

New Literature under Japanese Rule

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Taiwan was colonized by Japan during 1895-1945. During this time, the modernization and industrialization have stridden forward rapidly. The economic structure and social culture in Taiwan have experienced great changes at the time. Through the modern education system operated by the colonial government, people who used to speak Holo, Hakka, and aboriginal languages, for the first time, had a common language which combined writing and dialogue: Japanese. Compared with the national language of vernacular Chinese after the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, Japanese was not only much easier for people in Taiwan to learn, but also serves as a bridge and access to western civilization. However, for those Taiwanese intellectuals who still identified with a Chinese nationality, with the already established cultural identity of Holo and Hakka, accepting Japanese as the primary thinking and communicating tool was no easy task.

The new literature in Taiwan came out from this circumstance which can be further categorized into the following three groups: Traditional Han literati who have grown up under the rule of Qing Dynasty and wrote in classic Chinese; The first generation of new intellectuals who received both Shuyuan (academies of classical learning) and modern school education, and obtained both classic Chinese and Japanese ability; the second generation of new intellectuals developed by modern education system who even had the overseas experience in Japan and could only read and write in Japanese. Between the generations who inherited or confronted one another, and within the requirements of national identity or the acceptance of modernity, the new literature in Taiwan was first “discovered” as the means of national and social movement and then strived to develop its unique character.

1895~1945 年之間的台灣，為日本殖民統治時代。這段期間同時是往現代化與工業化急速邁進的時期，台灣的經濟結構與社會文化都經歷了巨大蛻變。因為現代學校教育的推行，原本因其族群屬性，而各自以閩南、客家、原住民語為常用口語的台灣人民，透過殖民者所施行之教育，首次產生書寫與口語合一的共同語言：日語。相對於辛亥革命後成為中華民國國語的中國白話文，日語對台灣人民來說學習較為簡便，也可成為接觸吸收西洋文明的媒介。但對於以中國為祖國、也透過閩南語、客家語的使用，建立起宗族與文化認同的台灣知識份子而言，

毫無抗拒的接受日語作為思考、溝通的工具並非易事。

台灣的新文學就在這樣的背景下誕生。在清朝統治下成長、以古典文言文為書寫工具的傳統漢文人；同時接受書房與近代學校教育、有文言文與日語雙重能力的第一代新知識份子；成長於近代學校體系、甚至擁有留學日本經驗、只能以日文讀寫的第二代新知識份子。在或傳承或對立的世代之間、在國族認同或現代性接納的需求裡，台灣新文學先是作為民族社會運動的手段被「發現」，繼而摸索發展出獨特的性格。