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清·乾隆十四年(1749),乾隆帝(时年七十)去紫霄宫谒庙,由庙前西侧一小型角门,供皇帝御驾行礼,以减步行路程。乾隆帝降辇,以又由于补内造此门成拱式平窗,窗下刻明“今皇帝御驾七十岁方可出入此门”,称此门为“古稀门”。以后清代各帝均沿用,事实上出入此门者均乾隆帝一人而已。

SEVENTY-YEAR-OLD DOOR

IN 1749, WHEN EMPEROR QIANLONG WAS 70 YEARS OLD, HE FELT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO WALK, AND SO THE OFFICIALS OF THE EMPIRE WOULD SUGGEST TO OPEN A SMALL DOOR IN THE SURROUNDING WALL NEAR BY THE IMPERIAL HALL OF HEAVEN SO AS TO SHORTEN THE DISTANCE OF HIS WALK TO THE TEMPLE. THE EMPEROR QUICKLY ACCEPTED IT, BUT OUT OF THE FEEL THAT HIS OFFICIALS WOULD FOLLOW HIS SUIT AND ABUSE HIS CONFIDENCE, HE MADE A SECOND DEMAND, "FROM NOW ON ONLY I AM ALLOWED BY OFFICIALS TO ENTER AND EXIT BY THIS DOOR WHO HAS REACHED THE AGE OF 70 YEARS OLD", AND HENCE THE NAME OF THE SEVENTY-YEAR-OLD DOOR. AFTERWARDS, OF THE SUCCESSIVE EMPERORS OF THE QING DYNASTY NONE REACHED THIS ADVANCED AGE AND QIANLONG WAS THE ONLY PERSON IN HISTORY WHO HAD USED THE DOOR.

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