

Chinese Authors at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009 (A Selection)

Alai

Alai was born in 1959 in Markang, in northwestern Sichuan Province. Having started his career publishing poetry in the early 1980s, in the mid 80s he turned his attention to the novel. In his novels, the Tibetan author transports the reader to a magical, secret and romantic world. His most important works have been translated into English, French, Spanish and Japanese. *Red Poppies* appeared in German translation in 2004 (Roter Mohn, Unionsverlag). He was named Outstanding Author of 2008, at the seventh Chinese Media Literature Awards, for his novel *Distant Springs*, which was published in German as *Ferner Quellen* by Unionsverlag, in July 2009.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Annie Baobei (Anne Baby)

Annie Baobei is one of the most popular Authors in China. Her books have all been bestsellers, and have been widely discussed. The writer, who was born in 1974 in the province of Zhejiang, is a keen observer of the emotions between people living in large cities. Her works include the novel *Padma*, which tells the story of a Chinese writer who travels through Tibet in search of a better life while experiencing an identity crisis. So far no German translations of her books have appeared.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Chen Ran

Chen Ran was responsible for turning Chinese women's literature into literature for women. Her book *A Private Life* is an important record of the early days of women's literature in China. Born in Beijing, in 1962, the author is a representative of the avant-garde, and an important figure for

contemporary Chinese literature. Several of her works have already been translated into foreign languages.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Chen Jiang Hong

A painter, illustrator and author, Chen Jiang Hong was born in 1963 in the Chinese port city of Tianjin, and he grew up during the Cultural Revolution. He studied art in Beijing and in Paris, where he has lived since 1987 as a freelance artist. Since 1994 he has produced illustrated books, through which he has retold myths and legends from his home country, while opening the readers' eyes to its cultural variety and the beauty of its art. In his award-winning work Chen shows his allegiance to Asian art and culture, while reflecting profound solidarity with all the cultures of the world. In Germany, his illustrated books are published by Moritz Verlag of Frankfurt. They include, *Zhong Kui. The horrors of evil* (Zhong Kui. Ein Besuch in der Pekingoper, 2001), *The Magic Horse of Han Gan* (Han Gan und das Wunderpferd, 2004), *Tiger Prince* (Tigerprinz, 2005), and *Young Eagle* (Junger Adler, 2006). Chen has also achieved great international acclaim for his work as an artist. This has won many prizes and has been exhibited in museums and galleries in Europe, Asia and America. In 2005, Chen was awarded the German Youth Literature Prize in the illustrated books category for *The Magic Horse of Han Gan*. A recent release in August 2009 is *Mao and Me* (German title: *An Großvaters Hand*)

(Source: international literature festival)

Dong Xi (Tian Dailin)

Dong Xi is the pseudonym of Tian Dailin, who was born in the autonomous region of Guangxi in 1963. He is a storyteller who never loses his "happy heart". He writes about suffering, but not despair; about evil, but not heartlessness; and about joy and the tears it contains. He is one of those rare authors who have developed their very own narrative logic and personal style. Among his most important works are the novels *Life without Language*, *A*

Sounding Box on the Ear, and A Record of Regrets. So far no German translations of his books have appeared.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Feng Li

Feng Li was born in 1963 in Shenyang. She has worked as a journalist in Tibet, as the producer of a women's programme with the Chinese broadcaster, CCTV, and as a translator and editor. As a writer, she has published seven books, of which two have appeared in German translation: Ein vermeintlicher Herr ('Allegedly a Gentleman') was published by Ostasienv Verlag, translated by Ulrich Kautz. In August 2009, it was awarded seventh place in the Litprom's Weltempfänger List of Best Literature. Der Duft meiner Kindheit ('The Scent of my Childhood' – Ostasienv Verlag) is about to be published in time for the Book Fair. With a distinctive style and quiet irony, Feng Li tells us about everyday life in China – about the individual search for happiness, about difficult relationships, or about problems with the allocation of apartments – and she does so without conforming to the fashion of "westernisation" currently so popular among young Chinese authors. In 2004, Feng Li received a scholarship from DAAD in Berlin, and today she lives in both Beijing and Berlin.

Ge Shuiping

Ge Shuiping was born in the district of Qinshui in Shanxi Province in 1965. Her work is characterised by simplicity, literary dexterity and poetic precision. One of the top flight of contemporary Chinese authors, Shuiping writes without flattery, exaggeration or false pity. To date, she has published more than 40 novellas and short stories, which have won her numerous prizes. So far no German translations of her books have appeared.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

He Shen

An author and winner of many awards, He Shen was born in 1951 in Tianjin. He describes the life of the cadre in rural areas, looking at their situation, their behaviour, the particular way they think, their environment, and their habits and peculiarities. This, and the uniqueness of his perspective, are where his strengths lie. So far no German translations of his books have appeared.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Hong Ying

In China, Hong Ying is a bestselling author. She writes about the country's dark underbelly, and she writes without coyness, as in *K: The Art of Love*, a novel that spent weeks in the German bestseller lists (German title: *Chinesische Geliebte*). Now, for the Book Fair, Hong Ying presents her new book, *The Concubine of Shanghai* (*Die Konkubine von Shanghai*, Aufbau Verlag). This period novel – set in Shanghai, the 'Paris of the East', at the turn of the 20th century, when luxury and crime are rife – depicts the rise of Cassia, the proud queen of the city's underworld.

K. T. Hao

K. T. Hao has made a name for himself as an illustrator and author of children's books far beyond the borders of his native Taiwan. Among the awards he has won are the Bologna Children's Book Fair Award and the UNICEF Book Award. Many of his children's books have been published in the United Kingdom by Purple Bear Books. In the German-speaking world, 2009 saw the publication of *Das Zauberbuch* (*The Magic Book*) by DIX Verlag.

Leung Ping-kwan

Leung Ping-kwan (Liang Bingjun) was born in 1949 in Hong Kong. He has become known as a poet, essayist and storyteller – and as a cosmopolitan and a gourmet. He has travelled to such places as Tokyo, Berlin and New York

and writes about the world's cuisine. More than just a gourmet, Leung Ping-kwan is a literary person with a feeling for the story beneath the surface; he is a wanderer between modernity and tradition. He uses food and drink as an excuse for poetical contemplation on political topics, or about changing cultures and people. In 1991 he was the first recipient of Hong Kong's Biannual Literary Award, which he won for his book Postcards from Prague. In 1998, Leung Ping-kwan was a scholar of the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin programme, and in 2006, he was writer-in-residence at Saorge Monastery in France. A number of volumes of Leung Ping-kwan's poetry have been published outside China, as well as one novel and four collections of short stories. From September 2009, the book Von Jade und Holz ('Of Jade and Wood' Drava Verlag) will be available in German.

Li Er

Born in 1966 in Jiyuan, Henan Province, Li Er is a novelist whose work attempts to give us a realistic depiction of the changing world. The result is a profound, ironic observation of contemporary society. The most important books by this author, who lives in Beijing, include the novels Coloratur (available in German from August 2009, Klett-Cotta Verlag) and Cherry On a Pomegranate Tree (Der Granatapfelbaum der Kirschen trägt, dtv), and the short story Afternoon Poetics.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Li Jingze

Li Jingze was born in Tianjin, in 1964. He is considered one of the most influential Chinese literary critics who has discovered many newcomers. He is the editor-in-chief of the leading literary magazine, People's Literature, as well as the responsible editor for a series of publications entitled Literary Criticism. He was one of the first critics to look more closely at the new generation of Chinese authors. At the end of August, together with Jing Bartz and in readiness for this year's Frankfurt Book Fair, he published a German anthology of ten short stories by young Chinese writers with the title

Unterwegs: Literatur-Gegenwart-China ('On the Move: Literature in Today's China', DIX Verlag).

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Liu Zhenyun

Many Chinese authors have only a vague understanding of China's new, urbanised culture. Liu Zhenyun, however, seems very close to the pulse of China's cities. Born in 1958, in the province of Henan, his award-winning short stories examine life in the country's state-owned enterprises and in the institutions of China's bureaucracy. His novel *My Name is Liu Yuejin* tells the story of a migrant worker whose only possession is a bag that he stole in Beijing. This book is currently being translated into German. Liu's cold humour, the apparent ease with which he approaches the many aspects of urban life, and his sensitivity have all contributed to make him a favourite author among Chinese readers. When first published in China, his hit novel *Mobile Phone* sold 220,000 copies in the first month, and it was later turned into a film. Now, for the first time, one of Liu's books has been published in German translation: *Taschendiebe* ('*My Name is Liu Yuejin*', Dix Verlag).

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Lu Min

Born in 1973, Lu Min is seen as a promising newcomer to the Chinese and international literature scenes. Since 1999 she has published her novels in numerous respected Chinese literary magazines, among others, in *Harvest*, *People's Literature* and *October*. In recent years she has won several prizes, including the *People's Literature Prize* and a *Chinese Magazine Writer's Medal*. In 2006 she was voted best author by the readers of the magazine *Selected Novels*. She is also vice-president of the writers' union in her hometown, Nanjing.

Ma Jian

Ma Jian was born in 1953 in Qingdao. He lived first as a writer and painter in Beijing before moving to Hong Kong after a number of his works were banned in China on grounds of "spiritual pollution". In Hong Kong, he founded the publishing house New Century Press. Between 1997 and 1999 he was lecturer for modern Chinese literature in Germany, where, this year, two of his novels have just been published: *Beijing Coma* (Peking Koma, Rowohlt) and *Red Dust: A Path Through China* (Red Dust: Drei Jahre unterwegs durch China, SchirmerGraf). In *Beijing Coma*, Ma Jian looks at the events that followed the Tiananmen Square massacre, and in *Red Dust* he describes his own experiences when, aged 30, eight years after the death of Mao, he spent three years travelling through China. *Red Dust* is currently listed at Number 5 in the Litprom List of Best Literature, the *Weltempfänger* (www.litprom.de). Today, Ma Jian lives and works in London.

Mo Yan

Mo Yan's work has long been considered some of the most important in contemporary Chinese literature. Thanks to his creativity and his powers of imagination, Mo Yan has repeatedly evolved new narrative forms. Besides the novels and short stories which he has published since 1981, such as *The Sandalwood Torture* or *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, his output also includes screenplays and stage plays (*Farewell My Concubine*). His works have been translated into more than ten languages. In 2009, Mo Yan was made a corresponding member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts. This followed the award of an honorary doctorate in Literature from the University of Hong Kong in 2005. To coincide with the Frankfurt Book Fair, the following German translations of his work are being published: *Die Sandelholzstrafe* (*The Sandalwood Torture*, Insel Verlag, September 2009), *Die Knoblauchrevolte* (*The Garlic Ballads*, Unionsverlag, July 2009) and *Der Überdruss* (*Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, Horlemann Verlag, May 2009).

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Su Tong

Before becoming a writer, Su Tong followed his Literature studies by working as a teacher and a journalist. Since 1983, this intriguing storyteller has published numerous novels and short stories. Among these are titles such as *Raise the Red Lantern*, *Rice*, *The Opium Trap*, *My Life as Emperor*, and *Madwoman on the Bridge*. Su Ting is a professional writer and a member of the Jiangsu Writers' Union.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Tian Er

Tian Er is a novelist. He was born in 1976 in Hunan Province. He began writing in 1999 and his first publications appeared in 2003. As an author, he is seen as constantly striving to overcome his own experiences. He examines existential questions as well as his own identity, and the expansive scope of his storytelling includes past events as well as all possible present-day situations. The result of these efforts is a contemplative picture showing the complexity and richness of life. A sample of his work in German is included in *Unterwegs: Literatur-Gegenwart-China* ('On the Move: Literature in Today's China', August 2009, DIX Verlag).

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Tie Ning

Tie Ning caused a stir with her book *Big-Bath Woman*. In this novel, released in 1999, she depicts the changing perceptions of women in China, from the 1970s to 1990s. Tie Ning herself was born in 1957 in Beijing and has been publishing short stories and novels since 1975. Besides her many national awards, she also won an award at the Berlinale for her screenplay *Oh, Xiang Xue*. Tie Ning has been president of the China Writers Association since 2006.

So far no German translations of her books exist, although some have appeared in Japanese, English, French, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Nury Vittachi

Born in Ceylon in 1958, Nury Vittachi is best known outside China for his series of crime novels featuring the Feng Shui Detective (Der Fengshui-Detektiv, Unionsverlag), but other publications in the West include management books, science fiction novels and a literary magazine. Vittachi's father was forced to flee with his family from what is today Sri Lanka, because of his opposition to the government. Nury Vittachi attended school in England, then learned his trade as a journalist in London's Fleet Street. Since 1986, he has lived with his wife and three adoptive Chinese children in Hong Kong, where he works as a columnist and author, and publishes his literary magazine. After the territory reverted to Chinese rule in 1997, Vittachi's writing was banned, and he began working instead on the adventures of Feng Shui Master C. F. Wong and Jo McQuinnie.

Wang Meng

Wang Meng was born in Beijing, in 1934. By 1962 he was a lecturer with the Faculty of Chinese Language and Literature at Beijing University, and today he is the holder of honorary professorships and deanships with numerous universities. His published works since the 1950s include seven novels, ten volumes of short stories and several other collections of stories, essays and poetry. Books such as The Butterfly, Long Live Youth and Help from Lao-tzu have been translated into more than 20 languages.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Xiaolu Guo

Xiaolu Guo was born in 1973 in a small town on the Chinese coast. At the age of 18, she moved to Beijing, where she studied at the Beijing Film Academy and wrote five novels. In 2002, she moved to London. Both in China and later

in her new British home, she made a name for herself as a film producer and a writer. She achieved international success in 2008 with her book, A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers. She had already written the novel Village of Stone (Stadt der Steine, Knaus Verlag) in 2005, which was shortlisted for The Independent's Best Foreign Fiction Prize in the same year. She has recently published the novel UFO In Her Eyes (Ein Ufo, dachte sie, translated from the English by Anne Rademacher, published by Knaus).

Xu Yigua

The author Xu Yigua uses her short stories to take a closer look at life in modern China. Sifting layer by layer, she penetrates deeply into people's souls and uncovers the true face of modern life with all its troubles and pain. The author herself views writing as the art of asking questions, although at the same time she believes life does not stand up to questioning. Chinese literary critics are convinced of Xu Yigua's talent as a writer; they predict a successful future for the author, who lives in Xiamen. Her most significant stories include Jade Streetlights, Palace of Snakes, and Tiramisu. So far no German translations of her books have appeared.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Xu Zechen

Born in 1978 in Donghai, in Jiansu Province, Xu Zechen is a newcomer to Chinese contemporary literature, yet his work already shows the skill and the power of a great writer. In 2006, his novella 'Through Beijing in Double Time' was commended by the Chinese Prose Society as one of the year's best short novels, and in 2007 it won the newcomers literature prize. The novel begins with the release of its protagonist, Huang, from jail, who then pursues his dream of getting rich in Beijing. This entertaining and socially critical novel is being published in German, in September 2009 with the title Im Laufschrift durch Peking (Berliner Taschenbuch Verlag).

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Yang Hongying

Children and their education are Yang Hongying's priority. She devotes her time to writing for infants, children and adolescents. She narrates events from the children's own perspectives, addresses their feelings and uses their children's language. For example, the *Diary of a Smiling Cat* (*Abenteuer eines lachenden Katers*, Egmont Franz Schneider Verlag, March 2009) has already established itself as a firm favourite of Chinese children's literature in the 21st century. So far the author has published more than 50 books of fairy tales and children's stories.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Yang Lian

Yang Lian was born in the Swiss capital, Bern, the child of Chinese diplomats. He was raised in Beijing until 1974 when, like all young people of his generation in China, he was sent to the countryside for "re-education by the peasants". He worked with the state broadcaster, and in 1978 he composed his first "modernist" poems. Large-scale lyrical works followed, some of which drew harsh criticism from the side of the government. Since the massacre at Tiananmen Square in June 1989, Yang Lian has lived in exile. Today he is a citizen of New Zealand, but he lives and works in London. He was a contributor to the 1997 documenta, and in 1999 he was awarded the Italian Flaiano International Prize for Poetry. The German translation of his book *Notes of a Blissful Ghost* will be published in September 2009

(*Aufzeichnungen eines glückseligen Dämons: Gedichte und Reflexionen*, Suhrkamp Verlag).

Ye Yanbin

Ye Yanbin, a writer of both poetry and prose, was born in 1948 in Haerbin. He is seen as a sensitive poet, who observes reality and who can express his feelings in comprehensible language. His short stories and memoirs impart a feeling of balance, experience and clarity. Ye Yanbin has received more than 50 awards for his poetry. He is a member of the Chinese Writers' Union, and works as a professor with the Faculty of Arts and Literature at the Beijing

Broadcasting University, and is also editor of Poetry Magazine. So far no German translations of his work have appeared.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Yu Hua

With his sharp-witted style of narration, Yu Hua is often compared to such great names of world literature as Dickens, Stendhal and Hemmingway. After working for five years as a dentist, he began writing in 1983. He has so far published several novellas, stories and novels, including *Brothers*, *To Live* (Leben! btb 2008), *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* (Der Mann, der sein Blut verkaufte, btb 2005), and *Cries in the Drizzle*. His works, which have so far been published in more than 20 languages, have won him numerous prizes, including the Italian Premio Grinzane Cavour, the Special Book Award of China, and the Prix Courier International in France. In August 2009, his novel *Brothers* will be published in German. (Brüder, Fischer Verlag)

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Zhao Benfu

An author of novels and short stories, Zhao Benfu was born in 1948. He is a member of the presidium of the Chinese Writers' Union, vice-president of the Writers' Union of Jiangsu Province, and the responsible editor of the magazine *Zhong Shan*. His themes are nature, simplicity, goodness and beauty; his work displays a great awareness and respect for life, as well as for the existence and the general values of human beings. His characters and his descriptions of people's inner lives are highly significant aspects of his work. So far no German translations of his work have appeared.

(Invited by the Organising Committee for the Guest of Honour China at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009)

Frankfurt am Main, 10 September 2009