



C. T. Hsia on Chinese Literature (Masters of Chinese Studies, V. 1)

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Best known for the groundbreaking works *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (1961) and *The Classic Chinese Novel* (1968), C. T. Hsia has gathered sixteen essays and studies written during his Columbia years as a professor of Chinese literature. Wider in range and scope, *C. T. Hsia on Chinese Literature* stands beside his two earlier books as part of his critical legacy to all readers seriously interested in the subject.

C. T. Hsia's writings on Chinese literature express a candor rare among his Western colleagues. Thus the first section of the book contains three essays that place Chinese literature in critical perspective, examining its substance and significance and questioning some of the critical approaches and methods adopted by Western sinologists for its study and appreciation. The second section has two essays on traditional drama—one on the Yuan masterpiece *The Romance of the Western Chamber* and the other a sophisticated study of the plays of the foremost Ming dramatist T'ang Hsien-tsu.

The third section is the richest and longest of the book, containing six essays on traditional and early modern fiction. At least four of these—on "The Military Romance" and the novels *Flowers in the Mirror*, *The Travels of Lao Ts'an*, and *Jade Pear Spirit*—are among the author's finest works. Finally, the fourth section of the book, covering modern fiction, includes one essay on the novel *The Korchin Banner Plains*, an essay on women in Chinese communist fiction, and three concise yet illuminating studies of the short story during the three republican decades before Mao, the first dozen years under Mao, and in Taiwan during the 1960s.

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