

# Literatures of Asia



Tony  
Barnstone

# Literatures of Asia

From Antiquity to the Present



Edited and with introductions by

**Tony Barnstone**

WHITTIER COLLEGE

Prentice  
Hall

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*This book is dedicated to*  
*Arthur Sze*  
*Sam Hamill*  
*J. P. Seaton*

# P R E F A C E

*Literatures of Asia* has been designed to present teachers and students with a textbook representative of the finest works of Asian literature, one that is amenable to many different teaching approaches. This book includes a wealth of materials so as to give teachers choices that they can tailor to their own preferences, needs, and expertise. This capaciousness will allow students to read around in authors, periods, and traditions that particularly excite them, supplementing assigned reading and providing an essential source book for their individual research. Teaching such a broad spectrum of texts may be challenging, and with this in mind I have supported the literary texts with a full apparatus: a general introduction, section introductions, and extensive headnotes. These supporting materials provide broad and specific contexts, placing literary texts within important cultural, linguistic, and historical movements. In addition, the headnotes include up-to-date bibliographies to guide students for further research.

Translations have been selected primarily for their literary quality because I firmly believe that it is a disservice to students, professors, and authors to present a great work of literature in an English translation that does not read as literature. The depth and quality of these texts demand excellent translations, so that students and professors may encounter them in a form that preserves their artistic integrity and delight. The translators featured here are among the finest in their fields, and many are themselves prominent writers. They include Burton Watson, Barbara Stoler Miller, A. K. Ramanujan, Arthur Waley, Ezra Pound, Kenneth Rexroth, Helen Craig McCullough, Donald Keene, and Robert Bly, among others. My one rule has been to include no translation that is merely adequate. In a sense, then, this text is a showcase for the art of literary translation, and my hope has been to compile an anthology that students will want to take home with them and to read around in long after the course is completed.

In addition to literary texts, *Literatures of Asia* includes selections from religious and philosophical texts that have literary merit, such as the Rig Veda; the Upanishads; Mahayana and Theravada Buddhist texts; the Bhagavad-Gita; classical Indian devotional (bhakti) verse; the *Analects* of Confucius; the Dao-De-Jing; and Zen poems, essays, and stories. These beautiful texts also provide a cosmological and cultural context for literary movements. Extensive headnotes and introductions trace religious movements and influence, giving students a broad overview of Asian religions, which, in the East as in the West, have often inspired and been an essential part of world literatures.

The book also includes important examples of the secular essay, including Mahatma Gandhi writing on passive resistance; a selection of classical Chinese and Japanese literary criticism; *ars poeticas* and meditative essays; along with a memoir by Liang Heng. These essays are themselves of immense literary importance and at the same time provide political, esthetic, philosophical, historical, and biographical supplements to the literary selections. In addition to providing context for the literary selections, the essays provide students with a valuable resource for writing and researching their own essays.

In dealing with many literatures written in many languages, a special problem is presented by the question of orthography. In the literatures of India, China, and Japan, there are alternate and warring systems of transliteration. Generally speaking, I have chosen to use those transliteration systems that are best designed for the general, nonspecialist reader, for whom a more scholarly orthography would prove less informative. However, I did not wish to tamper with the integrity of translators' choices, and so in some cases the headnote is rendered in simplified orthography (reflecting English spellings), whereas the text is maintained in scholarly orthography (reflecting the specialized phonetics of the source language). In such cases, where necessary, I attempt to avoid confusion through footnotes (the nonspecialist may not realize, for example, that the god Shiva is the same as Śiva). China presented a singular dilemma because the long-dominant Wade-Giles system, used until recently by the majority of literary translators, has now been superseded by the Pinyin system. Those Western readers who have a basic familiarity with Chinese literature may, therefore, have a hard time recognizing that the Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi (Pinyin) is the same person as Chuang Tzu (Wade-Giles), that Bo Juyi is Po Chū-i, and that Laozi is Lao Tzu. For China, therefore, I include Wade-Giles names in parentheses after Pinyin names in the headnotes and table of contents (except for those rare names, such as "Wang Wei," for which there is no difference between the systems). For Japanese terms and names, I have followed standard simplified transliteration practice, primarily eliminating long vowels (Bashō becomes Basho). When referring to Japanese *nō* plays, however, I use the now-archaic transliteration "noh" instead of "no" to avoid possible confusion with the English word.

Similarly, some readers may be confused by the fact that authors they may be familiar with from Japan appear here with their names inverted. The novels of Nobel Prize-winning author Mishima Yukio, for example, are commonly presented in English translation under the name Yukio Mishima, but in this text I have respected Japanese name order (last name first, first name last). Some ancient Japanese names include the preposition "no," which means "of," rather like early English usage (as in John of Gaunt). Chinese names, like Japanese names, appear with the family name first and personal name last. Transposed into English name order,

for example, Mao Zedong would be rendered Zedong Mao. As with Japanese names, I have respected Chinese name order in this text.

I would like to thank the many scholars who have contributed to the project: J. P. Seaton and Chou Ping for advice on the China section; Sam Hamill for his observations on China and Japan; Richard Serrano for suggestions about China; and Brenda Schildgen and Sara Saleri for their suggestions for the Indian subcontinent. I would like to thank Mika Fukuda, who helped me regularize and simplify the orthography for the Indian subcontinent, and especially to thank Ericka Embry, David Livingston, and Ayame Fukuda for their essential help in research, typing, and organization, and in the thousand small tasks that a project like this entails. Ayame Fukuda provided essential research help and also co-wrote the introduction to Japan. Finally, I would like to thank our editor Carrie Brandon, whose good cheer and interest have made preparing this edition of *Literatures of Asia* a pleasure.

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—TONY BARNSTONE

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