



*Winter Plum: Contemporary Chinese Fiction*. Edited by Nancy Ing. (Chinese Materials Center, Taipei, 1982, xxiv + 498 pp.) *Summer Glory: A Collection of Contemporary Chinese Poetry*. Translated and Edited by Nancy Ing. (Chinese Materials Center, Taipei, 1982, xxiii + 171 pp.)

For quite some time, Western readers wanting to know about Taiwanese literature have been hampered by the lack of reliable and well chosen anthologies of works translated into English. Partly as a result of this, Taiwanese works (unlike literature from the mainland) are hardly known, and much less read, outside the Chinese communities. With the exception of a handful of names such as Pai Hsien-yung and Chen Jo-hsi, Taiwan writers are by and large unfamiliar to Western readers, though there is no lack of talent among them. The appearance in 1975 of *An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature: Taiwan 1949-1974* (in two volumes) saw the first concerted effort by scholars to familiarize the English reading public with Taiwanese literature. The situation is further improved with the publication recently of *Summer Glory: A Collection of Contemporary Chinese Poetry*, edited and translated by Nancy Ing, and *Winter Plum: Contemporary Chinese Fiction*, edited by the same author. Together these two volumes bring to light a body of representative works which will go a long way to help Western readers in their appreciation of this vastly rich but youthful literature.

*Summer Glory* is an anthology of 54 poems by fifteen poets, including a preface by C. H. Wang, the pseudonym of the well known poet Yang Mu. This preface is worth mentioning because it pinpoints with insight the many problems confronting the Taiwan poet in his experimentation with new modes of expression. After reading the poems in the collection, one can easily sympathize with Wang's call for the development of a "Chinese modern poetry" (as distinguished from "modern Chinese poetry") where top priority is given to its Chinese substance, rather than to its modern appearance. *Winter Plum* features the work of 23 writers. By putting together stories as divergent as the "westernized" Pai Hsien-yung, Wang Wen-hsing and their "indigenous" counterparts, such as Hwang Chun-ming and Wang Tsen-ho, this volume succeeds in showing the varying techniques that these writers employed in portraying the different colours of life in Taiwan in the past three decades. Indeed, as the editor points out, it is the aim of this anthology, as well as that of *Summer Glory*, to present "a well-balanced representation that would result in a deeper comprehension of the widely different backgrounds of our writers which have produced such a varying kaleidoscopic view of life as it was in the past, and as it is in the present" (p. xiii). While the editor's desire to produce a balanced presentation is not in doubt, there is perhaps a minor question that one may raise: that of the absence in the collections of the stories of Chen Ying-chen, a novelist of immense stature, and the poems of Ya Hsien, a mainstay in Taiwan's poetic circle. However, one should in fairness point out that, all things considered, such omission should not reduce the editor's merit in bringing out two very useful guides for the Western reader interested in exploring the world of Taiwanese literature.

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