

## PENGUIN CHINA ANNOUNCES NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE PUBLISHING LIST

### List of books about and from China to launch 2010

*Beijing, Frankfurt, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2009*: Penguin, the international publishing company, announced today the establishment of a new publishing programme highlighting writing about and from China.

The list, based out of Hong Kong, will feature translations of Chinese language works, as well as books originally written in English. Starting in 2010, Penguin China will publish five to eight books a year covering both fiction and non-fiction subjects. Since opening an office in Beijing in 2005, Penguin has built a strong reputation for developing and finding new and contemporary Chinese writing, including *Wolf Totem* by Jiang Rong (which has become China's top selling contemporary novel of all time and was awarded the inaugural Man Asian Booker Prize), *I Love Dollars* by Zhu Wen, *English* by Wang Gang, and *Lust, Caution* by Eileen Chang.

In addition, Penguin has consistently developed its support for Chinese writers and translators, for example by founding the Chinese-English Literary Translation course (CELT), in partnership with China's General Administration of Press and Publications, Arts Council England, and the Australian Council for the Arts. This hugely popular workshop, now in its third year, aims to offer skills training and networking for early/mid career literary translators of English and Chinese, with acclaimed translators Howard Goldblatt (translator of *Wolf Totem*), Julia Lovell, and Bonnie MacDougall, and authors Marina Lewycka, Hari Kunzru, Bi Feiyu, Yan Lianke, and others on the previous faculty.

Jo Lusby, General Manager of Penguin China, commented: "This new English language publishing programme from China is a great opportunity to develop and build new voices around the region. We believe Penguin is uniquely positioned in China to seek out the best writing, publishing works for the regional English market and beyond. Just as Penguin did in India twenty years ago, we hope to find the best local talent, and use this platform to bring new writers to international attention."

Penguin is delighted to announce the first three titles of the programme:

- ***The Civil Servant's Notebook* by Wang Xiaofang:** A novel of politics, corruption, and intrigue from China's preeminent writer of the genre, set in the inner circle of a crooked provincial government department and following the inner fight to become city Mayor.
- ***A Peking Murder: Or Murder at Fox Tower* by Paul French:** On a winter's night in 1936 Peking, as Japanese troops surrounded the city poised to invade, the body of a 16 year old English girl, Pamela Werner was discovered. Dumped underneath the ancient Fox Tower, she had been brutally murdered in a crime that shocked and terrified an already nervous international community. In this true crime book, Shanghai historian Paul French uncovers Pamela's double life – by week, a happy schoolgirl, by weekend, a member of an underground swingers club and sexual cult – and solves a long unsolved murder.
- ***Living Fossils: The Pandas of China's West* by Dr. Zhang Zhihe and Dr. Sarah Bexell:** *Living Fossils* documents in beautiful colour the panda's fight for survival, and the secrets of their existence told by the people battling to save the species. Renowned evolutionary biologist Marc Bekoff will write the introduction.

Over the past four years, Penguin has led the way in China becoming the first international publishing company to make its front and backlist of English publishing available in e-book form to readers in China through its partnership with Beijing-based Founder Apabi Group. It is also the only international trade publisher with its own consumer-facing website (in Chinese and English) and is very active in viral marketing and campaigning with its own online club for readers, the Penguin Feathers. Penguin China has also established joint publishing programmes with Chinese language publishers for a wide range of adult and children's titles.

- Ends -

## **Notes to Editors:**

**Penguin Group (China)** was legally established in August 2005, to establish a foothold for the brand. From its base in Beijing, Penguin develops distribution of English language titles, establishes Chinese joint publishing projects, and seeks English publication rights to works from and about China.

**Penguin** is one of the world's most beloved published brands. Since its establishment in London in 1935, Penguin has published works by 25 Nobel Prize winners, 16 Pulitzer Prize winners, and 10 Booker Prize winners. From its offices in 11 countries of the world, Penguin publishes more than 4000 titles each year for readers from birth to retirement, ranging from popular, literary, and classic fiction to non-fiction, travel, lifestyle, children's, and reference. Penguin is a Pearson company.

## Further information on titles mentioned above:

- ***The Civil Servant's Notebook* by Wang Xiaofang:** A novel of politics, corruption, and intrigue from China's preeminent writer of the genre. Set in the inner circle of a crooked provincial government department, two municipal officials fight for influence and power in an internal race to become the next city Mayor. As the battle draws to a close, the civil servants find they must use everything at their disposal to see their man succeed.

Yang Hengda is the head of the general office, a civil servant privy to all the secrets of the incumbent Mayor. From his position of power and influence, he reveals the secrets of how he climbed to the top, the retired politicians who still pull his strings, and the conspiracies and subterfuge carried out by his fellow civil servants on behalf of their bosses. What he narrates is a breathless journey of plots, scandals, sabotage, featuring bribery, blackmail, and prostitution that exist under the surface of contemporary China. As the story unfolds, all players are tainted by this grab for power, creating repercussions that are felt beyond the secretive halls of government.

**Wang Xiaofang** is China's most popular writer of political fiction. Known as "officialdom writing", this is part of an established and popular genre in China today, probing into the inner workings of a government system otherwise invisible to the general reader. Wang himself is uniquely qualified to write these stories: he was the private secretary of Ma Xiaodong, the Vice-Mayor of Shenyang executed for corruption in 2001. His writings tell stories that only a Chinese writer can tell, of the moral bankruptcy and the common individuals caught up in it that goes to the very heart of contemporary China. *The Civil Servant's Notebook* was originally published in Chinese by the Chinese Writer's Publishing House under the title *Gongwuyuan biji* (公务员笔记).

- ***A Peking Murder: Or Murder at Fox Tower* by Paul French:** On a winter's night in 1930's Peking, as Japanese troops waited on the edges of the city, set to invade, the body of a 16 year old English girl, Pamela Werner was discovered. Dumped underneath the ancient Fox Tower, she had been brutally murdered and disemboweled. The crime shocked and terrified an already nervous international community, who were anxiously living out a privileged colonial-era existence that was soon to come to an end.

British Embassy officials were keen to pin the blame on the local Triad mafia. Edgar Snow, the American writer with unique access to Mao's inner circle, believed anti-Communist elements may have in fact mistaken Pamela for his wife, Helen, as the body was found not far from his own courtyard house.

Joint investigations between dogged Chinese and British detectives soon uncovered the shady secrets of Peking's international society. By week, Pamela was a high school border in nearby Tientsin and player on the hockey team; at weekends, however, she posed for glamour photographs and frequented a swingers club of older men and young women, run by an American dentist.

In this gripping true crime book, Shanghai-based historian and author **Paul French** delves into a society on the edge of disintegration, and the seedy mores that existed behind a prim Victorian exterior – and seeks to solve the mystery of a 73-year-old crime lost in the turmoil of invasion and revolution that followed in its wake.

- ***Living Fossils: The Pandas of China's West* by Dr. Zhang Zhihe and Dr. Sarah Bexell:** The Giant Panda is many things to many people: a living teddy bear, an evolutionary cul-de-sac, a politicized pawn of Chinese international policy, and much more. As the logo of a global conservation organization WWF, above all the panda represents the ongoing fight to save vulnerable species and habitats and the controversies involved. As Dr. Sarah Bexell, conservation education specialist at the Chengdu Panda Research Base and co-author of *Living Fossils* says, “If we cannot save a creature as loveable as the panda, then what hope is there for other less photogenic species?”

In truth, relatively little is known about pandas. Not found outside of China's western mountains, pandas were only discovered by Westerners in 1869. A 'living fossil', the panda

has existed unchanged for over three million years, and their ancestors date back eight million. Pandas are the only species to have a false thumb (in fact, an adapted wrist bone) that allows them to hold bamboo stalks much as humans do. Their recent struggle to reproduce without human intervention is well documented, and breeding programmes seek to protect the diversity of a rapidly dwindling gene pool. All pandas, including those born in foreign zoos, belong by law to the People's Republic of China.

*Living Fossils* documents in beautiful colour the panda's fight for survival, and the secrets of their existence told by the people battling to save the species. Through the stunning photographs of Chengdu Panda Base director Dr. Zhang Zhihe, he and his colleague Dr. Bexell, offer an up close, and personal look at the pandas of Chengdu, their life stories, and the challenge for survival. Renowned evolutionary biologist Marc Bekoff will write the introduction.