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The Finnish representatives have already expressed their delight in becoming Guest of Honour in 2014. They posted signs all over their booths announcing the future event. In contrast the People's Republic of China didn't take pleasure in its role as Guest of Honour in 2009 nor did the public

Oliver Schuster

Cover Story

Frankfurt Book Fair with China as Guest of Honour

Flag follows Trade -
- or vice versa?

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Bye bye Gutenberg, Hi eBook

Reading for fun or for business
is not bound to books printed
on paper any longer.

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Impressum



China encompasses more than just the communist state but only the People's Republic of China was entitled to become the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair. However dissidents, exiled writers and Chinese poets from Taiwan - which claims to be the true Republic of China - put on counter demonstrations.

Frankfurt Book Fair with China as Guest of Honour

China the Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009 was responsible for a discord already in the forefront. Obviously it has been proven that trading with the giant country is more important than discussing human rights. Thus the director of the Book Fair Juergen Boos apologized at the delegation from the People's Republic of China for the presence of two Chinese dissidents at the symposium in September, one month before the official opening. The same embarrassing situation occurred again du

had to withdraw the lady's name from the list on short notice. The following day project manager Ripken was fired because of continuous difficulties in communication.

It is not easy for a visitor to get an unbiased impression on the Chinese attitude towards literature because everything was neatly presented and well orchestrated. I listened to the presentation in Chinese just to follow the flow and melody of the otherwise incomprehensible language. The speaker gave an introduction to Ji Xianlin's book »Ten years in Germany 1935 1945«. The author described his journey as a 26 year old student from Peking via Moscow to Berlin. After 11 days Ji Xianlin reached Göttingen where he intended to stay for two years to study classical sinology. He learnt Sanskrit and Tokharian, a dead Indogermanic language, spoken in the north western part of China until 10th century a. C. Ji Xianlin did his doctorate at »Universitas Georgia Augusta« in 1941. Because of World War II it was not before 1946 that he was able to return to his country. He founded the science of indology in China and became vice president of the University of Peking later. Ji Xianlin shaped the image of Germany of the scientific community until today. Highly decorated he died in summer at the age of 97. The publication of his book »Ten years in Germany 1935 1945« also in German was made a special highlight at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009.

Professor. Dr. Michael Job, director of the linguistic seminar of the George August University Göttingen, extolled in detail the achievements of the former scholarship holder Ji Xianlin. Wang Xiting, vice Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Frankfurt, added friendly words in German over the mutu



The German flag on top of »Festhalle« above the China's poster Guest of Honour (down right)

Flag follows Trade – or vice versa? Germany prefers good trading ties with China to a discourse with dissidents

ring the farewell party. The event was sponsored by the German Foreign Office and the Book Fair Management. Dai Qing, an activist on the environment was due to deliver a few words to thank the organizers together with her critical statement for the failure of interaction between officially accredited and freelance Chinese writers during the Book Fair. Peter Ripken, then coordinator for the official Guest of Honour got a directive from the German Foreign Office. He

al appreciation. The city of Goettingen might not be well known in China, he said, but the place is mentioned in connection with Ji Xianlin's studies at the famous university. Now Wu Shulin, General Administrator of Press and Publication, delivered a long lecture. Gesture and intonation suggested a rigid propaganda speech. The translator couldn't render more than ten per cent into German. One got the impression that she couldn't find the suitable words. The press secretary seemed to lecture on the meaning of Marx and Engels for the relationship not sure what you mean by this between Germany and the People's Republic of China. The short translation mentioned only Marx. What remained untranslated, was probably not intended for the German ears. Nevertheless also some Germans among the listeners understood the Chinese speech. Since the press secretary's speech ran so long there was no time left for questions from the audience. The discussion with the translators Roswitha



At the China Forum Ji Xianlin's book »Ten years in Germany 1935-1945« covering his student's experience in Goettingen was widely praised.

Brinkmann, professor Li Kuiliu and Liu Daoqian had to likewise to be suspended. This non cultural exchange suited probably the large delegation of the host country China extremely well.

at the Frankfurt Book Fair Tradition and Innovation«. It helped a lot that the German words were included.



Little Taiwan has stolen the show from Big Brother China – at least optically with its big bags.

Taiwan was present all over the place. The small island, formerly known as *Formosa*, had the position until 1971 as sole representative to the United Nations as REPUBLIC OF CHINA ROC . ROC with drew from the United Nations when its communist rival obtained a seat in the Security Council. But ROC was highly visible even at the booth of mainland China: A lot of visitors carried big shopping bags with capital letters TAIWAN see left .

The gimmicks of communist Chinese stepbrother were comparatively poor as compared to the Taiwanese optical presence. Only with luck could one obtain a beautiful box with a puzzle containing Chinese characters see cover photo . After a successful assembled the puzzle showed the slogan »China Guest of Honour

The Laogai Research Foundation had a small booth, which garnered special attention. The former political prisoner Harry Wu 73 was present, he is the Executive Director of the organization based in Washington, DC. He is now an American citizen. Together with his international colleagues he presented books on violation of human rights in the People's of China. Harry Wu spoke about his detention in the Chinese concentration camps named Laogai. The term Laogai stands for reeducation by hard labor. Harry Wu was imprisoned for 19 years and has seen twelve camps. Slave labor is indispensable for the Chinese eco

onomy. Laogai camps serve as subcontractors to respected Chinese manufacturing companies. The exporters sell laundered products to the outside world ridiculously cheap. The average customer doesn't questi

on the dark origin of MADE IN CHINA neither is he concerned about the hazardous toys which are piled in children's rooms nor does he sense the prison smell of the garments nor is he conscious of the food processed in awful places.

The discussion with Zhou Qing and

Harry Wu on »How safe are Chinese-made food, toys and garments?« didn't surprise the well informed citizens but was a shock for the bargain hunters.

However, the problem is what are the alternatives for MADE IN CHINA on the global market?

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install the relevant software. I had to fill in various questionnaires, passwords and user's identification. The final license was denied each time. One could only obtain the permission for downloading when authorized by ADOBE's Digital Rights management DRM . I gave up after hours of frustration and de installed the program. I guess reading the 304 pages of »Atemschaukel« on my laptop wouldn't be great fun anyway.

When it comes to scientific literature electronic publishing is increasingly favored. In this case it seem less daring to read on a computer screen or a laptop because these devices are constant companions and in use on various adjacent contexts.



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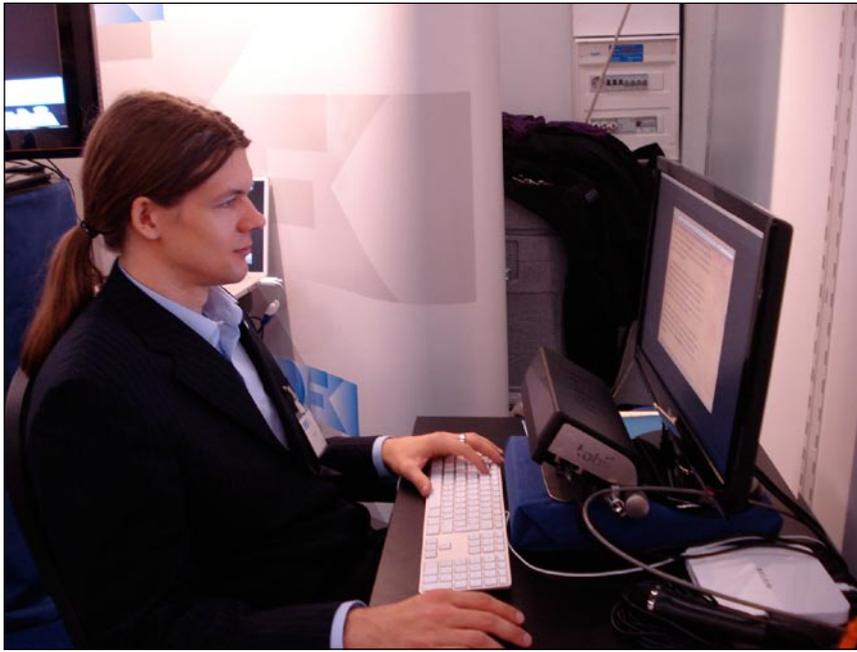


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Artificial intelligence is incorporated in the reading process. The German research center for artificial intelligence DFKI in Kaiserslautern had equipped a computer with an eye tracker. First an adjustment between pupils and screen has to be done. Now you read the *eyeBook*: The eye tracker generates various actions which were preset, for example paging up and down, marking the last position on a line by a red arrow when reading was in

The eBook Reader IRIVER STORY in action: it is easy to handle; an built-in keyboard is good for writing notes and for searches. The audio part plays spoken books.

It is essential to plan always for enough time to recharge IRIVER STORY –five hours are required.



eyeBook: Ralf Biedert, DFKI Kaiserslautern, reads with an eye tracker.

errupted. For the trial I have chosen »The Little Prince« by Antoine de Saint Exupéry in English. Despite my glasses sliding bifocals the effects came out very well. Additionally I saw the colored illustration at the edge or heard music whenever my eyes touched the equivalent part of Little Prince's story.

The *eyeBook* could provide correspondent translation if the eye rests longer at a complicated foreign word or give the correct pronunciation if incorporated in the script. Even additional footnotes were seen when at the suitable passage was reached.

When the speed of reading is increased the mass text fades leaving only key words highly visible. The so called *QuickSkim mode* might be very helpful for bulk reading or when searching for a distinct item. Springer Verlag did a survey recently on the users of *eBooks* at five University libraries. The outcome confirmed a former study that reading *eBooks* is far more selective than conventional printed books. When I tried the *QuickSkim mode* it was very difficult to obtain a result. The effect was very weak.

I assume my brain controlled my eyes and told them there is nothing really interesting to search for.

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