

Untamed Shrews: Negotiating New Womanhood in Modern China

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Moderator:

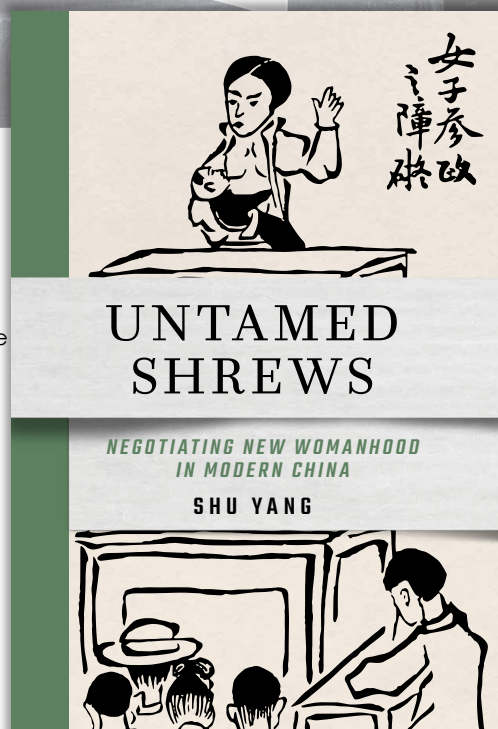
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**BOOK
TALK** by
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Untamed Shrews traces the evolution of unruly women in Chinese literature, from the reviled "shrew" to the celebrated "new woman." Notorious for her violence, jealousy, and promiscuity, the character of the shrew personified the threat of unruly femininity to the Confucian social order and served as a justification for punishing any woman exhibiting these qualities. In this book, Shu Yang connects these shrewish qualities to symbols of female empowerment in modern China.

Rather than meeting her demise, the shrew persisted, and her negative qualities became the basis for many forms of the new woman, ranging from the early Republican suffragettes and Chinese Noras, to the Communist and socialist radicals. Criticism of the shrew endured, but her vicious, sexualized, and transgressive nature became a source of pride, placing her among the ranks of liberated female models. *Untamed Shrews* shows that whether male writers and the state hate, fear, or love them, there will always be a place for the vitality of unruly women. Unlike in imperial times, the shrew in modern China stayed untamed as an inspiration for the new woman.



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