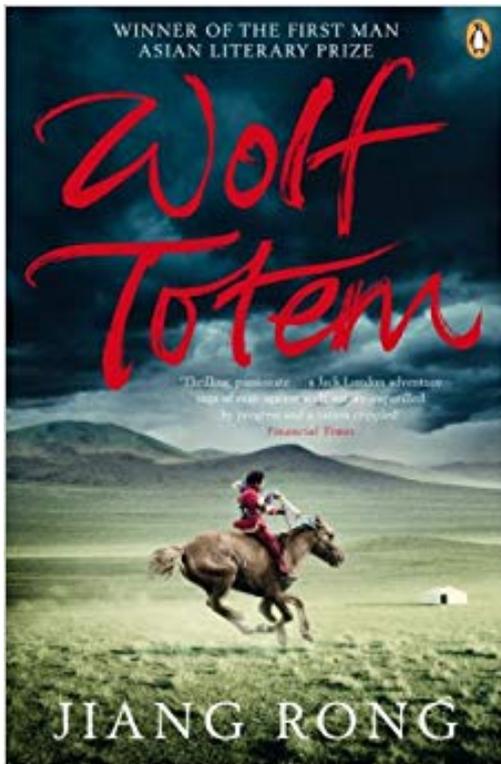


# Wolf Totem: A Novel. Translated by Howard Goldblatt *by* Jiang Rong



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Beijing intellectual Chen Zhen volunteers to live in a remote settlement on the border of Inner and Outer Mongolia, where he discovers life of apparent idyllic simplicity amongst the nomads and the wild wolves who roam the plains. But when members of the People's Republic swarm in from the cities to bring modernity and productivity to the grasslands, the peace of Chen's solitary existence is shattered, and the delicate balance between humans and wolves is disrupted. Only time will tell whether the grasslands' environment and culture will ever recover! "Wolf Totem" has been a sensation ever since it shot to the top of the Chinese bestseller charts in 2004. A beautiful and moving portrayal of a land and culture that no longer exists, it is also a powerful portrait of modern China and a fascinating insight into the country's own view of itself, its history and its people.



Reviews of the **Wolf Totem: A Novel. Translated by Howard**

## Goldblatt *by* Jiang Rong

### The Apotheoses of Lacspor

I enjoyed this book. I learned about it while traveling in China earlier this year. There, this book quickly achieved best seller status in the country given the natural detail along with the historical ties to Mao's cultural revolution. The book offers an insightful perspective of the Mongolian herder and Han Chinese farming cultures interspersed with insights into the balance wolves bring the lands they inhabit. Many additional messages for respect of the wisdom of indigenous people faced with encroaching settlement.

I live in the rocky mountain region of the U.S. and imagine that the story would be almost exactly the same from the perspective of many of our Native Americans in their truly tragic displacement by western migration and settlement.

I would definitely recommend this book to others.

I originally bought a used hardcover then also purchased the Kindle version that was more convenient for my travel.

### The Sphinx of Driz

A great book, I learned so much about Inner Mongolia, the Mongolian culture, the Chinese and how they relate to Mongolia, wolves, marmots, a way of life which is disappearing. This book won a major award in China, and is well worth the read. Amazing details about Mongolian culture and beliefs which was so interesting. Very believable with many details. The author lived the life of his main character. So glad I read it!

### Djang

This translation from Mandarin is very well done. The story of university students sent to live among the herders of Mongolia is something we in the Western World were only vaguely aware of at the time and a period of dislocation and trauma to those Chinese caught up in the Cultural Revolution. Three youths find themselves immersed in a culture where horses and sheep are always on the move from pasture to pasture and wolves are always a threat. What unfolds is a beautiful tale of how important the wolf is to ecological balance: too many wolves mean that they will wipe out small animal prey and become an even greater threat to livestock; too few wolves and the small animals eat up all the grass, denying it to grazing. Further, the pack behavior of wolves, particularly their effectiveness in coordinated efforts in hunting, are revealed in depth, a fascinating account. This book stands out as a unique contribution to our understanding of the role of predators and how humans can live in equilibrium with them, particularly relevant to current controversy on wolf killing in the American West.

### Zorve

Few books are written now that are both information and great story telling. This is a wonderful book, not only in its close connection with the spirit of wolves, but in its disclosure of the relationship of the Chinese and the Mongols. It's a richly rewarding read.

### JoJogar

This book is a fantastic insight into a land and peoples few of us know anything about. It's well written and a fascinating read on every level.

Much of it is autobiographic, drawn from the author's own experiences when he was sent to Mongolia for 're-education' during one of Red China's periodic episodes, so we get a glimpse of how young Chinese people of the time thought and how they were treated. Jian was a city boy sent to live with tribesmen living a life little changed for centuries in a very distant, isolated part of Mongolia, and his novel explores the culture shock this gave him. Perhaps even more fascinating is the detailing of how the Mongol herdsmen lived close to and with the wide lands they roamed, how they husbanded their horses, flocks and the land itself with love and deep understanding, and how the Chinese 'great thrust forward' ignored all that knowledge, essentially wrecking not only a way of life but the land itself. The wolf was the Mongol totem, top of the eco system - to be worshipped, hunted when necessary, but always with respect.

It's rare for me to read a book and know that I must have it on my shelf to be read and re-read and always enjoyed and learned from. This often heart rending, sensitive story is just such a book.

Lightwind

Slow starting and brutal scenes in the first few chapters had me wondering if I should continue. But the story sheds great light on the Mongolian herdsmen and their synergistic relationship with wolves. Worth the time spent reading, although, be warned, it is a rather dark take on the future of the Mongolian grasslands.

Dranar

This is the best novel I have read in years! As a dog trainer and nature lover, this novel brought me so close to the ever present need to preserve the balance of nature, which is the big life on which all life depends. It made me cry laugh and feel so close to Yang ,Chen, and Bilgee. I'm very grateful for this reading.

For anyone interested in ecological balance and how man is messing it all up, this is a wonderful book. I learned so much about wolves and dogs and horses and Mongolia. It was depressing, however, to learn how the Chinese wiped out the wolves and killed the culture and grasslands of Mongolia. A sad story that is happening everywhere on our planet.

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