



CHINA – TRADITION & INNOVATION
Ehrengast 2009 · Frankfurter Buchmesse
Guest of Honour 2009 · Frankfurt Book Fair

Chinese authors at the Frankfurt Book Fair

Alai

Alai was born in the Tibetan area of Sichuan in 1959, and first wrote poetry before turning to fiction towards the end of the 1980s. His novel *Settling Dust* won the fifth Maodun literary prize in 2000, and made his reputation with its lyrical, poetic language, and deep grounding in Tibetan culture and society. In 2005 he published his second novel *Empty Mountain* which tells six stories set in the small Tibetan village of Jicun. In 1998 Alai became head editor of *Science Fiction World*, a magazine based in Chengdu, and over the next several years it became a circulation larger than any sci-fi magazine in the world. Alai currently acts as the chairman of the Sichuan branch of the Writers Association.



Anne Baby

One of a new generation of writers determined to re-invent themselves, Chinese literature and Chinese society itself. Anne Baby has given her readers a point of view on China and on themselves that belongs to the future. Intensely personal, her earliest writing embodied the emotional pain of disillusionment and anomie of modern urban life in China, while more recent works have displayed a gradual maturation both of style and theme. *Padma*, published in 2006, recounts a dream journey through China's ethnic minority areas that bespeaks a decision to seek rather than to suffer, and embodies the struggle of China's youth to forge a new identity for themselves amid the glamor and change of China's new society. Anne Baby's works have been translated into Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese, and an English translation of *Padma* is underway.



CAI Yihuai

CAI Yihuai (pseudonym Nan Shan), a contemporary writer, literature critic and PhD in literature from Jinan University, was born in the city of Shishi, Fujian Province, in April, 1962. CAI grew up in Sichuan Province and later migrated to Hong Kong in the 1980s. His works

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include collections of short stories such as *L'Amour in the Past*, *Emotional Net*, and *Away with the Wind*, collections of literary criticism *Narratives of the Hong Kong People*, *Ways of Imagining Hong Kong* and *Dust on the Mirror of the Soul*. He is also the deputy president of the Federation of Hong Kong Writers, the deputy chief editor of Hong Kong Writers and the literary examiner of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

CHEN Ran

No single writer has done more than CHEN Ran to restore female writers to a place of dignity and legitimacy within China's literary culture. Though not the first of China's famous female novelists, she reminded writers and readers that women were not only fit subjects of fiction, but fit authors, and today's growing stream of writing by and about women in China can be traced back to her and the novel *A Private Life*. *A Private Life* tells the story of a young girl, isolated from her peers, who finds some acceptance and understanding from a widow who lives next door and an affair with a teacher. An explosive turn of events leaves her bereft of mother, lover and friend, and she must struggle alone from the depths of isolation into something like mastery of her own life.

This novel marked both the maturation of the 'individualist' fictional style in China, and the arrival of feminism in literature. In addition to this novel, Chen Ran's collections of short fiction and non-fiction are all essential elements of the library of modern Chinese fiction.



DONG Xi

A remarkably idiosyncratic author, DONG Xi writes with a deceptively light touch – in his stories, tragedy and sorrow are told with a calm acceptance, while joy and happiness always conceal a hint of sorrow. The novel *A Record of Regrets* narrates the decisions and indecisions of CENG Guangxian, who hopes for nothing more outlandish than love, but always makes the wrong choice at the wrong time. The novella *Life Without Language* is the fable of a blind father, deaf son and mute orphan who between themselves achieve a kind of completeness. DONG Xi's sly narration conceals unexpected emotions and insights within plots like carefully manicured miniature gardens.

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GE Shuiping

Originally a poet of some renown, GE Shuiping turned to fiction in 2004 and has since then published five collections of short fiction. She is known as a writer of the north, not only in the settings of her tales, but in the particularly northern Chinese sensibilities that inform her writing: an easy directness, a powerful vital force, a stoicism that scorns both sentimentality and undue complaint. Her novella *Screaming to the Mountain* won the fourth LU Xun literary prize in 2007, cementing her status as one of China's foremost female writers. The harsh cruelty of this story of a kidnapped woman who is held captive for ten years before finally winning her freedom is softened and sublimated by the poetry that still marks GE Shuiping's literary style.



HE Shen

For all that HE Shen's fiction is limited in theme – he writes primarily of the countryside, and in particular of country officials – it is broad in scope. Under his pen, a peasant household and the mother at its head become a microcosm of human hope and destiny, and the story of a village official returning to the city for the New Year festival contains all the ambiguity and uncertainty inherent in the dilemmas of leadership. HE Shen's writing records the transformations of China's countryside, but more than that it records the transformations of the Chinese spirit.

KUNG Peng-cheng

KUNG Peng-cheng, whose ancestry is in Ji'an, Jiangxi Province, was born in Taipei in 1956. He earned a doctorate from Taiwan Normal University and is the former president of the College of Liberal Arts of Tamkang University, president of Nanhua University, Fo Kuang University and Eurasia University. He is also former chief editor of Chinese World Monthly and Hsueh Sheng Press, former president of the Chinese Classical Literature Society, the Chinese Martial Arts and Literature Society, the Chinese History and Literature Society, the Liang Shih-chiu Research Society and more. He is currently professor at Peking University. Knowledgeable in literature, history, philosophy, politics, society, religion and art, KUNG Peng-cheng has published more than 70 academic works. His literary output is mainly poetry, prose and essays of cultural criticism. Among several other prizes he received the Zhongshan Literature and Art Prize and the Resurgence Literature and Art Medal.

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LAN Pochou

LAN Pochou (Taiwan) is a fiction writer and literary reportage specialist. Born in Miaoli, Taiwan, LAN began publishing short stories in 1983. After graduating in 1984 from the Department of French, Fu Jen Catholic University, he joined the literary reportage team of the Renjian Magazine in early 1987 and began engaging in research, writing and investigation on the history of the people in Taiwan. He has served as editor and reporter for magazines including The South and Renjian, as columnist for Liberty Times, as politics and economics researcher for The Independence Morning Post and as editor-in-chief for the Chinese version of the colonial publication A History of Social Movements in Taiwan (1939) and A History of the People in Taiwan by China Times Publishing. He was the producer of the T.V.B.S program Remembering Taiwan and the editorial consultant of Biographies. He has won the Jury Award for Fiction and the China Times Literary Award. His novel *Song of the Veiled Carriage* was nominated for the Hung Hsing-fu Award for Fiction. His published works include the novella *Travellers* (1989), the novels *The Vine Entwining the Tree* (2002) and *The Birth of a Young Writer* (2004). His works of literary reportage include *Sunken Bodies, Exile and 288* (1991), *Song of the Veiled Carriage* (1991) and *In Search of the Obliterated History and People of Taiwan* (1994).



LI Er

Novelist and short story writer LI Er was born 1966 in Henan Province. Despite his modest claim to be a “not very prolific” author, he has published five story collections, two novels and approximately 50 novellas and short stories – most of them within the last decade. His work appears regularly in Zuojia, Shouhuo, Huacheng, Shucheng, Dajia, Renmin Wenxue, Shanhua, Shidai Wenxue and a variety of other mainland literary journals. Although LI Er is still relatively unknown outside of China, he is widely respected in Chinese literary circles and has acquired a passionate base of highly literate and intellectual readers.

He has also attracted a great deal of attention among literary critics; large numbers of articles, essays and reviews have been published on his works. His fiction tends to use stories of individuals and small communities to reflect China's larger historical changes, and can display astonishing creativity of form.

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LI Jingze

One of China's first literary critics to recognize the new avant-garde literary movements of the 1990s, LI Jingze continues to be one of the most authoritative critics, editors and historians of contemporary Chinese literature. He is currently the head editor of People's Literature literary magazine, and is known as a sensitive and participatory editor, possessed of artistry in his own right. He has published eight volumes of literary criticism and several more of essays, and short story collections edited by LI have been translated into German and English.



LIU Zhenyun

Many Chinese writers seek to make sense of China's newly urbanized culture, but LIU Zhenyun, born in Henan province in 1958, seems to have his finger more firmly on the pulse of China's cities. His award-winning short stories have explored life in China's state-owned companies and bureaucratic offices, but his most celebrated novel *My Name is LIU Yuejin* tells the story of a migrant worker who has his bag (containing all his worldly possessions) stolen in Beijing. LIU's cold humors, his broad familiarity with the many facets of urban society, and his modern sensibilities have made him a favorite among Chinese readers.



MO Yan

More than any other Chinese author MO Yan is well represented in foreign languages around the world. And with good reason – he is one of the great novelistic masters of modern Chinese literature, with a long list of ambitious novels to his name. His writing is powerful, visual and broad, dipping into history, fantasy and absurdity to tell stories of China and its people. Originally counted a part of the "root-seeking" literary movement of the 80s, it quickly became clear that MO Yan had a style and voice all his own. He is often regarded as the Chinese writer with the most potential to appeal to an international audience.



SU Tong

One of the giants of modern Chinese literature, SU Tong is acknowledged as a master dramatist and stylist, writing in a range of voices that include folk tale, historical epic and penetrating character study. His earlier works such as *Wives and Concubines* laid bare the emotional savagery that lies at the heart of traditional Chinese society, while later books, such as *Binu and the Great Wall* are retellings of traditional stories that bring a new humanism to time-

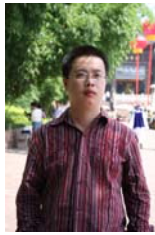
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honored tales. SU Tong's stories have been adapted to world-famous films, and he has been translated extensively into European and Asian languages.



TIAN Er

A great experimenter in style and theme, TIAN Er always seems to be surpassing himself. In a time when many Chinese writers seem mired in the self, TIAN Er revels in the imagination, and leaving himself behind. His novel *Erosion Belt* begins with a search for true identity, and descends into a dark fantasy of violence and secrets, in which the characters' struggles teach them nothing, but bring them closer to their fate. Still in his early thirties, TIAN Er has already attracted great attention and approbation within China's literary circles – with only a single novel and one collection of short stories published he has already won a large collection of literary prizes, including the prestigious LU Xun literary prize.

TIE Ning

Now chairwoman of the National Writers Association, TIE Ning was first known as a novelist whose portraits of women's lives gave readers a new way of understanding the interior lives of women and their place in Chinese society. Her novels, including *A Bathing Woman* and *The Rose Door* pioneered narrative techniques such as interiority and group protagonists, but more than representing milestones in the development of Chinese literature, they embodied new methods by which literature could serve to midwife the burgeoning self-awareness of China's reading public. TIE Ning's fiction has been translated into more than ten languages, and films made from her works have won awards both inside China and abroad.

WANG Meng

WANG Meng was born in Beijing in 1934. Already in 1962, he lectured Chinese language and literature at Beijing University. Until today he holds numerous honorary doctorates and deaneries of different universities. Since the 1950s he published seven novels, ten collections of novellas and several collections of short stories, essays and poems. His works *Butterfly*, *Long live Youth* and *Help from Lao-tzu* were translated into more than 20 languages.

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WONG Man Fai

WONG Man Fai, born in 1971, is a poet, columnist and literary critic in Macau. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Chinese Literature and a Master's degree in Literature and Art in Jinan University in Guangzhou, China. His publication includes collections of poems *Macau Muse* (a co-writer) (1993), *Therefore* (1999) and *My Lover* (2007), the collection of essays *Don't be Afraid, I Am Just Expressing My Feelings* (2006) and the collection of literary critique *Between the Lines* (2005). He also edited books such as *The Poems of the New Generation Poets in Macau* (1991), *A Selection of the Youth Literature in Macau* (1999) and *Interview with the Writers in Macau* (2006). He is now the deputy chief editor of supplement, executive of Macao Daily News and the vice president of executive council of Pen of Macau.

XU Yigua

Fiction's role in interrogating life and human emotions is fully realized in XU Yigua's works, which feature characters forced to address questions of life and death, virtue and ignominy. A wife begins to doubt her love for her husband after he fails to confront a burglar in their home; two jaded girls hoping to set the Guinness Record for time spent with poisonous snakes view their challenge in a different light after meeting an escaped convict; a country boy who wins through to his dreams of urban success finds he no longer knows himself, and is driven to violence. Neither XU Yigua's characters nor her readers are spared her cold pursuit of emotional truth, though both will find an unexpected gentleness in her handling of the human heart.



XU Zechen

Born in 1978 in Jiangsu Province, XU obtained a master's degree in Chinese literature at Peking University and is now an editor at People's Literature magazine. Despite this pedigree, XU's fiction is focused primarily on China's less-fortunate social classes – peddlers of pirated DVDs, migrant workers – and in his spare, realist style, lends some wry humor to their struggles. XU has published the three novels *Midnight's Door*, *Night Train* and *Heaven on Earth* and a collection of short stories entitled *How Geese Fly up to Heaven*. He has won several prizes within China for new and promising writers, and is generally considered as one of the rising new stars of China's literary scene.

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YANG Hongying

One of China's most prominent writers for children, YANG Hongying, is renowned for her fertile imagination and intuitive insight into children's hearts and minds. More than 30 million copies of her books and comic series have been sold within China alone and also have been enormously popular in Japan, Korea, Germany, France and America. In addition to fiction for young children YANG Hongying is also the author of fiction and non-fiction for older children, helping them in addressing issues of adolescence and maturity, filling a much-needed gap in social awareness of children's issues.



YE Yanbin

YE Yanbin writes primarily poetry and essays, and in his long career has not only authored nearly twenty volumes of each, but also served as editor for several poetry journals and head of the arts and literature department of a prestigious Chinese university. His poetry expresses themes taken from the Cultural Revolution, reflecting his own experiences as a sent-down youth, and later as an industrial worker in Beijing. After being accepted at Peking University he began writing poetry that reflected not only that tumultuous decade, but also the transformations of China's capital into a modern metropolis, locating the individual upon a historical line stretching from the ancient to the modern. His poetry is regularly taught in high schools and colleges, and has been translated into ten languages.



YU Hua

One of the great figures of modern Chinese literature, YU Hua began writing in the mid-80s. Relatively uneducated, YU Hua first began writing as a way to improve his material circumstances, and only afterwards discovered his talent. After a series of brutal, bloody short stories, YU Hua settled down into a spare storytelling style and produced a number of short novels (including *To Live* and *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*) that brought him true renown. His latest work *Brothers*, an ambitious tapestry of two eras of Chinese literature, represents a departure in style, length and subject matter from his previous work. YU Hua's writing is controversial, in that it is highly critical of modern Chinese society and culture, but his excellent storytelling instincts make him extremely popular with readers. His novels have been translated into many foreign languages, though his short stories and essays, quite popular within China, are relatively unknown abroad.

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ZHAO Benfu

ZHAO Benfu published his first short story *Selling a Donkey* at the age of 33. From that point on he has been considered as one of the masters of the short story in China. His long period of artistic gestation served him well in apprehending and fictionalizing some of the most fundamental changes in modern Chinese society – his portrayals of China's new urban age are second to none, and his memories of earlier times have led him to dub this "an earth-less age". ZHAO's characters struggle with the questions of place and identity, trust and dignity, swept along by the author's sure sense of drama and pacing. Within these tales of individual adventure, the larger tragedies and transformations of Chinese society are visible in the background, never taking center stage, but exerting a definitive influence on the fates of the protagonists.

ZHOU Mimi

ZHOU Mimi was once a script writer and editor for television and radio stations as well as managing editor of news papers and magazines and deputy editor-in-chief of a publishing house. In 1980 she began writing in her spare time and won several youth writing awards and municipal literary prizes. Her works have been published within China and abroad, and to date she has published more than 60 books as well as many children's television scripts and programs. Beginning in 1993 she has served on multiple occasions as a judge for the Youth Literature Prize, the Chinese Literary Prize, the Hong Kong Elementary and Middle School Story-Writing Competition and the Biennial Chinese Literary Prize as well as being a judging panel member for the Bing Xin Childrens Publication Prize. Her works have been included in educational materials for elementary and middle school students. ZHOU Mimi is now the vice-head of Hong Kong Writers, head editor of the bi-monthly Hong Kong Writer, vice-head of the Hong Kong Childrens Art and Literature Association, a judge and consultant to the Literary Committee of the Hong Kong Art Development Office and an educational committee member of the Hong Kong End Child Sexual Abuse Foundation.

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