As is commonly known, the study of Taiwan literature was launched progressively at the end of the seventies in the People's Republic of China as an incentive under the newly adopted open-door policy to "carry out the great undertaking of national unification." In Taiwan, it was after 1987, when martial law was lifted, that scholars started to respond to this situation positively and direct their attention to the study of Taiwan literature. There are two opposite viewpoints among scholars in general, reflecting in most cases differences in academic background:

1. Taiwan literature is part of, or tributary to, Chinese literature, and the development of Taiwan literature is viewed within the frame of Chinese literature as a whole;

2. Taiwan literature has a distinct identity with its own historical origins and unique tradition, and is not tributary to Chinese literature.

These two viewpoints form an antithesis that grew from historical and geographical factors. Mainland scholars have every reason in keeping with political circumstances to hold that Taiwan literature is a part of Chinese literature. In Taiwan some scholars and writers also maintain that Taiwan literature is a part of Chinese literature, or that Taiwan literature is the Chinese literature developed in Taiwan. This viewpoint had enjoyed general consent before martial law was lifted in 1987. The KMT government used to claim the right to represent China, and most of the public organizations were named with "China" rather than "Taiwan." Taiwan literature was taken to be the same as Chinese literature in such circumstances. Since martial law was removed, however, freedom of speech has prevailed, political circumstances in Taiwan have greatly changed, and people have started to show differences in their opinions regarding Taiwan literature and Chinese literature. Mainland scholars love to quote pro-China remarks made by Taiwanese writers, but often fall into anachronism because the "motherland" in the mind of a Taiwanese writer under Japanese rule was not necessarily the mainland of today, and before martial law ended, the "China" claimed on Taiwan's side of the Straits was definitely not the China on the other side. In 1972 the Republic of China in Taiwan withdrew from the United Nations and represented China no more in the diplomatic arena. Taiwanese consciousness has been strengthening ever since, and the second viewpoint on the study of Taiwan literature has become more and more conspicuous.

Both viewpoints, indeed, stand on different grounds, and each has its justification and limitation. If Taiwan literature has to be studied only within the configuration of Chinese literature as a whole, or must be interpreted with references to literary developments in the Mainland, obviously such a preset stand will be too exclusive to
deal with all the phenomena and issues of literature in Taiwan. Conversely, if Taiwan literature has to be studied only from the standpoint of Taiwan itself, this approach has self-set limits that will inevitably restrict the content and scope of Taiwan literature. As a product of the human mind, literature reflects specific realities of life and at the same time reveals universal human nature. Although the realities reflected in Taiwan literature cannot be separated from the time and land of Taiwan or the life of the people living on the island, the ultimate value of Taiwan literature lies in its art-its capacity to reflect universal human nature with excellent literary qualities appreciated by all mankind. Taiwanese writers should aim high with a global vision, and the study of Taiwan literature should have a vision beyond Taiwan and China.

Literature is an art of language and uses written language as a medium of expression. Distinguished by the language used there are various literatures, such as Chinese literature, English literature, French literature, and German literature. By Chinese literature we mean literary works written in the Chinese language, regardless of the place where they were written, which can be China or any other place in the world. Thus a new concept of "literatures in Chinese" (Hua-wen wên-hsüeh) has come into existence. Since the sixties, many Chinese writers in Taiwan went to study abroad and settled in foreign countries, becoming overseas Chinese writers. Since the eighties, Chinese writers all over the world have attracted scholarly attention as a worldwide phenomenon. Since the nineties, Mainland China has maintained open and steady communication between both sides of the Taiwan Straits, overseas Chinese societies have more and more contacts with China, and the study of worldwide literatures in Chinese has come to the fore as a rising field of research. Inasmuch as China's influence is increasing in the world, this tendency will get stronger and eventually the Chinese literatures will stand on a par with literatures written in other major languages of the world.

Furthermore, as far as cultural backgrounds and social realities are concerned, the literatures of Mainland China and Taiwan constitute the most important parts of world literatures in Chinese. Comparative characteristics of Taiwan literature will be better understood when studied from the perspective of world literatures in Chinese, rather than within the framework of China's literature. As they face the 21st century, not only the literature of China but the literature of Taiwan, too, will have to move toward the world. As an important component of worldwide literatures in Chinese, Taiwan literature should also be studied with a global vision so that its contribution to the world can be more appropriately explored and evaluated.

Due to its unique geographical location and historical background, Taiwan has developed a culture and society different from that of the Mainland. Taiwanese culture bears the characteristics of a sea-girt country, greatly influenced by maritime culture. Taiwan's society is basically an immigrant society. An island nation's culture is apt to be influenced from abroad, and the case of Japan is particularly remarkable. Taiwan has been greatly influenced by Japanese culture.
certainly as a result of fifty years’ rule by Japan, but the fact that Taiwan itself has the nature of an insular country in common with Japan is also an important factor. It is undeniable that Taiwan literature has been influenced by Japanese literature, and in fact Taiwanese writers have also been much influenced by literatures from Europe, America, and other countries, particularly through Japanese during the colonial period. In addition to Chinese literature, influences from Japan and the West have further complicated the cultural background of Taiwan literature. The native ethos, Chinese tradition, and foreign influences have been the three major factors influencing Taiwan literature during its historical development. The history of Taiwan literature is, so to speak, a process of mutual agitation, action and reaction, and interflowing of these three elements. Observations through a prism consisting of these three phases will be able to perceive the various facets and splendid features of Taiwan literature. Various foreign influences on Taiwan literature have made it an important subject for comparative study from an international perspective, and also have warranted its study on a theoretical basis for eventual evaluation within a global vision.

We need to study and evaluate Taiwan literature from an international viewpoint. None of the phenomena in the development of Taiwan literature is really isolated but rather has some counterpart for comparison in any Chinese literature developed in the other areas, or even in the literatures of other countries of the world. For example, Taiwan literature is taken by some people to belong to the literature of the third world, which is characterized by resistance to imperialism and colonialism and imitation of Western modernism. Taiwan was Japan’s colony for fifty years, and a comparative study of Taiwan literature with other colonial literatures will be an interesting subject, especially a comparison with the literature of Korea, which shared a similar experience under Japanese rule, or the Philippines, or India and other Southeast Asian countries. Literatures from those places must have something comparable and illuminating to each other that merits research by international scholars of comparative literature. From a colonial period to the present post-colonial stage, Taiwan literature seen in the context of the post-colonial diaspora also is a subject worth exploring.

In addition, Taiwanese writers during the Japanese period who wrote in support of the political campaign for transforming the Taiwanese people into imperial subjects, East German writers before the unification who were collaborators as state agents, as well as the anti-Communist writers of the fifties in Taiwan and the model writers during the Cultural Revolution in China, all seem to have faced a similar situation by working in collusion with the state. How to understand and deal with those writers and their works is also an interesting subject for critical review. As for local or indigenous literature, advocates of nativist literature in Taiwan either in the thirties during the Japanese occupation period or in the seventies during the debate over the status of Taiwan literature could be discussed on a par with Lu Hsün of the twenties, Shen Ts’ung-wen and the Northeast writers of the thirties, or Kao Hsiao-sheng, Han Shao-kung, and Mo Yen of the eighties in China, or even compared with William Faulkner, who expressed in his works the local color of the South in America, so as to better understand the universal characteristics of this type of
literature. The aboriginal literature of Taiwan and American Indian literature should be comparable in many ways as well.

Nevertheless, as a "border area literature," Taiwan literature and Irish literature bear many similarities that deserve exploration, especially the Irish literature restoration movement from the end of the nineteenth century to the twentieth century, which set itself the goal to revive the native Celtic culture in resistance to the literature of the ruling country, England. The Irish national poet Yeats, who participated in this movement, thereby made his literary activities and works particularly relevant to Taiwanese writers. The majority of Irish people are Celts, and there has been an official policy to restore Irish, a Celtic language, as the mother tongue of Ireland; but the world-class Irish writers in the twentieth century, such as Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett, as well as the familiar Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw, all wrote in English, or in French then translated into English, and received worldwide recognition. That is an issue that deserves some thought. Many literary trends in the twentieth century exerted a far-reaching influence on the contemporary literature of many countries of the world, especially modernism, which had a great impact in Mainland China in the thirties and Taiwan during the Japanese rule, as well as the modernist school of the sixties in Taiwan and the literature of the new period in China after the eighties. A study of the influences Taiwan received from the literary trends of the world, in comparison with other countries as regards historical developments, cultural backgrounds, adaptations, etc. will entail a better understanding of the particularities and universal qualities of Taiwan literature.

Due to various circumstances, a programmatic study of Taiwan literature was launched in Mainland China in connection with the open-door policy; it has called the attention and concerns of scholars in Taiwan and aroused the research interest of international scholars, especially in Japan and Germany. The study of Taiwan literature has become an object of international scholarly attention, and theses and dissertations with Taiwan literature as the subject have been increasing at many universities in the world. The field of vision in the study of Taiwan literature is bound to be widened with participation of more international scholars. Studying Taiwan literature as an important part of worldwide literatures in Chinese with a mental horizon of world literature appears to be a tendency in the foreseeable future.

Based on such a perspective, this issue of the Series focuses on Taiwan literature during the period of Japanese rule from 1895 to 1945 and particularly introduces Japanese scholars' research in this field. An international conference on "Lai Ho and His Contemporary Writers: Taiwan Literature of the Japanese Occupation Period" was held at Tsing Hua University in Taiwan, November, 1994. The main papers of this conference have been translated into Japanese and were published as a book in Japan in 1995, entitled Yomigaeru Taiwan bungaku-Nihon tōchi-ki no sakka to sakuhin (Taiwan Literature Resuscitated: Writers and Works of the Period of Japanese Rule). This volume is indeed a milestone in the study of Taiwan literature from an international perspective.
Selected translations in this issue include the most important writers’ works and related writings, which were all originally in Japanese except for the poems in the classical Chinese style by Lai Ho. The critique by Fujii Shōzō of Tokyo University is the preface to the above-mentioned volume; it poses a question, in considering modern Japanese literature from an international view, about the significance of the study of Taiwan literature before the war period, and touches upon the awakening of nationalism in Taiwan. The second critique, by Yamaguchi Mamoru of Nihon University, is also a preface, in this case, for an anthology of Taiwan literature; it provides a general historical and social background for understanding contemporary literature in Taiwan. For the fiction, Lü He-jo and Lung Ying-tsung are selected as two major writers of the Japanese occupation period who wrote in Japanese. "The Ox-cart" by Lü He-jo is a masterpiece, and has long deserved an artistic translation into English. The rendition of Lung Ying-tsung’s "A Chance Encounter" is also of high quality. Chang Wen-huan, a prominent Taiwanese writer and literary editor, was picked to represent Taiwanese writers who participated in the Greater East Asian Writers Convention in support of the war. For historical interest, the declaration of the Convention is selected for translation along with an essay written by Chang Wen-huan after returning from the Convention in Tokyo, which, interestingly enough, describes his impressions of Tokyo during the trip without highlighting any political implication of the event. Lai Ho (1894-1943) has been considered the father of Taiwan literature; in memory of him Yang K’uei’s essay reveals their special relationship, which should be of interest to scholars concerned. Ozaki Hotsuki is known for his study of the Japanese colonial literature in the past. His article is a classic, discussing for the first time Yang K’uei, Lung Ying-tsun, and Lü He-jo as the three most important Taiwanese writers during the Japanese occupation period and showing the weakening of their resistance under increasing pressure with the worsening situation of wartime Japan. Ch’en Ming-t’ai’s article on modernist poetry in Taiwan in the thirties during the Japanese period will make a contribution to understanding the far-reaching influence of modernism in the twentieth century as an international phenomenon. All the translators’ efforts, needless to say, are greatly appreciated for having made this second issue possible.

As a project to encourage the study of Taiwan literature and expand its appreciation in relation to the literature of China and in comparison with the other literatures of the Chinese diaspora, this journal, Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series, has been put on a secure footing with support from the Council for Cultural Affairs in Taiwan, as well as the College of Letters and Science and the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, University of California at Santa Barbara. We plan to publish two issues a year, and will have a focus for each issue hereafter. Translating is laborious, and we need an extensive muster of translators. Translating is also a creative process and to a very large extent becomes its own reward. However, we are able to pay a nominal fee for translation with hopes that more scholars in the field will lend us their expertise to help with translation. This journal has a future to look toward, and we will appreciate your support and suggestions.

(December 1997)