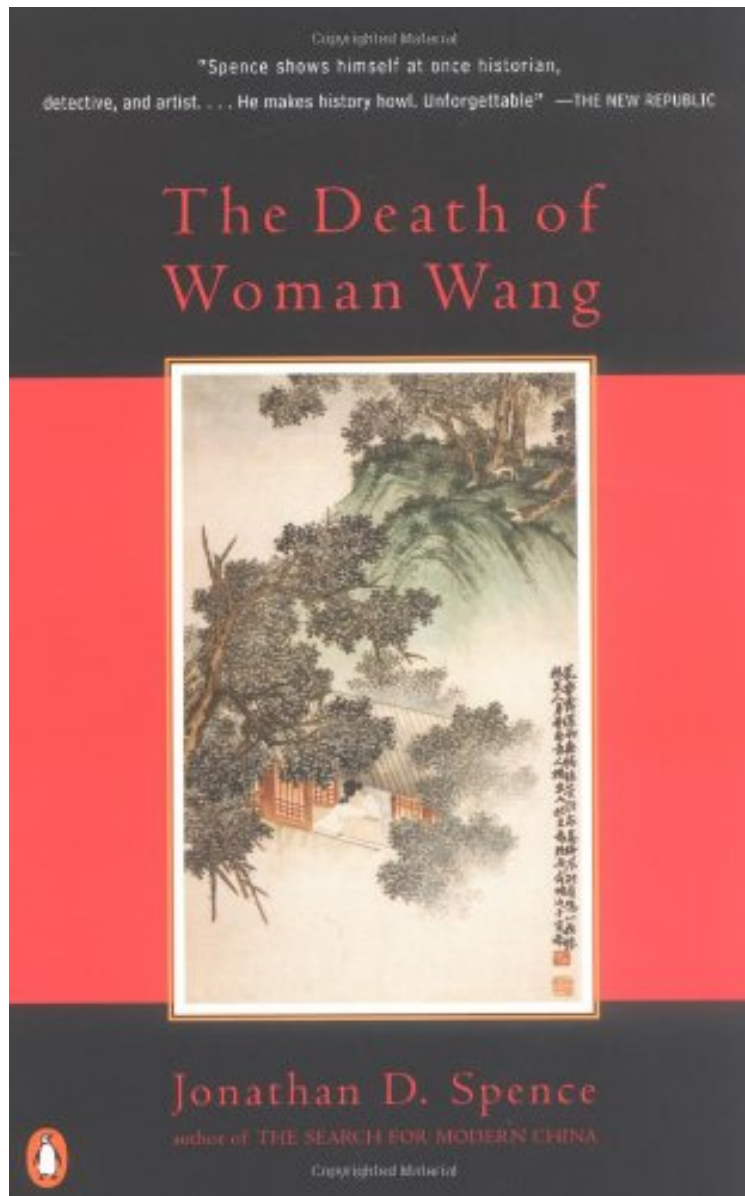


[Mobile book] The Death of Woman Wang

The Death of Woman Wang

Jonathan D. Spence

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#376043 in Books Jonathan D Spence 1998-09-03 1979-03-29Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.76 x .46 x 5.091, .29 #File Name: 014005121X192 pagesThe Death of Woman Wang | File size: 27.Mb

Jonathan D. Spence : The Death of Woman Wang before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Death of Woman Wang:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not a good place for womenBy Paolo FrancescaThis is an excellent book for learning about life for ordinary people in rural China. The author weaves together historical exposition and narrative storytelling to paint a vivid picture of life in China while helping us understand its legal and social customs.

The names get confusing and the Wade-Giles rendering is outdated, but it's still a very engaging book. I was surprised by how developed Chinese legal society was, with complex tax systems and exact codes for all kinds of crimes in all kinds of circumstances. Less surprising was the corruption, cruelty, and poverty of villages like the one described. The central government provided little protection and citizens were constantly suffering from natural disasters, crop failure, banditry and invasions. Poverty made lawlessness common and conflicts often erupted. I was very interested in the plight of women during that time and Spence does a great job of conveying what life was like for them. Basically, women were property and men were allowed to sell their daughters or wives for profit or in order to be rid of them. Daughters were betrothed at an early age and had no say in the choice of a husband. After marriage she is expected to be consummately devoted to her husband and in-laws. Widows were discouraged from remarriage. A husband was allowed to divorce his wife for failing to have sons, for serious illness, for talking too much, for not respecting in-laws, and for lascivious behavior. Women who committed adultery or ran away from home were considered criminals and their crime was punishable by death. Husbands were justified in killing his wife and her lover if he caught them in the act of adultery. In the conclusion to the story of the death of Woman Wang, a husband murders his wife and falsely accuses his neighbor of the crime he committed. His actions would be punishable by death, except that he was exonerated because his wife had betrayed her husband by running away with her lover before eventually being caught and returned to her husband, so the law says she deserved to die. No wonder there were so many insane women in pre-modern China, their only vengeance was to become a hungry ghost after death by suicide in order to haunt the people who treated them so badly. Yes, 17th century China was a bad place for women.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One Star
By Customer
Spoiler alert: woman Wang doesn't appear until page 101.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Insightful
By Kit Arndt. This book is very enlightening in the life of women and Chinese people in general in ancient China. It explores different aspects of the country's development in people, religion etc. It captivates readers with the exotic depictions of China and its conditions. I, JenNA, will gladly recommend this book to anyone interested in ancient Chinese culture or just wants a collection of stories to read.

Spence shows himself at once historian, detective, and artist. . . . He makes history howl. (The New Republic) Award-winning author Jonathan D. Spence paints a vivid picture of an obscure place and time: provincial China in the seventeenth century. Life in the northeastern county of Tan-cheng emerges here as an endless cycle of floods, plagues, crop failures, banditry, and heavy taxation. Against this turbulent background a tenacious tax collector, an irascible farmer, and an unhappy wife act out a poignant drama at whose climax the wife, having run away from her husband, returns to him, only to die at his hands. Magnificently evoking the China of long ago, *The Death of Woman Wang* also deepens our understanding of the China we know today.

Praise for *The Death of Woman Wang*: Whether judged as fiction or as historical reconstruction, [this] is a masterpiece of style and narration. Harold Bloom
An unforgettable book of historical re-creation. The New Republic
About the Author
Jonathan Spence's eleven books on Chinese history include *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, *Treason by the Book*, and *The Death of Woman Wang*. His awards include a Guggenheim and a MacArthur Fellowship. He teaches at Yale University.