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## Practices in Analyzing and Utilizing Historical Archival Resources from a Digital Humanities Perspective: A Case Study of the Kangxi Emperor's Diary of Activity and Repose and Veritable Records

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### Abstract

[Objective/Significance] Historical archives are solidified information with original documentary nature formed during the historical development of humanity, serving as an important carrier for the continuation of national civilization and the development of social culture. Properly developing and utilizing historical archive resources is an essential component of comprehensively revitalizing traditional Chinese culture. [Method/Process] From the digital humanities research perspective, we manually annotated the filial greeting data of Emperor Kangxi in two historical archives, “Kangxi Qiju Zhu” (Diaries of Kangxi’s Daily Life) and “Kangxi Shilu” (Veritable Records of Kangxi), and analyzed the specific practices of Emperor Kangxi’s governance through filial piety based on the annotated data results. [Result/Conclusion] Employing digital humanities methods to mine and analyze the content of these two historical archives, “Kangxi Qiju Zhu” and “Kangxi Shilu”, can provide reference and inspiration for the application methods of digital humanities in the development of historical archives. The application of digital humanities will offer new research perspectives for future studies and practices in the development and utilization of historical archive resources.

## Full Text

# The Practice of Analyzing and Utilizing Historical Archives from a Digital Humanities Perspective: A Case Study of *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu*

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## Abstract

**[Purpose/Significance]** Historical archives constitute solidified information with original records formed during the course of human historical development, serving as crucial carriers for the continuity of national civilization and the evolution of social culture. Effective development and utilization of historical archival resources represent an essential component in the comprehensive revitalization of traditional Chinese culture. **[Method/Process]** From a digital humanities research perspective, this study manually annotates Emperor Kangxi's greeting records within two historical archives—*Kangxi Qiju Zhu* (Diaries of Action and Repose) and *Kangxi Shilu* (Veritable Records)—and analyzes the concrete practices of Kangxi's governance through filial piety based on the annotated data. **[Results/Conclusion]** Employing digital humanities methods to excavate and analyze the contents of these two substantial historical archives provides valuable references for the application of digital humanities in historical archive development. The integration of digital humanities approaches will offer new research perspectives for future studies and practices concerning the development and utilization of historical archival resources.

**Keywords:** *Kangxi Qiju Zhu*; *Kangxi Shilu*; Historical Archives; Imperial Greetings; Filial Governance Culture; Textual Analysis; Digital Humanities  
**Classification Number:** G275.1

## 1 Introduction and Literature Review

Historical archives are solidified information with original records formed during human historical development, representing vital carriers for national civilization continuity and social-cultural advancement. As witnesses to millennia of Chinese national development and rich repositories of historical and cultural value, these archives present a critical question in today's era of rapid digital technological growth: how can digital humanities techniques and methods be leveraged to fully excavate and realize the content and value of historical archives? Current academic research on historical archive resource development primarily concentrates on resource introduction or utilization conceptualization. For instance, Shi Shan et al. introduced the distribution and utilization of his-

torical archives related to the 1911 Revolution in Hubei Province [1]; Ma Kefeng discussed the significance of developing and utilizing historical archives of the Hui nationality [2]; and Wang Yulong analyzed the implications of American oral history archive development for China [3]. In recent years, however, with the rise of digital humanities, scholars have begun applying digital humanities technologies and methods to develop historical archive resources. Gao Song and Wang Xiangnü proposed a development model for oral history archives from a digital humanities perspective [4]; Wang Ruan explored knowledge discovery in oral history archives within a digital humanities framework in her doctoral dissertation [5]; and Jia Qiong conducted research on aggregating historical archive resources based on linked data [6].

*Shilu* (Veritable Records) and *Qiju Zhu* (Diaries of Action and Repose) constitute important historical archival resources in China, serving as primary source materials for dynastic historians. Among all dynasties, the Qing dynasty's *Shilu* and *Qiju Zhu* are the most completely preserved. Following the emergence of digital humanities in China, the *Qing Shilu* has attracted scholarly attention. In 2008, Zhu Zhengji conducted named entity recognition on the *Gaozong Chunhuangdi Shilu*, analyzing social networks centered on “powerful ministers,” identifying co-occurring figures on an annual basis, establishing yearly network weights, and comparing differences in centrality and power group variations during the Qianlong period [7]. In 2011, Chen Pinyan segmented and tagged the *Qing Shilu*, constructed a query system (QSDL) modeled after the Taiwan History Digital Library (THDL), and computationally corrected 12 dating errors in the *Qing Shilu* [8]. In 2013, Gao Xinkai employed text mining technology, Google Map API, and Timemap timeline tools to establish a Historical Geographic Information System (HGIS), selecting date, title, and content data from the “Kangxi” and “Qianlong” reigns in the *Qing Shilu* for system training, and identifying overlapping place names between the *Qing Shilu* and spatial databases through lexicon-based toponym recognition [9].

Overall, current research on historical archive development predominantly focuses on resource introduction, utilization conceptualization, or tool development. There remain relatively few practical applications of digital humanities techniques and methods to specific categories of historical archives. Moreover, digital humanities research on the *Qing Shilu* has primarily addressed annotation and extraction of people, events, time, place, and objects, with insufficient excavation of semantic knowledge behind the text. The true research value of the *Qing Shilu* awaits further discovery. Therefore, this study attempts to conduct deeper knowledge mining and cultural analysis of *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu* through digital humanities research techniques and methods, using Emperor Kangxi's greeting practices as an entry point.

## 2 Cultural Connotations of Greetings and Imperial Filial Governance

“Filial piety” (*xiao*) represents the most influential core proposition in China’s traditional kinship-based clan society. Pre-Qin classics almost universally address “filial ethics” and “filial conduct.” The *Book of Rites (Liji)* is China’s earliest classical institutional text linking filial piety with governance, emphasizing its importance in family management and state administration [10]. The *Classic of Filial Piety (Xiaojing)* states: “Filial piety begins in serving one’s parents, continues through serving one’s sovereign, and is completed in establishing oneself” [11], representing the Confucian understanding and promotion of filial piety. Since the Han dynasty’s establishment of Confucianism as the state orthodoxy and the advocacy of “governing the world through filial piety,” nearly all successive dynasties over the subsequent two millennia promoted filial piety as a fundamental state policy. The Qing dynasty continued this tradition. Upon entering and ruling the Central Plains, the Manchu rulers extensively studied advanced Confucian culture and ethics, continuing to implement “governing through filial piety” [12]. The Qing rulers deeply understood the importance of filial governance and excelled at integrating filial piety with state governance practice. They actively advocated filial piety at the policy level—for instance, the *Qing Shengzu Shilu* records that in the twelfth month of Kangxi’s thirty-seventh year, the Emperor instructed his Grand Secretaries: “To promote education and encourage moral conduct, filial piety must be paramount. Chaste widows deserve commendation, but filial sons merit even greater praise. Surely there are filial sons among the Eight Banners; for officials of means, practicing filial piety is merely their duty. For the poor to fulfill filial piety is truly not easy. If any in poverty can fulfill their filial duties to parents, investigate and report.” Simultaneously, they led by personal example as models of filial devotion, thereby extending these practices to ministers and common people, creating a society with a strong emphasis on filial piety. The greeting ritual (*wen’an*) represents a crucial manifestation of the Qing rulers’ personal practice of filial piety and service to their elders.

The earliest records of greeting rituals appear in the *Book of Rites*. The *Liji·Quli* states: “The propriety for being a son requires warming parents in winter and cooling them in summer, settling them at dusk and inquiring after them at dawn” [13], meaning that the rule for children is to ensure parents are warm in winter and cool in summer, and to inquire about their well-being each evening and morning. The Han dynasty master Zheng Xuan annotated this as: “Settling means arranging their bed-mats; inquiring means asking whether they are well” [14]. To this day, the term “dingxing” (settling and inquiring) means children greeting their elders morning and night. The *Liji·Wenwang Shizi* also records: “When King Wen was heir apparent, he attended King Ji three times daily. At the first crowing of the rooster he would dress and go to the bedchamber door, asking the attending eunuch: ‘Is the King well today?’ If the eunuch replied ‘well,’ King Wen would be pleased. He would return at noon and again at dusk,

repeating the same inquiry. If the King was unwell, the eunuch would inform King Wen, who would look distressed and walk unevenly. Only when the King recovered would King Wen return to normal. When food was served, he would be present to observe its temperature; after eating, he would ask what had been consumed” [15]. Later, “inquiring after well-being and observing meals” referred to the filial rituals by which ancient feudal lords and royal children served their parents. The *Zizhi Tongjian · Tang Ji* records: “Wen remonstrated: The Crown Prince should rise at the rooster’s crow to inquire after well-being and observe meals, and should not indulge in pleasure.” Through the Ming and Qing dynasties, greeting rituals remained important activities through which emperors inherited the tradition of emphasizing filial piety, promoted fraternal respect, and demonstrated their own benevolent filial conduct. Upon his ascension, Ming Taizu Zhu Yuanzhang visited the Imperial Ancestral Temple, calling himself “Filial Son Emperor,” and promulgated the *Cixiao Lu* (Record of Compassionate Filial Piety), recommending filial and incorrupt officials. The *Da Ming Shilu* contains many records of imperial greeting activities, such as in the *Da Ming Renzong Zhao Huangdi Shilu*: “Since Your Highness assumed the throne, inquiring after well-being and observing meals, your filial conduct matches that of ancient kings; assisting governance and implementing benevolent orders, your reputation reaches throughout the realm, harmonizing with heavenly will and enjoying the blessings of ancestral temples and altars of soil and grain, winning the allegiance of people who sing praises and pay homage.”

In the Qing dynasty, the institutionalization and regularization of imperial greeting practices became increasingly evident. The *Da Qing Shizu Zhang Huangdi Shilu* [16] records: “Boundless maternal grace inspires profound devotion and respect; magnificent virtue defies description, enhancing solemn veneration. Your blessings flow across the seas, joy filling the palace chambers. We respectfully honor the Empress Dowager Zhaosheng Cishou Gongjian Anyi, whose virtue matches earth’s constancy and whose achievements complement heaven’s beginning, richly blessed and having bestowed fortune upon my humble person, specially selecting worthy consorts to assist in inner governance, inquiring after well-being and observing meals, unable to express the slightest sincerity of nurturing aspirations.” It also states: “The ancestor served the Empress Dowager with filial piety, rising at dawn to inquire after her well-being, kneeling long to receive instruction, honoring meritorious officials, and maintaining harmony with imperial relatives.” According to this study’s statistics of greetings in *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu*, Emperor Kangxi performed over 4,000 greetings to his paternal grandmother the Empress Dowager Zhaosheng, his birth mother the Empress Dowager Cihe, and his adoptive mother the Empress Dowager Renxian during his reign. Beginning with Kangxi, imperial greetings to elders became an indispensable filial routine in the emperor’s life. The *Guochao Gongshi* (Palace History of the Dynasty) explicitly records: “Our Emperor personally exemplifies profound transformation, beginning education within the palace chambers. First promoting filial governance, he sets the example for all under heaven. Reverently serving the Empress Dowager, inquiring

after her well-being and observing her meals, he is cheerful and joyful. Raising his cup in celebration to express his love and respect, personally performing colorful dances to extend blessings. His rituals follow heavenly principles, his every movement manifesting supreme virtue. How magnificent! Nothing surpasses this. Thus we observe the constancy of daily life, the regulation of rising and resting, personally demonstrating silkworm cultivation to establish norms.” Evidently, “governing the world through filial piety” remained the core ideology permeating Qing political rule, while “reverently serving the Empress Dowager, inquiring after her well-being and observing her meals” represented the most direct and concrete expression of imperial filial devotion. The Qing dynasty marked the apex of China’s feudal dynasties, with filial governance policies reaching their peak, permeating bureaucratic systems, legal statutes, educational institutions, and elderly care policies—constituting the primary focus of academic research on Qing “filial governance.” Greeting rituals were important manifestations of Qing emperors’ filial practice, with detailed records in the *Qing Shilu* and *Qiju Zhu*. However, current scholarship lacks research in this area, and the filial governance ideology embodied in greeting practices requires deeper excavation.

### 3 Framework Construction and Text Annotation Implementation

Emperor Kangxi, known as the “Emperor of Ages,” was the second Qing emperor after the conquest of China. He transformed the Qing dynasty from military conquest to peaceful state-building, laying a solid foundation for subsequent rulers. In Qing history, the “Kang-Yong-Qian Golden Age” is well-documented, with Master Qigong considering Kangxi’s reign the most prosperous among the three, during which all state institutions reached maturity. Therefore, this study selects *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu* as samples, conducting quantitative analysis and data mining of greeting practices to explore national filial governance through the history of a single reign, providing data construction and analytical frameworks that transcend traditional research pathways for Qing filial culture studies.

#### 3.1 Data Sources for Emperor Kangxi’s Greeting Records

To facilitate reading and support Qing historical research, the First Historical Archives of China, based on its collection of *Shilu* editions (supplemented by a few rare surviving copies), collaborated with Beijing Shutongwen Digital Technology Co., Ltd. to undertake full-text digitization of the *Da Qing Lichao Shilu* (Veritable Records of Successive Qing Reigns), ultimately digitizing 4,447 volumes. The digitized *Da Qing Lichao Shilu* contains both traditional Chinese text and original document images, which can be browsed independently or cross-referenced. In addition to the original volume directory compiled according to editorial conventions, a precise monthly time index facilitates reader search and retrieval [17]. Beyond the *Qing Shilu*, the Shutongwen database also

provides digitized full texts of the *Qingdai Lichao Qiju Zhu Heji* (Collected Diaries of Action and Repose of Qing Reigns). To achieve a comprehensive understanding of imperial greeting practices during the Kangxi reign, this study utilizes the digitized full texts of *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* (54 volumes) and *Kangxi Shilu* (300 volumes) from the Shutongwen Classical Chinese Database as primary data sources for annotation and processing of Kangxi-era greeting data.

### 3.2 Data Collection Framework for Emperor Kangxi' s Greetings

Before annotating greeting data, the research team designed a metadata framework for greeting records. Based on original text content, seven dimensions were established for full-text annotation of *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu*: greeting time, greeting location, greeting recipient, greeting reason, greeting context, original text describing the context, and original text describing the greeting. Spatiotemporal analysis represents a common method in digital humanities research; therefore, this study selected greeting time and space as annotation items to examine the temporal and spatial distribution patterns of Kangxi' s greetings and conduct related analyses. Since the Kangxi reign featured three distinct greeting recipients—Kangxi' s paternal grandmother Empress Dowager Zhaosheng (Empress Xiaozhuangwen), his birth mother Empress Dowager Cihe (Empress Xiaokangzhang), and his adoptive mother Empress Dowager Renxian (Empress Xiaohuizhang), with Empresses Dowager Cihe and Renxian jointly honored as “Holy Mother Empress Dowager”—specific recipients needed to be distinguished according to particular greeting circumstances. Additionally, since *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu* sometimes recorded why Emperor Kangxi performed greetings, such as for festival celebrations or when the Empress Dowagers were ill, the team annotated greeting reasons. To more comprehensively grasp greeting contexts—namely, what events the Emperor was handling on greeting days and whether connections existed between events and greetings—the team consulted materials including *Kangxi Shilu · Xiuzuan Fanli* (Editorial Guidelines), *Huangchao Jingshi Wenbian* (Collected Writings on Statecraft), *Qing Shilu Beijing Shi Ziliao Jiyao* (Essential Beijing Historical Materials from Qing Veritable Records), and incorporated suggestions from Qing history experts to systematically categorize events recorded in *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu*, constructing a comprehensive event classification system for the Qing *Shilu* to provide a foundation for subsequent event data annotation and statistical analysis. To facilitate further analysis, corresponding original texts for greetings and contexts were also annotated.

[Figure 1: see original paper] Framework for Collecting Emperor Kangxi' s Greeting Data

[Figure 2: see original paper] Event Classification System for the *Qing Shilu*

### 3.3 Annotation of Emperor Kangxi' s Greeting Data

Based on the constructed data collection framework and event classification system, five team members manually annotated texts from the Shutongwen

database' s *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu* under the guidance of Qing history experts. The team comprised one doctoral student in archival studies (digital humanities direction) and four master' s students in digital humanities, all possessing experience in *Qing Shilu* text annotation and backgrounds in classical Chinese information mining research.

#### Greeting Data Annotation Format

Purpose	Format	Original Text Example
Ensure data accuracy	Original text	“On jisi day, the Emperor went to the Empress Dowager’ s palace to inquire after her well-being”
Facilitate temporal analysis	Kangxi Year - Heavenly Stems & Earthly Branches - Month - Day	Kangxi 14th Year - Yimao - 3rd Month - 11th Day
Facilitate spatial analysis	Greeting location in text	Empress Dowager’ s Palace
Facilitate recipient analysis	Greeting recipient in text	Empress Dowager Zhaosheng
Facilitate subsequent context analysis	Regular, due to illness, etc.	According to “Qing Shilu Event Classification System”
Facilitate context verification	Original text describing context	“...Dingnan General Xi’ erken defeated rebels at Sizhou’ s Forty Mile Pond Fortress...”
Facilitate verification and review	Original text describing greeting	“...On yihai day, the Emperor went to Empress Dowager Zhaosheng and Empress Dowager’ s palaces to inquire after their well-being...”

### 3.4 Data Consolidation and Statistics

Following annotation, team members performed further data consolidation, primarily aligning greeting times, recipients, and locations. Regarding greeting time, the *Qing Shilu* uses the heavenly stems and earthly branches system for dating. While months are identifiable, daily records only include heavenly stems and earthly branches, making precise dates difficult to determine. Therefore, team members cross-referenced daily records in *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and combined them with calculations of the sexagenary cycle to complete temporal identification of greeting records in *Kangxi Shilu*. Based on this, greeting frequen-

cies were statistically analyzed at annual, monthly, and daily levels. Regarding greeting recipients, as previously mentioned, the Kangxi reign had three Empress Dowagers, but *Qing Shilu* and *Qiju Zhu* records refer to them only as “Empress Dowager” without distinction. Therefore, team members historically contextualized the three Empress Dowagers, specifically identifying them as Empress Dowager Zhaosheng (Empress Xiaozhuangwen), Empress Dowager Renxian (Empress Xiaohuizhang), and Empress Dowager Cihe (Empress Xiaokangzhang) to clarify greeting recipients. Regarding locations, *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu* record greeting locations variously as “Empress Dowager’s Palace,” “Empress Dowager’s traveling palace,” or specific palace names. To facilitate statistics, team members aligned these general location descriptions with specific sites based on historical facts, such as Cining Palace, Wulong Pavilion, Ziguang Pavilion, Danboweide Traveling Palace, Jingfeng, Qianzun Hall, West Palace, Xianxiancheng Hall, Jiujuingsanshi Hall, Luhua Tower, and Yawan Studio. Research revealed that some locations had hierarchical relationships: “Danboweide,” “Qianzun Hall,” and “Jingfeng” were all within the “Empress Dowager’s Palace” in the West Garden of the Changchun Garden. “Xianxiancheng,” “Jiujuingsanshi,” “Luhua Tower,” and “Yawan Studio,” while located in the Changchun Garden, were not within the “Empress Dowager’s Palace” [18]. Additionally, the *Shilu* contains mixed traditional, variant, and simplified characters (e.g., 澹泊为德, 澹泊为德, 澹泊爲德, 淡泊为德, 镜峰, 镜峯, 宁寿宫, 寧寿宫, 寧寿宮), with different orthographies but identical meanings that hinder computer recognition, necessitating character standardization.

Statistics revealed 3,545 greeting records from *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and 3,268 from *Kangxi Shilu*. During annotation, the team discovered that although the *Qiju Zhu* served as an important source for *Shilu* compilation, the two texts do not record state affairs identically. To obtain the most complete greeting data, this study merged greeting records from both texts, using *Kangxi Shilu* as the foundation and temporally integrating records present in *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* but absent from the *Shilu*, ultimately yielding 4,434 greeting records.

Monthly Distribution of Greeting Records

## 4 Analysis of Emperor Kangxi’s Greeting Practices

### 4.1 Temporal Dimension Analysis

**4.1.1 Annual Greeting Frequency** Annual greeting frequency shows an overall trend of initial increase followed by decline. The early increase primarily resulted from Kangxi’s growing emphasis on filial governance, exemplified by his promulgation of the *Sixteen Sacred Instructions* in October of Kangxi 9 [19]. However, Kangxi was not the originator of Qing filial governance. In Shunzhi 13 (1656), the Qing court had already published the *Imperially Commissioned Annotation of the Classic of Filial Piety*, authored by Grand Secretary Jiang Hede, vigorously promoting the *Classic of Filial Piety*’s dissemination and explicitly expressing the court’s ideal of governing through filial piety [20].

Kangxi inherited Shunzhi's governance, ordering Confucian officials including Ye Fang'ai to continue compiling the *Extended Meaning of the Classic of Filial Piety*. Completed in Kangxi 21 (1690) in 100 volumes, Kangxi personally composed its preface in Kangxi 29 (1690). This court-sponsored compilation emphasized the *Classic of Filial Piety*'s political and educational functions. Early Qing emperors repeatedly issued imperial annotations of the *Classic of Filial Piety* to promulgate throughout the realm, complementing the court's support for family organizations and patriarchal order, thereby establishing the *Classic of Filial Piety* as a cornerstone of imperial ideology. Furthermore, Emperor Kangxi personally exemplified filial governance, fulfilling his filial duties to his paternal grandmother Empress Xiaozhuangwen, striving to serve as a model for all people to implement filial governance [19]. For instance, in the first month of Kangxi 11, when Empress Dowager Xiaozhuang was "seriously ill," her grandson Xuanye personally accompanied her to Chicheng Hot Springs (in present-day Chicheng County, Zhangjiakou City, Hebei) for convalescence. In summary, the peak greeting frequency in Kangxi 11 is entirely reasonable.

[Figure 3: see original paper] Annual Greeting Frequency

**4.1.2 Monthly and Daily Greeting Frequency** Examining monthly and daily distribution patterns, the average monthly greeting frequency is 361 times, excluding intercalary months. The monthly frequency chart clearly shows the first month as having the highest greeting frequency at 551 times, as the beginning of the year was highly significant in traditional culture. During the Beginning of Spring, activities including sacrificing to the Spring God, erecting spring banners, and offering sacrifices to the God of the Year were conducted to honor heaven and ancestors, expressing prayers for the new year. Greeting rituals received particular emphasis in this special context.

[Figure 4: see original paper] Monthly Greeting Frequency

Daily statistics reveal the highest greeting frequencies on the first and fifteenth days of each month—the new moon (*shuo*) and full moon (*wang*) days. New moon greetings numbered 219, full moon greetings 181, while the daily average was only 146.4. The concepts of *shuo* and *wang* originated from ancient lunar observations, which guided production and daily life. The new moon marks the first day, the full moon the fifteenth (or sixteenth) day. The period from new moon to full moon records the moon's transition from crescent to full, making these two days exceptionally significant. On new moon days, the sovereign had to hold court, with ministers offering congratulations. The *Chronicles of the Eastern Zhou Kingdoms* records: "Tomorrow is the new moon; the King will certainly hold court." The *Huangming Shu* also states: "On new and full moon days, wear full ceremonial attire and bow twice, burn incense, offer tea, then withdraw" [21]. Additionally, Qing family ancestral rites followed this pattern: "On new and full moon days, offer tea, light incense lamps, perform rituals, and report affairs" [22]; "On the first and fifteenth of each month, burn incense and offer tea (new and full moon)" [23].

[Figure 5: see original paper] Daily Greeting Frequency

From a modern natural science perspective, on new moon days the moon's ecliptic longitude equals the sun's, positioning the moon between earth and sun; on full moon days, earth lies between sun and moon. On both days the moon is at its closest approach to earth, exerting its strongest gravitational pull, potentially triggering natural phenomena. Ancient people considered these days inauspicious and often conducted special activities to pray for blessings and safety, making greeting frequencies on these days substantially higher than others. Moreover, Qing emperors primarily copied Buddhist scriptures on new and full moon days and on the Buddha's Bathing Day (the eighth day of the fourth month), calling it "imperial brush scripture copying," both to pray for parental blessings and to cultivate personal virtue, while also symbolizing enduring state fortune. Imperial brush scriptures collected in the Palace Library include Kangxi's 37th year (1698) copy of the *Sutra of the Medicine Master*, his 41st year (1702) copy of the *Heart Sutra*, and Qianlong's 9th year (1744) copy of the *Imperial Copy of the Yellow Court Inner View Jade Scripture*. The Qing dynasty also had a system of proclaiming sacred instructions on new and full moon days. According to *Jiaqing Shilu*, Volume 222: "The Grand Secretariat is instructed: Censor Zhou Yue memorializes, requesting restoration of the old lecture system, earnestly implementing it to promote moral transformation. During the Shunzhi period, the Six Instructions were imperially established. During the Kangxi period, the Sixteen Sacred Instructions were promulgated. In Yongzheng 2, the *Shengyu Guangxun* (Expanded Instructions) in ten thousand characters was again promulgated, ordering all provincial officials to proclaim it earnestly on each new and full moon day." Evidently, conducting filial activities such as greetings on new and full moon days was common practice, a finding corroborated by Kangxi's greeting data.

**4.1.3 Greeting Intervals** Analysis of greeting intervals across 4,392 greeting records reveals that 1,886 records (approximately 43%) show intervals of three days or less. Intervals of one day numbered 789, the most frequent category, followed by two-day intervals (530) and three-day intervals (567). The formal institutionalization of greeting activities as a system occurred during the Qianlong period. Qianlong was renowned as a filial emperor who served his mother with extreme devotion, "personally dancing on all great longevity celebrations to express love and respect; personally composing poetry and painting at palace banquets to bring joy" [24]. The *Guochao Gongshi*, compiled in Qianlong 7 as a state ceremonial and administrative code, contains detailed regulations on greeting etiquette: "Protocol for Greeting at Shoukang Palace: The ritual for inquiring after the Empress Dowager's well-being. Every two or three days, the Emperor rises early in ordinary attire, rides in a carriage to the Empress Dowager's palace, dismounts and enters through Shoukang's left gate, proceeding to the front of the Empress Dowager's warm chamber. The eunuch announces him, the Emperor enters the warm chamber, kneels to respectfully inquire after her well-being. The Empress Dowager grants him a seat, the Emperor rises and

approaches the left side of the imperial couch, kowtows once and sits. When tea is offered, the Emperor kowtows to receive it, drinks, and kowtows again as before. After reporting and responding, he takes leave, exits, mounts the carriage and returns to the palace.” This demonstrates that by the Qianlong period, imperial greetings to the Empress Dowager had become an institutionalized ceremony with specific temporal regulations (every two or three days), detailed routes, and prescribed procedures. Kangxi-era greeting intervals had already essentially approached the Qianlong-period “every two or three days” standard, representing an early developmental stage of this institutionalized protocol.

[Figure 6: see original paper] Greeting Interval Days and Frequency

## 4.2 Spatial Dimension Analysis

Spatially, greeting locations were basically fixed at the Empress Dowager’s and Empress’s palaces. However, scholarly debate continues regarding the specific identities of these locations, as “Empress Dowager’s Palace” and “Empress’s Palace” are designations based on occupants, while the actual residences of Empress Dowagers and Empresses were obviously more numerous. For instance, Shouning Palace served as an Empress’s Palace, but not every reference to “Empress’s Palace” necessarily indicates Shouning Palace. Therefore, during statistical consolidation, the team only categorized locations with spatial distinctions, such as Danboweide belonging to the Changchun Garden, without distinguishing the specific referents of “Empress Dowager’s Palace.” Analysis identified two important greeting locations: First, Ningshou Palace. Completed in Kangxi 28 (1689), Ningshou Palace was constructed for Emperor Kangxi to support his mother, the Empress Dowager (Empress Xiaohuizhang of the Borjigit clan) [25]. The *Kangxi Shilu* [26] records: “In the eleventh month of Kangxi 28, the Emperor instructed his Grand Secretaries and Imperial Household Department: ‘Because the Empress Dowager’s residence in the old Ningshou Palace has been for many years, I will build a new palace, more magnificent and resplendent than the old one. Now that it is first completed, we should respectfully move the Empress Dowager to her new residence.’ ” This palace became not only one of Kangxi’s important greeting venues but its construction purpose itself demonstrated his filial devotion. According to the *Kangxi Huidian*: “Cining Palace is located behind the Wuying Hall to serve the Empress Dowager; Ningshou Palace is northwest of Cining Palace to serve the Empress.” The *Qingshi Gao · Houfei Zhuan* contains similar records: “The Emperor’s paternal grandmother is called ‘Empress Dowager,’ his mother ‘Empress,’ residing in Cining, Shoukang, Ningshou and other palaces.” Second, Changchun Garden. Since Kangxi 26 when the Qing dynasty’s first detached palace was constructed, Empress Dowager Renxian and other imperial family members frequently resided there. The *Qiju Zhu* contains multiple records of Emperor Kangxi greeting the Empress Dowager or accompanying her on excursions in Changchun Garden [28], such as in the fifth month of Kangxi 41: “On the sixth day, dinghai, at the chen hour, the Emperor held court at Danning Residence

in Changchun Garden. After officials from various ministries reported matters, the Grand Secretaries...the Emperor went to Danboweide Traveling Palace to inquire after her well-being.”

Statistical results show that although 16 different location names appear, most were actually within Changchun Garden. The original site of Changchun Garden was the “Qinghua Garden” built by Ming Shenzong’s maternal grandfather Li Wei. After returning from his southern tour in 1684, Emperor Kangxi utilized Qinghua Garden’s remaining water features and rockeries to construct Changchun Garden in imitation of Jiangnan landscapes, creating a suburban summer retreat for governance. After its completion, Kangxi resided there approximately half of each year. Statistics show that from Kangxi 26 (1687) when he first stayed at Changchun Garden until his death on the thirteenth day of the eleventh month of Kangxi 61 (1722) in the Qingxi Study within the garden, Kangxi stayed at Changchun Garden 257 times over 36 years, totaling over 3,800 days, averaging 107 days annually, with the shortest stay being 29 days and the longest 202 days [29]. According to Kangxi’s own *Imperially Commissioned Record of Changchun Garden*, the garden served two main purposes: First, for physical recuperation and spiritual cultivation during leisure from governance. Kangxi stated: “Since assuming the throne, daily affairs have been countless, without leisure or rest, accumulating fatigue and gradually inducing illness. Occasionally during free time, I rest and recreate here, finding the spring water sweet and enjoyable. Gentle breezes slowly blow, temporarily dispelling afflictions.” Second, to support the Empress Dowager, as Kangxi expressed: “With the imperial carriage before and behind, enjoying family happiness and serving my mother with love.” Generally, Kangxi would bring the Empress Dowager to Changchun Garden before the fifteenth day of the first month to celebrate the Lantern Festival, bestowing banquets on frontier princes and ministers; in the second month, after inspecting the capital region he would return to Changchun Garden; in the fourth and fifth months he would depart for tours beyond the Great Wall or to the summer retreat, returning in the ninth and tenth months to again reside at Changchun Garden until year’s end when he would return to the palace for the new year [30]. Whether Ningshou Palace or Changchun Garden, Kangxi’s construction projects all contain documented purposes of supporting Empress Dowagers, representing important manifestations of his filial practice.

[Figure 7: see original paper] Spatial Distribution of Emperor Kangxi’s Greeting Locations

### 4.3 Personnel Dimension Analysis

Overall, among greetings to his paternal grandmother Empress Dowager Zhaosheng, birth mother Empress Dowager Cihe, and adoptive mother Empress Dowager Renxian, Kangxi’s greetings to his grandmother were most frequent at 1,974 times; greetings to his adoptive mother Empress Dowager Renxian ranked second at 1,627 times; while greetings to his birth mother Empress Dowager Cihe were least frequent with only five recorded instances,

because Empress Dowager Cihe passed away in Kangxi 2 at age 23. Thereafter, Empress Dowager Renxian became Kangxi's only mother, making him cherish this mother-son bond even more. The *Kangxi Shilu* records that in the twelfth month of Kangxi 26, Kangxi stated: "Recalling from my youth, I early lost my parents and attended upon my paternal grandmother for over thirty years, receiving her personal nurturing and instruction to achieve maturity. Without my paternal grandmother the Empress Dowager, I could never have achieved today's accomplishments. Her boundless kindness is difficult to repay in a lifetime." After his ascension, Kangxi invariably brought the Empress Dowager when paying respects at imperial tombs annually. The *Qingshi Gao* states: "The Emperor, supporting the Empress Dowager, visited the Filial Tomb, journeyed to Shengjing, paid respects at the Fu and Zhao Tombs, departed from Gubeikou for summer retreat, and visited Wutai Mountain, always accompanying the Empress Dowager to demonstrate filial devotion."

[Figure 8: see original paper] Annual Greeting Frequency Distribution by Recipient

Empress Dowager Zhaosheng passed away on the twenty-third day of the first month of Kangxi 27, while Empress Dowager Renxian passed away on the sixth day of the twelfth month of Kangxi 56. In annual average terms, Empress Dowager Zhaosheng received approximately 75 greetings per year, while Empress Dowager Renxian received about 29. Before Empress Dowager Zhaosheng's death, she held supreme status in the inner palace. Although Empress Dowager Renxian occupied the Empress Dowager position, she daily persisted in performing morning and evening greetings to Empress Dowager Xiaozhuang, continuing even when Xiaozhuang felt it unnecessary. Combined with Kangxi's greeting frequencies, this demonstrates Empress Dowager Zhaosheng's extraordinary status both within the family and the state. Because Kangxi's birth mother passed away early, his adoptive mother's existence provided him an opportunity to practice filial devotion. According to *Kangxi Shilu*, on the eve of Empress Dowager Renxian's sixtieth birthday in Kangxi 39, "the Emperor ordered the Imperial Kitchen to count ten thousand grains of rice to make 'myriad nations jade grain rice' and delicacies, fruits, and other items as offerings." The Empress Dowager, sharing the rice with children, was delighted. Additionally, since the Chengde Summer Resort had not yet been constructed while Empress Dowager Xiaozhuang was alive, Kangxi was unable to let his grandmother enjoy this excellent summer retreat, leaving a lifelong regret. What Kangxi could not do for his grandmother, he finally realized for his adoptive mother. For the eight years before Empress Dowager Xiaohui's death, Kangxi would escort the Empress Dowager to Chengde for summer retreat each year. Each time, Kangxi and the Empress Dowager would depart the capital together. At the halfway point, he would lead some princes and ministers ahead to prepare everything for her arrival. When Empress Dowager Xiaohui arrived, he would lead all princes and ministers out to kneel and greet her. Emperor Kangxi promoted governance through filial piety, setting a personal example. Although Empress Dowager Renxian was not his birth mother, Kangxi demonstrated sincere filial devotion,

supporting her at the “Shouxian Chunyong” in Changchun Garden until her death.

#### 4.4 Contextual Dimension Analysis

**4.4.1 Overview of Greeting Contexts** Through annotation and consolidation, the team identified 50 event categories totaling 1,631 incidents in *Kangxi Qiju Zhu*, and 65 categories totaling 2,695 incidents in *Kangxi Shilu*. In both texts, personnel appointment and dismissal events ranked first, with 731 recorded in *Kangxi Shilu* and 392 in *Kangxi Qiju Zhu*, corroborating the notion of frequent personnel changes in the Qing dynasty. As a frontier tribe that conquered China, the Manchus faced the formidable task of rebuilding and effectively ruling this vast and disordered empire. Qing emperors therefore strove to maintain stability across multi-ethnic, multicultural contexts while constructing a massive empire, with frequent personnel changes serving as an effective means to prevent factionalism. To resolve issues of regime legitimacy, it was necessary to 淡化 ethnic conflicts, which required not only revering heaven and ancestors but also transforming filial piety into loyalty. Revering heaven and ancestors applied to emperors themselves, while transforming filial piety into loyalty applied to ministers and common people—the two approaches complemented each other. If the emperor served the state and people, and the people remained law-abiding, the nation would enjoy peace and prosperity. As non-Han rulers, Qing emperors initially found it inappropriate to advocate loyalty to the sovereign among Han Chinese, so they adopted a “circuitous approach,” vigorously promoting filial virtue and emphasizing governance through filial piety [31]. Historical practice proved this approach successful, directly contributing to the emergence of the Kang-Yong-Qian Golden Age.

[Figure 9: see original paper] Distribution of Greeting Contexts in *Qing Shengzu Shilu*

[Figure 10: see original paper] Distribution of Greeting Contexts in *Qing Shengzu Qiju Zhu*

**4.4.2 Textual Analysis of Greetings During Major Events** On the fifth day of the second month of Kangxi 11, Kangxi’s eldest son Aisin-Gioro Chenghu died at age four. Among all Kangxi’s sons who died young, Chenghu was his favorite. *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* records: “The eldest son Chenghu, born to the Empress, was four years old, naturally intelligent, and the Emperor deeply loved him.” Chenghu’s special favor derived not only from his innate intelligence but also from his birth coinciding with Kangxi’s outwitting of Oboi, his status as the principal son born to the Empress, and his mother being Empress Hesheli, whose clan members Sony and Songgotu had rendered meritorious service to the imperial house. For Kangxi, Chenghu’s birth represented great auspiciousness, while his death constituted a tremendous blow. Yet greeting data shows that even after this loss, Kangxi persisted in performing greetings, maintaining cheerful conversation before the Empress Dowager. *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* for the sixth

day of the second month of Kangxi 11 records: “...The prince fell ill and died at the si hour on the fifth day. The Emperor mourned deeply. At the chen hour, suppressing his grief, he went to the Empress Dowager’ s traveling palace to inquire after her well-being, conversing cheerfully as usual.” After the greeting, Kangxi told his ministers: “I fear the Empress Dowager would be grieved if she heard the news, so I suppressed my pain to inquire after her.” “Minister of Rites Zhong Gu’ erdai and others came to report funeral arrangements for the prince at the Empress Dowager’s traveling palace. Fearing the Empress Dowager would learn of it, the Emperor summoned them to a secluded place and, with tears streaming down, personally instructed them on funeral arrangements.” *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* for the seventh day records: “...Since hearing of the prince’ s death, the Emperor often suppressed his grief to greet the Empress Dowager at her traveling palace, then secluded himself in deep sorrow.” In response to ministers’ consolation, Kangxi replied: “My daily greetings at the Empress Dowager’ s palace bring considerable comfort. Since accompanying the Empress Dowager to the hot springs, if her sacred person is completely well, I am overjoyed. I do not mind the matter of my young son. I have noted your memorials.” Meanwhile, *Kangxi Shilu* for the second month of Kangxi 11, *xinsi* day records: “...Prince Chenghu died. The Emperor mourned. He went to the Empress Dowager’ s traveling palace to inquire after her well-being, conversing cheerfully as usual. Upon leaving, he instructed the Imperial Bodyguard Jueluo Tada: ‘I fear the Empress Dowager would be grieved if she heard. If any princes hear and come to console me, send them all away.’ ” The *Kangxi Shilu* for *guiwei* day records: “...Since hearing of the prince’ s death, the Emperor has been deeply depressed. Imperial clansmen and ministers memorialized: ‘The Emperor, hearing of the prince’ s death, is often depressed. We wish the Emperor would move his residence to ease his sorrow through change of scenery.’ The Emperor replied: ‘My daily greetings at the Empress Dowager’ s traveling palace bring considerable comfort. Since accompanying the Empress Dowager to the hot springs, if her sacred person is completely well, I am overjoyed. I do not particularly mind the matter of my young son.’ ”

Enduring such pain yet persisting in greeting rituals, maintaining cheerful appearance to comfort his elders—this demonstrates that Kangxi’ s filial piety was not a reluctant compliance with institutional requirements but a profound emotion arising from genuine feeling.

As an exemplary emperor who governed through filial piety, Kangxi not only emphasized filial devotion in political decrees, customs, education, and all aspects of cultural life but also strove to serve as a model for all people, fulfilling his filial duties to his paternal grandmother, birth mother, and adoptive mother. The *Kangxi Shilu* records Kangxi’ s statement: “Who among people lacks grandparents and parents? As descendants, all should fulfill filial duties—what difference does status make? I govern the world through filial piety, thinking to set an example for ministers and people, establishing standards for posterity.” This research’ s findings demonstrate that from temporal, spatial, personnel, and contextual dimensions, greetings fully represent Kangxi’ s exemplary practice

of personally implementing filial piety.

This study employs digital humanities methods, using Emperor Kangxi's greeting practices as an entry point, digitizing greeting details as a foundation to excavate and analyze greeting records within the substantial historical archives of *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* and *Kangxi Shilu*, providing new research perspectives for Qing *Shilu* scholars and references for historical archive resource development. However, this research remains limited to Kangxi's reign alone, requiring further expansion in both vertical and depth dimensions. Additionally, due to partial content loss in *Kangxi Qiju Zhu* itself, the study's conclusions have certain limitations. Future work by this research team will conduct further systematic exploration across broader spatiotemporal scales and research dimensions, based on fine-grained data.

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