Ban Zhao: Scholar of Han Dynasty China

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A woman (ought to) have four qualifications: (1) womanly virtue; (2) womanly words; (3) womanly bearing; and (4) womanly work. Now what is called womanly virtue need not be brilliant ability, exceptionally different from others. Womanly words need be neither clever in debate nor keen in conversation. Womanly appearance requires neither a pretty nor a perfect face and form. Womanly work need not be work done more skilfully than that of others.

(Ban Zhao, Lessons for Women, chapter IV; translated by Nancy Swann)

Ban Zhao (c. 45–120) was the first woman historian of China. She is known for her contributions to a masterpiece of Chinese historical writing, *Han Shu* (History of the Former Han Dynasty) and to an extant classic of Chinese women's education, *Nü Jie* (Lessons for Women or Admonitions for Women). Her works became standard reference for the education of daughters from Han China through the Qing period and, along with her other literary and educational accomplishments, won her the respectful traditional title of the "Venerable Madame Cao."¹ Despite her scholarly contributions to Han China and to succeeding dynasties, Ban Zhao has not attracted much attention from Western scholars. Nancy Lee Swann wrote a much reprinted biography of Ban Zhao in 1932, but only recently has her career found its way into several publications in English.² According to Paul Goldin, this revival of interest is attributable to the increasing importance of Chinese gender studies as a field of academic inquiry in general.³ If so, this current wave of interest is typical of the fluctuations in appreciation of her work over the centuries. Each major historical age in Chinese historiography has offered its own often widely differing interpretation of her life and career work, a process that no doubt will continue into the future.

Ban Zhao and Her Time

The Han Dynasty was considered to be the Golden Age of Chinese history, as well as world history. The Chinese, Roman, Parthian, and Kushan empires were regarded as the four great societies of the ancient world. Together they brought stability to the trans-Afro-Eurasian Silk Route. The first emperor of the Former Han Dynasty (202 BCE–9 CE) in China, Han Gaozu, preserved many characteristics of the preceding Qin imperial system, such as the administrative division of the country and the central bureaucratic system. The Han was a time of developments in art, sciences, literature, music, sport, and industry. While Han Gaozu emphasized the services of men of talent, he restored the Confucian classics destroyed during the Qin Dynasty and appointed capable officials to serve the government. From then onwards, the empire was administered by a body of officials theoretically selected through merit and knowledge. On some occasions, the selection of officials was based on personal networks or other criteria. Yet during the reign of Emperor Wu (r. 141–87 BCE), an imperial university was founded for the pursuit of Confucian classics. This university expected to recruit capable candidates for service in the government based on their command of Confucianism, which was the official ideology of the country.⁴

The reign of Emperor Wu marked a turning point in Chinese intellectual history. The great Confucian Dong Zhongshu (c. 179–104 BCE) was given guidance on the country's intellectual matters by the emperor. Confucianism, in general, appears to have had a beneficial impact on Han intellectuals.⁵ It was during this period that China produced its first male historian, Sima Qian (c. 145–86 BCE), who wrote *Shi Ji* (Historical
Ban Zhao thus participated in the formation of what became the formative era of the tradition of historical writing in China. During the Han period, philosophies and institutions reached maturity. The Chinese distinguished themselves in making scientific progress. They invented paper, sundials, and water clocks, and devised the lunar calendar that continued to be used until the founding of the Chinese Republic in 1912. The Chinese also achieved much in the fields of art, vivid examples being the famous sculpture of the "Han flying horse," and in the carving of the jade burial suits in Han tombs. Architecture—with jade pillars, precious-stone walls, painted woodwork, and carved marbles—was elaborately described in Chinese poetry and prose. Literature had new modes of expression as a result of prolonged periods of domestic peace, leading to the evolution of a common language and script and the development of education among the privileged. Industry and commerce in Han times also advanced.6

The Later Han Dynasty (23–220), however, was marked by a power struggle between court eunuchs drawn from the lower strata of Chinese society and the landlord-officials, which had devastating effects that contributed to the dynasty's eventual decline. Although the first ruler of the Later Han, Emperor Guangwu (r. 25–57), showed remarkable success in recovering lost territories, he was unable to restore the glory of the Former Han. It was during the Later Han period that Ban Zhao was born.

The Ban family traced their lineage back to the time of Confucius (551–479 BCE). This was a time when the Persian War (490–479 BCE) broke out in ancient Greece. In China, during the Spring and Autumn period, descendants of the Ban family moved into a region now included in Shanxi province. They became very rich by raising cattle and sheep. The fifth generation of the Ban family attained fame for their scholarship as well as prosperity, and its members were then promoted to high official rank. Their children received the favor of being ordered to court. For example, a daughter of the Ban family was taken into the palace of Emperor Cheng.7 Ban Zhao was thus born into a renowned family of scholars that had been closely tied with the Chinese imperial court.

Born in the town of Anling, Ban Zhao was the daughter of Ban Biao (3–54), an erudite scholar and a popular magistrate of Wangdu County (now in Hebei province). She had two elder brothers, Ban Gu and Ban Chao, both of whom became famous in different areas. Ban Gu (32–92) was a noted historian who wrote a very negative account of the rise and fall of Wang Mang. Ban Chao, twin brother of Gu, was arguably the greatest frontier general and administrator in Chinese history.8 Ban Zhao was niece of a well educated great aunt, Ban Jieyu, a concubine of the Emperor Cheng. Ban Zhao came from a reputable family of extraordinary achievement.

Ban Biao, as a boy, had studied the classics and later became an ambitious writer. He had been entrusted with the task of writing the Han Shu by the imperial court. He devoted most of his lifetime to working on this ambitious project. The Han Shu consists of 120 volumes with four main parts: twelve chapters of basic annals, eight chapters of chronological tables, ten chapters of treatises, and seventy chapters of biographies. This work constitutes the second volume in the Twenty-Four Histories, only second to Sima Qian's Shi Ji. However, Ban Biao was highly critical of the Shi Ji and wrote that it did not "give proper value to the original texts" and that its discussions were superficial and vague.9 It is clear that Ban Biao intended to produce a historical work superior to the Shi Ji.

The Han Shu proved far too ambitious a project for one to finish alone; Ban Biao died before completing it. His eldest son, Ban Gu, continued working with his father's manuscripts. Dissatisfied with the original title of the project, he changed it to Han Shu. He chose to undertake a history of the entire Former Han period rather than create a mere continuation of the Shi Ji. He was then accused of altering the imperial
history. He was imprisoned and his writings were confiscated. In his later years, Ban Gu became involved in power struggles within the court and was jailed for a second time. He died in prison in 92 CE.

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Anxious to have the family's work completed, Emperor He (r. 88–105) ordered Ban Zhao to come to the court to continue the project. She then checked, edited, and finalized the *Han Shu*. Ban Zhao seems to have been a talented scholar in her own right who had a good command of Chinese classics. In her childhood, she was taught by her parents and tutors the traditional Confucian mores and her early life appears to have been quite conventional. She demonstrated great enthusiasm in reading and later became excellent at both prose and essay writing. At the age of fourteen, she married a fellow townsman, Cao Shishu, though he died shortly afterwards. As Ban Zhao refused to remarry, she remained a widow for the rest of her long life. She had at least one child, although historical accounts differ enormously on this account.

Ban Zhao had become close to the royal family while she served as a tutor at the Dongguan Imperial Library. She was thus granted access to all books and archives in the library for teaching and writing purposes. Ban Zhao was also a teacher in the Han imperial court. Her female students included Empress Deng, the emperor's concubines, and palace ladies-in-waiting. She instructed them in astronomy, mathematics, history, Confucian classics, and traditional feminine virtues. She thereby earned the favor of Empress Deng. Her influence with the empress was apparently great; according to Nancy Swann, the empress conferred with Ban Zhao on the affairs of the country.

As a scholar, Ban Zhao devoted her efforts to numerous writing and editing projects in the library. Besides helping complete the *Han Shu*, she composed the most influential treatise on women's education, *Nü Jie*, wrote a commentary on Liu Xiang's *Lienü Zhuan* (Biographies of Exemplary Women), and authored poems, essays, inscriptions, eulogies, argumentations, elegies, expositions, memorials, and instructions. Her contributions to scholarly publication and education of the royal family won her the respectful title, "Cao Dajia". When there was a presentation of tribute in the court, the emperor always ordered her to compose verses for the occasion.

Ban Zhao died in 120 CE and Empress Deng mourned her death. It was extraordinary for a member of the royal family to mourn a commoner's passing. Clearly, Ban Zhao was remembered by her role as an erudite scholar and a respectable teacher. What were the actual dates of her birth and death? How many children did she have? How much did she contribute to the *Han Shu*? These questions remain unanswered. We are certain, however, that *Nü Jie* is the most important work of Ban Zhao.

**The Works of Ban Zhao**

Ban Zhao may have begun work on the *Nü Jie* in about 106 CE while she was serving the Han imperial court. This was at a time when China's Confucian society sought law and order to stabilize its complex families, which typically consisted of wives, concubines, children, grandparents, and in-laws. As they lived under the same roof, conflicts and chaos were very common. *Nü Jie* was perceived as a useful treatise on how women should behave as no existing Confucian texts of the time could serve that purpose.

The treatise is divided into seven chapters: (1) humility, (2) husband and wife, (3) respect and caution, (4) womanly qualifications, (5) whole-hearted devotion, (6) implicit obedience, and (7) harmony with in-laws. Ban Zhao expected women to be humble and sober, to serve their husbands industriously, to be respectful in conjugal relations, to observe the four womanly virtues (morality, words, appearance, and work), to undertake family chores whole-heartedly, to be obedient, and finally to reduce familial conflicts with in-laws. *Nü Jie* actually advised women to be submissive, to win their husbands' approval, and to serve family members by sacrificing their spiritual and material interests. The later famous Chinese sayings —"three obediences" (obey fathers, husbands, and sons) and "four womanly virtues"—were largely derived from this treatise.

In a disorderly time and complex family system like that of the Later Han period, *Nü Jie* may have been a practical survival guide for elite married women. As Bret Hinsch suggests, it constituted a "pragmatic
handbook" to teach elite women "how to survive the life-threatening intrigues at court and in the household." This is because contemporary struggles took the lives of many at court regardless of gender and thus threatened women as much as men. According to Nancy Swann, Ban Zhao's interpretation of Chinese womanhood had much value even for the twentieth century. The Chinese gender system in that century underwent tremendous challenges from the West. Nü Jie has been subjected to some unfavorable re-evaluations. Sherry Mou disagrees, believing that Ban Zhao's intention of writing the treatise was not admirable and her support of female education—often overlooked—did not make a lasting impression. She is critical of its focus on the education of elite women, rather than women of all classes in general.

As mentioned earlier, two other important works of the Han period to which Ban Zhao partly contributed are the Han Shu and the Lienü Zhuan. Ban Gu was the main author of the Han Shu, a history of the first two hundred years of Han Dynasty China. The question of how much Ban Zhao contributed to this ambitious project has been debated—sometimes vigorously—for nearly 2000 years. According to Swann, Ban Zhao was responsible for approximately one-fourth of the entire project. She shared in the compilation of the tenth treatise on astronomy and continued the eight tables of a chronological list of princes, aristocrats, and leading officials. The eight tables presented the personalities and careers of these people and it was a useful index of the Han Shu. In China's later times, Ban Gu received full credit for authorship of this project. In fact, it was team effort by the Ban family. Because the Chinese of the period highly regarded the feeling of family unity, as Swann notes, the task of distinguishing the respective contributions of the different members of the Ban family would have been of little importance.

Lienü Zhuan was a work by the famous Han Confucian Liu Xiang (79–8 BCE). It is the first extant book in China dedicated entirely to the issue of women and was influential in later Chinese history. The book is composed of 125 biographies of virtuous women, categorized in accordance with their respectable conduct and personality. It was perhaps intended for the imperial family in Han China. Ban Zhao is believed to have edited, annotated, and commented on the book. It is highly possible that she derived some of the sources of her Nü Jie from Lienü Zhuan. Both works were printed and circulated widely in China's subsequent dynasties.

Other lesser-known works by Ban Zhao include two memorials to the throne, three short poems, and a long essay in rhyme. The two memorials reflected her political influence in the Han imperial court. One was a plea for her brother Ban Chao's release and another gave advice to Empress Deng on the governance of the country. The three poems—namely "The Bird From the Far West", "The Cicada", and "The Needle and Thread"—demonstrated her esteemed status in the royal family. As was earlier noted, whenever there was a presentation of a gift or tribute, such as a large bird from the West, the emperor ordered Ban Zhao to compose verses for the occasion. The essay in rhyme "Travelling Eastward" showed her philosophy of life and her worship of Heaven. The central theme of this essay is the idea of keeping to the Great Highway, and abandoning regret for things left behind. All these extant literary works—fragments of Ban Zhao's writings—have been marginalized by present-day scholars and are therefore worthy of further intellectual inquiry.

The Impact and Legacy of Ban Zhao

Ban Zhao was and is remembered by the Chinese of later periods. This is because of her spirit of meticulous study and her impressive academic and literary output. The writing style of Nü Jie may have been too difficult for the women of the time to read and Han scholars generally neglected it. However, contrary to Sherry Mou's assumption, the treatise became increasingly popular amongst even ordinary
women in the Tang-Song and Ming-Qing periods. One theory of the legacy of Ban Zhao suggests that her *Nü Jie* served as a model of conduct for Chinese womanhood. This owes, to some extent, to the preservation of Confucianism as the essence of Chinese culture. Another theory indicates that the treatise was a source of oppressing Chinese women. This latter theory emerged as a result of the influence of nineteenth-century Western ideas, for example, the advocacy of the rights of women and the demand for gender equality. Scholars of this theory thought of Confucianism as a stumbling block to modernity; thus they attacked Confucianism. As the following paragraphs will discuss, these conflicting views stemmed largely from the continuing debate over whether Confucianism should have been promoted or the subject of attack even within its own historical contexts.

Immediately following the loss of power of the Han rulers, China underwent several eras of disunity. The survival of Confucianism as the official ideology and basis of society seemed in doubt. Nevertheless, *Nü Jie* resurfaced in Tang and Song China (618–1279). This was an era of great progress and unity during which the restoration of Confucianism as a cultural norm and its re-interpretation (as Neo-Confucianism) were emphasized by scholars of the time. In medieval Europe, this was also a period of cultural adjustment: William of Normandy invaded England and Muslims captured Jerusalem. The early Tang rulers simultaneously promoted Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Women's participation in politics, as in the case of Wu Zhao (624–705), was considered the norm because of the relative weakening of Confucianism.

Later, influential Song philosophers Cheng Yi (1033–1107) and Zhu Xi (1130–1200) re-interpreted Confucianism and developed the so-called Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism. This school laid stress on the Confucian classics, and in particular, the notion of separate spheres and women's place at home. Women's participation in politics was thought ridiculous in the eyes of these philosophers. Several Confucian didactic texts for women re-appeared in late Tang and Song China, such as *Nü Lunyü* (Book of Analects for Women) and *Nü Xiaojing* (Book of Filial Piety for Women). According to Susan Mann, *Nü Lunyü* was written in the powerful voice of the historical Ban Zhao and *Nü Xiaojing* was initially confused with Ban's own work when it was first published.

*Nü Lunyü* was the work of two sisters, Song Ruoxin and Song Ruozhao, who were daughters of the famous Tang Confucian scholar, Song Tingfen. *Nü Lunyü* developed the basic view of the four womanly virtues presented in Ban Zhao's *Nü Jie*. The Song sisters' book was divided into twelve chapters, ranging from abstract ideas of womanly virtues to everyday behavior in women's lives. Central to the book was its advice for women on who and how to serve, for example, their parents, parents-in-law, and husbands, and how to devote themselves to family chores whole-heartedly. Ban Zhao's words appeared in the first paragraph of *Nü Lunyü*, namely "Cao Dagu said . . .". Clearly, the Song sisters modeled their work on Ban's treatise.

The wife of the Song official Chen Miao, Madam Zheng, whose work was intended for her niece, wrote *Nü Xiaojing*. Its primary goal was to expand the basic message of *Xiaojing* (Book of Filial Piety) to apply to women. Again, the book cited the explicit authority of Ban Zhao several times, for example, "Lady Ban said: 'Let me comment on the way a woman serves her husband . . .'"; "Lady Ban said: 'A daughter's service to her parents is filial . . .'"; and "Lady Ban said: 'Study involves gathering information, questioning and evaluating it . . .'". *Nü Xiaojing* emphasized the differences of the sexes, the cultivation of women's talent, and household management by women. It was thus a didactic text for women derived from the teachings of Ban Zhao.

With the rapid development of printing culture in Ming China (1368–1644), certain Confucian texts for women—some of which have been noted—were circulated widely then and throughout Qing China (1644–1912). New primers for women had been published since the Tang and Song periods. The so-called *Nü Sishu* (Four Books for Women) was first published as a set of instructions in 1624. Eighteenth-century China further witnessed a growing interest in women's education amongst elite men and women and a boom for the publication of instructional books for women, including Ban's treatise. Even in late Qing times, despite the Western impact on China, these books were assigned readings for primary female students in some newly opened female schools. This was because these books did not just emphasize women's roles
as wives and mothers, but also appealed to traditional parents who wished their daughters to have Confucian moral instruction.

The "four books" consisted of Ban's *Nü Jie*, the Songs' *Nü Lunyü*, *Neixun* (Instructions for the Inner Quarters) by Empress Renxiao (1362–1418), and finally, *Nüfan Jielu* (Short Records of Exemplary Women) by the mother of Wang Xiang. *Neixun* followed the example of *Nü Jie* in style and structure. The purpose of the book, as Empress Renxiao indicated, was to educate the wives in the palace, inculcating them with correct manners and feminine virtues. It was a book for elite women. The final book, *Nüfan Jielu*, contained eleven chapters basically repeating the same principles of "the three obediences" and "the four womanly virtues." *Nü Jie* itself was subjected to countless reprints in later times and found its way into the homes of wealthy Chinese women. *Nü Sishu* is an important collection of books for understanding how the gender-role education of women was internalized. The collection was written by women for women themselves, and therefore it served as a moral guide for women.27 The famous Chinese dictums—the "three obediences" and the "four womanly virtues"—were derived from these texts and Ban Zhao's role in helping to formulate these dictums is too significant to be overlooked. She was long regarded as the founding mother of Confucian didactic texts for women. Women of present-day China, however, do not have to recite and memorize the contents of these texts. This is largely attributable to the feminist movements of the late Qing, Republican, and Maoist periods.

**Modern Feminist Critiques in Historical Context**

According to Ya-Chen Chen, there were "more than three waves of feminism" in China.28 The late Qing, the May Fourth, and Maoist feminism movements certainly among them. Late Qing feminism began to develop after the Opium War in 1839; it was a time of Western culture as well as political penetration of China. Some missionaries taught Western knowledge in Western-style schools for Chinese. Feminism (or women's rights), a part of this knowledge, appealed to some anti-footbinding reformers within China. In the early twentieth century, certain female overseas students and male intellectuals demanded the right of women to attend schools, choose spouses, have birth control, to be relieved of some domestic burdens, all expressions of their understanding of gender equality. May Fourth feminism began to take shape around the student activism of 1919. This was a time when Chinese women had access to national universities and some university women and returned female students explored gender issues. Of paramount importance was their participation in the movements of the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party. Maoist feminism began to have an impact after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. "Women hold up half the sky" was a distinct feature of feminism of this time. Women's rights of all kinds continued to advance through the Maoist and post-Maoist periods.29 However, several of these rights are in direct conflict with Confucian values extolled by Ban Zhao and thus *Nü Jie* has been subjected to criticism since the nineteenth century.

Scholars of the late Qing and Republican China (1912–1949) often argued that *Nü Jie* left a legacy of shame to Chinese womanhood because the treatise accepted the reality of male dominance. They thought that *Nü Sishu* were books about training women how to be dependent, immature, and submissive to men.30 They regarded Confucian texts for women as a stumbling block to modernization. Therefore, *Nü Jie* and *Nü Sishu* became a source of sometimes quite severe critiques by feminist and revolutionary writers. Some of these writers encountered concepts such as feminism and gender equality through educational experiences in Japan or Western countries or were introduced to them via reading translations of Western works and attending Western-style schools in China. In order to spread their new ideas through popular literature, these writers intentionally focused on the harsher aspects of Confucianism which in their view included the denial of a woman's right to schooling, paid jobs and public office. Chen Xiefen propagated women's educational rights. Zhang Zhujun alerted women to the issue of paid jobs. Qiu Jin taught women to participate in anti-Qing revolution. The late Qing feminist writer, He Zhen, proposed a women's suffrage movement in China,31 and defended her stance in a text that attacked Ban Zhao and her *Nü Jie* in extremely provocative language. The Republican writer, Chen Dongyuan, presented a negative view of *Nü Jie* in his influential book in Chinese, *A History of the Lives of Chinese Women* (1928). This book has become a standard classic.
for the study of Chinese women's history in the twentieth century. Chen believed that Nü Jie was a source of male oppression and women's sufferings; it had oppressed Chinese women for 2000 years. As a result of such critiques, Ban Zhao saw her reverential traditional sobriquets replaced by the unfriendly titles of either "Traitor Ban" or "Traitor Zhao."

In Maoist China (1949–1976), Ban Zhao continued to be a target of attack by anti-Confucian scholars. The "Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius" was one of the key events during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) as Mainland scholars began their campaign to re-interpret Chinese history in line with Mao Zedong's political theories. Nü Jie and other Confucian texts for women were grouped as expressions of "feudal-patriarchal ideology." The Cultural Revolution denied all such backward Chinese traditions, including Confucianism itself.

In the post-Mao era, there has been a renewed scholarly interest in history of all kinds, including women's history. The eagerness of some Chinese and Western historians to revisit Chinese history and its classical past through the lens of gender has brought Ban Zhao back to historical visibility. She is the subject of both favorable and less favorable verdicts passed by contemporary scholars. Some see her as "a sage of women's education", "China's first feminist", an "outstanding female intellectual", and "the world's first female historian." Others see her as a supporter of male superiority within traditional Confucian society and argue that Chinese women have long tasted the bitterness of life because of her promotion of male superiority. Still others believe that she was not an original thinker and her ideas even in her day were far from new. Such discourse is certain to continue for a variety of reasons. These include not only the evolution of the field of gender studies, but the on-going debate about whether Confucianism should be promoted as the essence of Chinese culture in the wake of the decline of communist ideology. As Confucianism and Confucian values are employed well beyond China's borders (several Confucius Institutes have been established outside China) and may be regarded as an offering a possible alternative to the values embedded in modernization/globalization processes, Ban Zhao's life and work will undoubtably draw the attention of scholars worldwide for a long time to come.

Using Ban Zhao to Promote Student Engagement

The Outcome-based approach to teaching and learning has lately been gaining ground. This approach makes learning more student-centered than traditional lectures. In such an approach, history teachers may initially ask themselves three questions: (1) What are the intended learning outcomes of their respective courses? (2) What will teaching and learning activities be involved? (3) How are students assessed through these activities? The answers should include reference to skills desirable for a history graduate, such as knowledge of people's thought and actions in different places and times; an ability to collect, analyze, and utilize both primary and secondary sources; an ability to work independently and collaboratively; and the ability to present findings with structure, coherence, and clarity.

Ban Zhao's life and career can be used to achieve some of these intended learning outcomes. First, the jigsaw method as James Diskant notes, is "an excellent way to encourage more students to participate" in classroom. Students can be assigned a portion of the article and given time to prepare for presentation. Unassigned students may then ask questions pertaining to this historical figure. An advantage of the jigsaw method is to help cultivate students in a sense of appreciation of Ban Zhao as a prominent historical figure. Second, small group discussion may be adopted in the treatment of sources and interpretations. Students may identify a wide range of sources by and about Ban Zhao before they attend class, including primary and secondary, English and Chinese, as well as printed and on-line. Group discussion alerts students to problems and strengths in historical records and varied interpretations. Third, role playing may be used to promote collaborative work. Ban Zhao (Han China), Wu Zhao (Tang China), and Qiu Jin (Qing China) are interesting figures that enable students to compare lives across. Fourth, students may compare/contrast views on the role of women across time and across civilizations and present their findings in written assignments. Ban Zhao can be usefully compared with Sondok (c. 582, Silla queen of Korea), Sappho (c. 612, Greek poet), as well as Aisha (c. 614, wife of the Prophet Muhammad, BPBUH).
However, perhaps as important, the various interpretations of Ban Zhao's life and work over time offered in this essay can be used as a window into how historian's think and the means to analyze ideas and motivations behind competing historical evaluations of historical figures, including historians. It can also be used to trace the meaning, impact and value judgments made of historical works over time. Such skills will increasingly be required of student's engaging in courses in world history at all levels of instruction.

**Suggestions for Primary Text Reading**


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**Notes**

1 Ban Zhao is also known as Pan Chao (old spelling), Ban Ji, Ban Huiban, Cao Dagu, Cao Dajia, and Lady Ban.


8 Wills, *Mountain of Fame*, 91.


12 Swann, Pan Chao, 41.

13 Swann, Pan Chao, 41; Robin R. Wang, ed., Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture: Writings from the Pre-Qin Period Through the Song Dynasty (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), 177.

14 Full translations of Nü Jie are in Swann, Pan Chao, chapter VII; Wang, Images of Women, 177–188. Also see Sherry J. Mou, ed., Presence and Presentation: Women in the Chinese Literati Tradition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 123.

15 Hinsch, Women in Early, 124.


17 See, for example, two books about popular education and female schooling by Paul J. Bailey, Reform the People: Changing Attitudes Towards Popular Education in Early Twentieth-Century China (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990) and Gender and Education in China: Gender Discourses and Women's Schooling in the Early Twentieth Century (London: Routledge, 2007).

18 Swann, Pan Chao, 61–65.


20 Translations of these lesser-known works by Ban Zhao appear in Swann, Pan Chao, chapters VI, VIII, and IX. Some are available on-line; see China and Women <http://womenshistory.about.com/od/china/China_and_Women.htm> for the entry on Ban Zhao.

21 For example, the Qing Confucian scholar Zhang Xuecheng was typical of his time. To defend Confucianism, he derived his views of the four womanly virtues from Ban's treatise. See Susan Mann, "'Fuxue' (Women's Learning) by Zhang Xuecheng (1738–1801): China's First History of Women's Culture," Late Imperial China 13 no. 1 (June 1992), 44. For the less favorable theory, see Chen Dongyuan, Zhongguo funü shenghuo shi [A History of the Lives of Chinese Women], rep. of 1928 (Beijing: Shangwuyin shuguan, 1998), 45–50.


23 See Mann's preface in Swann, Pan Chao, ix. Also see Heying J. Zhan, "Chinese Femininity and Social Control: Gender-Role Socialization and the State," Journal of Historical Sociology 9 no. 3 (September 1996), 271–272.


32 Xia, "New Meanings in a Classic", 12; Chen, Zhongguo funü, 45–50.

33 Mann's preface in Swann, Pan Chao, xi.

34 Danya Lin, "Chinese Women's Culture: From Tradition to Modernization," Chinese Education and Society 33 no. 6 (November/December 2000), 24–36; Mou, Gentlemen's Prescriptions, 80, 86; Van Gulik, Sexual Life, 97; Hucker, China's Imperial Past, 226–227; Mann's preface in Swann, Pan Chao, x–xii; and Fang Guo, "The Historical Track of the Chinese Ancient Female Personality," Chinese Education and Society 33 no. 6 (November/December 2000), 6–14.


37 For Internet sources, see the following useful links to begin with: Chinese Cultural Studies: Ban Zhao Pan Chao (c. 80 CE) Lessons for a Woman. http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core9/phalsall/texts/banzhao.html; Ban Zhao/Pan Chao /Cao Dagu (c.48–bef. 120 CE),

In the United States, the College Board's Advanced Placement Examination in World History will assess these skills beginning in 2012–2013 academic year.