



BOOK PRIZE

Awards Ceremony for the 2026 Winners

Journalist Barbara Demick and translator Michael Berry talk about their winning books "Daughters of the Bamboo Grove" and "The Running Flame," at our prize ceremony.

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Last week, at Asia Society in New York, *China Books Review* was delighted to host the winners of the second annual [Baifang Schell Book Prize](#). This book prize, with two \$10,000 awards in nonfiction and translated literature categories, recognizes exceptional books on or from China and the greater Sinophone world. In its second year, two independent juries considered over 80 English-language titles published in 2025 to come up with the shortlists for [nonfiction](#) and [literature](#), before deciding the winners.



At the ceremony, after an introduction by **Dr. Kevin Rudd**, President of Asia Society, there were two panel discussions with the winners. **Barbara Demick**, winner of the nonfiction award for *Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: From China to America, a True Story of Abduction, Adoption, and Separated Twins* (Random House, May 2025), talked with jury chair **Isabel Hilton** about the repercussions of the one-child policy, the disparate lives of separated twin sisters and the decades of reporting that went into her book. Next, **Michael Berry**, winner with **Fang Fang** (her award accepted by a close friend in the U.S.) of the literature award for *The Running Flame: A Novel* (Columbia University Press, March 2025) talked with **Alec Ash** about Fang Fang's writing, her passion for the oppressed and the fate of rural Chinese women. Watch a video of the program below, and see photos of the ceremony and reception below:



“ There’s psychological damage in all these families: the boys who know they were born at the expense of their sisters and may not be able to find wives; the girls who felt shunted by society; the parents who either gave up their children or had their children taken away. ”

— *Barbara Demick*

Photos



“ The traditional preference for sons has persisted in China for too long, and how much longer it will take for rural women to fully break free from this cycle, I truly don’t know. ”

— *Fang Fang, tr. Michael Berry*

Speakers



Kevin Rudd is a leading international authority on China, who currently serves as Global President and CEO of Asia Society. Formerly he has served as Australia's Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Ambassador to the United States. Rudd is the author of *On Xi Jinping* (2024) and *The Avoidable War* (2022).



Barbara Demick is an author and foreign correspondent, who was based in Beijing for *The Los Angeles Times* from 2007-14, and in previous postings covered Korea, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. She is the author of *Nothing to Envy* (2010), which won the Baillie Gifford Award, *Eat the Buddha* (2020) and *Daughters of the Bamboo Grove* (2025). Her work has also won the Overseas Press Club's human rights reporting award.



Isabel Hilton is a London-based writer and broadcaster who focuses on climate, geopolitics and China. She has written for *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*, presented radio and television for the BBC, and is the author of multiple books including *The Search for the Panchen Lama* (2000). She is the founder of the China Dialogue Trust, and a contributing editor at *Prospect* magazine.



Michael Berry is an academic and translator. He is Professor of Contemporary Chinese Cultural Studies and Director of the [Center for Chinese Studies](#) at the University of California, L.A. Berry is the author of multiple books, including *Translation, Disinformation, and Wuban Diary* (2022), as well as translator of Fang Fang's *Wuban Diary* (2020), *The Running Flame* (2025) and *Soft Burial* (2025).



Alec Ash is a writer focused on China, and editor of *China Books Review*. He is the author of *Wish Lanterns* (2016), following the lives of young Chinese in Beijing, and *The Mountains Are High* (2024) about city escapes in Dali, Yunnan. His articles have been in *The New York Review of Books*, *The Atlantic* and elsewhere. Born and educated in Oxford, England, he lived in China from 2008-2022, and is now based in New York.

The video of this talk was also published at [Asia Society](#). Submissions for next year's awards, considering books published in 2026, will open in November. ■