



## Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History (New Approaches to Asian History)

By Susan L. Mann

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Gender and sexuality have been neglected topics in the history of Chinese civilization, despite the fact that philosophers, writers, parents, doctors, and ordinary people of all descriptions have left reams of historical evidence on the subject. Moreover, China's late imperial government was arguably more concerned about gender and sexuality among its subjects than any other pre-modern state. Sexual desire and sexual activity were viewed as innate human needs, essential to bodily health and well-being, and universal marriage and reproduction served the state by supplying tax-paying subjects, duly bombarded with propaganda about family values. How did these and other late imperial legacies shape twentieth-century notions of gender and sexuality in modern China? In this wonderfully written and enthralling book, Susan Mann answers that question by focusing in turn on state policy, ideas about the physical body, and notions of sexuality and difference in China's recent history, from medicine to the theater to the gay bar; from law to art and sports. More broadly, the book shows how changes in attitudes toward sex and gender in China during the twentieth century have cast a new light on the process of becoming modern, while simultaneously challenging the universalizing assumptions of Western modernity.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

'Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History provides readers with a thoroughly lucid and insightful synthesis of this complex field and its challenges. Spanning centuries, Mann moves adeptly between late imperial China and the developments of the twentieth century ... [and] provide[s] a remarkable synthesis and guide to this dynamic and developing field that will enrich the study of gender and sexuality in modern China for students and researchers alike.' *The Journal of Asian Studies*

#### **About the Author**

Susan Mann is Professor Emerita of History at the University of California, Davis. She has written many books including *The Talented Women of the Zhang Family* (2007) and *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (1997).

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