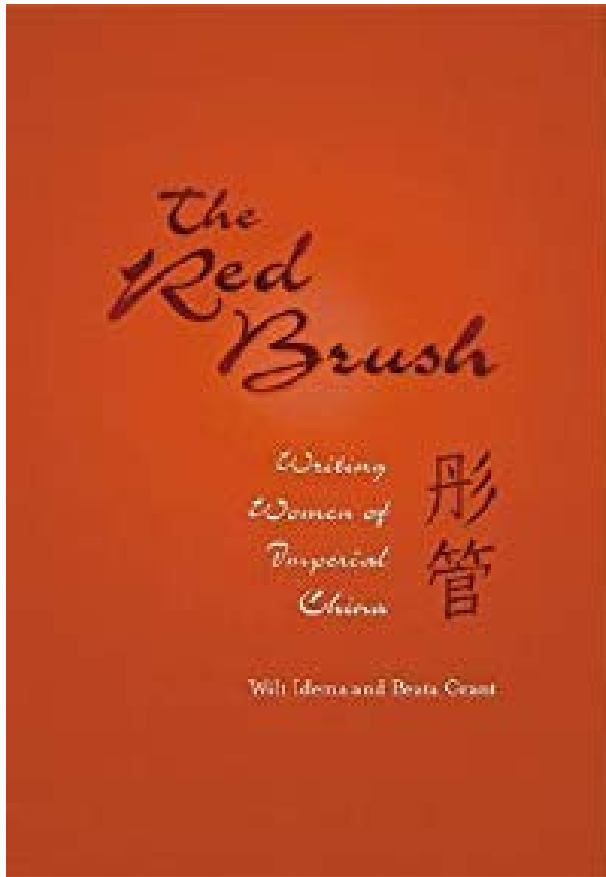


The Red Brush: Writing Women of Imperial China



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One of the most exciting recent developments in the study of Chinese literature has been the rediscovery of an extremely rich and diverse tradition of women's writing of the imperial period (221 B.C.E.-1911 C.E.). Many of these writings are of considerable literary quality. Others provide us with moving insights into the lives and feelings of a surprisingly diverse group of women living in Confucian China, a society that perhaps more than any other is known for its patriarchal tradition. Because of the burgeoning interest in the study of both premodern and modern women in China, several scholarly books, articles, and even anthologies of women's poetry have been published in the last two decades. This anthology differs from previous works by offering a glimpse of women's writings not only in poetry but in other genres as well, including essays and letters, drama, religious writing, and narrative fiction. The authors have presented the selections within their respective biographical and historical contexts. This comprehensive approach helps to clarify traditional Chinese ideas on the nature and function of literature as well as on the role of the woman writer.