



# Women in Early Imperial China (Asia/Pacific/Perspectives)

*Bret Hinsch*

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## **Women in Early Imperial China (Asia/Pacific/Perspectives) Bret Hinsch**

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 new roles that allowed women unprecedented influence in the highest level of government. Filling a conspicuous gap in the scholarship on both Chinese history and gender studies, this book offers the first sustained history of women in the early imperial era. Drawing on extensive primary and secondary sources in Chinese and Japanese, Bret Hinsch paints a remarkably detailed picture of the distant past. His 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. A rich array of line drawings, a Chinese-character glossary, and extensive notes and bibliography enhance the text. Historians and students of gender and early China alike will find this book an invaluable survey of the field.

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