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A publishing sensation in China, this novel wraps an ecological warning and political indictment around the story of Chen Zhen, a Beijing student sent during the 1960s Cultural Revolution to live as a shepherd among the herdsmen of the Olonbulang, a grassland on the Inner Mongolia steppes. Chen Zhen is fascinated by the herdsmen, descendants of Genghis Khan, and by the grassland's wolves, with whom the herdsmen live in uneasy harmony. When Mao's government orders the mass execution of the wolves to make way for farming collectives run by Chen Zhen's own people, the Han Chinese, he makes for a somewhat passive hero. Except for Bilgee, the wise old herdsman, and Director Bao, the face of the Communist government in the Olonbulang, the novel's secondary characters make little impression. The wolf packs, however, are vividly and beautifully described. As Chen Zhen helplessly witnesses the consequences of the order, he risks the enmity of both the herdsmen and the state officials by capturing a wolf cub and lovingly raising it as his own wolf totem. Jiang Rong writes reverently about life on the steppes in a manner that recalls Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf*.

Published in China in 2004, *Wolf Totem* has broken all sales records, selling millions of copies (along with millions more on the black market).. Part period epic, part fable for modern days, *Wolf Totem* depicts the dying culture of the Mongols_the ancestors of the Mongol hordes who at one time terrorized the world_and the parallel extinction of the animal they believe to be sacred: the fierce and otherworldly Mongolian wolf. Beautifully translated by Howard Goldblatt, the foremost translator of Chinese fiction, this extraordinary novel is finally available in English.

Jiang Rong spent eleven years in Mongolia laboring with the native nomads and learning about their culture.

Howard Goldblatt is the foremost translator of modern Chinese literature in the West. He is a professor at Notre Dame University.