

The 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize - Longlist Announced

Hong Kong, 22 July 2008 – The Administrative Committee for the 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize has today announced the longlist of works for this prize:

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| Tulsi Badrinath, <i>Melting Love</i> | Sumana Roy, <i>Love in the Chicken's Neck</i> |
| Hans Billimoria, <i>Ugly Tree</i> | Vaibhav Saini, <i>On the Edge of Pandemonium</i> |
| Ian Rosales Casocot, <i>Sugar Land</i> | Salma, <i>Midnight Tales</i> |
| Han Dong, <i>Banished!</i> | Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi, <i>Lost Flamingoes of Bombay</i> |
| Anjum Hasan, <i>Neti, Neti</i> | Lakambini A. Sitoy, <i>Sweet Haven</i> |
| Daisy Hasan, <i>The To-Let House</i> | Sarayu Srivatsa, <i>The Last Pretence</i> |
| Abdullah Hussein, <i>The Afghan Girl</i> | Miguel Syjuco, <i>Ilustrado</i> |
| Tsutomu Igarashi, <i>To the Temple</i> | Amit Varma, <i>My Friend, Sancho</i> |
| Rupa Krishnan, <i>Something Wicked This Way Comes</i> | Yu Hua, <i>Brothers</i> |
| Murong Xuecun, <i>Leave Me Alone, Chengdu</i> | Alfred A. Yuson, <i>The Music Child</i> |
| Kavery Nambisan, <i>The Story that Must Not be Told</i> | |

This longlist of 21 unpublished works of Asian fiction in English will be reviewed and evaluated by the 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize judges, who will announce a shortlist of works in October 2008. The winner will be announced on Thursday, 13 November at an awards ceremony in Hong Kong.

The judging panel for the 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize is: Adrienne Clarkson, former Governor General of Canada (Chair); Nicholas Jose, writer, scholar and former Cultural Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in China; and Pankaj Mishra, acclaimed Indian writer and thinker.

The 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize longlist was chosen from submissions received from all over Asia. The largest single group of submissions was from India, followed by the Philippines. The rest came from other countries throughout the region. The Prize received submissions from well-established as well as first-time authors, and entries included translated works as well as works originally in English.

Peter Gordon, Executive Director of the Man Asian Literary Prize said: "The long list, which contains unpublished works from throughout the region from Japan to Pakistan, demonstrates once again the depth and diversity of Asian contemporary writing. We were pleased that many of the works on last year's long list were published or are scheduled for publication, and we hope that highlighting Asian writers will have a similar effect this year and in the years to come."

Man Group plc is the sponsor of the Man Asian Literary Prize and the annual Man Hong Kong International Literary Festival.

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Additional information on the website:

www.manasianliteraryprize.org

Notes to Editors

The Man Asian Literary Prize will be awarded in November 2008. This major new literary prize aims to recognize 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. The first Prize was awarded to the Chinese writer Jiang Rong for his novel *Wolf Totem* on 10 November 2007. 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 Kong 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 is a world-leading alternative investment management business. With a broad range of funds for institutional and private investors globally, it is known for its performance, innovative product design and investor service. Man manages over USD78 billion¹ and employs 1,600 people in 13 countries worldwide.

The original business was founded in 1783. Today, the parent company, Man Group plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange and ranked in the top 40 companies of the FTSE 100 Index, with a market capitalisation of about USD20.7 billion².

Man supports many awards, charities and initiatives around the world, including sponsorship of the Man Booker literary prizes and the Man Group International Climate Change Award. Further information can be found at www.mangroupplc.com.

¹ At 29 May 2008

² At 29 May 2008

Judges biographies



Adrienne Clarkson came to Canada as a refugee during the War in 1942. A leading figure in Canada's cultural life, Madame Clarkson had a rich and distinguished career in broadcasting, journalism, the arts and the public service. During her career Madame Clarkson received numerous prestigious awards both in Canada and abroad in recognition for her outstanding contribution in professional and charitable endeavours. Madame Clarkson was Governor General of Canada from 1999 to 2005. Madame Clarkson is a judge of the 2006 Scotiabank Giller Prize. Her memoirs were published in the Autumn of 2006.



Nicholas Jose is the author of several acclaimed novels, including *Paper Nautilus*, *The Rose Crossing*, *The Custodians*, *The Red Thread*, and *Original Face*, as well as a memoir, *Black Sheep: Journey to Borrooloola*. He was Cultural Counsellor at the Australian Embassy, Beijing, from 1987 to 1990. He held the Chair of Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide, 2005-08, and now holds a Chair of Writing at the University of Western Sydney. He was a judge of Kiriya Prize in 2004.



The acclaimed Indian writer and thinker **Pankaj Mishra** is the author of New York Time's Notable books *Temptations of the West: How to be Modern in India, Pakistan and Beyond* and *An End to Suffering: The Buddha in the World*, and a novel, *The Romantics*. Mishra's writing has appeared in New York Times, the New York Review of Books, The Guardian, Granta and the New Statesman, among other American, British, and Indian publications.

Information on longlisted authors and works



Born in 1967, **Tulsi Badrinath** lives in Chennai, India. She is a dancer and a writer. Tulsi was on the longlist of the first Man Asian Literary Prize for her novel *The Living God*. *Melting Love* is her second novel.

Melting Love tells the story of an honest curator Harihar Arora at the Madras Museum who pawns an extremely rare gold coin in his custody to meet his daughter's wedding expenses. However the Finance Company in which he has invested his money collapses, and when he hurries to the pawnbroker to plead for the return of the gold coin, only to hear that the pawnbroker has melted the coin for the value of its gold.

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Hans Billimoria was educated in Sri Lanka, Madras and Scotland. In 2005 Hans returned to Pune, India to take on the role of Project Manager of Deep Griha Society's HIV/AIDS Unit. *Ugly Tree* is his first novel.

Ugly Tree has two parallel story lines, a gospel story by the Judas character and the more contemporary tale told through the eyes of Jude Vanderhoven, a Sri Lankan Burgher that was christened Judas by his mother, Sad Mummy. The two stories converge amidst Jedi cronies, talking trees, communal riots, half breed French nuns, wonderfully furious grandfathers, and of course 'the Rabbi' and his 'unfaithful ones.'

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Ian Rosales Casocot was born in the Philippines in 1975. He has won several Don Carlos Palanca Awards and an NVM Gonzalez Prize. He edited *FutureShock Prose: An Anthology of Young Writers and New Literatures* (2002) and published his first short story collection, *Old Movies and Other Stories* (2005), while his stories won him the Philippine Graphic/Fiction Awards (2006-7). He has been published in major publications in the Philippines such as *Story Philippines*.

Sugar Land is the story of three denizens of the small Visayan city of Dumaguete in the Philippines, whose lives come crashing together one August night, at the height of the traditionally festive annual celebration of the city's biggest university. Each one comes to terms with his and her own story, and prepares to finally confront the secret that binds the three of them together.

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Born in Nanjing in 1961, **Han Dong**'s parents took him to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution. He is a poet, essayist, short story writer and novelist. His chief works include: *Dad's Looking Down On Me From The Sky*, *Dynamics Of Love*, *Our Bodies*, *My Plato*, *Bright Scars*, *In The Western Sky*, *Banished!*, *Me and You*, and *A Small Town Hero Strides Forth*.

Banished! takes place in the Cultural Revolution, 1969. Tao and his wife are cadres banished to the countryside, along with their son and the grandparents. The parents face their internal exile with stoicism and pin their hopes for survival on making a real mark on village life. Despite the family's determination, they are prevented from striking real roots in the village by political and cultural tensions.

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Anjum Hasan is author of *Lunatic in my Head* (2007), shortlisted for the Crossword Fiction Award, and *Street on the Hill* (2006). She has been featured in anthologies and journals and she has also contributed to *The Hindu Literary Review*, *Outlook Traveller*, *Indian Review of Books* and *Little Magazine*. Anjum lives in Bangalore, India and works for the India Foundation for the Arts as the editor of *ArtConnect*.

Twenty-five-year-old Sophie Das has moved from Shillong to Bangalore in search of work, fun and liberty. *Neti, Neti's* action follows an increasingly alienated Sophie and her free-spirited friends through offices, pubs, night streets, shopping malls, rock concerts, and the homes of Bangalore's neo-rich. A shocking murder and an infatuation send Sophie back to the small town of her youth.

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Daisy Hasan grew up in Shillong, India. She is currently engaged in a study of South Asian women's art in conflict situations.

The To-Let House captures tells the story of the coming of age of Di, Lee, Kule and Addy. The tale unfolds in the city of Shillong, in the north east – one of India's most troubled areas. As the four children emerge into adolescence, framed by the region's violent search for identity, their inner and outer worlds hold uncanny mirrors to each other.

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Abdullah Hussein, born in 1931, is an Urdu fiction with several novels, novellas and collections of short stories published in the original and in translation in Pakistan and India. His first novel was included in UNESCO's Collection of Representative Works in World Languages in 1999. His second novel *émigré journeys* was published by Serpent's Tail, London, in 2000.

The Afghan Girl is about this Afghan-Scottish girl Yasmin who is a journalist. She is sent by her London newspaper to Pakistan to cover the jihad (holy war) that was being waged by the Afghan mujahideen (holy warriors) against the Soviet Union forces that had invaded and occupied Afghanistan. There she met Joe, a C.I.A. man who was financing and overseeing the jihad on behalf of the American government. An Arab mujahid blackmailed Joe to get his hands on a certain relic that which he thought was in possession of Yasmin's father.

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Born in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan in 1948, **Tsutomu Igarashi** won the Gunzo Magazine's Best New Writer Prize for his story "Ryutaku no Shima" (Isle of the banished) in 1979. While living in Thailand he founded *Tonan Asia Tsuushin* (The Southeast Asian News) in 1987. After returning to Japan he published the magazine *Asian Wave* in 1993, *Asia Bungaku* (Asian Literature) in 1996 and *Bungei Shisho* in 2005. In 1998 he won the top prize in the Yomiuri Newspaper/NTT Printec for his novel *Midori no tegami* (the green letter).

To the Temple is set just inside the Thai border with Cambodia at the time when Pol Pot's forces were putting up a last resistance to the invading Vietnamese army. A middle-aged Japanese man volunteers for a relief organization working in the refugee camps to escape loan sharks who are pursuing him for his father's debt. He learns about the Cambodian refugees' plight through his friendship with his assistant Muon, who has come through extraordinary hardship and danger to get to the camp.

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Rupa Krishnan is educated and works in India. Now she freelances as a management consultant and writes the rest of the time.

Something Wicked This Way Comes is set on the Nilangini Express. A sense of impending doom underline the fragility of the nascent friendship between Kajal who 'really doesn't care much' at first before nightmares of 'bloated death' warn her that the journey might end in misfortune, and Sarat, who is chafing under the rule of his tyrannical and ambitious father.

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Murong Xuecun was born in 1974. He worked as a lawyer, and senior sales manager for a car company, and started to write fiction in 2001. In 2002 when his first novel took China by storm, Murong gave up his job, and devoted himself to writing full time.

Leave Me Alone, Chengdu is a tragi-comic take on love and life in modern China. Three young men, Chen Zhong, Li Liang and Big Head Wang struggle to make their way in Chengdu, China's fifth most populous city. Despite their money-making aspirations, the trio's lives are beset by dead-end jobs, gambling debts, drinking, drugs, and whoring. Complicated relationships with women, whether pregnant mistresses, angry wives or passive lovers compound their misery.

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Kavery Nambisan is an essayist and novelist from Karnataka, India. Her adult novels have been published by Penguin India. *The Scent of Pepper* was published by Penguin UK (2001). She is a regular contributor to the national media on literature and healthcare issues.

The Story That Must not Be Told is about Simon Jesukumar, an ageing widower who lives in a housing colony in Madras. He is stirred by his guilt about the slum, optimistically called Sitara ('The Star') next door. With the reluctant help of a young journalist and his 'surprise' girlfriend, Simon embarks on a journey that ends in an ugly episode with the slum terrorists.

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Sumana Roy's short story "Award-winning Writer" was selected for the anthology *21 Under 40* (Zubaan, 2007); her poems and essays have won prizes in India and British Columbia. A few of her poems have been published by *Biblio* and *Tate Etc* while her review essays have appeared in *Himal Southasian*, *The Hindu*, *Hindustan Times*, *Tehelka*, *Marie Claire* and *The Book Review*. Her short essay won the second prize at the Kala Ghoda Essay Contest 2008.

Love in the Chicken's Neck surrounds Indian English writer Bhaskar Sen who is searching for the subject of his next novel, orphan and revolutionary Nirjhar who is searching for the manuscript of the first Rajbangshi 'novel', Tirna's childhood friend Balram, a Nepali exile who is looking for an appropriate national anthem for a future republic, and Tirna. This is as much a story of Tirna's loves as it is of the amoral character of the small town of Siliguri, the "Chicken's Neck".

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Vaibhav Saini was born in 1979 in New Delhi, India. He has been a student of science at Haryana, New Delhi, and Birmingham, and hopes to work as a scientist in New Delhi in the coming years.

On the Edge of Pandemonium begins one morning when Vijay's father is found dead. Ten years have passed, while Vijay inhabits a life stunted by the past in New York, his mother lives in a lonely house with her two grandchildren, 10-year old Rani and 9-year old Golu, in Vidharba, India. Their separate lives collide when a witch comes back to life, a tout seeks them for revenge, and their fates reverberate with the ripples of choices made long ago.

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Born in 1968 in Tamil Nadu, **Salma's** first poetry collection shocked conservative society where women are supposed to remain silent. In 2003, Salma and three other Tamil women poets faced obscenity charges and violent threats. Salma is now head of the panchayat (local level government body) of Thuvankurichi, near Trichi in Tamil Nadu. The government of Tamil Nadu has appointed her Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board.

Midnight Tales focuses on the inner world of Muslim women in the conservative society of Tamil Nadu in south India. This is a world in which women remain within the home, in purdah, while their men occupy the space of the outside world. There is much in these different households that goes on in the hours before dawn, when women wake up to a world as yet absented by men, and where they share thoughts, lives, joys and sorrows.

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Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi's first novel, *The Last Song of Dusk*, translated into ten languages, won the Betty Trask Award (UK); the Premio Grinzane Cavour (Italy); and was nominated for the IMPAC Prize. Shanghvi lives in Bombay.

A beautiful but twisted affair between a married older woman and a young photographer takes centre stage in *The Lost Flamingoes of Bombay*, a sharp and ravishing examination of modern India's perverse fascination with celebrity, the tension between public morality and private desire, and all the awful things we commit in the name of love.

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Lakambini A. Sitoy is the author of two collections of short stories, *Mens Rea* (1998) and *Jungle Planet* (2005). Sitoy has won awards in the Philippines for her short fiction and journalism, including Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards and a Manila Critics' Circle National Book Award (1999). Her fiction has appeared in anthologies in her home country and in the United States, Britain and Europe.

Sweet Haven tells about Narita Pastor who abandoned her bastard daughter to fulfill her dream of independence in Manila. Raised by her grandparents and aunt in the peaceful university community of Sweethaven, Naia grows into a spirited teenager. Now the family are thrown into turmoil when pornographic footage of the 15-year old spreads through the internet and cheap cds sold by sidewalk vendors.

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Sarayu Srivatsa has written extensively on the evolution and growth of cities in newspapers and journals. Her book *Where the Streets Lead* (1997) won the JIA Award. She won the Picador-Outlook non-fiction writing award (2002), and has co-authored two books with Dom Moraes: *Out of God's Oven*, nominated for the Kiriya Prize, and *The Long Strider*. *The Last Pretence* is Sarayu Srivatsa's first work of fiction.

The Last Pretence pulls the reader into magical Machilipatnam, a small town on the Coromandel coast in South India. When Mallika's firstborn, her daughter Tara dies at birth, finds herself incapable of loving Siva, except when she believes him to be Tara. Siva, eager for his mother's love becomes increasingly confused about his gender, and his sexuality, and a tragedy unfolds.

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Miguel Syjuco was born in Makati, Philippines in 1976. His fiction and poetry have appeared in national publications and anthologies. He co-founded and edited an online publication, Localvibe.com. He has also done editorial work for various international newspapers.

Illustrado begins on a winter morning in 2002 in New York City, when a body was found floating in the Hudson River. Miguel receives an anonymous email suggesting foul play of the most insidious kind and returns to the Philippines to determine if the death was a murder connected to an unfinished manuscript – a novel about the corrupt roots of power of the prominent Filipino families which has disappeared.

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Amit Varma is a writer based in Mumbai. He has written for publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *the Guardian*, *the Observer* and *Wisden*, in addition to numerous Indian newspapers. He won the 2007 Bastiat Prize for Journalism. He is best known for writing the popular blog India Uncut (www.indiauncut.com). *My Friend, Sancho* is his first novel.

My Friend, Sancho is set in 2008 Mumbai. Abir Ganguly, a young journalist on the crime beat, is asked by his editor to write a profile of Mohammad Iqbal, the victim of a police encounter. In the course of writing about another man's life, his own is transformed. The reason is Iqbal's daughter, Muneeza – or Sancho, as her father used to call her.

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Yu Hua was born in 1960 in Zhejiang, China. He has published four novels, six collections of stories, and three collections of essays. In 2002 Yu Hua became the first Chinese writer to win the prestigious James Joyce Foundation Award. His novel *To Live* was awarded the Premio Grinzane Cavour (1998), and *To Live* and *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* were named two of the last decade's ten most influential books in China. Yu Hua lives in Beijing.

Brothers is a big, spirited comedy of society running amok in modern China. Song Gang and Baldy Li are very different, though united in their love of the beautiful Lin Hong, and as their fortunes rise and fall over the decades, Yu Hua paints an extraordinary portrait of modern China through the eyes of these two brothers.

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Alfred A. Yuson has authored 22 books, including two novels as well as short fiction, poetry and essay collections. He contributes a weekly culture column to *The Philippine Star*, and a fortnightly column to the weekly *Philippine Graphic* magazine. He teaches fiction and poetry in Ateneo de Manila University, where he held the Henry Lee Irwin Professorial Chair.

The Music Child tells about an American journalist undergoes strange experiences in a southern island in the Philippines. He stumbles into a remote tribe of hair-string fiddlers, and encounters a half-breed child with the magical gift of song. Violence intrudes, forcing him to flee. Many years later, he encounters the "music child" again, this time as a grown man who has found a female partner with an equally prodigious gift.

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