

The empress dowager ci xi history essay



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Empress Dowager Ci Xi was born in 1835. She had two younger brothers. Her father Hui Zheng was a member of the Bordered Blue Banner of the Eight Banners. Bordered Blue Banner was descendant of royal, so she had an excellent family's background. According to annals, she spent her early life in Anhui Province. The earlier period of childhood, she started to learn literature, painting and handwriting. She had been training hard for several years before she moved to Beijing. Ci Xi took apart in a selection program for concubines for the new Xian Feng Emperor. She was a talented girl, so she was one of the few girls selected to be Preparative Concubine. After that, she was promoted to Noble Person after she was selected to serve the Emperor's daily life. She was pregnant for the first time in 1855, and she gave birth to Tong Zhi in 1856. Tong Zhi was the only son of the Xian Feng Emperor. So Ci Xi was promoted to Noble Imperial Consort Yi. The Xian Feng Emperor became lazy because of his bad health, and Ci Xi was good at handwriting, so Xian Feng Emperor looked over the political documents, and asked Ci Xi to write comments on it. So at that time Ci Xi started to contact with politics.

British and French troops attacked Beijing in 1860, Xian Feng Emperor took his son and Ci Xi fled Beijing to a safety place called Re He. However Xian Feng was seriously ill at that time, his son Tong Zhi was only 6 years old; it's too young to manage the whole country, so Xian Feng Emperor summoned eight of his most prestigious ministers to help his son to manage the country. Xian Feng Emperor died in 1861. After the death of the Xian Feng Emperor, both of his Empress Consort and Noble Consort Yi were elevated to the empress dowager. Tong Zhi became the new emperor and the Eight Regent Ministers tried to reduce the right of the new emperor, but Ci Xi was not

satisfied with the Eight Regent Ministers. So she made a plan to arrest them, and killed them with the help of Prince Gong. After that, Ci Xi started to mix in politics. In breaking with tradition, Ci Xi became the first and only Qing Dynasty Empress to rule from “ behind the curtains”.

Tong Zhi Emperor died in 1875, Ci Xi’s nephew Guang Xu became the new Emperor. However, Ci Xi still ruled from “ behind the curtains”.

The first Sino-Japanese War was break out in 1894, the result of the defeat the Qing government was forced to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Empress Dowager Ci Xi’s policy to the war was negative, so after a series of the wars of invading China, we lost our dominion gradually. Empress Dowager Ci Xi died in the Hall of Graceful Bird on 15 November 1908.

Empress Dowager Ci Xi, as an emperor had governed the Qing Dynasty for about forty years. When the Qing Dynasty was found at beginning, the emperor not Empress Dowager Ci Xi had set a ban that the imperial harem or seraglio should not participate in the international affairs. When it was Ci Xi’s turn to govern the whole country, everything seemed changed.

She used her beauty to make Xian Feng believe her and they soon got a baby called Tong Zhi. When Tong Zhi emperor controlled the country, it was a bad time. Britain and France united army went through Beijing and attacked and occupied Beijing. Then Xian Feng emperor escaped to a summer retreat. That was absurd that the high status emperor escaped when facing violence. How could the folks look at him? The only thing they responded was laughing at Xian Feng emperor. Just at that moment, Empress Dowager Ci Xi grasped this chance to become herself a

psychologist. She came to comfort Xian Feng emperor. But as a pity, he died soon. However Xian Feng emperor knew well about how good or bad Empress Dowager Ci Xi was. So he left an imperial edict to Empress Dowager Ci Xi to prevent her in case she done something harmful. But out of Xian Feng's prediction, Empress Dowager Ci Xi made the imperial in her own hands by using some kind of means. She made herself to be the emperor. How contemptible she was! When Tong Zhi was died at the age of 21 with sexual disease, it was obvious that Empress Dowager Ci Xi should take over the political power when Guang Xu was too young to take charge of the country. Empress Dowager Ci Xi always insisted on centralism. She suppressed the Taiping Rebellion which was an appeal for peasants' right. But she made it down. She kept the situation which was called centralism. Making the military power hold in her hand, she would not like anyone else to grab anything from her.

In 1904, Japan and tsarist Russia made a war because of the territory of China and Korea. It took place in the northeast of China. To everyone's surprise, Empress Dowager Ci Xi held the position standing in the middle. Thus made the people lived in northeast of China suffered in great pain. She even could bear that the people who were under her control were in pain not only in physic but also in mental. She made all rights belong to herself.

She designed and snared the ministers, judged them with blank commitments. She smashed others' power into ash. She insisted in holding the main power and making everyone who was under her control listen to her. She made a rule which was that anyone could not challenge her position or doubt her ability because all she wanted was the whole nation and the

entire power. As a leader, she failed to care about the folks` emotions and even did not know what they really needed and what they worried. She just knew that she had the responsibility to protect her position from being usurped.

Not only in her political aspect had she something that made people dissatisfied with her but also in the life aspect.

For example, Empress Dowager Ci Xi had a habit that was: where she went, where the meal went. So she did not have a specifically restaurant which was designed to eat. Incidentally, the bowls she used were colored in bright yellow, covered with silver lid, and some of them were decorated with dragon patterns, while others printed the Chinese character “ shou¹/₄^â⁻¿¹/₄%”.

The each meal of Empress Dowager Ci Xi was contained about 150 dishes. All the dishes were neatly arranged in rows. One row was a large line of bowls, and another row was a line of small dishes, followed by a row of a small bowl, in this case order. When the two female officers came into the bedroom and put the table, they were holding a big yellow food container. Her tea cups were made by pure white jade, and tea trays and lids were gold.

Empress Dowager Ci Xi would not eat with other people. When she began to eat, she always ordered the eunuchs to brought silver chopsticks, spoons, etc., and then said: “ I`m sorry you have to stand up when you are having your meal, but these are the rules set by our ancestors. I can not break the rules, even the Queen can not sit in front. I`m sure if the foreigners know

how we treat the woman in the palace, they would certainly think that we are barbarians. But you will soon find that I practice in front of them is completely different, they do not see merely who we are. “

Many people think that Empress Dowager Ci Xi was a bad woman in the Chinese history. However, she also had her success.

First of all, Ci Xi's struggles are worth for us to learn. In Qing Dynasty, nobody can be greater than her. When she was a child, she had already known that using money to bribe eunuch to be close to emperor. After she lived in the palace, she could deal with a lot of complicated things in correct and experienced ways. Then, she gave a birth to a child who was the only son of her husband—Xian Feng emperor. She was a really clever woman that no other concubines could have babies for the emperor.

Secondly, Empress Dowager Ci Xi could deal with things without hesitation. Before Xian Feng emperor dead, he told 9 ministers to control Ci Xi's rights. However, Empress Dowager Ci Xi didn't afraid of them. She used the hatreds between the ministers to turn the scale. Finally, she took helm of the state and she controlled her son, which was called attended to state affairs. In addition, she usually deals with things without hesitation, such as 1898 Reform period.

Thirdly, Empress Dowager Ci Xi ended feudal society in a quick way. The feudal society in China had lasted for more than 2000 years. It was too long and serious to China to develop capitalism, which made China poor and fall behind other countries in Qing Dynasty. However, Empress Dowager Ci Xi was a luxurious woman and she leaded a luxurious phenomenon around the

country. She reduced the money of the government, which led to the feudal society in China was ended almost 30 years in advance. In the position of Qing government, Empress Dowager Ci Xi was a guilty person, but in the position of the development of history, she helped China to end the feudal society in a quick way.

Fourthly, Ci Xi's luxurious hobbies—the Chinese feast and Peking opera, which developed Chinese culture. She loved the two things and many foreigners were interested in imperial banquet. The Chinese feast finally fixed many different styles of cooking. It's unique in the world. She loved Peking Opera and she often heard opera in her palace. In this way, many foreigners could have chances to come into contact with Peking Opera. The secrets and culture of Peking Opera could be spread. So that, Empress Dowager Ci Xi made contributions to Chinese culture.

Fifthly, hobbies of Empress Dowager Ci Xi improved the society in the process of modernization of China. Was Empress Dowager Ci Xi an old-fogy? If we find the answer from the Chinese history book, we may say she was, because she suppressed the Chinese reform. However, the time she was in power was a high communicated period with western countries. During this period, she certainly learned a lot from western countries. She imported many new things from foreign to China. Electric lights, automobiles, photos, movies and so on. We think that all of them were completed by courage from Empress Dowager Ci Xi, so we have to admit that she was a wise woman.

At last, Empress Dowager Ci Xi brought us a famous world culture heritage—the Summer Palace. When we travelled in the Summer Palace, guiders

usually told us that Empress Dowager Ci Xi spent the expense of navy in building the Summer Palace in 1888, which led to that China had failed in the Sino-Japanese War. Who knew that the Summer Palace would be a famous imperial garden where must be visited by foreigners. So, Empress Dowager Ci Xi was not only a guilty person all the time, she also had her ability and success.

There is no perfect man or woman in the world. Anybody has good aspect meanwhile he or she has the bad side. No one is absolute bad or good. So, is Empress Dowager Ci Xi good or bad? Everyone has his or her own idea.