

MANBAO

V1

UoM Student Art Magazine





Volume

01

	Editors' Statement	3	
	Will White:		
4	Selected Photos		
	Mariamne I by Anna Broom	7	
8	Aurora Chen: Selected Photos		
	An Interview With Nicky Harman	12	
15	Yaran Zhang: Finding True North		
			Calligraphy by Joseph Sol Stappard: Selected Photos 16
			Book Review: Beijing Sprawl 17
		21	Cédrine: Selected Photographs 20
		24	Edie Mayes: Selected Photographs





Editors' Statement:

This magazine is about inclusion. In the 21st century, the importance of diversity has been increasingly recognised. However, many communities remain distant from each other. On campus, one prominent example is the gap between British and Chinese students.

Although this is a complex phenomenon, the fact is that we need to make a bigger effort to speak to each other. Manbao is part of this effort. It's a space to share thoughts and feelings across communities.

Submissions are about our everyday lives: where we've been, what we've seen, what we think - with the hope that the more we share, the more we can come to understand and celebrate one another.

So have fun,

The Editors

THIS EDITION'S THEME:

DREAMS AND REALITY

WILL WHITE:



**SELECTED
PHOTOGRAPHS**



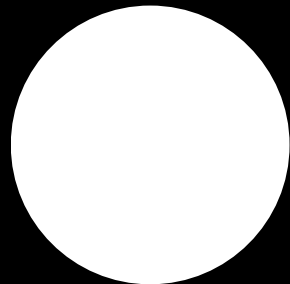


Mariamne I

by Anna Broom

The air sets like crystalized honey
Heavy with emotion,
Sediment, from the storm
of last night's fight.
Thick, raw glue
Catching each word
And sound
Breath
Littered with flies,
Far-flung, feeding,
The drenching of danger
With their whispers and clicks.

You come in from the dawn,
Drops of water
Caught like pearls,
Beading your lashes
To the fleece of your face.
They are cold.
They are salty as prayers,
But my tongue has
Candied in amber
and my eyes see only
Thick gold, your face,
Behind the veil of sun
Like a God.



AURORA CHEN

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS









AN INTERVIEW WITH NICKY HARMAN

EDITORS' PROLOGUE:

Nicky Harman is an award winning translator, working with the likes of Jia Pingwa, Yan Ge and Xinran. In bringing so many incredible stories to the West, she is a true inspiration. Recently, her translation of Shen Yang's memoir "More Than One Child", has been shared across the editorial team. We cannot recommend it enough. More information on Nicky is available [here](#).

BACKGROUND IMAGE CREDITS FOR PAGES 13/14: "Giant Strides" and "Wet Afternoon", by Ethel Spowers, Te Papa

AN INTERVIEW

with AWARD WINNING translator, Nicky Harman

Q: You've spoken before about the impact of sexism in publishing in translations from Chinese. Many incredible writers are suppressed and ignored because they are women. How can readers support them?

Discrimination against women writers is not exclusive to the Chinese-speaking world! Only 18 Nobel Prizes awarded for Literature have gone to women, for example. Equally, only a small minority of winners of China's most prestigious literary award, the Mao Dun Prize, have been women; in 2023, it was one out of the five winners.

From now on, I'm going to talk about books written in Chinese which come not just from China, but also from Taiwan, Hong Kong, or sinophone publishers in South-East Asia. How do these women writers fare when it comes to who gets translated? English-language publishers don't always know a lot about the Chinese literary scene, so they have to rely on what publishers in China (and Taiwan and Hong Kong) recommend, and those are often the big prize winners.

But things may be getting a little better: in our [Paper Republic Roll Call of Chinese Literature in English Translation for 2024](#), ten out of 26 novels were by women. And three excellent books by women writers came out in 2024 and might be up for literary and/or translation prizes: *Tongueless*, by Yeewa Lau (translated by Jennifer Feeley), *Taiwan Travelogue: A Novel*, by Shuang-zi Yang (translated by Lin King) and *Mourning a Breast*, by Xi Xi (translated by Jennifer Feeley).

I'm mentioning those in particular because I've just read them and I liked them very much.

How can readers support Chinese-language women writers? By reading them, and posting reviews on Amazon and Goodreads, for instance. Even short reviews and star ratings make a difference.

It's an interesting question whether Chinese-speaking women writers regard themselves as discriminated against. Some definitely do: a few years ago, Natascha Bruce and I conducted and translated [a series of interviews](#), in which they talk about their experiences getting published.

Their views are fascinating, and not necessarily what you might expect. Here are some highlights:

[Tang Fei, a scifi writer](#): We're often asked why we, as women, like science fiction. The question itself says a lot, doesn't it? There are female astronauts in space, while on Earth, Chinese women have to explain why they like science fiction! The situation of Chinese female writers is precisely the situation of Chinese women. Whether as the object of a novel, or as the writer, women are defined as the uterus that nurtures men's minds or men's flesh, giving birth to replicas either as the mothers of their children, or as their spiritual muses.

[Liang Hong, a fiction and non-fiction writer](#), about the #MeToo movement: I was very optimistic at the start of #MeToo. I believed that if the movement really went deep, it could bring about social changes that would not be limited to

changing relationships between men and women. I saw it as shaking deep cultural prejudices and impacting the redesign of the power structure. I saw it as a great opportunity for human civilization to move forward. However, it has disappointed us. Nowhere in the world has the #MeToo movement brought about genuine, healthy change. This shows yet again how difficult it is to tackle the problems inherent in gender politics.

Zhai Yongming, a poet: The biggest problem now is that as China's economy grows stronger, and it becomes more important globally, there is a growing desire for a Chinese cultural renaissance. But cultural rejuvenation has brought in its wake some very negative phenomena. We get the worst as well as the best. Feudal attitudes and practices once done away with have come back. In my view (though not everyone agrees with me), the status of women in China has slowly, almost imperfectly, gone into retreat. I personally think that We're seeing a gradual reappearance of sex discrimination. A young woman poet once said to me, 'In the new generation of male poets I come into contact with, there is still an essential contempt for female poets.'

I feel their contempt comes from their view of poetry: a real poet uses the power of strong language, digs into poetic language and creates new traditions... And they regard this as men's work.'

Q: Most books on China are political. Perhaps this is what readers expect. However, many of your translations features characters and themes outside of politics. Is this intentional?

If you mean that most novels translated from Chinese are about political movements like the Cultural Revolution and their effect on people, I don't think that is true anymore. One of the splendours of Chinese-language literature is that there are so many good writers who take their

inspiration from all aspects of human experience. Take a look at the [Paper Republic Roll Call 2024](#) and quotes from interviews at the start. Of the three books I mentioned above that I particularly like, only *Tongueless* has an underlying political theme: it deals with the current political tensions in Hong Kong, through the lives of two teachers and the very real pressures on them when the school decides to switch from teaching in Cantonese (the teachers' and students' native language) to Mandarin.

Taiwan Travelogue is a love story with a difference, and *Mourning a Breast* is a very moving memoir about Xixi's experience of breast cancer.

Q: Good translations take a lot of effort. Have your motivations for translating changed over time?

A: Yes, they do take a lot of effort! And, no, they haven't changed. I've always felt very privileged to be able to give English-language readers the chance to read Chinese-language writers in translation. Years ago, I started calling it 'opening a window to another culture', and that's still how I think of it.

Q: Some people think that a translator's voice should be undetectable. Others think that it should be loud and clear. What's your stance?

Hmmm, I don't like that dichotomy. Of course, translation theorists like Lawrence Venuti have discussed this issue at length, but personally, in my translation practice, I don't find it very helpful. I prefer to regard myself as having a dual loyalty, to the author and the reader, riding two horses, as it were (and sometimes just as uncomfortable!) If the author has written something lyrical, or funny, or scary, then the translation should reflect that. Translation always involves re-creation of a piece of writing in another language, it's never just a word-for-word substitution. But it mustn't go off on a frolic of its own, it has to stay loyal both to the style and the content of the author.

With a thank you to Nicky for taking the time to answer these questions, and [Sinoist books](#) for making this interview possible.



Finding True North

by Yaran Zhang

Inspired by a beach near Sendai, Japan

EDITORS' NOTE:

Sendai is a city in northeastern Japan, famous for its stunning natural landscape. Founded by the samurai Date Masamune in 1604, Date also funded a Japanese expedition that successfully sailed across the world to far-flung destinations, such as Mexico and Italy (where they met the Pope Paul V).

caligraphy by Joseph

不要審判免得你
們受審判
因惟你們用什麼
審判審判人也必
受什麼審判

EDITORS' NOTE (for Western audiences):

In China, Calligraphy has a history that spans thousands of years. As such, the practice of calligraphy has influenced countless schools of philosophy and art. It continues to be practiced and admired both throughout China, and across its diaspora communities.

Above is Joseph's rendition of Matthew 7:1-2, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use it, it will be measured to you".

SOL STAPPARD

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS







A REVIEW OF:

Beijing Sprawl by Xu Zechen

Translated by Eric Abrahamsen and Jeremy
Tiang

Liu Ciuxin once wrote that he like sci-fi because it unites humanity: when you're faced with aliens, you haven't got time to squabble. Sci-fi has a vision. It paints a world where we forget our differences, band together and fight those evil blobs. It's comforting.

In fact, we don't have to wait for aliens to connect with one another, even if we're very far away. All we need is a good book. Exhibit A: *Beijing Sprawl*.

It's a simple story. Some kids move to Beijing to escape the countryside. They don't have the right documents for legal jobs. So, every night, they push flyers for a fake ID racket. And by dawn, they've earnt the right to crawl back to their derelict homes and go to sleep, hungry.

You know, if they had any sense, they'd sleep in the day. But they don't. So they go onto the rooftops instead, and drink beer, sit around, watching the endless, city skyline.

It's beautifully written. The images are clear. If you close your eyes, you can see those distant buildings too, and you can feel its rumbling through your feet. It's everything to them. It's their way out.

For hours, months, years, they'll talk about making it big. It's essential, because when that day comes, they'll be ready. They'll know which house to buy, the smell of the paint, who to marry, the colour of the plates, etc.

But what happens?

You'll have to read the book. And when you've finished, it'll stick with you, like it stuck with me. Because even though they're on the other side of the world, living lives infinitely harder than my own, I've connected more with those guys, and their stories, than anything I've read before, or since.

Why? It's *Beijing Sprawl*.

- Jules Vermeeren

Cédrine

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS





后头湾

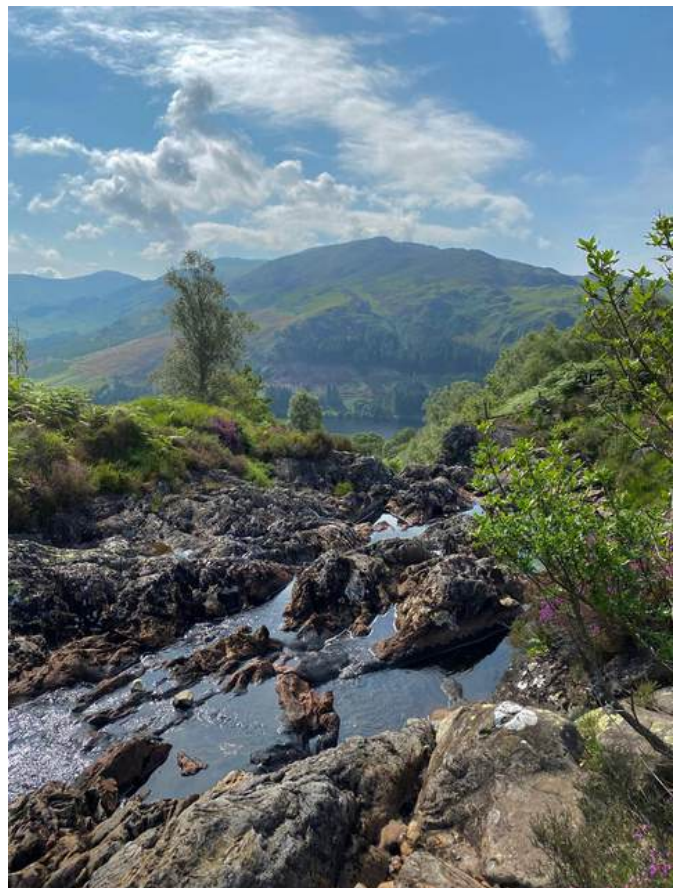


后头湾, Houtouwan, A small fishing village on an island south of the Yangtze. As the island population has gradually left, it is said to have been reclaimed by nature. Today, it is a popular tourist attraction.



EDIE MAYES: SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHY





FIN