FOREWORDS
As a novelist, a literary critic, a historian of Taiwan literature, and a framer of the theory and subjectivity of Taiwan literature, Yeh Shih-t’ao occupies an unparalleled position in the development and study of Taiwan literature.

Taiwan’s new literature started to develop in the 1920’s, and Yeh Shih-t’ao’s life grew with the historical development of Taiwan literature since his birth in 1925. In 1940, at the age of sixteen, he began to write stories in Japanese. He experienced the war period under Japanese rule, the postwar period under martial law, and the period of pluralism after martial law was lifted. His literary career developed in response to the major historical events in Taiwan, including the imperial subject movement at the end of war, the postwar transitional stage under the Nationalist government, the February 28th Incident of 1947, the White Terror period (1949–1987) under martial law, the Regional Literature...
Debate of the 1970’s, and the free and open multicultural society after martial law was repealed. Meanwhile, in September 1951, on a charge of “failing to report a communist suspect to the authorities,” he was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment. This sentence was reduced to three years, and he was released in July 1953. This experience had consequences that affected his entire life, leaving a vacant period in his literary career that lasted fourteen years (1951–1965).

Yeh Shih-t’ao’s literary career can be divided into the following stages:

(1) Prewar literary début (1940–1945). Yeh Shih-t’ao graduated from Tannan Second Junior High School. At sixteen, when he was in the third year of junior high school, he began to write stories in Japanese. The first two pieces, “Maso matsuri” [The Mazu Festival] and “Sei Tai dan” [A Tale of an Expedition to Taiwan], were contributed to the journals Taiwan bungaku [Taiwan Literature] and Bungei Taiwan [Literary Art Taiwan], but they were not published and the original manuscripts have been lost. His first published story “Hayashi kara no tegami” [A Letter from Hayashi] appeared in Literary Art Taiwan when he was nineteen, and gave him the opportunity to make the acquaintance of the established writers in literary circles: Nishikawa Mitsuru, Chang Wen-huan, and Lung Ying-tsung. Later on, he became an editing assistant to Nishikawa, who was in charge of Literary Art Taiwan. It is undeniable that Yeh Shih-t’ao was influenced by Nishikawa’s aestheticism and romantic
taste in literature. His stories “Hulu xiang chunmeng” [Spring Dream at Gourd Alley], published in 1968, and “Hudie xiang chunmeng” [Spring Dreams at Butterfly Alley], published in his later years (2004), both betray the taste of such a lingering style of romanticism.

(2) Postwar period (1945–1950). Yeh Shih-t’ao belonged to the “language-barrier-transcending generation” of Taiwan writers and started to learn Chinese and teach at an elementary school only after the war. In 1946, he continued writing in Japanese and got published in the Japanese section of Zhonghua ribao [China Daily] directed by Lung Ying-tsung. He published many stories, essays, and critiques in the “Qiao” [Bridge] literary supplement to Xinsheng bao [New Life News], launched after the February 28th Incident of 1947, including the article “Yijiu siyi nian yihou de Taiwan wenxue” [Taiwan Literature after 1941], in which he started to show concern about the problem of the history of Taiwan literature.

(3) Silent period (1951–1965). After the political incident that led to his being charged as a communist suspect, he became a bird that shies at the sight of a bow, and remained silent under the White Terror rule for fourteen years.

(4) Literary career at its peak (1965–1969). During these five years, like a phoenix rising from the ashes, he devoted himself to both creative writing and literary criticism and published five books of collected stories, thirty-nine pieces in total, and the first volume of
critiques, *Ye Shitao pinglun ji [Collected Critiques of Yeh Shih-t’ao]* (1968), in which “Taiwan de xiangtu wenxue” [Taiwan’s Regional Literature], published in November 1965, was the cornerstone of his theory of Taiwan literature.

(5) Literary criticism period (1970–1987). In October 1971, the Republic of China in Taiwan withdrew from the United Nations, and no longer represented China internationally. In February 1972, President Nixon officially visited mainland China and in September the Republic of China severed diplomatic relations with Japan. International major political incidents happened one after another and forced writers in Taiwan to face squarely the reality that confronted Taiwan; realism was gaining ground in the literary world and caused the debate on regional literature to break out in August 1977. In 1973, Yeh Shih-t’ao began to publish his critiques on writers and their works, including *Ye Shitao zuojia lunji [Collected Critiques on Writers by Yeh Shih-t’ao]* (1973), “Taiwan xiangtu wenxueshi daolun” [An Introduction to the History of Taiwan’s Regional Literature] (1977), *Taiwan xiangtu zuojia lunji [A Collection of Essays on Taiwan’s Regional Writers]* (1979), *Meiyou tudi, nayou wenxue [If There Is no Land, Where Is There Literature?]* (1985), as well as *Taiwan wenxue shigang [An Outline History of Taiwan Literature]* (February 1987), the first literary history by a single author, which was completed in three years. The article “An Introduction to the History of Taiwan’s Regional Literature,” published in
May 1977, touched off the debate on Regional Literature three months later. This important critique carried on the assertion made in his article “Taiwan’s Regional Literature,” published in 1965. The spirit of realism continued from generation to generation by the writers of Taiwan’s new literature. As a result, a firm belief developed in Taiwanese consciousness that penetrated the history of Taiwan’s regional literature and underlied the conflict between “Taiwanese consciousness” and “Chinese consciousness” in the 1980’s. By the publication of An Outline History of Taiwan Literature, the historical viewpoint that Taiwan literature is inseparable from the people, the land, and the social reality had been firmly established.

(6) Another upsurge in creative writing of fiction (1988–1990’s). After the historic mission of completing An Outline History of Taiwan Literature, the unfulfilled task for Yeh Shih-t’ao remained creative writing, and his passion was once again aroused for writing fiction. Previously, he was engaged in fiction in the 1940’s and 1960’s. At the end of the 1980’s, the society entered a pluralistic and multiethnic generation with a diversity of voices and clamorous public opinions; all kinds of heretical beliefs and unconventional ideas emerged quickly without any prohibition or taboo. As he strove to keep pace with the trend of the times, his creative works had entirely different interests. In other words, his subject matter was not found from the past. Breaking away from political concerns, his biographical
stories describe the experience of the White Terror with black humor, such as “Hong xiezi” [Red Shoes] and “Taiwan nanzi Jian Atao” [Jian Atao, A Taiwanese Man]. He expresses common human nature in the harmony of marriage relations between different ethnic groups, such as “Xilayazu de moyi” [The Last of the Siraya], “Yizu de hunli” [A Mixed Marriage Wedding], and “Guoshou” [Decapitation]. In his later years, he published erotic stories dealing with human desires, such as “Spring Dreams at Butterfly Alley.” Although his earliest works were lost, the titles remain, such as “Mazu Festival,” “A Tale of an Expedition to Taiwan,” and the novel Zeiranjū-jō kanraku-ki [A Tale of the Fall of Fort Zeelandia]. From these works and the stories he wrote in 1960's, such as “Cai liu ji” [A Story of Collecting Sulphur], “Meigui xiangquan” [A Necklace of Roses], “Zhanbai ji” [A Story of Defeat], we can infer that their subject matter concerns the history, society, and culture of Taiwan in different periods under the occupation either by the Dutch, Cheng Ch'eng-kung of the Ming Dynasty, the Manchu government, or the Japanese. Taking his writings as a whole, we can see the broad vision of Yeh shih-t’ao as a writer and his aspiration to take the people and the social reality as the subjectivity of Taiwan literature.

(7) Fame follows his real achievements with distinguished honors continuously accruing after the 1990’s. In 1987, after the publication of An Outline History of Taiwan Literature, he immediately received
a Culture Contribution Award from the *China Times*. Since 1991, after he retired from teaching at the age of sixty-five, he received all kinds of recognition and honors. In 1997, National Cheng Kung University conferred an honorary doctorate on him, and he started to teach at the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature at the same university. In 2008, *Ye Shitao quanji* [The Complete Works of Yeh Shih-t’ao], including fiction, essays, critiques, and reference materials in twenty volumes, was jointly published by the National Museum of Taiwan Literature and the Cultural Bureau of the Kaohsiung Municipal Government, consummating over sixty years of achievements in and contributions to Taiwan literature.

In retrospect, Yeh Shih-t’ao appears to have set out constructing his earlier stories with romanticism, idealism, and realism as mirrors to reflect the oppression and suffering endured by the common people; his tools were black humor and irony. After the lifting of martial law, Taiwan underwent a great transformation, and when Yeh returned to creative writing, he determined that a transcendence of self, gender, and race was in order. All of these things show his sense of justice, a Taiwan intellectual’s conscience, and a universally accepted humanistic spirit.

Yeh Shih-t’ao passed away in December 2008, and the journal *Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series*, founded in 1996, with the cooperation of Professors Jenn-Shann Lin and Lois Stanford of the University
of Alberta, Canada, published a special issue on the author in July 2009 (Issue 25). The stories selected for translation and published in the special issue of the journal are representative works that reflect the author’s literary characteristics and broad range of styles, as well as his humanistic spirit as a public intellectual.

This anthology is comprised of eight stories, of which five are reprinted from the special issue of the journal, and three newly translated stories of the author’s earlier works are added, namely, “A Necklace of Roses,” “Gladiolas and Flour,” and “Mazu in March.” The eight stories are arranged according to the chronological order of the historical background of the works, so as to give the reader a general understanding of the author’s creative career along with the historical context of Taiwan literature.

In 2015, to promote the outstanding contribution of Tainan to the development of Taiwan literature, the Tainan Culture Bureau initiated the idea of an English anthology of Yeh Shih-t’ao’s short stories to honor the author as a major writer from Tainan. Professor P’eng Jui-chin highly recommended the US-Taiwan Literature Foundation as the publisher to carry out this significant project. After much effort and cooperating with the Tainan Culture Bureau for more than a year, the project has been completed and the anthology has been published as a volume in the Taiwan Writers Translation Series of the foundation. The financial support and cooperation from the Tainan Culture Bureau, as well
as the devoted work and contribution of the translators, are herewith sincerely appreciated. I would also like to extend my thanks to my co-editor Terence Russell for his thoughtful contributions, and to my editing staff comprised of Angela Borda, Fred Edwards, and Raelynn Moy for their diligent efforts.

As a volume in the *Taiwan Writers Translation Series*, this anthology is aimed at English readers in general. For the transliteration of Chinese terms and the names of characters, we used Hanyu Pinyin in accordance with common practice in the field. However, for personal names and Taiwanese geographical terms, we used the Wade-Giles system, following the common practice of English newspapers published in Taiwan. In the story “Last of the Siraya,” we took the special step of using caps for terms that are in the Siraya language, to distinguish from terms in Chinese.

It is my hope that this series will not only enhance the understanding of Taiwan literature itself, but will also provide a growing resource of material for teaching and research beyond the borders of Taiwan, especially for scholars in comparative literature and world literatures.

Kuo-ch’ing Tu, Director
Center for Taiwan Studies
University of California, Santa Barbara
Today there is no doubt that the term “Taiwan Literature” has been established as a broadly inclusive designation. In recent years especially, the subject matter and writing styles that it encompasses have become increasingly diverse, and its concerns have progressed with the times. This is an imperative of the advance of modern civilization, but it should not be taken for granted. From Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga) through the Qing Dynasty and on to the period of Japanese colonial rule, the development of literature has been inseparably linked to the changes of dynasties and political circumstance. Like the island of Taiwan itself, “Taiwan literature” was buffeted by the winds of several hundred years, unable to find an identity and direction it could call its own. Only in the modern era, through the constant and fearless trail-blazing efforts of numerous writers, has Taiwan literature finally been able to blossom with the splendor of a hundred flowers.
Among those writers, the literary accomplishments of Yeh Shih-t’ao are important evidence of the turbulent advance of self-awareness in Taiwan literature. As we examine the more than sixty years of his literary career, we observe that he grew up in the colonial period, experienced the volatility of changing regimes, but never stopped writing, even under the shadow of White Terror authoritarianism. In the postwar transition, when confronted by the linguistic rupture between the Japanese and Chinese, he took up his pen again and created fiction and literary criticism that represented the realities of cultural thought in Taiwan. In addition, he urged the literary world to confront the issue of the orientation of Taiwan literature squarely, to recognize that it was not an extension or collateral branch of any regional literature, but had its own rightful place in the domain of “world literature.”

Tainan is not only the cultural capital of Taiwan, it also sees itself as a capital of world literature. Throughout the development of Taiwan literature, Tainan has always played a role. This was true in early times when classical poetry societies and their recitation parties prevailed, as well as during the period of Japanese rule when the two great literary movements—the Saline Region Literature, and the Windmill Poetry Society—came into being. With Yeh Shih-t’ao and his unremitting efforts in creating short stories, with his definitive work, An Outline History of Taiwan Literature, as well as with his experiments with, and promotion of Taiwanese language
literature, Tainan has always been at the forefront of the literary world, leading toward the future.

Yeh Shih-t’ao was born and grew up on Tayin Street in Tainan Prefecture, an old town known for silver work and jeweler shops. Tainan Prefecture was important in shaping his life and literature. Most of his creative fiction takes the prefecture as its background, and depicts the years he spent there, the people, and the things he knew. In his fiction, we can often see the winding alleyways, the incense burning temples, and the authentic delicacies of Tainan cuisine. In the context of Tainan literature, or even in new Taiwan literature, his works are among the earliest and most representative portrayals of local culture. With such copious output and ambitious goals, Yeh’s portrayal of Tainan city’s cultural complexion compares well with Joyce’s Dublin or Balzac’s Paris.

Despite its vigorous creativity and broad perspective, Taiwan literature is seldom a focus of discussion in world literary circles. The main reason for this is that it lacks translations that might raise its visibility. Although it is difficult for literary translation to express the details and contents of the original works exactly, it is the first step toward bringing greater attention to these works, and leading more people to study and seek an understanding of them.

Tainan is a city that aspires to be a “capital of world literature.” Therefore the translation of its literature into foreign languages is a mission that must not be shirked. To this end, in 2015, the Cultural Affairs
Bureau of Tainan City launched a project to translate and publish “An Anthology of Short Stories by Yeh Shih-t’ao.” It extended a special invitation to Prof. Kuo-ch’ing Tu of the University of California, Santa Barbara, who has long devoted himself to the English translation of Taiwan literature with brilliant success, to take charge of the project.

The translation of literary works is arduous work that often lacks supporting resources, and it requires a sustained devotion to the promotion of literature. We therefore wish to express our greatest gratitude to Professor Kuo-ch’ing Tu and his translation team on this project. At the same time, with this book, we express our highest respect for Mr. Yeh Shih-t’ao, the master of Taiwan literature who described himself as “a beast fed on dreams.” It is our hope that this anthology will be an addition to the splendor of world literature that will illuminate the path of Taiwan literature from the light tower raised by Mr. Yeh Shih-t’ao.

Yeh Tse-shan, Director

Cultural Affairs Bureau,

Tainan City Government