



Chinese Publishing and International Markets
15 March 2017, 14:00 – 16:00, Olympia, Apex Room
Keynote: IPA President, Dr Michiel Kolman

Thank you for the kind introduction.

Let me just start by pointing out that I love being in London, and it's always a pleasure to talk to fellow publishers. But this occasion is really special for me, because I get to talk about China and its publishing industry – two topics that are very close to my heart, both personally and professionally.

I have great respect for Chinese culture. I've been to China many times in my work with Elsevier, and I'm always looking for the chance to return. In fact, I'm hoping to get to the Beijing Book Fair, in August, where the IPA will be taking the lead in an international debate session.

I'm happy to say the IPA enjoys open, fruitful relations with several PAC decision makers, in particular Liu Binjie, Wu Shulin, and Li Pengyi. And we look forward to the PAC making an even bigger contribution to the IPA's future successes, around all of our primary objectives.

No question about it – the PAC is a powerful voice in world publishing. Chinese publishers have done a lot for this industry, exporting the Chinese story and culture to the world and bringing other cultures to Chinese readers.

So when the IPA General Assembly voted by a large majority in favour of the PAC's application, it marked an important expansion of the IPA's global footprint.

This growth of the IPA family – along with publishers associations from Bangladesh, Greece, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Peru, and Senegal – means the IPA now represents publishers that service around 5.6 billion people worldwide – 75% of the world population.

Our members' collective voice today carries further and speaks for more publishers than ever before. And this is how the IPA makes a difference, as we lobby for robust copyright frameworks and freedom to publish protections, as we advocate for mainstreamed literacy and accessibility initiatives and make the case for professional book and journal publishing everywhere.

By building constructive, inclusive dialogues with publishing stakeholders in the world's major markets, we increase our influence and advance our agenda on the platforms that matter – intergovernmental forums, such as the United Nations and the European Union, and national governments as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, this business of ours is an exciting, pioneering and necessary one – no matter where it's happening. Of course, there's nothing ground-breaking about a career publisher saying that. But, in reality, publishing is about much more than just business.

To my mind, publishing is a motor of human and social progress first and a noble commercial endeavour second. There is no *more* time-honoured and successful way of curating, expressing and preserving ideas, stories, opinions, beliefs and facts.

It's a process that enables the education, information and entertainment of billions of minds every day. I see publishing as intellectual amber – capturing information and displaying it in its original form to the eternal benefit of humanity. I've always felt there is something sublime about immortalizing ideas in print so they may be shared with masses of people – living or yet unborn.

In terms of impact on the human cultural journey, intellectual progress and international comprehension – no other industry compares. It's this momentousness that inspired me to devote my life to publishing, and I suspect many of you feel the same way.

So let's look at where China fits in to this picture.

First, let me say how great it is to see so many Chinese and international publishers in London. Your being here sends a profoundly positive message about the globalism of modern publishing. No market today can exist in isolation, and the most vibrant ones are those that embrace the challenges and rewards of cross-border commerce.

But as you know, China's part in this narrative goes way back.

It's well documented that the origins of printing lie in China. The earliest examples are fragments of floral silk prints from the Han Dynasty, in 220 AD. This was later adapted to paper (also a Chinese invention, of course), with the earliest printed paper book dating from the 7th century Tang Dynasty.

Had printing not made its way around the world and evolved into a 'General Purpose Technology' – as fundamental to mankind's evolution as the domestication of animals and the invention of the wheel – there could have been no knowledge economies, no science education and no financial credit systems.

In other words, the world owes a huge debt of gratitude to China for giving birth to printing and to publishing – a craft that evolved into a trade that grew into an industry.

Since those humble beginnings long ago, Chinese publishing has exploded into a \$10 billion concern – second only to the United States.

In terms of new titles, China is the biggest market by far: 470,000 in 2015, up from around 328,000 in 2010. This is compared to 338,000 in the US and 173,000 in the UK. And this impressive expansion continues: last year there were five Chinese publishing companies in the world's top 20.

With domestic sales driven by a vast, literate population that cherishes education and self-improvement, Chinese books today offer more choice of genre, voice and subject matter than at any time in the last 60 years.

Children's books have gone from strength to strength: at first propelled by the one-child policy as parents strove to give their sole offspring everything. And now the policy has been scrapped we're going to see children's books perform even better.

In addition, with 20 million English speakers emerging in China every year, demand for English language books is rising and driving up imports from Anglophone markets.

And we're all watching the fascinating explosion of 'wangwen' or 'online literature' – a uniquely Chinese phenomenon that's making young authors like Zhang Wei and Li Jie into overnight multimillionaires.

Chinese publishing is a modern-day marvel – a tale of potential made real. And all this success is built on a deep-rooted Chinese tradition of education and reading, culture and literature.

Long may it continue!

Having taken up the role of president of the IPA on the 1st of January, I am very optimistic about the work that lies ahead. My vision for the IPA is of a strategic organization working for and with a strong, cohesive, engaged membership.

We're consolidating and building on our interactions with the UN agencies in Geneva, in particular the World Intellectual Property Organization and the UN Human Rights Council. And we're evolving and expanding our network of international organizations with coinciding human rights mandates.

I am confident that with the support of our 70 members in 60 countries, the new, larger and globally resonant IPA can achieve some important gains for the publishing world. Rest assured, as publishers grapple with the challenges of political restrictions, contested copyright frameworks and technological disruption, we'll continue to devote ourselves to their future prosperity and interests.

For example, next February – less than a year from now – the IPA and the Federation of Indian Publishers will welcome the world of publishing to the 32nd International Publishers Congress in New Delhi, under the slogan 'Shaping the future: innovation meets experience'.

I love this slogan. It's honest, and prophetic, and it says we publishers hold our destiny in our own hands. In other words, it's up to us to forge our own future, to innovate and adapt by building on the traditions and values that are the timeless bedrock of this industry.

For more information please check IPACongress.com – which will evolve in the coming months.

Enjoy the rest of The London Book Fair – and I hope to see many of you in New Delhi!

Thank you.