

Press Release (embargoed until August 6)

The International PEN Poem Relay Ends with Global Call for Freedom of Expression in China

- ***PEN Poem Relay Sends “Poetic Petition” to the Chinese Authorities***
- ***125 Translations into 98 Languages Produced***
- ***Book of the PEN Poem Relay to be Published***

www.penpoemrelay.org

In the final countdown to the Beijing Olympics, the International PEN Poem Relay has sent a “Poetic Petition” to the Chinese authorities, including all the translations of Shi Tao’s poem “June” produced as part of this historic poetic journey around the world.

Writers and poets around the world produced 125 translations of “June” into 98 languages. The poem travelled to 65 countries during the four and half month virtual relay, which can still be viewed at www.penpoemrelay.org. (See Press Kit for list of languages and translators.)

The International PEN Poem Relay centred on the poem “June” by the imprisoned poet and journalist Shi Tao and sought to raise awareness about freedom of expression in China in a uniquely PEN way – through poetry and translation.

Shi Tao is serving a 10-year sentence in prison on the charge of “revealing state secrets abroad”. He was convicted for an email he sent to an overseas website using a Yahoo! email account after Yahoo! provided the Chinese authorities with his identity.

The poem “June” is a meditation on the tragedy of the military crackdown on the Tiananmen Square protests in June 4, 1989, which remains a censored topic in China. (Please see the attachment for more about Shi Tao and to read the poem.)

Organisers of the PEN Poem relay will send copies of all 125 translations to the Chinese authorities along with a statement calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Shi Tao and all writers in prison in China. (See Press Kit for Poetic Petition cover letter to Hu Jintao.)

“These translations represent the solidarity writers and poets around the world have with Shi Tao and all of the writers in prison in China,” said Chip Rolley of Sydney PEN, co-organiser of the PEN Poem Relay and translator of the poem to English. “Each act of translation is a call for freedom of expression in China.”

“The Relay surpassed our expectations,” said Swiss German PEN’s Kristin Schnider, also one of the organizers of the relay. “Shi Tao’s poem ‘June’ was and is a torch in its own right.”

Organisers of the Relay expressed deep concern about China’s continuing control of writers’ expression.

“While this poem’s journey in and out of 98 languages shows the world’s concern about the fate of these writers in prison in China, in the lead up to the Olympics, the authorities in Beijing have only tightened their grip on expression,” said Chip Rolley.

“Shi Tao’s case is a great way to examine the sincerity of Beijing’s promise of press freedom in China,” noted Yu Zhang, the Coordinator of the Writers in Prison Committee of Independent Chinese PEN Centre and one of the organizers of the relay. “As long as Shi Tao and other writers and journalists on PEN’s case list are still behind bars, his poem ‘June’ will be a reminder of the reality behind the Beijing Olympic motto ‘One World, One Dream’.”

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In a further development, P.E.N. Club of Austria, in cooperation with the PEN Poem Relay organisers, is producing a book documenting the International PEN Poem Relay. Helmuth Niederle, Chair of the Writers in Prison Committee of P.E.N. Club Austria is editing and publishing the book, which will include all translation texts of the poem "June".

International PEN Poem Relay is a Joint action by the Sydney, Independent Chinese and Swiss German PEN Centres on behalf of International PEN.

Available for interview:

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www.penpoemrelay.org
FOR FREE EXPRESSION IN CHINA

International PEN Poem Relay Press Kit - Petition Letter

Letter to His Excellency Hu Jintao

A Poetic Petition

Carrying the Torch for Freedom of Expression in China

His Excellency Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China
State Council
Beijing 100032
People's Republic of China

Your Excellency,

Over the past several months, centres of International PEN have arranged translation, recording and video performances of the poem "June" (六月) by the imprisoned Chinese poet and journalist SHI Tao (师涛), into as many of the world's languages as possible.

On a map of the world on the website "PEN Poem Relay" (www.penpoemrelay.org) the poem travelled virtually around the world, in the spirit of the Olympic Torch Relay with its own appeal for China to honour the right to free expression.

International PEN believes there are currently 44 writers and journalists, including Shi Tao, imprisoned in China for exercising their right to speak and write freely, as guaranteed under Chinese and international law.

These translations represent the solidarity writers and poets around the world have with Shi Tao and all of the writers in prison in China. Each act of translation is a call for freedom of expression in China.

Through these translations, we express our deep concern that despite official pledges to respect essential rights in this Olympic year, Chinese authorities continue to harass and detain writers in violation of their right to freedom of expression.

Through these translations, we call for Chinese authorities to:

- immediately and unconditionally release all writers and journalists currently imprisoned and end the practice of detaining, harassing, and censoring writers and journalists in China
- end Internet censorship and reform laws that are used to imprison writers and journalists and suppress the free exchange of information and ideas on the internet
- abide by China's pledge that "there will be no restrictions on media reporting and movement of journalists up to and including the Olympic Games"

On behalf of International PEN and its China Campaign

Chip Rolley, PEN Sydney Centre

Zhang Yu, Independent Chinese PEN Centre

Kristin T. Schnider, Swiss German PEN Centre



www.penpoemrelay.org
FOR FREE EXPRESSION IN CHINA

International PEN Poem Relay Press Kit – Shi Tao and “June”

Shi Tao, poet, journalist, and Independent Chinese PEN member

Shi Tao is one of the dissident writers whose downfall was the advanced technology used to monitor, survey and track down individuals who are seen to violate Chinese laws by exercising their freedom of expression on the internet.

He was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for "revealing state secrets abroad". In April 2004, Shi Tao took notes on a document read aloud at an editorial meeting of the *Dangdai Shangbao* (*Contemporary Commerce News*) at which he was present.

The notes referred to a directive issued by China's Propaganda Department that instructed the media how to cover the 15th anniversary of the military crackdown on June 4, 1989 in Beijing shutting down the Tiananmen Square protests.

He sent those notes to an overseas website using a Yahoo! email account. According to court documents, Yahoo! (Hong Kong) Holdings Ltd provided the Chinese authorities with Shi Tao's identity. PEN believes this conviction and sentencing are in contravention to Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (to which China became a signatory in 1998) and Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights.

The poem 'June' was written on June 9, 2004, shortly after the 15th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests and just less than two months after Shi Tao sent that fateful email.

The Poem

CHINESE

六月

所有的日子

都绕不过“六月”
六月，我的心脏死了
我的诗歌死了
我的恋人
也死在浪漫的血泊里

六月，烈日烧开皮肤
露出伤口的真相
六月，鱼儿离开血红的大海
游向另一处冬眠之地
六月，大地变形、河流无声
成堆的信札已无法送到死者手中

ENGLISH

Translated by Chip Rolley, Sydney PEN Centre

June

My whole life

Will never get past “June”
June, when my heart died
When my poetry died
When my lover
Died in romance's pool of blood

June, the scorching sun burns open my skin
Revealing the true nature of my wound
June, the fish swims out of the blood-red sea
Toward another place to hibernate
June, the earth shifts, the rivers fall silent
Piled up letters unable to be delivered to the dead



www.penpoemrelay.org
FOR FREE EXPRESSION IN CHINA

International PEN Poem Relay Press Kit – Languages and Translators

Languages and Translators

The PEN Poem Relay produced 125 translations into 98 languages and recorded 12 dialects of Chinese.

LANGUAGE	TRANSLATOR	PEN CENTRE AFFILIATION
Adnyamathanha	Lily Neville	Adelaide Centre
Afar	Saleh Mohamed Hassan	Afar-speaking Centre
Algherese Italian	Maria Chessa Lai	Sardinian Centre
Arabic	Mezziane Aberrahmane	Algerian Centre
Arabic	Ali Al-Shalah	Iraq Centre
Arabic	Mohamed Sari	Algerian Centre
Arremte	Veronica Dobson	Sydney Centre
Bahasa Indonesian	Kiki C. H.	
Basque	Iñaki Martinez Salazar	Basque Centre
Belarus	Uladzimir Niakliaeu	Belarusian Centre
Bengali	Bashabi Fraser	
Bikol	Kristian S. Cordero	Philippine Centre
Bosnian	Ferida Duraković	Bosnia-Herzegovina Centre
Catalan	Manel Ollé	Catalan Centre
Catalano-Algherese	Maria Chessa Lai	Sardinian Centre
Cebuano	Macario D.Tiu	Philippine Centre
Chavacano	Francis C. Macansantos	Philippine Centre
Chechen	Islam Elsanov	Chechen Writers Centre
Chichewa	Stanley Onjeazani Kenani	South African Centre
Cree	William Merasty	Canadian Centre
Croatian	Sibila Petlevski	Croatian Centre
Czech	Karl Oldrich	Czech Centre
Danish	Mette Holm	Danish Centre
Darug	Richard Greenthun	Sydney Centre
Dutch	Jan De Meyer and Iege Vanwalle	Belgian (Dutch-Speaking) Centre and Netherlands Centre
English	Chip Rolley	Sydney Centre
English	Gavin	Sardinian Centre
Esperanto	Giorgio Silfer	Esperanto Centre
Farsi	Azar Mahloujian	Swedish Centre
Farsi	Shahrouz Rashid	Iranian PEN Centre in Exile (IPCE)
Finnish	Rita Dahl	Finnish Centre
French	Huguette de Broqueville	Belgian (French-Speaking) Centre
French	Zeki Ergas	Suisse Romand Centre
French	Saleh Mohamed Hassan	Afar-speaking Centre
French	Emile Martel	Quebecois Centre
French	Hélène Poiré	Quebecois Centre
French	André Racette	Quebecois Centre
French	André Roy	Quebecois Centre
French	Kabemba Mulolwa	South African Centre
Frisian	Tsead Bruinja	Netherlands Centre
Irish Gaelic (Gaeilge)	Celia de Fréine	Irish Centre

LANGUAGE	TRANSLATOR	PEN CENTRE AFFILIATION
Irish Gaelic	Rody Gorman	Scottish Centre
Galician	Ursula Heinze de Lorenzo	Galician Centre
Gascon	Joan deu Peiron	
German	Shi Ming, Karin Clark	German Centre
German	Wolfgang Kubin	Austrian Centre
German	Rupprecht Mayer	German-speaking Writers Abroad Centre
German	Christine Koschel	German-speaking Writers Abroad Centre
Greek	Vassilis Vitsaxis	Greek Centre
Haitian Creole	Georges Anglade	Haitian Centre
Hausa	Ismail Bala Garba	Nigerian Centre
Hebrew	Shulamit Kuriansky	Israeli Centre
Hebrew	Azila Talit Reisenberger	South African Centre
Hiligaynon	Vicente Garcia Groyon	Philippine Centre
Hindi	Manalini Kane	Melbourne Centre
Hungarian	Elisabeth Csicsery-Ronay	Writers in Exile, American Branch
Icelandic	Sjón	Icelandic Centre
Igbo	Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo	Nigerian Centre
Iloko	Reynaldo A. Duque	Philippine Centre
Italian	Nicola Tanda	Sardinian Centre
Italian	Gilberto Isella and Chiara Macconi	Swiss-Italian and Reto-Romansh Centre
Italian	Antonio della Rocca	Trieste Centre
Japanese	Professor Shozo Fujii	Japanese Centre
Kazakh	Madina Omarova	Central Asian PEN Centre
Kinaray-a	J.I.E. Teodoro	Philippine Centre
Kiswahili	Muthoni Likimani	Kenyan Centre
Kiswahili	Kabemba Mulolwa	South African PEN
Krio	Arthur E Smith	Sierra Leonean Centre
Kurdish	M. Rechid	Kurdish Centre
Kyrgyz	Topchugul Shaidullaeva	Central Asian PEN Centre
Lingala	Kabemba Mulolwa	South African Centre
Lithuanian	Laimantas Jonušys	Lithuanian Centre
Lusoga	Cornelius Gulere	Ugandan Centre
Macedonian	Igor Isakovski	Macedonian Centre
Malay	Eddin Khoo	
Maltese	Antoine Cassar	
Marathi	Manalini Kane	Melbourne Centre
Matigsalog	Dadong A. Gumatao	Philippine Centre
Mayan	Jorge Miguel Cocom Pech	Mexican Centre
Nāhuatl (Dialect of Nāhuatl from the northern region of Veracruz, Mexico)	Juan Hernández Ramírez	Mexican Centre
Ngarrindjeri	Auntie Eileen McHughes	Adelaide Centre
Norwegian (Bokmal)	Ole Bjørn Rongen	Norwegian Centre
Norwegian (Nynorsk)	Ole Bjørn Rongen	Norwegian Centre
Paraguayan Guarani	Susy Delgado	Paraguayan Centre
Pashto	Nurul Habib Nisar	Afghan Centre
Polish	Teresa Podemska	Adelaide Centre
Polish	Anna Nasitowska	Polish Centre
Portuguese	Teresa Salema	Portuguese Centre
Poular	Koumanthio Zeinab Diallo	Guinean Centre
Romanian	Maria Lupsa	Romanian Centre
Reto-romansh	Gian Peder Gregori	Swiss-Italian and Reto-Romansh Centre
Russian	Ekaterina Turchaninova	Russian Centre
Russian	Olga Sedakova	Sardinian Centre
Scots	Kate Armstrong	Scottish Centre

LANGUAGE	TRANSLATOR	PEN CENTRE AFFILIATION
Scottish Gaelic	Rody Gorman	Scottish Centre
Sardinian	Nicola Tanda	Sardinian Centre
Serbian	Vida Ognjenovic	Serbian Centre
Slovak	MAB	Slovak Centre
Slovene	Ifigenija Simonović	Slovene Centre
Somali	Cabdi Muxumad Amiin	Somali-speaking Writers Centre
Spanish (Castilian)	Nedda G. Anhalt	Mexican Centre
Spanish (Castilian)	Luis Ignacio Larcada	Cuban Writers in Exile Centre
Spanish (Castilian)	Ricardo Gustavo Espeja	Kurdish Centre
Spanish (Castilian)	Lucina Kathmann and Elizabeth Starcevic	San Miguel de Allende Centre
Spanish (Castilian)	Emi Kasamatsu	Paraguayan Centre
Swedish	Anna Gustafsson Chen	Swedish Centre
Swiss German	Franz Hohler	Swiss German Centre
Tagalog	Domingo G. Landicho	Philippine Centre
Tamazight	Salem Zenia	Catalan Centre
Tausug	Tianzo L. Ong	Philippine Centre
Tibetan	Mr Wangyal	Tibetan Writers Abroad Centre
Tongan	Melenaite Taumoefolau	
Tsotsil (from Huixtán, Chiapas, México)	Manuel Bolom Pale	Mexican Centre
Turkish	Tarık Günersel	Turkish Centre
Ukrainian	Maryana Savka	Ukrainian Centre
Urdu	Nayyara Rahman	Pakistani Centre
Uyghur	Koresh Atahan	Uyghur Centre (Proposed)
Viennese	Helmuth Niederle	Austrian Centre
Vietnamese	Nguyen Hoang Bao Viet	Suisse Romand Centre
Vietnamese	Nguyễn Văn Thoâng	Vietnamese Writers Abroad Centre
Vietnamese	Lyly Phan	
Welsh	Menna Elfyn	English Centre
Wolof	Samba Fall	Senegalese Centre
Yiddish	Romek Mokotow	Melbourne Centre
Yoruba	Akinwumi Isola	Nigerian Centre

CHINESE DIALECT	PEN CENTRE
Cantonese (廣東話)	Hong Kong Chinese PEN Centre
Chongqing Dialect (重慶話)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre
Fuzhou Dialect (福州話)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre
Guizhou Dialect (貴州話)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre
Hakka (客家)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre
Hokkien (閩南)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre
Mandarin (國語)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre
Shanghainese (上海話)	Hong Kong Chinese PEN Centre
Shantou Dialect (汕頭話)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre
Sichuan Dialect (四川話)	Hong Kong Chinese PEN Centre
Teochew (潮州)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre
Wuhan Dialect (武漢話)	Independent Chinese PEN Centre