

## 京大過去問 2008年 第1問

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No presidency was more crisis-ridden and hectic than Lincoln's. His surface calm and good-natured demeanor do not suggest how totally engaged he was by the job. While never well organized or systematic, he was an energetic, hands-on, detail-oriented administrator. If any president's performance in office deserved the overused epithet indefatigable, it was his. He is famous for his willingness to make time for hearing the personal requests of ordinary members of the public. Though the demands of the patronage system drove him almost to distraction, he insisted on involving himself in the contentious process of sorting out the competing claims of hundreds of applicants for government posts.

One has only to peruse his personal papers to get some idea of the amazing number of details that received his attention. (1)The testimony of those who saw him regularly is overflowing with evidence confirming Lincoln's exertions. As is often pointed out, the physical toll that these efforts exacted is visible in the photographs taken over the course of his four years in office. He kept longer hours and in almost every way outworked his subordinates, which prompted an old friend and frequent visitor to ask him when he slept. Lincoln's answer was, according to this friend, "just when everybody else is tired out."

In the midst of all this exertion, Lincoln found an astonishing amount of time to write. Published items in the Collected Works from his hand as president run into the thousands, and recent searches in the National Archives indicate that there are many more writings that have gone unrecorded. As these discoveries show, Lincoln not only sent a constant stream of small notes and endorsements to various government offices and officials, but he sometimes drafted complicated documents that were issued over the signature of subordinates. He wrote frequently to his generals, as a way of keeping in touch and offering advice. (2)After his first taste of military defeat in a disastrous major battle of the Civil War, his reaction was to take up his pen and stay up all night to set down on paper what needed to be done to make up for the situation. In short, he responded in writing to almost every important development during his presidency, and to many that were not so important. Except for ceremonial proclamations, he seems to have delegated relatively little official writing. It becomes apparent that writing — both the activity and its products — was indispensable to Lincoln's way of performing his office.

But the drafting of a consequential text usually requires time, quiet, and absence of interruptions, the very things that Lincoln most often lacked. How did he manage? The

recollection of a friend helps to explain how so much writing was possible. "Lincoln had a wonderful faculty in that way," recalled this friend. "He might be writing an important document, be interrupted in the midst of a sentence, turn his attention to other matters entirely foreign to the subject on which he was engaged, and take up his pen and begin where he left off without reading the previous part of the sentence." (3)But the record also reveals that Lincoln frequently sought sanctuary to immerse himself in his writing. Indeed, there is more than a little evidence to suggest that writing was often a form of refuge for Lincoln, a place of intellectual retreat from the chaos and confusion of his duties where he could sort through conflicting options and order his thoughts with words.