

POETRY AND ACCESS TO POWER IN THE COURT OF EMPRESS WU ZETIAN (A.D. 624–705)

PRESENTED BY XIAOFEI TIAN, PROFESSOR OF CHINESE LITERATURE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Empress Wu Zetian, the only female sovereign who established her own dynasty in Chinese history, was a great patron of literature, especially poetry. This talk examines how her rule opened two-way access from the top of the empire to the bottom and vice versa; how her powerful intervention in the contemporary literary scene, in multiple ways, led to the “golden age of Chinese poetry” in the eighth century, and how, paradoxically, her reign also marked the beginning of the end of court literature as a force to be reckoned with in the larger cultural sphere.

Join us for this online lecture:

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30
7:30–9 P.M. EST

Please join us via Zoom by registering at the URL below or scanning the QR code at right. Questions can be directed to ctac@binghamton.edu.

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Xiaofei Tian, professor of Chinese literature at Harvard University has published widely on premodern and modern Chinese literature and culture. Her most recent publications include “The Halberd at Red Cliff: Jian’an and the Three Kingdoms” (2018); an edited volume, “Reading Du Fu: Nine Views” (2020); a book of essays on classical Chinese literature, “Shadows and Ripples: Selected Writings 影子與水文: 秋水堂自選集” (2020); and a translation, with critical introduction and notes, of “Family Instructions for the Yan Clan and Other Works by Yan Zhitui (531–590s)” (2021). She is currently completing a book entitled “Writing Empire and Self: Cultural Transformation in Early Medieval China” and is also working on a manuscript on slaves, things and artificial humans in Tang China.

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