The present volume, *Magnolia: Stories of Taiwanese Women* by Tzeng Ching-wen, is the first in a projected set of major works to be published under the title of *Taiwan Writers Translation Series* by the Center for Taiwan Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara. With the support of UCSB and the Council for Cultural Affairs in Taiwan, the Center also publishes *Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series*, a journal that has appeared biannually since 1996. Through both these series the Center seeks to demonstrate the validity of Taiwan literature as a world literature, by making representative works accessible in English translation and thereby promoting the appreciation and study of Taiwan literature from international perspectives. While joined in purpose, the two series complement each other. *Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series* elaborates a theme in each issue and covers a variety in
breadth so as to introduce English readers to a range of Taiwanese writers' and scholars' viewpoints on their own literature. The Taiwan Writers Translation Series focuses on the writer, with the objective of demonstrating a vertical depth of development, together with the historical positions of writers and the lineages of literary traditions. Together, these series will provide a growing resource of material for teaching and research beyond the borders of Taiwan, not only in Taiwan literature itself, but in the fields of Chinese literature, comparative literature, and world literatures in Chinese.

We would like to acknowledge the indispensable support of the Council for Cultural Affairs, Executive Yuan, Taiwan, ROC; the Lai Ho and Wu Cho-liu Endowed Chair in Taiwan Studies, the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, and the College of Letters and Science, University of California at Santa Barbara, without whose interest the Taiwan Writers Translation Series would not have seen the light of day. Likewise, we take much pleasure in commending the abilities of Magnolia's translators, Jenn-Shann Lin and Lois Stanford, of the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Alberta. Not only have they applied to their translation a studious familiarity with Tzeng Ching-wen's career and development, but they have also taken pains to reflect what can be considered the signature feature of his style, his sparseness and transparency of expression.

Tzeng Ching-wen is a master storyteller. His short stories are small, brilliant mirrors reflecting the life of four generations in Taiwan. In this collection, Magnolia, we have chosen stories in which women are the focus, and in particular, women's lives and roles in a tumultuous and rapidly changing society. His language, his unforgettable characters, and the vividness of the world of Old Town, Taipei, and the surrounding countryside in which the stories take place produce narratives that remain etched upon our hearts.

Tzeng Ching-wen chronicles his characters' loves and sorrows, pains and joys, interests and obsessions. He shows us the vicissitudes of Old Town life—the richness of the society and the constraints it imposes upon his characters. He looks into the hearts and minds of his country folk as he narrates, in a deceptively simple fashion, the tales of their lives. As a background to it all, he paints