

21ST CENTURY
CHINESE
LITERATURE

★ WANG MENG ★ LIANG XIAOSHENG ★ AH CHENG
★ BI SHUMIN ★ CHEN JIANGONG ★ LIU XINWU
★ JIANG ZILONG ★ ZHOU DAXIN
★ HANG YING ★ BEI BEI.....

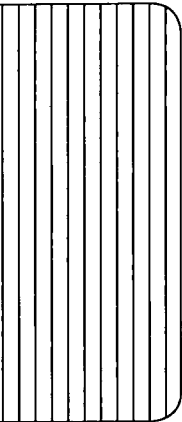
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AND MORE MINIATURE STORIES

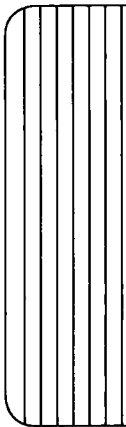


FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

1247.8
37c



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图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

一片落叶: 英文 / 冰峰 主编

北京: 外文出版社, 2009年 (21世纪中国当代文学书库)

ISBN 978-7-119-05748-4

I. 一 ... II. 冰 ... III. 小小说—作品集—中国—当代—英文 IV. I247.8

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2009) 第087092号

责任编辑: 邵东 曾惠杰

英文翻译: 纪华 高文星

英文审定: Kris Sri Bhaggiyadatta May Yee 王明杰

装帧设计: 视觉共振

印刷监制: 冯浩

一片落叶

主 编: 冰峰

©2009外文出版社

出版发行:

外文出版社 (中国北京百万庄大街24号)

邮政编码: 100037

网 址: <http://www.flp.com.cn>

电 话: 008610-68320579 (总编室)

008610-68995852 (发行部)

008610-68327750 (版权部)

制 版:

北京维诺传媒文化有限公司

印 刷:

北京外文印刷厂

开 本: 787mm×1092mm 1/16 印 张: 23.5

2009年10月第1版 第1次印刷

(英)

ISBN 978-7-119-05748-4

10800 (平)

10-E-3907P

版权所有 侵权必究 如有印装问题本社负责调换 (电话: 68995852)

First Edition 2009

ISBN 978-7-119-05748-4

©Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, China, 2009

Published by Foreign Languages Press

24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing 100037, China

[http: //www. flp. com. cn](http://www.flp.com.cn)

Distributed by China International Book Trading Corporation

35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China

21ST CENTURY CHINESE LITERATURE

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21st Century Chinese Literature

— Points of Departure

By Wang Meng

The *21st Century Chinese Literature* series aims to introduce contemporary Chinese literature in English, French and other languages to readers all over the world.

Chinese literature's recent path, along the country's trajectory, may not resemble a smooth highway, yet it is still the main channel toward understanding China and the daily lives and inner-world of the Chinese people.

China has been experiencing soaring development, and its links with the rest of the world have been growing closer. Even if you might not know anyone from China, "made in China" still can now be found in most aspects of your life, or as expressed in a Chinese idiom, "Look up, and see it everywhere." News about China appears regularly in newspapers, on TV and the Internet, trying to tell you what is happening in this remote yet near country called China, and what China is thinking and planning. In this way, peoples of the world have developed their general views of China.

Many of those views are often insightful. Chinese writers, like myself, have also been keeping an eye on the world. We often discuss the US, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Italy and other countries, as well as the interesting or ingenious views about China held by peoples of such countries. But we feel much regret to find

sometimes that others' views about China are full of illusions and misunderstandings, more often than not, preconceived, arbitrary and overgeneralized. Thus, my fellow citizens and I have become powerfully aware of how little the world really knows about China, and thus we feel that the world is so near, yet still so remote.

Literature can draw us closer to communicate views and imagination about the world and life, and share each other's joys and sorrows beyond language barriers, different cultures and backgrounds or long distances. It can make you feel that people living afar are like your next-door neighbors, as you perceive and share the secret interiors of their lives and dreams. To illustrate this point, I shall borrow a poetic line from the current Indian ambassador to China, Mrs. Nirupama Rao:

*"...making sense of each other,
even as realization glimmers
that, we are little morsels
tossed by the history of these parts."*

It elucidates the point of departure of this series. Readers from all over the world, who are used to learning about China through foreign newspapers, TV and the Internet, may now open up these books to see China through the heartfelt thoughts and writings of Chinese people themselves. The many authors of these new short stories, living in this rapidly developing and changing, yet ancient nation, have strived to describe all that is happening in and around themselves, to give genuine dynamic expression to the intricate recent experiences of the Chinese people. Through the power of their words you will be able to catch glimpses of the