

## Joanne Leedom-Ackerman: Editor's Note and Acknowledgements

*Joanne Leedom-Ackerman, novelist, short story writer and journalist, is Vice President Emeritus of PEN International where she served as International Secretary and Chair of PEN International's Writers in Prison Committee.*

*A zoo in China placed a big hairy Tibetan mastiff in a cage and tried to pass it off as an African lion. But a boy and his mother heard the animal bark, not roar. As news spread, the zoo's visitors grew angry. "The zoo is absolutely trying to cheat us. They are trying to disguise dogs as lions!" declared the mother.*

In 2009 the Chinese government put Liu Xiaobo, celebrated poet, essayist, critic, activist, and thinker into a cage, labeled him "enemy of the state," charged him with "inciting subversion of state power," and sentenced him to 11 years' imprisonment. Liu Xiaobo was not an enemy, but he was a "Lion" the state feared. He challenged orthodoxy and conventional thinking in literature, which he wrote and taught, and authoritarian politics, which he protested and tried to help reshape. His insistence on individual liberty in his own 1000+ essays and 18 books, his relentless pursuit of ideas, including as a drafter and organizer of *Charter 08* which set out a democratic vision for China through nonviolent change, and finally his last statement, "I have no enemies and no hatred," threatened the Chinese Communist Party and government in a way few other citizens had.

Dt. Liu Xiaobo won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2010, the first Chinese citizen, but he was in prison, not allowed to attend the ceremony and died in custody July, 2017.

When news of Liu Xiaobo's death reached the world and in particular writers and democracy activists who knew him, writers began to write. Tributes and analyses poured in, many sent to the Independent Chinese PEN Center, a gathering of writers inside and outside of mainland China which Liu helped found and served as President. The writing in **From Dark Horse to Nobel Laureate** traces Liu's history and the path of liberalism in China and is perhaps the largest gathering in one volume of Chinese democracy activists. For length, some tributes are listed only by authors' names in the Appendix.

A Chinese edition was published in 2017 as **Collected Writings in Commemoration of Liu Xiaobo** by *Democratic China* and the Institute for China's Democratic Transition. It is hoped that this revised and expanded English edition, organized according to phases of Liu's life and development, will find an even wider audience and offer insight into the person—his ideas, his loves and his legacy. Some have suggested that because of Liu Xiaobo's death and the economic and political ascendancy of the current Chinese regime, Liu's legacy has been nothing and a void exists. I would suggest those who claim such consider the longer arc of history. The same was said of visionaries in Eastern Europe when earlier protests were crushed in Poland, East Germany and elsewhere; the same was said of early martyrs in South Africa where repression eventually led to widespread civic resistance and in other countries where civilians have challenged repressive systems. Liu Xiaobo was committed to nonviolent engagement and political change. Though he no longer walks the earth, his ideas and writings endure. History will unfold this story. In the meantime the essays in this volume offer one man's journey and commitment to the struggle for the individual's right to freedom.

Thank you to the Independent Chinese PEN Center, Democratic China and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy which funded part of the translation. Profound thanks to fellow editors Yu Zhang, Tienchi Martin-Liao, and Jie Li and to Cai Chu and Yu Zhang, editors of the original Chinese edition and its publisher Wang Tiansheng. Much appreciation and recognition are due to translators Stacy Mosher and Andréa Worden and to the many colleagues of Liu Xiaobo who contributed to this book. Gratitude is recurring to agents Peter and Amy Bernstein who shepherded this manuscript, helped it find a home, and continue to assist as it finds its audience. Finally thank you to the team at Potomac Books and the University of Nebraska Press, including Editor Thomas Swanson, Editorial Assistant Abigail Stryker, and Publicity Manager Rosemary Sekora.

Societies move forward and are changed by ideas and by leaders and ultimately by their citizens. None of these essays show Liu Xiaobo aspiring to personal power. But those in power worried about this man of ideas and this activist who set ideas into motion. He didn't need to roar like a lion to garner the world's attention and respect. By his life and his death he holds those in power to account. —Joanne Leedom-Ackerman, *July, 2018*