explained in different terms and with differing subcategories in individual texts. Honesty allows the ruler to rein in his passions, retain modesty, and act with generosity. Courage, valour, ambition, and perseverance help the ruler to attain high goals. Wisdom, good judgement, wit, and remembrance make for good government. Justice reflects the ruler's equity and affection for his people. Justice also engenders moderation and prevents the predominance of one virtue over the others. The balance among the virtues is of crucial importance; pursuing any of these virtues to its extremes would lead to corruption.[19]

Sultans were 'the shadow of god upon earth, with whom all creatures could seek shelter'.[20] From the Umayyads to the Ottomans, Islamic rulers ostensibly protected their subjects against injustice – *zulm* or *mazalim*.

[17] Ghazali, *Ghazali's Book of Counsel for Kings (Naṣīḥat al-mulūk)*, ed. Frank R.C. Bagley (New York, 1964).

[18] Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago, IL, and London, 1988), 17–18, notes the absence of the father metaphor for god as well as for rulers in the Islamic world – a marked contrast with Europe as well as with China, where the family metaphor was omnipresent. The shepherd and the flock were present in metaphors of ruling both in the Islamicate world and in Europe.

[19] Marinos Sariyannis, 'The princely virtues as presented in Ottoman political and moral literature', *Turcica*, 63 (2011), 121–44; see also Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541–1600)* (Princeton, NJ, 1986).

[20] Lewis, *Political Language of Islam*, 21–2, note 48; Vasileios Syros, 'Shadows in heaven and clouds on earth: the emergence of social life and political authority in the early modern Islamic empires', *Viator*, 43/2 (2012), 377–406; Patricia Crone, *God's Rule – Government and Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York, 2004); Anne K.S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: The Jurists* (Oxford, 1981).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Many dynasties organised their own law courts inviting complainants from the populace, personally judging their cases or referring them back to *qadi* courts applying *shari'a*. A description of the Ayyubid sultan Salah al-Din (1138–1171–1193) brings to mind Louis IX under the oak:

Everyone who had a grievance was admitted, great and small, aged women and feeble men ... and he always received with his own hand the petitions that were presented to him, and did his utmost to put an end to every form of oppression that was reported.[21]

The Mamluk Sultan Qalawun (1222–1279–1290), instructing his son al-Malik as-Salih on how to govern Egypt while he went on campaign, stressed justice, petitioning, and the *mazalim* court in his advice.[22] Princely accessibility and adjudication provided legitimacy as well as a check on the transgressions of office-holders. The topos of defence of the weak against the powerful was strongly present in Islamicate ideals of rulership. Following his accession, the first action of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1592–1628–1658; Plate 16) was to set up a 'chain of justice':

After my accession, the first order that I gave was for the fastening up of the Chain of Justice, so that if those engaged in the administration of justice should delay or practise hypocrisy in the matter of those seeking justice, the oppressed might come to this chain and shake it so that its noise might attract attention.[23]

Mughal court paintings represent this chain of justice alerting the sultan to injustice (Plate 1); the ruler's benevolent protection created order among men and beasts, bringing together predator and prey, lion and lamb.[24]

[21] Albrecht Fuess, '*Zulm* by *mazalim*? The political implications of the use of *mazalim* jurisdiction by the Mamluk sultans', *Mamluk Studies Review*, 13/1 (2009), 121–47, at 123; Nimrod Hurvitz, 'The contribution of early Islamic rulers to adjudication and legislation: the case of the *mazalim* tribunals', in Duindam et al. (eds.), *Law and Empire*, 135–56, and in the same volume Engin Akarli, 'The ruler and law making in the Ottoman empire', 87–109, stressing that Ottoman law was particularly severe for its own officers.

[22] Paulina Lewicka, 'What a king should care about: two memoranda of the Mamluk sultan on running the state's affairs', *Studia Arabistyczne i Islamistyczne*, 6 (1998), 5–45, on justice at 13, 15, 19, 37; see another example of advice in Axel Moberg, 'Regierungspromemoria eines ägyptischen Sultans', in Gotthold Weil (ed.), *Festschrift Eduard Sachau zum siebzigsten Geburtstage gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern* (Berlin, 1915), 406–21; and Léonor Fernandes, 'On conducting the affairs of the state: a guideline of the fourteenth century', *Annales islamologiques*, 24 (1988), 81–91, with justice mentioned at 83. These texts were kindly made available to me by Paulina Lewicka.

[23] Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri; or, Memoirs of Jahangir*, ed. Henry Beveridge and Alexander Rogers (London, 1909), 7. Note that Shah Jahan was imprisoned by his son Aurangzeb in 1658, dying a few years later in 1666.

[24] See a brief reference to the delight princes took in 'showing themselves to be just', in Niccolao Manucci, *A Pepys of Mogul India, 1653–1708: Being an Abridged Edition of the*

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Protection did not entail equality: a view of society prevailed in which the flock of food producers could live in order and harmony only through the intervention of soldiers and administrators operating under the aegis of the king, a thought often rendered in the 'circle of justice' or *daire-i 'adliye*:

> The world is a garden the fence of which is the dynasty,
> The dynasty is an authority through which life is given to proper behaviour.
> Proper behaviour is a policy directed by the ruler.
> The ruler is an institution supported by the soldiers.
> The soldiers are helpers, who are maintained by money.
> Money is sustenance brought together by the subjects.
> The subjects are servants who are protected by justice.
> Justice is something familiar [harmonious], and through it, the world persists.
> The world is a garden . . .[25]

This phrase, repeated in many variants throughout the Persianate-Islamicate world and sometimes attributed to Aristotle, stipulates a stable world based on agriculture, with peasants generating revenue for a ruler who with his administrators and soldiers establishes order and protects his peoples against predatory neighbours within and without.

Among the three major dynasties dominating West and South Asia in the early modern period, the Safavids (1501–1736) of Iran remained particularly close to the Persian legacy. Shah Ismail I (1487–1501–1524), starting out as the spiritual leader of a messianic movement, turned his 'redhead' Qizilbash supporters into a devoted fighting force, conquering Iran and Iraq. His personal brand of rulership was linked to the adoption of Shia Islam that would remain typical for Iran.[26] Successful conquest combined with proselytising in Anatolia caused sharp conflict with the Sunni Ottoman dynasty. The Ottomans, long since sedentary, had expanded and consolidated administrative routines in the wake of their conquest of Constantinople (1453). These developments would be matched by the Safavids and the Mughals in the reigns of respectively Abbas I (1571–1588–1629) and Akbar (1542–1556–1605). Around 1600 the Ottoman empire underwent a series of crises, necessitating a redefinition of power relations in the realm. The Mughals,

"Storia do Mogor" of Niccolao Manucci, ed. Margaret L. Irvine and William Irvine (New York, 1913), 207.

[25] Cited in Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 41; see also Linda T. Darling, 'Circle of justice', in Fleet et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*. Ibn Khaldun attributes the passage to Aristotle, who in any case was influential in the Arabic world as well as in Europe.

[26] Kathryn Babayan, 'The waning of the Qizilbash: The spiritual and the temporal in seventeenth century Iran', PhD thesis, Princeton University (1993); Babayan, 'The Safavid synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to imamite Shi'ism', *Iranian Studies*, 27 (1994), 135–61.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

moving southwards and almost coincidentally conquering a huge empire in India, showed great agility in adapting their specific blend of rulership to pre-existing traditions, allowing a relatively smooth connection with Hindu Rajput princes. Akbar in particular strayed far from the dictate of Islam, combining various religions in an eclectic blend of devotion tied to his personal style of rulership. Only with the advent of Aurangzeb (1618–1658–1707) did the Mughal dynasty revert to a more orthodox Muslim position. The Mughals, boasting descent in the female line from Chinggis Khan and in the male line from Timur Lenk, carefully cultivated their steppe genealogy, maintaining their mobile and martial style of rulership longer than the Ottomans or the Safavids.[27]

Conquering the north of the Indian subcontinent, the Mughals followed in the footsteps of several earlier Islamic conquest dynasties. Long before these conquests, Buddhism had lost ground in India while taking root in contiguous areas. In the mosaic dominated by Hindu and Muslim polities in South Asia, with an additional strong Buddhist presence in Southeast Asia, Persian and Islamic influences were becoming stronger.[28] What did earlier Indic traditions have to say about rulership?

Hindu kingship worked in tandem with Brahmin authority. The active king, governing his realm and waging war, needed the power of the Brahmins as interpreters of the Vedic tradition to affirm his authority. The world-renouncing Brahmin 'held the key to religious values' and to the all-important sacred rites.[29] An ideal ruler who successfully ascended to the status of world-renouncer would in the end necessarily give up kingship itself. Kingship, in practice and in theory, was stuck between the sacral and the secular, between 'divinity and mortal humanity, legitimate authority and arbitrary power, *dharma* and *adharma*'.[30] The equivocal character of kingship, shifting between moral, pragmatic, and even capricious or violent modes of behaviour, could be made to work in various ways. A seasonal bifurcation allowed the coexistence of the styles in one person, leading troops into war in the cold season, engaging in ritual interaction during the hot season, and finally retreating during the rainy

[27] Lisa Balabanlilar, 'The Begims of the mystic feast: Turco-Mongol tradition in the Mughal harem', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 69/1 (2010), 123–47.
[28] See Basham, 'Ideas of kingship in Hinduism and Buddhism', in Basham (ed.), *Kingship in Asia and Early America,* 115–32; on their mingling in Southeast Asia and on the impact of Theravada Buddhism there, see M.C. Subhadradis Diskul, 'Ancient kingship in mainland Southeast Asia', ibid., 133–59; on the same process plus the impact of Islam in the archipelago, see S. Supomo, 'Some aspects of kingship in ancient Java', ibid., 161–77.
[29] Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (Madison, WI, 1978), iv–v.
[30] J.C. Heesterman, 'The conundrum of the king's authority', in Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority*, 1–27, at 3–4; James A. Santucci, 'Aspects of the nature and functions of Vedic kingship', in Basham (ed.), *Kingship in Asia and Early America*, 83–113.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

season. Alternatively, the Brahmin's role as moral and ritual guardian made it possible for the king to engage in aggressive or frivolous behaviour without undermining his elevated position. A south Indian oral epic, probably reaching back to a dynasty ruling the Kongu region around 1000 CE, reports another solution: the joint rule of two brothers, the elder performing the ceremonial and moral aspects of monarchy, the younger displaying the fierceness and impetuosity expected of a warrior-king.[31] Interestingly, these variants all underline that the combined roles of kingship were seen as too much for most individuals to handle competently.

Chandragupta Maurya (*c.* 317–293 BCE), the founder of the Mauryan empire, brought most of northern India under his authority. Tradition attributes the authorship of an extended pragmatic manual of rulership, the *Arthashastra,* to one of Chandragupta Maurya's advisors, Kautilya. The book was probably compiled later, on the basis of several sources, yet it speaks with a clear voice. The *Arthashastra* puts the maintenance of order first on the list of the ruler's duties, understanding this requirement not only as the preservation of the caste system, but also as the protection of the weak against their stronger neighbours.[32] In addition it underscores that a policy of social justice usually worked best. On the whole, however, the *Arthashastra* deals with the threats to the power of the ruler far more than with the ideals of rulership. Chandragupta Maurya's grandson, Asoka (304–268–232 BCE), embraced Buddhism and widely broadcast his elevated view of rulership. Asoka's moral standards reflected the 'ten royal virtues' that can be found in texts from the earliest Buddhist sources to statements by the current king of Thailand:

> Liberality, generosity, and charisma;
> A high sense of morality;
> Self-sacrifice for the good of the people;
> Honesty and integrity;
> Kindness and gentleness;
> Austerity and self-control;
> To possess no ill-will and enmity;
> To promote peace and non-violence;

[31] Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority*, vii–viii, referring to Brenda Beck, 'The authority of the king: prerogatives and dilemmas of kingship as portrayed in a contemporary oral epic from south India', in the same volume at 168–91.

[32] On compilation and authorship, see Basham (ed.), *Kingship in Asia and Early America*, 116; for a comparison of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Han Feizi, see Roger Boesche, 'Han Feizi's legalism versus Kautilya's Arthashastra', *Asian Philosophy*, 15/2 (2005), 157–72, esp. 159–60 and 169–70.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> Forbearance, patience, and tolerance, and
> To rule in harmony without giving offence and opposing the will of his people.[33]

The exemplary ruler embodying these virtues would inspire ministers and servants to be righteous; their example would not only comfort the people, but also bring celestial harmony:

> This being so, moon and sun go right in their courses. This being so, constellations and stars do likewise; days and nights, moons and fortnights, seasons and years go on their courses regularly: winds blow regularly and in due season. Thus the devas (gods) are not annoyed and the sky-deva bestows sufficient rain. Rains falling seasonably, the crops ripen in due season . . . when crops ripen in due season, men who live on those crops are long-lived, well-favoured, strong and free from sickness.[34]

The trickling down of the ruler's good example implies that his misbehaviour, too, could have far-reaching consequences: natural disasters, deformed animals or humans, or other ominous occurrences were habitually read as divine displeasure provoked by royal ineptitude.[35]

Kings stood outside of the regular order: they held powers unavailable to others. Extraordinary beings, singled out through special signs and physical marks, could choose between two paths: become a world-conquering 'wheel-turning monarch' (*chakravartin* or *cakkavatti*), or renounce the world and follow in the footsteps of Buddha.[36] Once they had chosen the way of the ruler, their personal rectitude remained of prime importance. At the heart of good rulership stood *dharma* or *dhamma*: the righteous path of social order and justice. The true victory of the ruler was to be found not primarily in military success, but in leading others to follow the path of dhamma. This necessitated not only maintaining justice and punishing injustice, but first and foremost cultivating the governance of the self.[37] The rise of Buddhism exacerbated the demands on rulers' morality, as it now became impossible to lay the burden of moral world-renouncing on the shoulders of the Brahmin.[38]

[33] Given here as cited in Georgios T. Halkias, 'The enlightened sovereign: Buddhism and kingship in India and Tibet', in Steven M. Emmanuel (ed.), *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy* (Malden, MA, and Oxford, 2013), 491–510, at 496.

[34] The Buddha speaking to monks in 'The Book of the Fours', cited by Halkias, 'Enlightened sovereign', 496.

[35] On Southeast Asia, see Andaya, 'Political development', 420.

[36] Halkias, 'Enlightened sovereign', 499–500.

[37] Upinder Singh, 'Governing the state and the self: political philosophy and practice in the edicts of Aśoka', *South Asian Studies*, 28/2 (2012), 131–45, on non-violence (136–8), on justice (140–1), and on governance of the self (141–3).

[38] The same statement holds true with even greater force for ascetic and non-violent Jainism: see Lawrence A. Babb, *Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture* (Berkeley, CA, 1996). Halkias, 'Enlightened sovereign', 502, underlines the impact of

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Buddhist monks or *sangha* could still function as 'conscience-keeper of the state', but the ruler himself remained responsible.[39] In practice the highly idealised standards of Asokan kingship must have functioned largely as an aspiration 'for measuring reality – to praise those who approximate them and condemn those who do not'.[40]

The mixture of influences in the discourse on rulership changed over time and space: between the Indian heartland and the mainland polities towards the Southeast that embraced Indic examples; between the mainland and the Southeast Asian archipelago which itself contained endless variety. The Hindu–Buddhist legacy persisted while Islamic influence became dominant in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A Javanese variant of the 'circle of justice' evokes this mixture of influences, with the sage added to the king, soldiers, peasants, and merchants: 'The soldier is the fortress of the king, the peasant the food of the state, the merchant the clothing of the land and the sage provides the benefaction of prayers.'[41] A wajang play describes the ideal Javanese king, who:

> is generous in giving alms, gives clothes to those who have none, gives a cane to those who slip, shelter to those scorched by the sun, food to those in hunger, consolation to the heavy of heart, a torch to those in darkness; he clears the thicket where it grows dense.[42]

These lofty ideals are also present in the 'eight life-rules' (*Asta-brata*) presented in a Javanese rendering of the Indic epic story *Ramayana*. Two of the guidelines, 'ruthless intelligence' and 'fiery courage', underline the need for political acumen, punishing wrongdoers, and military valour. Here as elsewhere, the ideals were superhuman as well as contradictory.[43] Complaints against wrongdoers in government service could be expressed in collective processions (*nggogol*); individuals could manifest their exasperation by doing *pepe*, to sit unprotected in the full sunlight on

Buddhism on the Brahmanical caste system and the vested power of the higher status groups.

39 Halkias, 'Enlightened sovereign', 501.

40 Gananath Obeyesekere, 'Religion and polity in Theravada Buddhism: continuity and change in a great tradition. A review article', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 21/4 (1979), 626–39, quotation at 635 in the context of criticism of Stanley Tambiah's *World Renouncer and World Conqueror*.

41 Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java*, 136; see another variant in Timothy Behrend, 'Kraton and cosmos in traditional Java', *Archipel*, 37 (1989), 173–87, at 179.

42 Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java*, 38; on Majapahit, see Theodore Gauthier Th. Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th Century: A Study in Cultural History. The Nagara-Kertagama by Rakawi Prapanca of Majapahit, 1365 A.D. III translations*, Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde 4/3 (The Hague, 1960), 3, citing as title of the prince: 'protector of the protectorless'.

43 Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java*, 43–4, full text at 152–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the square in front of the ruler's palace (*kraton*). Jesters and clowns were allowed some licence in voicing their critique.[44]

The interconnected worlds of mainland and archipelago in Southeast Asia can be portrayed as a set of interacting centres of dynastic power with unclear outer boundaries and overlapping spheres of influence, sometimes integrated into an overall hierarchy dominated by one conspicuous centre, sometimes breaking up into numerous competing entities. These interconnected conspicuous centres surrounded by circles of smaller replicas have been depicted in terms relating to the universe, as a *mandala* or 'galactic polity'.[45] The mainland polities in Southeast Asia, however, were connected not only to India, but also to the Chinese empire. At the same time, Chinese traders were a marked presence in the islands.

Moving from Europe to West and South Asia, the strong impact of religion on the ideals of rulership appears as a constant. A tension between religiously inspired ideals and the daily requirements of government was present in each of the regions considered. Once we move to East Asia, the burden on the shoulders of rulers is defined in different ways. Throughout the two millennia of Chinese imperial power, magistrates and scholars carefully glossed a number of texts mostly written in the centuries before the 'first emperor' Qin Shi Huang (221–210 BCE), notably including the works of Confucius (551–479 BCE). Confucius advocated rule through moral example and self-improvement. The *Analects* point to legendary exemplars of virtuous rule, notably the legendary emperors Yao and Shun: 'The Master said: "May not Shun be instanced as one who made no effort, yet the empire was well governed? For what effort did he make? Ordering himself in all seriousness, he did nothing but maintain the correct imperial attitude."'[46] What strikes the eye here is not the dignity that can be found in many ideals of princely behaviour, but the stress on stillness, repeated throughout the *Analects*: 'The Master said: "He who governs by his moral excellence may be compared to the pole-star, which abides in its place while all the stars bow towards it."'[47] The emperor was likened to the unmoving pole star, the still point of reference for active administrators who were expected to approach him from the south. Magistrates' buildings (*yamen*) and

[44] Ibid., 76–8.
[45] Stanley J. Tambiah, 'The galactic polity: the structure of traditional kingdoms in Southeast Asia', in Stanley A. Freed (ed.), *Anthropology and the Climate of Opinion* (New York, 1977), 69–97. On fusion and fission, see Andaya, 'Political development', 403; and Sunait Chutintaranond, 'Mandala, segmentary state and politics of centralization in medieval Ayudhya', *Journal of the Siam Society*, 78/1 (1990), 89–100.
[46] Confucius, *Analects*, trans. William Edward Soothill (Edinburgh, 1910; repr. London, 1995), Book XV, iv, 91–2.
[47] Ibid., Book II, i, 5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

imperial palaces consistently had their main entrance facing southwards: 'facing south' became a synonym for ruling.

Confucius' portrayal of impassive rule through exemplary morality provoked comments by 'legalist' writers proffering a more sceptical view of human nature, nurtured by the political turmoil in the 'warring states' period (403–221 BCE). The legalist school advocated a strict implementation of laws, stressing government through punishments and rewards rather than through moral example. At the other end of the spectrum stood a loose grouping of works and authors usually labelled as 'Daoist', including Laozi or the 'old master', possibly a contemporary of Confucius. His *Daodejing* or *Classic of the Way and of Virtue*, probably a compilation of works by several unnamed authors rather than the work of a single figure, fits neither the heavy social morality of Confucianism nor the legalists' pragmatic stance. The intentionally elusive poetic style of Daoism, never as sternly didactic as Confucius or as fixed on the ways of power as the legalists, confronts readers with the shortcomings of conventional wisdom without giving unequivocal solutions. It stresses withdrawal and reflection more than social engagement. However, aspects of Daoist thinking resonate in Confucius as well as in legalist texts, notably the idea of non-action or *wu wei*, the antithesis of active government interference.

A second round of discussion ensued in which Mencius (372–289 BCE) criticised the legalist approach and its 'rule through coercion' or 'rule of the hegemon', reverting to Confucius' 'rule through benevolence' or the 'kingly way'. Subsequently Han Feizi (280–233 BCE) provided a terse restatement of the legalist position as a pragmatic model of power. Han Feizi incorporated non-action into his work as a pragmatic princely strategy to confuse ambitious ministers, consorts, relatives, and servants: passivity concealed the ruler's intentions and made it very difficult to manipulate him.[48] Han Feizi also questioned the canonisation of early sage rulers, stressing the need to adapt policies to current situations.

Confucius and his numerous followers through the ages left room for laws, rewards, and punishments, but preferred ruling through moral example, characterised by simplicity and virtue more than by energetic activism. Their works became the dominant influence during the Han dynasty, and formed the core of an emerging orthodoxy under the Song dynasty. During the Ming and Qing dynasties the 'four books and five classics' of Confucianism formed the standard curriculum of the learned elite studying for the civil service examinations. Among the virtues of a

[48] See Han Fei Tzu, *Basic Writings*, trans. Burton Watson (New York, 1964); on the connection to Daoism, see 9–10.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

good emperor, filial piety ranked high: he should respect his parents and ancestors, maintaining harmony in his family before he could effectively act as emperor. Filial piety and the correct performance of sacrifices and rituals were the essence of virtuous rulership. Involvement in the active ingredients of leadership, protecting the realm against outsiders and leading the daily routines of government, needed to remain within bounds. A large share should be left to leading ministers. These high state servants themselves exhorted the young princes under their tutelage to listen to wise counsel and refrain from impetuous actions disaffecting the people. The didactic use of ancient examples and classic texts persisted to the end in imperial China, supplemented by more recent additions from the historic record portraying the actions of good and bad emperors.[49]

This powerful didactic message was conveyed by a group that in some ways was more dominant than either *ulema* or priests. Confucian literati rising through examination success dominated government under the Song and the Ming; they maintained their position to a large extent under the Manchu Qing dynasty, sharing power with a conquest elite itself increasingly moulded by Confucian precepts.[50] These gentlemen-scholars never formed a caste of ritual specialists as did the Indic Brahmins; nor did they form a separate estate with marked worldly as well as spiritual powers as did the clergy in Europe; they depended more strongly on government office than did the ulema in West Asia. Yet the Chinese literati, too, educated princes and voluntarily offered moral guidance to the ruler, usually in highly deferential terminology. Occupying the same moral high ground as the ulema, priests, or Brahmins, they, too, acted as tutors, custodians, and critics. More strongly than these other religious and ritual elites, however, they dominated throughout the imperial bureaucracy.

The Chinese emperor or 'son of heaven' (*tianzi*) held the 'mandate of heaven' (*tianming*), yet celestial support for his rule could be jeopardised by his immoral behaviour or by wrongdoings perpetrated in his name. Harmony and order were vital to the Chinese conception of rulership. However, direct justice does not seem to have occupied the pivotal

[49] See a critical view of late Ming and Qing governance, reiterating the examples of Yao and Shun and deploring the decline in standards of rulership and state service: Huang Tsung-Hsi, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince. Huang Tsung-Hsi's Ming-I Tai-Fang Lu*, trans. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York, 1993). See Ebrey, 'Remonstrating against royal extravagance', on the didactic role of the tutor.

[50] On the civil service examinations, see Chapters 3 and 4 below, 211, 245–246; Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, CA, 2000); and the same author's 'Political, social, and cultural reproduction via civil service examinations in late imperial China', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 50/1 (1991), 7–28.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

position it did elsewhere, nor did the personal accessibility of the ruler for his peoples figure strongly in legitimising stories.[51] Complainants could make themselves heard by striking the 'petitioners' drum' or by sounding 'grievance bells' in the vicinity of the palace; the intrepid might consider 'stopping the royal cart' or voice complaints 'at the palace gate' hoping for a speedy and favourable response by the emperor. The only formally ruling empress in Chinese history, Wu Zetian (624–690–705), instituted 'petition boxes' allowing her to redress grievances as well as to punish her political rivals.[52] Censors had been instituted in the early empire to evaluate magistrates' careers. The Ming founder Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–1368–1398, also called Ming Taizu or the Hongwu emperor) gave them a more active role in investigating complaints.[53]

While taking care of the people was a key responsibility, appeals and complaints appear to have been seen with mixed feelings, as an inevitable requirement best kept within strict bounds rather than as an opportunity to generate popular support.[54] The Portuguese Jesuit Alvarez Semedo, staying at the Ming court in its final decades, enthusiastically reported the presence of several instruments for petitioners:

within the first gate of the Palace, there was always a Bell, a Drumme, and a Table overlaid with a white varnish, as it were, playstered over; upon this, he that would not speak to the King in person, wrote what his request was, which was presently carried to the King: But whosoever would speak with him, rang the Bell, or beat the Drumme, and presently they were brought in, and had audience.

While this old tradition continued, Semedo added, petitioners used it only rarely, and for good reasons:

for during twenty two years' time, I do not remember, that it was ever beaten above once: and he that did it, was presently paid his pension in ready Bastinadoes

[51] However, see John S. Major et al. (trans.), *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York, 2010), 309 and other places citing the need of 'soliciting opinions'.

[52] On Wu Zetian and her writings, see Denis Twitchett, '*Chen Gui* and other works attributed to Empress Wu Zetian', *Asia Major*, 16/1 (2003), 33–109.

[53] Chinese emperors held three different types of name. Zhu Yuanzhang is the family name with given name (in that order), Ming Taizu is the temple name, Hongwu is the reign name, formally written as 'the Hongwu emperor' rather than as 'Hongwu' or 'Emperor Hongwu'. In this book, most often the reign names will be used, sometimes in abbreviated form, as Kangxi rather than as the more correct 'the Kangxi emperor'.

[54] See Qiang Fang, 'Hot potatoes: Chinese complaint systems from early times to the late Qing (1898)', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 68/4 (2009), 1105–35; and earlier discussions by Edward A. Kracke, Jr, 'Early visions of justice for the humble in East and West', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 96/4 (1976), 492–8, and J.R. Perry, 'Justice for the underprivileged: the ombudsman tradition of Iran', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 373 (1978), 203–15.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> [beatings], for having disquieted the King, who was about halfe a league off. After this hard penance he was heard, and allowed, not to see or speak to the King, but according to the custome now in use, in a petition.[55]

Semedo's report makes clear that the ideals of rulership represented in 'complaint systems' in China and elsewhere were rarely embraced whole-heartedly in practice.

Confucian ethics remained dominant in imperial China, but they were always mixed with Buddhist and Daoist influences, in changing proportions during various dynasties. The 'three ways' overlapped, with Confucian scholars incorporating aspects of the Buddhist notion of the universal virtuous and benevolent 'wheel-turning king' and the Daoist concept of non-action. Empress Wu temporarily placed Laozi's *Daodejing* on the curriculum for the civil service examinations and lavishly sponsored Buddhism.[56] While the Song dynasty witnessed a powerful resurgence of Confucianism, a single emperor such as Huizong (1082–1100–1126) could develop a strong penchant for Daoism. Northern conquest dynasties infused the Han Chinese blend with a robust martial style, performing a similar role in East as well as in West and South Asia. In addition, their repeated incursions also changed religious priorities. Under the Mongol conquerors who ruled China as the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) Buddhism again became a stronger presence. The Qing dynasty, ruling China proper primarily on the basis of its classic precepts, governed recently conquered peoples, most notably Mongols, Uyghurs, and Tibetans, according to different styles of rulership and different moral-religious positions, including shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism. Qing emperors were depicted as enlightened bodhisattvas and visited the Buddhist pilgrimage site at Mount Wutai.[57]

[55] Alvarez Semedo, *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China* (London, 1655), all quotations at 110.

[56] Twitchett, '*Chen Gui*'; T.H. Barrett, *The Woman Who Discovered Printing* (New Haven, CT, 2008).

[57] Bodhisattvas are 'beings who, having achieved nirvana or release from endless reincarnations, remain in this world to aid others towards release' – James L. Hevia, 'Rulership and Tibetan Buddhism in eighteenth-century China: Qing emperors, lamas and audience rituals', in Joëlle Rollo-Koster (ed.), *Medieval and Early Modern Ritual: Formalized Behavior in Europe, China, and Japan* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2002), 279–302, at 280; David M. Farquhar, 'Emperor as bodhisattva in the governance of the Ch'ing empire', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 38/1 (1978), 5–34; Natalie Köhle, 'Why did the Kangxi emperor go to Wutai Shan? Patronage, pilgrimage and the place of Tibetan Buddhism at the early Qing court', *Late Imperial China*, 29/1 (2008), 73–119. See also Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), 223–80, on Buddhism, bodhisattva-hood, the chakravartin, and Qing emperors.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Tributary polities around China, including Japan, more often Korea, Annam (Dai Viet or Vietnam) and a number of other entities such as Champa, Burma, and the Ryukyu islands, were all at some point influenced by the Confucian principle of rule based on virtuous example and learning. In each of these cases this shared imprint arose at a different moment and obtained a different character as it mixed with diverging political or social patterns and the equally strong Indic example. Soon after taking power, the Ming founder in truly Confucian style 'rectified the names' in his empire, extending this mission to include tributary polities:

> the Emperor personally wrote sacrificial invocations and sent officials to the mountains, the towns, the seas and the rivers to change and to fix the names of the spirits and to announce the sacrifices . . . others were sent to promulgate advice on the rectification of the spirits' names to Annam, Champa and Korea.

In 1372 the Hongwu emperor noted that not all tributaries were equally close:

> Korea is very close to China and its people are familiar with the classics, histories and cultured things. Their music and ritual are much like those of China and it cannot be considered together with other foreign countries.[58]

Within a generation, the advent of the Ming dynasty was followed by a major dynastic change in this closest tributary state, from the Koryŏ to the Chosŏn lineage. After a millennium in which Buddhism had been the paramount influence, this changeover in 1392 brought with it a powerful reinforcement of neo-Confucianism, furthering an even greater accord with Ming China. The Manchu conquest (1644) was initially experienced as a setback by Chosŏn Korea, but disrupted neither the tributary relationship nor the staunch Confucianism of Korea. King Yŏngjo (1694–1724–1776), at times participating in three 'royal lectures' with his scholars, may have surpassed even his contemporary, the Qing Qianlong emperor (1711–1735–1796*), as a paragon of Confucian diligence.[59]

In Japan the first legendary emperor, Jimmu, who according to tradition started his reign in 660 BCE, traced descent to the sun goddess, Amaterasu Omikami. Divine descent and continuity into the twenty-first

[58] Geoff Wade (trans.), *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu: An Open Access Resource* (Singapore: Asia Research Institute and the Singapore E-Press, National University of Singapore), http://epress.nus.edu.sg/msl (accessed 22 October 2013), entries for 29 June 1370 and 16 November 1372.

[59] JaHyun Kim Haboush, *The Confucian Kingship in Korea: Yŏngjo and the Politics of Sagacity* (New York, 1988); on the royal lectures, see Yonung Kwon, 'The royal lecture and Confucian politics in early Yi Korea', *Korean Studies*, 6/1 (1982), 41–62.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

century make this dynasty stand out in history.[60] The emergence of verifiable historic empresses and emperors – around 600 CE – coincides with the adoption of the Chinese calendar and other Chinese cultural influences; indigenous ritual Shinto practices became intertwined with Confucian phrases at the moment they were first recorded in writing. Chinese texts and examples were a formative influence, and the legendary Chinese sage kings of Yao and Shun can be found in Japanese Confucian texts, as well as the views of rulership connected to their example.[61] At the same time Buddhism became a powerful influence in Japan. In addition to some rituals familiar from imperial China, the imperial annual ritual observances (*nenju gyoji*) notably included Shinto and Buddhist practices. While adopting elements of Confucian thought, Japan cultivated its own style of rulership. Officials at the court of the Chinese Sui dynasty (561–618) quoted a Japanese envoy stating that 'The king of Wa [Japan] deems heaven to be his elder brother and the sun his younger. Before break of dawn he attends the court and, sitting cross-legged, listens to appeals. Just as soon as the sun rises, he ceases these duties, saying that he hands them over to his brother.'[62] The reference to the sun sets apart Japanese legitimacy from Chinese traditions. Interestingly, the requirement of listening to petitioners – familiar from European and West Asian tradition – is underlined here too. Notwithstanding its strong connections with China, Japan developed a specific style of rulership, with the emperors as increasingly symbolic figures leaving the practice of ruling to others. In early Japan the Fujiwara family, supplying imperial wives as well as regents, took power in its hands; while later, abdicated emperors ruled from Buddhist monasteries in the name of their sons. From the twelfth century onwards, the shogun emerged as the dominant military leader. Tokugawa Japan (1603–1868) consolidated a gradually evolving tradition where an emperor reigned and a shogun ruled, a separation of military and administrative power from ritual and cultural supremacy that was on occasion pictured as a combination of the two 'ways' of ruling: the way of the hegemon and the kingly way.[63] The practice of double

[60] In practice, several dynasties can be distinguished: continuity was as much a construction as divine descent, but both exerted a powerful influence.
[61] See several instances in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al. (eds.), *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. I: *From Earliest Times to 1600* (New York, 2001), 420 in the context of petitioning, article 15 in the Kenmu code.
[62] Ben-Ami Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors: Sacred Subservience in Japanese History* (Folkestone, 2005), 17.
[63] Mostly by critics among Tokugawa historians – see Wai-ming Ng, 'Redefining legitimacy in Tokugawa historiography', *Sino-Japanese Studies*, 18 (2011), 1–20, at 1. On the earlier traditions of separating the emperor's ritual authority from military and political power, see G. Cameron Hurst, 'Insei', in Donald H. Shively and William H. McCullough (eds.),

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

rulership, the marked presence of ruling empresses in early Japan, and the conspicuous role of a hereditary warrior elite indicate major differences between China and Japan beneath layers of cultural similarity. On closer observation, all lesser partners or tributaries of the Chinese empire mixed local tradition with Chinese and other influences. The Chinese model was never adopted wholesale and unchanged.[64]

Ideals of rulership established and reiterated in interconnecting literary traditions can be skimmed and summarised, a process limited here to the most obvious items in the catalogue of princely virtues. This task is more complicated for societies without long-standing written discourses on the prince, where oral traditions, myths of origins, and daily perceptions together convey far more diffuse and changing views. African, pre-Columbian American, and Polynesian views of rulership, however, can help to clarify aspects left aside in the literary ideals discussed here. I shall not attempt here to extrapolate more regional views of rulership from the scattered and unequal sources, but will look at ideas about kingship that extend and illuminate the preceding discussion and bring to light the problems these views engendered for incumbent kings.

Kings were often pictured as coming from elsewhere: as outsiders who through force, cunning, and celestial support defeated previous rulers and captured their wives or daughters. These 'stranger-kings' established their pre-eminence by transgressing common social norms: mythic royals could practise incest or use violence without risking social censure or punishment. Their successors could still be seen as possessing arcane knowledge and special skills, notably rainmaking. Royal incest, maintaining the bloodline through male and female lines, forms part of many myths of origin and indeed was sometimes put into practice, notwithstanding the powerful social prohibitions against it.[65] In the blurry changeover between myth and historical reality, conquest as the starting point

The Cambridge History of Japan, vol. II: *Heian Japan* (Cambridge, 1999), 576–643. On the emperors in general, see the long-term perspective in Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors*.

[64] James A. Anderson, 'Distinguishing between China and Vietnam: three relational equilibriums in Sino-Vietnamese relations', *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 13/2 (2013), 259–80; Gregory Smits, 'Ambiguous boundaries: redefining royal authority in the kingdom of Ryukyu', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 60/1 (2000), 89–123.

[65] On Inka incest, see Yaya, *Two Faces of Inca History,* 77. On Hawaii, see Patrick Vinton Kirch, *How Chiefs Became Kings: Divine Kingship and the Rise of Archaic States in Ancient Hawai'i* (Berkeley, CA, 2010), 37, 205, 206. On Egypt, see Zahi Hawass, 'King Tut's family secrets', *National Geographic*, 218/3 (2010), 34–59; and Sheila L. Ager, 'The power of excess: royal incest and the Ptolemaic dynasty', *Anthropologica*, 48/2 (2006), 165–86. On incest generally, see Pierre L. van den Berghe and Gene M. Mesher, 'Royal incest and inclusive fitness', *American Ethnologist*, 7/2 (1980), 300–17; and more examples cited in David Dobbs, 'The risks and rewards of royal incest', *National Geographic*, 218/3 (2010), 60–1.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of dynasty is ubiquitous. Sons born into royal clans with many siblings, who had slight chances of succession and reasons to fear for their lives, had good grounds to move away. With their followers, they stood a better chance of obtaining power elsewhere. The dynamics of dynastic reproduction and succession, to be discussed in the next chapter, added to the proliferation of conquest dynasties arising in the periphery of existing African kingdoms.[66] Mobile pastoralists from the Nilotic area acting as conquerors, subjecting resident farming populations in the south and west, form a common pattern in Africa. This dynamic role of pastoralists is equally strongly attested for Central Asians moving in all directions.[67] Martial valour, for these conquering groups, was surely an essential ingredient of rulership. Actual conquests may have given rise to 'stranger-king' myths; such stories, however, were not always necessarily related to actual takeovers by outsiders.

Can stranger-kings ruling as outsiders over subjected peoples be presented as bringing harmony? In the kingdom of Ankole in Uganda, pastoral Bahima formed the dominant clan ruling over agricultural Bairu serfs. The order maintained by the Bahima king (*mugabe*) primarily advanced the interests of his own group. Above the ruling mugabe, however, stood the tribal fetish of all peoples of Ankole: the Bagyendanwa drum. This higher authority was impartial, 'as much interested in the Bairu as in the Bahima'. It protected all against infringement and injustice: a Bairu sentenced to death by the mugabe would be pardoned if he made it to the Bagyendanwa sanctuary and touched the drum.[68] The drum, standing above the power even of the mugabe, performs the same service here that we find elsewhere in the ideal of protection of the weak. This remarkable (but perhaps not very practicable) form of pardoning underlines the power of objects related to royal authority. Drums were connected to royalty and its rituals in many African kingdoms. Regalia were seen as embodying rulership, with their possessors serving merely as temporary bearers. Stools carried the power of ancestor-kings; royal power was activated only by 'enstoolment' (Plate 3a). Objects with magical powers sometimes brought commoners to royal status: charmed krises have reportedly acted as kingmakers in Southeast

[66] See Tardits (ed.), *Princes & Serviteurs*, 20, for the connection between dispossessed royal siblings and conquest. On conquest, see Vansina, 'Comparison of African kingdoms', 329; and Southall, 'Segmentary state', 61–3.

[67] On stranger-kings, see recently Sahlins, 'Stranger-king', discussing examples from many regions and myths. On nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers, see e.g. Edwin M. Loeb, 'Die Institution des sakralen Königtums', *Paideuma*, 10/2 (1964), 102–14.

[68] K. Oberg, 'The kingdom of Ankole in Uganda', in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (eds.), *African Political Systems*, 121–62, at 150–7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Asia.[69] Peoples throughout the world were awed by the powers of regalia, representing a higher force that could only temporarily be vested in a person.

As elsewhere, African kings and their peoples more often than not were seen as having strong mutual obligations: 'every one who holds political office has responsibilities for the public weal corresponding to his rights and privileges'.[70] The chief or king could raise taxes and demand tribute or labour service, but in return had the obligation to 'dispense justice to them, to ensure their protection from enemies and to safeguard their general welfare by ritual acts and observances'.[71] While this would hold true for conquest clans governing subjected peoples, there are numerous examples where representation and consent counterbalanced the powers of kingship. Where several kinship groups merged into one polity, kingship ideally served as an overarching function holding together these segments.[72] This responsibility, moreover, could be anchored in practice by alternating kingship among leading clans of the kingdom. Circulating forms of kingship, whether including a limited number of descent groups or a larger number of chiefly houses, not only entailed the possibility of future rule for each of these groups, but also made more likely a pattern of rule through negotiation and consent.

While the measure of power in the hands of kings throughout Africa varied, there was usually a strong presence of elders and councils.[73] The Asante, forming a federation of 'stools' or chiefs under the paramount king (*asantehene*), were portrayed by Robert Rattray as practising a form of democracy reminiscent of ancient Greece.[74] Interestingly, the awkward question how to deal with an incompetent or bad king could be solved here by the wholly accepted practice of 'destoolment'. Dissatisfaction among commoners set in motion a process that, by raising support and convincing elders, could lead to destoolment. Chiefs at all

[69] See Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java*, 37, 65 on charmed objects (*pusakas*), 60–1 on signs of divine support and the ritual aspects of kingship; Jean-François Guermonprez, 'Rois divins et rois guerriers: images de la royauté à Bali', *L'Homme*, 25 (1985), 39–70, at 47, 50.

[70] Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (eds.), *African Political Systems*, 11–12.

[71] Ibid., 34, and see numerous other references to justice, including the obligation to protect the weak against evildoers at 69, reminiscent of *zulm* and *mazalim* in the Muslim context.

[72] Ibid., 22, and see also 293.

[73] Vansina, 'Comparison of African kingdoms', underlines this while also, at 332–4, suggesting a typology going from despotic via regal, incorporative, and aristocratic kingdoms to federations, linking the level of centralised power with exclusive or inclusive patterns of succession.

[74] Robert Sutherland Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution* (Oxford, 1929), 401–6. See more recently Napoleon Bamfo, 'The hidden elements of democracy among Akyem chieftaincy: enstoolment, destoolment, and other limitations of power', *Journal of Black Studies*, 31/2 (2000), 149–73, stressing the checks and balances in various Akan polities.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

levels, including the *asantehene* himself, could be destooled if they ignored the advice of elders, acted with undue cruelty, or forsook their ritual obligations.[75] Destooled chiefs were not allowed to take the property they had assembled during their incumbency, nor even the possessions they themselves had brought to the stool. This made it necessary to plan destoolments surreptitiously and execute them rapidly:

> The Chief might be enticed away from his 'palace' when he would be dragged out of his hammock, or he might have his Stool suddenly pulled from beneath him, so that his buttocks came in contact with the ground; he was also liable to be dragged on the ground; he was abused and slapped by the women and children.[76]

When a chief 'handed over the Stool voluntarily, his buttocks were not bumped on the ground'.[77] The sharp contrast between the usual highly reverential behaviour and this rather crude destoolment suggests the Asante people differentiated between the function and the person of chiefs: 'to the Ashanti, the stool was more important than the chief who, for the time being, sat upon it'.[78]

The role of kingship in bringing together the loosely integrated kinship segments can also be seen to some extent in the 'fourfold domain' of the Inka empire, where the royal descent group itself was divided into upper and lower (*hanan* and *hurin*) segments, each of which was again subdivided into left and right. The paramount ruler (*Sapa Inka*) needed to weld together the groups, but ritual as well as political responsibilities were divided among the sections.[79] Likewise the supreme king (*huey tlatoani*) of Tenochtitlan incorporated two other city-states under his rule, Texcoco and Tlacopan, headed by their kings (*tlatoque*). The supreme king 'carried his subjects in his cape': accepting responsibility for their welfare, he deserved their obedience.[80] As in many other places, justice and the protection of the weak were present in Aztec ideals of kingship.

[75] Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, 406; William Tordoff, 'The Ashanti confederacy', *Journal of African History*, 3/3 (1962), 399–417, at 416.

[76] Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, 146, and on destoolment, 85, 116, 133–4, 145–6, 196, 255, 406.

[77] Ibid., 196. [78] Tordoff, 'Ashanti confederacy', 416.

[79] María Rostworowski and Craig Morris, 'The fourfold domain: Inka power and its social foundations', in Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas* (Cambridge, 1999), 769–863; Yaya, *Two Faces of Inca History*; Franklin Pease, 'The Inka and political power in the Andes', in Basham (ed.), *Kingship in Asia and Early America*, 243–56.

[80] Manuel Aguilar-Moreno, *Handbook to Life in the Aztec World* (Oxford, 2006), 75–6; J. Rounds, 'Dynastic succession and the centralization of power in Tenochtitlan', in George Allen Collier et al. (eds.), *The Inca and Aztec States, 1400–1800: Anthropology and History* (New York, 1982), 63–89, stressing the 'corporateness' of the ruling elites; see also Pedro Carrasco, 'Kingship in ancient Mexico', in Basham (ed.), *Kingship in Asia and Early America*, 233–42. Basham's 'Introduction', 5–12, in the same volume, suggests (9)

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Father Bernardino de Sahagún noted in his *General History of the Things of New Spain* that 'The ruler watched especially over the trials; he heard all the accusations and complaints, the afflictions and the misery of the common folk, the orphans, the poor, and the vassals.'[81] Elsewhere, Sahagún refers to a stock of dried maize sufficient to feed the city for twenty years – an unlikely statement in general, but more specifically because he also reports a serious famine.[82]

The welfare of peoples, particularly in a context where different leaders competed for support, could be defined in terms of gift-giving and hospitality. For attracting followers and supporters, it was essential to amass wealth, produce, and often women – whose numbers were likely to be seen as a sign of power and who as a group were able to generate wealth. The Inka imperial venture was based on gift exchange: peripheral peoples accepting gifts lost autonomy. Expansion could be successfully consolidated only if the empire perpetually increased its stocks, amassing wealth to satisfy new tributaries.[83] In Melanesia and Polynesia, largesse and gift-giving formed the core of the households of 'big men' or chiefs, a practice that in the larger-scale institutionalised polities of Polynesia led to the building of storehouses to collect all sorts of goods: 'As the rat will not desert the pantry . . . where he thinks food is, so the people will not desert the king while they think there is food in his store-house.'[84] Conspicuous wealth and lavish entertaining, censured in moral-literary traditions, certainly rank among the most common characteristics of rulership. Without the writings of moral critics, it is not so easy to ascertain whether this show of luxury and hospitality was frowned upon by spiritual leaders.

The military, judicial, administrative, and redistributive roles of African kings were inextricably bound up with their ritual and magical functions. Numerous examples in African dynastic history show kings whose health was understood as closely connected to the health and wealth of their peoples, to rich harvests, good weather, and contented ancestors. In *The Golden Bough* James Frazer connected the deification of kings to the 'killing of the gods': once kings had lost their vigour, they

that the Inka held 'greater responsibility for the social security and economic welfare of his subjects' than the Aztec ruler.

[81] Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, ed. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dribble (Santa Fe, NM, 1954), Book 8, 'Kings and Lords', 54, with other references to justice at 41–3, 59.

[82] Ibid., 44 and 41 respectively.

[83] Rostworowski and Morris, 'Fourfold domain', 778.

[84] David Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities* (Honolulu, HI, 1903), 257–8, cited in Marshall Sahlins, 'Poor man, rich man, big-man, chief: political types in Melanesia and Polynesia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 5/3 (1963), 285–303, at 296; see 298: 'Even the greatest Polynesian chiefs were conceived superior kinsmen to the masses, fathers of their people, and generosity was morally incumbent upon them.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

could actively imperil the realm and should be exterminated. The vigour and the spirits of the ancestors needed to be kept safe lest a sudden and unprepared death of the incumbent king prevent their well-ordered transmission to a successor. The king was only the temporary vessel of a quality bigger than man. Frazer's model, quite influential in the early twentieth century, was re-examined critically in the 1940s by E.E. Evans-Pritchard for the Shilluk of the Sudan; he confirmed the presence of the idea, but doubted whether the killing of a king had ever been put into practice.[85] However, the killing or suicide of kings is present in many stories, and appears to have been practised too. K. Oberg, rendering common views about the king of Ankole in Uganda, mentions the virtues of courage and largesse, before proceeding to more transcendent qualities:

> He was called the 'drum', for like the drum he maintained the unity of the men under his power. He was called the 'moon', for through the moon he had power to drive away evil and bring fortune to the tribe. Power, then, both physical and spiritual, was the inherent quality of kingship. And when the physical powers of the king waned, through approaching age, these kingly powers were believed to wane with them. No king, therefore, was permitted to age or weaken. When sickness or age brought on debility, the Mugabe took poison, which was prepared for him by his magicians, and died, making way for a new, virile king who could maintain the unity of the kingdom and wage successful wars against external enemies.[86]

Whether or not kings were actually killed, it is clear that they were seen as possessing awesome powers that necessitated numerous ritual precautions restricting their own lives as well as their exchanges with other people. Among the Mamprusi of northern Ghana, *naam* was considered the essential quality shared by king and chiefs alike. Naam can be translated as 'office', but the term had strong connotations of the transcendent, of sacrifices and ancestors:

> Naam is concentrated in the king's physical body in ways that make him powerful, but also vulnerable. He lives constrained by a host of prohibitions and it is not entirely clear if the prohibitions are to protect him, or to protect others. Thus, the king may not move quickly. He may not step barefoot on the ground, or endanger his body by holding any sharp instruments such as those used in farming or warfare. For him to shed blood on the earth would bring disaster. He may not see certain parts of his palace or certain ritual specialists who reside in his kingdom. He may not hear certain words. He may not cross either of the two streams

[85] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'The divine kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan: The Frazer Lecture, 1948', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 1 (2011), 407–22.

[86] Oberg, 'Kingdom of Ankole', 137. On the suicide of the rain-queen, see Krige and Krige, *Realm of a Rain-Queen*, 167; W.D. Hammond-Tooke, *Boundaries and Belief: The Structure of a Sotho Worldview* (Johannesburg, 1981), 18, 21.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that traverse his village east and west of the palace. He sits only on the skins of animals that have been sacrificed by his ancestors, or those – such as the lion and leopard – which are embodiments of ancient kings.[87]

As a token of their elevated position, kings wore heavy regalia. In a 1929 study, Rattray portrayed the Asante king (*asantehene*) as so burdened with gold attire (Plate 3b) that he could move only with the assistance of his servants. In general, Blier concludes: 'Symbolically, rulers became the captives of the 'subjects' they served. Except for a yearly outing, many rulers could not leave the palace; most could never touch the ground. Nor generally could they eat, drink or speak in public except through (or accompanied by) an interpreter, linguist, or spokesperson.'[88] (See Plate 2.) This divine or sacral view of kingship, attributing awesome powers to kings while at the same time freezing them into immobility, does not seem to fit descriptions of European monarchs fighting and feasting, sultans on horseback pursuing the infidel, or Manchu emperors on campaign or hunting. It is also far from universal in Africa, where kings more often than not were expected to prove their prowess on the battlefield and flaunt their wealth through large-scale hospitality. The sacralised status of rulers, however, was present in each of these cases, though it often remained restricted to specific moments and constellations.

It is impossible to picture dynastic power anywhere without the ritual appurtenances that visibly demonstrated its status apart in society. Rituals are moments set apart from daily life, performed in a solemn or festive setting, usually including a set pattern of fixed actions, often involving special objects (regalia, religious insignia), and often accompanied by music and movement. Ritual calendars determined annually recurring feasts and sacrifices across the globe, a sequence sometimes specifically related to court activities, but often reflecting common social and religious practice. The fourth chapter of this book will deal with some of these occasions at greater length. Here it is relevant to mention them largely because they represent the incursion of the divine into dynastic routines.

The Chinese mandate of heaven, directly linking droughts, floods, and cosmic events to the performance of rulers, offers a powerful parallel for African ritual kingship. The Chinese record, moreover, suggests that

[87] S. Drucker-Brown, 'King house: the mobile polity in northern Ghana', in Quigley (ed.), *Character of Kingship*, 171–86, at 176–7 (Rattray is mentioned at 181). On *naam*, see also Meyer Fortes, 'The political system of the Tallensi of the northern territories of the Goldcoast', in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (eds.), *African Political Systems*, 239–71, at 256–8. For a general and in many respects outdated discussion of 'untouchables', see Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (London, 1950).

[88] Suzanne Preston Blier, *The Royal Arts of Africa: The Majesty of Form* (London, 1998), 29.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

astute and clear-headed rulers were themselves taken aback by the powers of their office and its divine sanction. In 1832, a drought persisting even after a series of sacrifices, persuaded the Daoguang emperor (1782–1820–1850) to escalate the ritual ladder to its highest extreme, by performing the exceptional prayer for rain (*dayu*). The emperor himself took full responsibility: 'I tremble as I consider the causes of the drought: the fault must be mine.'[89] Among his predecessors, the Kangxi emperor, universally acclaimed as a highly accomplished and sensible figure, considered that 'From ancient times when there is error in human affairs the harmony of Heaven is affected. Perhaps there has been error in governance; I may have been found wanting in my personnel appointments.'[90] Elsewhere, Kangxi argued that for the ruler, 'Careless handling of one item might bring harm to the whole world, a moment's carelessness damage all future generations.'[91] To assuage the powers of heaven, emperors did not only examine their own behaviour; they could reduce expenditure, punish corruption, reform the magistracy, or seek to lighten the burdens of their peoples. During a prolonged drought in 1392, the formidable but hardly affable Hongwu emperor sent out judges and censors explicitly to examine the condition of prisoners all over the country: could their situation have caused heavenly displeasure?[92] Moreover, Hongwu was upset by the misdeeds of his sons:

People are the mandate of Heaven. He who has virtue Heaven will give it to him and people will follow. If he does not have [virtue], Heaven will withdraw [the mandate] and people will leave him. Now Zhou, Qi, Tan and Lu [Ming princes] have indiscriminately bullied and humiliated the soldiers and the people in their fiefs, will Heaven take away the mandate from them?[93]

In 1644, the final critical year of the Ming dynasty, the Chongzhen emperor (1611–1627–1644) issued an 'edict of self-blame' reflecting on the situation at some length:

I have inherited and abided by the imperial cause for seventeen years. Day and night, I have been cautious and vigilant and have not dared to be idle. At present, calamities are frequent: bandits become more active, people are tormented, and peaceful residences are nowhere to be found . . . I am personally at fault. Who else to blame? The people therefore suffer from spears and arrows; fires and floods follow in succession; the dead fill ravines; skeletons are heaped in mounds; these are all my transgressions. Causing the people to transport grains and fodder, to see

[89] Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 227. [90] Ibid., 225.
[91] Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-Hsi* (New York, 1974), 147.
[92] Fang, 'Hot potatoes', 1120.
[93] Hok-Lam Chan, 'Ming Taizu's problem with his sons: Prince Qin's criminality and early-Ming politics', *Asia Major*, 20/1 (2007), 45–103, at 87.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> off the departing and supply food to the armies, the bitterness of imposing unregulated taxes and pre-collecting on debts, these are again my transgressions ... As for the lawlessness of the high officials I appointed, the dishonesty of the low officials I employed, the hesitancy and indecisiveness of the imperial censors, the arrogance, cowardice, and ineffectiveness of the military officials, are all because of my inadequate treatment and lack of compulsion. Even at midnight, whenever the situation comes to my mind, I feel extreme shame of myself. It is I who lack virtue and how could the people be held responsible?[94]

Chongzhen's self-blame did little to prevent the downfall of the dynasty.

Among China's tributaries, similar expressions can be found. Japanese emperors referred to their moral deficiencies when they explained their intention to resign or when the country was afflicted by natural adversities. In 705 Emperor Mommu (683–697–707) wrote: 'My virtue is insufficient to move Heaven and my humanity is inadequate to sway the people . . . There is either too much rain or there is drought. Harvests have been meagre and the people suffer from hunger.'[95] The Dai Viet king, Le Thanh Ton (1442–1460–1497), pondered in 1467 after a long period without rains: 'I am a person without merit . . . I am the father and mother of the people, sick at heart. If I do not dispense wide grace and generous forgiveness, then how can genuine blessings reach the people?'[96] Even minor incidents generated distress. In 1802 the Korean queen dowager-regent Chŏngsun was upset when lightning and thunder struck in winter, 'contrary to the regular rhythm and order'. After considering her own shortcomings and various possible faults in the government's treatment of the people, she admonished her ministers to mend their ways.[97]

Grave natural disasters, such as storms, floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, are still a test for government: tardy and ineffective responses can undermine legitimacy. In the premodern world, the tendency to attribute a certain responsibility for these occasions to the ruler, as intermediary with higher powers, further exacerbated the disruptive potential of natural phenomena. Extreme weather conditions and natural disasters threatened the well-being of the people and gave them a legitimate impulse to question the accomplishments of the individual ruler or the dynasty. Although most views of the polity underlined hierarchy and obedience, this was a moment

[94] Li Yuan, 'The Ming emperors' practice of self-examination and self-blame', *Chinese Studies in History*, 44/3 (2011), 6–30, at 16–17.

[95] Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors*, 68–9, among several other examples.

[96] Andaya, 'Political development', 420, stressing several elements familiar from African kingship in Southeast Asia: the strong connection with kinship patterns, the special qualities attributed to kings, the special role of revered objects, and the general relevance of natural disasters, cosmic events, and deformities in man or beast.

[97] JaHyun Kim Haboush, *Epistolary Korea: Letters in the Communicative Space of the Chosŏn, 1392–1910* (New York, 2009), 38–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

where rebellion could generate support and acquire legitimacy – successful usurpation of power, bringing an untarnished leader to the throne, could open a new era of harmony and well-being.[98]

All premodern variants of dynastic power cultivated a strong religious-moral underpinning as well as a connection to the celestial: they share at least some of these traits. The principal performances of imperial and royal legitimacy took place in or near places of religious observance and partially followed religious scenarios. Ottoman princes reached maturity with the ritual of circumcision, celebrated in prolonged festivals in which the city corporations of Istanbul took an important part. Friday prayer processions offered a less spectacular but more regular form of contact with the population. The dense ritual-ceremonial calendar was so pervasive for the Indic rajadharma that it constricted his role as an active ruler.[99] In Europe, Gottesgnadentum and *droit divin* were reflected in court practice. Addressing the young Louis XIV during a ceremony in the Parisian Parlement, one of its leading magistrates stated that 'Your Majesty's chair [*siège*] to us represents the living God, the orders of the kingdom pay their respects to you as to a visible divinity.'[100] French and English kings long performed the 'royal touch', healing their subjects suffering from the skin disease scrofula by serving as a vehicle for divine grace. When Louis XIV temporarily refrained from these activities early in his reign, he probably did so because his extramarital affairs prevented him from taking communion and hence left him unable to perform a rite based on divine grace. Louis XV, discontinuing the royal touch in most of his reign, explicitly used this soundly Catholic argument.[101] The populace did not forget the rite, however. Following the *sacre* (inauguration) of Louis XVI in 1775, more than 2,400 people presented themselves for the royal touch.[102] The royal touch was abolished by George I (1660–1714–1727) in 1714, but in France it persisted into the eighteenth century and briefly resurfaced in 1826.[103]

[98] Andaya, 'Political development', 420.

[99] Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority*, v; see also Heesterman, 'Conundrum of the king's authority', esp. 3–4, 8.

[100] Pascale Mormiche, *Devenir prince: l'école du pouvoir en France, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 2009), 212, citing Omer Talon, one of the advocates of limited monarchy in the Parlement.

[101] On Louis XV and his abandoning of the touch, see Jeroen Duindam, 'The dynastic court in an age of change', in *Friedrich300 – Colloquien: Friedrich der Große und der Hof*, in *Perspectivia* (2009), www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-hof/Duindam_Court.

[102] Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 139.

[103] Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges* (Paris, 1924), translated as *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J.E. Anderson (Montreal and Kingston, 1973); Frank Barlow, 'The King's Evil', *English Historical Review*, 95/374 (1980), 3–27; C.J.Ch. Siret, *Précis historique du sacre de S.M. Charles X* (Reims, 1826), 95–6, 137.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Deep into the eighteenth century a dense sequence of religious processions and ceremonies connected Habsburg rulers to the urban environment of their palaces. Emperor Leopold I (1640–1658–1705) invoked heavenly support against two scourges arising during his reign: the Ottomans and the Plague. Heaven's direct warnings, punishments, and deliverances instigated new ritual practices. Upon recovering a wooden fragment of the holy cross miraculously untouched by the great fire in the imperial Hofburg, Eleonora II Gonzaga, the dowager empress, instituted the female Order of the Starry Cross. Her stepson Leopold I barely escaped when lightning struck his apartment in his hunting lodge at Laxenburg in 1691, and duly honoured this portentous miracle with an annual procession.[104] The age-old religious rite of the *pedilavium*, the washing of the feet of the poor in a re-enactment of the Last Supper, had come to represent full royal sovereignty in the early modern period. Briefly abolished in Joseph II's personal rule after the death of his mother Maria Theresa in 1780, it was soon reinstated. Francis Joseph (1830–1848–1916) practised the washing of the feet of the poor on Maundy Thursday into the twentieth century.[105]

Unattainable and inconsistent standards

This *tour d'horizon* shows the similarity of some key ideals of rulership: the universal stress on harmony, on the common good, and on the protection of the weak. While it is not surprising to find such lofty ideals in works intended to instil moral values into the minds of princes and rulers who in practice often behaved very differently, it is interesting to note that both the ideals outlined and the transgressions condemned overlap to a large extent.

Differences in tone and content of ideals and criticisms can be related to varying moral-religious backgrounds as well as to the diverging social positions of the groups voicing these views. In China and the regions influenced by its Confucian precepts, the priority of moral example coincided with a relatively passive and withdrawn ideal of rulership. The literati who educated and admonished Chinese princes and emperors were also the most important agents of government – there was no clash

[104] For the Stern-Creuz Orden, see Johann Christian Lünig, *Theatrum ceremoniale historico-politicum, oder historisch- und politischer Schau-Platz aller Ceremonien, welche so wohl an europäischen Höfen als auch sonsten bey vielen illustren Fällen beobachtet worden* (Leipzig, 1719–20), 1161–3. For Leopold's Laxenburg miracle, see Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 140–1. On Habsburg piety, see literature cited in Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*. For the parallel in the Spanish Netherlands, see Luc Duerloo, 'Pietas Albertina: dynastieke vroomheid en herbouw van het vorstelijk gezag', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 112 (1997), 1–18.

[105] Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

here between the voices of clerical advisors and secular governors, although, of course, idealists and pragmatists quarrelled everywhere. On the other hand, the dominance of the literati in the written legacies of Chinese dynastic history may have deformed our view, by underplaying the presence of military elites and ignoring or criticising numerous examples of active and martial rulership.[106]

While European as well as most Asian views of rulership have a greater tolerance for an activist and outgoing style than the classic Chinese view, all ideals reviewed here stress the moral obligation of rulers, acting benevolently and justly towards their peoples while safeguarding cosmic order by appeasing divine powers through the painstaking performance of ritual.[107] Legitimacy was based on ritual propriety and religious sanction, translated into the need for the ruler to act in the shared interests of his peoples. European kings, in different measures, pointed to the divine sanction of their rule, but by doing so they accepted a responsibility for the welfare of their peoples. Persians cultivated the 'divine radiance' (*farr*) of kingship, a notion that permeated later Islamic forms of rulership, as can be seen through the adoption of Persian titles such as the 'shadow of god on earth' or the king of kings (*shahanshah*). Persian traditions and the newly acquired Islamic norms prompted the ruler to protect the flock against *zulm* (injustice). In China the mandate of heaven, obtained by successful claimants of the imperial dignity, engendered an overawing obligation to maintain the balance between heaven and earth through moral rectitude and ritual propriety. Popular disaffection, natural disasters, and cosmic events foreshadowed a violent end for any dynasty failing to redress the balance in time. The connection between the ruler's failings and divine wrath was equally strong in Southeast Asia and Africa.

This leads us to a second more important outcome: the duties of rulership as outlined in moral tracts were not only almost impossible to fulfil for most persons, they were also contradictory. Rulers were confronted by daunting responsibilities, too much for most talented persons and beyond the reach of the mediocrities that could be expected to sit on

[106] Robinson, *Martial Spectacles.*
[107] See Santucci, 'Vedic kingship', for the etymology and moral associations of the numerous Indo-European variants of *raj* and *rex*. Andaya, 'Political development', 408, 420, 421, indicates that views of rulership in mainland and island Southeast Asia fit well into this brief outline. However, note Spellman, *Monarchies*, who assumes four different types of monarchy (Asia, Africa and America, Byzantium and Islam, Europe) and underlines the differences between these styles. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, discusses some of the ideals traced in this chapter, but strongly underlines the instrumental character of the 'benevolence myth' (134–5); likewise, he sees the 'absolute loneliness' (154–6) of rulers largely as a consequence of the violence and terror he sees as inherent to the system he describes.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the throne where fixed rules of succession prevented selection. The expectation of moral and religious rectitude, a challenge for most individuals, awkwardly fitted the political challenges facing the ruler. Machiavelli's *Prince* was so influential and controversial precisely because it stated a truism that had often been denied. Pragmatic ruling often sullied the hands but it could be effective; conversely, rigidly sticking to ideals did not always advance the *bonum publicum* in the longer term. This posed a problem for the education of princes as well as an ongoing tension in the lives of rulers. Moral convictions and actual behaviour clash in the lives of most people, but here the tension was sharpened from two sides: lofty ideals of kingship seriously complicated the challenges of day-to-day government.

This permanent clash makes it understandable why reigning and ruling were often separated, creating differentiated roles for ritual figureheads and actual governors. Sometimes the separation between these roles was institutionalised. The paramount chief (*arii rahi*) of Tahiti escaped from the severe ritual constrictions placed upon him by abdicating upon the birth of a son, installing the child as chief while he himself ruled as regent – an adequate solution until the boy reached majority.[108] Japan offers a remarkable example of the separation between a largely sacerdotal supreme imperial power and a series of more active yet secondary rulers: regents from the dominant Fujiwara clan, abdicated emperors ruling 'from the cloister' (*insei*), and finally the 'military hegemon' (shogun). After the Heian period (794–1185) an almost continuous sequence of shogunal dynasties wielded power, whereas the imperial lineage held nominal sovereignty and ritual pre-eminence, ending only with the downfall of the Tokugawa shogunate and the restoration of the emperor in 1868.[109] While these explicit cases remain the exception, rulers across the world often found themselves limited to the ritual performance of omnipotence, while in practice they left government to key advisors. The Chinese tradition of governance, with its marked stress on a reticent emperor and active literati magistrates, left ample room for this solution. In the Ottoman empire, the grand vizier at times took over most of the sultan's active duties. In Europe, too, kings could maintain a high profile for distant audiences while in practice they were likely to follow the advice

[108] H.J.M. Claessen, 'Enige gegevens over taboes en voorschriften rond Tahitische vorsten', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 118/4 (1962), 433–53.

[109] Hurst, 'Insei', 580, underlines the separation of ruling and reigning in Japanese dynastic history, with Fuijwara regents, abdicated emperors, and shoguns primarily dealing with the 'daily scramble for political and economic power' and the emperor serving as the 'repository of dynastic authority'. Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors*, underlines the 'sacred subservience' as one of the possible explanations for the dynasty's longevity.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of their ministers. The guardians of kingship well knew the demoralising potential of the challenges facing a person elevated to extraordinary rank. They could use their moral suasion to keep the sovereign within the bounds dictated by tradition, but at times they effectively disempowered him while pursuing their own interests behind the smokescreen of royal omnipotence.

To these persistent tensions another complication needs to be added. The example of ancestors and their great deeds exerted a powerful influence that did not necessarily match the moral categories of the learned clerical or literary advisors of the king. In the dialogue on noble lineage and the virtues of the ideal courtier, Castiglione puts an interesting metaphor in the mouth of one of his discussants, Ludovico di Canossa:

> for noble birth is like a bright lamp that manifests and makes visible good and evil deeds, and kindles and stimulates to virtue both by fear of shame and by hope of praise. And since this splendour of nobility does not illumine the deeds of the humbly born, they lack that stimulus and fear of shame, nor do they feel any obligation to advance beyond what their predecessors have done; while to the nobly born it seems a reproach not to reach at least the goal set them by their ancestors.[110]

The legacy of forebears could include examples of wisdom or justice – as in the case of Saint Louis under the oak or the legendary Yao and Shun emperors. However, great military campaigns, impressive monumental buildings, and hunting parties or lavish entertainments were likely to figure as examples for a ruler trying to establish himself in the footsteps of his predecessors – the very matters that in the eyes of Chinese literati were likely to overburden the people and estrange the heavens.

Which catalogue of virtues did kings need to embrace? Which group of relatives, advisors, and attendants should they listen to? They were taught to respect a set of ideals that was in itself contradictory and almost impossible to fulfil in its entirety. The inconsistent accumulation of moral demands, dynastic examples to follow, and daily challenges to cope with could never be moulded into a coherent and feasible model of rulership, because every single ruler displayed different strengths and weaknesses. No consistent and balanced set of precepts could be used effectively for the variety of characters on the throne. Moral pressure did not always suffice to keep in check particularly strong-minded or viciously tempered rulers; the examples of predecessors' great deeds could not always convince lethargic and insecure persons to adopt more active roles. Kingship itself, notwithstanding the overall support it aroused,

[110] Baldassar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (*1528*), trans. Leonard Eckstein Opdyke (New York, 1903), 22.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

was always associated with the awkward problem of the bad king. The ideals of kingship not only reflected the desire to prevent the rise of bad rulers, but also provided an instrument to contain them or at least limit the damage they could bring about. How did kings respond to the model imposed on them? What did it mean for these persons of flesh and blood to be fitted into this awkwardly elevated position? How did they cope with the burden on their shoulders during the various stages of their lives?

Life cycles

The day-to-day political actions of dynastic rulers cannot be traced here. It is certain that they never fitted the inconsistent ideals entirely and more often strayed far from them. Examining the performance of dynastic rulers amidst their advisors and servants, it is important to note that they sometimes rose to power as children and ended their lives on the throne as disabled elderly persons. In contemporary politics, heredity in office is the exception and only adults are elected or nominated to office. Elderly leaders usually retire into the margins of political life before the erosion of their faculties wreaks havoc. In one-party systems or in dictatorships where small elites predominate, leaders can monopolise office and retain it longer than in democracies. The gerontocracy ruling the Soviet Union in its pre-reform stages is an example of this tendency. Only very rarely, however, do we find people holding supreme office from their early youth to their death. In fixed systems of dynastic succession, or when only one successor was available, toddlers could be installed as kings, holding their elevated position while depending on parents, regents, and educators.[111] For these child-kings, reigning could last a lifetime: they experienced all the familiar stages from early youth to old age on the throne. The upheaval created by adolescents emancipating themselves from their environment could have considerable consequences for the realm in the case of dynastic rulers. The same holds true for the weakening of elderly kings – these phases of change could bring violence and contestation, as well as opportunities for ambitious figures operating in the proximity of the ruler.

Louis XIV of France (1638–1643–1715) and the Qing Kangxi emperor (1654–1661–1722) both started their rule as youngsters upon the early deaths of their fathers (see Plate 4). After reaching majority in 1651 and undergoing his ritual consecration and coronation in 1654, young Louis

[111] Competitive or open systems of succession changed this situation, creating a group of possible successors who were all preparing in practice for their bid for power upon – or sometimes before – the death of the ruler.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

still remained in the background.[112] Only in 1661, after the death of his mentor and first minister, Mazarin, did Louis, aged twenty-two, choose to 'govern his peoples himself'. His Chinese contemporary the Kangxi emperor took less time. Fathering his first son in 1667 at age fourteen, he pushed aside the regency council in 1669 and personally assumed power with the support of his grandmother the empress dowager Xiaozhuang and other adherents. After these early years, the two rulers enjoyed three decades of relatively great personal power, the phase most commonly remembered. In the last two decades of their long reigns, however, these archetypally strong rulers experienced all sorts of setbacks, from the deaths of trusted advisors or relatives and the looming problems of succession to their own accumulating physical problems. They died saddened and with grave doubts about their own power.

While the reigns of Louis XIV and the Kangxi emperor were exceptional in length, numerous other rulers spent a fair share of their lives on the throne. They followed similar trajectories, starting out as boy-kings and ending as tormented old men. Safavid Shah Tahmasp (1514–1524–1576) ascended to power as a ten-year-old boy, gradually established himself as an astute ruler, but fell seriously ill and saw his authority evaporate a few years before this death. The Ming Wanli emperor (1563–1572–1620), a nine-year-old boy when his father died, spent his first decade on the throne under the tutelage of his grand secretary Zhang Juzheng and his mother empress dowager Li. Emancipating himself from these influences, he sought to take power in his own hands, but disillusionment with his officials made him gradually withdraw into the palace during the last three decades of his life.[113]

Mature women were called upon to bridge the gap in male succession by acting as regents, often for their own minor sons. Mothers throughout the globe were close to power when their young sons ascended to the throne. Where younger daughters or sisters ruled as sovereign queens or empresses in the absence of an acceptable male successor, they could hold power for many years. For these women rulers, the life cycle entailed a

[112] French kings reached majority at fourteen: see Pierre Dupuy, *Traité de la majorité de nos rois et des regences du royaume* (Paris, 1655).

[113] The gradual withdrawal of the Wanli emperor is the key theme in Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (Yale, CT, 1981); see also Ebrey, 'Remonstrating against royal extravagance'. On the religious patronage of Wanli as a form of competition with his mother, see Guoshuai Qin, 'In search of divine support: imperial inheritance, political power and Quanzhen Taoism at the court of the Wanli emperor, r. 1573–1620', a paper kindly given to me by the author. James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle, WA, 1996), 603–4, cites a Korean mission to the Chinese court stressing the accessibility of the young emperor and the relatively close contacts between him and the officials – all contrasted positively with the withdrawal of the Korean kings.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

special complication: childbirth. Maria Theresa (1717–1740–1780), succeeding to her father the 'last Habsburg' emperor Charles VI in 1740, was immediately subjected to grave military and political challenges. During these years she was either pregnant or recovering from childbirth: between 1737 and 1756 she gave birth to sixteen children.[114] Conversely, Elizabeth I of England (1533–1558–1603), shouldering an equally demanding burden, never married and hence never bore children, leaving her realm to James VI of Scotland. Mary of Hungary remained childless during her short tenure as queen (1521–7), nor did she remarry after the death of her husband on the battlefield in 1526. Her widowed state and childlessness made her particularly suitable to act as a viceroy for her brother, Emperor Charles V. The sixteenth-century patriarchal discourse asserting the inappropriateness of female sovereign power was belied in practice by the reigns of several successful queens. However, the question of marriage and childbirth made the exercise of power far more challenging for women than for men.[115]

In addition to the princes who spent almost a lifetime on the throne, numerous others started their reigns as children under the tutelage of their mothers and regents. These toddlers safeguarded dynastic continuity while learning the basic skills of life. Before Wanli, several Ming emperors had started reigning as minors.[116] Succeeding his father as emperor of the Manchu Qing dynasty in 1643, the Shunzhi emperor (1638–1643/4–1661) became the first Qing emperor of conquered China at age six in 1644.[117] Six years later, at age twelve, he started his personal rule following the death of the most important regent Dorgon in December 1650. After the accession of Shunzhi's minor son Kangxi, for more than a century only adults ascended the dragon throne. Several Qing ruling minors resurfaced in the second half of the nineteenth century, under the tutelage of the formidable dowager empress Cixi (1835–1908). The 'last emperor' Pu Yi (1906–1908–1912*) ascended to the throne as a two-year-old toddler; his reign soon ended in revolution.[118] The paragon of Mughal rulership, Akbar (1542–1556–1605) became

[114] See the relevant dates and children listed in e.g. Brigitte Hamann (ed.), *Die Habsburger: ein biographisches Lexikon* (Vienna, 1988), 341.

[115] Judith M. Richards, '"To promote a woman to beare rule": talking of queens in mid-Tudor England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28/1 (1997), 101–21.

[116] The Zhengtong (seven), Zhengde (thirteen), Jiajing (thirteen) emperors, followed in the seventeenth century by the two somewhat older Tianqi (fifteen) and Chongzhen (sixteen) emperors.

[117] Though he had already succeeded his father Hong Taiji as Manchu Qing emperor in 1643.

[118] Bernardo Bertolucci's movie *The Last Emperor* (1987) evokes some of the bewildering experiences of many previous child-rulers.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

shahanshah on the verge of adolescence. Several Ottoman sultans ascended to their supreme dignity before reaching maturity: Mehmed II (1432–1451–1481) ruled as a youngster when his Father Murad II stepped back from power between 1444 and 1446, before he assumed lasting control in 1451 (Plate 5). In the seventeenth century a series of young sultans started ruling under the guardianship of their mothers: Ahmed I (1590–1603–1617) and Osman II (1604–1618–1622) at thirteen, Murad IV (1612–1623–1640) at eleven, and Mehmed IV (1642–1648–1687) at six.[119] Notable European cases of youngsters on the throne include Edward VI (1537–1547–1553), James VI of Scotland (1566–1567–1625), and Charles II of Spain (1661–1665–1700). Edward reigned from his ninth to his fifteenth year under a regency, dying before reaching his majority. The 'cradle king' James, who ascended to the English throne in 1603 as James I, started his Scottish reign barely more than a year after his birth upon the forced abdication of his mother Mary Queen of Scots.[120] Charles II of Spain, the only son of Philip IV (1605–1621–1665), was only three years old when his father died. His physical and mental constitution was weak, and chances seemed slight that he would father any children. His death, awaited from the very beginning of his reign, caused a devastating succession war, ending Habsburg rule in Spain. Several French kings from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century ruled as minors – even if we accept as yardstick their formal majority at age fourteen: Charles IX (1550–1560–1574), Louis XIII (1601–1610–1643), Louis XIV, and Louis XV (1710–1715–1774).

This random selection shows that children on the throne were a regular occurrence. How were they trained for the tasks ahead? How did they relate to their teachers, who were subjects and masters at the same time? Did their parents play a marked role in educating them? Which responsibilities did they shoulder while young? In addition to child-kings put on the throne on account of the untimely deaths of their fathers, we find heirs-apparent awaiting succession and a wider group of princes eligible for the throne. For each of these groups, education could take a different shape. Proximity to succession created hierarchical differences among princes. Competitive patterns of succession, such as those practised by the Ottomans and the Mughals until respectively the early decades of the seventeenth and of the eighteenth century, made it likely to send out princes at an early age with

[119] Mehmed IV's rule ended by abdication rather than by his death, which occurred in 1693. On Ahmed I and Osman II, their mothers, and the concept of regency in the Ottoman context, see Baki Tezcan, 'The question of regency in Ottoman dynasty: the case of the early reign of Ahmed I', *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 25 (2008), 185–98, and the same author's 'The debut of Kösem Sultan's political career', *Turcica*, 40 (2008), 347–59.

[120] Alan Stewart, *The Cradle King: A Life of James VI & I* (London, 2003).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

their mothers and tutors, allowing them to build up their households and acquire experience. Training heirs-apparent presented a dilemma: preparing them for high office and power could make them restive and scheming, whereas cultivating submission hardly prepared them for sovereign leadership.[121] The certainty or likelihood of future rule affected the attitudes of educators and the young princes themselves. Children imbued with their supreme dignity could prove to be notoriously intractable, whether as heirs-apparent or as minor rulers. In China, Confucian tradition underlined the deference of pupils vis-à-vis their teachers – Qianlong expected his sons, all in principle eligible for the throne, to adopt a subdued and respectful position, facing northwards towards the teacher who occupied the position of authority.[122] The officially appointed lecturers, always required to maintain a respectful attitude, could expect immunity against their powerful pupils' retaliations. Haughtily rebuking a youthful prince, however, would be asking for trouble – immediately or in the future.[123]

Some practices will have been similar for most child rulers, heirs-apparent, and princes qualifying for succession. The first phase of rearing was in the hands of women: sometimes notably including the mother herself supported by foster-mothers and wet-nurses, sometimes largely in the hands of these women.[124] In this phase, male physicians and tutors played a role, but women were in the forefront at least during the first four years of the lives of princes. Princesses were not generally eligible for the throne, but their education at court was seen as a vital matter.[125] It prepared them for multiple other tasks in the dynastic universe: educating their children, providing an example of cultural accomplishment and piety at court, leading their dynastic household, and functioning as a *trait d'union* between dynastic interests.[126] Princesses in Europe and elsewhere cemented dynastic alliances, either with other sovereign dynasties or with elite groupings. Hence the training of princesses in the separate female households present at most European courts was important for dynastic policies. The harem, in addition to its more familiar role in dynastic reproduction,

[121] See e.g. François Bluche, 'Dauphin', in François Bluche (ed.), *Dictionnaire du grand siècle* (Paris, 1990), 448.
[122] Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-Lung Reign* (Cambridge, MA, 1971).
[123] Huang, *Year of No Significance*, 44; Qin, 'In search of divine support', 4.
[124] Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 117, on Manchu.
[125] See above, note 5 in the Introduction, and the extended discussion of women and power in the first part of Chapter 2 below.
[126] On 'horizontal' affinal connections and women, see Michaela Hohkamp, 'Transdynasticism at the dawn of the modern era: kinship dynamics among ruling families', in Christopher H. Johnson et al. (eds.), *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences since the Middle Ages*, (New York and Oxford, 2011), 93–106.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

performed a similar function in educating female servants and potential consorts under the supervision of the incumbent ruler's mother.

In the Ottoman, Mughal, and Safavid empires, princes and princesses alike would spend their first years in the harem. For the princes, circumcision indicated the first step towards majority, yet it could be performed any time between the seventh day following birth and the fifteenth year.[127] Ottoman princes' circumcisions took place at very different ages: in 1675 Mehmed IV celebrated the circumcisions of his sons, the eleven-year-old Mustafa and the two-year-old toddler Ahmed. Circumcised Ottoman princes could expect to be sent out with their mother and their male tutor (*lala*) to governments in Anatolia – after the troubled interregnum in the early fifteenth century and subsequent rebellions by princes, they were no longer sent to Rumelia, the European border region.[128] While the mother was the most loyal supporter of her son, the *lala* as the ruling sultan's nominee represented a check on the ambitions of the young prince. There was no fixed age for the crucial moment of sending the princes with their mother to build up their own household as provincial governors. At one extreme we find the future Mehmed II who was sent as governor to Amasya in 1437 at five years and even before his circumcision; at the other extreme stands Mehmed III whose circumcision had been celebrated quite late in his fifteenth year, while he obtained his governorship of Manisa only towards the end of 1584 at the age of eighteen.[129] Mehmed III proved to be the last Ottoman prince to be sent out as a governor. Seventeenth-century Ottoman princes were kept in seclusion in a separate compound in the Topkapı harem, where their education necessarily became less attuned to the practices of warfare and government, reflecting and partially explaining a more withdrawn and passive role of ruling sultans.[130] Under the rule of Abbas I (1571–1588–1629; Plate 17), the Safavids, too, shifted from sending out their princes to educating them in seclusion and without formal responsibilities.[131]

Mughal princes (Plate 16) were most often circumcised at four or five years, an important event followed shortly by another great moment: the

[127] Murphey, *Ottoman Sovereignty*, 175.
[128] Metin Kunt, 'A prince goes forth (perchance to return)', in Karl Barbir and Baki Tezcan (eds.), *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz* (Madison, WI, 2007), 63–71.
[129] Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Alan Masters (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 2009), 364–5, 368.
[130] More on these changes in Chapter 2 below. On the princes in the harem, see N.M. Penzer, *The Harem: An Account of the Institution as it Existed in the Palace of the Turkish Sultans, with a History of the Grand Seraglio from its Foundation to the Present Time* (Philadelphia, PA, 1936), 24.
[131] Sussan Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran* (London, 2004).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

opening of their education.[132] Like Ottoman princes, they were accompanied by their mother and a male supervisor (*ataliq*). The circumcision and the start of education together made clear that the prince was now visible in political terms. Henceforth, princes could be expected to shoulder minor responsibilities. Once their education began, young princes gradually expanded their households, obtained formal rank, and governed increasingly important places, gradually distancing themselves from their early years at the court of their father or grandfather. As in the case of the Ottoman *lala*, the *ataliq* represented the Mughal emperor in the vicinity of the prince: he was likely to support the central court against the ambitions of his young master, whereas the mother usually was her son's devoted partisan. In addition to the mother, the *ataliq*, and the teachers, an interesting category of 'artificial kin' can be found around these princes. Princes shared their wet-nurses' milk with a group of boys their age (*kokas*). These foster-brothers often became their buddies, sharing their first military experiences and serving as confidants later in life. Even if no 'milk kinship' connected princes to other young boys, their youth companions were likely to form a loyal group of supporters later on. They formed the core of the households required for the princes' political-military careers.[133] Most Mughal rulers were not only literate but well-versed in learning and poetry. Akbar seems to have been an exception. He was circumcised at three and was educated from his fifth year onwards, yet to the dismay of his father Humayun the boy still could not read after five years of tutoring. Clearly, illiteracy did not prevent Akbar from being an effective ruler.[134]

When the Ming dynasty came to power, it could draw on a rich legacy of institutions and offices related to the education of the heir-apparent.[135] It is not quite clear which of these offices still functioned in practice: some of the resounding names may have turned into titles conferring rank without requiring tasks in the education of the prince. The early years of most emperors and princes remain shrouded. The Wanli emperor, during an audience in 1590, reminisced about his own upbringing, telling his grand secretaries that he could read at four. The high officials, who wanted Wanli to nominate an heir-apparent, reminded the emperor that he had been appointed heir in his eighth year, the starting point of his

[132] Murphey, *Ottoman Sovereignty*, 175; Ágoston and Masters (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, 370; Munis D. Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504–1719* (Cambridge, 2012), 77.
[133] Faruqui, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 68–77.
[134] Vincent A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul 1542–1605* (Oxford, 1917), 22–3.
[135] See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (repr. Beijing, 2008), nos. 6239, 6244, 6249, 6251, 6256, 7102, 7538, and 7542 relating to the heir-apparent, and no. 7647 to the princes' school.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

education. His eldest son was now approaching the same age and yet had not started any formal training: there should be no further delay. Wanli, who had been postponing this crucial decision because he favoured his third son, responded evasively that eunuchs were already teaching his eldest son to read.[136] Although six appears to have been the accepted age for the onset of formal schooling, practices were far more flexible and likely to vary according to political and personal priorities.[137] Wanli's statements underline the role of the eunuchs as domestic teachers of young princes. As soon as formal teaching began, their literati counterparts in the outer court would take charge of the curriculum. Wanli's tutor and chief advisor, Zhang Juzheng, appointed five lecturers, two calligraphers, and one 'academician attendant' for the education of the emperor during his ninth year. Every morning, the young emperor spent three separate periods learning Confucian classics, calligraphy, and history. In the interval between these classes, his eunuchs would bring memorials, an opportunity for Wanli to wield the vermilion brush signifying imperial assent. At noon the emperor was free, although he was expected to practise handwriting and memorise texts. Zhang Juzheng viewed young Wanli's passion for calligraphy with suspicion. Fearing calligraphy would turn into an empty distraction, he gradually purged it from his imperial pupil's curriculum.[138]

Wanli had undergone the rite of 'capping', doing the hair in a bun and wearing a cap signalling the end of boyhood, at the relatively young age of nine.[139] This practice made possible the entry of princes on the public stage, as did circumcision in the Islamic world. It usually took place later than the Muslim circumcision, after the twelfth or fifteenth year. Capping was followed by a second important step, with the prince 'leaving the pavilion to receive instruction' – the opening of a second formal stage of instruction.[140] Education would continue at least until marriage. For princes it would end with their enfeoffment and departure from the palace, which could be expected towards the end of their teens or in their early twenties. For the heir-apparent, education ideally continued indefinitely, even after his accession to the throne.

[136] Huang, *Year of no Significance*, Appendix A, 227–9.
[137] Ibid., 43; Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 117–18, on age of princes and the *Shangshufang* (palace school).
[138] Huang, *Year of no Significance*, 9–12.
[139] Ibid., 3. On capping and ages, see Kia-Li, *Livre des rites domestiques chinois*, ed. Charles de Harlez (Paris, 1889), 46, suggesting that the 'prise du bonnet viril' should take place between 15 and 20, an assessment that can also be found in Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 261 and note 60.
[140] Jérôme Kerlouégan helped me with the terminology, ages, and habits related to education, and provided the phrase given here.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Education was based first and foremost on the Confucian classics, with the lecturers pointing to historical examples of good and bad rulership. Wanli's tutor Zhang Juzheng himself compiled a book containing lessons from the past, warning his pupil in stern tones: 'The First Emperor exhausted the people's strength to build palaces and lavishly adorn them for his own pleasure. But the hearts of the people turned away from him and they rebelled, and [his palaces] were in the end reduced to ashes by [the rebel general] Xiang Yu. Take warning!'[141] The tone as well as the schedule of teaching seems to have continued unchanged until the emperor's marriage at sixteen in 1578, which offered partial escape from the tutelage of Zhang Juzheng and the dowager empress Li. His education continued in principle throughout his reign in the form of public study lectures, a ceremonialised practice which the emperor skipped in his last decades. The emperor's relationship with his high officials cannot be equated to the connection between princes and their teachers: the emperor enjoyed an unassailable pre-eminence. Yet high-minded or ambitious officials could submit memorials in which they voiced didactic remarks and criticisms in polite language. In any case they would make sure the Confucian legacy would be voiced time and time again. A particularly straightforward memorial, submitted to the Jiajing emperor (1507–1521–1567) following a violent crackdown on remonstrating officials, noted: 'I am especially eager that Your Majesty takes your ancestors as model, pays attention to learning, promotes the worthy and accepts criticism, distinguishes right and wrong, recognises loyalty and sycophancy, and thus nurtures the blessings of peace.'[142] The audacity of this particular official was rewarded: the emperor granted him the retirement he had asked for. The roles of ambitious sycophant and honest critical advisor had become literary clichés at most courts, yet acting as the proverbial good advisor often had dire consequences in practice.

Emperors' sons in the Qing dynasty on the whole must have followed roughly the same patterns. They usually lived with their birth mother until their sixth year, while wet-nurses, nurses, and personal servants organised daily life. The timing of the move to the world of male tutors and companions for formal schooling long remained somewhat haphazard. Kangxi received formal lessons from Confucian lecturers only from his sixteenth year; he initiated the education of his son and heir-apparent only at the boy's twelfth year. The Qianlong emperor learned the basics of

[141] Cited in Ebrey, 'Remonstrating against royal extravagance', 130.
[142] Carney T. Fisher, *The Chosen One: Succession and Adoption in the Court of Ming Shizong* (Sydney and London, 1990), 95.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reading at five while a more extended curriculum started at eight.[143] During the first years in the domestic setting, relatives played a key role. At several points in his long life, Kangxi recalled the all-important place of his grandmother the dowager empress Xiaozhuang: 'Since I was a toddler just learning to speak, I received my grandmother's kind discipline: in eating, walking, and in speaking she encouraged me to behave in the proper manner ... I credit her with the accomplishments of my entire career.'[144] Even before the early deaths of Kangxi's parents, his grandmother and her household servants occupied an important place in his life.[145] Kangxi took an active part in the education of his sons at a later stage, and his successor Yongzheng (1678–1722–1735), too, seems to have presided over the teaching of his sons with some frequency.

Some sources indicate the presence of a palace school in the inner court of the Forbidden City under the Kangxi emperor. The head of the heir-apparent's tutors, Tang Bin, pointed out the emperor's keen interest in the education of his sons:

> At dawn, soon after the toll of the imperial clock, His Majesty arrived at the side chamber [of the Qianqing palace], where he called in his children one by one to recite the Classics they had just learned. He personally expounded on the Classics to his children before he went out to hold the morning audience with his ministers.[146]

A decade later, the French Jesuit Joachim Bouvet, visiting Beijing, likewise described how the princes, including the crown prince, could be seen daily attending the school for princes in a location close to the emperor, 'where they spend the entire day, partly to study and partly to engage in the exercises proper to their rank. His Majesty frequently visits them during their lessons.'[147] Bouvet was surprised to notice that the heir-apparent, although he was by now twenty-three years old, still attended these classes, and had not received his own palace and household. This, Bouvet suggested, was customary for princes at sixteen or seventeen.[148]

[143] Mark C. Elliott, *Qianlong: Son of Heaven, Man of the World* (New York and London, 2009), 4; Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, 115–21, 150–2.

[144] Silas H.L. Wu, *Passage to Power: K'ang-Hsi and his Heir Apparent, 1661–1722* (Cambridge, 1979), 17, and see a similar quotation at 51; see also Joachim Bouvet, *Histoire de l'empereur de la Chine, présentée au roy* (The Hague, 1699), 133–4. Fresco Samsin brought to my attention Kangxi's letters to his grandmother, edited in Giovanni Stary, 'A preliminary note on some Manchu letters of the Kang-hsi emperor to his grandmother', in Giovanni Stary (ed.), *Proceedings of the 38th Permanent International Conference (PIAC)* (Wiesbaden, 1996), 365–76, in particular the letter expressing his longing and nostalgia at 369.

[145] Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 117–18. [146] Wu, *Passage to Power*, 47.

[147] Bouvet, *Histoire de l'empereur de la Chine*, 142.

[148] Ibid., 141. The author could have connected this to the grand dauphin in France, who was no longer entitled to his own household, a practice developing after the two kings

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Early in Yongzheng's reign the school for princes (*Shangshufang*) in the Qianqing palace was certainly in existence. At that point, the practice of openly appointing an heir-apparent had been discontinued, so all the emperor's sons were nominally in an equal position. Princes worked hard and long at their school, with classes from five in the morning to four in the afternoon. As Qing princes were no longer as a rule enfeoffed and sent out but stayed in the proximity of the Forbidden City, their education at court appears to have continued into their adult lives. The Qianlong emperor obtained his title as prince of Bao at twenty-two in 1733, and only in the last two years of his father's reign did he acquire some practical experience. However, he had represented the emperor in a variety of ritual and social roles in the preceding years, presiding over sacrifices and visiting trusted servants of the dynasty.[149] Qianlong later stipulated that even princes who were performing important ritual and political tasks should report to school directly after their missions had been accomplished. The French Jesuit Michel Benoit observed in 1774 that 'an advanced age and employment' did not exempt the emperor's sons and grandsons from attending school, noticing several men in their thirties among the pupils.[150] Benoit was surprised to see the ageing emperor's active involvement in the education of the princes, underlining that Qianlong was adamant about the princes maintaining a respectful attitude vis-à-vis their teachers. In addition to the Confucian classics, the Qing curriculum included Manchu and martial practice, notably archery.[151]

European practice as a rule entrusted royal children during their *infantia*, the phase up to their sixth or seventh year, primarily to women. Queens and princesses were not always actively mothering; in any case a high-placed noble female supervisor was present at most courts, assisted by wet-nurses and female servants. In France basic formal education for princes and princesses started at age four, most often in the hands of male teachers. Throughout Europe, princes passing from *infantia* to *pueritia* at

who started ruling as minors (and hence were served by a full court), Louis XIII and Louis XIV.

[149] Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, 104–7; Elliott, *Qianlong*, 5–12. On ritual tasks of princes, see Nadia Maria El Cheikh, 'To be a prince in the fourth/tenth-century Abbasid court', in Duindam et al. (eds.), *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2011), 199–216, at 214.

[150] Michel Benoit in Louis-Aimé Martin (ed.), *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses concernant l'Asie, l'Afrique et l'Amérique, avec quelques relations nouvelles des missions, et des notes géographiques et historiques*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1843), IV, 216.

[151] Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes,* 115–21, 150–2; Rawski, *Last Emperors,* 118; see also Hyegyong, *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea*, ed. JaHyun Kim Haboush (New York, 1996), 251, on Prince Sado and the early stages of his life.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

seven were ceremonially brought from the female into the male domain. They now moved to a protracted formal phase in their education, crossing from *pueritia* which ended at thirteen or fourteen into *adolescentia*. Teaching continued until their eighteenth or twentieth year, in practice ending only with their marriage or once they obtained an active political role.[152] On 1 May 1758, a French courtier reports the ceremonial transfer of the eldest grandson of Louis XV, the duke of Burgundy. The young prince was stripped naked to be examined by physicians before being presented by his *gouvernante* to the king, and by the king to his *gouverneur* the Duke of Vauguyon. The seven-year-old boy was then given an apartment and served a formal meal, with his newly appointed governor waiting upon him.[153] Between seven and thirteen years, princes were trained in a variety of disciplines and practices, by a series of specialised male tutors. In France a governor and a preceptor, each served by several substitutes, were responsible for the formation of princes. The governor, always a high nobleman and a soldier-courtier, permanently accompanied the prince from his seventh year to his maturity, representing the king and offering protection. Consequently, governors often held high court office when their pupil ascended the throne. They shared responsibility for the formation of the prince's character and attitude with the preceptor, usually a cleric, who took charge of the intellectual and moral formation of the prince.[154] This division of responsibilities between a high nobleman and a learned cleric or scholar, both served by substitutes and specialised teachers, was common in the education of princes throughout Europe.[155] The role of parents, however, varied immensely depending on the personalities and contingencies involved.

The French case suggests that, following the thirteenth year, more hours were spent studying. Moreover, from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century the number of hours princes studied rose from four or five to seven hours – a practice still not matching the ambitious Qing schedule. The curriculum notably included moral lessons. In addition to religious teachings, the dos and don'ts of monarchical governance were didactically demonstrated through the examples of historical rulers. Images, cards, and games were used to make knowledge more accessible; corporal punishment, not uncommon in the seventeenth century, gradually

[152] Mormiche, *Devenir prince*.
[153] Charles Philippe d'Albert, duc de Luynes, *Mémoires du duc de Luynes sur la cour de Louis XV (1735–1758)*, ed. L. Dussieux and E. Soulié, 17 vols. (Paris, 1860–5), XVI, 432 (1758).
[154] Mormiche, *Devenir prince*, 16; see the education of Charles V detailed in Anna Margarete Schlegelmilch, *Die Jugendjahre Karls V: Lebenswelt und Erziehung des burgundischen Prinzen* (Cologne, 2011).
[155] Schlegelmilch, *Die Jugendjahre Karls V.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

disappeared in the eighteenth century. Latin, rhetoric, modern languages, history, and heraldry were complemented by geography, mathematics, and techniques of fortification and warfare. Physical and martial training, including horsemanship, was necessary for princes. Their fathers and mentors gradually involved them in the practical business of council meetings and military campaigns.[156]

An important aspect of their education, moreover, was the inculcation of the bearing and manners befitting a good prince. The notes of physicians and tutors shed light on the obstacles young princes encountered in learning their roles. Even before the death of his father Henry IV, the heir-apparent (*dauphin*) Louis was expected to take part in the rituals of kingship. Upon being asked to perform the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday in his father's stead, the six-year-old dauphin voiced, to his physician Jean Héroard, his aversion, telling him the poor had 'stinking feet'. In the end he could be persuaded to wash the feet only of girls, subverting the common gender arrangement of this ceremony, where the queen washed women's feet, the king men's feet. In 1619, after the regency of his mother and approaching full maturity at the age of nineteen, King Louis XIII expressed his doubts about performing an equally solemn and important rite, the royal touch. Could he be expected to touch his people during an outbreak of the plague? He was a person of flesh and blood, not a 'king of cardboard'.[157] Less dangerous experiences could still be challenging for youngsters. Young Louis XIV was a timid boy reluctant to engage in the social activities dictated by his function, from public dining to public ceremonies or speeches. In 1648, the nine-year-old king was expected to address the dignitaries in the Parlement of Paris; forgetting the text of his carefully prepared speech for the occasion, the boy burst out crying.[158]

Children were expected to perform their sovereign power in different contexts. Several prints depict Louis XV receiving ambassadors, one of them showing the rather tall Dutch diplomat Cornelis Hop towering over the boy king (Plate 6). The Ottoman ambassador Mehmed Efendi, whose visit in 1720–1 represented a major reorientation of Ottoman policies towards Europe, was charmed by the young king. During a first audience, however, the splendidly dressed eleven-year-old boy proved to be too timid to answer the ambassador's compliment. Later, when

[156] Mormiche, *Devenir prince.*

[157] Jean Héroard, *Journal de Jean Héroard sur l'enfance et la jeunesse de Louis XIII (1601–1628)*, ed. E. Soulié and E. de Barthélemy, 2 vols. (Paris, 1868), I, 255–7 (12 April 1607); II, 237 (17 October 1619).

[158] Orest A. Ranum, *The Fronde: A French Revolution, 1648–1652* (New York and London, 1993), 91.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the king's governor the duke of Villeroy invited Mehmed Efendi to a banquet, the ambassador had ample time to see the king in a less formal setting. Waiting for the meal to be served, Louis XV with his boy companions appreciatively examined the ambassador's exotic dress. Villeroy appeared eager to demonstrate the resourcefulness of his pupil, asking him to perform a sequence of stately and elegant movements. Mehmed Efendi, in the meantime, admired the king's appearance and attitude, patting his head while chatting with the governor.[159]

Several kings wrote long letters or tracts to prepare their sons for government. Louis XIV's memoirs, co-authored by several advisors, were explicitly intended for the education of the *dauphin* and were used for this purpose throughout the eighteenth century. German princes wrote lengthy 'political testaments' combining moral admonitions with practical instructions.[160] These texts were more practical than princely mirrors, yet most rulers presented moral standards they themselves had not been able to live up to – a common pattern in education. Louis XIV advised his son not to mix matters of the heart with those of the state while he himself was showering his mistress Madame de Montespan as well as her protégés with privileges.[161] Others, too, reiterated the admonitions of their tutors and confessors rather than their personal experiences. Charles V, in a highly personal instruction including numerous practical tips in an overall framework of devotion, advised his son Philip to study diligently, warning him against indulging in tournaments, hunting parties, and 'worse things' – a veiled reference to sex. Interestingly, he added that attendants around an inexperienced ruler could use such diversions to strengthen their own position – a warning that could easily have come from any Chinese minister.[162]

The three decades of maturity from twenty to fifty, labelled *iuventus* and *virilitas* in the European tradition, formed the period when kings and emperors stood the best chance of taking matters into their own hands. After the phase of education and initiation into their roles as future rulers, a critical moment arrived when young adults assumed personal power. This was the time to make their way, to show

[159] Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed, *Le Paradis des infidels: relation de Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed effendi, ambassadeur ottoman en France sous la Régence*, ed. Gilles Veinstein, trans. Julien Claude Galland (Paris, 1981), 98, 111–12.

[160] Duchhardt (ed.), *Politische Testamente*; Küntzel and Hass (eds.), *Politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern.*

[161] See Louis' sensible warnings in Louis XIV, *Mémoires de Louis XIV pour l'instruction du dauphin*, ed. Charles Dreyss, 2 vols. (Paris, 1860), II, 313–16.

[162] Charles V, *Das Vermächtnis Kaiser Karls V: die politischen Testamente*, ed. Armin Kohnle (Darmstadt, 2005), 48 (in the 1543 instruction). On Charles' education, see Schlegelmilch, *Die Jugendjahre Karls V.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

themselves to their peoples, to obtain glory on the battlefield, to develop their skills as supreme governors, and to demonstrate their ritual and cultural propriety – according to the dominant ideals of rulership. In Mughal as well as Ottoman history, enthronement was long the outcome of confrontation among the princes. Their violent clash most likely would bring to power a strong figure who had already assembled a circle of supporters. This did not necessarily mean that the new prince would take power into his own hands. More often than not, the elevation to the throne of a new scion started a protracted reconfiguration of power relations: it remained to be seen whether the new prince would actually rule. The pace and outcome of this process depended on numerous factors, including the qualities and temperament of the ruler as well as the constellation of forces at court and the contingency of external challenges.

A portentous moment arrived with the death of a powerful mother or political mentor. Who would seize the reins of power: the ruler himself, or a favourite replacing the previous, trusted figure? Louis XIV remained compliant until Mazarin's death in 1661 but made his subsequent move to the heart of power conspicuously clear. His widely broadcast declaration of independence was underscored by legal proceedings against the most likely successor to Mazarin, the *surintendant des finances* Nicolas Fouquet.[163] Habsburg emperor Leopold I (1640–1658–1705), who unexpectedly came to the throne after the death of the emperor-elect Ferdinand IV (1633–54), had relied on the advice of his chief minister Johann Ferdinand Portia until the latter's death in 1665. Now, the emperor intended to follow the example of Louis XIV, planning to be his own first minister. This proved to be a difficult undertaking, he confided to his friend and ambassador in Spain. There was no disinterested person he could ask for advice or support: everybody was keen on finding out who would become the next favourite.[164] As soon as the emperor would seek to explain his predicament to a figure close to him, others would immediately interpret this as the onset of the new favourite's career. A similar changeover in Ming China, Zhang Juzheng's death in 1582, started a decade of increasing involvement of the Wanli emperor: 'the boy who had been a manipulated ruler had now awakened to vindicate himself'. The subsequent setbacks encountered by Wanli, 'too

[163] Marc Fumaroli, 'Nicolas Fouquet, the favourite manqué', in J.H. Elliott and L.W. B. Brockliss (eds.), *The World of the Favourite* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1999), 239–55.

[164] Leopold I, *Privatbriefe Kaiser Leopold I an den Grafen F.E. Pötting 1662–1673*, ed. A.F. Pribram and M. Landwehr von Pragenau, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1903–4), I, 104–7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

intelligent and sensitive to occupy the dragon seat', would lead to his frustration and withdrawal.[165]

Conversely, if death did not take away the figures presiding over the lives of adolescent princes, conflict became a distinct possibility. Louis XIII's reign started with his mother Marie de Médicis as regent, but their relationship soon turned sour. The king imposed an internal exile upon his mother in 1617, followed by a reconciliation in 1621 which proved to be temporary. Within a decade, the queen mother's renewed political activities triggered a second, now definitive, exile: Marie, staying in the southern Netherlands until 1638, finally died in Cologne in 1642 after a few more years of peregrination.[166] The young Kangxi, aided by his grandmother and other supporters, toppled the regents Oboi, Suksaha, Ebilun, and Sonin and took power into his own hands – only to find out, however, that he now needed to gradually break free from the Manchu grandees who had helped engineer his coup.[167]

Rulers could decide to rely on the services of favourites they themselves created, often youth companions or trusted attendants. Soon after his accession, Süleyman (1494–1520–1566) promoted his servant and companion Ibrahim Pasha to the rank of grand vizier, allowing his favourite to overstep the ranks of the *cursus honorum* and turning him into his *alter ego* with full powers. The grand vizier's career ended in downfall and execution without, apparently, damaging Süleyman's reputation.[168] His son and sole remaining successor, Selim II (1524–1566–1574; Plate 21),

[165] Huang, *Year of No Significance*, 67, 93. Huang concludes that Wanli's predicament was partly the necessary consequence of the ageing Ming apparatus, a conclusion contested in recent literature; see e.g. a stress on Wanli's, and more generally late Ming, efficacy in military policy in the work of Kenneth Swope.

[166] Toby Osborne, 'A queen mother in exile: Marie de Medicis in the Spanish Netherlands and England, 1631–41', in Philip Mansel and T. Riotte (eds.), *Monarchy and Exile: The Politics of Legitimacy from Marie de Medicis to Wilhelm II* (Basingstoke and New York, 2011), 17–43.

[167] Michael Chang, 'The recruitment of lower Yangzi (Jiangnan) literati to the Kangxi court, 1670s–1690s', paper presented at the conference 'Servants and administrators: from the court to the provinces', Leiden, 31 August – 2 September 2011.

[168] Zeynep Nevin Yelçe, 'The making of Sultan Süleyman: a study of process/es of image-making and reputation management', PhD thesis, Sabanci University (2009), on Ibrahim Pasha and Süleyman.There is a rich literature on the favourite in Europe: see Jean Bérenger, 'Pour une enquête européenne: le problème du ministériat au XVIIe siècle', *Annales ESC,* 29/1 (1974), 166–92; Elliott and Brockliss (eds.), *World of the Favourite*; Nicolas Le Roux, *La faveur du roi: mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois (vers 1547 – vers 1589)* (Paris, 2000); Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini (eds.), *Der Fall des Günstlings: Hofparteien in Europa vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert. 8. Symposium der Residenzenkommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Ostfildern, 2004); Michael Kaiser and Andreas Pečar (eds.), *Der zweite Mann im Staat: oberste Amtsträger und Favoriten im Umkreis der Reichsfürsten in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2003).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

retained in office his father's last grand vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. More than a decade later under Murad III (1546–1574–1595), the all-powerful grand vizier would be pushed aside, with power reverting to the sultan and his circle of inner court favourites. Didactic history in East and West included notorious instances of attendants, eunuchs, or female favourites unsettling proper hierarchies and procedures at court. Rulers usually advised their potential successors to rule with a mixed group of advisors rather than depending on a single dominant figure. This was the best option for all groups at court. The dominance of a single person or faction raised doubts about the ruler's powers and inevitably triggered conflict at court, with the outsiders using every opportunity to overthrow the favourite or the faction in power.

The nominally all-powerful and morally supreme position of the ruler could not ensure the compliance and active support of key groups at court – relatives, spouses and concubines, personal attendants, state dignitaries, religious leaders, guards, and military commanders. Some exceptional rulers, such as first Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang or Napoleon, both rising to power after a phase of immense turmoil, could personally and forcefully reconstruct this constellation of powers. More often, as Louis XIV admitted, their prime task was the careful choice of talented and devoted ministers. In a mixed group of advisors, the 'jealousy of one would serve to check the ambitions of the others', the king perceptively noted in his memoirs. The appointment of several competing ministers would secure loyal service.[169] The ruler, however, still faced the question of how he could retain control of his leading agents' activities. The simplest answer to this question was: endless toil.

The tough schedule of education in Qing China prepared the princes for a daunting task ahead: dealing with an unending pile of paperwork. The three 'high Qing' emperors, all combining talent with diligence, appear to have worked very hard to adequately perform their office. Rising at five in the morning, the Qianlong emperor would be ready for a long morning's work with his councillors at seven, continuing with paperwork until the early afternoon, followed by audiences and interviews with likely appointees.[170] Around three in the afternoon the emperor would dine before he could finally choose to devote the evening to one of his numerous artistic or scholarly pursuits, retiring at nine. His father, the Yongzheng emperor, was even keener to keep everything

[169] Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, ed. Dreyss, II, 267: 'La jalousie de l'un sert souvent de frein à l'ambition de l'autre', a remark referring to ministers but often misread to describe the power balances among courtiers enforced by the king.
[170] Elliott, *Qianlong*, 23–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

under control, notably that core activity of all rulers, nomination to high office:

When I was still a prince, I did not have contact with ministers of the Outer Court, and thus I knew very few of them. When I succeeded to the Throne and there were vacancies in metropolitan and provincial posts, how could I not appoint people? I have had to search widely and appoint people whom I never knew. After I have appointed them and in due course observed them, then if I find them unworthy I have no choice but to change them. Therefore, every time there is an opening from governor-general ... down to local magistrate, if I do not find the right men, I pore through the monthly records of the Board of War and the Board of Civil Office repeatedly. Often I go without sleep all night. I must get the right man before I can relax. This is my predicament as a monarch, which words cannot describe.[171]

The emperor's commitment is confirmed by the comments he noted during hundreds of interviews with candidates for high positions.[172]

Yongzheng's father, the Kangxi emperor, though more easy-going than his perfectionist son, matched his capacity for work. The emperor allegedly once demoted a prefect who had boasted that he could handle seven or eight hundred administrative materials in one day, stating:

I've been ruling for forty years, and only during the Wu San-kuei rebellion did I handle five hundred items of business in one day. Nor did I myself hold the brush and write the documents, and even so I could not get to bed until midnight. You may fool other people, but you can't fool me.[173]

Looking back on his life at the end of his reign, Kangxi underlined that his toil could never be compared to that of a hard-working administrator: only the emperor carried the full burden of responsibility without a chance of respite: 'for decades I have exhausted all my strength, day after day. How can this just be summed up in a two-word phrase like "hard work"?'[174] The combined pressure of work and responsibility, he continued, made it understandable that earlier emperors had sometimes escaped into 'drink and sex'.

While the Mughal and Ottoman empires were certainly governed by paperwork as well as by horsemanship and archery, it is not clear how much time and effort individual rulers devoted to reading and commenting on administrative texts or to collegial decision-making and interviews. Akbar could not read but stood at the beginning of a major administrative reform and appears to have had a powerful memory. His

[171] Guy, *Qing Governors*, 121–2; Madeleine Zelin, 'The Yung-Cheng reign', in Willard J. Peterson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. IX: *The Ch'ing Empire to 1800* (Cambridge, 2002), 183–229, at 195. Both cite this passage.

[172] Guy, *Qing Governors*, 122. [173] Spence, *Emperor of China*, 46. [174] Ibid., 146.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

successors must have been involved in the machinery of government by paper. Foreign agents were surprised by the endless letters and reports digested by high Mughal dignitaries.[175] Ottoman rulers could rely on the services of the grand vizier and his staff; they gradually withdrew from meetings with the council (*divan*) and communicated with the grand vizier through written reports (*telhis*) rather than in face-to-face consultation.[176] Apart from perfectionists disinclined to delegate their tasks, such as Philip II of Spain and Frederick II of Brandenburg-Prussia (1712–1740–1786), most European rulers seem lackadaisical in comparison with the three high Qing emperors. However, many among them experienced the same pressures. Their upbringing conveyed a sense of responsibility that made it difficult to evade the accumulation of administrative, ritual, and social tasks. Louis XIV straightforwardly addressed the issue in his memoirs: the prince can never adequately study all the documents in his ministers' portfolios. Therefore he should repeatedly and randomly make a detailed study of specific items to test his ministers' competence and loyalty. Performing this feat regularly and without a predictable pattern, he could retain control without losing himself in unending and detailed paperwork.[177] Still, the father stipulated to his son, an unremitting schedule of hard work was the *conditio sine qua non* of good kingship.

Emperor Leopold I excused himself to his confidant the Habsburg ambassador in Spain for his shortcomings as a correspondent: after five hours of concentrated paperwork, he found energy only to scribble a few hasty lines. Elsewhere he complained about the increasing workload: 'tasks accumulate day by day, but it is my obligation and profession, to which God has called me'.[178] The emperor looked forward to a stay at one of his hunting lodges, where opportunities for recreation would arise. Outdoor activity brought respite from social and administrative pressures. Leopold, who escaped from Vienna when the Ottoman army approached in 1683 and never performed any military feats, nevertheless was a passionate hunter. The Swedish diplomat Esaias Pufendorf saw him ferociously clubbing foxes in the Vienna Prater in the company of his

[175] See examples in Jos J.L. Gommans, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and Highroads to Empire 1500–1700* (London and New York, 2003), 94. On Mughal scribal elites, see Kumkum Chatterjee, 'Scribal elites in sultanate and Mughal Bengal', *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 47/4 (2010), 445–72.

[176] Murphey, *Ottoman Sovereignty*; Pal Fodor, 'Sultan, imperial council, grand vizier: changes in the Ottoman ruling elite and the formation of the grand vizieral telhis', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 47 (1994), 67–85.

[177] Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, ed. Cornette, 65.

[178] Leopold I, *Privatbriefe*, I, 118 (15 March 1665).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

court dwarfs, a scene he found awkwardly remote from true imperial dignity.[179]

For Leopold and many of his fellow rulers, hunting represented a reprieve from the drudgery of government. Hunting is ubiquitous in the history of dynasty as a recreation and as a show of martial capabilities.[180] However, from a recreation in a small circle of intimates, the hunt could turn into a high-profile social activity with a circle of spectators watching the proceedings – another test to be passed. All social activities tended to acquire an element of representation and constraint. European kings with their relatively outgoing and interactive styles frequently tried to escape the bustle of courtiers and spectators and seek more secluded places, only to find that access to such select occasions was soon coveted as a special privilege. Some of them seized the opportunity this offered for the manipulation of ranks and reputations; others simply deplored the loss of leisurely and comfortable moments. Among the bustle of courtiers and petitioners, most rulers quickly adopted a reticent attitude, leaving the speaking to others and answering only briefly and in general terms. Louis XIV strongly advised his son to listen rather than talk, and never to respond directly to requests. Saint-Simon, the chronicler of the French court, reports the king's usual laconic answer: 'I shall see' (*je verrai*).[181] Louis XIII, hindered by persistent stammering, was dubbed 'the silent', an epithet he shared with many other rulers.[182] Habsburg emperors likewise were not noted for verbosity, usually answering in short and evasive statements.[183] Charles VI (1685–1711–1740), a talented linguist, was described by several unfriendly witnesses as being tongue-tied, speaking inaudibly if at all.[184] His daughter Maria Theresa, an easier personality in most respects at least until the death of her spouse in 1765, increased the social interaction of the Viennese court with the urban elites. No friend of gambling, she nevertheless advised her children to play cards and dice during the court's social gatherings because, she explained to them:

[179] Oswald Redlich, 'Das Tagebuch Esaias Pufendorfs, schwedischen Residenten am Kaiserhofe von 1671 bis 1674', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 37 (1917), 541–97, at 568.

[180] Thomas Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia, PA, 2006).

[181] Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, ed. Dreyss, I, 195–7, II, 64–5; Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ed. A. de Boislisle, 43 vols. (Paris, 1876–1930), vol. XXVIII, 143–6.

[182] A. Lloyd Moote, *Louis XIII, the Just* (Berkeley, CA, 1989), 3, 139.

[183] Esaias Pufendorf, *Bericht über Kaiser Leopold, seinen Hof, und die Österreichische Politik 1671–1674*, ed. Carl Gustav Helbig (Leipzig, 1862), 59; Volker Press, 'Österreichische Großmachtbildung und Reichsverfassung: zur kaiserlichen Stellung nach 1648', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 98 (1990), 131–54, at 146.

[184] Alphons Lhotsky, 'Kaiser Karl VI. und sein Hof im Jahre 1712–13', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 66 (1958), 52–80, at 63–4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

'speaking amidst 100 persons keen to approach you is too difficult to sustain at length.'[185]

Withdrawing into the inner apartments of the court, surrounded only by trusted servants, could be an alluring alternative. The attendants in this comfortable environment, Louis XIV stated, who are 'the first to see the king's weaknesses, are also the first to take advantage of them'.[186] It made sense, therefore, to recruit companions from groups unlikely, because of some defect, to rise to high power: eunuchs, dwarfs, exiles, or low-ranking outsiders. Withdrawal among such groups, however, tended to annoy vested elites. French high court nobles were angered by Henry III's (1551–1574–1589) reliance on a small circle of favourites and by his attempts to create more distance between king and court. The retreat of Wanli and several of his fellow emperors into the inner court likewise was censured by high state dignitaries – even if they voiced their vexation in more respectful terms. French nobles and Chinese scholars shared a common anxiety: the rise to power of low-ranking inner court favourites. Princes, clearly, could not easily find a refuge free from the occupational hazards of their position without creating even more serious problems.

While the catalogue of moral virtues compelled rulers to attend to their responsibilities, negligence would not necessarily have dire consequences. As long as they were served by a mixed group of loyal advisors respecting the king's supremacy, nothing much would happen. In fact it is almost impossible for modern historians, as it was for contemporaries, to ascertain whether measures were taken on the initiative of the council or through the intervention of the ruler himself.[187] It is likely that even active figures were usually happy to follow the advice of their specialised servants. These would see little reason to complain or broadcast the passivity of the ruler: it ideally served their purposes. The team of advisors established at the outset of a personal reign, however, tended to break down within a few decades at most. As soon as open conflict arose among the advisors, or between a closed group of advisors and others who were trying to make themselves heard, it was essential for a king to step in and recreate order. This became more and more difficult with the passing of the years.

Moving from maturity to old age, rulers experienced a draining of their powers. The final two or three decades of life proved difficult even for formidable figures. From the 1690s onwards, Louis XIV gradually started

[185] Handwritten notes by Maria Theresa in Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. ser. n. 1713, fol. 77^{r}.

[186] Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, ed. Dreyss, 288, 404; see a similar remark in Muḥammad Bāqir Najm-i Sānī, *Advice on the Art of Governance*, 60.

[187] Francis Bacon, 'Of Counsel', in *The Essays*, 120–4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

losing control (see Plate 7), a process caused by the deaths of his most talented and trusted ministers, the persistent political-military challenges facing France, increasing economic problems, and the changing physical condition of the king himself. His morganatic spouse, Madame de Maintenon, at the same time turned into a de facto first minister acknowledged by diplomats as a prime mover of court politics. In 1711 and 1712, a wave of deaths in the royal family soured the king's last years. After losing his only son, one of the numerous princes who never ascended to the throne, Louis also lost the duke of Burgundy, his cherished grandson and next in line for succession. The two young sons of the duke also fell ill, and the eldest died: now only a two-year-old boy, the future Louis XV, remained. The king decided to make his bastard sons eligible for succession, a step exacerbating factional strife at court. For these last years, numerous testimonies can be found on the king's anxious state of mind and declining health. A marginal comment in a text planning a banquet and ball included in the register for 1700 of the high noble servants in the king's chamber stipulates that 'only familiar faces should be placed around the king', suggesting that servants had long since been organising a comfort zone around their ageing monarch.[188]

The Kangxi emperor's long life likewise ended with fifteen years of increasing anxiety and ailments, caused to a large extent by his ongoing troubles with his sons and potential successors, most particularly his first (surviving) son Yinreng. In 1676 as an eighteen-month-old infant, this prince had been nominated heir-apparent by his proud father, but once he approached adolescence, tensions rose.[189] In 1708, after the death of a favoured younger son, the emperor's gradually mounting disgruntlement with the behaviour of his heir-apparent led to a distressing denouement in which Yinreng lost his position and was punished. Following the confrontation, the emperor feared that he had acted rashly and was beset by doubts. Reconsidering Yinreng's misdemeanours, he found indications that they had been caused by manipulations and possibly even by malicious spells. Kangxi's health was permanently affected by this crisis. By the end of 1708 he fell seriously ill and appeared to be dying. It took him until March 1709 to regain some strength, and he never fully recovered. Addressing his main officials when he felt death approaching, Kangxi himself stated that: 'After my serious illness in the forty-seventh year of my reign, my spirits had been too much wounded, and gradually I failed

[188] Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, 228: the *premiers gentilshommes'* register, cérémonies de toute espèce, 60–3, Bal masqué du 27 janvier 1700, note in the margin of 63. 'Nota: Eviter autant qu'il se peut de mettre des visages inconnus au roi sur l'échaffaud qui est vis à vis de lui.'

[189] Wu, *Passage to Power*, 31; Spence, *Emperor of China*, 123–39.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to regain my former state. Moreover, everyday there was my work, all requiring decisions; frequently I felt that my vitality was slipping away and my internal energy diminishing.'[190] Elsewhere in the same edict the emperor contrasts his position to that of the officials, who could at some point hope to enjoy retirement, asking himself: 'how can I attain the day when I will have no more burdens?'[191] In 1717 death seemed the only and desirable escape from a situation that seemed to become ever more wearying, saddening, and pointless. Typically, these powerful statements by the Kangxi emperor, who could not hold back his 'tears of bitterness' while sharing his thoughts with his officials (see Plate 8), were published in polished form after his death, without a trace of the emperor's despondency.[192] His grandson the Qianlong emperor (1711–1735–1796*) seems to have fared better. The French Jesuit Michel Benoit conversed at leisure with the emperor in 1774, during a session in which Qianlong posed for a Jesuit painter. At sixty-three, the emperor had gained some weight but still felt in good shape. The conversation suggests a keen and perceptive mind. Within a few years, however, Qianlong's grip on government diminished. From the late 1770s he allowed his favourite Heshen to accumulate offices, titles, and wealth, an example so conspicuous that it may well have contributed to corruption rampant among officials. Qianlong's powers waned, but he was able to maintain an unruffled outward image.

The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1618–1658–1707), grabbing the throne by defeating his brothers and imprisoning his ailing father Shah Jahan in 1658, enjoyed a particularly long life and ruled for almost fifty years. Shortly before his death in 1707 he wrote letters to several sons conveying fears of impending succession conflicts and a sense of the futility of his long activist reign: 'The instant which passed in power, hath left only sorrow behind it.' His sentiments appear close to those voiced by Kangxi, though in a less personal tone.[193] King Yŏngjo of Korea (1694–1724–1776), likewise ascending to the throne at a relatively advanced age, experienced the longest reign of his dynasty. When after a decade of ruling a son was born to him in 1735, the delighted Yŏngjo appointed him heir-apparent in his second year and groomed him for kingship. Gradually a gripping father–son tragedy unfolded around this 'prince of mournful thoughts' that in the end made Yŏngjo order his son to commit suicide in 1762. The king turned from 'a man of vision into a man of delusion', although he doggedly

[190] Spence, *Emperor of China*, 148. [191] Ibid., 150.
[192] Ibid., 145, and 169–75 for the final published edict with an examination of the changes.
[193] See the letters printed in Eradut Khan, *A Translation of the Memoirs of Eradut Khan, a Nobleman of Hindostan* . . ., trans. Jonathan Scott (London, 1786), 8–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

pursued the ideal of the neo-Confucian scholar-prince to his death.[194] Three centuries earlier, the longest-reigning of all Ottoman sultans, Süleyman (1494–1520–1566), started his rule by successfully continuing his father's military triumphs.[195] At the very time the sultan's physical powers started declining, his brawny thirty-eight-year-old son Mustafa became increasingly popular among the janissary elite household infantry. In 1553 the Venetian *bailo* or ambassador wrote that 'it is impossible to describe how much he [Mustafa] is loved and desired by all as successor to the throne'.[196] The example of Bayezid II (1447–1481–1512), forced to abdicate by his activist son Selim I in 1512, may have been on Süleyman's mind: he took no risk and had Mustafa executed. Somewhat later, Habsburg ambassador Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq noted that Süleyman, 'beginning to feel the weight of years', sought to improve his looks 'by painting his face with a coating of red powder'.[197] While Busbecq connected this habit to the sultan's wish to impress foreign ambassadors, it was clearly highly relevant for the Ottoman soldiery and leadership to see their sultan in good physical shape. During the 1566 Szigetvar campaign, the sultan, eager to demonstrate his personal leadership, proved unable to ride his horse without support. A book miniature pictures grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha supporting the sultan (Plate 9) – a scene commissioned by the grand vizier, who highlighted Süleyman's weakness as well as his own strength. The same series of miniatures shows how Süleyman had to dismount and ride in a carriage, which in the end became the hearse transporting his body. The aged sultan had tried to the end to perform a role that no longer fitted his physical capabilities.[198] Was riding into battle his version of the suicide practised by weakening Ankole kings?

In years of increasing vulnerability and anxiety, princes were no longer able to lead their soldiers into war and became less disposed to generate

[194] Haboush, *Confucian Kingship in Korea*, quotations at 230–2. See a portrayal of the rising tensions between King Yŏngjo and Prince Sado from the perspective of Sado's wife in Hyegyong, *Memoirs*, the memoir of 1805, 241–336.

[195] Yelce, 'Making of Sultan Süleyman'.

[196] On Mustafa and Süleyman, see Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 1993), quotation at 56, more details at 81–3; as well as Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554–1562: Translated from the Latin of the Elzevir Edition of 1663* (Oxford, 1927), 31–2.

[197] Busbecq, *Turkish Letters*, 65–6.

[198] Emine Fetvaci, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington, IN, 2013), 134–6, also printing another miniature with two servants supporting Süleyman; see also Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, *Le sérail ébranlé: essai sur les morts, dépositions et avènements des sultans ottomans, XVIe–XIXe siècle* (Paris, 2003), 32.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

support by touring their realm. Hours of paperwork and chairing meetings must have become increasingly burdensome. Dependence on a single trusted confidant became particularly tempting for these elderly rulers. Towards the end of his life, Habsburg emperor Rudolf II's (1552–1576–1612) low-ranking chamber servant monopolised access to the emperor, dominated the distribution of favours, and sold his influence to the highest bidder.[199] Rudolf had never been very outgoing, but more extrovert and forceful figures, too, tended to withdraw in a closed circle of companions. The problems of ageing kings were made worse by the restiveness of their now mature successors – who later in their lives could expect to replicate their fathers' anxieties. Leopold I, who ruled for almost fifty years, gradually became more comfortable in his role and continued in relatively good shape. However, his eldest son Joseph, emperor-elect since 1690, became impatient and attracted a 'young court' of people waiting for change.

Violent deposition occurred frequently in the Ottoman empire, with fifteen out of thirty-three sultans ruling between 1389 and 1918 forced out of their august office.[200] Interestingly, the abdications of Mehmed IV in 1687, Mustafa II in 1703, and Ahmed III in 1730 no longer automatically entailed the execution of the sultan – a pattern established earlier with the killing of Osman II in 1622 and Ibrahim in 1648. The elites pushing for abdication no longer even saw the retired sultans as a threat: they put another scion of the house of Osman on the throne who, hopefully, better fitted their expectations. Destoolment was an accepted and relatively peaceful pattern in several African kingdoms, but it served as a check on the behaviour of kings rather than as a solution to the problems of ageing rulers and impatient successors.

The Manchu grandee Songgotu sought to convince Kangxi of the desirability of abdicating in favour of his heir-apparent Yinreng in the late 1690s, but the emperor discarded the plan when his son's bad behaviour became more marked.[201] Kangxi's grandson, the Qianlong emperor, did in fact retire in 1796, leaving his illustrious grandfather Kangxi the honour of having enjoyed the longest reign in Chinese imperial history. In practice, however, Qianlong's son and successor the Jiaqing emperor (1760–1796–1820) could not rule without anticipating

[199] Friedrich Hurter, *Philipp Lang, Kammerdiener Kaiser Rudolphs II: eine Criminal-geschichte aus dem Anfang des siebenzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Schaffhausen, 1852).
[200] Murphey, *Ottoman Sovereignty,* 90; Anthony D. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty* (Oxford, 1956), 58.
[201] Wu, *Passage to Power*, 56–9, 69–70.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and respecting his father's wishes.[202] As 'supreme emperor' (*taishang huang*) Qianlong remained a notable presence from his abdication in 1796 to his death in 1799.[203] Abdications can be found in earlier Chinese history as well as in polities related to the Chinese Confucian model. In the period leading up to the Chinese Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), abdications were not infrequent. In Japan it almost became the norm: between the first abdication in 645 and the last in 1817, three quarters of all imperial reigns ended in abdication.[204] In addition, five of the fifteen Tokugawa shoguns voluntarily retired at least a year before they died.[205] In Korea and Vietnam, too, retired kings can be found. However, in each of these cases abdication did not primarily reflect a retreat to make room for a new generation but provided an instrument to deal with specific problems at court, securing a stabler succession pattern, circumventing powerful court factions, or simply dividing the heavy burden of rulership.

In Europe abdication remained rare; when it occurred, it was usually enforced by others or motivated by exceptional personal reasons. In 1567, after a series of confrontations, Mary Queen of Scots was forced to abdicate in favour of her one-year-old son James. In 1555–6, shortly before his death in 1558, a tired and disappointed Charles V retired after failing to contain the Reformation in his German territories, leaving his numerous lands and titles to his son Philip and his own brother Ferdinand. Queen Christina of Sweden abdicated in 1654 before departing to Rome and converting to Catholicism.[206] No regular pattern of abdication in favour of a younger ruler emerged, but arrangements for power-sharing between an elderly ruler and his successor can be found. The formal confirmation of a heir-apparent entailed a shift in responsibilities, increasing the difference in rank with others eligible to succeed to the throne. Where acclamation or election determined succession, kings

[202] The Japanese, Chinese, and Tahitian examples of emperors retiring for different reasons, often still actively ruling behind the scenes, are a different case. On the Chinese retired emperor from the fourth to the seventh century CE, see Andrew Eisenberg, *Kingship in Early Medieval China* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2008).

[203] Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*; Elliott, *Qianlong*, 160.

[204] Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors*, 49, underlining that most often emperors were forced to abdicate. At 109–10 Shillony mentions the shogun forcing the emperor's retirement in 1663 following signs of heavenly displeasure. See an overview of all abdicated emperors in Richard A.B. Ponsonby-Fane, *The Imperial House of Japan* (Kyoto, 1959), 287–9; the earlier phases are discussed in Hurst, 'Insei'. Hurst and Eisenberg present the practice of 'retiring' emperors as a strategy stabilising and reforming fluid succession practices (with shared sovereignty and female rulership) to male primogeniture, but this fails to account for the numerous retiring emperors in later periods.

[205] Personal communication from Anne Walthall.

[206] Also Philip V of Spain, John II Casimir Vasa of Poland, and several others.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

often tried to have their sons elected during their lifetime (*vivente rege, vivente imperatore*) without themselves stepping back. Alternatively, sovereignty could be divided, by placing different responsibilities in different hands. Maria Theresa, ruling the Habsburg monarchy from 1740 to 1780, could not hold the male title of Holy Roman Emperor. Her husband Francis Stephen, regaining this title for the Habsburgs in 1745 after a short Wittelsbach tenure (1742–5), was made co-regent by his spouse. After the death of his father, Joseph II took over his position as co-regent as well as the imperial dignity, to which he had been elected *vivente imperatore* in 1764.[207] Mother–son co-rule, however, proved to be difficult for both parties, with restless Joseph adopting outspoken viewpoints that pained his level-headed mother. Nor did it prevent Maria Theresa from experiencing the troubles of ageing rulers. Shortly after the death of her beloved husband in 1765 Maria Theresa, now fifty, looked back on her early years, seeing that she had been inexperienced, timid, and insecure. She pointed to a handful of devoted servants, who were as important to her in 'old age and decrepitude' as they had been in her 'youthful impetuosity'. A few years later, a courtier reported that she was 'at extremes, considering even to part with her crown out of despair and disgust'. In 1773 Maria Theresa wrote to another of her associates that her situation was becoming intolerable and isolated, and could only be maintained thanks to the support of a few loyal friends and state servants.[208]

The burdens of rulership: agency and trust

Looking at numerous lives of sultans, kings, and emperors, a pattern can be established. Most kings could be effective only during a few decades: youth and old age on the throne entailed dependence and anxieties. Even during their years of strength and maturity, rulers faced

[207] Robert Oresko, G.C. Gibbs, and H.M. Scott (eds.), *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of Ragnhild Hatton* (Cambridge and New York, 2006).

[208] *Correspondance secrète entre Marie-Thérèse et le Cte de Mercy-Argenteau. Avec les lettres de Marie-Thérèse et de Marie-Antoinette*, ed. Alfred von Arneth and Auguste Geffroy, 3 vols. (Paris, 1874–5), I, 146–7 (the empress reporting the death of Sylva-Tarouca to Mercy, 1 April 1771), quotation in note 1; Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias: Tagebuch des Fürsten Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch, kaiserlichen Obersthofmeisters 1742–1776*, ed. H. Schlitter and R. Khevenhüller-Metsch, 7 vols. (Vienna, 1907–25), VII, 128–30 (20–5 May 1772), with an exchange of letters in endnotes 153 and 154, at 422–3. Compare Derek Beales, *Joseph II*, I, 288–9, 350–1; and Maria Theresa, *Briefe der Kaiserin Maria Theresia an ihre Kinder und Freunde*, ed. Alfred von Arneth, 4. vols. (Vienna, 1881), IV, 298–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

daunting pressures. Paperwork, military action, ritual obligations, and social gatherings, mixed in different proportions for each place and period, formed a challenge for most incumbents. The moral responsibilities of kingship and the great examples of forebears did little to alleviate the burden. Shared patterns seem more important than any fundamental development over time or than any consistent regional divergence. Moreover, individual variation remains a strikingly important factor. Regional differences did determine conditions and expectations, leaving more room for a passively enacted moral example in the regions strongly influenced by Confucian thinking than elsewhere. Nevertheless, the alternation of outgoing and withdrawn rulers can be seen equally well in Europe or West Asia. Wanli, Murad III, Henry III, and Rudolf II, near-contemporaries, opted for an inward turn. A generation later, Murad IV and Henry IV developed more activist and outgoing styles, soon to be adopted by the new Qing emperors as well. Strong and weak figures chose different ways to deal with their kingship, but they were inevitably subject to the same pressures. Kangxi and Louis XIV, textbook examples of strong rulers, went through all the expected phases of the life cycle. Leopold I, often inaccurately pictured as a weak and indecisive ruler, experienced similar pressures and handled them no less sensibly than his more famous contemporaries. Murad III, most often seen as the typical bad sultan withdrawing into the harem, may have used his withdrawal to engineer the downfall of his overpowering grand vizier, in an attempt to regain the initiative. Lacking sources outlining the motives of the ruler and his proximates, we cannot be sure.

The political consequences of reigns have often determined judgements by contemporaries and historians. Military defeat, dynastic change, and political revolution all focus our attention on leaders' political errors or moral failures. Such dramatic endings, however, were not necessarily caused primarily by the incompetence of rulers, nor can successes always be explained by their wise deeds. Patricia Ebrey, carefully examining Song emperor Huizong (1082–1100–1126) on the basis of numerous sources, sees little reason to put the blame of the Jurchen triumph over Song China squarely on his shoulders.[209] She portrays a talented, well-intentioned young man ascending the throne unexpectedly. Common criticisms of Huizong, including the emperor's fancy for Daoism, his clashes with literati factions, and his spending on palaces and court life, hardly explain the Song fiasco. Ray Huang made an important remark about Wanli, another figure traditionally seen as weak. Wanli was

[209] Patricia B. Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Cambridge, MA, 2014).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

far from incompetent, but better grasped the constraints and contradictions of his awkward position than many other emperors. His intelligence and sensitivity made it more difficult for him to rule effectively.[210] While Huang fits Wanli's trouble into a story of overall Ming decline, the condition of princes more generally seems frustrating. They were, on the one hand, nominally supreme in everything; yet, on the other hand, they were bound by endless restrictions and guided by a staff offering advice that could be disinterested or self-seeking.

Kings stood at the heart of the political machinery, yet they were not always its prime movers. In his work on the 'theatre state' in Bali, Clifford Geertz suggested the image of the icon-king or king of chess, the passive centre of a dynamic and competitive world.[211] The metaphor is apt but presents one side only of kingship, or one specific type of king. Who would call the Ming founder Hongwu or Kangxi icon-emperors, Louis XIV or Süleyman kings of chess? These were active figures, with great impact on society at large. Yet they, too, were subject to the pressures that froze less formidable characters into passivity, worrying about their mandate, their physical prowess, and their successors. More often than not, it remains unclear whether the decisions attributed to individual rulers in contemporary discourse and later national historiography were in fact the result of their personal agency. The relevant point here is that we need to take into account the motives and actions of a variety of groups around rulers. Scholars educated youngsters, advised mature rulers, and wrote the history of their reigns. Personal servants acted as daily companions and low-profile favourites. Surrounded and served by all these groups, rulers nevertheless could not confide in them without running risks. At the top of the hierarchy, trouble-free trust was rare. Louis XIV seems to have recognised this explicitly in an instruction preparing his grandson Philip for the Spanish throne. In a series of thirty-three succinct phrases, moving from moral admonition to pragmatic advice primarily stressing the need to befriend the Spanish people, he laconically asks his grandson 'never to develop an attachment to anybody' – a dismal counsel based on the potential misfortunes caused by friendship rather than on conviction.[212] Who could be trusted without risk? Powerful ministers

[210] Huang, *Year of No Significance*, 67, 93.
[211] Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre-State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, NJ, 1980), 130.
[212] Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, ed. Cornette, 'instructions au duc d'Anjou (1700)', no. 5, 337. See the phrase cited at the outset of this chapter: 'Do not disclose the secret to anyone. Indeed, we have strolled the earth and found no confidant.' Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, 154–6, underscores the prevalence of loneliness-at-the-top but presents a more sceptical reading.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

or low-ranking inner court servants could abuse the ruler's confidence, or alternatively others could take offence at the privileged position of their rivals. Moreover, spouses and children, the category expected to be included in the innermost worlds of most persons, could become vicious rivals in dynastic settings. This fundamental tension at the heart of dynastic power took very different forms, depending on patterns of reproduction and succession. These patterns are the focus of the next chapter.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107447554.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press