

Foreword

The publication of the English version of *Wintry Night* is a great dream come true. This saga chronicles the ups and downs of a Taiwan “Hakka” family of three generations from the late nineteenth century to the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945. Recounting this family’s adventures, struggles, frustrations, and expectations amid endless natural and man-made trials, it vividly records the time when hundreds of thousands of Chinese immigrants tried to relocate themselves on the island of Taiwan and redefine their cultural and political identities. Most of the plot elements are based on records left in the archives of the Japanese governor of Taiwan.

The author, Li Qiao, is one of the most prominent writers in Taiwan. As he explains in his original preface, this ambitious trilogy is based on the story of his mother, “the woman who not only gave birth to me but is also the embodiment of our native land.” Li Qiao’s tender reminiscences about his mother and motherland enable him to invoke an unusual lyricism throughout his narrative. His rendition of the morals and manners of Taiwanese society under colonial rule is full of piety and compassion.

I am sure that this novel will inspire the coming generations of overseas Taiwanese who may not be able to read Chinese. They will find in this book their own families’ history vividly portrayed with affection and eloquence. More important, *Wintry Night* will also serve as a compelling introduction for general readers interested in the cultural and historical dynamics of Taiwan over the past century. The novel is well translated by Professors Taotao Liu and John Balcom, to whom I wish to express my heartfelt thanks.

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