



# **PEN for Freedom**

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## CONTENTS

1. [Preparations for ICPC Founding](#) (memoir) *By Bei Ling*
2. [ICPC Origin and Development](#) (history) *By Yu ZHANG*
3. [Broad Road Ahead of A Decade of Pioneering Hardship](#) (speech)  
*By Tienchi Liao*
4. [ICPC's Road of A Decade](#) (essay) *By MA Jian*
5. [Born for Literature, Fighting for Freedom](#)(essay) *By LIU Yimin*
6. [A Decade of ICPC](#) (essay) *By WANG Jianhui*
7. [ICPC, Fire in the Wilderness](#) (essay) *By LU Wen*
8. [Reminiscence and Thoughts](#) (memoir) *By Ye Huo*
9. [Random Memories and Thoughts](#) (essay) *By Ah Zhong*
10. [Founding History of PEN International](#) (history) *By Yu ZHANG*

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## **Preparations for ICPC Founding**

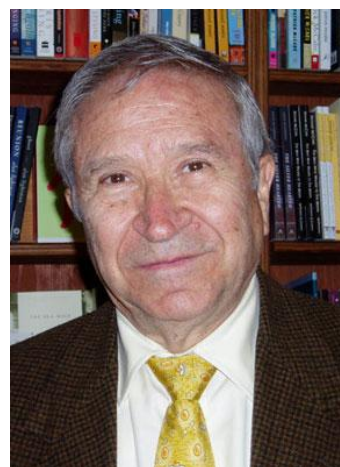
*By Bei Ling*



### **1, The Origins of ICPC Creation**

On August 27, 2000, I, as a Chinese citizen imprisoned for “illegal publication” of a literary magazine, was sent directly to a flight in Beijing to “deport” for exile in USA according to an agreement between the Chinese and US governments.

In October 2000, I went to Los Angeles to receive the PEN US West Center’s 2000 Freedom to Write Award. Mr. Homero Aridjis, the President of International PEN, and his wife attended the awarding ceremony. Mr. Aridjis, a Hispanic Mexican poet of 60s, had a talent of a politician and diplomat like many Latin American writers such as Pablo Neruda and Mario Vargas Llosa, the laughing strategists. Another goal of his trip was to discuss with me about establishing a PEN center of Chinese writers in exile. During next two days, at the awarding dinner party and in the empty hotel at city center, Mr. Aridjis and some board members of PEN US West continuously persuaded me that my own experiences of arrest and detention in August 2000 had demonstrated the great urgency of creating a PEN center of Chinese writers in exile.



*Mr. Homero Aridjis*

Based on my personal experiences, I told them that there had been a lot of controversial resentments among the overseas Chinese writers, but little communication between the writers with a strong political dissidence and others disliking the politics. Even among the exiled writers, there were not only the former underground writers but also some former government-sponsored writers, i.e., members of the official Chinese Writers Association, whose experiences and literary tastes varied greatly. It was extremely difficult to establish a group of those writers.

In the sense of morality and responsibility, however, I felt difficult to decline the idea. When I had been imprisoned for literature, Mr. Aridjis was among those issuing an open letter to Jiang Zemin, the President of China for my release, and PEN US West was among the centers calling for rescuing me. How could I decline them?

I hesitated for a long time. I had never taken part in any organization of writers. A writer is completely an individual, who should be neither partisan nor grouping. If I would go around creating a PEN club

of writers, it would appear to be contrary to my principle of conduct. In my mind, an organization of writers should be based on a literary journal or publishing house as its core. Although it could express its stand on the public affairs or major humanity events, it should usually be focus on literary seminars and publications.

Then I was thinking that when a writer or literary editor, for his text, writing, expression, or publication, was subject by the state to the censorship, threatening, banning, or even imprisonment, a fellow writer writing in Chinese (regardless of personal relationship or political affinity) should not be silent, nor indifferent, just waiting for the international writers and their organizations to protest publicly, or just waiting for the international communities or foreign governments to intervene for rescue. If we would have an organization of writers to speak up, which should ordinarily impose no constraints on writers (To a writer, nothing is more important than freedom), yet in the event that a writer's work was banned, or even that a writer himself was persecuted, no matter what country it might come from, in addition to the protests from individual writers, we would have an organization capable to voice out, in cooperation with International PEN and other international literary agencies, to support and rescue the writer, and to provide with refuge, living and writing conditions. Solzhenitsyn's case in Soviet Union in 1960s, Brodsky's in 1970s, Havel's in Czechoslovakia in 1970s-1980s, Rushdie's case including a fatwā against him issued by Iran's theocratic leader Khomeini in 1989, and even my own arrest in Beijing in August all had demonstrated the solidarity and assistance of would literary community and International PEN, and indicated the necessity and urgency to create an PEN center of independent Chinese writers. It was too hard for me to refuse it, a responsibility difficult to avoid after I had been rescued from jail.

After I got agreement from Meng Lang, a poet who had work with me in editing *Tendency* magazine for many years, and now who was willing to help me with preparation for founding a PEN center, after I had communicated and discussed with Liu Xiaobo to have got his agreement and participation, we confirmed a premise to found a PEN center, i.e., only if the writers beyond the official system of Chinese Writers Association, were also eligible to join it, I was willing to stand out to prepare the founding of such a PEN center. Strictly speaking, it was because Liu Xiaobo asked



*Bei Ling and Liu Xiaobo in July 2000*

me not to shirk this historical responsibility and also because he promised to persuade the independent writers within China mainland to become PEN members that I really started to prepare the founding work of the independent Chinese PEN. Only because of the agreement and participation of the underground writers and dissident intellectuals within China mainland, creating a PEN center makes sense.

Early in 2001, I notified Mr. Aridjis and some board members of PEN US West that I would give a try to prepare the founding of a PEN center of independent Chinese writers.

My studio apartment in the artist area, South End of Boston, and Meng Long's residence at Chinese Culture Institute, a walking distance of 10 minutes from mine, became the places of preparation and birth of the independent Chinese PEN.

In early spring, Meng Lang and I respectively made telephone communications with a number of overseas Chinese writers, exiled writers and scholars in Europe and USA. The preparation work got generously commitments and supports from the exiled writers in USA, including Liu Binyan, former Vice-president of the Chinese Writers Association; Zheng Yi, former Vice-president of the Shanxi Provincial Writers' Association; Yu Haocheng, former director of the China Qunzhong Publishing House, and Guo Luoji, former Marxist theorist. Among those who agreed to join us were also American-Chinese writer Han Hsiu, British-Chinese writers and poets Ma Jian, Hu Dong and Yang Lian, Swedish-Chinese writer Chen Maiping, and Danish-Chinese Feng Jun, etc. In short, the founding members included the writers, scholars and journalists in exile and the independent writers and intellectuals in China.

In March 2001, I sent the copies of an initiative letter to 40+ Chinese writers and scholars over the world to propose the creation of an overseas PEN center for the independent Chinese Writers. Then, Meng Lang and I telephoned one by one to invite those who agreed with PEN's aims to join us.

Chen Maiping, Meng Lang and I made a number of telephone discussions on both of Chinese and English names of the new PEN center. After I discussed several times with Mrs. Jane Spender, Administrative Secretary of International PEN, its English translation was finally accepted as INDEPENDENT CHINESE PEN CENTRE (ICPC).

As the writers were living in different countries, Meng Lang and I had to work hard to make telephone conversations with them day and night while counting the time difference. At that time, international calls were rather expensive, but we still had to start with greetings at first, even chatting a while before approaching our formal subject. Most of the writers did not know

the constitution and function of International PEN, nor understand why we should set up a PEN center. Therefore, Meng Lang and I had to explain this and that one by one, and make repeated persuasions, because the writers, especially those former underground writers in China who had disgust with the official organizations such as the Writers Associations and the Federations of Literary and Art Circles, might not recognize ICPC under preparation.

According to the regulations of International PEN, a new center should have at least 20 founding members and submit a written application for its membership to receive its acknowledgement. The curriculum vitae for each of founding members had to be translated into English for International PEN's examination and approval. The preparation for founding ICPC took time. Meng Lang and I kept calling and emailing to each of the founding members for their resumes. During that period, Miss Ann Huss, an assistant professor at Department of Chinese Literature, Wellesley College, helped me a lot, with writing all of English letters to International PEN for discussion on the preparation progress, and translating some of the resumes. After supplementing the membership information several times, a list of 31 primary founding members and documents with their signatures were finally acknowledged by International PEN headquarter on July 23, 2001. In August 2001, International PEN notified that ICPC's application for accreditation to International PEN had been included in the agenda of the International PEN Congress to be held in London in November.

ICPC founding members include the novelists, poets, scholars, publishers and literary editors exiled in Europe and USA, as well as the underground writers and dissident intellectuals in China. Among 31 primary founding members, there are also the former President of Shanxi Provincial Film Association and novelist Zheng Yi, Sweden-based novelist Chen Maiping and essayist Mo Li, UK-based novelist Ma Jian and poets Yang Lian and Hu Dong, Danmark-based poet Feng Jun, US-based scholar Wu Ningkun, Guo Luoji and Yu Haocheng, and novelist Han Hsiu, and China-based Liu Xiaobo and his wife Liu Xia, etc.

Soon, Taiwan poet Lo Fu, scholars exiled in Germany Zhong Weiguang and Huan Xuewen, and others also joined ICPC. At the same time, Meng Lang and I also made several phone calls to Shanghai-based poet Ah Zhong and other underground writers, and received their agreements and supports. In China, Liao Yiwu joined ICPC, and Liu Xiaobo was also engaged in the development of domestic membership, promoting writers Yu Jie and Ren Bumei to join us by the end of 2001.

## **2, Joining International PEN**

In October 2001, International PEN invited me as a co-founder of ICPC to attend its 67<sup>th</sup>

Congress to be held in London in November, and I would have a mission responsible to get ICPC approved as a chapter of International PEN through voting at the Congress.

In the morning of last day of the Congress, the resolution on the establishment of ICPC for affiliation to International PEN was presented at the meeting of the Assembly of Delegates. On behalf of PEN American Center to nominate ICPC, Mr. Larry Siems, Director of its Freedom to Write and International Program, make a powerful nomination speech. Mr. Siems, aged 40, was the former Director of Freedom to Write Program at PEN US West Center, a senior literary and human rights worker. A year earlier when I had received the Freedom to Write Award of PEN US West, it had been him to pick me at the Los Angeles airport. In 2001, moved to New York and got the current position. Therefore, we had a tacit understanding. During his speech, he formally introduced me to the delegates from around the world. Then, Chairman Mr. Aridjis asked me to make a presentation speech for ICPC application. Facing over a hundred delegates, I used my Chinglish (Chinese English) to talk about four points:

- (1) The situation of literature and writers in China today;
- (2) Chinese writers in exile and exile literature;
- (3) The reasons and historical responsibilities of founding Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC);
- (4) The relationship between ICPC and the Chinese Writers Association.

In my speech, I emphasized that ICPC represents no country but its membership, as we are the free association of the individual writers. One of the purposes of founding ICPC is because freedom of the press and freedom of expression in China have been constantly violated. It is because Chinese Writers Association cannot and dare not fight for the writers' freedom to publish and to create, and because it has always turned a blind eye to the events of continuing violations of writers' freedom of expression and of writing in China, that there exist necessity and urgency to establish ICPC. ICPC and Chinese Writers Association should supervise and urge each other to jointly safeguard writers' human rights and literary freedom.

My statement got applause, and the agenda of ICPC application made a climax at the Congress. Many delegates came up shaking hands with me, and told me that International PEN had been waiting for an independent Chinese center beyond governmental manipulation to join over a decade, and finally, we could sit together.

The delegates from a number of exiled PEN centers, such as Cuba, Iranian, Vietnamese in exile, spoke in sequence, expecting ICPC to become a member of PEN family.

After my speech, the delegates had a lively discussion and debate. The delegates from

Palestinian PEN, French PEN and Japan PEN presented their questions and doubts. Japanese delegate could not understand why ICPC should add “Independent” in its name, and doubted whether this concept would generate a political suspicion like national independence. The French delegate questioned, after its participation in International PEN, would ICPC make conflict with China PEN Center in the future Congresses? He even asked, could the newly founded ICPC represent the writers in China? The Palestinian delegate believed that as China PEN Center had consistently supported Palestinian people’s rights to fight for independence and national survival, ICPC should be incorporated into China PEN Center, and questioned whether establishing another center was superfluous. I made the following replies:

- (1) The term “independent” is not based on the sense of national independence, but means the independence of a writer or a group of writers from being attached to the state or official institutions;
- (2) ICPC is not a group of writers in exile, but its membership consists of three parts: “writers in China”, “Chinese writers settled overseas” and “writers in exile”;
- (3) ICPC has no intention to replace China PEN Center nor to represent a country, but hope to establish a constructive relationship for dialogue and cooperation with all of the PEN centers, especially the Chinese Writers Association (Chinese PEN).

My replies got again applauses and supportive statements from many delegates. The Japanese delegate spoke again and expressed his comprehension and support of ICPC’s work for Chinese writers’ freedom of the press. The Palestinian delegate specially apologized to me after the meeting. She said that Chinese government had always supported Palestinian independence movement, and that Chinese Writers Association had a good relationship with Palestinian PEN. Her public question was to account for China PEN in absence, but privately, Palestinian PEN would make no trouble with ICPC.

It was a historic moment. In absence of China PEN Center, 62 of 65 centers in presence voted in favor of ICPC.

In December 2001, as a co-founder of ICPC, I proposed a direct election of ICPC President by the members, and other members accepted my proposal. I nominated Liu Binyan as a candidate of the President, and through voting by email or fax, Liu Binyan got 78% of the membership votes and so was elected as the first President of ICPC. Afterwards, I propose Liu Xiaobo and Zheng Yi to be ICPC Vice-presidents. Liu insisted to decline it, said that one Vice-president would be enough, and that he could support ICPC operation in his capacity of a member. Zheng Yi accepted my proposal. To follow the working structure of PEN American Center PEN, I proposed the creation of freedom to write program, suggesting Meng Lang to



be its coordinator, and Meng accepted it. In January 2002, ICPC's team had been initially set up. Then, President Liu Binyan issued his handwritten appointments: Zheng Yi as Vice-president, Bei Ling as Executive Director and Meng Lang as Coordinator of Freedom to Writer Committee.

In February 2002, I wrote to Susan Sontag to report ICPC's birth and invite her to be ICPC Honorary Member. In the letter, I talked about the difficulties in founding ICPC, complained about too much transactional work. Susan quickly replied, congratulated on ICPC birth, and even pointed out its significance. In her letter, she asked, "I know this means a sacrifice of your writing time, but what else can you do? It's wonderful that the Independent P.E.N. Center has been founded. Someday this will be seen as a pivotal point for independent Chinese literature. Don't you think so? As for your arrest in August 2000, now it seems that was the Chinese government's gift to the cause of independent Chinese literature. Of course, that was not their intention! I am happy to be named an honorary member of your P.E.N. organization...so...I accept."

## Appendix

### ICPC Founding Members

No	Name	Sex	Previous Residing	Current Residing	Remark
1	Yu Haocheng	M	USA	Beijing, China	Honorary Director
2	Shen Rui	F	USA	USA	
3	Wu Ningkun	M	USA	USA	*
4	Feng Jun (Jimbut)	M	Denmark	Denmark	
5	Chen Maiping (Wan Zi)	M	Sweden	Sweden	Former Vice-president*
6	Ma Jian	M	London, UK	London, UK	Board Member
7	Liu Youhong (You You)	F	London, UK	London, UK	
8	Yang Lian	M	London, UK	London, UK	IP Board Member
9	Li Jianhua (Yi Ping)	M	USA	USA	
10	Han Xiu	F	USA	USA	*
11	Du Jiaqi	M	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	
12	Bei Ling	M	USA	USA	Founding Director
13	Chen Jianhua	M	USA	Hong Kong	

14	Bai Meng	M	USA	USA	
15	Zhang Ci	F	USA	USA	
16	Meng Lang	M	USA	Hong Kong	FWC Coordinator
17	Zhang Boli	M	USA	USA	
18	Xin Hong	F	USA	USA	
19	Zhang Er	F	USA	USA	
20	Bei Ming	F	USA	USA	*
21	Zheng Yi	M	USA	USA	Former President
22	Liu Xiaobo	M	Beijing, China	Jinzhou, China	Hon. President, in jail
23	Liu Xia	F	Beijing, China	Beijing, China	*
24	Yu Meijing (Mei Jing)	F	USA	USA	
25	Xue Di	M	USA	USA	
26	Zhang Langlang	M	USA	USA	
27	Cai Chu	M	USA	USA	Former Vice-president
28	Guo Luoji	M	USA	USA	
29	Mo Lihua (Mo Li)	F	Sweden	Sweden	Former Board Member*
30	Fu Zhengming	M	Sweden	Sweden	*
31	Hu Dong	M	London, UK	London, UK	

\* Quitted from ICPC

(Translated by Yu ZHANG)

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**BEI Ling**, a poet and essayist, is the founder and editor of *Tendency*, an exile literary journal founded in late 1993 and published in Chinese. In August 2000, Bei Ling was arrested for "illegally publishing" his journal in China. After a brief time in a Beijing jail, with the help of international society and the American State Department, he was released and expelled from China. He is on the Executive Board of the International Center for Writing and Translation at the University of California, Irvine, and a Research Associate at Harvard University's Fairbank Center for East Asian Research. His poetry has been translated from Chinese into English, Japanese, German, French and Spanish. Bei Ling was a winner of the PEN Center US West 2000 Freedom to Write Award.

## **ICPC Origin and Development**

*By Yu Zhang*



PEN International, formerly known as International PEN, founded on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1921, is currently the only global association of writers. The traditional constituents of PEN membership are summed up in its three letters: P stands for Poet and Playwright, E for Editor and Essayist, and N for Novelist. As a word in combination, PEN is also a traditional tool of writing, very meaningful. Today, a reporter, literary translator or publisher is also eligible to become a member of PEN.

According to the regulations of International PEN, there may be maximally five centers set up in one country due to the poor communications in long distance or more than one language or literature because. For instance, in the vast country of Australia, there were five centers directly affiliated to International PEN: Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney PEN centers. In the small land of Switzerland with different languages, there are three centers: Swiss German, Swiss Romand and Swiss Italian centers. Since some years before Hong Kong was reunited to China, there have been two centers: Hong Kong Chinese-speaking and Hong Kong English-speaking centers. In addition, the exiled or emigrated writers may also set up a PEN center in their country of residence in order to maintain the language and culture of their homeland. For example, the German writers in exile during World War II established the German Exile PEN, founded by Thomas Mann and other famous German writers, later renamed as The PEN Center of German-speaking Writers Abroad, still existing. Another example is the Chinese Writers Abroad Center, formerly known as a center of Chinese Writers in Exile, founded by the Chinese writers in USA exiled from China after the Communist Party seized the power in 1949, and renamed due to the increasing members emigrated from Taiwan. Moreover, there is also the Tibetan Writers Abroad PEN Center based in India, and The International PEN Uyghur Center registered in Sweden, but their members are residing over the world. In addition, some organizations of writers around the world, including Chinese literary societies also named as a pen club in Chinese, such as Taiwan Pen Association, Hong Kong Pen Club, Macau Pen Club, etc. but they are not among the member centers of International PEN.

Chinese writers' participation in International PEN can be traced back to 1920s. China PEN Club was formally founded in Shanghai on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1930. Its first president was Mr. TSAI Yuen-pei, a veteran of the Republic of China and prominent educator. After Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, China PEN halted its functions because of critical

circumstances during wartime. However, Mr. HU Shih, a pioneer of New Culture Movement, was still elected into the five member presidency of International PEN during 1941-1947. When the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, the leading figures of China PEN moved to Taiwan, while the writers remaining in China mainland broke off their relationship with International PEN. In 1958, PEN Club of Republic of China restored its organization in Taipei, and Mr. Chang Tao-fan became its president. His successors in sequence have been prominent writers LO Chia-luen, LIN Yutang, CHEN Yu-ching, YAO P'eng, Nancy CHANG ING and Yen CHU, and currently Prof. Ching-Hsi PERNG since 2007. In 1975, Mr. Lin, the president of China PEN, was elected a Vice-president of International PEN, but died of illness the following year. Since 1990, Mrs. Ing has also been one of Vice-presidents of International PEN. Besides, some Taiwanese writers set up a "Taiwan Center of International PEN", formally named as Taiwan Pen Association, on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1987, but its application to join International PEN has never been accepted as it has failed to communicate with the existing Taipei Chinese PEN in Taiwan.

*TSAI Yuen-pei**HU Shih**LIN Yutang*

In 1980, a group of senior writers in China mainland initiated the founding of China PEN Center in Beijing, chaired by BA Jin, President of China Writers Association. When International PEN approved China PEN Center's membership in the same year, the PEN Club of Republic of China agreed to rename it as Taipei Chinese PEN Center while maintaining its membership. Later, Shanghai Branch and Guangzhou Branch of the Chinese Writers Association set up the Shanghai Chinese PEN Center and Guangzhou Chinese PEN Center, respectively, and were also admitted directly into International PEN. However, those PEN Centers in China mainland have been subject to the constraints over official institutions there, and none of them has become a truly independent non-governmental organization, but failed to make any commitment to defending the writers, particularly Chinese writers for their freedom of expression and other rights.

In May 1989, China PEN Center sent a delegation to the 55<sup>th</sup> International PEN Congress in Maastricht, the Netherlands. As Mr. BEI Dao, a famous Chinese poet visiting Europe was invited by the International President to present at the Congress his launched petition for the release of Mr. WEI Jingsheng, an imprisoned writer in China, the China PEN delegation made an formal protest against Mr. Bei's presentation, walked out from the Congress, and eventually all of PEN centers in China mainland broke off their formal contacts with International PEN until 1997. In 2000, China PEN Center sent some observers to attend the 66<sup>th</sup> Congress in Moscow, but could not stand any formal discussion of a proposal for resolution on freedom of expression in China, thus halting contacts with International PEN once more, and ceasing to pay membership dues for many years. In 2005, after several PEN centers sent their commissioners to China to contact the PEN centers there, China PEN Center began to pay nominal dues, as if it had only about 20 members to maintain its membership of International PEN, but yet to restore its participation in international PEN's activities including the Congress. There has been no news from neither of two PEN Centers in Shanghai and Guangzhou over the years, nor even symbolic payment to their membership dues.

Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC) was founded in 2001 by a group of independent Chinese writers in exile abroad and in China. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2001, International PEN headquarter in London received ICPC's application with a list of 31 founding members. In November, ICPC was approved as a chapter of the International PEN at its 67<sup>th</sup> Congress in London. Since then, ICPC has sent its delegation to the Congress and other International PEN's events, every year and become one of most active centers.

ICPC's founding President LIU Binyan was a prominent writer, journalist and activist who passed away in exile in USA on Dec. 5 2005. Its founding Vice-president was ZHENG Yi, another prominent writer and novelist, the Executive Director was poet BEI Ling and the Coordinator of Freedom to Write Committee was poet MENG Lang, all of whom have been also in exile in USA. In October 2003, ICPC successfully held its first Internet Congress of the Membership Assembly to have approved its Charter, elected a Board of Directors, including the President Dr. LIU Xiaobo (China) and 2 Vice-presidents CAI Chu (USA) and CHEN Maiping (Sweden). In October 2005, ICPC held its Second Internet Congress to have amended its Charters, elected a Board of Directors, including the President Dr. LIU Xiaobo (China) and 2 Vice-presidents YU Jie (China) and Dr. CHEN Kuide (USA). In November 2007, ICPC held its Third Internet Congress to have elected the President ZHENG Yi (USA) and 2 Vice-presidents JIANG Qisheng (China) and Emily WU (USA). In September 2008, Yang Lian, a London-based poet and ICPC International Secretary, was elected as a Board

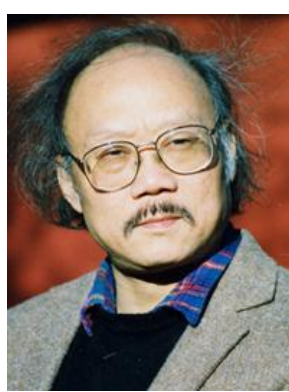
Member of International PEN at its Congress in Bogota. In October 2009, ICPC held its fourth Congress, and elected the current president Mrs. Tienchi MARTIN-LIAO (Germany) and 2 Vice-presidents Patrick POON (Hong Kong) and Jiazhen QI (Australia), and Honorary President Liu Xiaobo (jailed in China) who has been eventually awarded the Nobel Peace Prize a year later.



*LIU Binyan*



*LIU Xiaobo*



*ZHENG Yi*



*Tienchi LIAO*

ICPC has currently got 270 members, of whom slightly more than half are residing in China mainland, including four still in prison, LIU Xiaobo, SHI Tao, YANG Tongyan and ZHU Yufu. Besides, ICPC has also adopted 70 writers/journalists in prison as Honorary Member, among whom 22 have been still imprisoned. ICPC has set up several task teams including its Secretariat, Freedom to Write Committee (FWC), Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC), Internet Working Committee (IWC) and Literary Exchange and Translation Committee (LE&TC), and published two online journals, a literary monthly Freedom to Writing, and an English translation quarterly PEN for Freedom, and established a main website (<http://www.chinesepen.org>).

ICPC has upheld PEN International's aims, dedicated to safeguarding and promoting freedom to write over the world, particularly concerned with the writers in China mainland for their freedoms of speech, writing and publication, rescuing the writers charged and detained for their opinions, and assisting the Chinese writers persecuted in China or exiled overseas for their living and writing conditions. In cooperation with other Chinese PEN Centers around the world, ICPC has been making efforts to continue and develop the independent spirit and free tradition of Chinese PEN's antecessors, such as TSAI Yuen-pei, HU Shih, LIN Yutang and LIU Binyan, over China, and promote the international exchange and development of Chinese literature around the world.

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**Yu Zhang**, a Chinese citizen residing in Sweden, is ICPC Executive Secretary and the Coordinator of its Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC).

## **Broad Road Ahead of a Decade of Pioneering Hardship**

*By Tienchi M.-Liao*



On behalf of the Independent Chinese PEN Center, I would, regardless of the normal courtesy, like to first greet our colleagues and friends from Mainland China. My cordial and sincere congratulations to you, welcome to Hong Kong, we know it is not easy for you to make this trip.

To our special guests, Vice-president of PEN International Ms. Joanne Leedom-Ackerman and Chair of the Writers in Prison Committee Ms. Marian Botsford Fraser, my affectionate greetings and gratitude, I want to thank you for your years of efforts in caring about the safety of Chinese Writers in Prison. Mr. Takeaki Hori, International Secretary of PEN International, is ICPC's good friend, it is our honor to have his presence today.

I am most touched by our colleagues from PEN American Center, Leedom-Ackerman, Steven Isenberg, Larry Siems, Hannah Pakula and Sarah Hoffman, who show solidarity with ICPC since its founding. Larry, Steven together with Marian have just visited Beijing, regardless of the risks and troubles, they met with some members of ICPC, and they also tried to meet with our imprisoned members and their families. This is true friendship and a kind of chevalier spirit.

We are honored to have scholars from Taiwan and Hong Kong to be our panelists.

We all know the severe repression in China at the moment, therefore it is a pleasant surprise, yes, almost a miracle that the two winners of Freedom to Write Award and Lin Zhao Memorial Award, Mr. Ye Fu and Ms. Cui Weiping as well as the former awardee Mr. Xu Zerong are able to attend this event. On the other hand, it is a shame that the two awardees of the first Liu Xiaobo Courage to Write Award, Mr. Liu Xianbin and Mr. Zarganar of Burma are still in prison. However I am convinced that their spirit and ideas are with us today.

Besides the awarding ceremony, we also celebrate the 10th anniversary of ICPC. Three of the 31 founding members, Bei Ling, Ma Jian and Meng Lang can be here today; their presence puts more weight and delight to our meeting.

However, one person is missing today; he is the president of the PEN American Center, Prof. Anthony Appiah of Princeton University. He was denied entrance to China together with Sarah Hoffman, the leading staff in the American PEN office. Sarah decided to come to HK to join us, she is here among us today. Anthony nominated Liu Xiaobo for the Nobel Peace Prize, I believe this is the reason that he is not allowed to enter the Chinese border. Another reason that I mention Prof. Appiah is that, he is not only a distinguished writer, philosopher and scholar; he also has a deep cultural connection to China.

Prof. Appiah's grandmother is Lady Isobel Cripps (1891-1979), who founded the British United Aid to China, BUAC, in 1946. The mission of it was to support the Chinese people, who had suffered 8 years of war against Japan and were living under extreme poverty. She came to Hong Kong and China in 1946 and met with Generalissimo and Madam Chiang Kai-Shek. She also met with Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De. She not only traveled to the large cities but also to very remote villages.

Lady Cripps also founded the Sino-British Fellowship Trust in 1947 to support the stranded Chinese scholars in England after the war. She was the first president and kept this position for 30 years. The Trust exists even today, it has financed countless Chinese and English scholars to do their research work in the past half-century. I think that Prof. Anthony Appiah has taken over the legacy from his grandmother, he has shown much concern and care for our ICPC members. I want to express my deep respect and gratitude to him.

Looking back the past decade of ICPC history, it was a pioneer period, filled with hardship and sorrow, but also accompanied with joy and honor. When we see the list of the awardees in the past, there are courageous and distinguished writers. We should be proud of them. We commemorate the dead, miss the imprisoned colleagues and friends, express concern about those who cannot enjoy the freedom of writing and publishing. I am convinced that although the future way is thorny, a broader vision is lying in front of us. Hand in hand we will have the courage to walk straight ahead.

*Hong Kong, July 23, 2011*

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**Tienchi Martin-LIAO**, a German-based writer, translator and long-time human right activist, is currently the president of Independent Chinese PEN Centre.



## **ICPC's Road of a Decade: Harmony within Differences**

*By Ma Jian*



This year, Independent Chinese PEN Centre is 10 years old. It has developed from 30+ members to nearly 300, from a baby starting its steps to the one going to the world, having experienced all the ups and downs of growth. Today, I will only talk about my personal experience at ICPC Board as I may be the only founding member there.

I think that firstly we have yet reached a consensus on the direction of PEN, but still exploring. Some members believe that PEN aims at defending freedom of expression while others consider literature as the soul of PEN, demanding to keep a distance from politics. I reiterate Sartre's opinion: literature should not be extricated from society, nor is simply to pursuit of beautiful language, but to awaken people's consciousness, and a way to find a solution. The literature itself is a way of action. Therefore, literary works are all political, even if it seems far away from politics. At the same time, literature is also to escape from politics, even if it is directly discussing politics. Literature includes fiction, poetry and political commentary, and all other styles. The politics and literature are two wings of an author, who cannot fly when lack of either. A good political essay is literary, while a bad novel cannot be considered as a literature work. Literature is the highest requirement for writing and thinking, and so ICPC will not eliminate its aim of literature to become a political body. A political essay is as important as a novel and poetry, which is my point of view to have been back in ICPC Board.

For a career writer based on independent writing overseas, an individual would not be related to an organization since a professional author may only face his readers through his life. Some writers, such as Cao Xueqin and Kafka, did not even have readers. As ICPC co-founder Bei Ling said, an ideal PEN club is a literary republic, meaning that such kind of PEN club simply cannot exist. Joining ICPC makes only a sense: there still literary inquisition in China, with no sign of its termination, while Chinese language has not yet entered the era of true freedom to write. Although I am not fearing of literary inquisition but living in a free society, there is a motive that caught my attention: morally caring about Chinese society and fellow writers. Although this is the mentality of a volunteer, there are also some causes of personality, nosy and frowning to those bullying on the weak. Although hating "organization", a word opposite to "individual", when thinking about the literary friends in it, I join them. Moreover, I have been a salesman-like, from time to time to introduce more of my friends to join us, such as

Zhou Duo, Tienchi Liao and so on.

After joining ICPC, in addition to face the community development at home and abroad, we have to face the contradiction between consensus and disagreement among the literatis, to which Mr. Maiping Chen, the former Secretary-General had done a lot of work. It can be said, that without his efforts, ICPC could not grow so strong as it is today. All of the presidents have also done their best. I have been a Board Member elected in and out, just upholding my personal point of view to face the emerging conflicts but not able to coordinate others ideas.

For a decade, ICPC has changed in generations like all of organizations. Some of the founding members have quitted, some lost their enthusiasm, and some even become the opponents, indicating that ICPC is still young, with poor awareness of regulations, the difficulties in gathering the different writers, but also the necessity for ICPC's existence. If we cannot seek a common ground at some points while reserving differences, we will not eligible to demand China to move toward democratization and diversity. PEN is the home of the thinkers and elites caring about the social issues, and so it must break off the evil curse that there is always some infighting where there are Chinese people.

ICPC's general direction should be to enhance all styles of Chinese writing. The literary quality demonstrates the worth ICPC's existence. The political essays have shown the plight of Chinese literature. ICPC has no political resources to resist totalitarian regime, only moral resources to fight for people's understanding or to reveal the truth. We rely on a pen to promote PEN. At the same time, protecting the members and reducing the risk of their writings are also our key mandate. We must not change our direction of free writing because the Chinese government has been tightening the freedom of expression, but we have to assess the situation and adjust the development strategy. Today, this is just the bottleneck of ICPC development. As we have constantly got new blood joining us, we should also motivate nearly half of the old members who have been silenced, to take literature for meeting friends again.

We should also pay attention to the situation that, under political fear, the majority of the writers have been forced to a way out: coldness with some ridicules, no rebelling, nor touching reality, but stop thinking. This style is the literary taboo. The literature with the humanitarianism can only remain at the level of fairy-tale of good and evil. Such kind of work without penetration is the writer's disgrace, as well as a tragedy to PEN. ICPC should be alert to that the censorship slips into the work by our members to get the literature lose ideas. ICPC Board should have a responsibility to do some work, such as promoting the comments on our works and strengthening the international exchanges and translations, to request the members to comment the publications at ICPC website and the e-journal Freedom to Write. More

attentions should be paid to that as the lies have been tied with power; our social responsibilities have been increased to avoid overflowing of writings from enthusiasm. In particular, the internet writers should promote the energy of their literary ideas to get the expression more saturated with people.

We are all trying to establish a self-world. However, we should also provide a safe spiritual home for our members, in order to obtain ideological emancipation and to create enduring literary classics. This is not only the reason for our members to join us, but also the significance why we want a writer under a totalitarian control to risk for ICPC membership. A human cannot live to receive an insult until the death. To express ideas is our dignity and dream, for which propose of course ICPC has be present for a decade.

A decade has passed, and now we express our thanks to all of our founding and early members. As different routes to the same destination, as long as ICPC's purpose does not change, here is your home of "Harmony within Differences". I look forward to the moment of ICPC twentieth anniversary when there will be none of us in absence.

*(Translated by Patrick Poon)*

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**MA Jian** is a London-based novelist and Board Member of ICPC. He was awarded the Athens Prize for Literature in 2010 for his novel *Beijing Coma*.

## **Born for Literature, Fighting for Freedom**

*By LIU Yiming*



It is well known that Hong Kong was once far away to us and a trip to Hong Kong was a dream hard to reach. However, during the past years I was lucky enough to have several opportunities to go to Hong Kong. The first time was for an Asian-Pacific Conference of International PEN, which I failed to attend due to obstructions of the Government. One year later, with an invitation of a non-governmental organization, I was fortunate enough to make a trip to Thailand. Therefore on my way to and from Thailand, I had a close look of beauties of the city.

Around World Press Freedom Day in 2008, together with other organizations, Independent Chinese PEN Centre launched a series of activities. This made me once again to set foot on the land of Hong Kong. Looking back, some scenes of the activities are still fresh to me. ICPC once held its awarding ceremonies in the Mainland for its Freedom-to-Write Award and Li Zhao Memorial Award. However, after that, they could no longer continue and had to move to Hong Kong, a politically special region.

July 23<sup>rd</sup> this year is the tenth anniversary for the foundation of ICPC. More than one month before, ICPC decided to celebrate on that day and present the latest Free-to-Write Award, Li Zhao Memorial Award and Liu Xiaobo Courage-to-Write Award. As an ICPC member, I felt excited to be invited to attend. However, I still had some worries, as a tragically governmental obstruction might happen anytime.

On the afternoon of July 21<sup>st</sup>, I boarded on a southbound train to Shenzhen and arrived at Shen Zhen Railway Station the next morning. After finishing lunch with an old friend at noon time, I got into the Luohu Station of Exit & Entry Frontier Inspection to try my luck. When the Border Control Officer handed back me my Exit—Entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macau, my heart popped back into my chest. A train from Lo Wu (Luohu) to Hung Hom took me to University Station in half an hour. Getting off the train and going through an underground path, I found myself at the gate of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Although I came to Hong Kong several times before, it was the first time to visit the Chinese University. Due to school holidays, the university campus, which meant to be crowded and bustling, seemed quiet and lonely under the scorching sun. There was hardly anybody to be

seen within the reach of eyes. Luckily enough soon came a school bus. I got on the bus and asked the driver how to go to the Yali Guest House. The bus driver, quite warm-hearted, told me that it was not easy to find the Guest House as there was no bus stop before it and I had to get off at the other bus stop before going over there.

As an internationalized metropolis, Hong Kong smells no pretty-townsfolk breath which is quite common in many Mainland cities. Hong Kong people are all friendly and warm. When I asked for a direction from the bus driver, a middle-aged woman, knowing I was going to Yali Guest House, told me to follow her as she would go in the same direction. Getting off the bus, I followed the woman on a hilly road, and after several turns finally got to the Guest House. I was thinking then that it could be not that easy to find it in such a short time if I were in any Mainland city.

ICPC held this event in Hong King and naturally would not just invite one Mainland member like me to attend. In fact, as early as a week ago, I knew that Jiang Danwen from Shanghai, Zan Aizong and Zhuang Daohe from Hangzhou were also invited. After checking into the Guest House, I tried online chat tools to find out whether they could come. The result was that both Zan Aizong and Zhuang Daohe were stopped by the Mainland border control officers. Actually this result was not surprising at all, as both of them had similar experience before.

ICPC conference this year was inferior to that of 2007 in strength and fanfare, though there were many members successfully entered Hong Kong to attend while some of its members had been denied to travel. It was a great pity that Ms Cui Weiping, the laureate of Lin Zhao Memorial Award 2011 could not attend the conference due to obstruction of the government, and another ICPC member Mr. Jiao Guobiao was also blocked by the government from attending. These blocked members had more possibilities to leave the country than other members, however lots of ICPC members knew that they were not allowed to leave and did not even have a plan to attend the conference. If all ICPC members in Mainland China were invited, the number of absence would be big.

Under One-Country-Two-System policy, Hong Kong is superior to the Mainland not only in the social environment but also in the natural environment. Opening the curtains, through the clean and clear window glass, the panoramic view of the bay and buildings came into my eyes. With the sun setting down, those scenes could make people thoroughly relaxed and cleaned. Staying in such a nice environment, the burden of tiredness of the body and soul was released all of a sudden. From this we can see that Hong Kong is not only the financial centre of Asia but a scenic spot for travellers to relax as well.

In the early evening, those arrived earlier from home and abroad gathered happily in the lobby. Everybody was sitting on sofa talking and laughing with no restriction of topics. What made people feel extremely moved, Mr. Yao Jianfu, in his eighties, came from Beijing, thousands of miles away, to Hong Kong to attend this conference. Though old in age, Mr. Yao talked vigorously, and even climbed hills with us in the evening when we went to the students' canteen for dinner. I think that being hale and hearty should be double strength of both body and soul, and that Mr. Yao is just a model of being hale and hearty.

The conference didn't start until they finished lunch on the first day as the schedule was not so full. The location was at Level 7, Mong Man Wai Building, Chinese University of Hong Kong. So as to make more members attend successfully, ICPC didn't make any publicity before the conference, simply notifying attendees in private. As the location was not so easy to be found, within that cinema-like conference hall, the number of attendees obviously didn't seem matching with the huge space of the hall.

Despite less attendees, the conference was warm and heated. Several VIPs from the PEN International and the PEN American Center attended the conference and made speeches. Ye Fu, the laureate of Freedom-to-Write Award 2011, successfully arrived in Hong Kong and made a speech "Maintaining Flint Fire to Fuel", saying that "Freedom, in our hearts, is a perpetual lamp, which does not only light the life of humble darkness, but is also a default birthmark in which we will always find our colleagues." As a matter of fact, Ye Fu is not the only writer who advocates freedom. As far as ICPC mainland members and the suppressed literature circle in Mainland, Ye Fu spoke out the message for all.

Ms. Cui Weiping, the laureate of Lin Zhao Memorial Award 2010, was unable to come to collect the award in person due to obstruction of the government. However, she prepared her acceptance speech in advance. Like other writings of hers, this acceptance speech is also fresh and moving. Cui's absence to the awarding ceremony added a vivid footnote to the situation of human rights in Mainland China. Just because people have no freedom to exit and enter the country and no freedom of expression, Lin Zhao Memorial Award has its real value and meaning for existence. Presenting Lin Zhao Memorial Award can really encourage more people to express their anger and thoughts.

As a literary organization, ICPC has responsibilities both to promote literature and to defend freedom of expression. Just as what Ma Jian, ICPC Board Member, talked at the conference, these two sides are actually two indispensable wings for ICPC. Literature can keep itself away from politics. However, writers should never avoid politics deliberately. Without guarantee of freedom of expression, literary writings would find it difficult to reach the realm or play its

due role in the society. Whether there is sufficient humanity concern in the literary writings would set out the key difference between ordinary writers and great writers.

Mr. Xu Zerong, a well-known scholar and once convicted of espionage, won Writer in Prison Award 2009 but could not come to Hong Kong that time. However, he unexpectedly appeared at the awarding ceremony this year. According to Ms. Cai Yongmei, an ICPC member, Mr. Xu was previously a quite rich man, however, after 10 years in prison, he had totally changed. Freedom to Write Award needs depth of thinking, Lin Zhao Memorial Award needs the bursts of courage, and however Writer in Prison Award needs a heavy price to pay. It's the same case from Yang Tianshui to Xu Zerong and to Liu Xianbin again. Writer in Prison Award has been renamed as Liu Xiao Courage to Write Award. As I think, naming after Dr. Liu Xiaobo is either giving more consolations to those writers in prison or protesting and remembering Dr. Liu Xiaobo for his imprisonment due to speeches and writings.

In the hall for awarding ceremony that day, though audience was thinly scattering, rounds of applauds burst out now and then at moments with touching speeches. Smiles could be seen on every face there, however in every heart there was a heavy burden due to the severe social reality in mainland China. ICPC founding members like Ma Jian and Bei Ling reviewed the history of ICPC creating. They were extremely proud of its current influence and achievements. Before the conference ended, member writers displayed their own books for others to choose. These books are impressions of the writers' inner worlds and accusations to the dark reality of the mainland China. Though with no permission to be published in the mainland, their literary values are beyond estimation and they will never perish.

At about 6 o'clock in the afternoon, the awarding ceremony was announced to finish after speeches by Zhang Tiezhi and other guests. ICPC members and guests went for dinner at the Guest House. During the meal, people of three tables talked and laughed making exchanges over literature and thoughts. As the saying goes that "drink wine when bosom friends meet, recite poems when fellow poets gather", it might be the happiest moment in life as writers from mainland China, Hong Kong and overseas came together to celebrate happily.

The activities next day were for ICPC members only at its Hong Kong Office. At about 9 in the morning, Sheng Hui, Meng Lang, Yang Weidong and I met in the lobby. With Yang Weidong going back to Beijing, three of us took a taxi heading to the Hong Kong Office. Located in a remote industrial building, the Hong Kong Office seems too simple in its office setting which is inconsistent with ICPC as a literary organization.

After a short waiting, ICPC members arrived from different hotels and involved in the

discussion seminar presided by Meng Lang, coordinator of ICPC Free to Write Committee. At the seminar, members made free expressions. Some talked about membership card while some mentioned about reforms to ICPC elections. Though much fewer people participated than the day before, the atmosphere was however unusually active and lasted to 2 o'clock in the afternoon before we realized. During fast-food lunch time, members still had heated talks. Meng Lang announced the end of seminar later after.

Good time is always short. There goes a farewell after several days' gathering. Many members hoped time should stop at that moment, however we had to wave our hands to say goodbye. Wu Yizhe, secretary to the Hong Kong Office, saw us off. With support and cares from numerous overseas friends like him, the writers under totalitarian rule in Mainland China like us wouldn't feel lonely and hopeless.

Right on that night, I returned to the mainland and stayed in Shenzhen for a night. Though having left Hong Kong, those touching scenes and both familiar and unfamiliar faces flashed in my mind constantly. In a time with depression for literature, the historical mission for ICPC members might be "born for literature and fighting for freedom"!

July 26, 2011

*(Translated by CHEN Biao)*

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**LIU Yiming**, freelance writer and ICPC member in Hubei Province, China.



## **A Decade of ICPC**

**-To Liao Yiwu**

*By Wang Jianhui*



### **First**

These days I am spending my annual leave. My family of three was taking our car out of Chengdu, and driving to the suburbs. We had no goal. Wherever we got with a feeling of nice scenery on which a few glances were not enough, we stopped to look around until our eyes would be full. Then we continued to drive forward. Wherever there was thickness in green or chaotic vegetation, we would recklessly get into it, into the deeper landscape. When it was late, or when we were tired, we would find a reasonably priced hostel or farmhouse to stay and relax our whole bodies and souls.

Those who write always have a shortcoming, loving to summarize. During this travel of random wandering, I found that the best scenery was not necessarily in front of us but those which had been mostly passed. To turn back, however, it would not be worthy but to continue forward. It was because of a word of “hope” in our knowledge, a hope to have better scenery. Usually the hopes would be dashed. However, it was just due to such a dubious word that we had been to the new places one by one that were not necessarily the views of scenery.

### **Second**

Back from my travel, the first thing was to read my email messages, in which hid were my friends in a distant. They were accompanying me to enter the spiritual journey. Life has two kinds of journeys: one going down, and another up. At this moment, I started mine going up. An email from Mr. Meng Lang, for the tenth anniversary, was inviting me to write an article. I have a shortcoming unable to refuse others. But facing his invitation, I thought that, even though I had learned to refuse, I could not turn down Mr. Meng Lang’s invitation. I must write it. Just afraid to write badly, I had got a psychological burden. To write! Where to start my pen?

### **Third**

Mr. Meng Lang is one with whom I got acquainted when I joined the PEN, which can be considered as a gain from it. Although never met, we have often communicated through emails, with mutual trust in a spiritual friendship. Every time for an email to him, Mr. Meng Lang gives an accurate response at his first opportunity. In this era when the mind of the people is impetuous and when everyone is everyone's tool, regarded as a means toward another place, I know he is my real friend without benefit relationship between us, as pure as

tea water. The friendship between gentlemen is as pure as water. This kind of friends must be treasured. Meng Lang is a poet. He has changed my views over the poets - forgetful of things, jumpy minded, extremely self-acknowledged, and deliberately obtuse over the great matters while never confused over a small one.

#### **Fourth**

One of the treasured friends is called Liao Yiwu, who was also a famous poet. After 1989, he said simply: "To write poetry in China after 1989 is shameful." Then, as a friend, I have excluded him from the poets. As a friend, in fact, I know that the life in prison has made a poet unable to go on being romantic and fanciful. Facing the terrible reality, do you throw your pen as a spear at your opponent? That will only make your own hands have even less than nothing. Therefore, the former poet has chosen to use the pen in his hand to records the realities that his eyes have seen. "My pen is my video camera," said he. In this era when the reality is far beyond imagination, choosing to record the reality is not to let the imagination be lazy but to take responsibility for reality and the burden of history. Let the time show whether his choice is right or wrong!

It was Liao Yiwu who pulled me into PEN. He said that, in PEN, there were his friends - Xiaobo, Hu Ping, Zheng Yi, Maiping, Yu Jie, Yadong, Wang Yi, etc., and many, many joined it for friends, for friends' friends. The reason to join PEN is that "I cannot refuse others." (Second) Such a character is very dangerous in the era when "everyone is everyone's tool" (Third). If careless, it will become a knife, stick or gun in the hands of someone else. Fortunately, I have not made any mistake in making friends. This is not to say that my view is sharp as fire, or so sophisticated, but because of my unsocial temperament, I have made very few friends. "Few" means that the probability of making error is "small".

#### **Fifth**

In early July, Liao Yiwu got to Germany in a way of exile. An unknown reporter at the Global Times, a small newspaper lack of distinction in China, wrote an article "One Can Get to Germany without Being Exiled", claiming that Liao Yiwu was not well-known in China. Whether or not being well-known in China is not important, because this is a country with no common sense nor reason nor jurisprudence. All results presented are so strange and incredible. As an old Chinese saying goes, "a good man does not have a long life while a bad guy lives for a hundred year", which, from one angle, indicates that one must try to be a bad guy in order to live a good life in this land. Never mind being unknown. No need to care about the position that an irrational system has arranged for you. In an autocratic country, the higher position and more income can only prove the greater evil. Do not actively enter the "mainstream" to compete for the notoriety with those "successful" figures.

**Sixth**

The title of "One Can Get to Germany without Being Exiled" written by that little reporter is correct. Liao Yiwu could get to Germany indeed without choosing a way in exile, but waiting until August or September. Originally, he was invited in April, but the government did not allow him to leave during that period. The reason was "well known". During that period when the flowers bloomed and withered, our government made a lot, lot, lot of shocking decisions. The policeman who directly monitored Liao Yiwu promised that it would definitely be no problem for him to go abroad in August or September. From February to August, I calculated with my fingers the government statistics on the people's capacity of memory: six months. Six months later, whatever would be forgotten. I believe that the policeman would not lie to him. A human is really an animal with feelings. With more contacts there will be a feeling. They frankly communicated really like friends. Each of Liao Yiwu's articles was carefully read by him, a loyal reader. He also gave Liao Yiwu some fair criticism on his works, and could be considered as a friend offering forthright admonition. Their relationship was so unique that, in the long history of Chinese civilization, it would be difficult to find the corresponding case.

Liao Yiwu's move to exile let down the monitoring policeman. Maybe he would be troubled with demotion, wage reduction, and bonus deduction, particularly in these years when everything rises up except for wages. Yiwu, when convenient, please insert in any of your articles a little contraband to that policeman by saying: "Sorry!" More often, survival is more important than faith, ideal and interest.

**Seventh**

Why did Liao Yiwu choose a way at risk, a risky path to exile abroad? Could it be OK for him to wait two more months? To my understanding of him, I know that he is expressing a political attitude: it is not up to you that I will not go if you do not allow me to do so; or I will go at the time when you let me so. I am free. I can act according to my own timetable.

**Eighth**

Can he come back after he left? When Liao Yiwu was in Chengdu, every weekend, if we did not have anything else, we would have an appointment for tea, looking for a cheap teahouse – in summer, selecting one in the shadow of trees where the sunshine could not come in, occasionally only with the wind that blew the leaves shaking disorderly, so cool; In winter, finding an open ground without shelter to let the sun keep on licking and soaking the bodies, so comfortable. Five CNY for a cup of tea let us drinking from 2 o'clock in the afternoon to 9-10 o'clock in the evening. From the strong tea to clear water, the plain transparent water showed a friendship between us. At supper time, the lady owner was called to cook a bowl of

noodles to fill our stomachs full of water, also 5 CNY each. Each of us spent 10 CNY for a whole day. Having tea is not only for the communication, but more for enhancing the knowledge and insight. I do not like reading, and so drinking tea with friends for communication has become an approach of my reading.

### **Ninth**

For years after joining PEN, I have not thought carefully about what organization PEN is. Is it a political organization? An economical entity? A literary society? A shelter for dissidents? A salon for making friends with a hobbit?

100 individuals may have 100 interpretations. I believe that this is just the spirit of PEN, which has broken the unified idea that has encased the heads of people for thousands of years. Here we have learned the respect and sharing, and learned to make concessions for the freedom of other people while protecting our own rights. Meanwhile, we have harvested the mutual benefit and win-win situation, unlike the past revolutionary idealists, who maintained truth on their own to sweep everything and carry out a struggle for "life and death".

I often forget this organization. This is perhaps because PEN has not requested me to swear allegiance to holding a fist up, and because there is no variety of complicated and fixed formalities, neither obligation to attend the organizational activities, nor to report one's thought regularly. However, it is such a peaceful way that has made me easy to find my own place as the water in this form. It also makes me looked very natural.

This is a circle of friends. I have known some. I have remembered some. I am respecting these people.

### **Tenth**

We had not gathered again before Liao Yiwu went to exile. Taking this opportunity of Mr. Meng Lang's invitation, I am writing this article as a farewell to the old Liao.

*Early morning, August 20, 2011, written at home in the Emerald City, Chengdu  
(Translated by Yu ZHANG)*

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**WANG Jianhui**, a novelist and member of ICPC. He was partially involved in the pro-democracy movement in 1989 and then sentenced to one year "Reeducation Through Labour" for "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement". His major novels include *Human Thinking*, *Human Path*, *Man with Complex*, and *The Map of China*. He received ICPC Freedom to Write Award in 2009.

## **ICPC, Fire in the Wilderness**

*By LU Wen*



I could have had a supine life similar to my father's, if giving up dignity and being content with only three meals a day like an animal. I am to be blamed for disdain to mediocrity, devoting myself to writing and idealism, which lead me to the way of dissident writer by joining Independent Chinese PEN Center.

Born in a humble family, my father got his initial job as a rickshaw boy. In the peaceful time, he worked hard with his bare hands to earn the bread. Before the war came, he joined "Secondary Class Reserve Force" signed by Marshal Peng Teh-huai, aiming to devote for the friendship between China and the Soviet Union as well as the world peace. After that, this docile citizen who was willing to slave for the government or get blown off by the foreigners peacefully spent his life over 70 years or so, despite three years' famine, endless deficit, or one week's checkup behind bars.

Digging up river slit, operating spraying gun, I was initially a qualified son of workers and peasants carrying the laboring gene from my father. Besides that, I obeyed the government by accepting propagandas voluntarily or involuntarily. For example, "Chiang Kai-shek's family" was called "Chiang Kai-shek bandit gang", Japanese flag was called "plaster flag", and sayings like "all American imperialists are paper tigers". I was so deeply influenced by these ideas that I still feel awkward to see "12-points star" or "Kimigayo flag" proudly hanging over the sport ground. When President Jiang enjoys the cruise trip and BBQ with foreign leaders, I can hardly accept it emotionally. The reason behind is the inconsistent education either proactive or conservative, which caused the departing of intellect and emotion, a psychological illness that is incurable.

I joined the Young Pioneers when I was eight, planned to apply for joining the Communist Youth League in the age of 15. In the Culture Revolution, I assisted in knocking down Liu Shaoqi for Mao Zedong. During the brigade, I voluntarily requested going to the hard places. I can imitate some Red Guard Dance, sing some propaganda songs like "Sewing the red flag with tears". I could recite the articles like "Reasonable Rebel" and "Sailing by the Steersmen".

Being faithful as I was, the only treasure I had were the passion, hunger and a shirt with sweat stains. Virgin boy who lead a moral life was framed as gangster, physically abused and put

behind bars. Educated scholars were watched over as strike breakers, threatened and persecuted. They copied what described in George Orwell's *1984*, setting up gigantic net of spies and agents, holding people's breath and preventing people from escaping. Many times, I visited my farmer friends, just for the excuse of escaping from the ubiquitous cameras. Honestly, I am not used to act as a role under the cameras. I know that I am not gifted as an actor, not even a performer in the background. I reckon those who fled abroad were bored of the prosecuting cameras, like Liao Yiwu, author of *Massacre* and Sun Baoqiang, author of *Prisoner in Red Building*.

The government treated me as extreme person. Cameramen were everywhere, by the front door, the toilet and more of them in public places like bookstore. Of course I shared most of the cameras with other citizens except the one by the front door. Moreover, living in a hotel needs to be registered, taking a bus needs to be identified. My internet was cut off, emails and messages were monitored. My privacy and minds were closely pried on. When trying to argue for human rights with legal weapon, people like Wang Ligang can strike you to limbo for three days.

Initially, I grieved and called for justice. Using fist against the author of *Dreaming Lotus* and *Fine Cordage* was not a decent treatment for talented, as there are many bullyboys like Wang Ligang, but only one Lu Wen. Later on, I came to realize that they equally treated their colleagues as AB group, burning valve, burning at the stake, piercing the collarbone and chopping the breasts. They need to keep themselves busy to maintain psychological balance.

My greater part of lifetime had been spent in darkness, without a glim of hope, full of beasts howling. Meeting Liu Xiaobo was like meeting a fire in the wilderness. The fire is ICPC.

In ICPC, there are many talented people who are holding the philosophy of independency and spirit of freedom. They are the elites of Chinese culture. I feel like fish in water, safe and belonged. Getting along with them influenced me in upgrading my understanding. They are my comrades once in a thousand years. No, not only comrades, but my brothers and accompanies as close as flesh and blood. I have met some of them, like Kejian, Xiaoqiao, Dagong, Baoqiang. Those who did not meet face to face can be seen on internet, like Yang Lian, the author of *Sun and Human*. When seeing the picture Meng Lang holding up the slogan of "Rehabilitation for 6.4", I came to know that he has the same beard as Ma Jian. After reading Yang Tianshui's story about Jingwa and Wang Yiliang I came to know they stuck to each other through better or worse.

Although I cannot tell all the works of my brothers, I truly understand the hurt from the

government. I know that Yang Tianshui was involved in legal dispute for the same years as Ran Arang. Shi Tao was serving for the jewellery products in jail for many years. Zhu Yufu was again put into jail. Liu Xiaobo needs to stay in jail for 4000 days. Yan Zhengxue was hardly survived till present. Sun Wenguang broke four ribs. Zhu Xinxin had two fractures in her arm bone. Liu Feiyue was beaten by a gangster who was said to be the guarder. Xi Biao stopped talking for the reason unknown. Yu Jie was assaulted and went into coma. He was almost dead, but thanks to the first aid. In my eyes, Yu Jie paid the price as being tortured, putting his life in danger to prove the untruth of the best actor.

You cannot step twice into the same river, but literati in China are attacked by both government and gangsters. From ancient times, the literati were suffered, but only in one way, like being burned and buried alive by Emperor Chin, castrated by Emperor Wu or put into prison. They were unlikely to be assaulted by gangsters after suffering one of those tortures. Only in the novel *the Golden Lotus*, Ximen Qing prompted the gangsters to beat his rival Jiang Zhushan before using his power to torture Jiang in government. Even in the so called darkness of the Republic, Li Gongpu was never beaten by the gangsters before assassination. In the bloody Chairman times, the government servants did not act as gangsters to attack Lin Zhao. Never a westerner would believe that a person can survive from both Mussolini and Sicilian Mafia.

I am confused by their unreasonable behavior. Although they knew that literati are not interested in authority but only report the truth and give their suggestions based on their sense of responsibility; they knew that if all outsiders are put into jail, the harmony and stability would collapse definitely in a society with intense; they knew that the mass group accidents were not provoked by literati who were only the mediator between government and the people, they still chase literati restlessly.

Fortunately, the abusers have their fatal points, which are the liquidation, the scaffold, the money in foreign banks suddenly missing. They are worried about their immigrated wife and children becoming the hostage, billions of dollars going through to the new government. Nevertheless, they would tackle all the outside the same way as they tackle Wang Shiwei.

What the government servant has done to the bare-handed outsiders is not impulsive. They have been planning for a long time, proceeding sneakingly, routing out one by one. Gao Zhisheng, Guo Feixiong, Hu Jia, Chen Guangcheng, Ai Weiwei, Fan Yafeng, Tang Jitian, Liu Shihui, Yao Lifa, Tang Jingling, these are all the outsiders who have been thoroughly tortured. No sleeping or the broken ribs are not the worst torture; they even assault the sufferer's genital area with electric stick or toothpicks.

Facing these “abnormal law enforcement”, I suggest that the Writers in Prison Committee to expand the scope of their working, by not only support the writers in prison, but also set up a database for the prosecution victims. On the one hand, the victims can feel the warmth of the fire, knowing that their sufferings are recorded; on the other hand, the government servants may restrain their rulings. After all, autocracy is not forever. They cannot leave the planet. They still have families.

20<sup>th</sup> August, 2011

*(Translated by Angela Hu)*

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**LU Wen**, writer, essayist, novelist and ICPC member, is now living and writing in Suzhou, China.



## Reminiscence and Thoughts

--- Commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
The Independent Chinese PEN Centre (ICPC)

*By Ye Huo*



In 2007, it was my first time to take part in a five-day event in Hong Kong organized by the PEN International. The overall environment in China was a bit freer at that time than in this year. Some relatively more active overseas members could still enter the mainland through Luohu, Shenzhen. However, the situation has changed now. The current level of surveillance is much more vigorous than the past years.

### 1

In fact, how could a group of writers who would only “wave their goose-feather writing brush” [use their pens] shake a strong authoritarian regime which spends more on controlling stability than national defense? Also, the meeting venue was chosen to be in Hong Kong, “a country within a country”. But due to its ethical weakness, the Chinese Communist Party is destined to be oversensitive and neurotic towards all “unstable” sentiments. As a result, some gentle and frail-looking writers, including some ICPC members, were charged with “inciting subversion of state power” and imprisoned. Among them, the most famous one was the ICPC's former president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Dr. Liu Xiaobo.

I met him once, in summer of 2007, well before he was arrested. I remember when I met him in Beijing on that evening, I immediately asked him after we sat down if he “brought his tail” [was being followed]? He articulately said: “In—this year, it's – kinda comp—aratively loose. Bas—ically, there is—n't much spec—ial restriction on me.” At that time, I still couldn't believe his overconfidence. I glanced over the surrounding to check if there were any suspicious persons. But there were only two of us in the nearly empty and dimmed cafe at midnight.

It was the only time I met with him. He gave me an impression of generosity, serenity and clarity. He showed his personal character in some of his expressions.

For instance, when some of his “fans” in the ICPC wanted to persuade him to continue to be ICPC's president, Liu explained: “According to the pattern of presidency of the United States, it shouldn't be more than two terms. So, I also can't continue my presidency [in ICPC].” Even in the change of presidency in an NGO like the ICPC, he would refer to the US model of

democracy and constitutionalism. We can see how he values the importance of following the rules of democratic procedures.

When we talked about the internal conflicts in ICPC, he said in a philosophical way: “When we criticize the Communist Party, there is not a concrete object we can attack. It's an abstract object. It's very difficult for you to get the feeling of grabbing something, while it's easy to find a target when we want to find a concrete object in our camp.” Obviously, he was trying to use philosophy to understand the conflicts of targeting on an individual. If we all can have this kind of broad vision to look at the “battles of words” around us, we could at least learn how not to label the person we attack as “insane” but to dilute the hurt by leniency and understanding, so as to maintain our reputation.

I could feel that he was concerned about how to strengthen and develop the ICPC as the president then. But I expressed my doubts to him that some members seldom show up. For example, a famous scholar who is living inside the party system has never taken part in any of the ICPC's activities. What does that mean? Liu intelligently replied and admitted that we don't need such a person who is both famous inside and outside the system to publicly participate in the ICPC's affairs. The symbolic meaning is already enough for that person to join the ICPC.

Sometimes, to comprise does not mean to surrender or to give up. It also doesn't mean actively ending the struggle. But it's the beginning of another option. It's a durable struggle.

As a normal person, Liu Xiaobo sometimes also makes some common mistakes. Once, when he talked to me about helicopters, he said that the black eagle helicopters China imported from the United States had stopped taking off for years due to lack of components. However, I later found out that it was not the case. But he accepted it when I told him the truth.

## 2

There were only over 100 members in ICPC in 2007 but I heard that there are nearly 300 members now. Membership has been increased but active members are still the familiar faces before the membership increase. Comparing with the current ICPC, I seem to miss the atmosphere in the past. Recalling the big gathering in Hong Kong in 2007, I still enjoy it now. More than 100 people got together and writers were rubbing shoulders with one another. I can never forget it.

The witty Mr. Sha Yexin gave a talk at the University of Hong Kong, making the audience repeatedly nod and smile. Elder Sha's talents seemed to be inborn. Mr. Yang Hengjun, the

“foreigner” in the room, had a dynamic and humorous character energized the most boring atmosphere. Ahhai, whose hair was as graceful as Beethoven’s, always had a cigarette in his hand. Like his expressive character, full of energy and emotions. Sheng Xue liked to wear *qipao*. She not only looked very sharp every day, but she was also good at emotional expression as the host. Wu Yimao, whose voice was very delicate and her English was good enough to write a novel, hid herself in the room and wept over her simultaneous interpretation. A white-headed “rightist” Tie Liu was waving his hands when he talked, making me think of how vehement Wen Yiduo was like in the 1930s. Mr. Meng Lang, who was famous for his poems, was always serious in his look and seldom showed any interests in debates. Mr. Wanzi, one of ICPC’s founding members, always smiled. He was not only good at Chinese and foreign languages, but his public relation skills were also very impressive. Hong Kong member Mr. Pang Kai was very hardworking in helping out with the logistical work. At first, I thought he was a temporary delivery worker. But he could speak very fluent American English when he did simultaneous interpretation on the stage. Although the scholarly Dr. Chen Kuide looked serious, he was very scrupulous with wearing a suit and tie, showing how much he concerned about the beauty of being a gentleman. There were really so many talents in the ICPC. Although they had different characters, they shared the same purpose.

In my view, all of ICPC members should be gifted people who “bear justice on our shoulders and write articles with our excellent hands.” However, there are members who have written anything for a long time. There are even members who produce “garbage words”. But, of course, there are even more “quick gunmen” who never stop writing. In writing styles, there are works talking about romance or trivial matters. But there are also “highly cynical” ones with the tone similar to those during the Cultural Revolution. From my reading experience, only Sha Yexin and Liu Xiaobo’s words could lead me to enjoyment of words. Our PEN centre should be a “tribe of writers”. However, we often simply make ourselves feel good by what we write. It might be a very lovely common problem among writers.

In fact, real writing should be lonely but beautiful. In my own unknown pursuit for writing, I always yearn for literary spirit of peace in my heart. It’s the pursuit of ultimate beauty, the pursuit of elegancy and also the pursuit of the unattainable resplendency.

Because of Liu Xiaobo winning the Nobel Peace Prize, it certainly helps ICPC to gain some reputation. One day, if there would be also a Nobel Literary Prize laureate in the ICPC, it will surely be even more thrilling news topic in the international literary circle.

Nevertheless, this year is the first anniversary of Liu Xiaobo winning the Nobel Peace Prize and it's also ICPC's tenth anniversary. It has a very special symbolic meaning. Over the past

ten years, many ICPC members upheld justice with their words and their indomitable gesture which won the respect of the International PEN and the international community. The ICPC's existence proves that there is another cultural battlefield in China which resists brainwashing in one of the few still existing authoritarian regimes in the world. There is after all another voice tenuously and continuously reaching out from the unified party state media. There is after all an independent cultural field where pen is used as sword to inherit the characteristics of moral integrity and gentleness in Chinese culture.

Ten years have passed like the blink of an eye. In the following ten years, what other eye-catchers would appear in this place? I and my friends are looking forward to it while walking alone....

*(Translated by Patrick Poon)*

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**Ye Huo** is an essayist and ICPC member residing in Guangdong Province, China.

## **Random Memories and Thoughts**

*By Ah Zhong*



Ever since my youth time, I have been a liberal drifting outside the System. Though this kind of the drifting status is mostly due to being rejected by the System, an almost instinctive judgment at that time was to have a contempt for existing in the System which I thought was the breeding ground for mediocre who would attain a sense of security within there.

As a writer, I choose to be in an underground state. As despotism does not tolerate freedom of writing, choosing to be underground can allow me to express more freely and at the same time avoid being eliminated.

The beginning of the new century witnessed big arrests. A number of friends of cultural revival movement were detained and even given heavy sentences at that time. Wang Yiliang, an old friend of mine, was also sentenced in the first year of the new century for two-year imprisonment. And I have been questioned for several times and harassed to be asked to “drink tea” with the public security officers for long.

To be a writer in China, if you refuse to attach yourself to the System, refuse to be mediocre, refuse to flatter, try to express yourself freely and volunteer to carry some historic responsibilities, definitely means you have chosen a dangerous existing situation and the executing sword hanging over your head will fall down at any time.

I read some lines from a book before saying it was a disaster to be a Chinese in the nineteenth century. At that time, Chinese people were transported like animals to the west to be slave workers, and every Chinese head was featuring a long pigtail, a symbol of humiliation...

After time came into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we still don't feel lucky to be Chinese. At least, lots of Chinese people have that feeling.

I don't have very clear memories of corresponding details between Bei Ling and I when Independent Chinese Pen Centre was founded.

At the turn of summer and autumn in 2000 before the founding, Bei Ling was suddenly

arrested in Beijing. I was very surprised when I got the news from internet, and immediately sent the message to Jin Bute. Almost at the same time, Meng Lang carried out rescue plans in the States, which will surely be recorded in the history. Later on, the United States Embassy in Beijing released messages to concern about Bei Ling's arrest, and Bei Ling was deported by the Chinese police. Escorted by Chinese policemen, Bei Ling made a phone call to me at Shanghai Pu Dong Airport. We made short exchanges over the phone, which I sent out onto the internet right after that.

All these happenings were set as meaningful backgrounds for the founding of Independent Chinese Pen Centre.

From *Preparations for ICPC Founding* by Bei Ling, we know the original thoughts and plans of Bei Ling and Meng Lang while founding ICPC, and the whole process of their efforts. In terms of the overall situation of Chinese writers and then reality, this effort was really well-intentioned.

Some details are not clear enough at recall. What remains in memory may be the atmosphere of that time. As a non-governmental and independent writer in the dangerous social situation in China, you have fears all the time with doubtful eyes from your neighbors, harassing visits from street committee aunties and household-registration police. Their hesitating intonation and unspoken subtext make you think about what is their real meaning behind.

The so-called underground poets are actually not underground at all. Underground poets have nowhere to hide in such a heavily-regulated social network. They are monitored. Most of their mails received are already opened, telling you clearly that you are under surveillance. You have no time at all to think whether this surveillance is legal and whether you are illegally violated; your basic rights as a human being are illegally violated by state machines or some social organizations. In such an upside-down society, every "illegal" state doing always wears a "legal" appearance.

At such a time, a writers' organization is a real need to non-governmental and independent writers and poets, or in other words underground writers and poets. When we are executed, when our basic human rights as writers are illegally violated, or when we are sentenced because of free expressions like our friends, a writers' organization, a non-governmental organization for writers shows its importance. At least it can pass over our sufferings and hurts to the international media. A voice can be heard for the victims when the devils are preying. There will be someday in the future when all victims are no longer isolated and hopeless, and the devils can do nothing at all anymore.

This is the meaning of Independent Chinese PEN Centre in reality.

When Bei Ling invited me to join ICPC years ago, I was very glad to accept the invitation, with two basic points. One is that Bei Ling and I are literary colleagues, and the literary function is a common topic to share and also one of the premises for ICPC to exist, and the other is that ICPC should voluntarily bear the responsibility to fight for freedom of writing and speech and also the basic human rights for writers. These are the two basic points why non-governmental independent writers in Mainland China would like to choose ICPC.

Writing up to here makes me think about the Chinese name for ICPC--- Chinese Independent Writers PEN Centre. I should say it is very successful to have that Chinese name for it at the very beginning as it directly shows a standpoint. However, at one of the annual meetings it was changed into the currently Independent Chinese PEN Centre which makes the emphasis and tendency of ICPC shifted away to some extent. I voted for the change of name at that time. However, thinking back now, I feel it is a failure to have the name changed, and regret for my vote with poor thinking at that time. Perhaps we can discuss about the possibility of changing back to the original name.

ICPC is not a band of unorganized mobs or a mere human right organization. ICPC should firstly should the literary mission. Without literature, I think this PEN Centre should perish or turn itself into another kind of organization (like many overseas Chinese organizations). I feel it a great pity if an ICPC member shares no literary recognition and commitment.

In essence, writing is a kind of craftsmanship. It is a basic requirement for writers to have excellent writing skills. It is clearly stated in ICPC's Charter: its members should have "a certain level recognized by colleagues" (roughly a meaning of that but no check of the original). Therefore, some ICPC members behaved against the name as writers. If they are sensible enough, they should not join ICPC. They really don't know what they are talking about. Disgrace for them is maybe a second issue. However, weird writings at ICPC's online forum are surely far away from the honorable title as writers.

After finishing the above writing, power went out all of a sudden in my house and the neighbors were in darkness as well. We had no idea where the problem was. Making a phone call to the electricity company, I was told they would come over to fix as soon as possible. But eventually nobody turned up. Maybe because of Hurricane Irene, emergency repair staffs had no extra time to cover our neighborhood. We spent one night in darkness. Right in that night, I had a dream, dreaming of a Public Security officer coming to talk to me.

The dream was in a total confusion, but the key person of it was that Public Security officer, a thin young man with lots of pimples on his whole face. I kept a far distance with the young man, and the air seemed to be frozen in the pure dark space. The heavy memories taken with me out of China occupied my dream again.

Though far away from China now, we still take freedom as a luxury---once our souls lost freedom, we will never be free inside out even if going far away from that place full of nightmares!

We need a real liberation.

When we are aware that we are not only writers, Chinese writers, even Chinese writers suffered from authoritarianism, but we are a tiny cell of the universe as well. When you calm down, you may hear flowing of the universe and thundering of the earth rotating. As writers, we are lucky enough to be at the front of human liberation; and the Pen Centre as a consolidation of writers is a power we can reply on.

The above writing is for the 10th anniversary of ICPC founding.

September 1, 2011

*(Translated by CHEN Biao)*

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**Ah Zhong**, pseudonym of LI Yunzhong, writer, poet, and member of ICPC. His works are banned in China, especially in Shanghai where he is from.



## **Founding History of PEN International**

*By Yu Zhang*



The primary founder of PEN International, aka International PEN, was Mrs. Dawson-Scott, an English novelist and poet, whose maiden name was Catherine Amy Dawson. She was once better known as Mrs. Sappho, and later as “Mother of PEN”.

### **1, Mother of PEN**

Mrs. Sappho, organizer of To-morrow Club, was a novelist whose real name was Mrs. Dawson-Scott, and maiden name Catherine Amy Dawson.



Catherine Dawson was born at Dulwich village in southern suburb of London on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1865. Her father Ebenezer Dawson was a brick manufacturer, while her mother Catherine Armstrong was a Scottish descendant.

Catherine Dawson graduated from high school at 18 and started to earn her own living as a secretary of an elderly blind Professor Jennings, including reading aloud for him several hours a day. Professor Jennings liked her very much, especially for her clear and pleasant voice. He did not only taught her a lot of knowledge including Greek and Logics as well as Skepticism as being not credulous to others' saying, but also paid her £ 400 a year, a very high wage those days when a skilled worker or ordinary clerk had an income below £ 100 a year while an university professor got £ 700-1000 a year for salary and other subsidies. When Professor Jennings died 4 years later, Amy was 22 who had saved enough to move to London and rented a flat there. She started her writing career by publishing on newspapers her poems, short stories, etc. to earn her a little money for her living without just using up her little fortune.

In 1888, Catherine Dawson was 23 when she published under her name of C.A. Dawson her first book Charades for Home Acting. One year later, She published at her own expense her first literary creation, a 210-page long poem Sappho, an epic eulogizing the famous ancient Greek woman poet. As the poem fully expressed the feminist idea of the romantic young author to seek every kind of freedom, she became nicknamed as Sappho to her friends and other acquaintances. Three year later, her second literary book was still a collection of poems directly entitled as Idylls of Womanhood, thus establishing her literary reputation as a feminist poet.

In 1896, Catherine Dawson married Dr. Horatio Francis Ninian Scott, a Scottish from North Ireland and a junior partner of the physicians attending the Royal Family, and then assisted her husband and taught her children instead of writing. Six years later, Dr. Scott eventually felt disgusted with London and so persuaded his wife, with their daughter of three and son of one year old, to move to West Cowes in the north of Isle of Wight, at the southern end of England. He started a private practice as a country general practitioner, and soon established his career with his skills of healing both in medicine and surgery. After she had given the birth of her second son in 1904, Mrs. Dawson-Scott was freed completely from daily household duties, eventually living an easy and relaxed life day by day, and so germinated an idea to write again. In 1906, fourteen years after she had quitted from the literary world, Mrs. Dawson-Scott, aged 41, published her first novel *The Story of Anna Beames* under a penname Mrs. Sappho, and two years later the second novel *The Burden* under her name of C.A. Dawson Scott. Then she became so productive as to deliver seven more books in six years until the First World War would break out in 1914, including five novels, a nonfiction and a poetry anthology; and some short stories. In 1910, Scott family moved back near London. As a senior poet and new novelist, Mrs. Dawson-Scott returned to literary London.

In 1914, First World War would break out. Dr. Scott joined the Royal Army Medicine Corps (RAMC) and was sent to France, leaving his wife alone to take care of 3 children at school. It was at the first week after the outbreak of the war that Mrs. Dawson-Scott showed her extraordinary organizing ability for the first time. She published a letter in the *Times* suggesting women to set up an organization for the civil or semi-military work so that more men could be enabled to enlist. Many people from all over the country wrote to her and asked her to be the founder, thus setting up the Women's Defence Relief Corps (WDRC) with a thousand members forming many branches within a few weeks. The WDRC was very successful, but she handed it over to others to continue its work two years later as her purely patriotic enthusiasm gradually rose to a higher level concerned with the harms of war and the world peace. Her attention focused again on the issues of writing and writers.

Mrs. Dawson-Scott specially cared for, and was kind to, the ambitious young writers, particularly those hardly tolerated in society for their rebelling against the traditional doctrines. She did many reviews of their works, and invited authors of first novels to tea, or those hard-ups to a good meal and then gave them some tins of foods to take home. Thus, she made friends with many youths who called her Mrs. Sappho. She often introduced the new talents to meet her established old friends and recommended the promising ones to the editors, literary agents and publishers whom she had known well. These made her an idea to found the To-Morrow Club providing "writers of tomorrow" with the circumstances and opportunities

for their exchanges, studies, inquires and developments, and to expand the home parties to the Club's dinner meetings and lectures.

In the spring of 1917, Mrs. Sappho, aged over 50, founded her second organization in her idea, the To-Morrow Club, the predecessor of International PEN. The name "The To-Morrow" meant that its members would be writers "tomorrow" though many of them were just the fons of literature at the time of "today", or so-called "literary youth". This established writer appointed herself its Fixtures Secretary, planning and ascertaining the subject, speaker and chairperson of every meeting for "writers of tomorrow". At those meetings, those literary youths could not only communicate with and learn from each other, but also draw experiences from her established friends who offered the lectures and chatting, seek advices and helps, and got encouragements and comments. Moreover, Mrs. Sappho sometimes invited specially the literary agents and editors whom she knew well to attend the dinners, and encouraged the tomorrow's writers to take such opportunities of meeting them.

The Club was very successful under the direction and scheming of Mrs. Sappho. From 1918, the weekly dinner meeting and lecture became conventional. Her eighth novel *Wastralls* also came out in the same year, resuming her writing state of a book per year. In November, the First World War formally ended with Briton as one of the victors, the families that had been separated by the war was about to reunite soon. Everything appeared to go upon highway.

Just what was called as happiness was what misfortunes leaned on, or extreme joy begot sorrow, so that it was also hard for the victors to avoid the byproduct of war -- family splitting, which occurred after Mrs. Sappho and her husband got a short reunion. Not long after he had demobilized from army to be back in London in 1919, Dr. Scott felt that his wife's impulsive emotion and social enthusiasm could not fit his aspiration to restore a quite family livelihood at all. Although her affection toward her husband was very deep, Mrs. Sappho could not possibly return to the role of Mrs. Dawson-Scott as the housewife of a country doctor. The old couple of over 20 years marriage decisively divorced very quickly, which became her biggest failure throughout her life and made her never be relived. It led her even more squint toward the psychics and psychological research, thus trying to communicate Dr. Scott's spirit several years after he had died, which would become a main part of the spiritualist notes *From Four Who Are Dead* (1926) published 7 years later, and 10 years later, or 8 years after International PEN would be founded, founding a spiritualist organization Survival League. Beyond the emotional and spiritual life, however, the divorce to Mrs. Sappho, a de facto "wartime single mother" already for 5 years, did not make significant impact upon or change of her livelihood, let alone her children who had grown up. Mrs. Sappho resided in London for nine months a year to keep on her literary and social activities. Beside the weekly events of the To-morrow

Club, she had a salon of afternoon tea at home on a Sunday monthly, with her daughter's assistance, to host 20 or more different guests relevant to the writings, including old and new friends in the local literary society, and sometimes visiting writers, reporters, editors and publishers from other countries. Her social circle became bigger and bigger.

Every summer, Mrs. Sappho took her children to stay at a country cottage Levorna in Cornwall for 3 months. She sometimes also invited some of her friends to meet each other for a vacation, to enjoy natural scenes and peasant foods, and discuss their works and ideas.

## **2. Birth of PEN**

In 1921, it was fourth successful years since Mrs. Sappho created the To-Morrow Club. Following the publication of *Wastralls*, her first postwar novel in 1918, two more novels were published at a rate of a book per year. Her fourth novel has also been finalized. In July, Sappho went to Cornwall and rented the beach villa Levorna for summer as usual, writing her next novel *The Green Stones*. However, her daughter Marjorie who had been with each other for many years could not accompany her this time. Marjorie, just turned 21, had been working at the British Passport Control in Warsaw about a year, and received a long letter from her mother every week. Later on, she published the relevant contents of those letters when she recalled the early history of. PEN.

In a letter dated on 29 July, Mrs. Sappho mentioned her new idea for the first time, “Levorna, Thursday. Marjorie! I’ve got an Idea! A Dining Club—men and women of repute. I am going to write to Violet (Hunt) about it—she and I could do it—it neatly cuts out unnecessary husbands and wives. Tuesdays for the Dinners—8 p.m. the Florence Restaurant.”

In her following letter to Marjorie six days later, Mrs. Sappho mentioned for the first time the membership of the Club as P.P.E.N.—Poet, Playwright, Editor and Novelist, later abbreviated to PEN. In the further following letter, she began using clearly the name of Pen Club, and considered its internationality.

Mrs. Sappho set up the first Dinner for the formal foundation of PEN Club at Florence Restaurant, Rupert Street, Piccadilly Circus, in central London on Tuesday 5. Most invitees praised her idea and agreed to join PEN.

On 5 October 1921, 43 writers attended the Inaugural Dinner, and all of them joined the PEN, regarded from that date as "Foundation Members." In addition to Mrs. Sappho and her daughter, 41 individuals are listed in alphabetical order as follows:

1. Arthur Beverley Baxter (1891-1964);
2. Victor Bridges (1878-1972);
3. Ethel Coxon (f)
4. Charles Seddon Evans (1883-1944);
5. John Farquharson (1882-?);
6. John Galsworthy (1867-1933);
7. Walter Lionel George (1882-1926);
8. Muriel Morgan Gibbon (f);
9. Louis Golding (1895–1958);
10. Austin Harrison (1873-1928);
11. Edith Shackleton Heald (f, 1984-1976)
12. M.T. Hogg (f);
13. Percy Hord (f);
14. Isobel Violet Hunt (f, 1862-1942);
15. Edgar Alfred Jepson (1863-1938);
16. Fr[iniw]yd Tennyson Jesse (f, 1889-1958);
17. Sheila Kaye-Smith (f, 1887–1956);
18. Lamburn;
19. Mrs. Lamburn;
20. Lewis Rose McLeod (1875-?);
21. Arthur E. Mann (1876-1972);
22. Mrs. Elizabeth Craig Mann (1883-1980);
23. Ethel Colburn Mayne (f, 1870-1941);
24. Edgar Charles Middleton (1894-1939);
25. Mrs. Yevonde Middleton (1893-1975);
26. Elinor Mordaunt (1872-1942);
27. Hermon Ould (1885-1951);
28. Edward Raymond Thompson (1872-1928);
29. Hylde Rhodes (f);
30. Kathlyn Rhodes (f, 1878-1962);
31. Marion Ryan (f);
32. Horace Shipp (1891-1961);
33. May Sinclair (f, 1862 - 1946);
34. Stephen Southwold (1887-1964);
35. Winifred Stephens Whale (f, 1870–1944)
36. Muriel Stuart (f, 1885-1967);
37. Netta Syrett (f, 1865-1943);
38. Rebecca West (f, 1892-1983);

39. Kate Douglas Wiggin (f, 1856-1923);
40. Stanley Wrench;
41. Mrs. Violet Louise Stanley Wrench (1880-1966).

Among the participants, there were 25 women and 18 men. Before the dinner, Mrs. Sappho failed to get Mr. Galsworthy agree to be the President, but after discussion at the meeting he was finally persuaded to serve as the President for a year. The Secretary should have been none other than Mrs. Sappho, but she mildly refused it for excuse of her poor health. Then her daughter Marjorie was elected as Honorary Secretary, and Austin Harrison, editor of *English Review*, as Honorary Treasurer. At the dinner, members of the first Executive Committee were also elected, including Harrison, McLeod, Evans, Shipp, Golding, West and Mrs. Mann.

A week after on October 12, the Executive Committee held its first meeting at the office of the *English Review* in Bedford Square, London. Harrison was elected its Chairman. The Committee also agreed to consult some individuals in Europe and North America for advices on whom to contact for creating PEN centers in their countries, named a number of well-known authors to invite to join English PEN or to be the Honorary Members in others countries.

As Harrison failed to demonstrate a strong leadership, the Committee asked Galsworthy to be its chairman after the first meeting. He started to chair the Committee at its second meeting another week later. According to the decision made by the second meeting, PEN held its first “ordinary” dinner in late October after its foundation, which 72 individuals attended, including several guests from the United States, Canada and other foreign countries.



*John Galsworthy*

On 10 November, the Committee held its third meeting and approved 24 new members, including Gilbert Keith Chesterton and Joseph Conrad. Marjorie Dawson-Scott was instructed to write to a number of well-established authors abroad and to invite them as the Honorary Members. On January, 2002, a number of world celebrities had accepted the invitation to become the honorary members, including 5 of 12 laureates of Nobel Prize in Literature alive at the time and a future laureate: Selma Lagerlöf (1909), Maurice Maeterlinck (1911), Romain Rolland (1915), Knut Hamsun (1920). Anatole France (1921) and William Butler Yeats (1923). The others famous writers included Thomas Hardy, Johan Bojer , Geoge Brandes, Martin Andersen Nexø, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, George William Russell and Artur Schnitzler.

As the work on international communications was mounting up while the members of English PEN was rapidly increasing, it became too difficult for a small Executive Committee to deal with both matters. Mrs. Sappho wife raised her suggestion as made from the beginning, to set up an International Committee to take over the duties to organize and contact the centers abroad. The Executive Committee approved her proposal. The International Committee was to be led by Mr. Galsworthy and Mrs. Sappho, including several London-based members who had international contacts, e.g., an Executive Committee member Shipp, a founding member Stephens Whale, and three new members William Archer, Rosita Forbes and Edward Shanks. Marjorie was also the Secretary. On 26 February 1922, the International Committee of English PEN held its first meeting at Mrs. Sappho's home, while there had been the news of a French PEN Center already in its foundation and several other centers in their preparations.

On 1 May 1923, the First Congress of International PEN held its first dinner at Hotel Cecil in London. Besides the English PEN as its headquarters, there had been 11 centers set up in 10 countries, Barcelona (Spain), Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Italy, Madrid (Spain), Norway, Romania, Sweden, and USA, which sent their delegates. 164 participants included also the honorary and ordinary members. The ideals of International PEN were developed in England by Mrs. Sappho, Mother of PEN, from her inspiration, expanded at home and abroad by many fellow writers with through their resonations, and responded by more and more writers from various countries, tending to their achievement.

**References:**

- 1 · Marjorie Watts, P.E.N. The Early Years 1921-1929, Archive Press, London, 1971
- 2 · PEN International website, <http://www.internationalpen.org.uk/>

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## ***A Brief of Independent Chinese PEN Centre***

*Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC) is a nongovernmental, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization beyond borders based on free association of those who write, edit, translate, research and publish literature work in Chinese and dedicated to freedom of expression for the workers in Chinese language and literature, including writers, journalists, translators, scholars and publishers over the world. ICPC is a member organization of International PEN, the global association of writers dedicated to freedom of expression and the defence of writers suffering governmental repression. Through the worldwide PEN network and its own membership base in China and abroad, ICPC is able to mobilize international attention to the plight of writers and editors within China attempting to write and publish with a spirit of independence and integrity, regardless of their political views, ideological standpoint or religious beliefs.*

*ICPC was founded in 2001 by a group of Chinese writers in exile and in China, including its founding President LIU Binyan, a prominent author, journalist and activist who passed away in exile in USA on Dec. 5 2005, Vice-president and author ZHENG Yi, Executive Director and poet BEI Ling and Freedom to Write Committee Coordinator and poet MENG Lang, all of whom have been in exile in USA. In November of same year, ICPC was approved as a chapter of the International PEN at its annual congress in London. Since then, ICPC has made vigorous efforts to promote and defend the freedom of writing and publication and the free flow of information in China, and been deeply concerned about the state of civil society and open discourse there.*

*In September and October, 2009, ICPC held its Fourth Internet Congress of the Membership Assembly to have elected 5 Board members and 2 alternates to fill its vacancies, including the President Tienchi MARTIN-LIAO (Germany) and 2 Vice-presidents Patrick POON (Hong Kong) and QI Jiazhen (Australia). The past president Dr. LIU Xiaobo, who has been imprisoned since December 8, 2008, was elected Honorary President.*