

Emperor Qianlong's Filial Piety to His Mother, Empress Dowager Xiaosheng

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Abstract

Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799; r. 1736-1795) is noted for his extremely filial piety to his mother, Empress Dowager Xsiasheng 孝聖皇太后 (1692-1777). It is noticeable, however, that he conducted his filial behavior differently in two different stages, based on different conditions. In the early stage, when he was a prince (1711-1735), he hardly showed his personal feeling toward her; while in the later stage, after he had become the emperor (1736-1795), he remained a consistent sensitive caring and loving person to his mother till her death in the age of eighty-six *sui* (1777). This paper based on his poems, historical documents, and pictorial evidence, observes his filial behavior seen in these two stages and tries to explicit their implications.

Keywords: Emperor Qianlong, Empress Dowager Chongqing, Empress Dowager Xiaosheng