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Taiwan Literature
and Childhood
Kuo-ch’ing Tu

The theme of this issue of the journal, “Taiwan Literature and Childhood,” combined with that of Issue 21, “Taiwan Literature and Home-Longing,” is intended to explore nostalgia as expressed in Taiwan literature from the perspectives of time and space. In terms of time, the formative experiences of one’s childhood are carried throughout one’s developing life, with inerasable memories becoming the source of nostalgia.

The term “childhood” usually refers to the stage of life before reaching the age of eighteen—a physical and intellectual developmental period subdivided into “early childhood,” “juvenile,” and “adolescence.” During this growth stage when life has just begun, routine habits have not yet been formed and one has not seen much of the world, so that every experience is novel and fresh. Children are pure and innocent, understanding the world by intuition; their minds are full of discovery and the joy of surprise, and they are sensitive and easily wounded. Thoughts and feelings aroused by life experiences and sensory stimuli remain in one’s memory for a lifetime, becoming the source of recollections and reflections. Childhood memories, conjuring the bygone days with emotion—either recollected or reflected upon, sentimental or full of regret—often become appropriate subjects or themes for narra-