

For Immediate Release

Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* Wins the Inaugural Man Asian Literary Prize

Hong Kong, 10 November 2007 – A panel of three internationally acclaimed authors and experienced literary judges named Beijing-based Chinese author Jiang Rong the winner of the 2007 Man Asian Literary Prize for his novel *Wolf Totem*, a fictional account of life in the 1970s that draws on Jiang's personal experience of the grasslands of China's border region.

The Man Asian Literary Prize aims to recognise the best of new Asian literature in English and to bring it to the attention of the world literary community. Works submitted by Asian authors for consideration must not yet have been published in English, although they may have been published in other languages.

Adrienne Clarkson, Chair of the judges for the inaugural prize praised *Wolf Totem*: "A panoramic novel of life on the Mongolian grasslands during the Cultural Revolution, this masterly work is also a passionate argument about the complex interrelationship between nomads and settlers, animals and human beings, nature and culture. The slowly developing narrative is rendered in vivid detail and has a powerful cumulative effect. A book like no other. Memorable."

The prize winner was announced at a celebratory dinner at Cipriani Hong Kong. Jiang Rong was awarded USD 10,000 and the book's translator, Howard Goldblatt, was awarded USD 3,000. Jiang was unable to travel to Hong Kong due to ill health, and the prize was accepted on his behalf by the publisher of his original Chinese novel, Li Bo, and Jo Lusby of Penguin China, who will publish the English version in 2008.

Wolf Totem was originally published in Chinese by the Changjiang Art and Culture Publishing House, and has been widely acclaimed in China. Last year Penguin acquired the English-language rights to *Wolf Totem* and the book is scheduled for release in English in March 2008.

The judging panel for the 2007 Man Asian Literary Prize is: Adrienne Clarkson, former Governor General of Canada (Chair); André Aciman, New York-based author and scholar, and Nicholas Jose, writer, scholar and former Cultural Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in China.

The shortlist of five from which the winner was chosen included Filipino writer Jose Dalisay Jr. for *Soledad's Sister*, Indian writer Reeti Gadekar for *Families at Home*, Myanmar's Nu Nu Yi Inwa for *Smile As They Bow*, Chinese writer Jiang Rong for *Wolf Totem* and Hong Kong's Xu Xi for *Habit of a Foreign Sky*.

Commenting on each of the other shortlisted works the judges had this to say:

"Jose Dalisay Jr's *Soledad's Sister* is full of narrative surprise, artfully put together and richly observed. It offers an unillusioned, compassionate portrayal of contemporary society from a Philippines perspective, and is utterly compelling. The characters engage us in the epic, yet

very local nature of their quest for dignity and justice. A work of warmth, humanity and confidence."

"Reeti Gadekar's *Families at Home* is a robustly humorous intrigue that delves into the murky corners of modern Delhi. The rich cast of characters is evoked with satirical gusto and the social analysis is sharp and spirited. Highly enjoyable and a real eye-opener."

"Xu Xi's *Habit of a Foreign Sky* is a sophisticated global fiction set against the background of financial upheaval with a complex female protagonist at the centre. The fine charting of this woman's journey, with its shifting and ambiguous professional and emotional allegiances, makes this something of a Jamesian tale relocated to contemporary Hong Kong, Shanghai and New York. Seductive and lucid."

"Nu Nu Yi Inwa's *Smile As They Bow* is a fascinating work of prose fiction from Burma that depicts, with extraordinary detail, energy and intimacy, the textures of a life that is both traditional and transgressive. It also tells an unconventional love story, mixing tough realism with dreams and romance in a quite moving way. An insider's view, highly sensual, informed and frank."

This first Man Asian Literary Prize received over 240 submissions from throughout Asia from well-established as well as first-time authors. Entries included works translated from several Asian languages as well as works originally in English.

Man Group plc is the sponsor of the Man Asian Literary Prize, in cooperation with Asian Literary Prize Ltd. Man Group also supports a variety of other programmes as well as charities aimed at furthering literature and literacy, including the Man Hong Kong International Literary Festival, a 10-day event that attracts authors from around the world and thousands of attendees. Separately, Man Group also sponsors the annual Man Booker Prize and the biennial Man Booker International Prize. Both these prizes are awarded and administered by the Booker Prize Foundation.

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Additional and updated information, including high resolution photos, available from the Website: www.manasianliteraryprize.org

Notes to Editors

The Man Asian Literary Prize will be awarded in November 2007. This major new literary prize aims to recognise the best of new Asian literature and to bring it to the attention of the world literary community. A distinguished panel of judges selects a single work of fiction to be awarded the prize each year. Works submitted for consideration must not yet have been published in English, although they may have been published in other languages. The prize is jointly administered by representatives of the Man Hong Kong International Literary Festival, the University of Hong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and is sponsored by Man Group plc, a leading global financial services firm based in London.

Man Group plc is a leading global provider of alternative investment products and solutions. The company employs 1,600 people in 13 countries, with key centres in London and Pfäffikon (Switzerland), and offices in Chicago, Dubai, Hong Kong, Montevideo, Nassau, New York, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo and Toronto. Man Group plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange (EMG) and is a constituent of the FTSE 100 Index. Further information on Man Group can be found at www.mangroupplc.com.

Biography for Jiang Rong

Chinese author Jiang Rong was born in Jiangsu in 1946, and graduated from the middle school attached to China Art College in 1966. In 1967, Jiang joined the first wave of intellectuals who moved to the countryside as volunteers, living with nomadic communities on the Chinese border of Inner and Outer Mongolia for 11 years. Following his return to Beijing in 1978, Jiang embarked on postgraduate studies in political science at the renowned Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and assumed an academic position at a Beijing university. Now retired, he lives in Beijing, with his wife. *Wolf Totem* is a fictional account of life in the 1970s that draws on Jiang's personal experience of the grasslands of China's border region. Translated by Howard Goldblatt, *Wolf Totem* will be released worldwide by Penguin in March 2008.

Synopsis of *Wolf Totem*

It is the final 1960s heyday for the people of the Inner Mongolian grasslands—a time when an age-old balance based on culture and tradition was maintained between the nomads, their livestock, and the wild wolves who roamed the plains. Beijing intellectual Chen Zhen volunteers to live in a remote nomadic settlement on the border of Inner and Outer Mongolia. There, he discovers life of apparent idyllic simplicity based on an eternal struggle between the wolves and the humans in their fight to survive. Chen learns about the rich spiritual relationship, and respect that only equals can feel, that exists between these adversaries. After many years of solitude, his peace of mind is shattered with the arrival of his kinfolk sent from the cities to bring modernity and productivity to the remote grasslands. Once the careful balance between the wolves and humans is disrupted, however, culture and tradition is damaged, and the environment suffers.