



China – Guest of Honour at Frankfurt Book Fair 2009

Tradition & Innovation – Chinese Culture in Frankfurt

In October 2009 China will attend Frankfurt Book Fair as Guest of Honour for the first time. As Guest of Honour, China's slogan is "Tradition & Innovation".

Publishing will be a major part of Guest of Honour events. During the Fair China will hold diversified publishing events fully displaying the status of its publishing industry and Chinese publishers' thoughts on the development of the industry in order to promote exchange and cooperation between Chinese and the world publishing industries. A series of events have been designed in consideration of the practice and experience of previous Guests of Honour as well as the reality of the Chinese publishing industry. The events will be composed of four parts: Culture Display in 2.500 m² Guest of Honour Theme Pavilion, exhibition at a 1.200 m² exhibition stand, professional exchanges during the fair and performances in pavilions.

I. China Forum

The China Forum covers an area of 2.500 m². The pavilion will be used for displaying comprehensive culture of the Guest of Honour; it is the brainchild of the world-famous designer LI Jiwei. LI is well known in both China and Germany thanks to his *floating space* installment (displayed in Nanjing, China in 2007 the "Year of Germany"), the *blue and white* seven-screen set for Deutsche Bank (co-designer), and the *inForm* installment for the Embassy of Germany in Beijing.

The design of the pavilion combines the essential elements of books, i.e., paper, type, book and ink, showing the history of books from inscriptions on bones and tortoise shells to publications in the digital age. It focuses on creating a visual space that manifests a poetic beauty unique to China. The design process was very time-consuming and LI made more than 3.000 3D plans. Finally he chose Chinese pictograph, type printing, rice paper, thread-bound book, ink drop, and some other basic elements as the core and proceeded from them to create a Chinese poetic beauty in the space. He successfully blends practical design with arts.

The exhibition in the theme pavilion consists of four units, from the early carrier of characters, invention and development of papermaking technology, invention and development of printing technology, to modern publishing. It follows the sequence of time and highlights such milestones as invention of papermaking and printing, and application of electronic technology in publishing.

Mediacontact

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The history of publishing and the development prospect and rich contents of Chinese civilization are clearly displayed. Precious exhibits include hemp paper excavated in Gansu which dates back to no later than 25 BC, the earliest-dated block print that survives today (Diamond Sutra, reprint), and Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (the 1903 edition). Every item will be crucial to understanding a stretch of history for example Southern Song Dynasty presswork that represents the budding of copyright in China and *Publisher's Weekly*, the first magazine issued in the P.R.C under a copyright cooperation arrangement.

The pavilion will host events like Guest of Honour's opening ceremony, handover ceremony, Chinese literary writers' reading event, demonstration of block printing and type printing, and publishing culture exchanges.

II. Exhibition Stand of China as Guest of Honour

Compared with previous years China has more than doubled the size of its stand. The design of the 1.200 m² stand corresponds with that of the theme pavilion, yet with its own innovations. The concept of type print is applied and the idea of "drop, character, writings and book" is used for the entire stand, emitting a particular charm and grandeur of traditional Chinese culture. The display racks are ingeniously arranged in a way resembling Chinese characters, perfectly echoing the Guest of Honour logo.

The Chinese exhibition stand consists of nine parts: theme area, area for key organizations, professional area, areas for digital publishing, ethnic publishing, Hong Kong & Macao, OCLCI and other organizations and activity area. For the first time exhibition areas are reserved for digital publishing, Hong Kong & Macao and ethnic publishing. Chinese digital publishers will mount their own displays for the first time and the three exhibitors, Founder Apabi, CNKI, SDL are all strong and representative organizations in this field. Hong Kong & Macao publishers will be made a part of the Chinese delegation for the first time, and Sino United Publishing (Holdings) Limited and several other publishers have applied for exhibitions. In the ethnic publishing area, selected ethnic literary works published in recent years will be shown. Presently 40 events are confirmed to be held at the stand, including news conferences and promotional conferences for new books, copyright contract signing ceremonies, seminars, forums, reciting meetings, etc. Rongbaozhai will also be present to show wood-block printing.

So far, 227 publishing institutions or more than 500 staff members have applied for exhibition. About 7.600 kinds of exhibits, including books worth more than RMB 870,000 will be displayed.

III. Professional Exchange Activities

During the fair, the Chinese publishers will, based on their scope of business, hold no less than 100 professional exchange activities. Besides, the Organizers of the Guest of Honour events will host 35 important professional publishing exchange activities in order to share ideas and experience, enhance understanding and cooperation, bridge China and the world publishing industries and facilitate Chinese publishers' going out initiative.

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The 35 exchange activities consist of four summits, 28 professional publishing activities in the theme pavilion, and three theme receptions. Though varied in theme, content, form and specialty, these international exchange activities are equally professional and of high quality. China will hold the Guest of Honour summit forums that are unprecedented in the history of the fair. Major forums include *Chinese and Foreign Publishing Industry Summit* where four world famed publishing institutions' representatives will discuss problems facing the global publishing industry centering on the theme of "challenge and opportunity of world publishing industry" and come up with solutions and suggestions. There will be also the Chinese and Foreign Economists' Forum where about six Chinese and foreign economists including Nobel Prize winners will come and discuss the Chinese economic growth and its interaction with the world economy.

During the fair, well-known Chinese writers will launch interactive activities with readers in Germany. They will introduce their latest works on rural, urban, ethnic and other subjects to give readers a glimpse of the latest development of Chinese literature and the reading habit and aesthetic values of Chinese readers. The highlights will be the 80 cultural activities attended by twenty famous Chinese writers, like TIE Ning, MO Yan, YU Hua, SU Tong and LI Er during the fair. For example TIE Ning will participate in a dialogue between Chinese, Turkish and Argentina women writers, "Who Are Reading Novels Today?". SU Tong, LI Er and XU Zecheng will participate in another talk between Chinese writers and German translators.

IV. Performance

Among all the activities organized by the Guest of Honour in the Frankfurt Book Fair, performances on the square can undoubtedly best reflect a country's national and cultural characteristics and close the gap between different cultures and peoples. During the fair the feature and charm of Chinese culture are shown vividly through both the square performance on a 64 m² stage and display of intangible cultural heritage in the 504 m² Guest of Honour tent.

During the five-day air (from 14th to 18th October) two shows (12:30 – 13:10 and 15:30 – 16:10) will be given each day. The performances will fully display Chinese national arts. China National Peking Opera House will arrange 30-odd actors for the shows in Frankfurt including ten opera pieces, Chinese Kongfu and lion dance. Popular actors like YU Kuizhi (Laosheng performer) and LI Shengsu (a performer of Dan roles and disciple of Mei school) will also be present.

Within the theme tent the organizers Central Compilation and Translation Press and Chinese National Academy of Arts will mount displays of highly diversified Chinese folk arts such as Tibetan Tangka, shadow figures, Miao's embroidery, kites, paper-cuts, new-year pictures, incense making and tea making. National-level inheritors of each art will be invited to give performance and teach the audience. There will also be artifacts on sale. In this area Folk Art Inheritors' Oral History Series, Stories of Peking Opera and other books will be displayed and copyright trade opportunities will be sought.

The two series of activities will focus on interaction with the audience. The Peking Opera performances will be coupled with "prizes for participation" to encourage more audience to

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experience the charm of intangible cultural heritage. The transparent backstage and tent areas will be well worth exploring.

Besides, the film hall will show about 20 excellent Chinese films produced at varying periods.

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