

# Women



# History



*Drawing of Wu Zetian*



*Official portrait of Wu Zetian*

## Wu Zetian

Wu Zetian was born in 624 in the Sichuan Province of China. Her parents were friends of the Chinese emperor. Her father had several jobs in the government and the family was wealthy.

As a child, Wu Zetian loved to read. She also travelled with her parents, so she was very smart about politics and the ways of the Chinese people.

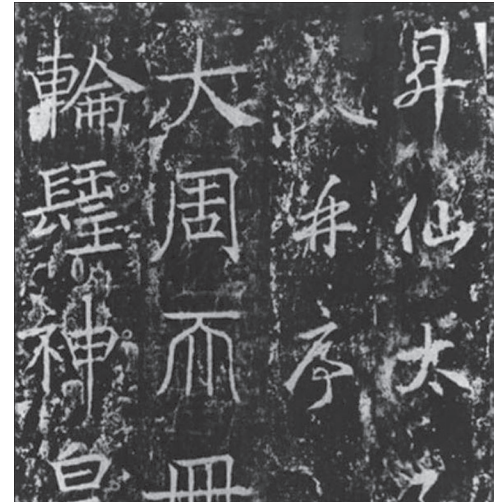
When she was older, she went to the court of Emperor Taizong. After he died in 649, she married his son, Gaozong, who was the new emperor.

Now that she was empress, Wu Zetian made many of the decisions for her husband. He later became ill, and Wu Zetian gained even more power. When he died in 683, she still held a great amount of power, since she was the mother of the next two emperors.

Wu Zetian did not like many of the plans and decisions her sons made when they were emperor. She wanted to rule China, but Chinese traditions did not allow a woman to be head of the government.

Finally, in 690, Wu Zetian took the throne after several requests from the people. She started her own ruling family called the Zhou Dynasty.

Wu Zetian would continue to rule China until her death in 705 at the age of 81. She was the only woman to rule China.



*Wu Zetian changed the characters of Chinese writing.*

What year was Wu Zetian born?

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the name of the ruling family that Wu Zetian started?

\_\_\_\_\_

What did the Chinese traditions not allow Wu Zetian to do?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q**  
**AND**  
**A**