

### 12 years of Shanghai Writing Project: over 100 writers from 36 countries

"2019 上海写作计划"12年: 36个国家 100余位作家参与

On September 2nd, the 2019 Shanghai Writing Project with the theme of "Imaging Community" was unveiled at the Writer's Bookstore in Shanghai.

Shanghai Writing Project, initiated by Wang Anyi in 2008, Chairman of the Shanghai Writers Association, is the first foreign writer writing project in mainland China. The project accepts applications from foreign writers and invites a number of them to live in Shanghai for two months from September to October each year to experience Shanghai's daily life and feel the pulse of urban development. The Shanghai Writers Association provided various conveniences for their writings. In the past 12 years, more than 100 writers from 36 countries have been invited.



During these years, foreign writers in the city have created works like *Shanghai Xiaolongbao*, *The lingering tea fragrance*, *Lu Xun's Four Dreams*, *Kung Fu Comedy*, *Zhongshan Park Flower Girl*, *Lost In Shanghai*, *Shanghai Tango*, *Shanghai As Home* and other works. The writers in the city recorded the adventures and surprises they

experienced in the city. Some Writers published books on subjects related to Shanghai after they returned to their own countries, some incorporated Chinese cultural elements into their works, some promoted the works of Shanghai writers and some even moved their family to Shanghai.

### New media marketing helps make mega bestsellers

用新媒体流量红利打造爆款

By Lu Yun

The new media marketing that became prevalent last year is becoming the common path for publishers to create phenomenal bestsellers.

As a social media platform for selfies through users uploading and sharing short videos, Douyin has quickly spread across China since its release in 2016.

Many publishers have begun to use the short videos on Douyin to produce book-related content in order to obtain more users, thus create a better brand image, and strengthen the cash flow. If a book is labelled as "Douyin Recommended Book", it means the book will achieve enormous sales. For example, *Cross the Boundary of History*, *Learn Ancient Chinese Short Stories* written by BTV host Wang Fang did not join the JD 618 promotion as many newly published books would do. Rather, her publisher, the Oriental Publishing House chose to work with Douyin. Wang Fang and the marketing team of the publisher curated and released short videos on related contents. The short videos won tens of thousands of praises on Douyin. After that, the video that Wang Fang went to the printers to wrap the new belly band, signed for her books and delivered the book as a courier got more than 100,000 likes, and soon the book topped the *Douyin Recommended List*. Immediately with the promotions on Dangdang, Weibo and Wechat, the book was printed five times in merely a month, sold for 220,000 sets of 1.1 million copies, achieving sales of more than 60 million yuan.

Likewise, CITIC Publishing House and the New Children's Book Institute launched the book *I Like history So Much!* in May. With all-platform marketing including WeChat and Weibo, it sold more than 10,000 copies in 3 hours online, printing 4 times and selling 400,000 copies in less than one month. The story behind the success is that, CITIC and New Children discovered there is a lack on the market that encourage

children to think critically and use idiom stories to teach Chinese. The ideal book should not only include the lives of kings and aristocracies, but also tell the stories of ordinary people. Ma Ying, editor-in-chief of CITIC Red Cloak Imprint, said that after they decide the feature of the book, they polished the words and sentences and searched widely for materials that could be helpful for their illustrators.

In order to increase intimacy with the young readers, the team organised reading clubs, inviting children to read the proofs and altered the expression, making it sound more friendly and more interesting. Ma Ying said, the first week and first month is crucial for a new title. In order to get off to a good start, they chose to premier in the community and then promote on all social media platforms. Firstly they find influencers on Wechat in the field of parenting and education, in order to maximise the exposure of the books in the most relevant groups and draw the attention of parents. Then, they released new book briefs with direct purchase links to all major online bookstores and through the official Weibo account of their partner, a style brand named ZHICHINA. They arranged many KOLs on Weibo to read and reblog their briefs to achieve the word of mouth recommendations of nearly 7,000 reblogs. After the market was warmed up, Ma Ying and her team launched the market promotion and distribution on Dangdang, JD and Tmall simultaneously, joining forces with front page recommendations such as "Tmall expressway" to drive the sales of the book.

*The DK Natural History Book*, translated and published by China Science and Technology Press(CSTP), has become the A-list publication in the first half of this year, thanks to the marketing strategy on WeChat, Toutiao and all other platforms. According

to Wang Chuan, deputy director of the distribution department of CSTP, the book is a classic book with lots of knowledge. They found experts to translate and assess the contents to ensure the quality of the translation. The publisher got in touch with a number of WeChat public accounts in advance, the posted articles warm up the market. On the "Double 12" day last year, two of WeChat's influential business accounts started the group sales at the same time. The first prints of 8,000 copies was sold out in merely 3 days. Afterwards, many WeChat business accounts quickly followed up. In the first half of the year, dozens of WeChat business accounts organised group purchases for more than 60 times. Since April, the publisher has sold through a big account on Toutiao. With the appeal of millions of fans, it sold 18,000 copies in ten days and quickly topped Toutiao's bestselling chart in all categories. After that, word of mouth recommendations began to spread in all social media platforms. The book began to distribute in all channels including new media channels like Toutiao, Douyin, with sales of 180,000 copies and revenue exceeding 80 million yuan.

From the examples shown above, some tips can be concluded. First of all, high quality content is always the basis of any successful market campaign. The book per se has to meet the needs and tastes of the influencers' fan base or meet the needs of the new media platform audience for the quality content to get their recognition. Secondly, focus on the key period of a book's publication, and carry out accurate publicity through key influencers on social media. Finally, after the first stage of promotion, keep calm and carry on with more WeChat accounts and e-commerce platforms to drive the sales up and help generate word of mouth effect. In the end, the publisher should aim at both online and offline market simultaneously.

# English writer Ian McEwan awarded "Literary Figure of 2019" elected by Chinese Youths

英国作家麦克尤恩获得中国青年评选的"2019年度致敬文学人物"

On October 26, 2018, the "21 University Students International Gala" jointly sponsored by the School of Liberal Arts of the People's University of China(PUC), Tencent News, and the International Writing Centre of Oriental Literature was held at PUC, to make tribute to the "Literary Figure of 2019" British writer Ian McEwan, for his outstanding contribution to the art of narrative because of his charm, style and sharp wisdom. McEwan, 70 years of age, came to China for the first time to join the ceremony. In December, Chinese writer Zhu Tianwen was awarded "Global Chinese Literature Honor Writer".

The "21 University Students International Gala" was founded in 2016. Every year, it pays tribute to a writer who has a world influence, who is creative to literature, and pays close attention to the love, dilemmas and ideals of human beings. The award was judged by a rigorous procedure and a unique review system, with a prize of 10,000 dollars. The preliminary reviewers are composed of academic authors and top writers while the final judges are composed of 21 college students and young writers, representing the Chinese youth's vision of the world and literature.

McEwan was born in England in 1948. At the age of 27, his debut novel *First Love, Last Rites* has made him world famous. So far, 17 works of McEwan



Zhu Tianwen

have been translated into Chinese. 2016's winner is Amos Klausner, an outstanding modern Israeli writer. His works include *Where the Jackals Howl*, and other stories. 2017's winner is Swedish poet and novelist Kjell Espmark, his works include the biographical novel *The Age of Oblivion*, *Béla Bartók against the Third Reich* and *Hoffmanns försvar*.



Ian McEwan

By Le Yi

## Chinese Writer Ning Ken settled in "October writer residence, Prague"

作家宁肯入驻"十月作家居住地·布拉格"

From April 22 to May 13, famous writer Ning Ken moved to "October Writer Residence, Prague". Previously, Ningken's novel *Tian Zang* was translated by the Czech sinologist and translator Li Zuzana and was published by the Czech publisher Verzone Press in January. The book was considered to be one of the fruits of the project "October Writer Residence".

The book received enthusiastic feedback from Czech readers. During the 2019 Prague Book Fair, Ning Ken accepted a special interview with the famous Czech weekly magazine "tvar" and became the first Chinese writer to be interviewed by the magazine. During his stay, he

created the short story *Train*, which is part of his short story collections *City and Year* and will be published by Beijing October Literature and Art Publishing House.

"October Writer Residence" is an important platform for Beijing Publishing Group to expand publishing cooperation in countries and regions along the "Belt and Road Initiative" and has become an important literary brand in the literary world at home and abroad. Since the creation of the October Writer in Prague, famous writers Yu Hua, Su Tong, Ge Fei, Wu Yuchu, Ma Yuan, Han Shaogong, Ye Guangqin, and famous translator Liu Wenfei have previously been guests.



Prague, Czech Republic, FRA Literature Cafe, Ning Ken participates in the *Tian Zang* reading event

## Why does this publisher make mooncakes?

这家出版社为何要做月饼?

13th September is the traditional Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival this year. Chinese people have always had the habit of eating mooncakes on this occasion. The People's Literature Publishing House, New Oriental Group and the well-known pastry brand 21cake jointly launched the "Grand Masters and Moon and Poetry" mooncakes, with a price of 199 yuan per box. 5,200 boxes were sold in two weeks and the sales revenue reached one million yuan.

At the end of July, a young editor of the PLPH proposed that the four major literary works of China that PLPH newly published could be used as the theme of mooncakes. In this way, poetry can be injected into the mooncakes to reflect the literary artistic conception of the traditional festival. This idea was quickly recognized. Dayu Culture of the New Oriental Group participated in the design of the mooncake gift box, printing the translation of the ancient poems by Mr. Xu Yuanchong on the mooncake box and was responsible for the sale of new products and group purchases.

The branded Mooncakes choose Li Bai, Du Fu, Su Shi and Ouyang Xiu as representatives of the elements of mountain, water, cloud and pavilion, and further result in a box of mooncakes with four flavours. The fillings of the mooncakes are related to the literary works of the ancient poets. For example, Li



Bai's mooncake has fillings of black sugar and rose petals, because he is a romantic poet. Du Fu's mooncake, on the other hand, has fillings of black sugar and miscellaneous grains, because unlike Li Bai, who is always above the worldly affairs, Du Fu cares about ordinary people's lives.

The project's success was beyond expectation, with the help of the right theme of "poetry and moon", and the perfect collaboration of PLPH, Dayu Culture and 21cake. It is reported that PLPH will launch a very auspicious "New Year Gift Box" in December this year. This gift box will be creative by a handful of influential authors with exquisite content.

(translated by Xiao Jianpeng)

# A Global team to create comic books of Liu Cixin's works, which will be published in 2020



欧美 + 中国主创团队携手打造刘慈欣作品漫画书不日全球同步上市

Since its launch in 2016, For Transcendence Culture (Beijing) Company has devoted itself to creating *Liu Cixin Science Fiction Comic Series* and invited 26 famous artists from home and abroad to adapt Liu Cixin's 15 works into graphic novels. The series is divided into 4 series and will be completed in the 2nd quarter of 2021. Among them, the first five works including *The Wandering Earth* will be published by CITIC Publishing Group in March next year.

The collection brings together French comic artist Thierry Robin, Italian comic artist Stefano Raffaele, Spanish artist Ruben Pelleji, Miki Montllò, American artist Dan Panosian, French comic writers Sylvain Runberg, Valerie Magin, Christophe Bec among



other international comic artists, award-winning cartoonist Zhang Xiaoyu and many outstanding local comic artists such as Yang Weilin, Wu Qingsong and Liu Wei. They formed a talented team. The company

is negotiating with French publishers and the French edition will be launched next year. Moreover, talks with other European and American publishers are also undergoing.

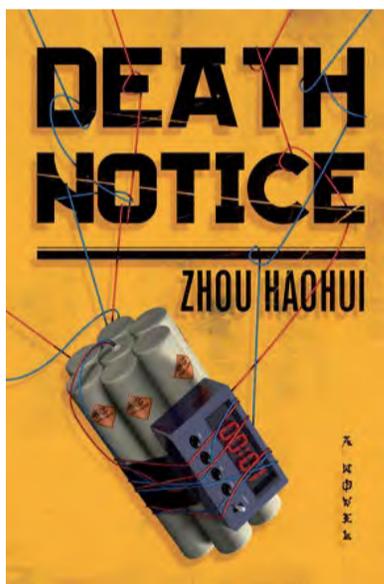
Illustrations inside the Series



By Le Yi

## Chinese suspense writer Zhou Haohui went popular in Europe and America

中国悬疑作家周浩晖作品走俏欧美

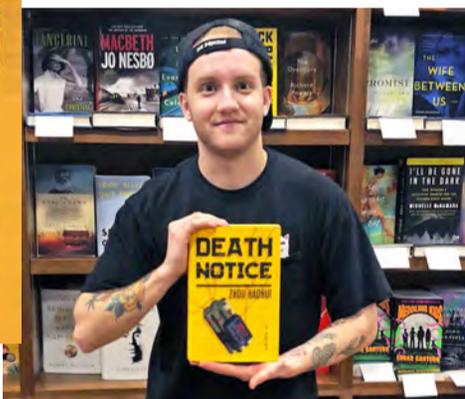


A fan of *The Death Notice* at a bookstore in USA.

At the "China Suspense Literature Goes to the World - Talks with Suspense Master Zhou Haohui and *The Death Notice* Signing Conference" hosted by China Education Publications Import and Export Co., Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as CEPIEC) during this year's BIBF, writer Zhou Haohui announced the rights sales of Japanese, German, and Russian copyrights of *The Death Notice*. The German edition of the book will be launched in 2020 by science fiction publisher Heyne, which is also the publisher of *The Three-Body Problem* in Germany.

It is reported that since its publication in 2009, *The Death Notice* has always had a high reputation and good sales and acclaimed by many readers as the masterpiece of China's

high IQ crime novels. The novel tells the story of a high-intelligence game between the criminal policeman Luo Fei and the mysterious killer who calls herself "Eumenides" (the goddess of vengeance). The eponymous film will be released this year. The English version of *The Death Notice* was published in the UK and the US last June, and sales exceeded 10,000 in half a year. At the same time, the book entered the "100 best crime novels and thrillers since 1945" elected by Sunday Times. The US rights of *The Death Notice* was acquired by Doubleday (publisher of *The Da Vinci Code*) for a high price of \$110,000. This is another overseas best-selling work created by CEPIEC after multiple language editions of *The Three-Body Problem* has sold 1.5 million copies globally.



## Chinese picture book *Summer* won praise in Europe and America

中国图画书《夏天》欧美引发好评

Once released, the English edition of the original picture book *Summer* published by the 21st Century Publishing House received much attention at this year's Book Exhibition of America. The book quickly became the first in the Amazon bestseller list (poetry). The English-language publisher Macmillan USA held a grand launch for the book at the book fair. People lined up for the signing event of the book. The organizer also invited the illustrator and British-Chinese painter Yu Rong to participate in two activities with American school librarians, teachers and children's literature writers.

It is reported that *Summer* is the second cooperation between Cao Wenxuan and Yu Rong after co-authoring the picture book *Smoke*. After the publication of *Smoke*, the copyright was exported to South Korea and Sweden. Jonathan Yaged, CEO of Macmillan USA Children's Books, said: "The English edition of *Summer* has three advantages in the market: firstly, the theme of *Summer* is friendly, inclusive, and team-oriented; Secondly the way *Summer* is written is very attractive, the language is poetic, and it uses Chinese traditional paper-cut art plus good colour to present an international vision. Third, this book about summer is very special in its theme, in the United States, there are few books written about summer.

In order to meet the needs of the US market, Macmillan made some changes to the English Edition of *Summer*. The first is to highlight the theme of friendship, tolerance and sharing of the 7 small animals in the interaction. The front cover of the American edition highlights 7 small animals, and the design style is more American. Secondly, in order to highlight the special features of the summer theme, on the front cover of the English edition

is written the sentence 'Do not steal books or shade in the sun, or you will always sit alone as one.' This approach echoes the title of *Summer*. Thirdly, the director of this imprint of Macmillan is proficient in the publication of poetry-type picture books. He personally modifies the content and English translation, so that the full text is more rhyming. Yu Rong also made a holistic illustration adjustment for the adjusted text to make the book have a better aesthetic.

It is reported that the translation rights of *Summer* has been sold to 8 editions in 6 languages, including the French, Swedish, Korean, and Arabic languages. It was also selected as the "White Raven Bibliography" of the 2016 German International Youth Library. The respective editions of *Summer* has also performed well in New Zealand and Sweden. Jonathan, the general manager of Macmillan USA, said that in the future, they will pay more attention to Chinese original picture books and strengthen cooperation with Chinese publishers.



People lined up to buy the English edition of *Summer* at BEA.

# Focus on improving the ability of storytelling

赵海云：努力提升讲好中国故事的能力

By Zhao Haiyun

First of all, exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and foreign publishers have yielded fruitful results. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of P.R. China. With the rapid development of China's publishing industry, the international exchange and cooperation of China's publishing industry has reached an unprecedented height and breadth. China has trade relations in the publishing industry with most countries in the world. At present, there are nearly 30,000 copyright trades each year, and the import and export revenue of physical and digital publications has steadily increased. The foreign investment of Chinese publishing companies has also become a new normal. International publishers benefit from China's development and growth among them, many internationally renowned publishing companies achieve double-digit business growth in China every year. In particular, in recent years, Chinese-foreign publishing exchanges and cooperation have also shown a situation of integrity and innovation. This is the result of the entrepreneurship of the publisher, the operation of the market, and the mechanism of social participation. This mechanism has laid the basic pattern for the "going out" of Chinese publishers today.

Up to now, the *China Classics International Publishing Project* has been implemented for 10 years, and the *Silk Road Shuxiang Project* has been carried out for 6 years. It has facilitated the translation, publication and copyright trades of some excellent Chinese books, and the carry-out of the enthusiasm of both Chinese and foreign publishers. It also makes possible for developing countries and countries along *The Belt and Road* to translate and publish excellent Chinese books. A friend of mine, who is also a Lebanese publisher, told me that he has introduced hundreds of Chinese books, and that Chinese children's books can sell 20,000 copies at a price of \$4. China's excellent books are quickly spreading in many countries nowadays. Recently, we began to implement the *Mutual-translation Project of Asian Classic Works*, which we believe will enable Asian outstanding works to meet more Chinese readers, readers from other Asian countries and the rest of the world. In addition, China has been the Guest of Honour at international book fairs in 21 countries. Many countries have never seen Chinese publishers and so many Chinese books before. The books we've shown at these book fairs

**Mr. Zhao Haiyun, an official at the State Administration of Press and Publication, recently talked about the situation of China's publishing industry in terms of the international exchanges and cooperation with overseas counterpart. He stresses Chinese enterprises should and are striving to improve the ability to tell the Chinese story to foreign readers.**

have achieved good results in copyright sales.

Second, cooperation needs to be transformed into real productivity. The experience and ability of Chinese publishing companies has been enhanced in the process of going global, but the ways of cooperation are still unsophisticated, and this has become a constraint and a shortcoming. Some Chinese companies already have a distinctive industrial production capacity, and they have mastered the rules of publishing abroad. However, it is difficult to produce greater influence because of their size. The international market needs more qualified and capable publishing houses. Therefore, many Chinese publishers need to strengthen cooperation with both domestic and foreign peers to form a number of more solid publishing chains for different international markets and different categories of books. A fruitful attempt is the China International Publishing Centre established by China Youth Press and Bloomsbury from Britain.

Thirdly, Chinese publishers need to improve the ability to tell "the Chinese Story" and turn it into products tailored for international market. China is a rich mine of content, with a history of thousands of years of civilization, a hundred years of modernisation, 70 years of nation-building, and more than 40 years of reform and opening up. International publishers also agree with us: China has a large number of content having the potential for becoming high quality ones. I used to talk with an international publisher who is working with a private education company in Anhui, the foreign publisher discovered that their educational products, especially video products, have surpassed the standards in developed countries. It's just that the company is not aware of the international value its products may have. It is like finding diamonds in a mine. These diamonds have to be designed and polished to become a product of international standard. Therefore, the

key here is to think deeply how our publishers can learn from internationally advanced enterprises and turn themselves from merely publishers of books into an international human resources company. It is also the question of how to create conditions and mechanisms for talented writers and reserchers with international background and absorb them into the chain of industry that tells the Chinese story well. Every year before the BIBF, we award the China Book Award for Special Contributions to foreign writers, translators and publishers who have made outstanding contributions to introducing China, promoting Chinese culture and Chinese publications overseas. All the experts who have been awarded can join Chinese publishing companies in the production and research of international products. This is also a respect for their intelligence.

Lastly, Chinese academic publishers should be open-minded and learn from foreign peers. In recent years, well-known international publishing companies, such as Springer Nature and Cengage Learning Group, have published excellent works such as *Chinese Dream and Chinese Road*. They reflect the views of Chinese experts and Chinese scholars in complete categories and in large scale. Some of their publications have been downloaded for more than 10,000 times. At the same time, China has also created new models that are rare in other countries in the field of Internet knowledge services. For example, the app "Kai Shu tells a story" alone has over 30 million users. I believe that this miracle can only happen in the Chinese market. However, in the field of academic publishing, our gap in production philosophy and academic influence is still very large compared to international standards. International academic publishers has embraced digital for a long while, and the best digital academic content is presented in a way that integrates many international resources. For Chinese publishing companies, it is necessary to create products that have both Chinese characteristics and international standards. Thus, Chinese publishing companies should be open-minded to learn from their international peers. In particular, it is necessary to see that participation in the competition of international market are the only way for Chinese academic publishers to enter the international market.

(translated by Xiao Jianpeng)

## Highlights of China's events at Frankfurt Book Fair

date	Event	organizer	location
9:30-10 am, Oct 16	Introduction to Beijing's most beautiful bookstores & Launch and signing event of <i>Beijing City: the Last Crystallization of Chinese Capitals</i>	Beijing Municipal Bureau of Press and Publication (BMBPP)	China exhibition booth
10:30-11:30 am, Oct 16	Launch of <i>Nature: the Living Record of Science series</i>	Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press	China exhibition booth
3-4 pm, Oct 16	Chinese story cultural exchange conference & Opening ceremony of digital video and image exhibition of <i>China in Time and Space</i>	Encyclopedia of China Publishing House	Booth R47, Art+ stage, Hall 4.1
2:30-3:30 pm, Oct 16	Release of the English edition of <i>Fall in Love with China</i> & Signing event of multiple other language editions	Zhejiang University Press	China exhibition booth
3:40-4:40 pm, Oct 16	Signing ceremony of multi-language editions of <i>China Story</i> & Introduction to the English edition of <i>Work is Life</i>	CNPIEC	China exhibition booth
1:30-2:30 pm, Oct 16	Signing ceremony of overseas editorial department in Romania, Argentina and Canada on Chinese themed books & Release of the English edition of <i>Forty Men in Forty Years</i>	New World Press	BMBPP booth
3-4 pm, Oct 16	Signing ceremony of the strategic cooperation with Mona Publishing House and Spanish organisation & Release of the Spanish edition of <i>Cold Night</i>	Blossom Press	BMBPP booth
Oct 16	Release of the English edition of <i>How to Look at China</i>	Foreign Languages Press	China exhibition booth
Oct 16	Introduction to the English edition of <i>Beijing City</i>	Foreign Languages Press	BMBPP booth
9:30am-3am, Oct 17	<i>Cool Panda</i> : Introduction to the English version of children's Chinese teaching resources	Higher Education Press	China exhibition booth
2-3pm, Oct 17	Signing event & Seminar of multi-language editions of <i>Happy Millie Molly and Lily</i>	China Children's Press & Publication Group	China exhibition booth
3:30-4:30pm, Oct 17	Release ceremony of the multi-language editions & Expert seminar of <i>Illustrated Chinese Classical Literature Series</i>	CYPI PRESS	China exhibition booth
2-3pm, Oct 17	Introduction to <i>People's China</i> & Signing ceremony of international cooperation	New Star Press	BMBPP booth
Oct 17	Release of <i>Chinese Acupuncture and New Chinese-English Chinese Medicine Classification Dictionary</i>	Foreign Languages Press	BMBPP booth
Oct 17	Introduction to the English edition of <i>The World, please Listen to Me</i>	Foreign Languages Press	BMBPP booth
10-11am, Oct 18	Beautiful China: hand-painted book of the ancient capital	Shandong Pictorial Magazine	BMBPP booth

## First half of 2019 result

# China's book sales shifts to online

2019上半年中国市场:图书销售向线上转移

By Le Yi

### The book market gradually warmed up

In the first half of 2019, the China's book retail market moved from "cold spring" to "warm summer".

According to the data jointly released by China Publishing and Media Journal and the Aoshi company (this data integrates real-time monitoring data of over 3200 physical bookstores and online stores, distribution and publishing units in various provinces and cities across China), shows that the national book retail market in the first half of 2019 is doing better than last year. In detail, the sales volume increased by 0.23%, and the sales revenue increased by 8.66%. Among them, the volume of sales in physical bookstores decreased by 13.15% year-on-year, sales revenue decreased by 10.17% year-on-year; while for

online stores, the sales volume increased by 10.39%, and sales revenue increased by 16.01%.

In physical bookstores, cultural and educational books is the largest market segment, the market share increased from 35.88% last year to 41.35%. The share of social science related books contracted to 20.63%. Literature, Children's books and technology related books remained stable: literature accounted for 16.06%, down 1.11%; children's books accounted for 12.63%, up 1.31%; technology related books accounted for 9.32%, down 1.02%.

For the online market, the share of children's books increased by 0.86% to 31.23%; the share of cultural and educational books decreased by 1.94% to 22.50%, that of social science related books increased by 0.68% to 19.87%, and that of literature and art increased by 0.32% to 19.35%. Technology related books went up by 0.18% to 4.27%. Lifestyle books went down

by 0.1% to 2.78%. It can be seen that consumers of children's books are more willing to buy online, and their market share jumps from the fourth to the first position.

### Policies issued benefit the publishing

In 2018, the China's publishing industry was in a transition period from traditional publishing to integration and innovation, from high-speed growth to high-quality development, and from manufacturing products to providing knowledge services. Several aspects of policy adjustment have had an impact on the publishing industry. First, the central government and government at various levels have introduced various policies and provided financial support, which boosted the morale of the book industry.

(Continued on F13)

## Which books sold well in China?

当当网2019上半年畅销书分析

By Lu Yun

### Dangdang Bestseller List in first half of 2019

(according to online book reviews and number of sales)

Fictions		
title	author	publisher
1 No Longer Human	Dazai Osamu	Writers Press
2 Alive	Yu Hua	Writers Press
3 The Three-Body Problem	Liu Cixin	Chongqing Publishing House
4 The Kite Runner	Khaled Hosseini	Shanghai People's Publishing House
5 The Long Goodbye	Raymond Chandler	Hainan Publishing House
6 Ferrymen	Claire McFall	Baihua Literature and Art Publishing House
7 There is a Little Booth in the cloud	Zhang Jiajia	Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House
8 Besieged City	Qian Zhongshu	People's Literature Publishing House
9 Wandering Earth	Liu Cixin	Chinese Overseas Publishing House
10 Fang Siqu's First Love Park	Lin Yihan	Beijing United Publishing Company
Non-Fictions		
title	author	publisher
1 Positive Discipline	Jane Nelsen	Beijing United Publishing Company
2 Skin	Cai Hongda	Tianjin People's Publishing House
3 I understand you	Chen Guo	Shandong Pictorial Publishing House
4 Life Needs a Sense of Rituals	Li Siyuan	Shandong Literature and Art Publishing House
5 Feng Zikai, All Tastes are Life	Feng Zikai	Huazhong University of Science & Tech Press
6 Genius On the Left Madman On the Right	Gao Ming	Beijing United Publishing Company
7 15 Years of Wanli Emperor in Ming Dynasty	Huang Renyu	SDX Joint Publishing House
8 We Three	Yang Jiang	SDX Joint Publishing House
9 Raising boys	Steve Biddulph	CITIC Publishing House
10 A Half Hours Comic Chinese History Jiangsu	Chen Lei	Phoenix Literature Publishing House
Children's Books		
title	author	publisher
1 The Magic School Bus (picture book)	Joanna Cole	Guizhou People's Publishing House
2 Chinese History for Children	Chen Weiping	New World Publishing House
3 Silver Rocket Juvenile Science Fiction series	Liu Cixin	Zhejiang Education Publishing House
4 Eco: A Young Math Book	Mindel & Harry Sitomer, etc	Guizhou People's Publishing House
5 DK Children's Encyclopedia	/	China Encyclopedia Publishing House
6 French Eyes Series	/	CITIC Publishing House
7 Records of the historian for Juvenile Readers	Zhang Jiahua	Qingdao Publishing House
8 Nobel Prize-Winning Works (Juvenile Edition)	/	Liaoning Children's Publishing House
9 Little Piyo	Satoshi Iriyama	Yangtze River Children's Publishing House
10 Mi Xiao Quan goes to school	Bei Mao	Sichuan Children's Publishing House

According to Dangdang's booklist in the first half of the year based on online book reviews and bestseller charts, consumers are still happy to purchase trending books despite the trade conflict between China and US, economic downturn and marketing contraction.

In terms of fictions, in addition to the classic evergreen bestsellers *Alive*, *The Kite Runner* and *No Longer Human*, the release of the film *The Wandering Earth* during this spring festival has triggered a reading craze of Liu Cixin's novels. For example, *The Three-Body Problem* is at the forefront of the sales list. The film has made the science fiction genre familiar to many other readers and the sci-fi has finally moved from a niche circle to mainstream culture in China. During the Spring Festival, orders of science fictions on Dangdang rose more than 12 times year-on-year, which shows more opportunity for science fiction writers including Liu Cixin.

It is worth mentioning that Mai Jia released a new book, *Life Like That* which has been polished for eight years. After the launch, it has received much attention and entered the TOP10 list of new fictions. Dong Qing, Gao Xiaosong, Bai Baihe, Yang Youning, He Sui and other celebrities participated the launch of the new book, which made the topic of *Life Like That* continue to ferment.

Now look at non-fictions. The new middle class is generally faced with childcare problems, so Jane Nelsen's parenting *Bible - Positive Discipline* leads the non-fiction list, and the author becomes a welcomed foreign education writer among Chinese parents. Parents are enthusiastic and have left more than 730,000 comments for the book on the internet.

Ranked 9th, *Nurturing Boys* provides parents with an advanced guide for parents about their children before adulthood. The book sells 5 million copies worldwide. The Chinese version has been printed 48 times and the sales volume of the Chinese edition has exceeded 2.2 million copies. It has been on the bestselling chart for 15 years.

Gao Ming's psychological work *Genius On the Left Madman On the Right* has quickly topped various lists of bestsellers since its publication. At the same time, major film and television companies competed for the film & TV rights, and the first episode of online drama series of the book immediately has over one million viewers. In the full version of the new book in 2018, Gao Ming added 10 new chapters that have never been published.

*Feng Zikai: All Tastes are Life* was published on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of Feng Zikai's birth. The new book was sold out three times upon its release and the cumulative sales exceeded 200,000.

The author of the Chinese history comics *The Half-Hour Comic History Series*, Er Hun Zi, has created a new trend in reading history. The book combines graphic illustrations with textual explanations and with its language style familiar to digital natives takes care of the reading needs of the fragmented era. Therefore, it won the heart of many young readers. The author has 4 million followers online and actively participate in online and offline promotion, thus creating a strong reading trend.

Other recommendations from the top 10 best-sellers are all written by people with common tags: influencers, intellectuals, founders of social media accounts with millions of followers and opinion leaders in the field of parenting. They write their parenting experience into books, e.g. *Building Children's Super Brain* by Big J Little D, *Silicon Valley Engineer Dad's Super Mind Mapping Tutorial: Shaping Children's Learning Brain* by Honest Dad and *Every Child Can learn Chinese language Well* by Ivy Dad. Each specializes in different subjects, provides practical skills, and becomes a common choice for many families.

Last but not least, in children's category, influenced by *The Wandering Earth*, *Silver Rocket Juvenile Science Fiction* series curated by the Little Dangdang Children's Library has enabled many parents to help their kids build a systematic sci-fi framework. In the list of children's new books, you can see that in addition to the hot sale of books about the Forbidden City and history for juvenile readers, some other books on setback education (about helping child cope with frustration) and logical thinking have also received attention, such as *Miyaniishi Super Picture Book* and *DK Brain Training Manual + Magical Logic Thinking Game Book*.

# Tech drives reform in book retailing

大数据人工智能推动中国图书零售结构重建

■ By Le Yi

Nowadays, the book retail industry has undergone tremendous changes under the impetus of new technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence(AI). The physical bookstore is integrated with intelligence, and more and more attention is paid to bookstores' reconstruction by technologies. Physical bookstores now focus on data collection and operation and start various forms of innovative exploration from "self-checkout + robot shopping guide", intelligent terminal equipment integrating guide and self-service to intelligent high-end book city consisting of intelligent buildings, smart book industry, and smart bookstores (unmanned bookstores), smart book bar, smart life, smart education and smart office. The physical bookstore continues to provide readers with an increasingly high-quality consumer experience through new technology and innovation.

As a representative of the high-end smart book city, Shenzhen Longgang Bookstore has received more than 1.2 million readers since its opening in July last year. The book city has big data, mobile payment, face recognition, unmanned bookstores and other projects. In the past year, the self-service sales in revenue through mobile equipment have increased by 486%; from July 1st to 15th, 2019, self-service sales in revenue have increased by 200%. At present, intelligent system has been integrated into the front-end sales system, back-end management system, and operation system of Longgang Bookstore.

Similar to Longgang Book City, in 2018, the online platform Tmall Books has transformed Shanghai Zhida Bookstore and Hangzhou Boku Bookstore Tianmubranch, and reconstructed both

physical bookstores with mobile internet technology to realize online and offline integration and interconnection. After the transformation, Shanghai Zhida Bookstore connects the online and the offline through electronic payment. Consumers get the real shopping experience in the store, and the bookstore obtains offline traffic and customer information when paying, helping the bookstore perfect the CRM (consumer relationship management) system, establish an electronic membership system to promote personalized promotional items, and directly send accurate marketing information to target groups to help bookstores integrate loyalty points, prepaid cards and other functions.

Similarly, Boku Book City Tianmu branch introduced AI technology after the transformation, such as smart bookshelf, face recognition and smart payment. Readers can scan the code to get into the store, select books by themselves, use smart face recognition for face payment, and complete the shopping process all by themselves. The smart bookshelf in the bookstore can also recommend relevant books that may be interesting to readers, while the bookstore provides better interaction and experience for readers by collecting, analysing, and applying customer data to improve operational, management, and service methods. The book city transformation was originally designed to save labour costs, but in the long run, bookstores can achieve the aim of understanding the readers and using consumer data to promote books more accurately.

The physical bookstores in Sichuan and Shandong have made innovations in the introduction of smart terminal devices. The Xinhua Wenxuan Smart Book City project in Sichuan province was launched in

2016 and is now operating in many large department stores in Sichuan Province. In addition to laying more than 200 smart terminals with touch screen in 128 central stores and campus stores in the province, Shandong Xinhua Distribution Group has also built an online mall based on WeChat public account to realize the real-time updates of online and offline goods, inventory and marketing campaign and online purchases. In terms of logistics and distribution, users can choose to have their order delivered or go to the store to pick up their own books, and they can complete the purchase of books in any place within the province without leaving their homes. In addition, consumers can use mobile phones to scan book barcodes in physical stores to form orders directly, while enjoying offline event offers and using WeChat to complete transactions.

Faced with the problem that the physical bookstore is not cost-effective after the introduction of new technology and the new system is sometimes incompatible with the original system, the major physical bookstores have also actively explored solutions. For example, Longgang Book City is committed to deepening the use of smart projects, strengthening the overall marketing of the book city, and increasing publicity and promotion. The "Xinhua Life + 24-hour Unmanned Smart Bookstore" operated by the Beijing Publishing Group, which opened in January last year, integrates self-checkout systems, intelligent product identification, remote customer assistance, motion recognition/anti-theft systems, face recognition and other innovative technologies. With the help of these new technologies, the bookstore achieves an effortless 24-hour operation.

(translated by Xiao Jianpeng)

## Online platforms adjust strategy catered to the needs of the generation Z

电商针对Z世代需求调整营销策略

■ By Le Yi

At the Social Media&Bookstore Marketing Conference hosted by China Publishing and Media Journal at the end of August, Liu Ting, director of the JD Book Culture and Education Business Department, gave a wonderful presentation on the "Marketing Method Targeted at Generation Z". She said, Generation Z refers to the generation born between 1996 and 2010. There are 7.8 billion generation Zs in the world. This group of people is becoming the main force of future book readers. Their influence on society is gradually increasing.

The Generation Z has some common features, they have a free and easy personality, sometimes cannot keep their promises; They always overthrow what they claim to be; They like to envy other people, having high self-esteem; They like to watch videos with bullet comments.

The consumption concept of Generation Z is also different from others. First, they like to buy things that their peers like and attract others within the same circle. They love interaction, sharing and teasing. Second, they are willing to keep trying to find a style that suits me. Third, their purchase decision = exploration + thinking + comparison. The purchase is no longer linear. They are easy to go crazy about something, but they are not so easy to be impressed.

Facing with the new features of Generation Z, how does the publishing house conduct marketing behaviours? Liu Ting thinks that, first,with the rise

of fan economy and user brand awareness, it is necessary to attract fans and better get along with fans. Second,users and products are increasingly tagged, therefore it is important to find the right consumer with the products and find the right circle to promote precisely. Thirdly, generation Z needs more interactive marketing and vertical marketing that combine their hobbies and more marketing that is inserted in social occasions, such as inviting the authors to dine with the readers, gathering a group of travellers online and group events after high school exams.

At a time when consumer groups are increasingly segmented, it has become a major focus for JD to divide consumers into different circles and then start to market precisely according to the needs of the circles. Based on the user's online browsing and consumption information, JD grouped its users to form different circles such as people who bought or browsed a competing product, people browsed or searched for similar SKUs(Stock Keeping Units) and keywords, people sensitive to price, people with money to spend and people with targeted SKU. At the same time, JD's DMP (Digital Management Platform) label can help shops target the right group of fans. For example, JD has set up the "Follow This Store" tab on the DMP platform. After clicking the label, the seller on JD can circle all the fan users of the store and combine with other labels to achieve more precise and targeted marketing outcome.

She pointed that, different marketing strategies are required for different product features. If you have a brand without a huge number of fans, you need to

clarify your brand positioning and product features, invite users to participate, experience, and then share and gain the trust of more people. If, on the contrary, your brand already has lots of fans, for example the best-selling authors gather a large fan base, then you need to encourage the users to share their experiences, expand consumer base with similar tastes, establish brand reputaton, and finally develop new products. Liu Ting said that because fans mean free and stable traffic, fans also bring a stable source of GMV (Gross Merchandise Volume) to the website, so JD has a department that operates specifically for fans to improve the reach of the products.

As an e-commerce company, JD boosts sales in several ways. First, Jingdong provides resources and preferential treatment to SKA merchants (means middle and upper-level quality merchants), such as providing exclusive operation counselling, book resources, priority registration to large-scale book related activities. Second, getting new fans in various ways, including gifts upon following, gifts upon sign-in, shop lottery, fan price and fission games. Third, consolidate the fan base by releasing book content and new book information, sharing photos taken by consumers, planning activities and designing membership system and rating mechanism, etc.

Because Generation Z likes the marketing method that is direct and interactive, entertainment marketing has become a favourite way for many platforms including Bilibili, Douyin, Kuaishou, Mango TV, Player Unknown's Battleground, Arena of Valour, Weibo, Xianyu and Quanmin Karaoke. JD has also explored new ways in which entertainment marketing can seize Generation Z, such as H5 games, setting up scenes, interactive topics, live shows, guided shopping videos and endorsement by public figures.

(translated by Xiao Jianpeng)

# "There is no weak market, only weak books"

“没有疲软的市场，只有疲软的产品”

*"There is no weak market, only weak books. We will focus on the innovation in YA book category, publish more new YA titles."*

***In the first half of this year, there is an interesting phenomenon in the Chinese children's book market. The market share of online sales is over 30%, with a year-on-year growth of 19%, becomes the biggest segment. On the other hand, the market share of offline sales is less than 13%. The year-on-year growth is less than 1%. Parents and children prefer buying books on the internet. In response of this change in the market, what kind of adjustments did you do?***

In recent years, online sales have been growing at a surprising rate, and offline sales growth remained weak. There are two reasons for this. One reason is that many readers go to the physical bookstores to read books, and then buy discounted books on the internet. The other reason is that e-commerce platforms are selling at a discount, while in physical bookstores there are less discounts. These reasons cause this situation.

Online and offline sales have completely different sales models and target consumer groups. Last year, Jieli divided the distribution department into three divisions according to different consumer groups. Division one is responsible for physical bookstores including Xinhua and other private bookstores. Division two is responsible for shops on social media platforms, community sellers and online channels such as JD and Dangdang. Division three is responsible for Tmall channels and our own official flagship store on Tmall platform.

According to the different characteristics of online and offline sales, we have developed different sales strategies and standards in order to make a clear distinction between online and offline platforms. By doing so, we can also make our promotions more targeted according to the different features of the various segments of book sales.

The effect is very obvious. This year, the sales of Tmall stores have doubled, and the turn-over has increased from 30 million yuan to more than 60 million yuan. Our Tmall flagship store has also achieved very good results. A few years ago, we operated the official Tmall store through a private bookseller with an annual income of more than 3 million yuan. Now we are operating by ourselves. The annual sales of the Tmall flagship store exceeds 10 million yuan. There was a slight increase in the sales of Division two, and the growth of Division one was weak. This is related to the whole market.

If you sub-divide the market, the result you get will be very different. It is very important to adjust according to changes in the market and sales channels. Publishers should adjust their marketing strategies with the changes in the market. The sales cost and the delivery can be very different by physical bookstores, three big online platforms (JD, Dangdang and Tmall), and community e-commerce platforms. Not all books are suitable for sale in all channels. Some books are suitable for community channels, and other books are suitable for physical bookstores. The discounting activities of online platforms reduce the publishers' profits to a very low level. This is unfavorable to the sustainable development of the publishing industry. However, publishers have no right restricting the discounts behavior of online booksellers. Policies on governmental and industrial levels are needed to put on price limit on both online and offline book promotions. This is the solution to ensure the healthy and sustainable development of the



Bai Bing (Editor-in-Chief, Jieli Press)

publishing industry.

***Since last year, instead of community marketing, new media is playing more and more important role in marketing. Did Jieli take any countermeasures?***

We have put a lot of effort into the new media marketing. We use H5 technology into Jieli's official Wechat and Weibo account for promotion. We established good partnership with Tik Tok and cooperated with major public accounts. Working with major public accounts to promote books has a direct impact on the sales. Some big influencers can drive thousands of copies of sales at one time. By group sales, we can get the money back quickly, there are no returns and they are very trustful. So we will invest more in the new media marketing and open up new accounts on sales platforms.

***Jieli set up three branches last year. How is the development? Which is the biggest branch? The YA sector is currently underdeveloped in China. Will it become a potential growth for Jieli in the future?***

The pre-school branch is growing fast, followed by middle grade branch and the YA branch. In my opinion, there is no weak market, only weak books. As long as the books are in high quality and the topics meet the need of the readers, the market response will be great. If there are problems with the topic selection, then the book sales will not increase. The reason is that the innovation by our YA books is not enough. For example, the best-selling books such as *Monster Master* series and *Mission Survival* series are still selling well, but there are not many new titles. We will work hard to solve this problem soon. The pre-school branch is growing pretty fast because of the excellent original and also translated books. There will be no increase, if there are no excellent products and no innovative topics. Another reason is that the staff on management level is not fully equipped. We will solve this problem till next year.

***Does Jieli have any motivation system for encouraging the employees to be more innovative?***

First of all, Jieli has an award for innovative new books. The award criteria are based on the sales, social influence, turn-over and sales return. The editor, who won the award can get a higher bonus.

Secondly, we encourage a double-track system. We encourage our editors to be more professional and also undergo reforms on salary system. Employee, whose performance is good last year, can be promoted to a higher level and can also get a higher salary.

Thirdly, we encourage editors to publish more original books. We offer favorable policies on the calculation of workload and the proportion of bonuses, so that editors can get the same incentives whether they are making original books or translated books.

The fourth is that we have considered a system of chief editor. Some publishers under the Guangxi Publishing and Media Group started implementing this system, and Jieli is also considering to introduce this new system later this year or the next year. We can have a chief editor for each imprint, solve the problem of motivation system. We are planning to introduce promotion and exit system.

In the first half of this year, the sales of original Chinese children's books were gratifying. How about Jieli's books? And how many titles are sold to foreign countries?

The sales of our original books, especially the picture books are great. There are many reprinted and awarded titles. In addition, we hold Jieli Cup Jin Bo Childhood Literature Award and Jieli Cup Cao Wenxua Children's Fiction Award Books. This year, we launched some of the awarded books and got good feedback from the market. *Lonely Major*, written by Xue Tao is also an important work. This book has great influence on the society and has been selected into many major book list. Most of our original titles are sold to other countries. *Little Surprise* series (10 titles) have been sold 37000 copies in Vietnam.

***How is your cooperation with Usborne Publishing?***

Usborne is an innovative publisher, who publishes many high-quality novelty books. Our partnership starts from copyrights cooperation. Then we both want to find a new mode to cooperate, so we set up a strategic partnership and Jieli got the right to publish all the new titles of Usborne in Mainland China.

Jieli made great effort in marketing and promotion, so the Usborne books are selling very well in Mainland China.

We also suggest to include more Chinese elements in Usborne books. Usborne books are sold in more than 200 countries and regions around the world, by introducing more about China, we can also expand the influence of Chinese culture. They thought it's a good idea and have already published two new titles about China. They will publish more books about Chinese cities, cultural landscapes, architecture, etc. in the future. By this project, Jieli supports them by suggesting Chinese illustrators and offering more contents.

I personally have very similar experience with Peter Usborne, the founder and president of Usborne Publishing. We were both soldiers in our early years and went into the publishing industry after that. We both like the child-oriented management, and we are very satisfied with our cooperation.

# "The three things I am looking for"

“我在寻找这样的中国作品”

*Sebastian Pirling, Editor of Heyne Fantasy & Science Fiction, Heyne Press, talks about his experience of publishing Chinese writers and he noted that he's looking for Chinese works with originality, which are successful and accessible for Western readers.*

Questions: Qu Jingfan

**During the course of acquiring the rights of *The Three-Body Problem*, do you have other competitors in Germany?**

Yes, there was one other competitor, if I remember correctly, but I think finally we had a better offer and publication concept.

**How did you find the translator for the book? Why did you insist on translating from a Chinese edition rather than from an English edition? Is there any successful or failed precedent before?**

Finding a translator was not that easy, though. There are not that many literary translators here, and their services are highly sought after. We started working with Martina Hasse who had translated Mo Yan before, to translate Liu Cixin's first novel, *The Three-Body Problem*, for us. But since translating from Chinese to German takes much longer than from most of the European languages, we asked Karin Betz, a highly acclaimed translator, too, to continue the trilogy.

While other European publishers translated from the English translation, we decided against this early on, although it cost us time. But for German readers, especially an audience that reads more literary works than genre fiction, the authenticity of a translation is very important. And we had quite a "scandal" (if you want to call it like that) some years ago when some very famous TV literary critics dismissed the translation of a Haruki Murakami novel because it was from English, not from the original Japanese text. We wanted to avoid such a discussion, so we had Liu Cixin translated from Chinese – and the overwhelming success proved us right.

**How many copies have the works of Liu Cixin been sold till now?**

Since its launch in Germany in 2016, *The Three-Body Problem* series has sold 150,000 copies and Liu's complete works sold 250,000 copies, it's certainly exceeded our expectations by far! I hope, however, that this success will open the door for new and younger voices from the Chinese science-fiction, such as Chen Qiufan.

**Which Chinese authors will Heyne publish next?**

We are going to publish Baoshu's supplement to Liu's *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy, *The Redemption of Time*, and then there will be a collection of short stories edited by Ken Liu, *Broken Stars*, with even more authors like Stanley Chen Qiufan, Xia Jia, Gu Shi, Regina Kanyu Wang or Ma Boyong. Beyond that? I am curious to see... There are always three things I am looking for: First, originality – that is, something that distinguishes their ideas, their point of view and their storytelling from the mostly Western tradition of science-fiction that we have had for the last five to six decades here. Secondly, are they successful? Authors like Chen Qiufan or Hao Jingfang are interesting to me because they already have won a massive Chinese audience. And thirdly, I also look for a certain accessibility for Western readers. Not all texts are as interesting or even relevant for an international audience – they must be able to understand the setting, the problems and the intentions of the story this author tries to tell.

**How do you find a suitable writer or work?**

In the case of Liu Cixin, it certainly helped that he turned out to be the most successful and the most famous Chinese science-fiction author. But the main reason German readers keep recommending him and the German press keeps applauding his works is the originality and scope of his thinking. His ideas and visions, how he leads his readers to the very edge of space and time and which questions about

humanity he lets emerge, that is what fascinates most readers here. In Oct 2018, Liu Cixin visited the FBF and had several public interviews and panel talks on that day. I remember one discussion with the German journalist, science-fiction writer and book critic Dietmar Dath, very vividly, when Liu Cixin and Dath delved into an exchange of thoughts on Hegelian philosophy, the future of humanity and its relation to technology. That was very inspiring to me as well as to the almost 200 people in the audience. It is exactly this mixture of speculative thinking and philosophical implications that makes science-fiction interesting beyond mere genre-stories of rockets and robots.

And I hope some of my new contacts and people I know in Beijing will help me find these new voices of Chinese speculative literature. We at Heyne have always tried to offer a wide variety of works in our science-fiction program that shows this bandwidth. Liu Cixin's success in Germany is a good sign.

**The market is strong in the category of translated works in Germany. Has the market share grown in 2018 because of *The Three-Body Problem*?**

The German book market has always been strong in publishing translations from a wide range of languages and literatures. Liu Cixin's works certainly opened the eyes of many for Chinese literature they did not know about before. From what I hear from my colleagues at many other publishers, it is encouraging to them to see that one can be successful with such a daring project. I really hope to see more, even from our competitors.

**Are German publishers getting more interested in Chinese titles and more editors are interested in learning Chinese?**

Well, I would love to read more comics, but when in doubt, I tend to grab a prose book rather than a graphic novel. As for the prose, apart from what I read for my job, I mostly read non-genre stuff, such as philosophical essays, biographies, contemporary novels or even poetry from time to time. In Germany, there is great interest in

novels and non-fiction books about Chinese history, mostly about the last decades up to the present, about the everyday life of ordinary people in big cities or rural areas. I hope to see more Chinese crime fictions in German, too.

**Can you recommend some German books Chinese readers deserve pay attention to recently?**

There are two of my authors here at Heyne I would love to see translated into Chinese. One is a novel called *Terra* by T. S. Orgel where an ordinary guy (he is half Mexican, half Chinese) on a space freighter from Mars to Luna discovers there is a bomb in one of his containers – and it is headed directly to Earth. Will he and his sister be able to stop the disaster? The second book is by Jens Lubbadeh, it is called *Transfusion*. In this novel, the author tells the story of a scientist in a pharma company who wants to save children that are being exploited for the big medical business.

**Can you give some advice for Chinese publishers on developing rights business with German counterparts?**

Nora Mercurio from Suhrkamp publishing explained that one thing is crucial for getting the interest of German publishers: a sample translation. We are only at the beginning of discovering more Chinese literature, but up to know it has been an academic undertaking to discover and translate texts from Chinese. I for myself are going to learn Chinese and I hope many of my colleagues will join me so that we can get a wider, more informed and more nuanced picture of Chinese literature. Until then, we need English (or French) samples to get a quick glance on what this text is about and how the author can write. I am looking forward to seeing more!

## There is no simple recipe for choosing a successful book

发现一部好书没有一个简单的答案

Dr. Michaela Röhl, Literary agent, Petra Eggers Agency, Germany, says three factors are critical: good story-telling, right subject and precise timing.



**In 2016 you made a super bestseller named *Gut* by Giulia Enders, how many copies has the book been sold till now?**

It has sold several millions of copies worldwide and translated into more than 40 languages. It was a number one bestseller in many countries and a Top10 bestseller in other countries.

**Please talk about your agent work right now?**

I am a German agent, running an agency in Berlin. I sell books on the German book market: mainly books written by German authors, but there are also international authors amongst the writers that I am agenting.

Three years ago, I came to China, while living in Beijing, I came to appreciate Chinese culture and literature very much. I am learning the Chinese language and hopes to be able to read Chinese books in Mandarin in the future, without having to

rely on translations. I am open to Chinese authors who are interested in publication in Germany. I found the online influencer Afu and encouraged him to write a book about his father-in-law, the book has just been published this year in Germany and became a bestseller. Afu and his wife Li Ping both have an enormous talent for storytelling. They are both extremely funny, witty and skilled narrators. Therefore, it was very gratifying to work with Afu. Of course, the texture of a book is very differently structured than that of a video blog. Therefore we took our time in crafting the storyline for the book.

Afu is more well-known in China than some famous German Football stars. You just have to walk through Shanghai with him to see how often he is recognized and addressed by friendly Chinese fans. The German public was curious to know why someone they had never heard of before was so popular in China.

(Continued on F16)



# A good translator does translate the feelings, style and atmosphere

好译者要传达作品的感觉、风格和氛围

"The readers don't care where a good book comes from, as long as it's well-written, has an interesting story and makes them learn something about a culture and gives them new ideas."

Questions: Qu Jingfan

Karin Betz, Literary translator, Germany

**What are you working on relating to the translation of Chinese books? What kind of categories do you have interest?**

Generally, I am interested in all kinds of fictions, but I always loved good Science Fiction. I read all the time, that's part of my job and life. Currently, I am translating Jin Yong's *Legend of the Eagle Shooting Heroes*, which means long and hard work, as you can imagine. But it's fun, full of Chinese cultural history and martial arts fantasy.

**What aroused your interest in Chinese language and Chinese culture?**

I started studying Chinese Studies (Classical and Modern Chinese language, history and literature) right after graduating from High School in 1987. I was fascinated by Chinese characters and culture - it seemed an exciting challenge for me. I have worked in different employments since my Master's Degree before I started working freelance.

**For an early Chinese-language learner in Germany, what suggestions will you give them? What books will you recommend to know more about China and Chinese culture?**

I would always recommend to read some classics (like 论语, 道德经, 庄子, 唐诗等, 西游记, 聊斋志异等), because they are still part of modern Chinese culture, but also modern classics like the works of Lu Xun, Xu Zhimo, Qian Zhongshu, Lao She and then just anything of modern fiction they like.

**Can you talk about the process and your feeling on the translation of *The Three-Body Problems*?**

The editor at Heyne asked me to translate the volume two and three of the series. And I was delighted to get the opportunity to translate a really interesting author. I've always loved Sci-Fi and it's great to have a Chinese author with groundbreaking new ideas and plots in that genre.

**How can one be a good translator?**

A good translator does not translate words, but



feelings, style, atmosphere ... Sometimes the most adequate solution for an expression seems very different from the original, but hits exactly the meaning. You need to understand Chinese culture and Chinese language conventions well, but first of all, you have to master your own language well, to be able to write good German that suits the needs of this novel and genre. Sci-Fi has a certain sound and Liu Cixin has a certain sound, both have to fit. Also, for hard Sci-Fi like this, you have to be ready to invest time in researching all the details of physics or astronomy, because they have to be accurate.

**Are there some Chinese contemporary fictions attracted you? How do you think of the Chinese contemporary fictions?**

I find many writers interesting, but the most important is what German publishers find interesting. The readers don't care where a good book comes from, as long as it's well-written, has an interesting story and makes them learn something about a culture and gives them new ideas.

Culture is no obstacle for a good writer. But of course the international taste for literature is dominated by American writers. It's time to change that! For a long time, it was difficult to sell Chinese novels in Germany

and publishers were reluctant to publish them. But the situation has changed and I think that is partly thanks to Liu Cixin who proved that Chinese literature can be a bestseller. As I said, I like Sci-Fi, but mostly hard Sci-Fi, not so much "fantasy". I personally like writers like Mai Jia, because he simply is a very good writer and storyteller. Many Chinese authors have good topics and stories, but sometimes their style or their quality of writing does not match international demands. Sometimes Chinese literature writers who write good stories have a strange hobby for vulgarity and violence that does not fit in their genre of literature. I think that's a cultural question. In Germany we make a big difference between "serious" and "entertainment" literature. "Serious entertainment" is of course the best. There are many young, promising writers in China, but we need good literary agents who sell them to the German market. German publishers trust their agents more.

**Do you often participate in the reading-aloud event in Germany? Is it widely attended in your country? What kind of book can join such promotion?**

I love to read in public and have often participated in events with or without the author. Depending on the type of event, there can be 30 people in a small bookshop or 200 in a literature festival. Of course, the more popular the book, the more readers attend an event. Most of the people who attend those events are a bit older, female and interested in literature and culture. But for Liu Cixin for example, attracts a huge crowd of young readers, thanks to the topic. Children's books are also popular and many libraries have reading events for children.

**Which book do you expect to be translated and read widely in Germany?**

I hope that Jin Yong's novel will become a popular read - there are many cultural obstacles, but I am doing my best to make the book enjoyable and understandable in German. Among my next projects are Wang Xiaobo's *Golden Era* and Can Xue's *The Last Lover*, both writers have never been translated to German and I am looking forward to introducing them. There is a young female writer Li Jingrui and Luo Yijun who I find interesting, but I really like to continue translating Liu Cixin's works.

(Continued from F06)

The central government fulfilled its promise of a further tax cut and reduced the tax rate of print books and e-books by 1% to 10% while exempting the value-added tax levied to wholesalers and retailers, which injected power into the competitiveness of publishing companies. Government also provides strong support for physical bookstores. For example, in 2018, Beijing invested 50 million yuan to support 151 physical bookstores. In 2019, the support fund will reach 100 million yuan.

Second, the government actively promoted the reform of textbooks and thus changed the pattern of the education publishing market. The textbooks of three subjects (Ideology and Politics, Chinese, History) compiled by the Ministry of Education were launched in the fall of 2017. In September 2019, they will be used nationwide in primary and secondary schools across China. This will change the pattern of the textbook publishing market. The market competition for

the selection of textbooks will be more intense, and the share of big publishing houses will be further expanded.

Third, under modifications of the government, the number of titles in the book market continues to shrink and publishers strive to achieve high-quality development by improving quality and efficiency. According to the data released by the State Administration of Press and Publication, the number of new books in China in 2018 decreased by 3.1% year-on-year to 247,000. At the same time, the number of reprinted books continued to grow rapidly in both volume and title, surpassing the new edition in the number of titles. The original book market is further heated up. The annual print-runs of 24 original literature and children's books exceeded 1 million, with an increase of 33.3% from prior year. The annual print-runs of 67 original children's books exceeded 500,000, with an increase of 39.6% year-on-year, accounting for 73.6% of the children's

books with print-runs of 500,000 and above. The balance of content industry has shifted from being comprehensive to being professional.

Fourth, with the support of the government, many listed companies actively explored the deep integration of industry and capital. At the same time, they actively carried out brand diversification and completed the evolution from book brands and publishing brands to cultural brands. The number of publishing groups with assets of more than 10 billion yuan has reached to 21, increased by 3 from last year.

Fifth, on the basis of mastering big data, publishers actively use new technologies to learn readers' real preferences and needs, and then to produce related products. Content production has realized a decentralized production mechanism. Publishers innovate in the mining of the publishing resources and upgrading of production methods, and have launched a number of new publications that incorporate new technologies.

# What kind of Children's books are hot in China?

## 中国童书市场需要哪三类作品?

Questions: Qu Jingfan

**When did you found the company and start working with important German children's literature?**

Beijing Star Media was founded in 2005. Strictly speaking, we saw importation of children's literature really begin in the late nineties; at that time I was still working at the Beijing Information Centre, a branch office of Frankfurt Book Fair. Adding it all together, I've been in the industry for almost twenty years.

**During these years, how did German children's books sell in China?**

German children's books have continually seen growth in sales in China. Through us about 3000 titles have been introduced to China (excluding copyright extensions and transfers), here I must note that we count a series as a single title. A number of the German children's picture books that we've brought into China have become bestsellers in China. Titles such as *Tales from Tooth Street* and *New Tales from the Station Belly*, both written by Anna Russelmann and illustrated by Stefan Schulz, each sold more than 1.5 million copies. *The grandma in the Apple Tree* written by Mire Lobe and illustrated by Susi Weigel broke the million mark, with *Something is Not Quite Right* series by Ralf Butschkow and two others in the series reaching almost a million in annual sales.

**How has the cooperation with Chinese publishers been?**

With Chinese publishers' copyright awareness growing by the year, as well as a continuous increase in international cooperation, especially in the past 20 years, with closer and more harmonious collaboration with Chinese publisher, we've seen a clear decrease in the communication cost involved in cross-cultural communication.

**Germany is one of the main countries from which China imports children's books;**

## "I hope to write profound and amusing stories"

"我希望写出深刻而有趣的作品"

Questions: Qu Jingfan

**You have been written and drawn illustrations for children's books since 1999, till now it's been 20 years, however your major in university is design, how did you embark on writing for children?**

I'd loved to write since I was able to do so. When I finished school, I primarily wanted to study German and arts to become a teacher. But things unfolded differently. I did not get a study position for that combination of subjects, so I decided to start my studies of Illustration at a university of applied sciences. It did not take long since I discovered that my general preference for storytelling is the perfect requirement to become a good illustrator. And moreover, the short form of storytelling in Children's books was an interesting opportunity not only to draw but to write little stories as well. In Germany, there are some illustrators doing both. Besides the passion of storytelling in general, that might be also related to the small fees which are paid for the story and the illustrations.

**How did you write so many popular and awarded children's books? What's the challenge of writing for children?**

I think, if you write for children you should do that, because you want to write for children not because you are not able to write for adults. For me it's challenging to try to explain complex interpersonal subjects and transform it into children's literature. Not to simplify things, but to show that, the problems you might have as

*Wang Xing believes Chinese publishers nowadays focus more on the following three factors when acquiring foreign rights: the writer's fame, whether he has won a big prize, and whether the book has interesting science-related content. Jingfan reports.*

**compared with the previous few years, has the number of copyright transactions and royalty fees increased greatly? What do you consider when you re considering acquiring the Chinese rights for a German children's book and choosing a Chinese partner?**

In terms of acquiring German titles, the golden period was 2015 to 2016. After 2017, we saw a levelling off and even a bit of a drop-off. According to our own analysis and the information that we gained from querying Chinese clients, currently the competition in the Chinese children's book market is quite fierce. During the past few years, people's needs for excellent titles have been relatively concentrated, in areas such as famous authors, winners of big prizes, and interesting science-related content; this has led to price competition and higher fees for acquiring titles. When we're selecting German books, we first consider the demand in the Chinese market; when we're selecting a publisher to work with on the Chinese side, we're not looking at estimated costs as much as the quality of the Chinese publisher's products, and whether or not the book suits them.

**How big are children's books in the German book market? What modern children's writers deserve attention in Germany? What are the major prizes for children's literature in Germany, and when are they handed out?**

The largest portion of the German literary market is literature, which includes youth literature. Currently there are a large number of influential, excellent children's authors and illustrators in German-speaking countries, such as Michael Ende, Otfried Preussler and other classical writers, there are also Christine Nöstlinger and Mirjam Pressler and others who came in the next

round of authors and illustrators. The German Juvenile Literature Award is the biggest of its kind in the area, and is given out every October at the Frankfurter Book Fair.

**China is promoting parent-child reading. What experiences do the German authors have with this concept?**

As I understand it, most German parents, publishers, children's book institutions and libraries all place great emphasis on parent-child reading, which is the activity of parents sitting by their children and accompanying them as they read, or reading together and discussing with them, which strengthens comprehension and love. Reading with and accompanying children as they grow is a core component of raising one's offspring. For this reason, hardback books are the main medium for the activity of parent-child reading. I've been very happy

to see that in recent years Chinese parents are starting to pay attention to the activity of parent-child reading, and accompanying their children in doing so.

**What advice do you have for publishers, in areas such as copyright discussions, understanding industry trends, and forming relationships with new partners?**

I hope that with our Chinese colleagues we can have more discoveries at the book fair, and I recommend that they make sure to have deeper and broader understanding of titles they're looking at before they make decisions. At the same time, I also hope that German-language publishers can get to know more actively about Chinese publishers and the Chinese book market at the book fair.

(Translated by Moy Hau)



Wang Xing, General manager, Beijing Star Media Company, China

*Franziska Biermann, Children's literary writer, Germany*

a child, are the same problems adults have. There may be more nuances in an adult's life, but in the end it's all about friendship, joy, fear, anger and grief.

**What elements should a good children's writer possess?**

It's just like using a watercolor box. You take the primary colors. You learn the names of them. You find out that every color has a special temperature, a character and meaning and then you discover the mixed colors. Therefore I try to write stories for children and their parents as well. A profound but also amusing story for children and with a hidden but also humorous level for the adults. I love humor.

**Can you share some interesting stories during the course of writing or drawing these books?**

The beginning of all the Fox-Stories who have been with me for almost 20 years was a little picture, which I drew for the Rowohlt Verlag. It showed a fox, who was something like a mascot for the series for young readers, eating a book. The publisher wanted my picture for a summary of the children's book-novelties. I was so inspired by my idea of what might happen to somebody who eats books, then I wrote the story of Mr. Fox who loves books that much, and eats them after reading seasoned with salt and pepper. It was a fairytale of becoming an author and for me somehow also the beginning of my career as an illustrator and author.

**Could you please tell us your family life with your children? How do you spend time reading with your children?**



*The Fox who Ate Books has been sold over one million copies so far, and been translated into 10 languages.*

I have two children, a daughter and a son. They both like stories. My daughter is nearly adult. She liked to read from the beginning. Although she loved it very much when something was read to her, she was ambitious to read as many and as thick books as possible. My son is younger. Although he can read very good, he prefers reading aloud. If my husband and I don't have the time to read for him, he will hear radio plays. Maybe that has a little bit of something to do with laziness...;-)

**You are nominated this year for the German Juvenile Literature Award, can you talk about it? Will you participate some book awarding and tour events?**

I was very happy about the nomination for the literary prize. It's great when a jury appreciates the book you thought of. It is a very important literary prize in Germany. Being on the selection list is a great honor for me. During the Frankfurt Book Fair I will be reading a lecture at the "Junges Museum" as part of OPEN

# Chinese fantasy literature has more possibility going abroad

中国幻想文学更有可能“走出去”

Vanessa Mei Zhu, Editor,  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Publishing Group, China

Questions: Qu Jingfan

**When did you become an editor of German literature at the 21st Century Publishing Group? Which books have you worked on as an editor?**

I started to work at the Tianxia Children's Book centre of the 21st Century Publishing Group in Beijing in 2017. Prior to that, after finishing a graduate program in Germany, I worked as a copyright agent for German books in Frankfurt. After I joined the 21st Century press, I mainly worked with German-language children's literature, and with editing Chinese original children's literature. 21st Century press has explored and built up in the field of German children's literature for more 20 years, building a brand of famous authors and books in China. I'm quite lucky; over the course of the past two years I've worked on editing the works of some of the most important children's literary authors, for example, Paul Maar's *Smas Series*, Otrfied Preußler's *Der Räuber Hotzenplotz und die Mondrakete*, and the 20th-Anniversary edition of Michael Ende's *Momo*.

**What's your impression of German children's literature? When compared with literary work of other countries, what would you say stands out about it?**

My first impression of German children's literature was that it's "a bit hard to read", but the more you read the more interesting it becomes; this is what it's like with their adult literature. It's pretty heavy on irony and criticism. This might have something to do with the fact that Germans are good at self-reflection. At the same time, German children's literature puts a lot of focus on realism; for instance youth titles cover topics such as difficulties growing up, concerning family, love, sex, and even drugs – you see all of these in these literary works. Recently, the topic of refugees has become the background used by some authors, such as how to achieve cultural fusion, and how to cope with cultures from different cultures. Germans are very regimented, and work hard on their internal affairs; at the same time they have no lack of innovation, with the winners of many large awards for design being Germans. *Momo* is a typical fantasy work, but the fantasy is based in reality. It sharply criticises the status quo that people in Germany are exhausted,

and the society ignores camaraderie. The author has created Momo, a brave young girl, the Men in Grey, who steal humans' time, and Master Hora who controls time itself. Ende comes from an artistic background, thus the pictorial sense in his novels is very strong, the addition of the fantasy characters of the Men in Grey gives the reader a real sense of the stifling stagnation that the protagonists face.

**What are some of your favourite characters in German literature?**

I like Sams and Momo most. You can see a lot of the most basic values of purity and braveness in these characters. Momo tells people what time and life are about, and fearlessly fights with the Men in Grey, helping the people take their time back. This book, when placed in the context of modern China, really is something that connects with current reality. Paul Maar tells the children through Sams how to deal with friendship, family, and love, how to understand what it is to have a meaningful life. Of course, what's important is that people can't lose the bravery to face life, nor the bravery to change themselves. There is an adult book which I also quite like: *Ein ganzes Leben*. In our lives that can be both short and long, we face a lot of difficulties and problems; we may resent and evade them. We can't calmly accept them, but rather must resolutely push through, because we ultimately know where we belong.

**The 21st Century press has published the Coloured Crow series and achieved great success, what other collaborations have come about in recent years?**

*Coloured Crow* has been a longstanding hit for 21st Century press. They're short and memorable books which still enjoy great popularity in the market. Since China's Ministry of Education revised the curriculum of Chinese books in 2017, *Coloured Crow* has become a very suitable set of books for elementary students at years 2-4, with volumes that can be read quickly. *Coloured Crow* series incorporates elements of both fantasy and realism, includes not only the traditional fairy tales and folk tales, but also a number of topics related to life education as well. In this way the books subtly inspire recognition and various concepts in the children's mind that will stick with them. At the start of 2019, the head of the German



Mei Zhu

Academy of Youth Literature, Maria Claudia Pecher came to China and visited our publishing house; aside from having a desire to continue collaboration on *Coloured Crow* series, she also hopes that similar books from China will be exported to Germany, allowing German children to know more about Chinese culture. Of course, such a collaboration will take some time and need mutual adjustment.

**What kinds of Chinese children's literary works do you think would be well received by German audiences?**

Actually, there aren't many Chinese children's books entering the Germany market. The German publishing industry has a long history, and has very rigorous standards for the books they choose to publish. I've had communication with many German publishers, and when it comes to picture books, there is still a need for stories and content that both Eastern and Western audiences can accept; they can't be too culturally specific. However, in terms of art style, we can add more Chinese elements. For example, we had exhibited some Chinese original picture books in Germany, among which, *Express Delivery from Dinosaur World* (written by Dong Yanan) and *The Rainbow Flower* (by Michael Grejniec) have been our most sought-after titles there. There's also Cao Wenxuan's *Summer*, which has been published by MacMillan in the UK in English, and has attracted the interest of a number of German publishers. *Summer* is a book that concerns sharing and love, and the art is all in the style of Chinese papercuts. I think that there're many works with realistic topics in China, as literature is about creating resonance, and the differences in Chinese and German culture are so huge, so these books are hard to go abroad, but when it comes to fantasy works, they may have a much greater opportunity to abroad. (translated by Moy Hau)

(Continued from F11)

And they were interested to know how Afu connected to China and why Chinese like him. Also, Afu has his Chinese father-in-law play a major role in his book. This father-in-law is at the same time very intimidating and very likeable. Germans are interested in these cross-cultural family ties, especially if they have been to China before or know someone in China.

**What kind of elements attract you to sign an author?**

There is no simple recipe for choosing a successful book. It is a mixture of good storytelling, the right subject matter and precise timing. Nowadays, it becomes more and more important that authors have a direct connection to their fans or readers. Video clips, or social media in general, can be a very good way of connecting to fans, but it's not the only one. I have also found authors after having read a newspaper article written by them or about them, or contacted authors as experts of a specific topic, after having heard them perform a reading, or just based on a text that I have read.

**Within the three years in China, how do you**

**think of the Chinese publishing market?**

As a private observer, it seems to me that books in China are mostly seen as a means to improve oneself and learn rather than reading them for pastime, entertainment or relaxation. Books on education and self-help seem to play a major part in the book market in China.

**How to be a good literary agent?**

If you work in the rights department, you deal with other rights departments on a more regular basis than with authors themselves. You are loaded with information on books from different countries and publishing houses. There, the challenge is more about seeing the potential for a book, originally published in a different country, for the own market. But markets are different, and countries as well. The more countries and publishers publish one book, the easier the decision in favor of this book, because it seems to work more universally. But if you wait too long, the rights might be hard to get, others might have been quicker and secured the rights before. As for Afu, the complex Chinese rights have sold already. And as long as simplified Chinese rights on his book are still available, I can only recommend the departments to

have a look at Afu's followers on QQ or other popular Chinese channels in order to see the immense sales potential of this book in China.

**How do you think of the impact video or new technology brings about to the publishing industry?**

New technologies are everywhere. People like to read on their phones, authors can directly interact with their readers on online platforms and sometimes even let their readers vote on the outcome of their stories. The publishing cycles change as well as successful marketing strategies. Books are turned into movies and movies or TV series, or documentaries into books. Much of the information previously searched for in books is now acquired over the internet. The way we receive stories is greatly changing, as is the time and concentration we are willing to sacrifice to reading books. These processes have already brought enormous changes to the publishing industry and will continue to do so. That said, I still firmly believe in the good old-fashioned way of just going into a bookstore and buying a book - unenhanced - and reading it from beginning to end. Because some stories can just not be told in a vlog.

# Using different viewpoints to tell the story of China

## "外国人写作中国计划": 用不同视角讲中国故事

In 2016, the "Foreigners Writing China Program" was rolled out, inviting overseas sinologists, authors, media personalities, scholars and famous figures in society to use their own experiences to tell their own China story. To date, this program has published 121 books in 19 languages, with topics including philosophy, thought, politics, literature, personal stories, film, and travel; got good response globally. The reporter interviewed a number of foreign authors and scholars who participated in the program, sharing their own stories involved in it.

By Le Yi

William Brown, an American professor at Xiamen University, had *Off the Wall* published by the Foreign Languages Press; the book is a collection of more than 30 years of his correspondence with his family and friends in the USA. He hopes that through these letters foreign readers see the real China. This year in July, he completed his plan of driving around all of China, writing a new book about the changes in China in 25 years, he will also write a book about the fifth great inventions in governance in China.

Five years ago, Romanian television personality Marina Almasan decided that she wanted her son to understand China, and thus every year has come to China to visit a different city; she used her own perspective as well as interviews of Olympic medallists, artists and fashion designers to write a book about all of China, which after being published in Romania was well received, quickly making her a famous author about China.

Japanese author Kiyoshi Wakana, through his thirty years of research and personal experiences wrote *The Flying Dragon - Why hasn't China collapsed?*. His thirty years of experiences in China have led him to see that the pacifism that the Chinese government has pursued over the past 30 years has laid a foundation for development of the country; on the contrary, Japan has witnessed a continual decline over the past two decades. He says that he hopes to show the China he has seen to the Japanese people to help them better understand the real China.

American sociologist, author and folk musician Mark Levin uses American folk songs to describe the village

stories of China. He is the first foreign musician to sing to the Chinese guards of honor of the three services of the PLA, and was named as a "hero of folk music" by Chinese media. Unsatisfied with unrealistic media reports in the USA about China, in 2013 he wrote *My China Story* in which he introduced people he knew in China, the places he had been and things he had experienced.

Constantin Lupeanu, head of the Romanian Cultural Centre in Beijing published *We Are All Brothers* through the China Translation Publishing House, collecting stories that he had written about China in Romanian newspapers which record his witnessing of almost 20 years of development and change in China. This book will be published in October in Romania.

Famous American scholar and Chinese historian Ross Terril published *Mao: A Biography* in 1980, a book that was hugely popular in the West. In 2010, China Renmin University Press published his new work *Me and China*. Currently, he is writing *Mao as a Boy* and a book on Sino-American relations, *Crossing the River by Feeling the Stones*.

Kim Sungil, researcher at Dongguk University's Institute of East Asian Comparative Studies and head of the East Asia Future Research Institute, wrote *Sino-Korean Relations in My Eyes* which, through a historical and cultural macroscopic reference framework, covers the origins of culture between China and Korea, cultural interchange, the history of communication and reciprocal relations, analysing the commonalities and differences in the two nations' development. Upon this foundation he explores hopes for the future of relations between the two countries.

Peter Sragher, head of the Bucharest branch of the Romanian Writers Association, visited China in 2016 and

wrote a collection of poems, *You are a Dragon*. In his book, he described Beijing, Xining, Henan and other areas - what he saw and felt there. It's a book that expresses the joy of experiencing the different culture of China.

Today, more and more foreign sinologists, authors, media personalities, scholars, and famous persons in society are participating in the "Foreigners Writing China Program". These books have become emissaries to disseminate Chinese culture and from diverse angles let overseas readers understand the real China through reading.

In January of last year, as part of the program, there started a "Chinese-Overseas Author Communication Camp", which invited authors participating in the program and authors who write about foreign countries to interact on the topics of innovation, cooperation and literature with Chinese themes.

According to Xu Baofeng, the leader of the project named "China Cultural Translation & Research Network", through providing a base of communication and innovation for Chinese and foreign authors, we can increase communication and understanding between Chinese and foreign authors, and strengthen the understanding of the foreign masses of China. The plan is already in its fourth stage, and has expanded to allowing foreigners to participate in the selection process, giving authors more of an active role in the entire process. Additionally, there are plans to establish communication camps in Nanjing and Guangzhou, and to invite foreign authors to come to China to live and interact with the locals. Talks are underway with writing bases.

(translated by Moy Hau)

## "I have enough faith to commit to China's future"

“我对中国的未来充满信心！”

**Please tell us your story with China.**

I came to China in 1988, soon I applied for Permanent Resident of Fujian city. I believe the best hopes for the future were in China. At that time many of my students had the goal of going abroad, so I hope to persuade these brightest minds that they should invest their lives in China and help it to grow. I had confidence that China could succeed. Happily, many students are not going abroad now, or are returning after they do so. And many who went abroad 30 years ago have returned. I'm happy I had enough faith to commit to China's future when it was still not that certain.

Today, Xiamen people really are my family, because in 2009 our oldest son Shannon married Miki, from Xiamen. And I helped Xiamen government start the International School, as well as helped Xiamen and a dozen of other cities enter the "International Flower City Competition".

**Do you like writing very much?**

I've always liked writing. I wrote stories (and poems and songs) even when I was only 7 or 8. These years, I wrote lots of articles about China and issued in some magazines or journals, mostly about my hopes for China. I tried to focus on the positive, as too many people focused on the negatives.

Many Chinese leaders were very kind to me, among them, Xi Jinping once encouraged me to write more books about China, because even then he was emphasizing telling China's story to the world, as



William Brown, writer of the *Off the Wall*

Chinese knew the world but the world did not know China. He suggested I start with Quanzhou because that was the start of the Maritime Silk Route, which gave him the inspiration decades ago for the Belt and Road Initiative.

**Earlier this year, your work *Off the Wall, How We Fell for China* was published by FLP, how is your progress on the other books?**

I began writing letters about our family life in China, using humor, to help family and friends in America better understand China. I used humor because it helped break barriers and made my letters more acceptable and persuasive, and many Americans

had negative ideas about China - especially my father, who served in the Army 18 years. He was not happy I'd moved to China, but in 2004, 3 months before he died, he told me he was proud of me coming to China to help, and admired that I'd stayed here. That was the last time he spoke to me, and is a memory I will always treasure.

This year, in July, I drove around China again to write about the changes over 25 years. I hope to let foreigners see the hinterlands in China have changed. Even in the remotest areas, such as Ningxia and Gansu, the government was building good roads, hospitals and schools, and they had electricity.

**Will you write a book about China's fifth invention?**

All the world knew China's 4 great inventions, and admitted that China was best in the "art of government", so I call this the 5th great invention. Consider 2,300 years ago—Dujiangyan. A wise Chinese leader used this project to stop flooding, and also irrigate the land to provide the crops to allow the food that let the first Emperor to create his first army and unite China. Today, because of Dujiangyan, Sichuan is still a great breadbasket of China. The Grand Canal, and many great engineering feats, and countless inventions - all because Chinese were grounded in the Confucian education and morality. Today, Chinese leaders still have solid education backgrounds and abilities to govern.

# International publishers deeply involved in China-themed book publishing

## 国际出版商深度参与中国主题图书出版

*At BIBF this year, more and more large international publishing companies rolled out books with titles related to Chinese culture, or integrated Chinese elements into their overseas publications. Some heads from international publishers talked about their insights on this category.*

■ By Le Yi

The Cengage Learning Group, at BIBF this year, announced the new progress of the children's reading project "Chinese World", with the launch of the first batch containing fifty new books. According to Zhang Kuiwen, senior manager of educational and professional division (China) at Cengage, they started the project four years ago, they discussed and formulated the systems, frameworks and development blueprints of the project. Last year they cooperated with China Intercontinental Press and soon expanded the partners of Chinese publishing houses to more than 20 with their more than 6,000 books participated, from which Cengage selected 50 titles to make Chinese-English editions. He disclosed the plan to increase the number to more than 1,000 books in the next three to five years, and build a vocabulary base, which will help children overseas learn Chinese. He mentioned their long-term plan is to establish a graded Chinese reading system, provide a Chinese learning platform for overseas Children, and help them learn Chinese more easily. He stated that they plan to promote the books in the schools of English-speaking countries so as to provide rich reading materials to students.

Aside from this, Cengage has also linked up with People's Education Press to launch the *Chinese Readers*. This series tells Chinese stories from an international perspective, allowing readers to learn Chinese culture whilst studying English. Zhang Kuiwen said, the series has four installments, altogether twenty volumes, at the end of the year eight new books will be published and distributed worldwide.

Oxford University Press also announced two programs named *Talk about China* (TAC) and *Chinese Language Teaching* (CLT). According to product manager

Xiang Peihua at OUP, TAC covers Chinese society, culture, history, life and other aspects, it aims to exhibit excellent Chinese culture, customs and people's lives, etc, and let students to "learn authentic English and tell the Chinese story". She disclosed OUP will publish the first batch of TAC books in Sep 2020.

OUP's another new series, CLT, published in partnership with New Star Press, is targeted at younger overseas students. Ying Peihua said, in the first stage they hope to publish *Oxford Beginners' Chinese* and distribute these books with the help of the Confucius Institute to the elementary and middle-schools overseas. This series is very interesting, with elements such as explanations of the structures and of histories behind various Chinese characters in the text, allowing readers to understand the story behind these ideographic characters, learn how to write Chinese characters, and gradually understand Chinese culture.

One the academic publishing field, the Springer Nature has published numerous academic books written by Chinese authors. Li Yan, director of book business (China) of Springer Nature, said that currently Chinese scholars are making more and more excellent contributions in the natural and social sciences, and the worldwide academia is hoping to know Chinese colleagues' research progress. Chinese authors are at the forefront of research and are a reflection of changes in modern Chinese society, economic development, social governance and cultural countenance; they're being watched by global academics and the masses. Also, authors of books upon the subjects of Chinese traditional culture, history and philosophy are also performing well worldwide. She remarks that these authors have all been included in Springer's book database; every year newly published books are collected into e-book discipline packages, distributed

through university or research institution libraries, and brought to global academic research groups. Among them, many classical works have been used as teaching materials for graduate students. Li Yan said, "Spinger Nature is developing more teaching material, and in cooperation with many Chinese academic publishing houses, they have published dozens of China-themed English-language books, in the future they will continue to publish more new books in this category."

Zhang Kuiwen said that, over the past few years, Cengage has published hundreds of China-themed books, most of them are recommended by others and the topics are on Chinese governance and economy as well as national administration, but these books are scattered in topics and the user groups are also scattered. It's very difficult for the editors to edit and promote. For this reason, Cengage began to think of building a professional team in line with the international market, and develop relevant products. He believes that a new Chinese children's reading project can continually promote Chinese culture with the publication of the series. Content with universal value can be disseminated, and this can enhance the sense of identity of overseas readers about Chinese culture. "Just as Cengage's English readers can be published for decades, if this series enter the overseas's school reading system, it will have great and deep influence."

He also states that since the series was released, he hadn't expected so many positive reactions from all corners of the globe. His boss stressed that the project should start from the first level (currently the books start from levels two to four) and develop a complete series. Overseas customers also came and expressed a desire to be the agent of the books abroad.

(translated by Moy Hau)

## The joint editorial divisions get positive result

### 中外“混血”的国际编辑部初显成效

■ By Le Yi

Since 2016, dozens of Chinese publishing enterprises have established overseas editorial departments in cooperation with well-known foreign publishers, through deeply cooperation in editorial, distribution and sales, increased overseas readers' understanding of China with newly published books about China. These books have been well received with a lot of attention and more sales. Our reporter Le Yi interviewed some heads of the overseas editorial departments.

China Translation Publishing House, starting in 2016, cooperated with LID Business Media of the UK in curating and publishing a project suitable for readers worldwide. According to Martin Liu, LID's Chief Operation Officer, they did extensive research into the market needs of readers outside of China, then decided to publish a series about famous Chinese entrepreneurs, as more overseas readers are curious about the Chinese economy and Chinese enterprises. Then, they discussed on the topics, writing style and content structure of the series with experts from different fields, and confirmed the positioning of the series: using intelligent and simple language to tell these Chinese entrepreneurs' stories. CTPH invited Chinese business writers familiar with these entrepreneurs to write, and LID invited a famous French artist to draw sketches of each entrepreneur for the cover of the series. Since the publication in June 2016, it's been

distributed to large bookstores and airports in 18 countries, and sold more than 5,000 copies. Over 20 language rights have been sold. According to sources, the second round of the series, comprising five books, will be published in English and launched next year at the London Book Fair. Till now CTPH has established 8 such offices globally.

According to Gu Jun, the head of the overseas development department of Sinolingua Press, the press established one such venture with Wisdom House Cultural Investment Company of Egypt in 2018; they scheduled to publish 10 books every year targeted at Arabic-language markets in the area of Chinese-language teaching. The first ten were published at the end of 2018. The strong demand for Chinese-language teaching materials in the Arab world led to strong sales of these books. Among them, the *HSK Vocabulary by Frequency* series of four books, with its initial print run of 4,000 copies for the series sold out completely, and entered the second round of printing. The series entered the bestseller list in respective category in Egypt, and provoked lively discussion on Facebook. Another China-themed series, including 3 books about Chinese Culture, Chinese Geography and Chinese History were also purchased by Al-Sheqary, the largest educational book provider in Saudi Arabia. The series sold almost 2,000 copies. The publisher conducted broad promotion at the book fairs across the Arab world for these books.

As Tong Meng, head of international cooperation

division of New World Press sees it, close cooperation between the Chinese and foreign partners is absolutely key for success. The press, through hard work with a Turkish partner, established an overseas editorial department in 2017, till now has published more than ten Turkish-language titles, with most of them selling more than 1,000 copies. What impressed Tong Meng most was that when publishing *I Come from Xinjiang*, they pipelined the workflow of both presses, by making use of the time difference between the two countries, finished the translation, verification and printing between the Turkish side and Chinese side in two weeks before a launch event at Ankara. Till now, New World Press has established 13 such divisions globally.

The Commercial Press, based on its nearly 40 years of cooperation with the Oxford University Press, established a joint editorial office in HK last year. Guo Chaofeng, vice director of the Copyright and Legal Department of the Commercial Press, expressed that the two parties will continually deepen their cooperation on publication of dictionaries and academic works, then prioritise to publish the English-Chinese bilingual edition of Chinese-language culture dictionaries for non-mother-language speakers of Chinese, which may include a Chinese culinary culture dictionary, a Chinese tea culture dictionary, a Chinese society dictionary, etc, thus forming an advanced and multi-angled dictionary series.

(translated by Moy Hau)

# "There should be more platforms like The Arts Bridge"

“应有更多像‘艺术之桥’这样的平台”

At this year's BIBF, Guangxi Normal University Press Group announced four artists were the winners of "The Arts Bridge 2020". The press will hold a launch of "The Arts Bridge 2020" at the Frankfurt Book Fair. This is one of the press's major activities for going abroad.

The four winners are "Artist of the Year" Xu Bing, "Designer of the Year" Yang Mingjie, "Honour of the Year" Zhu Zheqin, and "Manufacturer of the Year" Xu Gang. These four artists all have won major awards in art and design before both in China and abroad, and all have great influence and fame.

Yang Mingjie says that he hopes to meet Dieter Zimmer, who was his tutor when he studied in Germany a decade ago, he also wants to meet his German friends in designing field to catch up and chat with them. Zhu Zheqin, who is participating at Frankfurt for the first time, says that when she was young, German classical music and art are what sparked her interest in music and made a deep impression upon her. Contemporary German art, design, film, dance and other creative fields have a very important influence on art and artists worldwide. Examples include the band Rammstein, film director Wim Wenders, Pina Bausch's dance troupe, sculptor Anselm Kiefer, and artist Joseph Beuys.

Yang Mingjie says that, The Arts Bridge is a great interaction platform that can serve to promote contemporary Chinese art to the outside world, and that's a great honour to be selected as the "2020 Designer of the year". "Currently, there isn't enough understanding abroad of Chinese artists, designers and what's going on right now; The Arts Bridge functions as

a bridge for modern Chinese culture to be disseminated abroad. Chinese designers and artists can also use this bridge to understand what's going on with art and design abroad. Looking at it from an international perspective, high-quality Chinese art and design books are underrepresented in terms of market share and quality, but in reality modern China has already poured out a number of very good artists and designers. I hope that more projects like The Arts Bridge will appear, and allow the entire world to see the achievements of high-quality Chinese art and culture.

Xu Gang believes that The Arts Bridge is a kind of weathervane. Through participating, he hopes that "local creations" can act as testaments to the time period, and to see the collision of more artistic thoughts and creation continuing to bring about new forms. As a Chinese designer, he feels strongly that more Chinese design books tend to focus on design observation and classification on the ontrast between past and present, whereas those that discard the limitations of the timeline and raise thoughts and questions about future society, bringing along different axes of thoughts to inspire and influence are relatively few.

Zhu Zheqin says it's been less than a decade since China started to roll out creative activities. China needs to transform from a country that got rich being the world's factory into a society with more cultures, more values, and more innovation in order to be a better place! So many Chinese artists, designers and cultural personages are getting with the changing times, and taking up positions at the forefront of change. This is the change of an age and a group of people. "The World Sees" (a charity project for Chinese innovation

conducted by Zhu in 2009 in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme) has already transformed from being a UN charity project into a brand with social enterprise attributes. On the tenth anniversary of the project, stories have been collected into a book that will be published; this is an example of a very valuable collection of recollections. She also hopes that more people in China will continue down this kind of route, and that handicrafts in relation with the project can go out into the world. She says that in the past her musical albums became a documentary, and in the same way she hopes that this publication can be transformed into music or design objects.

Additionally, Yang Mingjie's book for the Arts Bridge Project, *Design Fusion: Jamy Yang's Design Deconstructing West and East* will be published at the book fair, at the same time he will bring his work that previously won the German Red Dot award, *Virtual Landscape*, to the fair. This work expresses the fusion of real and meaningful digital culture and humanistic elements through a combination of a virtual network architecture and Suzhou-style garden design.

Xu Gang's new book *Refashioning Concrete: Design by Bentu* will also be exhibited at the fair. This book gathers eight years of "local creation", against the backdrop of industrial sites in the Pearl River Delta region, showing the use of concrete over time for a continued view of the results of observation and implementation. It raises the view that concrete exists in a form of society. Concrete is a modern material that has the function of openness and spirited international character; in the process of a city's globalisation, it represents the face of the times.

Frankfurter Buchmesse 2019

2019 Arts Bridge Forum at Frankfurt Book Fair

# The Arts Bridge

Committed to The International Communication of Art and Design

## Samsara of All Things

Boundless in Art and Design between East and West

From China

Xu Bing  
Contemporary artist

Jamy Yang  
Industrial designer and founder of Yang House

Zhu Zheqin  
Singer, musician, crossover artist and founder of KANJIAN

Xu Gang  
Product designer and founder of BENTU

From Germany

Prof. Dr. Klaus Klemp  
Professor of design history and theory

Prof. Matthias Wagner K  
Museum director and curator

Axel Malik  
Artist

-October 17th  
2pm - 5pm

-Museum Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt a.M., Foyer

Hall 6.1 C133

# Contents

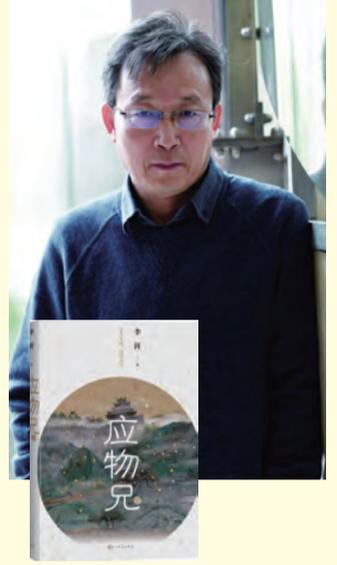
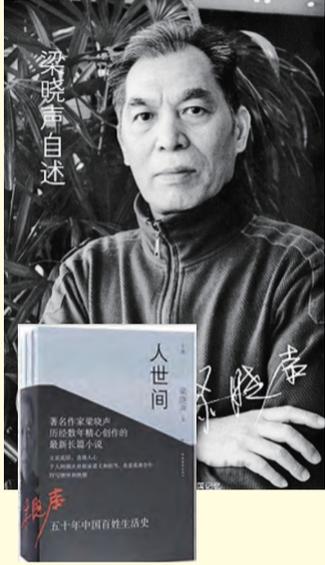
F22 Mao Dun Literature Prize winners  
F23 Other renowned writers  
F24 Science Fiction/Fantasy writers

(The listing is in alphabetic order of family name)

On August 16, China Writers Association announced five novels won this year's Mao Dun Literature Prize, which is one of the four highest literature awards in China. The five novels, respectively written by Liang Xiaosheng, Xu Huaizhong, Xu Zechen, Chen Yan and Li Er, won the prize, which is awarded every four years.

## 2019 Mao Dun Literature Prize winners

2019 中国茅盾文学奖获奖作家及其作品



### 梁晓声 Liang Xiaosheng

Liang Xiaosheng was born in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, in 1949. He was sent to work in the countryside after graduating from high school in 1968 under the then policy to involve the "educated youth" in farming. Liang drew on his experience to write several novels about the "educated youth." Now he is a professor at Beijing Language and Culture University. He is also a member of China Writers Association. His novels have been translated into English, French, Japanese, Russian, and Italian.

#### 《人世间》

**The Human World** China Youth Press(Nov,2017),1466p

The novel revolves around an ordinary man's life, showcasing the changes of Chinese society and people's lives against a backdrop of half a century. It has been referred to as "50-year history of Chinese people's life".

### 徐怀中 Xu Huaizhong

Xu Huaizhong joined Chinese Eighth Route Army in 1945 and has worked as editor of the army newspaper, script writer for the army film studio, dean of the literature department of the liberation army art college. His works include novel: *We Plant Love*, Novella: *The Rainbow on the Ground*, story collection: *The Angel with No Wings*. Short story *Anecdote on the Western Front* won the best short story of the year in 1980 and non-fiction *Base Color* won "Lu Xun Literature Prize". Novel *Lead Along with the Wind* won Mao Dun Literature Prize in 2019.

#### 《牵风记》

**Lead Along with the Wind** People's Literature Publishing House(Jan,2019), 375p

The liberation army broke through the defense line of the National Party at the Yellow River and started to attack. A young student Wang Keyu decided to join the force in Yan'an. She passed the camp of "Night Tiger Regiment" and met the colonel Qi Jing. A classical tune "Lofty Mountains and Flowing Water" brought them together but unexpected incidents forced the warzone love birds into tragic paths.

Cavalry messenger Cao Shuier was tall and brave and was Qi Jing's capable assistant. On the battle field though, he sometimes lost control and eventually caused catastrophe. This book is the fruit of a lifetime persistent effort of writing by a 90 years old man showing his reflection and understanding of war and

human nature.

### 徐则臣 Xu Zechen

Born in 1978 in Jiangsu Province, Xu Zechen obtained a master's degree in Chinese literature at Peking University, and is now an editor at People's Literature magazine. Xu is the author of several novels about the underbelly of contemporary urban life in China's largest cities. He is considered one of the rising stars in the Chinese literary scene and has also held residencies and taught in the United States, at Creighton University in Nebraska in 2009 and at the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa in 2010.

Xu's fiction is focused primarily on China's less-fortunate social classes – peddlers of pirated DVDs, migrant workers – and his spare, realist style lends some wry humor to their struggles. His books include *Midnight's Door* and *Heaven on Earth*, as well as *Running Through Beijing*, which is available in English. His most recent book is *Jerusalem*. His books have been translated into German, Korean, Dutch, Japanese, and Mongolian.

#### 《北上》

**Northward** Beijing October literature and Arts Press(Nov,2018),466p

*Northward* tells the centuries-old "secret history" between several families in China and Italy living along the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal with past and present as two clues. This book, trying to connect different historical periods of the canal, explores the relationships between ordinary Chinese and their country, between intellectuals and their country, and between China and the world, and explores the important influence the Grand Canal has on China's politics, economy, geography, culture and the changes of the people's mind, depicting the spiritual map of the Grand Canal in a hundred years and the new life of an old nation. In this sense, the Grand Canal is a mirror of China. As the China's main artery linking north and south, the Grand Canal has nurtured an ancient country for thousands of years, and cultivated a unique generation of Chinese people.

### 陈彦 Chen Yan

Chen Yan was born in Zhen'an County, Shaanxi in 1963. At the age of 17, he published his first short story, *Blasting* in Shaanxi Workers' Literature and Art. In 2004 he became president of Shaanxi Opera Research Institute. He is a dramatist and member of China Writers Association.

His novel *The Protagonist* has won the 10th Mao Dun Literature Prize. His other main works include *The Protagonist*, *Story of the West Capital* and *Stage Setting*, etc. He has been awarded three times "Cao Yu Drama Literature Prize", and the novel *Stage Setting* ranked No. 1 on the novel list in 2015 chosen by Chinese Novel Society.

#### 《主角》

**The Protagonist** The Writers Publishing House(Jane,2018)

*The Protagonist* depicts the rise and fall of the Qin Opera through the vivid description of Qin Opera diva, Yi Qin'e, over the past half-century, and her complicated associations with Qin Opera. The whole life of Yi Qin'e over the past fifty years and its spiritual history provides a possible important reference to classical thoughts adapting to a changing world. Although suffering internal bothers and external troubles, feeling exhausted mentally and physically, she still feels the responsibility and chooses to have a positive life and get the spiritual support.

### 李洱 Li Er

Novelist and short story writer Li Er was born 1966 in Henan Province. Despite his modest claim to be a "not very prolific" author, he has published five story collections, two novels and approximately 50 novellas and short stories - most of them within the last decade. He is widely respected in Chinese literary circles and has acquired a passionate fan base of highly literate and intellectual readers. He has attracted a great deal of attention among literary critics. He also gained reputation in Germany, through the publication of his work *Cherry on a Pomegranate Tree*. Novel *Brother Ying Wu* won "Mao Dun Literature Prize" in 2019.

#### 《应物兄》

**Brother Ying Wu** People's Literature Publishing House(Dec,2018), 1042p

Li Er spent 13 years to complete his latest novel *Brother Ying Wu*. The 900 thousand words saga is a record of the life courses and spiritual journey of the intellectuals in China for the recent 30 years. In the novel, Li Er made up a Jizhou university and a celebrated scholar, Ying Wuxiong, is in charge of establishing a Confucian school for the university. He interacted with all sorts of characters and the ways they talk and behave are depicted in detail, showcasing the glory and downfall, hope and disappointment in their lives which therefore constitute a vivid paint of an era.

# Other renowned contemporary writers and their works

其他中国当代优秀作家及其作品

## 冯骥才 Feng Jikai

Feng Jikai was an important figure in the reactive "scar literature" and "retrospective literature" movements that directly followed the Cultural Revolution. Not only did he publish short stories and novellas that defined and now represent those genres, he continued to criticize the extremes of the Cultural Revolution in essays, interviews as well as through the novel *Ten Years of Madness: An Oral History of the Cultural Revolution*, which has been translated into English twice. Later on in the nineties his literary focus moved toward the cultural history of his native Tianjin, and his stories began to incorporate the mythical (like the novella *The Three-Inch Golden Lotus*, published in English by the University of Hawai'i in 1996).

### 《俗世奇人》

Extraordinary People in Our Ordinary World

*Extraordinary People in Our Ordinary World* is a short story collection firstly published in 2008, with 18 concise stories in a half classical Chinese, half modern style. A new expanded edition of 36 stories was released in 2016. This collection focused on the life of ordinary people in the city of Tianjin in the late Qing early Republic period. Each piece is a biography of one legendary character, inspired by folk tales that circulate in Tianjin at the time. The book won the 7th Lu Xun Literature Award for best short stories in 2018.



## 金宇澄 Jin Yucheng

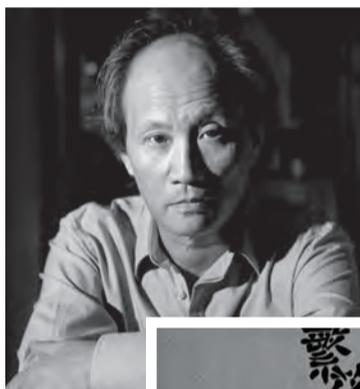
Jin Yucheng is a Chinese novelist and literary editor. He was born in Shanghai in 1952. During the Cultural Revolution, He spent eight years on a farm in Northeast China. In 1977, he returned to Shanghai and worked in West Shanghai Workers' Culture Palace. Jin Yucheng started to publish works in 1985, His debut story, *The Lost River* won a national essay contest. In 1988, his novel, *The Wind Birds*, won a fiction Award sponsored by Shanghai Literature magazine. At the same year, he was transferred to Shanghai Writers Association and worked as an editor of Shanghai Literature since then.

*Blossoms*, his major work published in 2013, is a literary phenomenon of the decade, with almost one million copies sold, having won numerous literary awards including Mao Dun Literary Award, the most prestigious prize in China. Wong Kar-Wai is developing the novel into his next feature film. Rights have been sold to US (FSG), France (Gallimard), Spain (Navona), Italy (Guanda) and Japan (Hayakawa).

### 《繁花》

*Blossoms* Shanghai Literature & Art Publishing House (March, 2014)

Told in a series of vignettes, *Blossoms* follows a group of young people in Shanghai as they grow into adulthood in the sixties and seventies, even as the country lurches into the Cultural Revolution. Thirty years later, they are on the brink of middle-age, and a newly-prosperous China is hurtling into the twenty-first century. The narrative begins with childhood friends Husheng and Ah Bao, then slowly fans out to meet their various friends, neighbors and lovers. There is no protagonist as such – Husheng and Ah Bao are the most constant presences, but their story doesn't drive the novel, and they disappear for long stretches. Rather, the author seeks to create a vast web of relationships that spreads across Shanghai, and occasionally farther afield. *Blossoms* weaves the two significant eras into a tapestry of love, desire, memory and nostalgia, a tale of ordinary and extraordinary events.



## 霍艳 Huo Yan

Born in 1987, Huo Yan is a writer of novels, short stories, screenplays and criticism. She began writing at the age of 13 and won her first literary prize at the age of 14. She is the author of eight books, and her work has been published in magazines including *Harvest*, *October* and *Beijing Literature*. She holds a Doctorate of Contemporary Literature. In 2013, she held the Rewi Alley Fellowship at the Michael King Writers Centre in Auckland, and wrote *Dry Milk*. She lives in Beijing.

### 《奶粉》

*Dry Milk* Giramondo Publishing (Australia) (July, 2019)

John Lee is a migrant from Beijing who has lived in Auckland for three decades. Formerly a librarian, he leads an increasingly lonely and misanthropic life, reduced to selling second-hand goods, and living in a marriage of convenience with his disabled wife, whom he treats with contempt. When he becomes infatuated with a young student who lodges in their house, and puts his life savings behind a scheme to export powdered milk to China, the dubious balance with which he has held his life together comes apart, and feelings of alienation and humiliation turn to violent obsession. Huo Yan's novella is a stark portrait of social isolation, and of the experience of some of those who left China after the Cultural Revolution.

Written by one of the strongest young voices of China's post 1980s literary generation, *Dry Milk* looks back on the traumas of the previous generation, with the intensity of a writer imagining the most terrifying possibilities of cultural displacement.



## 林白 Lin Bai

Lin Bai was born in Guangxi Province in 1958 and sent down to the countryside after middle school. She began publishing in 1990s and immediately established herself as a writer of women's literature to the extent that her work sought to define and explore the nature of a uniquely female psychology. Her most outstanding work so far has been the 1994 novel *A Woman's War*, which depicts the life of a young woman from southern China as she comes to understand herself physically and psychologically. Lin Bai's work, which comes as close to the Western-defined "women's literature" and "literature of the body" as any Chinese author has so far, features female main characters from southern China and frequently employs a retrospective narrative style. Feminine sexuality and homosexuality are common themes. Heavy flavors of autobiography are present.

### 《一个人的战争》

*A Woman's War* Guangdong Flower City Publishing House (August, 2019), 320p

Duomi, the protagonist of Lin Bai's autobiographical novel, *A Woman's War*, details the instinctual urges as a child exploring the sensations of her own private parts and does so by enlisting another girl's assistance. It begins by relating the experience of a girl's masturbation. It ends with the girl, Duomi, selling out her own marriage. In between the novel relates how she gets pregnant out of wedlock, has a miscarriage, and these sorts of experiences. As Duomi grows up, however, she learns to consider intimacy with other women as abnormal and comes to identify her childhood same-sex play as shameful. Even though Lin does not explicitly criticize homophobia as a social construct, her depiction of a protagonist who constrains her own spontaneous polymorphous desires because of society's prejudices against homosexuals sets the stage for future critiques of lesbian self-denial. At one level of meaning, this novel subverts male-dominated society. However, male critics really welcomed the work, and enthusiastically praised it.



# Science Fiction/Fantasy writers and their works

中国当代科幻及幻想作家及其作品

## 陈楸帆 Chen Qiufan

Chen Qiufan is an award-winning science fiction writer. He grew up near Guiyu, China, home to the world's largest e-waste recycling center, an area the UN called an "environmental calamity". His experiences there inspired the *Waste Tide*. Since 2004, he has published over thirty stories in *Science Fiction World*, *Esquire*, *Chutzpah!* and other magazines, as well as a novella, *The Abyss of Vision* (2006), and novel, *The Waste Tide* (2013). He has won Taiwan's Dragon Fantasy Award, China's Milky Way Award for Science Fiction and Nebula Award, and a Science Fiction & Fantasy Translation Award along with Ken Liu. His fictions has been translated into English and Italian. He currently lives in Shanghai and Beijing and works as the founder of Thema Mundi Studio.

### 《荒潮》

*Waste Tide* Tor Books(US)(April,2019)352p

*Waste Tide* is a thought-provoking vision of the future. Translated by Ken Liu, who brought Cixin Liu's Hugo Award-winning *The Three-Body Problem* to English-speaking readers.

Mimi is drowning in the world's trash. She's a waste worker on Silicon Isle, where electronics - from cell phones and laptops to bots and bionic limbs - are sent to be recycled. These amass in towering heaps, polluting every spare inch of land. On this island off the coast of China, the fruits of capitalism and consumer culture come to a toxic end. Mimi and thousands of migrant waste workers like her are lured to Silicon Isle with the promise of steady work and a better life. They're the lifeblood of the island's economy, but are at the mercy of those in power. A storm is brewing, between ruthless local gangs, warring for control. Ecoterrorists, set on toppling the status quo. American investors, hungry for profit. And a Chinese-American interpreter, searching for his roots. As these forces collide, a war erupts - between the rich and the poor; between tradition and modern ambition; between humanity's past and its future. Mimi, and others like her, must decide if they will remain pawns in this war or change the rules of the game altogether.



## 江南 Jiang Nan

Jiang Nan (Ricardo Z. Yang) is an accomplished writer and TV and movie producer. Graduated from Peking University with a degree in chemistry, he then went to Washington University in St. Louis and earned a master's degree in Pharmaceutical Science and Analysis.

Jiang Nan has published works in different genres, including science fiction, fantasy, Chinese Kongfu novel, and young adult campus literature. He broke the stereotypical understanding of fantasy fiction in China, and for many times has inspired new reading trend in China. Jiang Nan and his works changed the fantasy genre in China. As *Dragon Raja* keeps breaking selling record and sold over 21 million copies, Jiang Nan won the best fantasy novelist award and the book with most commercial value award. *Dragon Raja* was selected by the government in the list of 100 outstanding books recommended to young people.

### 《九州缥缈录》

*Novoland Eagle Flag* People's Literature Publishing House(starting from 2005, 6 titles)

Novoland is a world constructed based on the history of East Asia and Chinese fairytales. It was built in 2002 by a group of young writers who joined forces to start the magazine *Novoland Fantasy* and published a series of *Novoland* novels. As the foundation of the universe, *Novoland Eagle Flag* is one of the most important novels in China's modern fantasy fiction, and it is the best work from Jiang Nan's repertoire to-date. In the past 10 years, 6 volumes have been published, and sold around 2 million copies. The depth of its content and delicate portrayal of characters combining with an epic storyline could be compared to *A Song of Ice and Fire*. A traditional Chinese Edition was published in Taiwan in 2010.



## 宝树 Baoshu

Baoshu is the pen-name of Li Jun. Baoshu studied philosophy at Peking University and KU Leuven in Belgium. His debut novel *The Ruins of Time* won the 2014 Chinese Nebula prize.

Baoshu writes stories about the future. Published works include the novel *Three Body X: The Universe of the Mind's Eye* and his short stories have been published in *Sci-Fi World*, *Super Sweet*, and *ZuiB*.

### 《时间的救赎》

*The Redemption of Time* Head of Zeus (UK)(April,2019), 400p

Set in the universe of the New York Times bestselling *Three-Body Problem* trilogy, *The Redemption of Time* continues Cixin Liu's multi-award-winning science fiction saga. This original story envisions the aftermath of the conflict between humanity and the extraterrestrial Trisolarians. At the end of the fourth year of the Crisis Era, Yun Tianming, riddled with cancer, chose to end his life. His decision was the first step in a journey that would take him to the end of the universe and beyond. His brain was extracted from his body, flash frozen, put aboard a spacecraft and launched on a trajectory that will intercept the Trisolarian First Fleet in a few centuries. It is a desperate plan, almost certain to fail. But there is an infinitesimal chance that one day Tianming may, somehow, be able to send valuable information back to Earth. And so he does. His broadcasts from the Trisolarian fleet reveal the secrets of faster than light propulsion and the ultimate defence of black domains.

This is Tianming's story. It reveals what happened to him when he was intercepted by the Trisolarians. It reveals the true nature of the struggle that has created the universal 'dark forest', and the ultimate fate of the Universe...



## 夏笳 Xia Jia

Xia Jia (pen name of Wang Yao) was born in 1984 in Xi'an, China, she is Associate Professor of Chinese Literature at Xi'an Jiaotong University, and a visiting scholar at University of California, Riverside from 2018 to 2019. Her writing style often blends genres and integrates sci-fi, fantasy, romance and mythology. She has been publishing speculative fiction since college. Seven of her stories have won the Galaxy Award, China's most prestigious science fiction award.

So far she has published a fantasy novel *Odyssey of China Fantasy: On the Road* (2010), as well as three science fiction collections *The Demon Enslaving Flask* (2012), *A Time Beyond Your Reach* (2017) and *Xi'an City Is Falling Down* (2018). Her works has been translated and published in *Clarkesworld* and other publications. She is also engaged in other science fiction related works, including academic research, translation, screenwriting, editing and creative writing teaching.

### 《你无法抵达的时间》

*A Time Beyond Your Reach* Tianjin People's Publishing House(Sep, 2017)

This is a collection of Xia Jia's recent sixteen novellas and short stories. The works included *A Time Beyond Your Reach*, *A Hundred Ghosts Parade Tonight*, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* and *Goodnight, Melancholy*. One notable theme emerges from the stories is the unstable and ever-evolving boundaries of Chinese modernity.



# Paid knowledge providers: Expanding cooperation, from online to offline

内容付费提供商：拓展平台合作 线上走向线下

By Chen Ying

China's paid knowledge market is still continually expanding, and there are a few main reasons for this: first, the public's awareness of intellectual copyright protection is further strengthened, second, online payments are becoming ubiquitous and supporting paid knowledge platforms, third, many more people are creating content and sharing it, they tend to look for ways to capitalize on their content, and fourth, consumers' consumption upgrading are driving up the consumption of cultural content. However, the industry is also facing problems with shrinkage in audience rating and re-purchase rate, a lack of content filtering and systematic promotion method, among other things. The paid-knowledge industry is in urgent need of breakthrough to achieve further expansion.

Earlier this year, market research firm Insight & Info Consulting published a report *An Analysis of the Paid-Knowledge Market in 2019 in China*, in which it shows that up until the end of 2018, the Chinese paid knowledge users reached 290 million, with the permeation rate (the number of paid knowledge content users as a portion of total internet users) reaching 25%. Paid knowledge upstreams were firms mainly including Zhihu, Igetget, Himalaya FM and other content providers; midstreams were Zhihu, Igetget and other platforms, and downstreams were content consumers mainly on finance and financial management, medicine and health, travel, and a few other areas. And in 2019, the scale of the paid knowledge users is estimated to reach to 387 million, and by 2020 the market will exceed 23.5 billion yuan.

## Innovating content format, enhancing the user experience

Looking at content providers, the competition between various platforms is white-hot. Paid-knowledge platforms are continually innovating in the formats of audio content and improving the user experience.

In December 2018, Himalaya FM held its third "12.3 Knowledge Festival", during which period content consumption exceeded 435 million yuan. Comparing this with the second and first sessions which saw figures of 196 million and 50 million yuan respectively, it's clear that the paid knowledge market is blowing up.

On August 20 of this year, Himalaya FM launched its "Story Festival", many leading media brands like "Stories", "ONE" and "Real Story Plan" participated and brought more than 30 years of their most popular classical stories to Himalaya FM subscribed users.

As another comprehensive audio platform, Qingting FM is also picking up the pace. In January of this year, Qingting FM announced that its monthly active users (MAU) had broken 100 million, with total users numbering 450 million. In November 2018, Qingting FM announced that they were rolling out a nine cell content matrix, and that over a 3-year period they would spend one billion yuan to support streaming content, with bundling major IPs such as Gao Xiaosong, Xu Zhiyuan, Jiang Xun, and others, to guarantee continual offering of good content.

In April of this year, Igetget at its spring press conference suddenly announced a number of innovations targeted towards ebooks, including a function on the Igetget smartphone app that allows users to search by any keyword across all of Igetget's online resources, and the ability to preview ten percent of a title at any point. While the company is enhancing the user experience, it focuses more on satisfying users' needs to knowledge.

## Building a cross-platform membership system, expanding offline

The entire paid knowledge market has upgraded to

jointly launch cross-platform membership, which is viewed as an effective way in achieving higher user activity and maintaining user base.

Up to this year, The membership model, originally derived from video websites, is becoming a favourite in the knowledge service market. Himalaya, Qingting, Zhihu and others have continually launched their membership systems, and progressed towards alliance memberships. With Qingting FM as an example, it has worked with



Zhihu and Yanjiyou Bookstore jointly created a compound reading experience area "Yan Yan Q&A Space" which opened in Beijing.

Mango TV and Youku to form an alliance membership, later going on to establish an alliance system with iQiyi and JD Plus.

In April of this year, Zhihu, in cooperation with independent bookstore Yanjiyou, established the first offline bookstore "Yan Yan Q&A Space" in Xiamen. On May 21, Zhihu and Yanjiyou jointly announced a joint membership system "Yan Yan Member"; the two parties jointly created a compound reading experience area "Yan Yan Question and Answer Space" which opened in Beijing. After this, Zhihu announced its "Yan yan Member service", with memberships sold for 198 yuan, allowing those subscribers to access content on JD Plus and iQiyi for a year for free.

Read at Ten, Kai Shu Story, Youshu, Xin Shixiang reading club and other platforms have continually expanded their business scope. Read at Ten, for example, has business covering literature, film, fashion, education, video, publishing, bookstores and more, "Read at Ten Classroom", a derivative brand of Read at Ten, has launched 132 courses, which has been listened or viewed more than 200 million times; payers on the platform reach to about 2 million, 4% of total 50 million users. The re-purchase rate is about 60%. "Read at Ten Classroom" has developed many top-tier products. And online courses are seeing more outlets along with Read at Ten opens offline bookstores. At the end of last year, the Read at Ten bookstore in Xiamen had started more than 100 courses, with an average of six courses a week.

Paid knowledge platforms are taking big steps to go offline, with Himalaya and Yit (a new comprehensive e-commerce platform) opening their own brick-and-mortar stores. Even more evident is the Fan Deng Bookstore, which was founded in 2016 by Fan Deng Reading Club, till now, has built over 200 physical stores across China through different models of outlet shops plus partner shops.

## A Turn to the realm of education

At the same time, several paid content tools with QLChat and Xiao'e tong as representatives, have noticed the trend that paid content market is shifting towards online education, and even developing offline educational contents. After going online through Zhongchuang Space, Tencent's open platform for startups, QLChat

spent nearly three years to transform from a tool to an independent content platform. Currently, QLChat's courses include live casts, recorded broadcasts, and Q&A.

Xiao'e tong has invested 100 million yuan in supporting 100 different educational institutions via its "New Education Solutions Plan". This plan covers recruiting students, instructor administration, student administration, online courses, offline courses, student assistance and interaction, operational analysis, reputation promotion and other core education scenarios, and has become a complete closed circle for education. According to sources, Xiao'e tong already has 500,000 registered members, 300 million end users, and 5.5 million knowledge products, with total cash flow of 3.5 billion yuan. Study activities by users have reached 8.5 billion times.

In January 2018, Baidu Education put online its first audio paid product "Baidu mini-Class"; this project is an upgrade of "Baidu Chuanke" which it acquired earlier. Baidu replied that Chuanke will all be one of distribution channels for educational contents among its other channels like Baidu Library, Baidu Reading, and Baidu Audio.

## iQiyi jumps into paid knowledge market

Bonuses for mobile internet users reaching peaks is already a reality; although some knowledge-paid players are rapidly retreating, there are still more top-tier internet platforms entering the paid knowledge competition in a big way.

On March 31 of this year, Qtone Education Group announced a preliminary plan for reorganisation, proposing an acquisition of 96% of Wu Xiaobo's Hangzhou Bajiuling Cultural and Creative Company; in May, the free program "Li Xiang's Internal Reference of Knowledge" announced that it would cease updating, and Li started a new paid program "The Path to Huge Riches".

Toutiao, early on in December 2017, planned to launch a paid knowledge audio platform titled "Xinzhi", but the plan didn't come to fruition at all. In May 2018, Toutiao quietly launched gogokid, which targets at children under 12 years of age. In July of the same year, Toutiao pushed out its "Study Well" app, entering the paid knowledge arena, but the product later disappeared.

In April of this year, iQiyi, with 1,000 partners and 12,000 courses, slipped into the paid content market, generating great interest. Its new product, iQiyi Knowledge app, with the support of the company's userbase and high-quality content, managed to work well with audio courses, production alliances and exclusive content creation to achieve something big. The first six knowledge-related stores that were on the app include Read at Ten, Qingting FM, and Fan Deng Reading Club.

At the same time, AI, big data and other technologies have further pushed along the development of smart voice boxes and Internet of Things, expanding the distribution channels for paid knowledge content. Voice interaction technology has opened a new gateway for consumers of knowledge products.

Market research firm iiMedia Research believes that, as paid knowledge users become better at differentiating and selecting the products they buy, it's crucial to drive their re-purchase behaviour through deepening or expanding experience requirements, encourage lateral re-purchase behaviour (buying content in different categories on the same platform) and vertical re-purchase behaviour (buying content in the same category on the same platform).

(translated by Moy Hau)