

vergleichbaren Werke in den Schatten und wird auf viele Jahre hinaus für jeden unverzichtbar sein, der sich mit chinesischer Literatur beschäftigt.

Thilo Diefenbach

Wu Ying, Jia Zongpei u.a. (ed.): Selected Short Stories from China (1991-2000)

Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 2004, 321 S., US\$ 20

This volume is part of the "Cultural China (*wenhua Zhongguo*)" series which was established in order to "build mutual understanding between [China and the West] by presenting the truths about China", as Sun Yong, chief editor of the series, puts it in his preface. This seems to be necessary, as "China remains a mystery to the West. [The] poverty of knowledge about China is contrasted by Chinese knowledge of the West." Blunt statements like these might be questioned, but as long as they lead to the attempt of presenting Chinese culture to a larger audience, they at least seem to have positive side-effects. The 21 short-stories collected here should, according to Sun Yong, not be taken as an "anthology of modern Chinese literature." This may be the reason why no author from the younger generation (which has lately seemed to dominate the market) has been included. "Our selections are mostly short works on the joys and sorrows of the Chinese, pieces people outside China can enjoy. Our prime selection criterion was that the stories be compelling." Opinions might differ as to whether these aims have been reached.

The first story, Jia Pingwa's "Smoking", is more confusing than compelling and definitely gives the book a bad start. Unfortunately, the following pieces are just as disappointing: Han Dong's "Reunion" is written in such a clumsy style that it is not easy for the reader to find any interest in this family

saga; Liu Zhenyun's "The Drummer on the Mound and Richard Clayderman" is a pointless comparison between a young drummer from the Chinese countryside and the famous piano player, stressing over and over again that the two have absolutely nothing in common. Wang Zengqi's "Two Tales" come to a sudden halt right after the main characters have been introduced. It is only with Wang Meng's "Anecdotes from the Land of Chess" and Feng Jikai's "Profiles of Folks Around Town" that the reader (who might already feel a little worn-out by now) finally encounters the art of storytelling: straight, pleasant to read and with a certain sense of humour that modern Chinese literature still lacks so often.

Next in line are three women writers who know how to display their skills: Chi Li's "A Still Life" and Bi Shumin's "The Muddy Roads" create atmospheric, even thrilling scenarios taking place somewhere in the Chinese countryside, and Xu Kun's "Encountering Love" demonstrates how emotions are completely out of place in the times of merciless business. Qiu Huadong's "The World of Clocks and Watches" goes one step further, showing a young man who seems to go insane under the pressure of everyday modern life. Han Shaogong's touching sketches of social misfits in "The Folks of Maqiao" are reminiscent of Feng Jikai's piece. Guan Renshan's "A Villager-sponsored New Opera" acquaints the reader with the difficulties of cultural economics in an age of materialism and also contains quite a few frank words on corrupt officials misusing their power. Yu Hua's "The Little Boy in the Dusk" is once again one of those violent nightmares for which this author is already well-known (and, incidentally, the short biographical note offers a possible explanation for Yu Hua's obsession with blood and pain: he used to be a dentist!).

Liu Qingbang's "Shoes", in contrast, is a silent, slow and very personal story. In "Beauty," Tie Ning combines a demonstration of the backwardness of a small water-

less village with erotic entanglements. Both Hong Ke's gruesome "The Merino Sheep" and Wang Anyi's heavy-going "On the Ferry Boat" cannot keep up the standard to which the reader has become accustomed by the time he/she reaches this point. Mo Yan's "The Shen Garden" and Su Tong's "Encounters with Mr Sima" describe the pitiful lives and experiences of elderly couples, whereas Ma Yuan tries to take a satirical glance on a family which is torn apart by daily business and can only communicate via cell phones in "Bits and Pieces of Family Love". A Cheng's "An Joong-gun's assassination of Ito Hirobumi" which closes the book is nothing but a display of aggressive anti-Japanese nationalism. This volume does offer some interesting insights into modern China, but the poor quality of some stories (concerning style as well as content) seriously interfere with the editors' aspirations. The fact that neither the original titles of the stories nor the sources of their first publication are given is another point that could be criticized.

Thilo Diefenbach

Roger Mark Selya: Development and Demographic Change in Taiwan, 1945-1995

New Jersey u.a.: World Scientific Publishing, 2004, 479 S., 70 GB£

Diese von dem Geographen Mark Selya, einem langjährigen Beobachter der Bevölkerungsentwicklung Taiwans, verfasste Monographie behandelt alle wichtigen Aspekte der Bevölkerungsentwicklung Taiwans der Nachkriegszeit. In gut verständlicher, aber stets präziser Sprache werden auch komplexe Zusammenhänge zwischen Geburtenraten, Bildungspolitik, Urbanisierung und Gesundheitspolitik verdeutlicht, sodass ein der Komplexität des Themas angemessenes Bild von der immer noch nicht in allen Facetten erklärbaren Bevölkerungsentwicklung Taiwans entsteht.

Der Autor legt dieser Studie eigene Auswertungen der verfügbaren statistischen Daten zugrunde und kontrastiert diese mit den zuvor erzielten Ergebnissen anderer Einzelstudien aus dem Untersuchungszeitraum. Sein in der Einleitung explizit genanntes Ziel ist, eine methodisch an die Vorgängeruntersuchung von George W. Barclay angelehnte aktuelle Fortsetzung mit den Daten für den Zeitraum 1945-1995 zu liefern (George W. Barclay: *Colonial Development and Population in Taiwan*, Princeton University Press 1954). Dies ist eindrucksvoll gelungen; das Buch ist gut geeignet, als Handbuch auch fachfremden Wissenschaftlern schnell einen Überblick über die statistisch belegbaren Veränderungen in der Bevölkerungsstruktur Taiwans und deren Hintergründe zu liefern. Für Taiwan-Spezialisten unter den Politikwissenschaftlern sind besonders die Teile interessant, die die absichtlichen und unabsichtlichen Folgeerscheinungen der Bevölkerungspolitik der taiwanischen Regierung anhand der heute vorliegenden Daten evaluieren.

Neben einer Einleitung ist das Werk in folgende Hauptteile gegliedert: Growth, Distribution, Composition, and Structure; Fertility; Mortality, Morbidity, and Public Health; Migration sowie Population Policies. Der Anhang enthält die wichtigsten taiwanischen Dokumente zur Bevölkerungspolitik in Übersetzung sowie einen Index.

Der Autor versteht es, die Fachdiskussion in der Sekundärliteratur in transparenter Weise darzustellen, indem er die darin zu einzelnen Fragen vertretenen Thesen listenartig gegenüberstellt. So wird besonders gut deutlich, in welcher kontroverser Art und Weise dieselben Daten von verschiedenen Autoren interpretiert wurden und werden. Selya leistet allein schon durch diese unparteiische Dokumentation einen sehr interessanten Beitrag zur methodischen Frage der Interpretation von statistischen Daten, wird doch gerade das Beispiel der Entwicklung Taiwans von Vertretern völlig unterschiedlicher und sich gegenseitig ausschließender theoretischer