The stability of the British government owes much to the monarchy. Its continuity has been interrupted only once (the Republic of 1649-1660) in over a thousand years. Theoretically, the king or queen is the source of all government powers. They are the head of the legislative, executive and judicial branches, the commander-in-chief of all armed forces and the “supreme governor” of the Church of England. In reality, they do everything on the advice of the Prime Minister and their role is symbolic, ceremonial and unpolitical. This includes giving their Royal Assent to any new law that has been passed by Parliament, meeting with the Prime Minister on a weekly basis at Buckingham Palace, and paying state visits to Commonwealth countries as head of state and non-commonwealth countries on behalf of the British government. The importance of the monarchy is found in its effect on public attitude. It represents the continuity and adaptability of the whole political system and is a symbol of British unity, an indissoluble(牢不可破的) bond among people who retain many regional and cultural differences.