

## Debut author and Nobel winner share Man Asian Literary Prize Shortlist

### **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2011

**HONG KONG** – A first time novelist has been listed alongside a Nobel Prize winner in the shortlist for the Man Asian Literary Prize, the leading international literary award for Asian writers. The five strong shortlist was announced today and includes writers from Japan, China and India.

The Prize judges announced the following 5 books from a longlist of 10:

*Three Sisters* by Bi Feiyu

*Serious Men* by Manu Joseph

*The Thing About Thugs* by Tabish Khair

*The Changeling* by Kenzaburo Oe

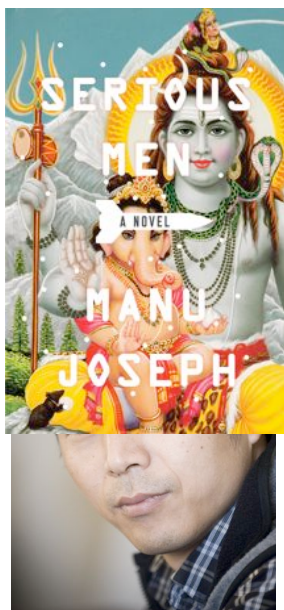
*Hotel Iris* by Yoko Ogawa

The three distinguished judges for this year's Prize are Monica Ali, Homi K. Bhabha and Hsu-Ming Teo. Their comments on each book can be found below.

A total of 54 works from all over Asia were submitted this year and the overall winner of the MALP 2010, which carries a cash award of USD 30,000 will be announced at an award dinner in Hong Kong on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

Professor David Parker, Chair of the Board of Directors of the MALP, said, "Our judges have chosen five very different novels, each in its own way brilliant and captivating, representing the achievements of three major Asian cultures: China, India and Japan. Readers everywhere now have the opportunity to enjoy and compare the high and distinctive accomplishments of the novel across the breadth of Asia."

On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March, the evening before the winner is announced; the shortlisted authors will appear in an event at the Hong Kong International Literary Festival. It is the only opportunity for readers to join the 2010 shortlisted authors for readings from their books, discussion and an audience Q&A.



## The Shortlisted Writers

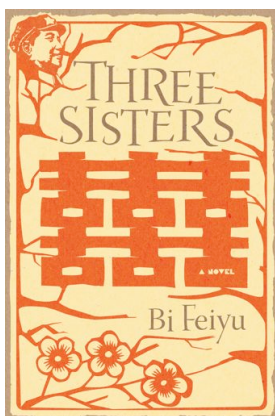
### Bi Feiyu

#### *Three Sisters*

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Bi Feiyu is one of the most respected authors and screenwriters in **China** today. He was born in 1964 in Xinghua, in the province of Jiangsu. A journalist and a poet as well as a novelist, he has been awarded a number of literary prizes, including the prestigious **Lu Xun Literary Prize**. He co-wrote the film *Shanghai Triad*, which was directed by internationally renowned director Zhang Yimou. His first novel is the critically acclaimed *Moon Opera*.

#### *About the novel*



*Three Sisters* begins with the birth of the Wang family's eighth child, a long sought-after boy. But the stars of this novel are not boys, but women - three of Little Eight's sisters. From the petty treachery of the village to the slogans of the Cultural Revolution to the harried pace of city life, these three women strive to change the course of their destinies as they battle against an infinite ocean of people, in a China that does not truly belong to them. *Three Sisters* is an irreplaceable portrait of contemporary Chinese culture - of lives unknown, but immediately familiar.

#### **What the Prize Judges say**

"A moving exploration of Chinese family and village life during the Cultural Revolution, that moves seamlessly between the epic and the intimate, the heroic and the petty, illuminating not only individual lives but an entire society, within a gripping tale of familial conflict and love."



### Manu Joseph

#### *Serious Men*

HarperCollins

Manu Joseph is editor of the **OPEN Magazine**, an off-beat Indian newsweekly. *Serious Men*, his first novel, has won **The Hindu Best Fiction Award** and is one of **Huffington Post's 10 Best Books of 2010**.

#### *About the novel*

Ayyan Mani works in the Institute of Theory and Research as a lowly personal assistant to a brilliant, insufferable astronomer, Arvind Acharya. Mani is one of the thousands of men stranded in the slums of Mumbai, but

the opportunistic Mani is also an astute observer and sly eavesdropper. Partly to entertain himself, partly to cheer up his once-animated but now work-worn wife, partly to bolster his ten-year-old son's confidence, Mani weaves an outrageous fiction around the boy - a fiction that captures the interest of his superiors and threatens to set into motion an unstoppable and disastrous chain of events. Added to that is the arrival of the beautiful Dr. Oparna - the first woman ever to work at the Institute - and the ongoing "war of the Brahmins." And Mani, struggling to keep his own dreams alive, sees opportunity in everything.

#### What the Prize Judges say

“A seriously funny, ingenious novel, part satire, part comedy of manners, and an intelligent commentary on both Dalit-Brahmin issues and academic science.”



#### Tabish Khair

##### *The Thing About Thugs*

Fourth Estate, HarperCollins India

Tabish Khair is an acclaimed **Indian** poet and novelist whose recent novels have been short-listed for the **Encore Award (UK)** and the **Crossword Prize (India)**. Translated into various languages, his works include *Where Parallel Lines Meet*, *Babu Fictions: Alienation in Indian English Novels*, *The Bus Stopped*, *Filming: A Love Story*, *The Glum Peacock* and *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere*.

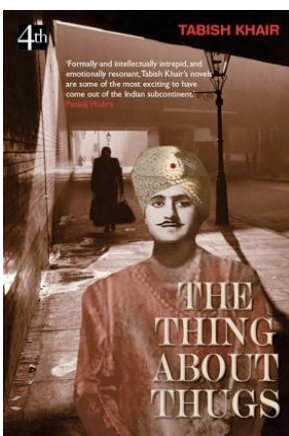
#### About the novel

Amir Ali leaves his village in Bihar to travel to London with an English captain, William Meadows, to whom he narrates the story of his life – the story of a murderous thug. While Meadows tries to analyse the strange cult of the Indian Thug, a group of Englishmen sets out to prove the inherent difference between races by examining their skulls – with bizarre consequences.

Set in Victorian London, this story of different voices from different places draws intricate lines of connection from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, between England and India, across individual and cultural differences.

#### What the Prize Judges say

“Crossing continents and centuries, Khair's inventive multiple narrative subtly subverts expectation and post-colonial narrative traditions by simultaneously echoing Dickens's London and inserting a totally fresh voice at its centre.”





**Kenzaburo Oe**  
***The Changeling***

Grove/Atlantic

Kenzaburo Oe is the recipient of the **1994 Nobel Prize for Literature** and the **1989 Priz Europaia**, and one of **Japan's** leading post-war writers. He published his first novel, *Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids*, while an undergraduate at Tokyo University, and has been a prolific and revered novelist and essayist ever since. His novels include *A Personal Matter*, *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness*, and *A Quiet Life*, as well as *The Changeling*.

*About the novel*



*The Changeling* introduces Kogito, a writer in his early sixties, who receives a mysterious package from his childhood friend and estranged brother-in-law, Goro. Goro has sent him a trunk of tapes with recorded reflections on their relationship, and after receiving it, Kogito learns his lifelong friend has jumped to his death. However, Goro's voice continues to speak, promising Kogito that he will remain in contact from the Other Side. Kogito listens obsessively and embarks on a far-ranging search to understand what drove his brother-in-law to suicide, a journey that spans the forests of Japan to the streets of Berlin, where Kogito confronts the ghosts from his own past and Goro's.

**What the Prize Judges say**

“A richly complex work that centres on a tale of brotherhood and loss, and plunges deep into the nature of artistic desire and ambition, at once questioning every impulse and yet remaining stunningly assured.”



**Yoko Ogawa**  
***Hotel Iris***

Macmillan

Yoko Ogawa's fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *A Public Space*, and *Zoetrope*. Since 1988 she has published more than twenty works of fiction and nonfiction and has won every major **Japanese literary award**. Her fiction has been translated into twenty-five languages.

*About the novel*

In a crumbling sea-side hotel on the coast of Japan, quiet, seventeen-year-old Mari works the front desk as her mother tends to the off-season customers. When one night they are forced to expel a middle-aged man and a prostitute from their room, Mari finds herself drawn to the man's voice, in what will become the first gesture of a single long seduction. In spite of her provincial surroundings, and her cool but controlling mother,



Mari is a sophisticated observer of human desire, and she sees in this man something she has long been looking for.

**What the Prize Judges say,**

“In beautifully sparse elegant prose, Ogawa lays bare the dark side of intimacy, the nature of obsession and the indefinable qualities of what bonds one human being with another.”

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

**About the Man Asian Literary Prize**

The Man Asian Literary Prize was founded in 2007. It is an annual literary award given to the best novel by an Asian writer, either written in English or translated into English, and published in the previous calendar year. The judges choose a longlist of 10 to 15 titles announced in December, followed by a shortlist of 5 to 6 titles announced in February, and a winner is awarded in March. The winning author is awarded USD 30,000 and the translator (if any) USD 5,000. Submissions are invited through publishers based in any country.

**About Man**

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The original business was founded in 1783. Today, Man Group plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange and is a member of the FTSE 100 Index with a market capitalisation of around £5.5 billion.

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Additional information is available at [www.manasianliteraryprize.org](http://www.manasianliteraryprize.org)

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