



Wu Zhao: China's Only Female Emperor

By N. Harry Rothschild

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This new entry in the Longman Library of World Biography series offers the compelling story of Wu Zhao - one woman's unlikely and remarkable ascent to the apex of political power in the patriarchal society of traditional China.

Wu Zhao, Woman Emperor of China is the account of the first and only female emperor in China's history. Set in vibrant, multi-ethnic Tang China, this biography chronicles Wu Zhao's humble beginnings as the daughter of a provincial official, following her path to the inner palace, where she improbably rose from a fifth-ranked concubine to becoming Empress. Using clever Buddhist rhetoric, grandiose architecture, elegant court rituals, and an insidious 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 arts of governance, deftly balancing factions in court, staving off the encroachment of Turks and Tibetans, and fostering the state's economic growth.

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Editorial Review

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