



The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Drama (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

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The first of its kind in English, this anthology presents translations of twenty-two popular plays published between 1919 and 2000, accompanied by an introduction to the historical, cultural, and aesthetic evolution of twentieth-century Chinese spoken drama. Primarily comprising works from the People's Republic of China, though including representative plays from Hong Kong and Taiwan, this collection showcases more than the revolutionary rethinking of Chinese theater and performance that began in the late Qing dynasty. It also reflects the formation of Chinese national and gender identities during a period of tremendous social and political change, as well as the genesis of contemporary attitudes toward the West.

Early twentieth-century Chinese drama embodies the uncertainty and anxiety brought on by modernism, socialism, political conflict, and war. After 1949, the PRC theater paints a complex portrait of the rise of Communism in China, with the ideals of Chinese socialism juxtaposed against the sacrifices made for a new society. The Cultural Revolution promoted a "model theater" cultivated from the achievements of earlier, leftist spoken drama, despite the fact that this theater arose from the destruction of old culture. Post-Mao drama addresses the Chairman's legacy and the attempts of a wounded nation to reexamine its cultural roots. Taiwan's spoken drama uniquely synthesizes regional and foreign traditions, and Hong Kong's spoken drama sparkles as a hybrid of Chinese and Western influences. Immensely valuable for scholars of cross-disciplinary, comparative, and performance study, this anthology offers essential perspective on the theatricality and representation of political life.

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