Will sharing bookstore become a sustainable model for future retail?

A spokesperson for the Anhui Xinhua Group said that in creating a shared bookstore, one aspect centres around creating a better service for customers, helping them reduce the cost of their reading activities, lowering the gateway to reading, and increasing the frequency of reading, while another aspect centres around maximizing the utilization of book resources with quicker turnover. Also, a sharing bookstore should allow readers, stores, and publishers to share information with each other, minimizing the wear and tear of books stored within, and bookstores and publishers have long shared responsibility for this issue. Currently, almost 100% of books are returned in good condition to the store, thus having very little impact on the bookstores’ ability to recirculate them.

(translated by Moy Hau)
2017 is the French Cultural Year in Germany. France also becomes the spotlight as the Guest of Honour at Frankfurter Book Fair 2017. Among many Guest of Honour celebration events, Frankfurth Book Fair holds related reading-tours, exhibitions, literary competitions in schools and colloquia at universities in 2017.

According to the Press and Publishing Industry Report by China’ s State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and TV released in July, France is one of China’s biggest books partners, with 110 rights sold to France and 1069 rights bought from France in 2016.

Children’s books is one of the hot categories for rights deals. French children’s literature and publishing are among the most remarkable in the world. Their creativity and vitality recognised globally. Many French children’s books ever since being translated into Chinese market, got tremendous success, which include My First Discovery, "我的第一次发现”, published in France by Gallimard) and Barbapapa (巴巴爸爸), written by Talus Taylor and Annette Tison, both published in China by Jieli Press, and DADA Global Art series (达达全球艺术启蒙系列”, published in France by Asta magazine and in China by CI-TICKIDS). Chinese publishers are also on discussion with overseas publishers to sell rights to original books before the book fair.

French Guest of Honour Pavilion dedicates a lot of space to children’s and youth literature and the comic. Besides, other highlights include talks on innovative publishing projects by French Tech start-ups, the Francomics Competition targeted for German schools, and "Books on” Exhibition Zone where global publishers can show their current titles on the Guest of Honour.

When interviewed before the Frankfurt Book Fair, many Chinese publishers expressed great interests on building business relationship or deepening cooperation with French peers at Frankfurt Book Fair.

As the president of the company Tan Yue points out, the company is the most influential publishing house in both trade and professional publishing segments in China. It has not only championed the retail market share for years, but also remains one of the most competitive publishing houses in China.

The reason behind this is multiple, but the most important one is that the company is professional, prestigious and sustainable. He also promises the investors that the company will continue to pay attention to its strategic partnership with other world-renowned publishing groups including Penguin Random House, Pearson, and OUP.

During the 2017 BIBF, the company once again drew wide attentions from the publishing industry with its 8 new joint editorial offices. To be specific, China Translation and Publishing House and Encyclopaedia of China Publishing House, both under the umbrella of the company, has signed contracts with leading publishing houses from seven countries in the “Belt and Road” regions and one from EU respectively. These moves, they hope, would give Chinese publishers a better chance into the foreign market, and vice versa.

(Continued from F01)

Since 2015, China Publishing & Media Journal has been collaborating with international organizations including The Bookseller magazine from the UK, German Book Information Center in Beijing, and Books + Publishing magazine from Australia to release the annual report of International Publishing Trends. This year, the cooperation has been enlarged to that with Pace University of the United States, and Beijing Normal University Institute of Publishing Science, to present the report.

As to the size of publishing market in 2016, books and journals all included, the US one shrank 5.1 percent from 2015 to $26.24 billion (about 175.5 billion yuan) in terms of income; Chinese market increased 0.3 percent of income to 102.6 billion yuan; Japan dropped 3.5 percent to 1.54 trillion yen (about 94.46 billion yuan); Germany increased 1 percent to 9.28 billion euro (about 73.12 billion yuan); the UK increased 7 percent to 4.8 billion pound (about 41.4 billion yuan); France increased 4.25 percent to 2.84 billion euro (about 22.38 billion yuan); and Russia has a market worth 55.92 billion ruble (about 6.35 billion yuan). The figures are based on those released by trade organizations from those countries.

China now has a bigger market than Japan, and ranked second among the seven world’s biggest and strongest publishing countries.

Chinese publishing embraced the first ever “paying for knowledge share” year. There are 50 million users willing to pay for quality content.

In 2016, the textbooks of liberal arts for elementary education has returned to be compiled and edited by Ministry of Education, which will further cause a shuffle of the educational market.

While the market for print books tended to be stabilized, more readers choose reading on different screens (like smart phones, kindle, iPads and other e-readers) to kill their fragmented time.

Innovation is not just technology

Publishers need to be agile and responsive, which can mean balancing different business models with shifting demand.

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“Publishers need to be agile and responsive, which can mean balancing different business models with shifting demand.”

Protecting all stakeholders

In many cases, during the process of providing tools and services to authors, publishers assume the same risks as writers. Underpinning this relationship is copyright, an indispensable legal instrument that protects the rights of creators and publishers. Publishers remain concerned about piracy and its ability to undermine the fundamentals of the publishing industry.

The absence of a good framework for intellectual property rights, investment and innovation diminish, which endangers quality publishing.

The IPA’s activities are focused on finding the right balance of copyright in order for the framework to continue to work for all stakeholders in the digital era.

A good example of this is the Marrakesh Treaty, which ensures that books are available in accessible formats for people with visual disabilities. The IPA has taken a leadership role in the implementation of this treaty and in supporting publisher-led capacity programmes, such as the Accessible Books Consortium.

(Continued on P11)
Publishers with a tradition of innovation underpin German market

The German Publishers and Booksellers Association, i.e. Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, is the world’s only comprehensive trade association that serves the production, retail and wholesale of books. Exactly because of its uniqueness, the Börsenverein has more opportunities of achieving the win-win situation in the field of both economic and cultural politics through internal cooperation and promotion. In Germany, publishers are an integral part of an open and diverse society. They open up the market for intellectual properties and their role as both the communicators of culture and the creators of economic values is vital. As in other part of the world, publishers are the pioneers in the world of knowledge. They materialise the zeitgeist and the original text, making it accessible to the readers. Even in the digital age, publishers do not lose their function as the pioneer of culture and knowledge.

The book industry in Germany has a stream of innovations and creations, as well as a rich tradition. The German bookselling industry remains stable in our era of major media transformation. Today, more than two-thirds of bookshops in Germany also sell books online, and this figure continues to grow. The total bookselling revenue in Germany reached €9.28 billion in 2016, and the share of digital revenue is growing. Brick and mortar bookshops remained the industry’s largest distribution channel, gathering revenues of €4.39 billion, that is 0.8 percent less than in 2015. The shops’ share of the overall market dropped from 48.2 to 47.3 percent, while those Internet revenues jumped 5.3 percent. This took the revenue share of Internet business up to 18.2 percent, over 2015’s 17.4 percent. And this represents some €1.69 billion. The overall picture is that, the first five months of 2017 saw a slight drop (1.6 percent) in the revenue of brick and mortar bookshops in the relatively stable market (the total revenue dropped by 0.3 percent). Although declining customer footfall in the retail sector brought fewer buyers into bookshops, those customers bought more titles per capita and even spent more money on books.

The consumer market (excluding academic books and textbooks) in Germany saw its number of consumers decrease a little to 30.8 million, but the total of book purchases increases steadily, from 11.5 titles in 2015 to 12.2 titles in 2016. In the meantime, consumers on average spend €134 on books, that is roughly a 10 percent increase from last year and a 2.6 percent increase per title.

The Börsenverein reports that the children’s sector had the biggest bump in 2016, a 9-percent rise to a 16.5-percent share of the market. Besides, school books and educational materials jumped 6.1 percent, reaching a market share of 10.9 percent. The traditionally largest share of the market, fictions only went down by 0.5 percent to 31.5 percent. Non-fictions, on the other hand, dropped 2.7 percent after years of increase to 9.8 percent.

Translation books had a much more significant presence in the market share of new titles. In 2016, the German book market imported 9882 titles, representing a 13.6 percent in all new books. The major impetus behind this is the translation of fictions. The German book rights selling has been stable, with a total number of 7310 titles, in which children’s books are the main components. China has championed the list of countries that imported most German books for six years in 2016, importing 1425 titles, far surpassing the English speaking and Spanish speaking regions that ranked the second and the third.

“Internet +” is a familiar concept of development to the Chinese people, and China has amazed the world with her many innovations. From last year, the Frankfurt Book Fair has introduced a brand new section of “Art +”, providing a convenient platform for the collaboration of art publishing and media. I sincerely invite my fellow publishers in China to join us in the “Art +” exhibition located in the 4.1 section of the Frankfurt Book Fair. I believe in there you will not only be able to use your imagination, but also see the bright future of book publishing industry.

(Translated by Xiao Jianpeng)

Entrepreneurial, outward-looking, innovative spirits push UK market to grow

2016 was a difficult year for the United Kingdom. The unexpected referendum result sent the pound “into a dizzying decline, created consternation among politician of all parties, and generated uncertainty in businesses and with general public. This combined with the terrible events around the world and a strange new presidential regime in the United States might have been expected to undermine the UK’s publishing industry. It did not.

Overall book and journal sales (including the ever more important digital elements) rose 7% (inflation in the UK was close to zero, so this is real growth) to £4.8 billion.

Highlights include continuing strong growth in Children’s books with British authors showing yet again their appeal not just in the home market but across the globe. Within the Children’s books area there is, of course, Harry Potter whose appeal and product range know no bounds.

Export sales, particularly to East and South Asia and USA showed remarkable growth. Sales to East and South Asia were up 10% to £231 million, and to North America up 19% to £136 million.

Journal sales rose 10% but interesting to note that income from Open Access Article Processing Charges reached £81m in the year, an increase of 46%. It is an indication of the flexibility and innovation within the STM sector of the industry.

Reported e-book sales fell slightly although there is some lack of clarity over the sales of self-published titles. The suspicion is that these titles have grown to some extent at the expense of traditionally published e-books. Nonetheless e-books sold a very significant £538 million and are a material part of all publishers’ activities.

Overall digital sales increased by 6% to £1.7 billion and account for 35% of total revenues. Within which, ebook sales were down by 3% to £538 million continuing a trend seen for the first time last year. This was in large part down to a 17% drop in the total consumer ebook market to £204 million. Total consumer audio downloads continued to perform well up by a further 28% to £16 million. Total sales of academic/professional digital books were up by 6% to £277 million.

Alongside the numbers the industry has also had a good year in working with other organisations to promote high levels of literacy, improve educational standards in schools, address issues of diversity in the workplace, fight copyright piracy, support research an development, and encourage academic and literary freedom.

2017 has fared well in spite of all the challenges.

(Translated by Moy Hau)
China’s Press and Publishing Industry Report 2016 reveals: growing scale and more reprint titles

Wen Dong

According to the Press and Publishing Industry Report 2016, which was released by China’s State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television in July 2017, Chinese publishing industry presented such trends as the following, in year 2016:

In 2016, publishers on the Chinese mainland have released 500,000 titles in total, an increase of 5.1 percent compared with that in 2015; the total print run was 9.04 billion copies, an increase of 4.3 percent. Among which, the reprint titles amounted 238,000, and the copies reached 5.12 billion, respectively increased 10.3 percent and 10.9 percent, while the percentages of reprint books against the total publishing amount have risen 47.5 percent in titles and 56.6 percent in copies.

Those changes are clear indicators that the constant sellers have taken up bigger portion in the market.

Half of the titles that were top 10 mostly printed in 2016 are about themes of China development and its modes, including Important Speeches by General Secretary Xi Jinping (2016) that was printed 52 million copies.

With children’s books, the fastest increase was seen and the total titles printed reached 44,000, an increase of 19.1 percent. The total copies of children’s books reached 780 million, an increase of 40 percent.

Contemporary Chinese literature like Ordinary World by Lu Yao, and children’s book like The Straw House by Cao Wexuan, were among the eight original titles that were printed more than 1 million copies in the year.

Digital publishing keeps increasing but traditional publishers took a small percentage in digital business. In 2016, the income of digital publishing (including online journals, e-books, ring tones, games for mobile phones, online education, online comics & cartoons, and internet advertisements) reached 572.09 billion yuan ($87.08 billion), an increase of 29.9 percent.

Among which, online journals earned 1.75 billion yuan, ebooks 5.2 billion yuan, and digital newspapers 900 million yuan. In total the three had 7.85 billion yuan, but they only took up 1.4 percent of the digital products.

The numbers tell that it still takes time for traditional publishers to be fully digitalized.

China has copyrights to 11,133 titles sold to overseas markets in 2016, an increase of 6.3 percent. 9811 titles among which were copyrights to print books, with increase of 10.7 percent, and 1047 were to digital publications, gaining a big-scale balance in trade surplus.

The country in all has exported $110.1 million worth of books, newspaper, journals, audio products, and digital publications, an increase of 5 percent. $30.55 million worth of digital publications have been exported, an increase of 29.1 percent compared to that in 2015, and amounted for 27.7 percent of total exported products in 2016.

Reading of digital and print contents rises. In 2016, the comprehensive reading rate of the country reached 79.9 percent, a small increase from that in 2015. 66.1 percent of the adult Chinese read on mobile phones, an increase of 6.1 percent. 58.8 percent of all Chinese had habit of reading in the year, an increase of 0.4 percent. But to the youngsters of the country, 85 percent of them had the habit of reading, an increase of 3.9 percent.

Online audio books has become trendy new way of “reading”, with 17 percent of Chinese would go for the listening of books and other audible contents.

(Translated by Mei Jia)

French market

Curriculum change helped French publishers to 4% uplift in 2016

Publishers’ sales rose by 4.25% to €2.8 billion in 2016 (€2.7 billion in 2015), with volume sales rising 4.11% to 434.5 million (from 417.3 million), according to statistics released by the French Publishers Association (Syndicat National de l’Edition, SNE).

However the figures reflect the boost from a major school curriculum reform, and without it the increases would have been a more modest 0.11% and 2.5%, respectively.

Revenue from paperbacks rose by a robust 5% above inflation, while those of e-books came to €234 million, accounting for 8.65% of the total. Royalty payments rose from €449 million 2015 to €468 million in 2016.

The figures were released at the SNE a.g.m. (29th June), at which SNE president Vincent Montagne called publicly for the first time for the long-mooted French book tracking system to be put in place, because of its helpfulness in tough times.

“The economic equation is increasingly difficult. Sales are stable, but the number of titles published and royalty payments are rising, and books’ shelf life is shortening. This means that everyone’s margins are shrinking.” But he added that negotiations for such a system would be complicated.

New French culture minister Françoise Nyssen, former CEO of publisher Actes Sud, also expressed her support for the tracking system, according to Montagne.

(0 source: The Bookseller website, posted on Jun 30, 2017, by Barbara Casassus)

US market

Trade sales were a bright spot in a dark year for sales

A 1.5% increase in sales in the trade segment was not enough to offset declines in the other major publishing categories in 2016. As a result, industry revenue was 5.1% lower in 2016 than in 2015, dropping to $26.24 billion, according to the final sales estimates released by the Association of American Publishers.

Trade sales (including the religious segment) were $15.9 billion in 2016, making trade the largest publishing segment. Within the trade group, sales from religious presses increased 6.9% from the prior year, followed closely by the 6.7% gain in the children’s/young adult fiction category.

The increase in sales in the religious segment was attributed by the AAP to the crossover successes of a number of inspirational titles. The gain in the children’s/YA fiction segment was due in part to the blockbuster hit Harry Potter and the Cursed Child by J.K. Rowling, which sold more than than four million units.

Adult fiction was the only trade segment in which sales declined in 2016, falling 7.8% from 2015. The lack of a new big book was a factor in the drop in sales, as was the inability of novelists to get media attention while the broadcast and cable networks covered the presidential election.

Recent format trends in the trade segment continued into 2016: print sales rose, sales of e-books fell, and sales of downloadable audio jumped from their 2015 level. Trade paperback sales rose 5.4% in the year and Hardcover sales increased 4.9%.

Sales of mass market paperback dipped 0.4%. E-book sales fell for the third straight year in 2016, down 16.9% to $2.26 billion. E-books remained the most popular format in adult fiction, where they accounted for 33% of sales, the AAP reported.

As for downloadable audio, sales rose 19.7%. Downloadable audio sales were put at $643 million by the AAP, more than double the 2012 figure.

In the education and scholarly segments, pre-K12 sales were 9.2% lower than in 2015, higher-education course materials dropped 12.6%, and professional book sales were down 22.5%. AAP attributed the lower pre-K12 sales to a down year for state textbook adoptions in large states. The decline in the higher-education market was attributed to several factors, including students switching from print to digital educational materials, lower enrollments, and changes in student purchasing behaviors.

The drop in professional publishing revenue was due to stagnant library budgets, AAP said. Sales for the higher-education and professional segments showed improvement in the first quarter of 2017.

The final sales figures are based on reports from about 1,800 publishers, which are then augmented by estimates from publishers that do not report to the AAP.

(0 source: Publishers Weekly website, posted on Aug 04, 2017, by Jim Milliot)
Children’s book market: keeps rising at a 30% growth rate in five years

Chen Lin

At BIBF 2017, China Publishing and Media Journal (CPMJ) and Dangdang.com joined together to issue the Five-Year Report on Dangdang’s Sale of Original Children’s Books on 27 August. Here are some of the key details.

The five years from 2013 to 2017 saw a steady and continuous growth on the number of children’s books sold on Dangdang.com, especially in 2016 and 2017, in which years the growth rates are both 35 percent. In the first 8 months of 2017, Dangdang sold 120 million copies of children’s books, one third of which are original works by Chinese writers. The report concludes that original children’s books have considerably facilitated the high-speed expansion of the whole market, and is therefore optimistic about the future of the sector.

The market of children’s books has expanded by an annual rate of 30 percent in China, according to the report from Dangdang.com. In addition, original works are expected to play a bigger role in the future.

Rumour has it that 2017 marks the turning point of original books. The report testifies to this: in the last five years original children’s books usually account for 30 percent of the 1000 best-selling titles, but in the first eight months of 2017, this figure rose to 40 percent. Moreover, 4 Chinese works made it into the most competitive TOP 10 list, the proportion of original children’s books has reached its highest level ever.

The most popular sub-genres of children’s books among parents and children are children’s literature, picture books and popular science/encyclopaedias. Among them, children’s literature has a share of 30 percent, including a 17 percent of original works. Its revenues have increased by 40 percent for four years in a row, suggesting the great momentum of original works in China.

Another noteworthy phenomenon is the revival of Chinese classics and traditional culture in the field of children’s books. The popularity of many television programmes such as “Gala of Chinese Poetry” (中国诗词大会) and “The Reader” (朗读者) has brought classical Chinese culture closer to the consumers of children’s books. In 2017, Chinese History for Children (写给儿童的中国历史) published by New World Press topped the list of the bestselling Chinese Children’s literature with a total sale of nearly half a million copies.

Picture books, the report says, offer another example of the improvement of original books. The illustrators are able to produce much finer pictures and the range of original picture books is much wider now.

An interesting point is that many picture books use both the Chinese and Western elements, for example they combine Chinese illustrations with foreign stories or vice versa. In 2017, original works account for 15 percent of all picture books (hardback) and 20 percent of paperback ones. The report concludes that Chinese picture paperback books attract more consumers.

As to the different topics of picture books, those focalising on the development of children’s personality and habit have increasingly been favoured by young parents. Two examples of these books are the Huanai Rabbit series (歪歪兔逆商教育系列) published by Happy Pig Bbofet (快乐小猪波波飞) published by China Children’s Press and Publication Group. Original picture book These Are The 24 Solar Terms published by the Happy Pig Bbofet (快乐小猪波波飞) won the Hugo Award winning “Folded Beijing” is included.

As to the number of books published, it is evident that certain publishers are always among the top ones, suggesting their strength in both the quantity and the range of new books. These publishers are People’s Literature Publishing House, Tsinghua University Press, Chemical Industry Publishing House, Children Publishing House of Zhejiang, Post and Telecom Press, and Publishing House of Electronics Industry. On the other hand, other specialized private publishing companies with good brand promotion and strong marketing strategies secured their share of the market and therefore should not be looked down upon. Examples are Xiron (or Motie) Book Publishing Company, Dolphin Media Company and GuoKai Children’s Media Company.

(Translated by Xiao Jianpeng)
Publishers talk on rights and further plans
中外出版人谈版贸与合作规划

New idea exchange is the key
积极交流是成功合作的关键

Franky LAU, Head of Dictionary Publishing, Oxford University Press (HK, China)

A symposium on bilingual learner’s dictionaries held in Oxford, 2014, participants from Oxford University Press (OUP) and The Commercial Press (CP), as well as Chinese academics, discussed why the Chinese-bilingual Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary has been so successful. The first reason on which all agreed was the strength of the partnership between OUP and CP, two publishing houses with a long tradition of excellence in publishing.

The CP and OUP have enjoyed a successful business partnership lasting over 35 years. We believe that the strength of this partnership is due in part to two things—our shared goal of producing products that are of the highest quality and the most academic/educational value, and the close collaboration we have fostered between both publishing teams.

Since the early 1980s, OUP and CP have co-published more than 60 print dictionary / grammar / linguistics titles over 120 different bindings in China. The partnership is regarded as one of the most successful cases in its category, as the products have won great critical and popular acclaim and gained the lion’s share in the market.

OUP and CP are leading lexical publishers in the UK and China respectively. We have picked the right subjects to help us reach quick and considerable success. OUP have brought new methodologies and technologies to the projects, which further enhance the efficiency and quality of the work; CP has provided total support in terms of sales and marketing, which lays the excellent foundation of promoting both the co-published titles and the OUP brand in China.

The relationship between OUP and CP has been beyond what we had thought about licensor and licensee. CP consistently bring in new ideas of production and up-to-date market intelligence, from trends to policies, so that both parties can design viable strategies and make wise decisions in due course. This is the key to the thriving collaboration.

Though the sales of print dictionaries remain surprisingly strong in China, OUP and CP have seen growing demands for digital products. A forum on digital publishing and business development was held in Hangzhou, 2015. The co-developed apps have received favourable reception from the market.

It has been a fruitful journey for both OUP and CP. We expect more and greater success from such partnership and probably from more different areas.

Time-tested collaboration leads to more amazing results
久经考验的合作带来出色成果

Wang Qi, Vice General Manager, The Commercial Press, China

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary and developed niche products of Oxford Series. With joint efforts, CP and OUP have made Oxford learner’s dictionary series an outstanding model of cooperation between Chinese publisher and foreign counterpart.

In 2013 BIBF, CP’s General Manager Yu Dianli met with OUP delegates led by Adrian Mellor, Managing Director of Asia Education. Both parties agreed to further strengthen the business partnership. From then on CP and OUP have jointly held staff trainings, strategic meetings, symposiums and book launches regularly. All these have fostered great collaboration between the two excellent publishers and brought a rise for both sides in Chinese market when the global book market is shrinking.

Now the collaboration between CP and OUP has been upgraded to a new level. During 2016 BIBF, CP and OUP signed the memorandum on co-publishing the Chinese-English version of Xinhua Dictionary and Modern Chinese Dictionary. Based on this project, CP and OUP will endeavor to translate excellent Chinese content for the western audience.

The Commercial Press do look forward to achieving more amazing results with our great partner—Oxford University Press—in coming years.

Inspire China’s children with the stunning books
用最美的图书影响孩子

Michael Neugebauer, Founder of Minedition, Germany

I feel blessed and grateful to have been introduced to CITIC Press two years ago by our agent Bardon China. And only 18 months ago I have met with the heads of CITICKIDS and their committed editors in their Beijing office.

Meeting them in person and seeing their commitment to beautifully crafted children’s books convinced me to step into a close collaboration with this publishing house. CITIC is big and has an interesting list of books, including international bestsellers. Their marketing is professional and aggressive (in a positive sense of this word), sales of last year were far beyond my expectations. CITIC owns a range of beautiful bookstores as well as airport-shops all over China.

But that was not what made me feel so confident and sure when entering into an exclusive collaboration agreement with them.

I was touched when I watched them all, including the president, looking at our books, turning the pages carefully, enjoying details of our artistically illustrated books, production and art, listening to my storytelling, that’s what I found so agreeable. And after all we found out that we share a closely related philosophy.

That meeting made us be sure and feel confident that this publishing house will be just right for a closer collaboration. We promised each other to try and see how we collaborate—after more than a year of collaboration I was not disappointed at all, I hope they feel the same about me.

Their production of our books is stunning, just like our original editions, their editing seems so carefully done to me when I see the judgement and the knowledge of their young and enthusiastic editors (somewhat it seemed they know more about my books and their creators than I do).

We both hope that children and our audience (between 4 and 99 years) will enjoy the books, just like we enjoyed making them. And to inspire children, open their eyes for beautifully designed things. Let their phantasy grow and get active themselves. And after all, contribute to a better world of tolerance, understanding and peace on our wonderful planet.

CITICKIDS—minedition introduces beautifully crafted picture books that open the door to the world—created by authors and illustrators from around the globe.

It is one of our goals to introduce Chinese artists, illustrators and authors and publish them internationally.

(Continued on F10)
Publishers talk on rights and further plans

Three publishers at CUP impressed me most

剑桥大学出版社让我印象深刻的3个人

After six years’ hard work, the English version of Art of China is presented to the world. When I hold the two volumes of Art of China, the recollections of the Cambridge publishers come back to me.

First one, the tolerant and liberal Stephen Bourne. It seems to me that Stephen Bourne follows the “actionless governance” principle to work as the CEO of Cambridge University Press (CUP). In August, 2010, on the reception after the Foreign Experts Forum held together by CUP and CRUP, Stephen shared his favorite red wine airlifted from England, talking and laughing with everyone. You could hardly associate this man with boring growth curve and stressful work. It is said that he overrode all objections on the Cambridge Chinese Library topic discussion to accept many Chinese Scholars’ work.

Then I wondered, if our Art of China could have a chance?

The second one, the brisk and professional Andrew Brown. In January, 2010, when Andrew Brown and his academic publication team visited CRUP, he saw the newly published Korean version of Art of China. He was deeply attracted by the fluent and beautiful words as well as the exquisite and precious pictures of the book. Andrew is a very experienced publisher and he decided to make the four volumes of Art of China into two volumes and recommended to the regular catalog.

And the Art of China could not win such a success.

(translated by Diana Gao, CRUP)

(Continued on P11)

Cooperation begins from a dream of China tour

合作来自一次中国梦之旅

■Karen Christensen, CEO, Berkshire Publishing Group, USA

ECPH and Berkshire co-founded the International Editorial Center (IEC) at London Book Fair this year. ECPH and Berkshire share the same mission: to offer knowledge for our common future, and specialize in encyclopedia publishing and academic publishing respectively.

In April 2001, during the course of editing the Encyclopedia of Modern Asia, Karen Christensen took her children, then 12 and 15, to China for the first time. After visiting Beijing, Xi’an, Urumqi and Dunhuang, they were deeply attracted by China. A few months later, news came that Beijing would be the host of the 2008 Olympic Games. Karen realized it cannot be ignored any more that China would play a very important role in the world. So she decided to help other westerners learn more about China. From then on, Berkshire began to focus on China and published series of China-related books. Tom, her son, began to study Chinese and has worked in Beijing since college.

The publication of encyclopedia requires large amount of inputs of effort and time, but with slow output. With sincere willingness of cooperation, ECPH and Berkshire have been working on in-depth discussion and finally made agreement on strategic cooperation and co-developed project. The two presses will put together to publish p + e readings about China and work together to publish p + e readings about China. It is said that he overrode all objections on the Cambridge Chinese Library topic discussion to accept many Chinese Scholars’ work.

Through years’ efforts, Encyclopedia of Chinese Civilization Series, a ten-title work introducing China’s philosophy, history, cultural relics, arts, science and technologies, etc. has been published by Berkshire. The digital version is also brewing. To fulfill the goal in the second stage, both ECPH and Berkshire agree that mutual visits of editors, more communication, learning from each other and stronger connections are necessary. So both parties decided to found the IEC in each own press to get better understanding mutually.

It took ECPH and Berkshire ten years to found the IEC. In the next ten years, we believe that the IEC would offer more knowledge about China for readers who want to be part of the world.
Publishers talk on rights and further plans

So fortunate to cooperate with a great Chinese publisher

如此幸运遇到了优秀的中国伙伴

Neal Porter, Publisher, Roaring Brook Press, Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group, USA

I have long been interested in the notion that great children’s books can reach across borders, exposing kids to cultures other than their own and encouraging them to think about the wider world. Over the years I have been privileged to introduce books from many countries to American readers and pleased to see many of the books I have originated in the US translated and published abroad. But until recently I had very little understanding or knowledge of the children’s publishing community in China.

My company is very fortunate to have a cooperative publishing arrangement with the great Chinese publisher 21st Century Publishing Group (21st Century). They translate and produce exceptionally handsome Chinese editions of books I’ve published including Philip and Erin Stead’s A Sick Day for Amos McGee, winner of the Caldecott Medal, our most distinguished picture book prize, and books by Laura Vaccaro Seeger, whose work has garnered two Caldecott Honors and The Boston Globe-Horn Book Award.

In November of 2015, Philip and Erin Stead and I had the opportunity of visiting China at the invitation of 21st Century. We spent several days in Beijing, meeting with our colleagues there and discussing the picture book process with the 21st Century editors. We also made a presentation at the National Library, then moved on to Shanghai, doing presentations both at the Shanghai International Children’s Book Fair and other locations. One of my greatest thrills was having the opportunity to meet with Chinese children’s book editors at a literary salon. In a plush amphitheatre usually reserved for storytelling we were able to tell our own stories about our respective publishing careers, discovering in the process the many bonds we shared.

What impressed me most, was the care and attention to detail given to the books published in China, in terms of text, illustration, design, as well as production values. While western-style picture books are a relatively recent development in Chinese publishing, it’s clear that great strides have been made and that books currently being originated in China are of exceptional quality. I’m particularly excited that our author, Laura Vaccaro Seeger, will have the opportunity to visit both Beijing and Shanghai this November, again at the invitation of our publishing friends. I look forward to many more years of cooperation and to the sharing of publishing knowledge with our good friends in China.

Macmillan Century (MC) is a joint venture company of Macmillan Publishing Group and 21st Century Publishing Group founded in 2012. During the last 5 years, MC has published the simplified Chinese version of nearly 400 titles for Macmillan and gradually become a popular brand of children’s books in China. We have learned from this form of collaboration that rights trading is not only the buying and selling of rights, but is also a chance for both sides to communicate in terms of culture, experiences, and visions.

On November, 2015, during the China Shanghai International Children’s Book Fair, MC invited American picture book authors Philip Stead and Erin Stead, the youngest Caldecott winners, along with their editor Neal Porter for a series of activities in Beijing and Shanghai. MC has published 8 of Philip and Erin’s titles, including the Caldecott Medal winner A Sick Day for Amos McGee.

During their meetings with Chinese readers, editors, authors and critics, Philip and Erin’s account of creating picture books and Neal Porter’s views toward the relationship between authors and editors were very memorable to the attendees. In the mean time, the American writers and editor were impressed by the passion for picture books of Chinese readers and the sophistication of Chinese children’s publishers. This form of communication has become bigger than just trading the rights of one or two books; it is an exchange of ideas and views that is beneficial to the promotion and understanding of foreign titles.

Another author from Macmillan, Laura Vaccaro Seeger, will come to China in November 2017. Laura has won the Caldecott Honor twice, and 8 of her books have been published by MC in China. We believe Laura will bring a new round of communication between Chinese and American publishers.
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Selling Children’s books on social media: has it already past its prime?

The beginning of 2016 witnessed an explosive growth on the sale of children’s books through WeChat accounts on social media. The responses and cooperations with many established publishing houses help to make it last longer.

In the first six months of 2016, many WeChat accounts with huge numbers of followers experienced an explosive growth on the sale of children’s books. From the beginning of the year, the number of WeChat account-based online bookshops which play as book suppliers had rose to 120, covering about 6,000 titles per year.

As many WeChat accounts upgraded themselves from selling books only to providing a range of related services and products including babysitting courses, publishers also investigated the possibility of more in-depth services that better catered to consumers’ needs.

In order to boost the sale of a series of picture books that aim at the English learning for toddlers on the accounts as “Ivy Dad”, Children’s Fun Publishing Company released dozens of online and offline learning courses for parents and kids. Some of these courses were offered at a small fee, while others are complimentary with the purchase of children’s books. The effect is immediate, And Children’s Fun Publishing Company is researching a more systematic approach to the development and evaluation of such courses that can be readily applied to any other mature products. They hope to consolidate the existing consumers by cooperating with both WeChat accounts and traditional brick-and-mortar bookshops. CITICKIDS took a quite different approach. Their focus was on the intellectual property of picture books. Therefore, they organised an exhibition for the Hans Christian Anderson Award winners and put on stage dramas that were adapted from picture books, such as Last Stop on Market Street (《市场街最后一站》) and Meeting Beauty (《遇见美好》). CITICKIDS cooperated with more than 200 WeChat accounts on social media this year, and they were divided into different sections according to the different markets. For example, in order to promote the sale of children’s books on art, CITICKIDS exchanged a huge number of books with the art museum tickets provided by accounts such as “Accidental Art”, “798 Hand Paintings”, and “National Library of China”. ATCPH built three separate sales teams responsible for the distribution through brick-and-mortar bookshops, traditional online shops and WeChat accounts respectively. In the first six months of 2017, brick-and-mortar bookshops sold 42 percent of the books published by ATCPH, while the figures for traditional online shops and social media are 43 and 15 percent respectively. ATCPH also tailored the sales strategy according to different distribution channels. For example, the online shops usually sell more picture books, while for children’s literature and schoolbooks, brick-and-mortar bookshops have the advantage of promotion, especially in September when students go back to school. In other months, ATCPH would change their focus to online retailers, as consumers generally do some research online before making their purchases.

According to Bao Fang, marketing director of CITICKIDS, the explosive growth of the sale on social media is still “quite far away”. The sales director at Children’s Fun Publishing House Ma Linguo also believes that the appearance of many bestselling titles on social media from the end of 2015 to the beginning of 2016 is only an early phenomenon of the rise of this distribution channel. With the maturation of social media, Ma says, WeChat accounts still have great potential of growth in the future.

Sun Jue

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(translated by Xiao Jianpeng)
Which will be the next bestsellers in China?

Based on the statistics of bestsellers in 2016, we can predict some trends of China’s best-selling books in 2017.

New installments in bestselling series and children’s books will recreate buzz

New installments in bestselling series are expected to recreate buzz, children’s books continue to sell well.

Six years ago, Chinese author Wang Wei published the book The First Book to See the World Pattern Better (《看懂世界格局的第一本书》), which analyses a number of world trends from economic and geopolitical angle, and has sold more than 500,000 copies. Last October, Beijing Publishing House published a new installment in the series The First Book to See the China Pattern Better: From Vasalos to Empires (《看懂中国格局的第一本书:从诸侯到帝国》), which analyses the form and direction of all kinds of patterns in China, and looks to have a good chance at selling well.

After publishing the extremely well-selling Logical Thinking series (“逻辑思维”系列), Beijing Xiron (or Motie) Book Company published the book I Know You’re Anxious about Knowledge (《我懂你的知识焦虑》) last December. Luo Zhenyu, an experienced media personality and broadcaster as well as creator of the Logical Thinking series, shares his all-new knowledge edge about the internet age in this book.

Gao Xiaosong is a famous Chinese producer of music, and the president of Ali Music as well. His talk show “Xiaosongpedia” has gained more than 500 million views on streaming video sites such as iQiyi. Hu- nan Literature and Art Publishing House (HLAPH) published the Xiaosongpedia series The Today in History Pattern Better (《晓松奇谈·历史》) which quickly became a market favourite. The book, in which Gao analyses history from his personal perspective, has sold more than 1 million copies. In January 2017, HLAPH published a new one named Xiaosongpedia: World Edition, in which Gao analyses with his personal perspective and classic cheeky, light-hearted tone all manner of historical events and geographic keywords.

Publishers are always working to create classic series for children. For this reason, they are constantly creating new versions of works by famous authors, and rolling out all-new books as well. Anhui Children’s Publishing House came out with the Magic Boat series (“幻影游船”系列) which describes the adventures of a 4th grade Liu Jiayi after being sucked into a dream world, in which a magic boat carries him through all kinds of adventures and where, through these adventures, he achieves personal growth. Jieli Publishing House last December published children’s author Zheng Chunhua’s new Little Dragonfly (“小飞虫系列”) story Yichong and Yahuang (《一只中和一只黄》), which talks about two twin girls who travel from the countryside to the city. The book tells the story of how they gradually integrate into city life yet face the peril of the unlicensed structure in which they live being demolished. How can they protect their house and their hard-won friendships with the city children?

More excellent literary works set to come

With a number of excellent literary works coming onto the scene last year, China’s scene this year is already set to receive a number of excellent titles.

In January of 2017, Jiangsu Literature & Art Publishing House published The Master of True Likenesses: Transmutation (《真相推理师:嬗变(华语推理不朽经典)》), A Classic of Chinese Mysteries which broke into the list of top-selling books on e-retailer Dangdang. In this book, after a number of murders, the team of experts goes in a different direction, but just as it looks as if they are about to crack some cases, the shadow of death suddenly draws near. Hu Yanyun, the author, is one of the best Chinese-language mystery authors, has conducted a large amount of research in forensics, the science of criminal investigation, and criminal psychology. His other novels also involve intense logical investigations that yield to startling conclusions.

People’s Literature Publishing House published a book of Xu Zechen, Sea of People in the Capital City (《王城如海》) in January. The book talks about life on all levels in Beijing after the controversy over overseas—returned Director Yu Songpo’s drama Antizens. With the author’s skilled penning, one is given a view into the real Beijing, under the layer of smog.

Psychological bestsellers focus on communities with niche interests

Another Me in This World (《世界上另一个我》), from Motie, is a self-improvement book about Yuan Zwen and Yuan Zhaoh, a pair of twin brothers at Peking University, who managed to lose a large amount of weight. They linked up with Kuaikan Manga to make new works, adding pictures and manga to their story for 70 clips about love, growth and companionship.

Educational Art Books for beginners are booming

Recent years, those born in the ’70s and ’80s are becoming new generation parents, and they are looking forward to deeply involving the great works of foreign artists, which has brought a new area to exploit in children’s art books.

In 2016, CITIC Press Group did incredibly well with their DADA Global Art Series (“DADA全球艺术启蒙”系列). Additionally, Jieli Press came out with the No Words Art Education series (“儿童艺术启蒙无字系列”), and the Utopia Imprint of Guangxi Normal University Press published My First Art Education Book (《我的第一本艺术启蒙书》), among other titles, all of which did well on the market. However, looking at these titles overall, most of the higher-quality art education books for children come from England, France, and other European countries. (translated by May Hau)
Online literature in China is moving towards the quality strategy, in order to upgrade further the quality of online literature, the method of integration and incubation with other industries is advised, which is the aim of the Online Literature Plus Forum held in Beijing from August 11 to 13.

The online literature industry in China has existed for a long time, and experiences fierce competition. It is already achieved a relatively high level of maturity, and there has been a clear increase in the number and quality of works provided. Because of these reasons, a number of sites translating Chinese online literature are popping up, and China Literature’s announced its subsidiary, Web Novel, going online in May of this year.

Research’s international division looked at 16 online literature platforms, and in February published its full report on the state of online literature in China. The report showed that there were more than 1.4 million authors on these sites in 2016, and that on men’s sites, male users accounted for 88% of usership, whereas on women’s sites, females accounted for 97.4% of usership. The average age of users was 28, with most being born after 1990, being single, living in second and third-tier cities, and most having an undergraduate university education. Topics popular on male-targeted sites include fantasy, kung-fu novels, books about working life in the city, science fiction, and history, whereas works popular on female-targeted sites are mainly historical romances, modern romances, and fantasy works.

Chinese online literature IP has already developed a complete industry chain. At the upper reaches of the chain are the copyright providers of these works (including authors and platforms with rights), in the middle are derivative operations (gaming companies, video and animation companies, traditional publishers) who after acquiring IP rights transform these works into other media such as games, comics, videos, online dramas, print books, and other derivative products, outputting products that have the IP of online literature at their core further down the chain. Third-party players provide IP management services, including rights management, payment channels, distribution of application content and other support services, making profit from derivative products. Online literature enterprises’ income model is no longer limited to subscription income, with full IP rights being leveraged for greater effects, and localised online literature sites seeing benefit at all stages of the industry chain, from to games, to video, comics and other services.

As for facing increasing competition in the online literature, Qiyi’s chief of content Wang Xiaohai predicts that in 2020, the online literature market will have grown from 2016’s figure of 4.6 billion yuan to 13.4 billion yuan, and the market of transforming this IP to other contents will have grown from 2016’s 468.9 billion to 836.1 billion yuan.

(translated by Moy Hau)
China Publishing & Media Holdings Co., Ltd.

Particularly Recommended Books

**People’s Literature Publishing House**

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ISBN: 978-7-5000-4319-4

**Mercy**
Author: Ji Ping
ISBN: 978-7-5000-4575-0

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ISBN: 7-5000-32233

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Translator & annotator: Yang Bojun
ISBN: 978-7-5000-9979-6

**Monsters in the Forbidden City**
Author: Ge Zhaoguang
ISBN: 978-7-101-07764-3

**Encyclopaedia of China**
Editor: Li Jiaxin and Cheng Gong are childhood friends born in the late 60s. They were intricately linked and fascinated. It’s a memoir modestly filled with innocence and traditional painting skills, 30 volumes involved, and prepared for 4-7 years old.

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China Publishing & Media Holdings Co., Ltd.,
focuses on “one resource, two platforms” strategy to enhance its internationalization. By the strategy, “one resource” means con-verting experiences across publishers, writers, sinologists and translations during the annual Beijing International Book Fair, while “two platforms” means promote the company’s brand and products through two platforms as the London Book Fair and the Frankfurt Book Fair. That strategy aims to broaden the reach and influence of both China’s Publishing brand and publications in the global market.

The company will put emphasis on the following aspects during the 2017 Frankfurt Book Fair:

- Expanding cooperation on basis of the Joint Editorial Offices for Chinese Content.
- By September, 2017, the company has creatively established China Translation and Publishing Center with the Bodleian Libraries at Oxford University in Britain, and China Culture Publishing Center with Pace University in the United States.
- The centers are designated to attract talents and conduct well-organized translation of Chinese titles, a significant step forward for the company. Meanwhile, publishers affiliated to the company have been making the same efforts.
- China Translation & Publishing House has joined hands with 7 publishers from countries that are involved with “The Belt and Road Initiative” to set up Joint Editorial Offices, including Romanian RAO Publishing, Hungarian Koszath Publishing Group, and Spain-headquartered LID Publishing (UK). Encyclopaedia of China Publishing House has respectively established International Editorial Center with Springer Nature during BIBF.
- These joint editorial organizations are based on long-term cooperation of both sides, and they decide to join the editing process and drive publishing topics that cater to the precise needs of local readers, in order to better develop the potential of Chinese titles in overseas market.
- Promoting opportunities of publishing cooperation with countries involved with “The Belt and Road Initiative”.

During the upcoming Frankfurt Book Fair, the Commercial Press, Zhonghua Book Company, and SDX Joint Publishing Company and many publishers from the company will negotiate about further cooperation coopera- tion and multilingual rights to their titles.

As the 2017 BIBF China Translation & Publishing House made agreements with Bulgarian sinologist Petko Hinnen as well as Hungarian sinolo-gist Gábor Hámor to publish their works in The Slavic series. Each book from the series strengthens personal perspectives and emotions in accounting the writers’ stories with China, which are believed to be more touch- ing and attractive to the international readers.

The publisher has been inviting experts from countries involved with the “Belt and Road Initiative” to write such works for the series since 2015. So far, it has published works by sinologists like B.R.Dospeck and Wolfgang Kubich, and has signed publishing agreements with more than 20 Chinese scholars from countries including Britain, France, Turkey, and Korea.

Enlarging cooperation with French publishers as France being the Guest of Honor.

As France being the Guest of Honor at the 2017 Frankfurt Book Fair, publishers at the Commercial Press and Encyclopaedia of China Publishing House will enhance exchanges with their French partners, and seek new co- operation and new quality contents, with an aim to upgrade quality of aca-demic books and art books.
Two major trends on monetization of China’s family education content

With the relaxation of the one Child policy in China and the shift in family concepts in China, educational authors have found themselves face with a serious need to analyse and adapt their content. As paid content has become more and more of a hot topic, family education content has expanded on all relevant platforms. Although family education content constitutes a very small portion of the entire intellectual service industry chain, it has a huge potential for development. Overall, content mainly comprises products concerning child–parent relationships, basic English, traditional culture, and picture books with accompanying recordings. Text, video and audio, as well as other formats can become products of knowledge that interests heads of households.

### Trend One:
Centring upon creating IP with high recognition in the sphere of family education and creating further products, as well as products centring upon experts and services.

Looking at the “Kaishu Story” app, it contains a number of stories in audio format targeted at different levels, for children from 0 to 6 years old as well as those relating to family education and maternal growth. There is a large amount of paid premium content, the price of which changes over time. The representative paid story ‘Kaishu’s Journey to the West’ contains a large amount of Chinese idioms and poetry, explaining one of the four great classics of Chinese literature in simple terms to children. After going online for initial sale in May of this year, this app has been downloaded 25,000 times per day, and seems to be on the path to achieving huge returns through its multiple channels of IP distribution. A number of mothers have created their own media channels which express their views on family education which are very easy to run, and have gained a number of fans. These mothers provided their own educational content for children, with these books they produced having great influence upon readers. For example, the WeChat account “Father’s and Mother’s Hall”, established from Huang Jingjie, and the creator of “Close to American Style Education” Tang Lanlan gained the admiration of parents through their excellent content. Parents follow popular personalities just as they would do with celebrities to purchase these family education experts’ books and pay to listen to the online courses.

### Trend Two:
In the age of User Generated Content, premium content is now more than ever in appropriate channels. For this reason, the process of the choice of channel by content creators is also a process of knowing products, and definition of target users.

Currently, Babytree, Fybaby and other family education apps have content that covers topics comprehensively from nursing to education, which has attracted a large amount of usership from mothers around the country. Traffic conversion is usually accomplished through popular platforms such as Himalaya, Lychee FM, and Xgged. Lychee FM has supported audio livecasting since October of last year, attracting a huge amount of usership, with the platform and broadcasters sharing profit through a coin-based system.

With it as the beginning, in recent times many exemplary broadcasters in the area of family education have started to select livestreaming platforms for their content about parents and children, but the listenership hasn’t been great. However, relevant industry professionals say that expenditure by mothers is still relatively concentrated upon children's books and other educational products.

Data shows that women represent 70% of the market of people that pay for content, and a large portion of them are buying educational content. They have a strong ability to learn, and have a continual need for the accumulation of parenting knowledge. Good tutorial content can target the needs of these people seeking childhood educational content. In solving the problems facing the industry, one can find a solution in determining which kind of content parents will enjoy paying for.

Expert in family education and author of best-selling children's books Lu Pengcheng believes that realisation of effective marketing of children's education needs both effective promotion from platforms and solid content from authors. When these two parties gaining economic profit and brand recognition, the users getting valuable family education kits, all the parties can get benefit.

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(Translated by Moy Hau)
Spotlight on twelve contemporary Chinese writers

Ge Fei

Ge Fei is the pen name of Liu Yong, author and professor of contemporary Chinese literature at Tsinghua University. He is best known for his South China trilogy ("江南三部曲系列") which includes the novels Kindly Beasts (《人面桃花》), Rivers and Mountains Fall Adrift (《山河入梦》) and Spring Comes to the South (《春天江南》), and for which he received the 2015 Mao Dun Literature Prize. The Invisibility Cloak (《隐身衣》) was published in 2012 in Chinese and has been translated into French, English, and Spanish. It is clearly the work of a modern master, which one can enjoy for both the intimacy of its characters and its clear-headed exploration of more abstract themes. The hero of The Invisibility Cloak (《隐身衣》) lives in contemporary Beijing—where everyone is doing their best to hustle up the ladder of success while shouldering an ever-growing burden of consumer goods—and he’s a loser. Well into his forties, he’s divorced, childless, and living with his sister (her husband wants him out) in an apartment at the edge of town with a crack in the wall the wind from the north blows through while he gets by, just by making customized old-fashioned amplifiers for the occasional rich audio-obsessive. He has contempt for his clients and contemp for himself. The only things he really likes are Beethoven and vintage speakers. Then an old friend tips him off about a special job—a little risky but just don’t ask too many questions—and can it really be that this hopeless loser wins? This provocative and seriously funny exercise in the social fantastic by the brilliantly original Ge Fei, is among the most original works of fiction to come out of China in recent years.

Liu Zhenyun

Liu Zhenyun, an award-winning short fiction writer and novelist, was born in 1958. In his work, he explores the clash between tradition and contemporary Chinese culture. His first novel, Tapu Township (《塔铺》), was published in 1982 and deals with the struggles of young people due to the Cultural Revolution.

Liu Zhenyun became increasingly well-known after his novels Chicken Feathers Everywhere (《一地鸡毛》) and Working Uni (《单位》) were adapted as a popular TV drama series in 1994. Several of his other books were also adapted for TV and film, including Cell Phone (《手机》), which became a blockbuster. His novel One Sentence Is Ten Thousand Sentences (《一句话一万句》) was awarded the 2011 Mao Dun Literature Prize and sold more than 1.5 million copies.

Sheng Keyi


Her novel Northern Girls (《北妹》), which looks at the life of a migrant worker, is based on some of the author’s own experiences, as well as those of others. It was translated into English and published by Penguin in 2012, when it was shortlisted for the Man Asia Literary Prize.

Since Northern Girls (《北妹》) was translated, Keyi has garnered significant attention in the U.S., with a write-up and review in the New York Times and an essay-length consideration of her work and the larger Chinese fiction scene in the Los Angeles Review of Books.

A Yi

A Yi is a writer who has known hardship. In the time he spent as a police officer, he encountered many corpses, each having met with a very specific and cruel death, which made them stories waiting to be told. An admirer of literature with depth and technique, A Yi’s own work sparkles with intelligence. In A Perfect Crime (《下面，我该干什么》), a teenage boy deliberately murders his only friend. He lures her over,.strangles her,. stuffs her body into the washing machine and flies town, whereupon a perilous game of cat-and-mouse begins. A shocking investigation into the despair that traps the rural poor as well as a technically brilliant excursion into the claustrophobic realm of classic horror and suspense, A Perfect Crime (《下面，我该干什么》) is a thrilling and stylish novel about a motiveless murder that echoes Kafka’s absurdism, Camus’ nihilism and Dostoevsky’s depravity. Yet this should not be understood as stealing from these masters—no more so than a high school student who has plagiarized his history paper, who also has a feeling for the real world of the taboo, the strange and the uncanny.

Hedgehog Song (《刺猬歌》), and You Are On The Highland (《你在高原》); essay collections Into the Wild (《融入野地》), Night Thoughts (《夜思》), and Heart of Fire (《夜火燎原》); and works on literary theory including Spiritual Background (《精神的背景》), The Spiritual Direction of Modern Literature (《当代文学的精神走向》), and Midnight Badger (《午夜来獾》). These publications have won over fifty different prizes at home and abroad.

(Continued on F20)
Yu Hua

Yu Hua is one of China’s most famous contemporary writers. Born in 1960, Yu Hua is the child of doctors and initially began a career in dentistry before turning to fiction. His major books include *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* (《许三观卖血记》), considered one of the most influential Chinese novels of the 1990s; *To Live* (《活着》), of which there are more than six million copies in print and which was made into a film by director Zhang Yimou; *Brothers* (《兄弟》); and *The Seventh Day* (《第七天》).

Yu Hua is part of a generation of writers who, beginning in the 1980s, reimagined Chinese literature. His novels, which began appearing slightly later, in the 1990s, are spare, carefully crafted, and often deal with the implications of the Cultural Revolution. Recent books by Yu Hua have boldly addressed contemporary Chinese society, including issues surrounding capitalism and materialism. Yu Hua’s novels have been translated into many languages and have received international awards and honors, including the Italian Premio Grinzane Cavour and Giuseppe Acerbi prizes and the French Prix Courrier International. In 2004 he was made a chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government. Yu Hua is also a prolific essayist and has contributed op-ed pieces to the New York Times.

Mai Jia

Mai Jia is the pen name of Jiang Benghu, who was born in 1964. Jiang Benhu is a hugely popular thriller writer in China. For 17 years he worked in an intelligence unit of the People’s Liberation Army, and this experience deeply informs his books, which frequently deal with spycraft and the interactions between China and the West.

In addition to his intelligence work, Jiang Benhu worked as an editor in television and currently holds executive posts with two Chinese literary organizations. His novels include *Decoded* (《解密》) and *In the Dark* (《暗算》), which have both been translated into English, as well as Plot, which won the Mao Dun Prize in 2008. Many of his books have been adapted for television and film.

Lu Nei

Lu Nei, 43, announcing himself as “one of the least-educated young writers in China”, seems to have profited rather than lost by a life that began in struggle. Since the age of 19 he held a series of menial jobs around China—drifting, exploring, fighting and observing. His interest in literature began while he had a job watching dials in a factory, and plenty of reading time on his hands. Born in Suzhou, that city provides common background for both of his novels, *Young Babylon* (《少年巴比伦》) and *On the Trail of Her Travels* (《追随她的旅程》). The first recounts the semi-faristol adventures of a young man much like himself, while the second is the story of a group of disaffected youth in a small town, who suddenly decide to take their futures into their own hands. Lu Nei’s writing is fast and funny. Young Babylon — already made into a movie, is now available in English, translated by Poppy Tuland, published last Sep by AmazonCrossing.

The famous writer Wang Anyi commented that Lu Nei’s novel on youth nonchalantly touched up on the topics of social rules, challenges and human psychology during a period of social transformation in the 1990’s. His work flows smoothly and natural—without suffering from stereotypes and hypocrisy.

Lu Nei said it is not an easy task for a writer to walk on the broad road of history. I need to find my own narrow passageway and see if I can use fictional writing as a tool to express what I want to show my audience.

Xu Zechen

Born in 1978, Xu Zechen 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.

His books include *Midnight’s Door* (《午夜之门》) and *Heaven on Earth* (《天上人间》), as well as *Running Through Beijing* (《跑步穿过中关村》), which is available in English. His most recent book is *Jerusalem* (《耶路撒冷》). His books have been translated into German, Korean, Dutch, Japanese, and Mongolian.

Zhang Yueran

In *Cocoon* (《茧》), Zhang Yueran achieves a narrative tour de force. Upon a most conventional scheme typical of much of contemporary Chinese fiction (the national-family historical saga), Zhang manages to offer a fresh, renewing work, both in form and content, that points beyond the narration of the experience of collective history and wider and incontestably universal topics such as resentment, childhood’s darkness, revenge, atonement and (belated) love. A book that signals the blooming of a younger generation of Chinese writers.

A pending issue throughout the narration is the echoes of the Cultural Revolution, one of the most sensitive topics in China. Zhang Yueran’s work is certainly the clearest attempt at coming to terms with the literary scene that has pervaded Chinese literature since the early 1980s, and its consequences still linger in their lives, as a form of transgenerational sorrow.

Is this strive to overcome the determinisms of the collective past, with its inherited narratives and memories, also the metaphor of the younger generation of writers, ready to assume the legacy and weight of their literary forebears but willing at the same time to move forward, to find their own voice, their own narrative? If so, Zhang Yueran’s *Cocoon* (《茧》) certainly is the clearest attempt at coming to terms with the literary scene that has pervaded Chinese literature since the early 1980s, and a most clear, solid and decided signal of the emergence of a new scene of daring and unbound-ed writing in China.