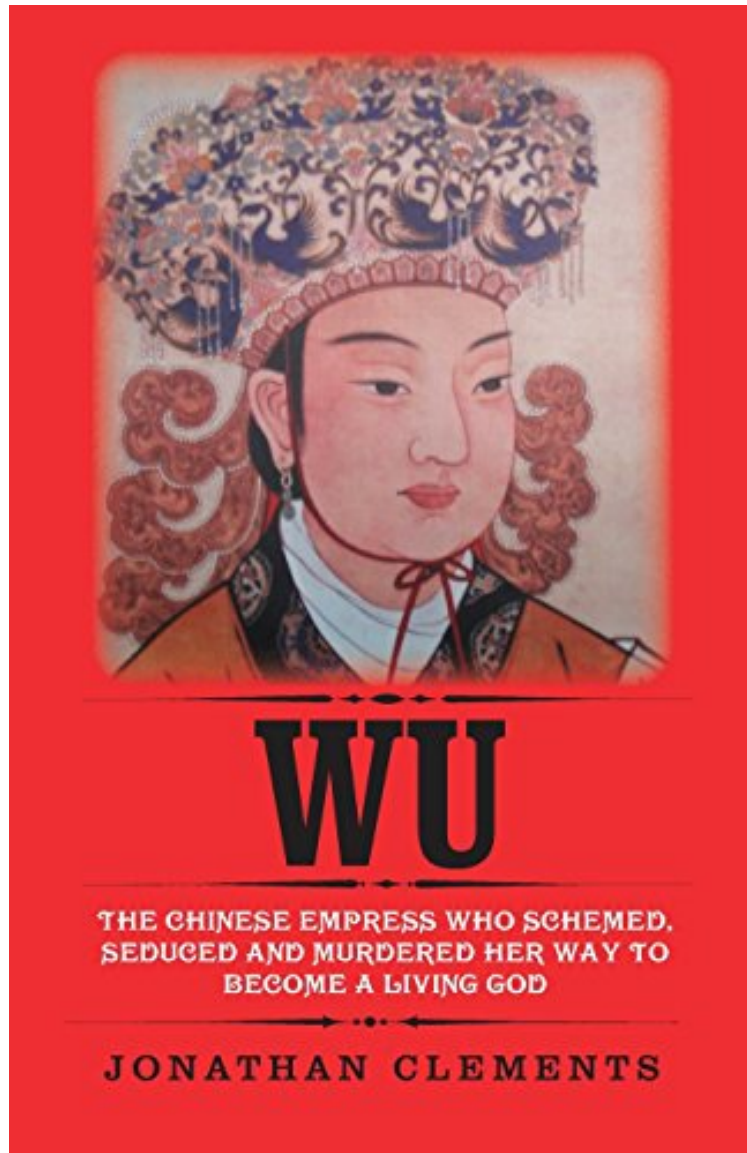


(Free pdf) Wu: The Chinese Empress who schemed, seduced and murdered her way to become a living God

## **Wu: The Chinese Empress who schemed, seduced and murdered her way to become a living God**

*Jonathan Clements*

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**Jonathan Clements : Wu: The Chinese Empress who schemed, seduced and murdered her way to become a living God** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wu: The Chinese Empress who schemed, seduced and murdered her way to become a living God:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great insight, great story.By dvBunnyGreat insight, great story.21 of

22 people found the following review helpful. A Wonderful Adventure!By Ruth WherlandJonathan Clements has managed to take the story of the controversial Empress Wu and make it extremely entertaining, while still maintaining historical accuracy. He keeps the narrative going at a quick pace, but provides enough details to keep the reader from becoming lost or confused. Empress Wu is a really difficult historical figure. She is neither a good guy or a bad guy. She is a woman who did some amazing things, and some really terrible things. So many biographies of Wu have an agenda, either to make her look like a martyr or a villain, and the truth is far more complicated than that. Clements provides both what is known about Empress Wu, and various opinions and constructs of her made by those who came later. He shows how the image of Empress Wu is often twisted to meet the needs of political fads, and that all of these perspectives should be taken with a grain of salt. Even if you know nothing about Chinese history, you will find this book a fascinating and lively read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Suzan B. Kotlerloved this.

Empress Wu Zetian (624-705 AD) was the only woman to be the sovereign ruler of imperial China. A teenage concubine of the Tang Emperor Taizong, she seduced his son while the emperor lay dying. Recalled from a nunnery as part of an intricate court power-game, she caused the deaths of two lady rivals, before securing her enthronement as the Emperor Gaozong's consort. She ruled in the name of her husband and two eldest sons, presiding over the pinnacle of the Silk Road, before proclaiming herself the founder of a new dynasty. Worshipped as the Sage Mother of Mankind and reviled as the Treacherous Fox, she was deposed aged 79, after angry courtiers murdered her two young lovers. The subject of countless books, plays and films, Empress Wu remains a feminist icon and a bugbear of Chinese conservatism. Jonathan Clements weighs the evidence of her life and legacy: so charismatic that she could rise from nothing to the height of medieval power, so hated that her own children left her tombstone blank.

From Publishers WeeklyEmpress Wu (625-705), the only woman in Chinese history to rule in her own name during the golden age of the Tang Dynasty, began her career as a low-ranking concubine in the palace of Emperor Taizong. Here, historian and author Clements (*The First Emperor*) tells the story of her improbable rise to power and her 30-plus years as Empress. Aside from his subtitle, Clements is even-handed in his depiction. Wu was a feminist who argued for the equality of women, upset the long established Confucian orthodoxy by appointing new bureaucrats according to their merit, and courted the commoners by lowering taxes and developing new farmlands. She also started her own secret police force, had eleven branches of the imperial family exterminated-entirely-during two years of purges, and made her cosmetics-dealing lover a Buddhist priest so that he could proclaim her divinity. Clements' only misstep is in his parade of minor historical characters, introduced every few pages to distracting effect. Otherwise, Clements' skillful narrative leaves it to the reader to decide whether Wu was a tyrant or a dutiful stateswoman maligned by the patriarchs of history; students of Chinese history will find this illuminating and enjoyable. Illustrations. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the AuthorJonathan Clements is currently a Visiting Professor at Xian Jiaotong University, China. His books include histories of Beijing and the Silk Road, and biographies of Chairman Mao, Marco Polo and the diplomat Wellington Koo. The Chinese translation of his book on the First Emperor was published in 2007. He was a consultant and interviewee on the National Geographic documentary *Koxinga: A Hero's Legacy*, which drew heavily on his book *Pirate King*, and has appeared on many other programmes on Chinese and Japanese history for Channel Four, PBS and BBC Yesterday. His most recent works include *The Art of War: A New Translation*, which revisits Sun Tzu's military classic, and *Modern China: All That Matters*, a study of contemporary issues facing the Peoples Republic.