

## South Korean novelist announced as first woman to win Man Asian Literary Prize

HONG KONG, 15 March 2012 – Kyung-sook Shin has tonight become the first woman to win the Man Asian Literary Prize, Asia's most prestigious award for writers, for her novel 'Please Look After Mom'.

The South Korean novelist attended the black tie Prize Dinner at The Conrad Hotel in Hong Kong to receive the award of US\$30,000. The translator of the novel, Chi-Young Kim also received US\$5,000.

The win is the first for a South Korean writer, and 'Please Look After Mom' is the first novel by a South Korean to make it to the Man Asian Literary Prize shortlist in the Prize's five year history.

'Please Look After Mom' is a deeply moving story of a family's search for their mother, who goes missing one afternoon amid the crowds of the Seoul Station subway. It offers the reader an insight into traditional family life in contemporary South Korea and has already sold 1.93m copies in South Korea alone – a country with a population of just under 50m people. Following the shortlisting, the novel is now set to be published in 32 countries.

90 books were submitted for the Prize in 2011 with a longlist of twelve being announced in October 2011 and an unprecedented shortlist of seven revealed in January – owing to the strength of Asian literature.

Chair of Judges, Razia Iqbal said, "Please Look After Mom' is an incredibly moving portrait of what it means to be a mother, but also of the tradition and modernity of the family in South Korea. The novel is a sensitive exploration of the inner life of the family with a very dynamic narrative structure. The story is surprising in its complexity yet has a beating heart at the centre of it."

Prof. David Parker, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Man Asian Literary Prize said, "'Please Look After Mom' is a deeply moving, humane and intricately wrought book, at once culturally specific and universal. It is a book that will be loved everywhere."



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Kyung-sook Shin is the author of numerous works of fiction and is one of South Korea's most widely read and acclaimed novelists. She has been honored with the Manhae Literature Prize, the Dong-in Literature Prize, and the Yi Sang Literary Prize, as well as France's Prix de l'Inaperçu. 'Please Look After Mom' is her first book to appear in English.

A spokesperson for Weidenfeld & Nicolson, the UK Publishers of 'Please Look After Mom' reported that "Being shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize provided a large boost to our sales, especially in export territories, as well as renewed publicity at home and abroad."

Kyung-sook Shin's agent, Joseph Lee of Korea Literary Management, reports that, while prior to the announcement of the 2011 Shortlist most Korean readers were unfamiliar with the Man Asian Literary Prize, it has since "become a well-known and important literary award" in Korea.

Nominations for the 2012 Man Asian Literary Prize will open at the end of May to publishers of novels by Asian writers from 35 countries.

The Prize can be followed on Twitter at [@MALPrize](#) and [#MALPrize11](#), as well as on Facebook at [facebook.com/MALPrize](#)

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### **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 October, followed by a shortlist of 5 to 6 titles announced in January, and a winner is awarded in March. The winning author is awarded USD 30,000 and the translator (if any) USD 5,000.

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