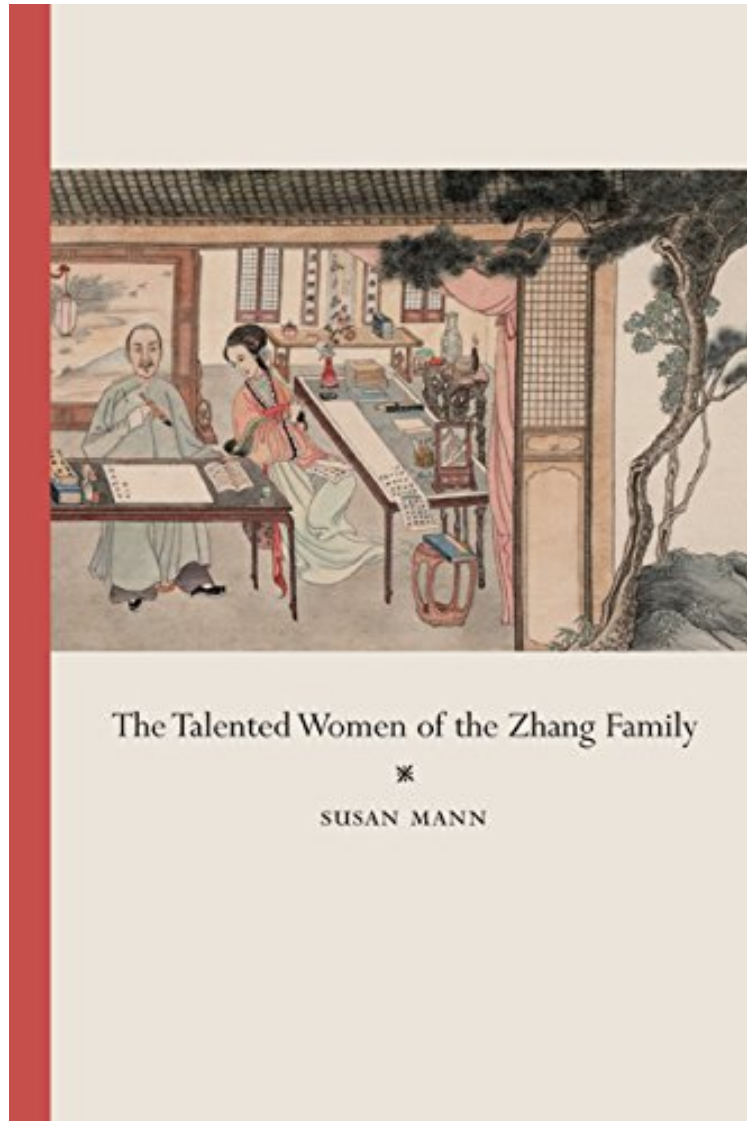


(Free pdf) The Talented Women of the Zhang Family

## The Talented Women of the Zhang Family

*Susan Mann*

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writer takes a slightly novelistic approach [which is carefully explained and justified] to create good history and an amazingly good read. I was sad when I came to the end.

The history of China in the nineteenth century usually features men as the dominant figures in a chronicle of warfare, rebellion, and dynastic decline. This book challenges that model and provides a different account of the era, history as seen through the eyes of women. Basing her remarkable study on the poetry and memoirs of three generations of literary women of the Zhang family—Tang Yaoqing, her eldest daughter, and her eldest granddaughter—Susan Mann illuminates a China that has been largely invisible. Drawing on a stunning array of primary materials—published poetry, gazetteer articles, memorabilia—as well as a variety of other historical documents, Mann reconstructs these women's intimate relationships, personal aspirations, values, ideas, and political consciousness. She transforms our understanding of gender relations and what it meant to be an educated woman during China's transition from empire to nation and offers a new view of the history of late imperial women.

Wonderful . . . . An erudite and important contribution to the social history of nineteenth-century China. Yet it reads almost like a novel.