

Regulations for Queen Dowager Regency: An Introduction to the Nineteenth-Century *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* 垂簾聽政節目

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This paper aims to introduce the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* 垂簾聽政節目 (Regulations for Queen Dowager Regency) from nineteenth-century Chosŏn, as recorded in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 and *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記, with the goal of providing a comprehensive English-language translation and analyzing the characteristics of the regulations. The *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* standardized the procedure for *suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng* 垂簾聽政 (queen dowager regency), authorizing queen dowagers to assume a public role during the minority or unpreparedness of a king, which marked the only period in which women were legally and directly involved in court politics. This paper will analyze each regulation from the 1800 promulgation of the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* for Queen Dowager Chŏngsun's 貞純王后 (1745-1805) regency for King Sunjo 純祖 (1790-1834) and identify the amendments to the regulations during the later queen dowager regencies. The regulations allowed the queen dowagers to be involved in court politics within established bounds, covering a range of procedures from where the queen dowager could sit in court, how to give orders and how the king could turn to the queen dowager for advice. The regulations established the procedure for regency with the purpose of encouraging the joint governance between the queen dowager and the king, which coincided with the king's education during the regency period. The *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* is significant to studies on the queen dowagers and the institutional history of the Chosŏn dynasty because it codified queen dowager regency, officially authorizing them to assume a public and political role, albeit temporarily.

Keywords: *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* 垂簾聽政節目, *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng* 垂簾聽政, Queen Dowager Regency, Queen Dowager Chŏngsun 貞純王后, nineteenth-century Chosŏn

Introduction

This paper aims to introduce the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* 垂簾聽政節目 (Regulations for Queen Dowager Regency) from nineteenth-century Chosŏn, as recorded in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty) and *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記 (Diaries of the Royal Secretariat), with the goal of providing a comprehensive English-language translation and analyzing the characteristics of the regulations. The *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* were the rules and

regulations codified by the Ministry of Rites to ensure proper governance by the queen dowager while serving as regent during the minority or unpreparedness of a king. The first three regencies of the Chosŏn dynasty occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The first regency was from 1469 to 1476 by Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi 貞熹王后 (1418-1483) for King Sŏngjong 成宗 (r.1469-1494). The second in 1545 until 1553 by Queen Dowager Munjŏng 文定王后 (1501-1565) who became regent for King Myŏngjong 明宗 (r.1545-1567). The third was from 1567 until 1568, where Queen Dowager Insun 仁順王后 (1532-1575) served as regent for King Sŏnjo 宣祖 (1567-1608).

It was over 200 years before Chosŏn encountered another queen dowager regency. In the nineteenth century, Chosŏn was confronted with the need for four queen dowager regencies across four consecutive reigns. This began with Queen Dowager Chŏngsun (1745-1805) who served as regent for King Sunjo (r.1800-1834) from 1800 until 1803. The next was Queen Dowager Sunwŏn 純元王后 (1789-1857) who conducted her first regency for King Hŏnjong 憲宗 (r. 1834-1849) from 1834 until the end of 1840 and her second regency for King Ch'ŏlchong 哲宗 (r. 1849-1863) from 1849 until 1851. Finally, Queen Dowager Sinjŏng 神貞王后 (1809-1890) for King Kojong 高宗 (r. 1864-1907) from 1864 until 1866.¹ It was not until the first of these four nineteenth-century regencies that a procedure was promulgated through the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* to formalize queen dowager regency.

Chosŏn, as a Confucian society, subscribed to patriarchal gender norms, but the relationship between women and Confucianism could shift depending on historical context and the needs of its practitioners.² As such, despite the state's support and promotion of gender norms, there were times where the boundary between the public and domestic sphere that divided the genders altered. One case was the role of queen dowager, the widowed queen. Even without regency, queen dowagers were in a unique position that placed them as the head of the royal family, the most senior member of the royal family, despite age. The coexistence of the throne and the hierarchical order of the royal family which placed queen dowagers in a position of authority, created both symbolic and actual centers of power.³

The queen dowagers had influence over court and decisions within their role as head of the royal household, particularly when it came to the succession to the throne. The queen dowagers became the link between generations in order to ensure smooth transition of throne, and on occasion adopted the heir as their own son to ensure

¹ For consistency, the queen dowagers will be referred to by their well-known posthumous names, instead of the honorary names bestowed to them as queen dowagers.

² Youngmin Kim, "Portrait of Two Women: Multiple Layers of 'Confucianism' in Late Chosŏn Korea," in *Women and Confucianism in Chosŏn Korea: New Perspectives*, ed. Youngmin Kim and Michael J. Pettid (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011), pp. 13-14.

³ JaHyun Kim Haboush, "The Vanished Women of Korea," in *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History*, ed. Anne Walthall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 283.

legitimacy to the throne.⁴ The queen dowagers' role also extended to the abdication of a king and enthronement of his replacement due to coups d'état, an act that occurred twice in Chosŏn; first, the deposal of Yŏnsan'gun 燕山君 (r. 1494-1506) by Queen Dowager Chŏnghyŏn 貞顯王后 (1462-1530), and secondly the deposal of Kwanghaegun 光海君 (r. 1608-1623) by Queen Dowager Inmok 仁穆王后 (1584-1632). Due to these influences on family politics, Alban Schmid argues that queen dowagers held a high degree of authority that matched and, in some cases, exceeded the authority of the king.⁵ Due to the queen dowagers seniority they were in a position of authority, but it was only through acting as regent that a queen dowager had direct involvement in court politics. JaHyun Kim Haboush states that this female presence in the public space through regency was extraordinary and was only tolerated because it was temporary.⁶

Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng 垂簾聽政 (queen dowager regency) is a largely understudied area of Chosŏn history. Within English-language scholarship on gender in the Chosŏn dynasty, research that examines queen dowagers occasionally incorporates regency.⁷ For example, JaHyun Kim Haboush's work on the relationship between gender and language in Chosŏn utilizes the regencies of Queen Chŏnghŭi, Queen Munjŏng, and Queen Chŏngsun to discuss how language was perceived and documented when women entered the public space, in turn providing clear discussion on the role of regent and political activity.⁸

In general, nineteenth-century Chosŏn is lacking research, which has resulted in the *suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng* of the nineteenth century being overlooked. The main contributor to research on the *suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng* of nineteenth-century Chosŏn is Lim Hye-ryun, who has covered various aspects of queen dowager regency from the implementation and process of regency, analysis of the ceremony for regency, and the public and private aspects of regency.⁹ The limited research on the political situation of the

⁴ Seokyoung Han, "Dowager Queens and Royal Succession in Premodern Korea," in *A Companion to Global Queenship*, ed. Elena Woodacre (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), pp. 199, 207.

⁵ Alban Schmid, *The Institutional Power of Chosŏn Korea's Queen Dowagers, Gender and Power in the Premodern World* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2024), p. 61.

⁶ JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Gender and the Politics of Language in Chosŏn Korea," in *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman et al. (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2002), p. 242.

⁷ JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Female Rulers," in *Epistolary Korea: Letters in the Communicative Space of the Chosŏn, 1392-1910* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 29-41; Haboush, "Gender and the Politics of Language in Chosŏn Korea," 220-257; Seokyoung Han, "Dowager Queens and Royal Succession in Premodern Korea," 195-208; Bae-yong Lee, *Women in Korean History*, trans. Kyong-hee Lee (Ewha Womans University Press, 2008).

⁸ Haboush, "Gender and the Politics of Language in Chosŏn Korea," 227-243.

⁹ Hye-ryun Lim, "Chosŏn sidae wangbi taebi ūi ŏnmun kyosŏ chaksŏng kwa suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng si pyŏnhwa" [Changes in the Queen and Queen Dowager's Vernacular Korean Writings and Regency in the Chosŏn Dynasty], *Sahak Yŏn'gu*, no. 151 (2023): 135-72; Hye-ryun Lim, "19 segi 'suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏngŭi' ūi sihaeng kwa chŭgwi ūirye" [The Implementation of the 'Regency Ceremony' and the Ceremony of Enthronement in the Nineteenth Century], *Sarim*, no. 80 (2022): 37-67; Hye-ryun Lim,

nineteenth century, and the growth in power of the royal in-laws, *sedo chǒngch'i* 勢道政治 (*sedo* politics), has little mention of the regency periods.

Through Lim's research, the *Suryōm ch'ōngjōng chōlmok* has been described and analyzed in a few instances.¹⁰ Lim's first research that includes the *Suryōm ch'ōngjōng chōlmok* gives an explanation of the regulations and argues that through the regulations, regency in the nineteenth century was institutionally maintained and provided with a framework to govern.¹¹ In Lim's PhD thesis research she explains the regulations through grouping them into themes: the queen dowager's presence in court, the status and position of the queen dowager, the queen dowager's participation in state affairs, and the methods of giving orders.¹² In this work Lim concludes that the regulations placed the queen dowager regent of Chosŏn in a higher position symbolically than the empress dowager regent during Chinese history.¹³ In her work, looking at the characteristics of regency, Lim has additionally argued that the queen dowagers, following the stipulations of the *Suryōm ch'ōngjōng chōlmok*, shared the burden of the state with the king.¹⁴ Lim's latest research that includes the *Suryōm ch'ōngjōng chōlmok* provides an interesting comparison between the regulations created for the queen dowager regency and the regulations created for *taeri ch'ōngjōng* 代理聽政 (crown prince regency), through which she argues both the regulations created for the two types of regency ensured the authority of the regent never surpassed that of the king.¹⁵

While Lim has produced several studies discussing the *Suryōm ch'ōngjōng chōlmok*, scholars have so far provided no alternative interpretations of these regulations. This paper examines the procedures for queen dowager regency, with a focus on the nineteenth-century regencies, and analyzes the *Suryōm ch'ōngjōng chōlmok* promulgated in 1800 at the beginning of King Sunjo's reign for the regency of Queen Dowager Chōngsun. The regulations consist of 11 points, each of which is translated and discussed in this paper; it also briefly introduces the minor modifications made for the final two regency periods. The *Suryōm ch'ōngjōng chōlmok* is significant to studies

"19 segi suryōm ch'ōngjōng ūi kong kwa sa" [Public and Private Aspects of Regency by the Queen Dowager in the 19th Century], *Yōksa wa hyōnsil*, no. 93 (2014): 61–91; Hye-ryun Lim, "Han'guksa esō sōpchōng, suryōm ch'ōngjōnggwōn ūi pyōnhwa yangsang" [Changing Patterns of Regents and Regency in Korean History], *Han'guk sasang kwa munhwa*, no. 62 (2012): 173–200;

¹⁰ Hye-ryun Lim, "Chosŏn hugi 'taeri chōngch'i' ūi kwōnhan pōmju wa wanggwōn" [A Study on the Authority Category of 'Substitute Governance' and Kingship in Late Chosŏn], *Yōksa wa tamnon*, no. 85 (2018): 157–86; Hye-ryun Lim, "Chosŏn sidae suryōm ch'ōngjōng ūi chōngbi kwajōng" [The Process of the Mandate of *suryōm ch'ōngjōng* in the Chosŏn dynasty], *Chosŏn sidae sahakhoe*, no. 27 (2003): 33–65; Hye-ryun Lim, "19 segi suryōm ch'ōngjōng yōn'gu" [Study of *suryōm ch'ōngjōng* in the Nineteenth Century] (PhD dissertation, Sookmyung Women's University, 2008). Hye-ryun Lim, "19 segi suryōm ch'ōngjōng ūi t'ūkching: chedo jōk ch'ūngmyōn ūl chungshim ūro" [Characteristics of *suryōm ch'ōngjōng* in the Nineteenth Century], *Chosŏn sidae sahakhoe*, no. 48 (2009): 255–89.

¹¹ Lim, "Chosŏn sidae suryōm ch'ōngjōng ūi chōngbi kwajōng," 57.

¹² Lim, "19 segi suryōm ch'ōngjōng yōn'gu," 91–108.

¹³ Lim, "19 segi suryōm ch'ōngjōng yōn'gu," 107.

¹⁴ Lim, "19 segi suryōm ch'ōngjōng ūi t'ūkching," 276.

¹⁵ Lim, "Chosŏn hugi 'taeri chōngch'i' ūi kwōnhan pōmju wa wanggwōn," 182–183.

on the queen dowagers and the institutional history of the Chosŏn dynasty because it codified the regency of queen dowagers, officially authorizing them to assume a public role, albeit temporarily. This marked the only period in Chosŏn history in which women were legally and directly involved in court politics.

Procedure for Queen Dowager Regency

Female regency, specifically queen dowager regency, was used throughout Korea's history, beginning in the Three Kingdoms period 三國時代 for Koguryŏ's 高句麗 (37 BCE-668 AD) sixth king, T'aejo 太祖王, who came to the throne aged seven, compelling his mother, Queen Puyŏ 扶餘太后, to act as regent.¹⁶ Queen dowager regency was used as a method to conduct governance during unusual succession and rule, which occurred largely due to three reasons; when a king was too ill to govern, when a king came to the throne lacking in education, or when a king came to the throne as a minor. Despite earlier cases in Korean history, Chosŏn's queen dowager regencies followed precedents of female regency from China's dynastic history, focusing primarily on examples from the Song dynasty which had nine regency periods. Although criticized and occasionally prohibited in China's history, the empress dowager regency was an institutionalized means of governance when necessary and appears frequently throughout the dynasties. The ability of the empress dowager to act as regent was first institutionalized during the Han dynasty (202 BCE-220 AD). When the empress dowager served as regent, she could receive officials in the throne hall facing east and the emperor to the west, and memorials would be submitted to both the empress dowager and young emperor.¹⁷ It was not until the Song dynasty (960-1279) that the procedure for dowager regency was expanded and formalized. A description of the procedure can be found in *Songshi* 宋史 (History of Song).¹⁸

In 1800, King Sunjo came to the throne at 11 years old. Queen Dowager Chŏngsun was required to serve as regent to aid in governance while the young king underwent his education. Before the king turned 16, Queen Dowager Chŏngsun declared she would give up the regency (*ch'ŏllyŏm* 撤簾/*hwanjŏng* 還政) when he came of age. The next year the regency ended and the king governed by himself (*ch'injŏng* 親政). This was the custom for all the regencies in the nineteenth century, except for King Ch'ŏlchong who came to the throne unprepared at 19 years old and governed by himself at 21 years old. In 1800, at the beginning of Sunjo's reign, the regulations for regency, *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok*, were created. This was the first time in Chosŏn that regulations were compiled to institutionalize and standardize the queen dowager regency process.

¹⁶ Lim, "Han'guksa esŏ sŏpchŏng," 177.

¹⁷ Keith McMahon, "Women Rulers in Imperial China," *Nan Nü* 15, no. 22 (2013): 196; Lien-sheng Yang, "Female Rulers in Imperial China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 23 (1960): 55.

¹⁸ *Songshi* 宋史, 117.70.20.

There are several arguments as to why regulations were made in the beginning of the nineteenth century. As it had been over 200 years since the previous regency, the court needed to standardize the procedure. Another explanation points to King Sukchong's 肅宗 (r.1674-1720) reign, in which he ruled independently despite being a minor, prompting the creation of the regulations to avoid similar situations from reoccurring.¹⁹ King Sukchong came to the throne at 14 years old but went straight into governing by himself without a period of regency by a queen dowager, despite there being two queen dowagers alive at that time. Becoming crown prince at the age of seven, King Sukchong began his education in future kingship at a young age. He has been described as exceptionally intelligent and like an adult at a young age.²⁰ While, Lim has suggested that the regency was avoided as each queen dowager at the time was born into opposing political factions, she asserts that more research needs to be conducted to prove this.²¹

Lim also argues that with no previous regulations for regency, the regulations created for the crown prince regency during the reign of King Sukchong in 1717 influenced the creation of the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* in 1800, as the first promulgation of crown prince regency regulations in Chosŏn.²² The first three cases of queen dowager regency in the Chosŏn dynasty did not have formalized regulations. The procedures for Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi's regency were decided a few months into regency, which encouraged the king to make decisions in consultation with either the ministers or the queen dowager, and any decisions made were to be put into effect only after the approval of the queen dowager.²³ During the regency of Queen Dowager Munjŏng, a series of rules were discussed and created that established key aspects of the regency, including who would perform the regency, the location of regency and use of a curtain for division in court.²⁴ These points were discussed throughout the regency, but were never collated and formalized.

The rules discussed during Queen Dowager Munjŏng's regency are reflected in the 1800 regulations for regency but are not cited as examples used when creating the regulations. It was instead the Song dynasty's second empress dowager regent, Empress Dowager Gao 宣仁聖烈皇后 高氏 (1032-1093), and Chosŏn's first queen dowager regent, Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi, who were recorded as the examples used when creating the regulations. The regulations were first recorded after the record in the *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 (The Annals of King Sunjo) that documented the ceremony of the Sunjo's coronation and the ceremony for inauguration of regency. They began by stating the precedent that the regulations would follow:

¹⁹ Lim, "Chosŏn sidae suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng ŭi chŏngbi kwajŏng," 51.

²⁰ Lim, "19 segi suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng yŏn'gu," 63.

²¹ Lim, "19 segi suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng yŏn'gu," 63-64.

²² Lim, "Chosŏn sidae suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng ŭi chŏngbi kwajŏng," 165-166.

²³ Haboush, "Gender and the Politics of Language in Chosŏn Korea," 229.

²⁴ Lim, "19 segi suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng yŏn'gu," 80-85.

The *Yejo* 禮曹 (Ministry of Rites) *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok*, concerning the current regency of Her Highness the Queen Dowager in relation to the state's most important rites, is prepared and carried out in accordance with the revered example of Empress Gao of the Song dynasty, and the precedent set by our state's Queen Chŏnghŭi.

禮曹垂簾聽政節目今此大王大妃殿下垂簾同聽政係是邦家莫重莫大之禮謹稽宋朝宣仁太后故事國朝貞熹聖母徽規磨鍊舉行.²⁵

The regulations were repeated for Queen Dowager Sunwŏn's second regency and Queen Dowager Sinjŏng's regency. However, unlike the 1800 regulations which were recorded as the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok*, the subsequent restatements of the regulations were cited as the *Suryŏm tong ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* 垂簾同聽政節目, translating literally to the regulations for joint governance from behind the hanging curtain, or simply regulations for joint governance. While the name *suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng* 垂簾聽政 and *suryŏm tong ch'ŏngjŏng* 垂簾同聽政 are often considered interchangeable names for queen dowager regency, by including the character *tong* 同 to mean together or jointly, this is an instance of the encouragement of the regency being a joint governance between the queen dowager and the king. This was likely undertaken to discourage the monopolization of power by the queen dowager during the regency period. This is not the first time that *tong* had been used to reinforce the idea that a dowager regent did not have sole power in their position. Lien-sheng Yang, in "Female Rulers in Imperial China," describes the Song officials as making a point by using *tong* in proclamations about empress dowager regency, in order to emphasize that the emperor, although in illness or minority, still remained the sovereign.²⁶ The encouragement of joint governance can be found throughout the regulations of regency, emphasizing the aim of the regulations being to discourage monopolization of power by the queen dowager.

Regulations for Queen Dowager Regency

Proclaimed in 1800, the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok*, is divided into 11 regulations that ranged from how the queen dowager could be involved in court, to her attire. Previous research often describes the regulations for regency as consisting of 12 regulations, but it was not until later promulgations that the regulations increased to 12, a modification that will be discussed later in this paper. The first regulation states, "The temporary location for the regency is the *Pyŏnjŏn* 便殿 (Palace Administration Hall). Temporarily let the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn* 承政院 (Royal Secretariat) receive [the queen dowager's] royal orders." 一垂簾處所以便殿爲之臨時令政院稟旨.²⁷ The *Chŏngjŏn* 正殿 (Main Throne Hall) was designated for major events and, as such, was not

²⁵ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

²⁶ Yang, "Female Rulers in Imperial China," 54.

²⁷ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

suitable for everyday governance, so regular court throughout the dynasty was held in the administration hall. This appears to be a continuation of procedure that was established during the regency of Queen Dowager Munjŏng, when the location of regency was moved to the administrative hall.²⁸ Despite this being a consistent aspect of court governance procedure, the regulation explicitly stated that when the queen dowager conducted the regency, she was permitted access to this space, showing the authorized shift of the queen dowager from her role in the private and domestic sphere into the public domain. The regulation makes no mention of the main throne hall, likely signaling the regency would not break this boundary.

Under this regulation, the queen dowager was also formally authorized to issue orders through the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn*, Royal Secretariat, in the same manner as the king. The *Sŭngjŏngwŏn* was the administrative office responsible for transmitting the king's orders, and as such the queen dowager's orders during regency. In the Chosŏn dynasty, regency was the only circumstance in which royal women were legally permitted to give orders concerning political matters. Nevertheless, queens and queen dowagers exercised significant influence as the spouses or widows of kings, advising on matters such as the royal family, the women's quarters, and succession to the throne. It became most common for royal women to submit *Han'gŭl* letters expressing their opinions, often described as *ŏnmun kyosŏ* 諺文教書 (Korean vernacular royal edicts). Although previously not uncommon for a queen dowager to comment on state affairs, the regulations provided queen dowagers with the formal right to give orders, in the same way the king could.²⁹

The second regulation formalized where the queen dowager could sit within the hall and declared the most well-known aspect of queen dowager regency, the queen dowager sitting behind a curtain, the route of the name *suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng* 垂簾聽政, literally meaning governance from behind a hanging curtain. The regulation stated:

While conducting the regency, Her Highness the Queen Dowager shall sit behind the curtain towards the eastern side, facing south. His Highness the King was originally to sit outside the curtains towards the western side, also facing the south, but this arrangement has been amended so that His Highness the King shall sit in the center, facing south. During *choha* 朝賀 (court ceremonies)³⁰, in accordance with the historical precedent of Empress Dowager Gao, military and civil officials shall first bow four times to Her Highness the Queen Dowager, then move slightly to the west and bow four times to His Highness the King.

一垂簾時大王大妃殿下座于簾內近東南向殿下侍座于簾外近西南向 後以當中南向改書以入朝賀時依宣仁太后故事文武官先行四拜于大王大妃殿下移班少西行四拜于殿下。³¹

²⁸ *Myŏngjong sillok* 明宗實錄 1:86a; *Myŏngjong sillok* 明宗實錄 3:54b.

²⁹ For translations of queen dowager edicts see, Haboush, "Female Rulers," 29-41.

³⁰ Ceremonies such as Winter Solstice, New Years and birthdays where greetings and well-wishes were offered to the King.

³¹ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

Using a curtain to separate the queen dowager from the male officials was a way to maintain Confucian etiquette during queen dowager regency. As a Confucian state, Chosŏn followed the *naeobŏp* 內外法 (Inside-Outside Rule), the law prohibiting the free contact between men and women.³² Due to this law, the queen dowager was unable to be seen properly by those outside of her immediate family. To maintain this, a curtain was installed in the administrative hall to allow the queen dowager to sit in court without being visible to the male ministers. It is not surprising the queen dowagers, as regent, would turn to their family for support when they were unable to meet face-to-face with other ministers, coinciding with common association of the growth in power of a queen dowagers' family during regency periods.

Regency that used a hanging curtain to separate the queen dowager and the court is often cited as beginning with Empress Wu (324-384) in Eastern Jin, who is said to have put up a white gauze curtain in the Taiji Palace and held court with the emperor in her arms.³³ In Chosŏn, the use of a curtain to conduct regency did not begin with Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi, but with Queen Dowager Munjŏng. At the beginning of the regency period of Queen Dowager Munjŏng the court argued that, although the records do not say Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi used a curtain, it is still important they follow the precedent of earlier regencies, thus must install the curtain.³⁴ It is difficult to find records that categorically state whether Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi used a curtain or not. However, it has been argued that, due to Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi's regency taking place during early Chosŏn, before the wide expansion of Confucian ideology, the *naeobŏp* may not have been strictly followed.³⁵

Not only did the second regulation stipulate the use of a curtain, it also described the position within the court that the queen dowager and king should sit. As stated in the record, previous regencies had the king sitting facing the south, located more to the left of the hall which placed the queen dowager in the center, to the right of the king. To move the king into the center of the court, they adjusted the location to have the queen dowager situated more to the right of the hall. The previous example described in the regulation only refers to the example of Queen Dowager Munjŏng's regency, as King Sŏnjo is described as having sat behind the curtain with Queen Dowager Insun.³⁶ Repositioning the king to sit in the center of the hall was likely to emphasize that the king, not the queen dowager, remained the rightful sovereign of the state. However, rather than bow to the king, the officials would bow first to the queen

³² Han Hee-sook, "Women's Life During the Chosŏn Dynasty," *International Journal of Korean History* 6 (2004): 114.

³³ McMahon, "Women Rulers in Imperial China," 196; Yang, "Female Rulers in Imperial China," 56.

³⁴ *Myŏngjong sillok* 明宗實錄 1:6a. 古者帝王幼冲則太皇后聽政有例故近日公事出納于上殿矣考貞熹王后時日記則有某日御于某殿之例而貞熹王后與成宗同坐聽政矣今亦事若不關則院相使承傳內官出納大事則大王大妃與大殿同御承旨入啓宜當貞熹王后時日記未見有垂簾之事然垂簾古也今則不可不設令政院備其儀何如

³⁵ Lim, "19 segi suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng yŏn'gu," 74.

³⁶ Lim, "19 segi suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng yŏn'gu," 89.

dowager during court celebrations to recognize that, as the most senior member of the royal family, her position remained above that of the king.

How the queen dowager was permitted to be involved in politics was expanded in the third regulation, which states:

During regencies in the Song dynasty, eunuchs conveyed orders from in front of the curtain. In Chosŏn, however, it is permitted for Her Highness the Queen Dowager to personally manage general affairs through the ministers. When residing deep within the palace, Her Highness summoned *naegwan* 內官 (eunuchs) to transmit orders, while matters of the state were explained by the *chusagwan* 奏事官³⁷, and in special circumstance she was permitted to govern by herself. Now, at the present time, Her Highness the Queen Dowager and His Highness the King govern jointly. Officials first report to His Highness the King, who may either decide by himself or act in accordance with Her Highness the Queen Dowager's decree. At times, Her Highness the Queen Dowager may issue edicts herself, and ministers may, on occasion, report directly to her from in front of the curtain. This arrangement is considered a means by which superiors and subordinates can assist and offer counsel together within one hall.

一垂簾時宋朝則簾前通語內侍傳宣我朝則大臣以大妃殿下親斷庶務所可深居宮中使內官傳命請令奏事官解釋文字以啓特許親聽矣今番則大王大妃殿下親宣同聽政奏事官先奏于殿下則殿下或親爲裁斷或仰稟慈旨大王大妃殿下或親宣慈教諸臣或直奏簾前以爲一堂上下輔翼參贊之道。³⁸

This regulation is one of the most direct ways the court encouraged the queen dowager to jointly govern with the king to prevent the monopolization of power. While the beginning of the regulations states the example of Queen Dowager Gao will be used to create the regulations, here the example of the Song dynasty is given to show how the Chosŏn dynasty is moving away from certain methods of governing, specifically to allow the more direct involvement of the queen dowager and the joint governance with the king.

The regulation states that during the Song dynasty the eunuchs would convey the empress dowager's orders. However, for the Chosŏn dynasty, the queen dowagers were to personally give edicts, and the ministers had the ability to directly inform her of matters but divided by the curtain. This can be traced back to the regency of Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi, when it was ordered that while the queen dowager governs, the eunuchs were not to be informed of matters of governance.³⁹ This prevented eunuchs from gaining excessive influence through their close proximity to the queen dowager and ensured that the queen dowager discussed state matters only from behind the curtain, thus encouraging the queen dowager to rely on ministers for advice, rather than personal relations. Park Chihun, when discussing Empress Dowager Gao's

³⁷ The *chusagwan* 奏事官 were officials who presented memorials and reports.

³⁸ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

³⁹ Lim, "Chosŏn sidae suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng ŭi chŏngbi kwajŏng," 54.

regency, argues that female regency was largely conducted in only two ways: either through the use of ministers, or through the use of close relationships such as family members or eunuchs.⁴⁰ These concerns come across clearly within the regulations, where the ministers created a structure that allowed them to discuss affairs directly with the queen dowager.

A further point pushed by the court in this regulation was the fact that the queen dowager regency was not the sole governance by the queen dowager, but a joint governance with the king. The king was to be informed first and then turn to the queen dowager for advice. Not only does this regulation clearly state the two would jointly govern, as discussed earlier with the use of *tong* to clarify the joint governance, but also allows the king to learn state governance with the support of the queen dowager. One of the key aspects of the regulations for queen dowager regency, and an aim for the regencies in general, was to give young kings time to learn how to govern and prepare them for when the regency was relinquished and sole governance began. A mirrored case of regency to allow the king to learn governance before having to manage state affairs on their own, can be seen in the crown prince regencies, where occasionally a crown prince would take on a regency to get first-hand experience in governing while receiving the advice of the current king.

The fourth regulation continued the organization of the queen dowager's involvement in governance, declaring how often the queen dowager was expected to be involved in court:

In one month, court shall be held six times. *Choch'am* 朝參 (court audience) and *sangch'am* 常參 (standard audience) shall follow precedents as decreed by His Highness the King. Joint governance shall follow the Song dynasty's model of *ilch'am* 日參 (daily participation) and *yukch'am* 六參 (every sixth day participation). When there are cases of important political orders, rites, and urgent reports from the border, permission is given [for the queen dowager] to issue orders when there is no time to consult with the king. Matters of importance, such as issuance of orders, performance of rites, military soldiers' affairs, punishments, examinations, etc. shall all be directly reported to His Highness the King, but the queen dowager's decree shall be proclaimed and a final decision made.

一一月六對朝參常參依例稟旨同聽政體宋朝日參六參之例大政令大典禮時急邊報許令無時請對或賜宣召祀典兵刑試官職等重務皆直啓于殿下稟慈旨裁決

41

The main point of this regulation was to encourage the regular holding of court following both Song and Chosŏn customs. Chosŏn's regular court followed the practice where *sangch'am* 常參 (a standard audience) was held daily at the administrative hall with the ministers, and *choch'am* 朝參 (a court audience) was held

⁴⁰ Chihun Park, "Puksongdae sŏnin t'aehu ūi sŏpchŏng" [The Regency of the Empress Dowager Gao in Northern Song China], *Chungguk hakbo* 43 (2001): 263.

⁴¹ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

every other day with all the officials in the main hall.⁴² As stated in the previous regulation, the queen dowager was allowed to occasionally proclaim edicts herself, a right elaborated upon in this regulation, establishing that in urgent and important matters the queen dowager could make decisions without first consulting the king.

There are two main reasons for the court to be held six times a month, every five days, with the queen dowager present. In late Chosŏn, the court began meeting following the governing method of *ch'adae* 次對 (the holding of court every five days or six times a month with the king). Similarly, during the first regency of the Song dynasty, the court recommended that queen dowager should join in court every five days, following the example of the Eastern Han.⁴³

The fifth regulation, while still discussing the queen dowager's involvement in governance, shifts the attention towards how the queen dowager would be referred to in the position of regent. The regulations state:

Orders issued by Her Highness the Queen Dowager shall be referred to as *chagyo* 慈教, those issued by His Highness the King shall be referred to as *sanggyo* 上教. In her orders, Her Highness the Queen Dowager shall follow the precedent of the Song dynasty to refer to herself as *yŏ* 予 (I). Matters concerning the opening and closing of the inner and outer palace gates, as well as military operations, shall first be informed to His Highness the King. After the king conveys these matters to Her Highness the Queen Dowager, an order may be posted on the palace gates, or, in accordance with the order given, may be dispatched to the military barracks. 一慈教稱大王大妃傳曰上教稱傳曰大王大妃殿下教令用宋朝稱予之例內外門鑰開閉軍兵解嚴稟于大殿大殿稟慈旨後用標信信箭舉行.⁴⁴

This regulation creates distinction between the king and queen dowager's orders during the regency period. As discussed previously, regency was the only time in Chosŏn history in which a royal woman was legally allowed to be involved in state politics; orders given directly by the queen dowager thus needed to be signified as such. The court codified the use of the term *chagyo* for the queen dowager's orders, distinguishing it from *sanggyo*, the term for a king's edict. The character *cha* 慈, meaning love or compassion, was also used in other names and titles through the Chosŏn dynasty when referring to the queen dowagers, such as *chasŏng* 慈聖 or *chajŏn* 慈殿, for the queen dowager herself and *chaji* 慈旨 for her orders. The general term for orders given by a queen dowager, not exclusive to regency, was *ŭiji* 懿旨, so when this term was used during regency it emphasized her familial position, not official position as regent.⁴⁵ Despite the aim of creating distinction, most policy

⁴² James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), p. 603.

⁴³ John Chaffee, "The Rise and Regency of Empress Liu (969-1033)," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 31, (2001): 13-14.

⁴⁴ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

⁴⁵ Haboush, "Gender and the Politics of Language in Chosŏn Korea," 230.

announcements were issued under the name of the king and written in the mirror image of royal edicts, making it difficult to assess the extent of the queen dowager's influence.⁴⁶

When referring to herself in edicts, the court allowed her to follow the precedent of the Song dynasty that used *yŏ* 予. The king, throughout the Chosŏn dynasty, in reference to himself, also used *yŏ* 予/余. During the Song dynasty, by contrast, the equivalent term was *zhen* 朕, which female regents were prohibited from using, with the court permitting only the use of *yu* 予.⁴⁷ The Song dynasty employed this rule to distinguish between emperor and regent, while Chosŏn's court permitted the same word for king and regent.

The sixth regulation is the final regulation in the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* to discuss the queen dowager's involvement in court politics. It focuses on how appeals could be presented during the regency period:

Minister's appeals, following the precedent of Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi, shall be presented to His Highness the King. Reports from the *Sahŏnbu* 司憲府 (Office of the Inspector-General), *Saganwŏn* 司諫院 (Office of the Censor-General), and appeals submitted by government offices concerning crimes, administrative practices, and reports of rural matters, shall also be presented to His Highness the King. These matters can either be decided directly [by the king], or, after informing Her Highness the Queen Dowager, a response may be issued.

一諸臣疏章依貞熹聖母時故事上于殿下臺啓及各司啓辭諸道狀聞亦啓于殿下或直斷或自內承稟後賜批。⁴⁸

This regulation continues the encouragement of the joint governance between the queen dowager and the king, a system in which appeals are first reported to the king, who can then turn to the queen dowager for advice. The regulation not only encourages joint governance but also instructs the king to learn the proper ways of governance, in part through the advice of the queen dowager. One of the model regents used by the court, Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi, is described as having a more indirect role in governance, advising the king only when needed.⁴⁹ The regulations aimed to encourage the queen dowager to follow a similar method of involvement in the court, through advising and mentoring the king, rather than dominating the court proceedings.

The remaining regulations move away from the queen dowager's involvement in governance as the regent and focus more on the administrative and ritual aspects of the court. The seventh regulation states that on special occasions the queen dowager

⁴⁶ Haboush, "Female Rulers," 30.

⁴⁷ McMahon, "Women Rulers in Imperial China," 197.

⁴⁸ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a

⁴⁹ Woo-gi Kim, "Chosŏn sŏngjong tae chŏnghŭi wanghu ŭi suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng" [The Regency of Queen Chŏnghŭi during Sŏngjong's Reign of the Chosŏn Dynasty], *Chosŏn'sa yŏn'gu*, no. 10 (2001): 211.

should receive greetings and gifts, in the same way as they would be presented to the king:

On the three holidays (*sammyōngil* 三名日) of the New Year, the winter solstice, and king's birthday each administrative office shall present formal greetings to Her Highness the Queen Dowager, following the same protocol as presenting greetings to His Highness the King. Offerings and gifts shall follow the aforementioned conduct.

一正至誕日三名日各道進箋于大王大妃殿一依大殿進箋之例方物物膳依前舉行.⁵⁰

Lim Hye-ryun argues that this regulation implies that the king and the queen dowager were, symbolically, of equal status at court during the regency, as they received the same number of gifts which is in contrast with periods when the queen dowager did not serve as regent and received fewer gifts than the king.⁵¹ This formal equality seems to clarify that the king, not the queen dowager, was the true sovereign.

The eighth regulation permitted the queen dowager to join in the king's educational lectures, held in an area of the court that had previously been closed to royal women. The regulation states, "When His Highness the King attends *kyōngyōn* 經筵 (royal lectures), Her Highness the Queen Dowager, may listen from behind the curtain." 一殿下御經筵時大王大妃殿於簾內以時親臨時講.⁵² As was the same for court, she could sit behind a curtain to attend the lecture, and after the lectures finished, the queen dowager was able to discuss state matters. Allowing the queen dowager to participate in this aspect of court life not only continued the encouragement of the king's education but also positioned the queen dowager to directly hear the opinions and teachings of the ministers, moderating the influence of private discussions she may have had with family members.

The final three regulations look at the implementation of regency, specifically the proper ceremonial institutionalization of the regency. The ninth, tenth and eleventh regulations are recorded as follows:

After ascending to the throne within *Injōngmun* 仁政門⁵³, His Highness the King, wearing the crown, goes to the palace *Pyōnjōn*. Here, in the presence of Her Highness the Queen Dowager, he leads the ministers in the courtyard in performing the ritual of four bows. After this is completed, His Highness the King ascends the hall and sits together with the Queen Dowager. The high officials of second rank or higher, having followed them up, inquire after the wellbeing of Her Highness the

⁵⁰ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a

⁵¹ Lim, "Chosŏn sidae suryōm ch'ōngjōng ūi chōngbi kwajōng," 56-57.

⁵² *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

⁵³ Within Ch' andōkkung Palace, the main throne hall *Injōngjōng* 仁政殿 is entered through *Injōngmun* gate 仁政門. This signifies the coronation ceremony took place at *Injōngjōng* the main throne hall.

Queen Dowager and His Highness the King. Thereafter, they withdraw and return to their respective positions. Her Highness the Queen Dowager then returns to the inner palace. His Highness the King removes his robe and crown, changes back into mourning attire and returns to the inner palace. The ministers then depart.

一殿下於仁政門卽阼後仍具冕殿詣大王大妃殿下所御便殿率百官行四拜禮于殿庭訖殿下陞殿侍坐大臣二品以上以次從陞起居于大王大妃殿殿下 後還復位大王大妃殿下還內殿下釋冕服反喪服還內諸臣退出。

The ceremony inaugurating the queen dowager regency is of great importance and should follow the precedent established during the time of Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi. A special edict should be proclaimed to the court and the people. After His Highness the King has returned to within the palace, the members of the royal family, together with the civil and military officials, change to the official hemp mourning attire and hold the ceremony without the king present. Beginning on the fourth day, while conducting the regency, Her Highness the Queen Dowager, wearing the *chŏgŭi* 翟衣⁵⁴, will attend court. At ordinary times, she may wear her usual attire. When attending court during regency, for all ceremony matters, the *Aekchŏngsŏ* 掖庭署⁵⁵, along with each administrative office, shall pay her their respects.

一垂簾同聽政典禮至大倣貞熹聖母時事別爲頒教中外而殿下還內後宗親文武百官改具布公服權停例舉行今初四日垂簾時大王大妃殿具翟衣殿座常時則用常時所御之服垂簾時殿座排設諸事令掖庭署及各該司進排。

The regency is to be reported to the shrines including *Sajik* 社稷 (Altars of the Spirits of the Land and Grain), *Chongmyo* 宗廟 (Royal Ancestral Shrine), *Yŏngnyŏngjŏn* 永寧殿 (Hall of Eternal Peace) and *Kyŏngmogung* 景慕宮 (Kyŏngmo Shrine), on auspicious days.⁵⁶

一垂簾告由社稷宗廟永寧殿景慕宮擇吉奉行。⁵⁷

⁵⁴ The *chŏgŭi* 翟衣, ceremonial robe (sometimes referred to as the pheasant robe), was a blue robe embroidered with pheasants and the highest formal attire worn royal women in the Chosŏn dynasty during ceremonies.

⁵⁵ *Aekchŏngsŏ* 掖庭署 were an administrative body in charge of various affairs in the court, including conveying the kings orders. James B. Palais has used the term Royal Concubine Office to name this administrative office. See Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions*, p. 644.

⁵⁶ These four locations served as sites used to perform rituals in the hopes for peace and prosperity of the nation. *Sajik* 社稷 served as the location to perform rituals for overcoming natural disaster and to seek good harvest. *Chongmyo* 宗廟, referring to the main hall of Chongmyo Shrine was the location where the previous kings and queens ancestral tablets were enshrined, and was the key location for the king to visit to wish for the prosperity of the nation and to inform the ancestors of important news. In addition to this, *Yŏngnyŏngjŏn* 永寧殿 was the extended hall next to Chongmyo's main hall which housed the ancestral tablets of those no longer in the main hall. *Kyŏngmogung* 景慕宮, at the time, enshrined the ancestral tablet of Crown Prince Sado, and during later regency periods also enshrined the ancestral tablet of Lady Hyegyŏng.

⁵⁷ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

The regency ceremony, *suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng ŭi* 垂簾聽政儀, occurred after the completion of the king's coronation ceremony. As stated in the regulations, and corresponding closely to the details of the actual ceremony recorded in the *Sunjo sillok*, the coronation took place in the main throne hall, after which the king would move to the administration hall to begin the regency ceremony.⁵⁸ This followed the same precedent as the first regulation that designated the administration hall as the location of the regency. Through designating the space for regency as the Administrative Hall, the court again reinforced the king's sovereignty, as the Main Throne Hall was not an appropriate location for female regency.

Regarding the queen dowager's attire, she was instructed to wear *chŏgŭi*, ceremonial robes, only during celebrations and at the beginning of the regency, while continuing to wear her regular clothing during everyday activities. This suggests that the queen dowager's involvement in court affairs was intended to be a routine aspect of governance during the regency period, not ceremonial. Furthermore, the declaration of the regency to the ancestral shrines served to legitimize the regency, indicating that it was understood as a legally sanctioned mode of governance during exceptional periods of rule.

Amendments to the Regulations for Regency

The regulations for regency were reissued at the beginning of Queen Dowager Sunwŏn's second regency in 1849 and Queen Dowager Sinjŏng's regency in 1864, as the *Suryŏm tong ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok*. This updated version is very similar to the original 1800 *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok*, with only five notable changes, excluding minor character changes that do not affect the content of the regulations. Additionally, it should be noted each regulation in the two reissues of the *chŏlmok*, as recorded in the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* and *Kojong sillok* 高宗實錄 (The Annals of King Kojong), include the *idu* 吏讀 (clerical reading) sentence ending marker *wibaekche* 爲白齊, which noted the end of the regulation clause. The *idu* writing system incorporated vernacular Korean represented by Classical Chinese characters, which although appearing in other forms of literature, was most often used for administrative documents and was essential for carrying out administrative business in Chosŏn.⁵⁹ Furthermore, in both instances, a statement was added to the end of the *Suryŏm tong ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* noting the provisional nature of the regulations.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a.

⁵⁹ Ross King, "Idu in and as Korean Literature," in *The Routledge Companion to Korean Literature*, ed. Heekyoung Cho (Routledge, 2022), 126-127.

⁶⁰ *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記 2487:24a-25a. 一未盡條件追乎磨鍊爲白齊; *Kojong sillok* 高宗實錄 1:2a-2b. 一未盡條件追後磨鍊爲白齊.

The first changes were made to the second regulation that determined where the queen dowager could sit in court. The amended regulation did not change the legal aspect but instead removed the information that described the previous location where the queen dowager would sit, making the regulation more concise.⁶¹ The biggest change to the regulations of regency affected the tenth regulation. In the amended regulations the information stayed largely the same, however the regulation was divided into two separate regulations as follows:

The ceremony inaugurating the queen dowager regency is of great importance and should follow the precedent established during the time of Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi. A special edict should be proclaimed to the court and the people. After His Highness the King has returned to within the palace, the members of the royal family, together with the civil and military officials, change to the official hemp mourning attire and hold the ceremony without the king present.

一垂簾同聽政典禮至大倣貞熹聖母時故事別爲頒教中外而殿下還內後宗親文武百官改服布公服權停例舉行爲白齊。

Beginning on the ninth day, while conducting the regency, Her Highness the Queen Dowager, wearing the *chŏgŭi*, will attend court. At ordinary times, she may wear her usual attire. When attending court during regency, for all ceremony matters, the *aeckhŏngsŏ*, along with each administrative office, shall pay her their respects.

一今初九日垂簾時大王大妃殿下具翟衣殿座常時則用常時所御之服垂簾時殿座排設諸事令掖庭署及各該司進排爲白齊。⁶²

Due to the splitting of regulation ten into two regulations, the *Suryŏm tong ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* from 1849 onwards included 12 regulations. This split also serves to make the regulations more concise.

Additionally, the regulations were amended to declare the specific day on which the regency began. For King Sunjo's reign, following the lunar calendar, the king ascended the throne, and therefore, the queen dowager became regent, on the fourth day of the seventh month, hence the fourth day is declared in the regulations.⁶³ For King Ch'ŏlchong's reign, following the lunar calendar, he ascended to the throne on the ninth day of the sixth month and in the *Suryŏm tong ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok*, the ninth day is recorded, as shown above. As for the *Suryŏm tong ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* promulgated in King Kojong's reign, following the lunar calendar, he ascended to the

⁶¹ *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 2487:24a-25a. Hŏnjong 15th year 6th month 8th day. 一垂簾時殿下殿座于簾外當中南向大王大妃殿下殿座于簾內近東南向朝賀時依宣仁太后故事文武官先行四拜于大王大妃殿下又行四拜于殿下爲白齊。

⁶² *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記 2487:24a-25a.

⁶³ *Sunjo sillok* 純祖實錄 1:1a-2a. 一垂簾同聽政典禮至大倣貞熹聖母時事別爲頒教中外而殿下還內後宗親文武百官改具布公服權停例舉行今初四日垂簾時大王大妃殿具翟衣殿座常時則用常時所御之服垂簾時殿座排設諸事令掖庭署及各該司進排。

throne on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month which is also recorded as the start date for the regency in the regulations.⁶⁴

The next significant change made in the *Suryŏm tong ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* during King Ch'ŏlchong's reign was the addition of one more location to the list of places that the regency was to be reported, "The regency is to be reported to the shrines including Sajik, Chongmyo, Yŏngnyŏngjŏn, Hwijŏngjŏn 徽定殿 (Hwijŏngjŏn Shrine)⁶⁵ and Kyŏngmogung, on auspicious days." 一垂簾告由社稷宗廟永寧殿徽定殿景慕宮擇吉舉行爲白齊.⁶⁶

In this regulation, Hwijŏngjŏn which housed the ancestral tablet for King Hŏnjong's first queen, Queen Hyohŏn 孝顯王后 (1828-1843), was also included as a location to which the regency had to be reported in order to legitimize it, but this requirement was subsequently removed in the regulations promulgated during King Kojong's reign, as it was no longer in use.⁶⁷

Concluding Observations

Promulgated in 1800, at the start of King Sunjo's reign for Queen Dowager Chŏngsun's regency, the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* provided 11 regulations that established the procedure for the queen dowager regencies throughout the nineteenth century. Through the standardized procedure, the queen dowager's presence in the public domain was institutionally legitimized, despite conflicting with Confucian gender norms. Key points from the regulations allowed the queen dowager to legally participate in state affairs, including provisions recognizing the queen dowagers right to both discuss state affairs with the ministers from behind the curtain and proclaim edicts herself. Additionally, she received the right to attend regular court meetings, as the king would, as well as the royal lectures, all from behind a hanging curtain. However, the regulations also continuously encouraged the joint governance of queen dowager and king, through a system in which ministers first reported to the king, who could then call on the queen dowager for advice. Through promoting joint governance, the king was encouraged to learn about state governance while the regency was being conducted.

Institutionalizing nineteenth-century regency as an exercise in joint governance, the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* promoted the education of the king during the regency period, while discouraging the monopolization of power by the queen dowager. While this paper has described and analyzed these regulations, it does not discuss the extent

⁶⁴ *Kojong sillok* 高宗實錄 1:2a-2b; *Kojong sillok* 高宗實錄 1:3a. 一今十三日垂簾時大王大妃殿下具翟衣殿座常時則用常時所御之服垂簾時殿座排設執事令掖庭署及各該司進排爲白齊.

⁶⁵ Hwijŏngjŏn 徽定殿 was built in 1843 as the Honjŏn 魂殿 (spirit hall) to temporarily enshrine the ancestral tablet of Queen Hyohŏn until 1851 when both King Hŏnjong and Queen Hyohŏn's ancestral tablets were moved to *Chongmyo*, the royal shrine.

⁶⁶ *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記 2487:24a-25a.

⁶⁷ *Kojong sillok* 高宗實錄 1:2a-2b. 一垂簾告由社稷宗廟永寧殿景慕宮擇吉舉行爲白齊.

to which queen dowagers followed these regulations during their regencies. Further research on the *Suryŏm ch'ŏngjŏng chŏlmok* needs to question and evaluate the actions of the queen dowager regents during their regencies to see whether they followed these regulations, how the regulations may have affected their regencies, and whether they returned to normal procedures once the regency ended and the kings governed by themselves.

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