



The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

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He-Yin Zhen (ca. 1884-1920?) was a theorist who figured centrally in the birth of Chinese feminism. Unlike her contemporaries, she was concerned less with China's fate as a nation and more with the relationship among patriarchy, imperialism, capitalism, and gender subjugation as global historical problems. This volume, the first translation and study of He-Yin's work in English, critically reconstructs early twentieth-century Chinese feminist thought in a transnational context by juxtaposing He-Yin Zhen's writing against works by two better-known male interlocutors of her time.

The editors begin with a detailed analysis of He-Yin Zhen's life and thought. They then present annotated translations of six of her major essays, as well as two foundational tracts by her male contemporaries, Jin Tianhe (1874-1947) and Liang Qichao (1873–1929), to which He-Yin's work responds and with which it engages. Jin, a poet and educator, and Liang, a philosopher and journalist, understood feminism as a paternalistic cause that liberals like themselves should defend. He-Yin presents an alternative conception that draws upon anarchism and other radical trends. Ahead of her time, He-Yin Zhen complicates conventional accounts of feminism and China's history, offering original perspectives on sex, gender, labor, and power that remain relevant today.

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