

women of the tang dynasty

women of the tang dynasty played an influential role in shaping Chinese history, culture, and society. Renowned for their contributions to politics, the arts, and social transformation, Tang dynasty women stood out in an era marked by innovation and prosperity. This article provides an in-depth look at the lives of women of the Tang dynasty, exploring their social status, famous figures, fashion, cultural contributions, and everyday experiences. Readers will discover how Tang women broke traditions, excelled in literature and music, and left a lasting legacy on Chinese civilization. Whether you are interested in historical figures, cultural evolution, or the role of women in ancient China, this comprehensive guide offers valuable insights and detailed information, all while keeping search engine optimization in mind. Continue reading to uncover the fascinating world of women of the Tang dynasty.

- Social Status of Women in the Tang Dynasty
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Social Status of Women in the Tang Dynasty

Women of the Tang dynasty experienced greater freedoms and social mobility compared to those in earlier periods of Chinese history. The Tang era, spanning from 618 to 907 CE, was characterized by openness and cultural diversity, which enabled women to participate more actively in public life. While Confucianism remained influential, the government and society allowed for more flexibility regarding gender roles, especially among the elite classes.

In Tang society, women could own property, receive education, and even manage households and businesses. Aristocratic women often took part in intellectual pursuits and were sometimes involved in political affairs. Although patriarchal structures persisted, the influence and visibility of women in social and cultural spheres were notable. The Tang dynasty is frequently cited as a golden age for women's rights and visibility in China, setting a precedent for later periods.

Social Hierarchies and Gender Roles

The status of women depended heavily on their social class. Elite women, such as those from noble

families or the imperial court, enjoyed privileges and access to resources that lower-class women did not. Despite some progress, women were still expected to adhere to certain gender norms, especially regarding marriage and familial duties. However, the Tang dynasty's cosmopolitan nature allowed for the emergence of exceptional female figures who defied traditional limitations.

- Aristocratic women held influential positions in court and society.
- Women could inherit property under certain circumstances.
- Education for girls was more accessible, especially among the upper classes.
- Marriage customs were flexible, with instances of remarriage and divorce.

Notable Women and Historical Figures

The Tang dynasty produced several remarkable women who left indelible marks on Chinese history. Their achievements ranged from political leadership to artistic excellence, and their stories continue to inspire generations. These influential figures challenged conventions and contributed to the dynasty's reputation as a progressive era for women.

Empress Wu Zetian

Empress Wu Zetian is the most celebrated female figure of the Tang dynasty and the only woman to rule China as emperor in her own right. Rising through the ranks of the imperial court, Wu Zetian exercised extraordinary political acumen, consolidating power and overseeing significant reforms. Her rule marked a period of relative stability and prosperity, although her methods were often controversial. Empress Wu's legacy as a powerful and visionary leader has cemented her place in world history.

Princess Taiping

Princess Taiping, daughter of Empress Wu Zetian, played a pivotal role in Tang politics. She was instrumental in court intrigues and power struggles, often acting as an advisor and mediator. Princess Taiping's intelligence and influence earned her respect and authority at the highest levels of government, further illustrating the prominence of women in the Tang era.

Female Poets and Artists

The Tang dynasty was a flourishing period for poetry and literature, and women contributed significantly to this cultural renaissance. Notable poets such as Yu Xuanji gained recognition for their innovative styles and emotive works. Female artists and musicians were also celebrated, often

performing at court and participating in literary circles.

- Yu Xuanji - renowned poet and Daoist nun
- Consort Yang Guifei - famous for her beauty and influence on music and dance
- Female court musicians and dancers

Fashion, Beauty, and Cultural Trends

Women of the Tang dynasty were celebrated for their fashion sense, beauty, and artistic expression. The period saw a vibrant exchange of cultural influences, reflected in clothing styles, cosmetics, and personal adornments. Fashion was not merely a matter of personal taste but also a symbol of status, identity, and cosmopolitanism.

Clothing and Hairstyles

Tang dynasty women's clothing was characterized by bold colors, intricate patterns, and luxurious fabrics such as silk and brocade. Dresses featured wide sleeves and flowing silhouettes, often accented with sashes and ornate accessories. Hairstyles were elaborate, with high buns and decorative hairpins being popular among aristocrats. The cosmopolitan nature of the Tang capital, Chang'an, encouraged the adoption of styles from neighboring cultures, including Central Asia and Persia.

- Long-sleeved gowns and layered skirts
- Embroidered silk robes
- Jade, gold, and silver hair ornaments
- Cosmetics such as rouge, powder, and eyebrow ink

Beauty Standards and Social Influence

The Tang dynasty established distinctive beauty standards, favoring fuller figures, delicate features, and expressive eyes. Court records and paintings depict women with rounded faces and graceful postures. The influence of foreign cultures contributed to evolving ideals of beauty, as seen in the adoption of new fabrics, jewelry, and makeup techniques. Fashion and beauty were also used as expressions of political and cultural identity, especially among court ladies.

Women's Contributions to Literature and the Arts

The Tang dynasty is renowned for its literary and artistic achievements, and women played an integral role in this cultural flourishing. Female poets, writers, musicians, and performers enriched the artistic landscape, producing works that are still admired today. Their contributions reflected both personal experiences and broader social currents.

Poetry and Prose

Women of the Tang dynasty wrote poetry that explored themes of love, longing, nature, and spirituality. Some, such as Yu Xuanji, gained fame for their lyrical mastery and candid reflections on female life. These poems were circulated among literary circles and often praised by male contemporaries. Women also contributed to prose, including letters, essays, and philosophical commentary.

Music and Dance

Music and dance were essential aspects of Tang court life, and women excelled as performers and composers. Court dancers and musicians entertained royalty and guests, often setting trends in style and technique. The fusion of Chinese and foreign musical traditions created new genres and forms, with women at the forefront of innovation.

- Popularity of the pipa (lute) and guqin (zither)
- Development of new dance styles influenced by Central Asia
- Women as composers and lyricists

Family Life and Daily Routines

Daily life for women of the Tang dynasty varied depending on social class and location. While elite women enjoyed leisure and artistic pursuits, most women were engaged in domestic responsibilities and community activities. Family structures were generally patriarchal, but Tang women could exert influence within the household, particularly in managing finances and education.

Marriage, Motherhood, and Domestic Duties

Marriage customs in the Tang dynasty allowed for more flexibility than earlier periods. Women could sometimes initiate divorce and remarry, especially among the aristocracy. Motherhood was esteemed, and women were responsible for raising children and managing household affairs. In

rural areas, women worked alongside men in agriculture and crafts, contributing to the family's economic well-being.

Education and Social Activities

Education was increasingly accessible to girls, particularly in noble families. Women learned literature, music, and etiquette, preparing them for roles in society and court. Social gatherings, poetry salons, and religious festivals provided opportunities for women to network and express themselves, enhancing their visibility and influence in Tang society.

- Domestic management and financial planning
- Participation in religious and community events
- Engagement in arts and crafts
- Education in literature, music, and etiquette

Legacy and Influence on Later Generations

The legacy of women of the Tang dynasty endures in Chinese history and culture. Their innovations in politics, arts, and social life inspired subsequent generations and altered perceptions of gender roles. The Tang period is often referenced as a model for female empowerment and cultural sophistication, influencing later dynasties and modern society.

Through literature, historical records, and artistic depictions, the stories of Tang women continue to resonate. Their accomplishments underscore the enduring impact of female agency and creativity on the development of Chinese civilization. Today, scholars and enthusiasts celebrate the women of the Tang dynasty for their courage, intellect, and cultural contributions.

Trending Questions and Answers about Women of the Tang Dynasty

Q: Who was the most powerful woman of the Tang dynasty?

A: Empress Wu Zetian was the most powerful woman of the Tang dynasty. She became the only female emperor in Chinese history, ruling effectively and implementing significant reforms that shaped the dynasty's development.

Q: What were the main roles of women in Tang dynasty society?

A: Women in the Tang dynasty fulfilled roles as political leaders, poets, musicians, artists, wives, mothers, and managers of households. Aristocratic women often participated in court life and cultural activities, while common women contributed to family businesses and agriculture.

Q: Did women of the Tang dynasty have access to education?

A: Yes, especially among the elite classes. Girls from noble families were educated in literature, music, etiquette, and sometimes philosophy, enabling them to engage in intellectual and artistic pursuits.

Q: How did Tang dynasty women influence fashion and beauty standards?

A: Tang dynasty women set trends in fashion and beauty, favoring luxurious fabrics, vibrant colors, elaborate hairstyles, and innovative cosmetics. Their styles were influenced by both local and foreign cultures, reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of the era.

Q: What contributions did women make to Tang dynasty literature?

A: Women contributed poetry, prose, and philosophical works. Poets like Yu Xuanji wrote about personal and universal themes, and their works are considered significant in Chinese literary history.

Q: Were women allowed to own property during the Tang dynasty?

A: In some cases, especially among aristocratic families, women could inherit and manage property. Laws and customs of the Tang period provided more flexibility regarding property rights than previous dynasties.

Q: Who was Consort Yang Guifei, and why is she famous?

A: Consort Yang Guifei was a beloved consort of Emperor Xuanzong, renowned for her beauty, musical talent, and influence at court. Her tragic story and cultural impact have been immortalized in Chinese literature and art.

Q: What were common daily activities for Tang dynasty

women?

A: Daily activities included managing households, raising children, engaging in arts and crafts, attending social gatherings, and participating in religious ceremonies. Elite women often enjoyed leisure pursuits such as poetry and music.

Q: How did the Tang dynasty shape women's rights in later periods?

A: The Tang dynasty established precedents for women's visibility and participation in public life, influencing attitudes toward women's rights and roles in subsequent dynasties and modern China.

Q: What lasting impact did women of the Tang dynasty have on Chinese culture?

A: Women of the Tang dynasty left a lasting legacy in politics, literature, fashion, and social life, inspiring future generations and shaping Chinese cultural identity through their achievements and influence.

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Women of the Tang Dynasty: A Glimpse into a Golden Age of Female Influence

The Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) is often lauded as a golden age in Chinese history, a period of unprecedented economic prosperity, artistic flourishing, and expansive territorial reach. But while emperors and generals often dominate historical narratives, the story of the Tang Dynasty remains incomplete without acknowledging the significant role played by its women. This post delves deep into the lives of women during this fascinating era, exploring their diverse experiences, social standing, and contributions to society, challenging common misconceptions and offering a nuanced understanding of their realities. We'll examine everything from their fashion and beauty standards to their involvement in politics, arts, and even rebellion.

The Shifting Sands of Social Status: Women's Roles in Tang Society

Contrary to popular perceptions of restrictive patriarchal structures, Tang Dynasty women enjoyed a relatively higher degree of freedom and social mobility compared to previous or subsequent periods in Chinese history. This wasn't universal, of course, and varied greatly based on social class, but the overall trend was towards greater female autonomy.

Aristocratic Women: Power and Patronage

Elite women, particularly those from influential families, wielded significant power through their connections and influence. They often held sway over their households, managed estates, and even played crucial roles in political maneuvering behind the scenes. Many aristocratic women were educated, literate, and actively involved in artistic pursuits, becoming patrons of the arts and contributing to literary circles. Their influence extended beyond their immediate families, shaping social trends and impacting the cultural landscape.

The Middle and Lower Classes: Diverse Experiences

The experiences of middle- and lower-class women were naturally more varied and often fraught with challenges. While they didn't enjoy the same privileges as aristocratic women, they were nevertheless involved in a wide range of activities, from running small businesses and engaging in trade to working in various crafts and professions. Their lives offer a compelling counterpoint to the often romanticized image of elite women, providing a more complete picture of Tang Dynasty society.

Female Education and Literacy: A Surprising Prevalence

Contrary to expectations, literacy among women, especially within the upper echelons of society, was surprisingly common. Access to education, although not universal, was more prevalent than in many other historical periods. This literacy allowed women to participate in intellectual and artistic pursuits, composing poetry, writing letters, and engaging in scholarly discussions. This level of education contributed significantly to their social influence and agency.

Fashion and Beauty: Reflecting Social Status and

Aspirations

Tang Dynasty fashion is renowned for its elegance and extravagance, and women's clothing played a crucial role in expressing social status and individual style. Elaborate hairstyles, colorful silks, and intricate accessories were common, with trends often reflecting the cultural exchanges occurring during this period of global interaction.

The Ideal of Beauty: Full Figures and Flourishing Features

Interestingly, the Tang Dynasty ideal of female beauty diverged significantly from later eras. Rather than valuing extreme thinness, a fuller figure was considered desirable, reflecting the era's abundance and prosperity. This is a stark contrast to many later periods in Chinese history where slenderness became the dominant beauty standard.

Women in the Arts and Literature: Leaving a Lasting Legacy

The contributions of Tang Dynasty women to the arts and literature are undeniable. Many female poets, writers, and painters achieved great recognition during their lifetimes, producing works that continue to be studied and appreciated today. Their artistic output reflects not only their skills but also their observations of society and their reflections on the human condition.

Notable Female Figures: Poets, Painters, and More

The names of several prominent female artists and writers continue to resonate through history. Their works provide invaluable insights into the lives, thoughts, and perspectives of women during the Tang Dynasty. Studying their achievements helps us to break down stereotypes and appreciate the multifaceted talents of these women.

Conclusion: A Reassessment of Women's Roles in the Tang Dynasty

The women of the Tang Dynasty were far from passive figures in history. They occupied diverse roles, from influential political players to celebrated artists and skilled craftswomen. By understanding their experiences, we gain a richer and more nuanced appreciation of this vibrant

era. While challenges undoubtedly existed, the Tang Dynasty presents a fascinating case study of a period when women enjoyed a level of agency and influence that was often later eclipsed. Their legacy serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring strength and resilience of women throughout history.

FAQs

1. Were all women in the Tang Dynasty wealthy and influential? No, the experiences of women varied greatly based on social class. While aristocratic women enjoyed significant privileges, the lives of middle- and lower-class women were often characterized by hardship and limited opportunities.
2. What were some common occupations for women in the Tang Dynasty? Women worked in a variety of occupations including textiles, agriculture, trade, and domestic service. Some were also involved in running small businesses or working as entertainers.
3. How did the Tang Dynasty's openness to foreign cultures affect women's lives? The dynasty's cosmopolitan nature led to the adoption of new fashions, beauty standards, and even philosophical influences, impacting women's lives in diverse ways, from clothing styles to artistic expressions.
4. Were women allowed to participate in politics? While women couldn't hold official political offices, they often exerted influence through their family connections and social standing. Some women even played significant roles in advising emperors or influencing political decisions indirectly.
5. What lasting legacy did the women of the Tang Dynasty leave behind? Their artistic achievements, literary contributions, and overall impact on society continue to inspire and inform our understanding of Chinese history and culture. Their stories challenge conventional narratives and enrich our comprehension of a complex and fascinating era.

women of the tang dynasty: Women of the Tang Dynasty May Holdsworth, 2000-02-01 Women in Tang society enjoyed experimenting with ways to enhance their charms. Not only enthusiastically adopting fashion styles of foreigners who thronged the capital of Chang'an, they were also some of the earliest cross-dressers in history. Through a close-up look at excavated pottery figures and surviving gold and silver objects, a picture emerges of a remarkably open society in which women took an active part. The Close-Up series is the very first of its kind to give you a fascinating, concise introduction to individual aspects of China and its peoples, past and present. Each topic is presented by chosen experts in their fields who write with brevity for the intelligent reader. Illuminating text is supported by the work of international photographers and with maps and diagrams to give a picture that satisfies curiosity and encourages further reading.

women of the tang dynasty: Women in Tang China Bret Hinsch, 2019-11-11 This important book provides the first comprehensive survey of women in China during the Sui and Tang dynasties from the sixth through tenth centuries CE. Bret Hinsch provides rich insight into female life in the medieval era, ranging from political power, wealth, and work to family, religious roles, and virtues. He explores women's lived experiences but also delves into the subjective side of their emotional life and the ideals they pursued. Deeply researched, the book draws on a wide range of sources, including standard histories, poetry, prose literature, and epigraphic sources such as epitaphs,

commemorative religious inscriptions, and Dunhuang documents. Building on the best Western and Japanese scholarship, Hinsch also draws heavily on Chinese scholarship, most of which is unknown outside China. As the first study in English about women in the medieval era, this groundbreaking work will open a new window into Chinese history for Western readers.

women of the tang dynasty: Gender, Power, and Talent Jinhua Jia, 2018-03-13 During the Tang dynasty (618–907), changes in political policies, the religious landscape, and gender relations opened the possibility for Daoist women to play an unprecedented role in religious and public life. Women, from imperial princesses to the daughters of commoner families, could be ordained as Daoist priestesses and become religious leaders, teachers, and practitioners in their own right. Some achieved remarkable accomplishments: one wrote and transmitted texts on meditation and inner cultivation; another, a physician, authored a treatise on therapeutic methods, medical theory, and longevity techniques. Priestess-poets composed major works, and talented priestess-artists produced stunning calligraphy. In *Gender, Power, and Talent*, Jinhua Jia draws on a wealth of previously untapped sources to explain how Daoist priestesses distinguished themselves as a distinct gendered religious and social group. She describes the life journey of priestesses from palace women to abbesses and ordinary practitioners, touching on their varied reasons for entering the Daoist orders, the role of social and religious institutions, forms of spiritual experience, and the relationships between gendered identities and cultural representations. Jia takes the reader inside convents and cloisters, demonstrating how they functioned both as a female space for self-determination and as a public platform for both religious and social spheres. The first comprehensive study of the lives and roles of Daoist priestesses in Tang China, *Gender, Power, and Talent* restores women to the landscape of Chinese religion and literature and proposes new methodologies for the growing field of gender and religion.

women of the tang dynasty: China's Golden Age Charles D. Benn, 2004 In this fascinating and detailed profile, Benn paints a vivid picture of life in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), traditionally regarded as the golden age of China. 40 line illustrations.

women of the tang dynasty: Empire of Style BuYun Chen, 2019-07-12 Tang dynasty (618–907) China hummed with cosmopolitan trends. Its capital at Chang'an was the most populous city in the world and was connected via the Silk Road with the critical markets and thriving cultures of Central Asia and the Middle East. In *Empire of Style*, BuYun Chen reveals a vibrant fashion system that emerged through the efforts of Tang artisans, wearers, and critics of clothing. Across the empire, elite men and women subverted regulations on dress to acquire majestic silks and au courant designs, as shifts in economic and social structures gave rise to what we now recognize as precursors of a modern fashion system: a new consciousness of time, a game of imitation and emulation, and a shift in modes of production. This first book on fashion in premodern China is informed by archaeological sources—paintings, figurines, and silk artifacts—and textual records such as dynastic annals, poetry, tax documents, economic treatises, and sumptuary laws. Tang fashion is shown to have flourished in response to a confluence of social, economic, and political changes that brought innovative weavers and chic court elites to the forefront of history. Art History Publication Initiative. For more information, visit <http://arthistorypi.org/books/empire-of-style>

women of the tang dynasty: China's Cosmopolitan Empire Mark Edward Lewis, 2009-06-30 The Tang dynasty is often called China's "golden age," a period of commercial, religious, and cultural connections from Korea and Japan to the Persian Gulf, and a time of unsurpassed literary creativity. Mark Lewis captures a dynamic era in which the empire reached its greatest geographical extent under Chinese rule, painting and ceramic arts flourished, women played a major role both as rulers and in the economy, and China produced its finest lyric poets in Wang Wei, Li Bo, and Du Fu. The Chinese engaged in extensive trade on sea and land. Merchants from Inner Asia settled in the capital, while Chinese entrepreneurs set off for the wider world, the beginning of a global diaspora. The emergence of an economically and culturally dominant south that was controlled from a northern capital set a pattern for the rest of Chinese imperial history. Poems celebrated the glories of the capital, meditated on individual loneliness in its midst, and described heroic young men and

beautiful women who filled city streets and bars. Despite the romantic aura attached to the Tang, it was not a time of unending peace. In 756, General An Lushan led a revolt that shook the country to its core, weakening the government to such a degree that by the early tenth century, regional warlordism gripped many areas, heralding the decline of the Great Tang.

women of the tang dynasty: *Emperor Wu Zhao and Her Pantheon of Devis, Divinities, and Dynastic Mothers* N. Harry Rothschild, 2015-06-16 Wu Zhao (624-705), better known as Wu Zetian or Empress Wu, is the only woman to have ruled China as emperor over the course of its 5,000-year history. How did she—in a predominantly patriarchal and androcentric society—ascend the dragon throne? Exploring a mystery that has confounded scholars for centuries, this multifaceted history suggests that China's rich pantheon of female divinities and eminent women played an integral part in the construction of Wu Zhao's sovereignty. Wu Zhao deftly deployed language, symbol, and ideology to harness the cultural resonance, maternal force, divine energy, and historical weight of Buddhist devis, Confucian exemplars, Daoist immortals, and mythic goddesses, establishing legitimacy within and beyond the confines of Confucian ideology. Tapping into powerful subterranean reservoirs of female power, Wu Zhao built a pantheon of female divinities carefully calibrated to meet her needs at court. Her pageant was promoted in scripted rhetoric, reinforced through poetry, celebrated in theatrical productions, and inscribed on steles. Rendered with deft political acumen and aesthetic flair, these affiliations significantly enhanced Wu Zhao's authority and cast her as the human vessel through which the pantheon's divine energy flowed. Her strategy is a model of political brilliance and proof that medieval Chinese women enjoyed a more complex social status than previously known.

women of the tang dynasty: *Women of the Tang Dynasty* ,

women of the tang dynasty: *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women, Volume II* Lily Xiao Hong Lee, Sue Wiles, 2015-01-28 This volume of the Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women completes the four-volume project and contains more than 400 biographies of women active in the Tang through Ming dynasties (618-1644). Many of the entries are the result of original research and provide the only substantial information on women available in English. Of note is the inclusion of a large number of women who reached positions of authority during this period as well as women artists and writers, especially poets, during this period of increased female literacy and more liberal social attitudes to women's cultural roles. Wherever possible, entries incorporate translations of poems and sometimes prose works so as to let the women speak for themselves. The book also includes a multitude of entertainers and actresses. The volume includes a Guide to Chinese Words Used, a Chronology of Dynasties and Major Rulers, a Finding List by Background or Fields of Endeavor, and a Glossary of Chinese Names. It will prove to be a useful tool for research and teaching.

women of the tang dynasty: *Love and Women in Early Chinese Fiction* Daniel Hsieh, 2009-03-02 In traditional China, upper-class literati were inevitably strongly influenced by Confucian doctrine and rarely touched upon such topics as love and women in their writings. It was not until the mid-Tang, a generation or two after the An Lushan rebellion, that literary circles began to engage in overt discussion of the issues of love and women, through the use of the newly emerging genres of zhiguai and chuanqi fiction. The debate was carried out with an unprecedented enthusiasm, since the topics were considered to be the key to understanding the crisis in Chinese civilization. This book examines the repertoire of chuanqi and zhiguai written during the Six Dynasties and Tang periods and analyzes the key themes, topics, and approaches found in these tales, which range from expressions of male fantasy, sympathy, fear, and anxiety, to philosophical debate on the place of the feminine in patriarchal Chinese society. Many of these stories reflect tensions between masculine and feminine aspects of civilization as seen, for example, in the conflict of male aspiration and female desire, as well as the ultimate longing for reconciliation of these divisions. These stories form a crucial chapter in the history of love in China and would provide much of the foundation for further explorations during the late imperial period, as seen in seminal works such as *The Peony Pavilion* and *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

women of the tang dynasty: *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture* Robin Wang, 2003-01-01 This rich collection of writings--many translated especially for this volume and some available in English for the first time--provides a journey through the history of Chinese culture, tracing the Chinese understanding of women as elucidated in writings spanning more than two thousand years. From the earliest oracle bone inscriptions of the Pre-Qin period through the poems and stories of the Song Dynasty, these works shed light on Chinese images of women and their roles in society in terms of such topics as human nature, cosmology, gender, and virtue.

women of the tang dynasty: *Sources of Chinese Tradition* Wm. Theodore De Bary, William Theodore De Bary, Burton Watson, 1964 This volume contains a chronological table of Chinese history beginning with 2852 B.C. up to A.D. 1849. In addition to presenting the major schools of classical philosophy, this volume discusses yin-yang theories of cosmology and geomancy and the rationale of monarchy and dynastic rule.

women of the tang dynasty: Exemplary Women of Early China Anne Behnke Kinney, 2014-02-18 When should a woman disobey her father, contradict her husband, or shape the policy of a ruler? According to the *Lienü zhuan*, or Categorized Biographies of Women, it is not only appropriate but necessary for women to offer counsel when fathers, husbands, sons, and rulers stray from virtue. The earliest Chinese text devoted to the moral education of women, the *Lienü zhuan* was compiled by Liu Xiang (79-8 B.C.E.) at the end of the Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.-9 C.E.) and recounts the deeds of both virtuous and wicked women. Informed by early legends, fictionalized historical accounts, and formal speeches on statecraft, the text taught generations of Chinese women to cultivate filial piety and maternal kindness and undertake such practices as suicide and self-mutilation to preserve chastity and reform wayward men. The *Lienü zhuan*'s stories inspired artists for a millennium and found their way into local and dynastic histories. An innovative work for its time, the text remains a critical tool for mapping women's social, political, and domestic roles at a formative time in China's development.

women of the tang dynasty: Wu Zhao N. Harry Rothschild, 2008 The story chronicles Wu Zhao's humble beginnings as the daughter of a provincial official and follows her path to the inner palace, where she improbably rose from a fifth-ranked concubine to emperor. Using Buddhist rhetoric, architecture, court rituals, and a network of cruel officials to cow her many opponents in court, Wu Zhao inaugurated a new dynasty in 690, the Zhou. She ruled as emperor for fifteen years, proving eminently competent in the art of governance, balancing factions in court, staving off the encroachment of Turks and Tibetans, and fostering the state's economic growth.

women of the tang dynasty: *The Confucian Four Books for Women*, 2018-04-02 This volume presents the first English translation of the Confucian classics, *Four Books for Women*, with extensive commentary by the compiler, Wang Xiang, and introductions and annotations by translator Ann A. Pang-White. Written by women for women's education, the *Confucian Four Books for Women* spanned the 1st to the 16th centuries, and encompass Ban Zhao's *Lessons for Women*, Song Ruoxin's and Song Ruozhao's *Analects for Women*, Empress Renxiaowen's *Teachings for the Inner Court*, and Madame Liu's (Chaste Widow Wang's) *Short Records of Models for Women*. A female counterpart to the famous *Sishu* (Four Books) compiled by Zhu Xi, Wang Xiang's *Nü sishu* provides an invaluable look at the long-standing history and evolution of Chinese women's writing, education, identity, and philosophical discourse, along with their struggles and triumphs, across the millennia and numerous Chinese dynasties. Pang-White's new translation brings the authors of the *Four Books for Women* to life as real, living people, and illustrates why they wrote and how their work empowered women.

women of the tang dynasty: 女界英華 Daqian Zhang, 1971

women of the tang dynasty: *Biographical Dictionary of Tang Dynasty Literati* William H. Nienhauser, Jr., Michael E. Naparstek, 2022-04-05 Many regard the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) as the most important era for classical Chinese poetry, with around fifty thousand poems from the period surviving to the modern era. The great poets--Li Bo, Wang Wei, Du Fu, Bo--all lived in the Tang Dynasty. Meticulously researched and featuring many examples of their writings, the *Biographical Dictionary of Tang Dynasty Literati* presents 139 biographies of classical Chinese

poets. Compiled by award-winner author William H. Nienhauser, Jr., and Michael E. Napatstek, this book is the first comprehensive dictionary of writers during the Tang dynasty. In addition to individual entries, it includes an overview of Tang literature, a literary timeline of the Tang, and an explanation of official titles and ranks, making it an indispensable resource for anyone interested in classical Chinese poetry.

women of the tang dynasty: *Daily Life in Traditional China* Charles D. Benn,

women of the tang dynasty: Celestial Women Keith McMahon, 2016-04-21 This volume completes Keith McMahon's acclaimed history of imperial wives and royal polygamy in China. Avoiding the stereotype of the emperor's plural wives as mere victims or playthings, the book considers empresses and concubines as full-fledged participants in palace life, whether as mothers, wives, or go-betweens in the emperor's relations with others in the palace. Although restrictions on women's participation in politics increased dramatically after Empress Wu in the Tang, the author follows the strong and active women, of both high and low rank, who continued to appear. They counseled emperors, ghostwrote for them, oversaw succession when they died, and dominated them when they were weak. They influenced the emperor's relationships with other women and enhanced their aura and that of the royal house with their acts of artistic and religious patronage. Dynastic history ended in China when the prohibition that women should not rule was defied for the final time by Dowager Cixi, the last great monarch before China's transformation into a republic.

women of the tang dynasty: *My Fair Concubine* Jeannie Lin, 2012-06-01 The USA

Today—bestselling author of *The Dragon and the Pearl* “combines wit, seduction, skill, and intelligence in a tantalizing take on ‘My Fair Lady’” (Publishers Weekly, starred review). Yan Ling tries hard to be servile—it's what's expected of a girl of her class. Being intelligent and strong-minded, she finds it a constant battle. Proud Fei Long is unimpressed by her spirit—until he realizes she's the answer to his problems. He has to deliver the emperor a “princess.” In two months can he train a tea girl to pass as a noblewoman? Yet it's hard to teach good etiquette when all Fei Long wants to do is break it, by taking this tea girl for his own . . . “Lin has a gift for bringing the wondrous and colorful world of ancient China to readers. The history and culture of the era are beautifully bound together with a classic romance theme. Those yearning for new worlds and age-old adventures will savor Lin's novel.” —Romantic Times

women of the tang dynasty: Women Writers of Traditional China Kang-i Sun Chang, Haun

Saussy, Charles Yim-tze Kwong, 1999 The book also includes an extended section of criticism by and about women writers.

women of the tang dynasty: The Shadow of the Empire Qiu Xiaolong, 2022-01-01 'Brilliant'

-Publishers Weekly Starred Review The legendary Judge Dee Renjie investigates a high-profile murder case in this intriguing companion novel to *Inspector Chen* and *The Private Kitchen Murder* set in seventh-century China. Judge Dee Renjie, Empress Wu's newly appointed Imperial Circuit Supervisor for the Tang Empire, is visiting provinces surrounding the grand capital of Chang'an. One night a knife is thrown through his window with a cryptic note attached: 'A high-flying dragon will have something to regret!' Minutes after the ominous warning appears, Judge Dee is approached by an emissary of Internal Minister Wu, Empress Wu's nephew. Minister Wu wants Judge Dee to investigate a high-profile murder supposedly committed by the well-known poetess and courtesan, Xuanji, who locals believe is possessed by the spirit of a black fox. Why is Minister Wu interested in Xuanji? Despite Xuanji confessing to the murder, is there more to the case than first appears? With the mysterious warning and a fierce power struggle playing out at the imperial court, Judge Dee knows he must tread carefully . . .

women of the tang dynasty: The Eyes of the Empress Lyn Reese, 1996 Based on scholarship

in women's history, these dramatic stories teach about women and girls from ancient times through the 16th century.

women of the tang dynasty: Ethnic Identity in Tang China Marc S. Abramson, 2011-12-31

Ethnic Identity in Tang China is the first work in any language to explore comprehensively the construction of ethnicity during the dynasty that reigned over China for roughly three centuries,

from 618 to 907. Often viewed as one of the most cosmopolitan regimes in China's past, the Tang had roots in Inner Asia, and its rulers continued to have complex relationships with a population that included Turks, Tibetans, Japanese, Koreans, Southeast Asians, Persians, and Arabs. Marc S. Abramson's rich portrait of this complex, multiethnic empire draws on political writings, religious texts, and other cultural artifacts, as well as comparative examples from other empires and frontiers. Abramson argues that various constituencies, ranging from Confucian elites to Buddhist monks to barbarian generals, sought to define ethnic boundaries for various reasons but often in part out of discomfort with the ambiguity of their own ethnic and cultural identity. The Tang court, meanwhile, alternately sought to absorb some alien populations to preserve the empire's integrity while seeking to preserve the ethnic distinctiveness of other groups whose particular skills it valued. Abramson demonstrates how the Tang era marked a key shift in definitions of China and the Chinese people, a shift that ultimately laid the foundation for the emergence of the modern Chinese nation. *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* sheds new light on one of the most important periods in Chinese history. It also offers broader insights on East Asian and Inner Asian history, the history of ethnicity, and the comparative history of frontiers and empires.

women of the tang dynasty: Women Shall Not Rule Keith McMahon, 2013-06-06 Chinese emperors guaranteed male successors by taking multiple wives, in some cases hundreds and even thousands. *Women Shall Not Rule* offers a fascinating history of imperial wives and concubines, especially in light of the greatest challenges to polygamous harmony—rivalry between women and their attempts to engage in politics. Besides ambitious empresses and concubines, these vivid stories of the imperial polygamous family are also populated with prolific emperors, wanton women, libertine men, cunning eunuchs, and bizarre cases of intrigue and scandal among rival wives. Keith McMahon, a leading expert on the history of gender in China, draws upon decades of research to describe the values and ideals of imperial polygamy and the ways in which it worked and did not work in real life. His rich sources are both historical and fictional, including poetic accounts and sensational stories told in pornographic detail. Displaying rare historical breadth, his lively and fascinating study will be invaluable as a comprehensive and authoritative resource for all readers interested in the domestic life of royal palaces across the world.

women of the tang dynasty: The Search for the Beautiful Woman Cho Kyo, 2012-10-16 While a slender body is a prerequisite for beauty today, plump women were considered ideal in Tang Dynasty China and Heian-period Japan. Starting around the Southern Song period in China, bound feet symbolized the attractiveness of women. But in Japan, shaved eyebrows and blackened teeth long were markers of loveliness. For centuries, Japanese culture was profoundly shaped by China, but in complex ways that are only now becoming apparent. In this first full comparative history of the subject, Cho Kyo explores changing standards of feminine beauty in China and Japan over the past two millennia. Drawing on a rich array of literary and artistic sources gathered over a decade of research, he considers which Chinese representations were rejected or accepted and transformed in Japan. He then traces the introduction of Western aesthetics into Japan starting in the Meiji era, leading to slowly developing but radical changes in representations of beauty. Through fiction, poetry, art, advertisements, and photographs, the author vividly demonstrates how criteria of beauty differ greatly by era and culture and how aesthetic sense changed in the course of extended cultural transformations that were influenced by both China and the West.

women of the tang dynasty: Brocade River Poems Xue Tao, 2016-06-10 Xue Tao (A.D. 768-831) was well known as a poet in an age when all men of learning were poets—and almost all women were illiterate. As an entertainer and official government hostess, she met, and impressed, many of the most talented and powerful figures of her day. As a maker of beautiful paper and a Taoist churchwoman, she maintained a life of independence and aesthetic sensibility. As a writer, she created a body of work that is by turns deeply moving, amusing, and thought-provoking. Drawing knowledgeably on a rich literary tradition, she created images that here live again for the contemporary reader of English. This bilingual edition contains about two-thirds of Xue Tao's extant poems. The translations are based on accurate readings of the originals and extensive research in

both Chinese and Japanese materials. The notes at the end of the book explain allusions and place the poems in the context of medieval Chinese culture and its great literary heritage, while the opening essay introduces Xue Tao's work and describes her unusual life history.

women of the tang dynasty: Notable Women of China Barbara Bennett Peterson, 2016-09-16 The collaborative effort of nearly 100 China scholars from around the world, this unique one-volume reference provides 89 in-depth biographies of important Chinese women from the fifth century B.C.E. to the early twentieth century.

women of the tang dynasty: The Red Brush Wilt L. Idema, Beata Grant, 2020-03-23 One of the most exciting recent developments in the study of Chinese literature has been the rediscovery of an extremely rich and diverse tradition of women's writing of the imperial period (221 B.C.E.-1911 C.E.). Many of these writings are of considerable literary quality. Others provide us with moving insights into the lives and feelings of a surprisingly diverse group of women living in Confucian China, a society that perhaps more than any other is known for its patriarchal tradition. Because of the burgeoning interest in the study of both premodern and modern women in China, several scholarly books, articles, and even anthologies of women's poetry have been published in the last two decades. This anthology differs from previous works by offering a glimpse of women's writings not only in poetry but in other genres as well, including essays and letters, drama, religious writing, and narrative fiction. The authors have presented the selections within their respective biographical and historical contexts. This comprehensive approach helps to clarify traditional Chinese ideas on the nature and function of literature as well as on the role of the woman writer.

women of the tang dynasty: Fables for the Patriarchs Jowen R. Tung, 2000 This provocative study explores issues of gender in Tang-dynasty literature and culture, and their meaning for society as a whole. Drawing on a comprehensive range of historical, literary, and social texts, Jowen R. Tung unravels the complex mechanisms of one of the world's oldest patriarchal systems. With remarkable depth and originality of analysis, the author persuasively applies contemporary feminist theory to Tang dynasty poetry, narrative, and anecdotal literature. Interpreting both well-known and obscure works in fresh ways, Tung sheds light on areas long left shadowed or ignored. In the process, she paints a far darker picture of a period traditionally known as the 'golden age.'

women of the tang dynasty: *Women in Early Medieval China* Bret Hinsch, 2018-10-05 This important study provides the only comprehensive survey of Chinese women during the early medieval period of disunion, which lasted from the fall of the Eastern Han dynasty in 220 AD to the reunification of China by the Sui dynasty in 581 AD, also known as the Six Dynasties. Bret Hinsch offers rich descriptions of the most important aspects of female life in this era, including family and marriage, motherhood, political power, work, inheritance, education, and religious roles. He traces women's lived experiences as well as the emotional life and the ideals they pursued. Building on the best Western and Japanese scholarship, Hinsch also draws heavily on Chinese primary sources and scholarship, most of which is unknown outside China. As the first study in English about women in the early medieval era, this groundbreaking book will open a new window into Chinese history for Western readers.

women of the tang dynasty: *Women in Imperial China* Bret Hinsch, 2016-09-22 This accessible text offers a comprehensive survey of women's history in China from the Neolithic period through the end of the Qing dynasty in the early twentieth century. Rather than providing an exhaustive chronicle of this vast subject, Bret Hinsch pinpoints the themes that characterized distinct periods in Chinese women's history and delves into the perception of female identity in each era. Moving beyond the traditional focus on the late imperial era, Hinsch explores how gender relations have developed and changed since ancient times. His chronological look at the most important female roles in every major dynasty showcases not only the constraints women faced but also their vast accomplishments throughout the millennia. Hinsch's extensive use of Chinese-language scholarship lends his book a fresh perspective rare among Western scholars. Professors and students will find this an invaluable textbook for Chinese women's studies and an excellent supplement for courses in gender studies and Chinese history.

women of the tang dynasty: Empress Wu Zetian in Fiction and in History Dora Shu-fang Dien, 2003 In the dynastic history of China, Wu Zetian was the one woman who attained the status of emperor in her own right. A stone tablet marking her mausoleum was left blank, reportedly at her request because she wanted the future world to assess her. And her rise in the patriarchal system supported by Confucianism did later inspire many novelists and playwrights. Dien's slim study looks at the rise and achievements of the historical empress, her influence in the form of defiant woman who appear in legend and fiction, and (very briefly) the state of urban gender equality today. Annotation : 2004 Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com).

women of the tang dynasty: Butterfly Swords Jeannie Lin, 2010-10-01 During China's infamous Tang Dynasty, a time awash with luxury yet littered with deadly intrigues and fallen royalty, betrayed Princess Ai Li flees before her wedding. Miles from home, with only her delicate butterfly swords for defense, she enlists the reluctant protection of a blue-eyed warrior.... Battle-scarred, embittered Ryam has always held his own life at cheap value. Ai Li's innocent trust in him and honorable, stubborn nature make him desperate to protect her—which means not seducing the first woman he has ever truly wanted....

women of the tang dynasty: Women in Early Imperial China Bret Hinsch, 2010-08-16 After a long spell of chaos, the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BCE-220 CE) saw the unification of the Chinese Empire under a single ruler, government, and code of law. During this era, changing social and political institutions affected the ways people conceived of womanhood. New ideals were promulgated, and women's lives gradually altered to conform to them. And under the new political system, the rulers' consorts and their families obtained powerful roles that allowed women unprecedented influence in the highest level of government. Recognized as the leading work in the field, this introductory survey offers the first sustained history of women in the early imperial era. Now in a revised edition that incorporates the latest scholarship and theoretical approaches, the book draws on extensive primary and secondary sources in Chinese and Japanese to paint a remarkably detailed picture of the distant past. Bret Hinsch's introductory chapters orient the nonspecialist to early imperial Chinese society; subsequent chapters discuss women's roles from the multiple perspectives of kinship, wealth and work, law, government, learning, ritual, and cosmology. An enhanced array of line drawings, a Chinese-character glossary, and extensive notes and bibliography enhance the author's discussion. Historians and students of gender and early China alike will find this book an invaluable overview.

women of the tang dynasty: Women in Ming China Bret Hinsch, 2021-05-03 This groundbreaking work provides an original and deeply knowledgeable overview of Chinese women and gender relations during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Bret Hinsch explores in detail the central aspects of female life in this era, including family and marriage, motherhood, political power, work, inheritance, education, religious roles, and virtues. He considers not only the lived world of women, but also delves into their emotional life and the ideals they pursued. Drawing on a wide range of Western and Chinese primary and secondary sources—including standard histories, poetry, prose literature, and epitaphs—Hinsch makes an important period of Chinese women's history accessible to Western readers.

women of the tang dynasty: Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, Joan R. Piggott, 2003-08-28 This book rewrites the history of East Asia by rethinking the contentious relationship between Confucianisms and women.

women of the tang dynasty: Journey to the West (2018 Edition - PDF) Wu Cheng'en, 2018-08-14 The bestselling Journey to the West comic book by artist Chang Boon Kiat is now back in a brand new fully coloured edition. Journey to the West is one of the greatest classics in Chinese literature. It tells the epic tale of the monk Xuanzang who journeys to the West in search of the Buddhist sutras with his disciples, Sun Wukong, Sandy and Pigsy. Along the way, Xuanzang's life was threatened by the diabolical White Bone Spirit, the menacing Red Child and his fearsome parents and, a host of evil spirits who sought to devour Xuanzang's flesh to attain immortality. Bear

witness to the formidable Sun Wukong's (Monkey God) prowess as he takes them on, using his Fiery Eyes, Golden Cudgel, Somersault Cloud, and quick wits! Be prepared for a galloping read that will leave you breathless!

women of the tang dynasty: Masculinities in Chinese History Bret Hinsch, 2013-08-30
Masculinities in Chinese History is the first historical survey of the many ways men have acted, thought, and behaved throughout China's long past. Bret Hinsch introduces readers to the basic characteristics of historical Chinese masculinity while highlighting the dynamic changes in male identity over the centuries. He covers the full span of Chinese history, from the Zhou dynasty in distant antiquity up to the current era of disorienting rapid change. Each chapter, focused on a specific theme and period, is organized to introduce key topics, such as differences between the sexes and the mutual influence of ideas regarding manhood and womanhood, masculine honor, how masculine ideals change, the use of high culture to bolster masculine reputation among the elite, and male role models from the margins of society. The author concludes by exploring how capitalism, imperialism, modernization, revolution, and reform have rapidly transformed ideas about what it means to be a man in contemporary China.

women of the tang dynasty: China in the 21st Century Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 2013-05-31
The need to understand this global giant has never been more pressing: China is constantly in the news, yet conflicting impressions abound. Within one generation, China has transformed from an impoverished, repressive state into an economic and political powerhouse. In the fully revised and updated second edition of *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*, China expert Jeffrey Wasserstrom provides cogent answers to the most urgent questions regarding the newest superpower, and offers a framework for understanding its meteoric rise. Focusing his answers through the historical legacies--Western and Japanese imperialism, the Mao era, and the massacre near Tiananmen Square--that largely define China's present-day trajectory, Wasserstrom introduces readers to the Chinese Communist Party, the building boom in Shanghai, and the environmental fall-out of rapid Chinese industrialization. He also explains unique aspects of Chinese culture such as the one-child policy, and provides insight into how Chinese view Americans. Wasserstrom reveals that China today shares many traits with other industrialized nations during their periods of development, in particular the United States during its rapid industrialization in the 19th century. He provides guidance on the ways we can expect China to act in the future vis-à-vis the United States, Russia, India, and its East Asian neighbors. The second edition has also been updated to take into account changes China has seen in just the past two years, from the global economic shifts to the recent removal of Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai from power. Concise and insightful, *China in the 21st Century* provides an excellent introduction to this significant global power.

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