

## Books Received

*Although Renditions carries advertising of books on Chinese and Asian subjects, it does not publish a regular book review section. From time to time, however, publishers send us editorial copies of their new titles, and these are acknowledged in the following manner.*

***Rice*** by Su Tong. Translated by Howard Goldblatt. Penguin Books, 1996. 266 pages.

A village boy flees to the pre-war big city to escape starvation, finding work in a rice emporium. Steeled by humiliation to ruthless self-reliance, he wrests control of the emporium, its women, and the local underworld, maintaining throughout a fetishistic obsession with rice. A bleak but absorbing portrayal of an atomized society.

***Oxcart: Nativist Stories from Taiwan 1934-1977***. Translated with introduction by Rosemary M. Haddon. Dortmund: projekt-verlag (edition cathay), 1996. 304 + xxv pages.

An anthology of Taiwanese *xiangtu* 鄉土 or 'nativist' fiction, a movement originally associated with 1920s 'New Literature' and resistance to Japanese imperialism, but which re-emerged in the 1960s and 70s as a critical voice in a post-colonial context. This selection includes works from both periods.

***Ink Bamboo: poems, translations & adaptations*** by John Cayley. London: Agenda Editions and Bellew Publishing, 1996. 107 pages.

Translations interspersed with creative adaptations and original poems, embodying a very personal response to Chinese poetry and aesthetics. The selection of Chinese poetry spans from remote antiquity to the present day.

***Beyond Spring: Tz'u Poems of the Sung Dynasty***. Translated by Julie Landau. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. 275 + xii pages.

Selection of 150 classic *ci* lyrics from fifteen of the period's masters. Includes general introduction and guide to symbols and allusions, making the poems more

accessible to non-specialists. Illustrated with contemporary calligraphy and paintings, some by the poets themselves.

*The Castle* by Jia Pingwa. Translated by Shao-pin Luo. Toronto: York Press Ltd., 1997. 79 + iii pages.

Tradition and modernity lock horns when a resourceful Shanxi villager confronts jealousy, superstition, fatalism and self-interest in trying to set up a co-operative mining venture. The arrival of a film crew from the city is a salutary influence, but Zhang Laoda's fate is ultimately that of Qin reformer and local ancestor Shang Yang, whose story is narrated by the Taoist in the village temple.

I.C.