

Xiong Liang's Dossier

CBBY Candidate for
HCA Award Illustrator



HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARD
2018 ILLUSTRATOR • CHINA

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Introduction to the Artist

Xiong Liang: ink wash artist, writer, pioneering Chinese illustrator. Born in July 1975 in the city of Jiaying, in Zhejiang Province, Xiong began studying traditional Chinese ink wash painting at an early age.

Xiong's illustrations evince a strong command of lines, shades of black, and a particularly Asian sensibility where color is concerned. His works draw on the best of China's long artistic tradition, depicting unique scenes and characters in drawings brimming with visual poetry, emotion, and expressiveness.

His works span a number of fields, including children's books, illustrated novels for adults, plays, novels, and modern ink wash painting. They unite a variety of influences, both deep and broad, to produce a style all Xiong's own.



His Works and His Contributions

Xiong's decade-plus artistic career has coincided with the emergence of illustration and children's literature in China, with the country's publishing houses and market still in their nascent stages.

Xiong's untiring creative versatility has had a profound influence on the course of Chinese drawing and painting, helping nurture a passion for original works of illustration among China's youth.

I. Teaching and Creating Artistic Communities

From 2008 until the present, Xiong has served as either a visiting professor or graduate student advisor at a number of prominent art academies, including the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and the Beijing Institute of Clothing Technology. In all these positions, he has worked to foster understanding of picture books, and to help grow the school's illustration-related majors.

He has also held workshops and lectures on illustration on a regular basis at Beijing's most prominent bookstores, including Kubrick, The Bookworm, and Sanlian, sharing his experience with a number of young illustrators.

For them, Xiong has been more than a teacher. He is an architect, someone showing

the way forward for Chinese culture. He is a friend, one who advocates the idea of an open artistic community, pushes for increased communication and exchange, and has created platforms to share and grow.



II. Creative Expeditions

For Xiong, artistic creation is a journey with no end, one where new starting points can appear at any time, offering opportunities to explore new possibilities for expression. For him, broadening and deepening the very meaning of illustration is the most profound happiness there is.

Aside from his work in the classroom and the studio, Xiong has also found the time to take young artists on expeditions to the open country of Qinghai and Xinjiang, giving them the opportunity to get to know people from fields very different than their own.



III. Illustrations of Nature

During the past several years, from 2013 to 2016, Xiong has led groups of artists on trips to Sichuan and Qinghai, in cooperation with the Nianbaoyuze Natural Protection Society, and Peking University's Shanshui Natural Protection Association. The trips have produced work on subjects such as mountain spirits, snow leopards, pikas, Pallas's cats, and cow dung, revealing the deep connection between man and nature.

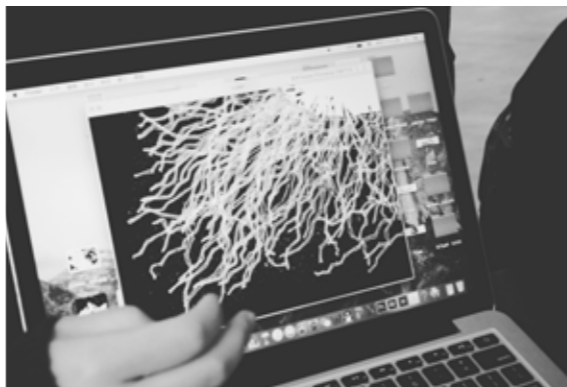
One book—"Whose Footprints Are These?"—has already been published as a result of this work, with four more illustrated books slated for release in 2017.



IV. Experimental Illustration

To encourage artists to diversify their creations, Xiong has taken a step beyond commercial works, working together with the cross-cultural creative organization Meridian, exploring new possibilities for narrative forms and artistic styles. Among the artists who've participated have been graphic illustrators, comic illustrators, domestic and foreign art students, graphic designers, and apparel designers.

For more information on Meridian's cross-cultural programs, visit www.meridian-online.com.



V. Folk Collections and Essays

Xiong has worked to collect stories from Chinese folk culture.

In his conversations with friends from Tibet and Sichuan, Xiong has done more than simply put down stories on paper. Rather, he has learned to set aside preconceived notions, and understand different cultures from the inside.

Aside from his work as an illustrator, Xiong is also an independent author of essays, poems, and scripts. A magazine he founded in 2003—Essays—was the voice of a new essay movement.

His latest book will collect folk stories and fairy tales. Publication is planned for 2017.



VI. "Alternative" Folk Works

Beginning in 2006, Xiong took a bold step, initiating a long-term excavation of "alternative" forms of traditional culture. His goal was to bring to light a different side of Chinese traditions, and of life itself.

His 2015 folk play "Tales of Darkness" was jointly published by Meridian and New Star Press. His updated version of "Wukong's Story: Journey to the West Retold" will be published in April 2017.



Wukong





VII. Animation and Movies

Xiong's work "Monster of the Monsoon" was adapted into an animation script, winning a "Best Script" award from the prestigious Beijing Film Academy.

His work "Peking Opera Cats" was also adapted into an animated series by the same name. Since 2013, the series has won fifteen foreign and domestic awards for excellence.

Xiong has also served as an advisor for the Master's Degree in Animation at Beijing Institute of Clothing Technology, working together with a number of other artists on developing the imagery and stories for new kinds of animation.



VIII. Pure Drawing

In contrast with versatile illustration style, the visual language of Xiong's sketchwork has a simplicity bordering on terseness. The immediate experience of these sketches is bound up with his use of lines, shapes, and colors, marrying long practice with long-held thoughts to produce a state of total concentration, a state of complete emptiness from which his creations can naturally emerge.

His deep, sustained exploration has transformed the color relationships of traditional ink wash painting into a new artform, and provides the soil from which the visual language of his illustrations has grown.

Among the exhibitions where his work has been shown:

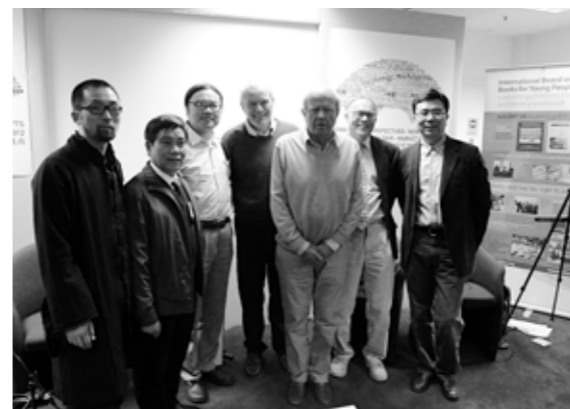
In December 2009, invited by Osaka International Children's Literature Museum to give a special lecture to introduce the creation and development of the original picture books.

2012 at the British Museum: At an exhibition showing modern Chinese children's picturebooks, Xiong met and exchanged ideas with well-known British illustrators such as John Burningham, Andrew Browne, and Michael Foreman.

2016 Frankfurt Book Fair: "Children's Picture Books from China", organized by the Confucius Institute.

2016 New Delhi World Book Fair.

2018 Invited to participate in a drawing exhibition at France's Musee des beaux-arts de Gaillac, planned for the first half of the year.



Actively participate in cultural exchanges with young domestic artists and foreign picture book artists from different cultural backgrounds.

IX. Children's Art Education

In 2014, Xiong began "Teacher Xiong's Illustration Class", a design and art class for children offered via his WeChat public account that has been attended by more than 2,000 students. More than just teaching children to draw, the class is meant to provide a unique, interesting way of thinking about art. At the same time the class brings together traditional and modern views on art, expanding children's horizons while promoting their individual creativity.



X. Conceptual Research

Xiong Liang's views on picture books are better described as a set or a series of intellectual methodologies. Put simply, it is studying how to see clearly one's most intrinsic intellectual states, and to put them into flowing words and pictures. Thought is one of our most basic qualities; the most fundamental elements of culture, philosophy and religion all emerge from our everyday thoughts. Positive ways of thinking help one to set aside excessive desire, and expand your understanding of the world. Stories are the most supremely simple way of transmitting thought there is.

For Xiong, drawing and illustration are an all-encompassing intellectual state, where the creator and the reader can set aside conventional understanding to understand things anew. This new pedagogy or creativity continually inspires new possibilities.

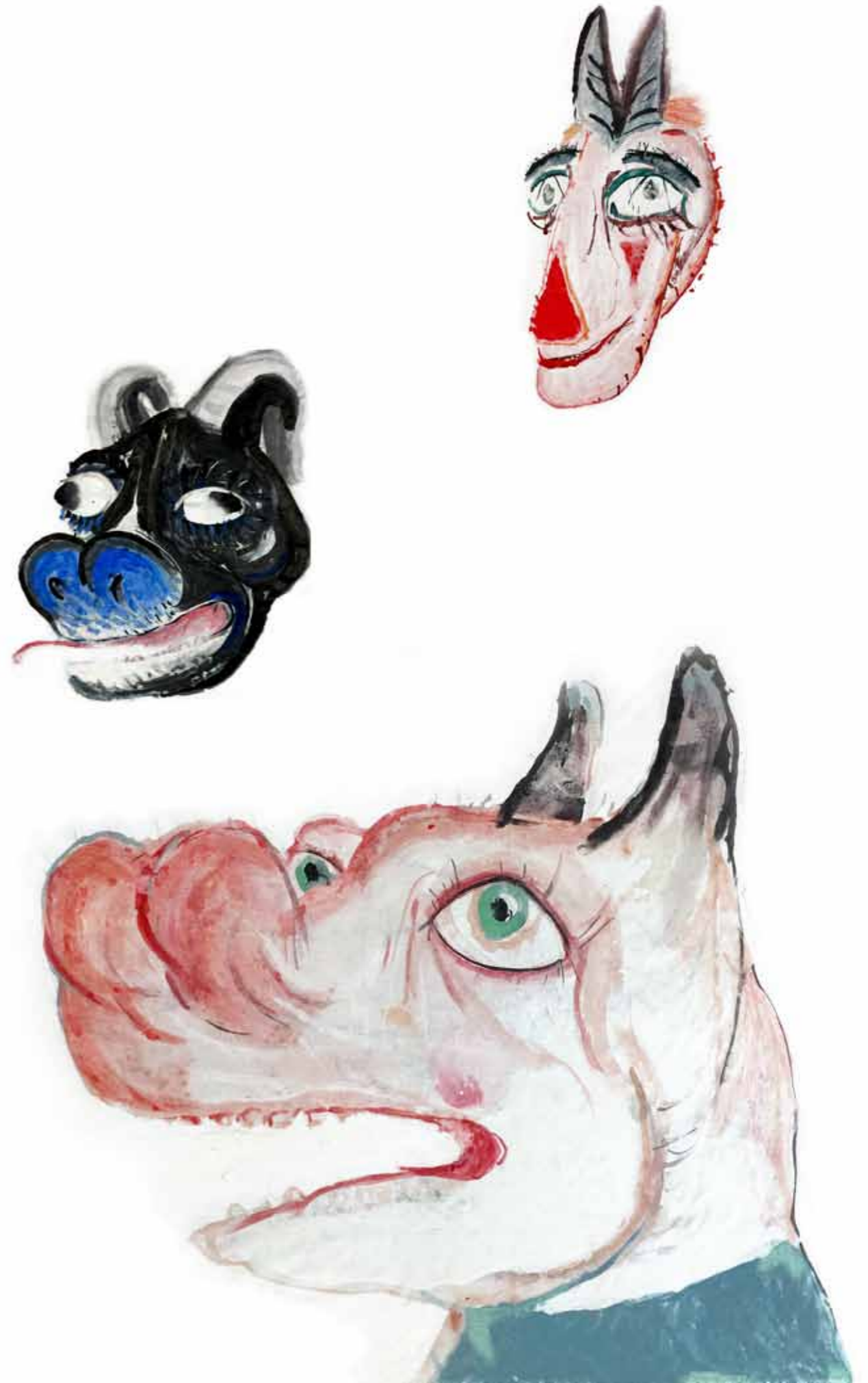
Xiong's stories for children make airy concepts tangible, give power to the obscure, and inspire us to walk towards what is light and bright. They make faraway stories sympathetic, linking the past with the present, and erasing barriers through countless acts of varied creation.



XI. Tradition and Modernity

Xiong also hopes his works and his teaching can act as vehicles for transmitting ideas on both traditional and modern Chinese art. Art goes beyond the mere visual. Its more fundamental purpose is the pursuit of a philosophy of life lying behind the appearance: Namely, how should we live? How should we understand and treat the world that we share?

Ancient Asian philosophical beliefs about coexisting harmoniously with nature, passing on traditional culture, continually seeking new understanding of the self become more important with each passing day in our noisy, messy present. Books of the kind Xiong creates are about reclaiming from the wasteland a bit of quiet, no matter how small.



List of Awards and Other Distinctions

2005

Xiong Liang was invited by the Hans Christian Andersen Fund in Denmark to illustrate a Bicentennial Edition of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales.

Xiong Liang's illustrations in The Complete Works by Hans Christian Andersen (Chinese Edition, 2005) were collected in the exhibition by the H.C Anderson's House.

The Little Stone Lion

2005 Best Children's Book of the Year by China Times, Taiwan.

2005 Recommended Book for Readers by Taiwan United Daily News

2005 Recommended Book of the Year by Central Daily News

Beijing Opera Cat and the Battle of Chang Ban Po

2007 Best Children's Book of the Year by China Times, Taiwan.

2007 Best Work of the Year, Asian Youth Animation & Comics Contest (AYACC)

Silver Award, The 17th Golden Cup of Art Books, 2007, China

2007

2008

Picture Story Book China Series - The Little Stone Lion. The Toy Rabbit Story. The Kitchen God. The Clay General. The Dragon Slayers. The Old Tree.

Original 100 Chinese Publications Award by the National Administration of Press and Publications.

The Little Stone Lion

2008 Best Children's Book of the Year by China Times, Taiwan.

2008 Top 10 Best Books of the Year, Eslite Books, Taiwan

The Old Tree

2008 Best Books of the Year, Taiwan

The China Memory Series - My Pony. Paper Horse. Beijing Opera Cat and the Wu Song Fight the Tiger. Beijing Opera Cats and the Battle of Chang Ban Po. Lotus Back. Su Wu Herding Sheep

Original 100 Chinese Publications Award by the National Administration of Press and Publications.

Lotus Back

Most Beautiful Book of the Year, China

2011

Beijing Opera Cat and the Battle of Chang Ban Po
Gold Prize of Cartoon Production, Gold Prize of Cartoon
Image, 7th China International Cartoon and Animation Fair
2011 Top 10 Best Books of the Year, Eslite Books, Taiwan

Beijing Opera Cat and the Wu Song Fight the Tiger
Selected as Basic Reading List for Young Children, China

2012

The Monster of Monsoon
10 Best Books by the Beijing News Weekly Magazine

2013

2014

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARD 2014
On being selected as candidate for the 2014illustrator
award by the IBBY national section of china

The ten volumes of "Xiong Liang: Chinese Illustrations" win
the Sina Children and Infant Channel's "2016 Picture Book
Award"

2016

A Complete Bibliography

The Little Stone Lion

《小石狮》

Language published – Chinese/English

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2005) Chinese Edition

Heryin Books, Inc.; 1st English Ed edition (June 1, 2006)

Tomorrow Publishing House, Beijing CHINA (2007) Chinese Edition

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition

The Toy Rabbit Story

《兔儿爷》

Language - Chinese/English/Korean/Japanese

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2005) Chinese Edition

Tomorrow Publishing House, Beijing CHINA (2007)

* Korean and Japanese editions cannot be located on internet by the author.

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition

Story Of The Year

《年》

Language published – Chinese/English

Tomorrow Publishing House, Beijing CHINA (2007), Chinese Edition

Better Chinese LLC (2007), English Edition

Dragon Totem Cultural, Taiwan (2011)

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition

Kitchen God

《灶王爷》

Language – Chinese/English/French

Tomorrow Publishing House, Beijing CHINA (2007), Chinese Edition.

Better Chinese LLC (2007), English Edition

Dragon Totem Cultural, Taiwan (2011), Traditional Chinese Edition

Le génie du foyer [French] [Paperback], Editions Horizon Oriental (2011)

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition

The Clay General

《泥将军》

Language - Chinese/English

Tomorrow Publishing House, Beijing CHINA (2007), Chinese Edition

Better Chinese LLC (2008), English Edition.

Dragon Totem Cultural, Taiwan (2011), Traditional Chinese Edition

The Dragon Tribe

《屠龙族》

Language – Chinese/English/French

Tomorrow Publishing House, Beijing CHINA (2007), Chinese Edition

Better Chinese LLC (2008), English Edition.

Dragon Totem Cultural, Taiwan (2011), Traditional Chinese Edition

Le Mystère des dragons disparus, Mille Fleurs (11 April 2013), French Edition

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd.,Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition

The Beijing Opera Cats and Battle Of Chang Ban Po

《京剧猫 – 长坂坡》

Language – Chinese/English/French

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2007), Traditional Chinese Edition

Picture Story Publishing House, Beijing, CHINA (2008), Chinese Edition.

SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, CHINA (2013), Chinese Edition

Le Chat Général Zhang Fei, Horizon Oriental, France (2011), French Edition

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd.,Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition

The Beijing Opera Cats and Wu Song Fights the Tiger

《京剧猫 – 武松打虎》

Language – Chinese/English/French

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2007), Traditional Chinese Edition

Picture Story Publishing House, Beijing, CHINA (2008), Chinese Edition.

SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, CHINA (2013), Chinese Edition

Le Tueur De Tigre, Horizon Oriental, France (2011), French Edition

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd.,Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition

Su Wu Herding Sheep

《苏武牧羊》

Language – Chinese

Picture Story Publishing House, Beijing, CHINA (2008), Chinese Edition.

My Little Pony

《我的小马》

Language – Chinese

Picture Story Publishing House, Beijing, CHINA (2008), Chinese Edition.

Lotus are Back

《荷花回来了》

Language – Chinese/Korean

Comic book publisher, Beijing,CHINA (2008)

sallim Publishing Co.South Korea (2012)

Paper Horse

《纸马》

Language – Chinese/English

Better Chinese LLC (2007)

Comic book publisher, Beijing, CHINA (2008)

Dragon Totem Cultural, Taiwan (2012)

Children at Large

《野孩子》

Language - Chinese

Comic book publisher, Beijing, CHINA (2009)

Dragon Totem Cultural, Taiwan (2012)

SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, CHINA (2013), Chinese Edition

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA (2016)

Chinese Edition

The Vajia Master

《金刚师》

Language - Chinese

SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, CHINA (2010), Chinese Edition

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA (2016)

Chinese Edition

The Monster Of Monsoon

《梅雨怪》

Language - Chinese /French

SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, CHINA (2010), Chinese Edition

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA (2016)

Chinese Edition

The Monster Of Monsoon

《梅雨怪 / 二》

Language-Chinese

SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, CHINA (2012), Chinese Edition

The Tea Time On The Moon

《月亮上的筵席》

Language - Chinese

SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, CHINA (2012), Chinese Edition

The Solar Terms

《二十四节气》

Language – Chinese/Spanish

Produced by Meridian

Published by New Star Press, Beijing, CHINA (2015) Chinese Edition

PASTEL DE LUNA, S.L., Spain, Spanish Edition (2015)

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA (2016)

Chinese Edition

Tales of Darkness

《寻暗集》

Language – Chinese

Published by New Star Press, Beijing, CHINA (2015) Chinese Edition



Wandering with the Wind

《和风一起散步》

Language – Chinese

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition



Wukong (COMING SOON)

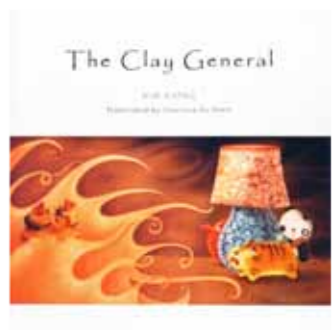
《悟空》

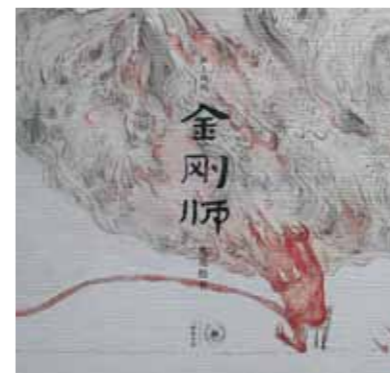
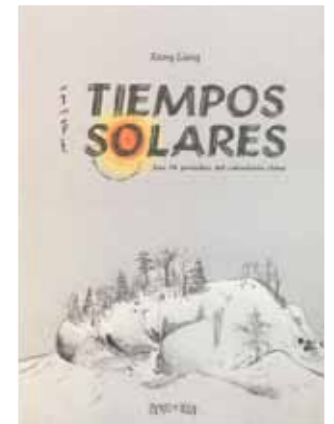
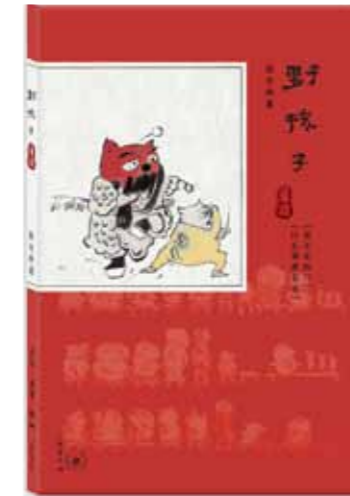
Language – Chinese

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd., Beijing, CHINA(2016)

Chinese Edition









List of Translated Editions

The Little Stone Lion

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2005) Chinese Edition

Heryin Books, Inc.; 1st English Ed edition (June 1, 2006)



Story Of The Year

Chinese LLC (2007), English Edition



The Toy Rabbit Story

Language - Chinese/English/Korean/Japanese

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2005) Chinese Edition

* Korean and Japanese editions cannot be located on internet by the author.



Kitchen God

Better Chinese LLC (2007), English Edition

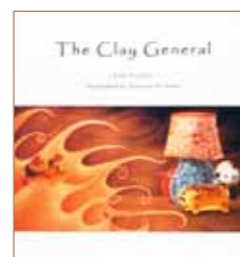
Le génie du foyer [French] [Paperback], Editions Horizon Oriental (2011)



The Clay General

Better Chinese LLC (2008), English Edition.

Dragon Totem Cultural, Taiwan (2011), Traditional Chinese Edition



The Dragon Tribe

Better Chinese LLC (2008), English Edition.

Le Mystère des dragons disparus, Mille Fleurs (11 April 2013), French Edition



The Beijing Opera Cats and Battle Of Chang Ban Po

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2007), Traditional Chinese Edition

Chinese Edition Le Chat Général Zhang Fei, Horizon Oriental, France (2011),

French Edition



The Beijing Opera Cats and Wu Song Fights the Tiger

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2007), Traditional Chinese Edition

Chinese Edition Le Tueur De Tigre, Horizon Oriental, France (2011),

French Edition



Lotus are Back

sallim Publishing Co.South Korea (2012)



Paper Horse

Better Chinese LLC (2007)



The Monster Of Monsoon

Chinese Edition Le Tueur De Tigre, Horizon Oriental, France (2011),

French Edition



The Solar Terms

PASTEL DE LUNA,S.L.,Spain,Spanish Edition(2015)



Summaries and Commentary on Major Works by Xiong

The Solar Terms

ISBN:978-7-5133-1667-5

Produced by: Meridian 时差

Published by: New Star Press

Publishing Date: January 2015

Binding: Hardcover

Format: Sixteenmo

Print Runs: 1



Summary:

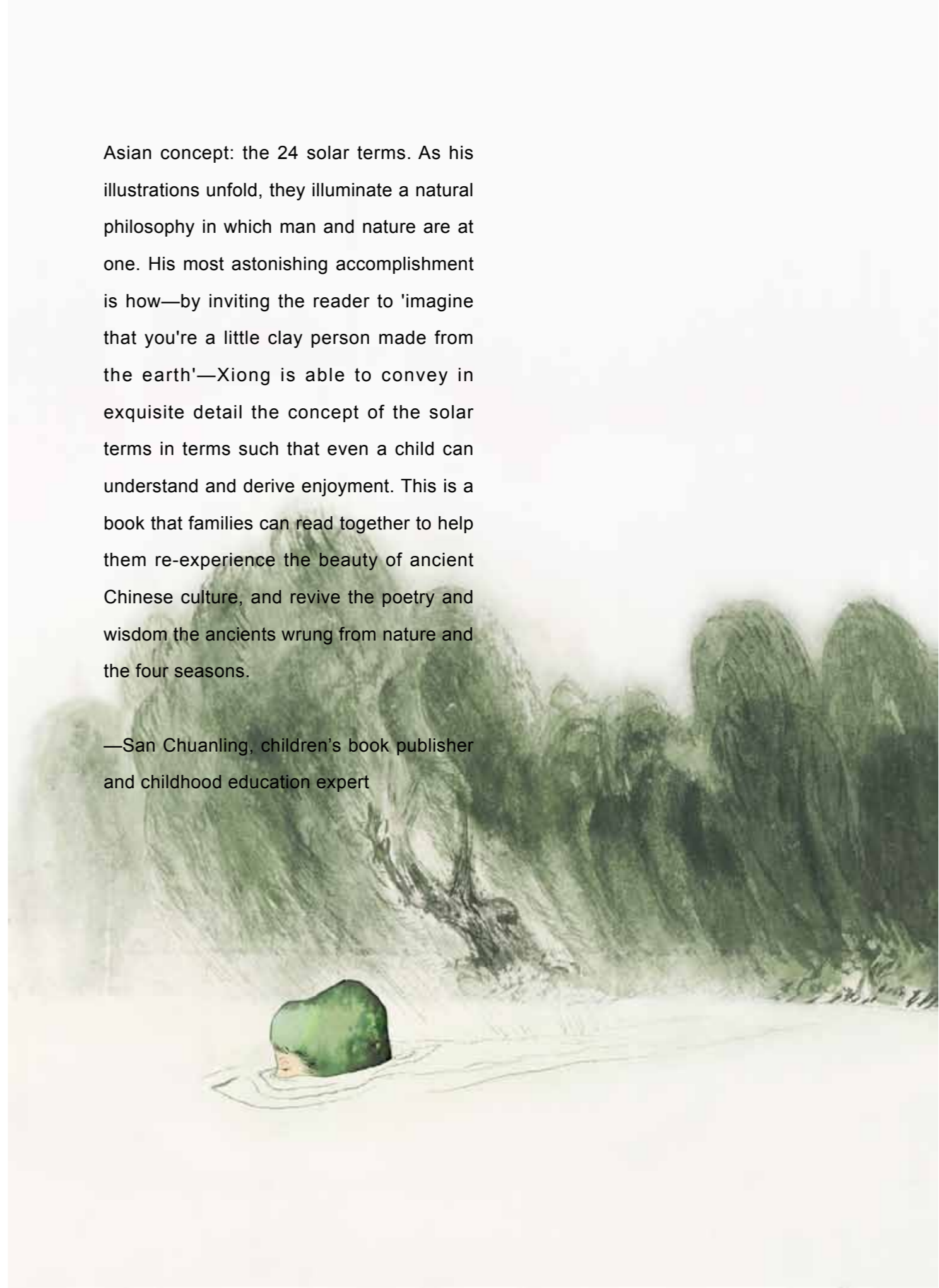
A small clay figure body changes with each of the seasons, and with it, his experiences. Each page shows these seasonal changes, creating a tale that's as much cycle as story.

Commentary:

In this book, the illustrator and artist Xiong Liang uses an eminently Chinese artform (ink wash painting) to lay forth an eminently

Asian concept: the 24 solar terms. As his illustrations unfold, they illuminate a natural philosophy in which man and nature are at one. His most astonishing accomplishment is how—by inviting the reader to 'imagine that you're a little clay person made from the earth'—Xiong is able to convey in exquisite detail the concept of the solar terms in terms such that even a child can understand and derive enjoyment. This is a book that families can read together to help them re-experience the beauty of ancient Chinese culture, and revive the poetry and wisdom the ancients wrung from nature and the four seasons.

—San Chuanling, children's book publisher and childhood education expert





Wandering with the Wind

ISBN:9787201110394

Publisher: Tianjin People's Press

Publishing Date: December 1, 2016

Print Runs: 1

Binding: Hardcover

Format: Twelvemo



Wandering with the Wind

Summary:

In this book, where each quiet page is juxtaposed with a page filled with motion, a young child is blown by the wind, roaming near and far, making trouble, meeting with misfortune, growing up, and finally returning back home.

Does the wind really go with the child in his travels? Or is it the child's own journey? Children under the age of six have a special connection with the world, merging the wind of the natural world with the child's inner vitality.

Commentary:

An innocent heart's journey through the world.

The inspiration for this story comes from "The Wind's Gift", by Song Yu, a poet in the Kingdom of Chu during the Warring States period of Chinese history, a poem that paints a skillful, vibrant portrait of the changes wrought in the natural world by the coming of the wind. The illustrator and artist Xiong Liang draws out the essence of Song's work to

create the "Little Wood Elf", a mystical Asian creature. Through his witty, finely wrought depiction of the games played by the wind and Little Wood Elf, he shows the wind's effect as it sweeps through the world, and its ability to touch the hearts of ordinary people.

The entire story brims with innocence and childlike fascination, its images trickling by in an unhurried stream. It all seems very subdued, but at every turn there are exquisite little surprises. The medium Xiong has chosen—silk—is both traditionally Chinese and famously difficult to work with. By developing an innovative twist on traditional methods that combines rubbing and collage techniques to produce images, he hits a personal high for storytelling and artistic skill, beyond anything seen in his work in recent years.

—Yimin Mao, Founder of Meridian 时差







The Little Stone Lion

ISBN 9787533254636

Publisher: Tomorrow Publishing House

Publishing Date: September 1, 2007

Number of Pages: 34

Print Runs: 1

Binding: Hardcover



Summary:

Xiong Liang's first illustrated book tells a story about time through the eyes of its main character, an unmoving stone monkey.

The book uses a unique style of visual narration, using the stone monkey's continuing growth as a jumping off point to explore the timelessness of eternity, the depth of emotion, and the accumulation of memory, stepping into the history all around us through the pure perspective of a child.

Commentary:

Although *The Little Stone Monkey* isn't illustrated with traditional ink brush techniques, and doesn't evince that technique's generous use of blank white space, it nevertheless approximates the feel of those images through its arrangement of space and its sense of boundlessness. The story, extreme in its simplicity, lingers in the mind long after it's finished, and is depicted with the sprightly essence of the Western illustration style. The story is told through the narration of a small carved stone monkey in a small

village. The first three frames gradually draw us in closer to the monkey, showing the contours of its face in ever-greater detail. The author slyly sells the reader on the false impression that the narrator is not just a monkey, but a guardian spirit of immense size. In the next page though, comes the sudden realization that the stone monkey is no bigger than the railing on which it sits, smaller than a cat in fact. The sleight of hand gives what could be a quiet story an opening jolt. The temple in which the monkey sits does not teem with worshippers, it sits there like any other marker in our lives, like a tree, or a building. There stands the monkey, upright and stock still, piercing the veil of time as the seasons flow by, watching as people and events come and go. The small stone monkey knows that, while some people might remember him, others might not. It knows, though, that it will remember each and every last one of them. Seeing the two panels in which the monkey holds its head high in the snow and rain, we might think its situation lonely or intolerable. But the glowing happiness of its expression, the joy with which it plays its role...this is the book's very essence.

—Zhang Suchun, picturebook researcher

“The Little Stone Monkey: A Hometown’s Sentinel and Sentimental Attachment”

After we've grown up, after we've traveled the world, after our memories of our hometown have gradually grown cloudy, who will there be to worry themselves after us in that distant place?

Have you figured out who it might be? It is, it turns out, the little stone monkey sat at the end of a bridge in our hometown, that silent, living little stone monkey.

Even if we've gone, left without a care in the world, disappeared for years, or even decades, the stone monkey will be forever there, there in our little village, keeping

watch over our childhood memories, keeping time company. This stone statue is history, it is a witness, it is, more than anything, the embodiment of our hometown. When we prodigal sons and daughters cast our eyes back homeward—our native place returning suddenly to mind—we will cry and we will discover, with tears running down our face, that as the stone statue has kept watch over us through the decades, so too have we kept it always in our hearts, its gaze as loving as that of a mother.

This is a book that must be read and savored slowly, quietly.

Reading it slowly, first reading the text, then taking in the pictures, then the text again, you'll finally understand what the book is driving at. You'll finally be able to savor how it lingers in the mind.

And from this, you will understand that all of us, deep within our hearts, have a little stone monkey, one that we forget all too often.

—**Peng Yi (Assistant Professor, Zhejiang Normal University Children's Cultural Research Institute)**



The Monster of the Monsoon

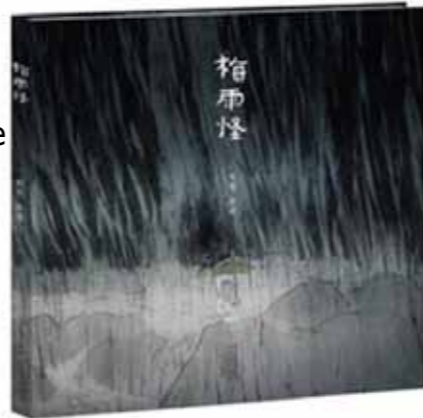
ISBN:9787501610174

Publisher: People's Literature Publishing House

Publishing Date: October 1, 2015

Format: Twelvemo

Print runs: 1



Summary:

On the outskirts of the city lies Big Rain Mountain, where it rains the whole year round. Here, the Monsoon Monster and his friends live, playing little tricks to make people laugh, changing the monotony of life in the rain into joy and fun.

Commentary:

A view of a mountain village, with steadily darkening calligraphy faintly discernible through the rain; a little pixie taking the first step on the road to enlightenment. At a first glance, these are the two powerful images within "The Monster of the Monsoon" that moved us, and inspired us to immediately begin work on producing a film version.

"The Monster of the Monsoon" is rich with meaning, bursting with movement and vitality, and chock full with food for thought.

On the surface, it is a story for children: a little pixie, who has spent much of its life in the rain, decides to go looking for the sun, and bring it back to its house. Dig down a layer, though, and you find a Buddhist tale: a monsoon monster, fenced in by barriers he himself built, begins down the path to enlightenment, which he attains through the things he sees and thinks, the joys and sorrows he experiences long the way. At the end he returns to the world he betrayed, and finds peace within his life. When he

realizes he must move beyond his ego, the heavens and earth open to him.

There is much more besides this to captivate the reader: the Chinese ink brush illustration of lush mosses and wildly breeding insects, all wrought in pure visual poetry. This is the book's intent, and it captures perfectly the Daoist concepts of "The Way follows its own way", and "being natural wherever one finds oneself".

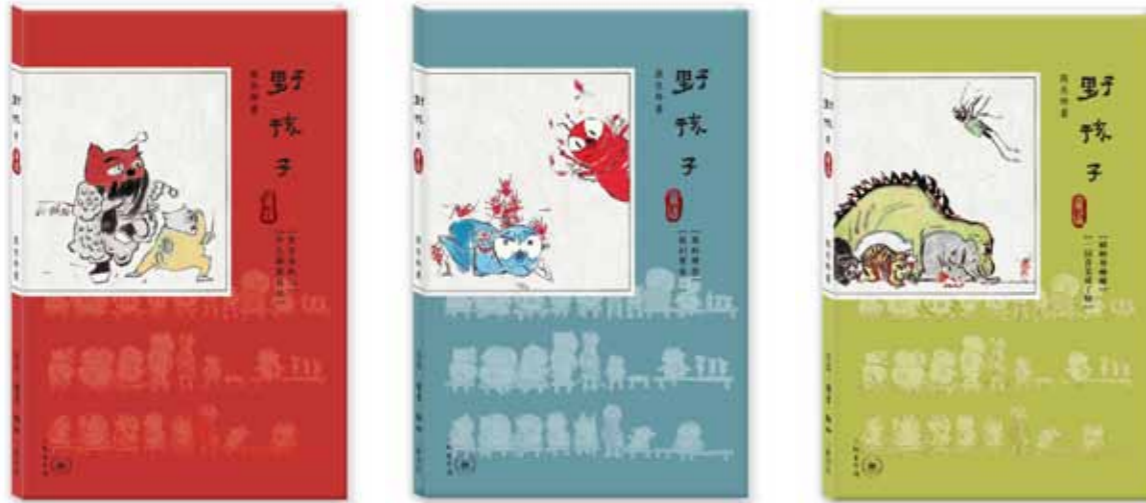
To bring this outstanding work to life, we decided to turn to Offshore for script development, and Miyu for animation production, with Guo Na and Xiong Liang as executive producers, and Claire Sichez as director. Sichez is a noted animation director, and has worked together with a team of animators to bring the world of the original work to the screen. After we delivered the previous version to CNC, we put together an animation plan that would eventually lead us to a better developed final product; the difference shows in both the direction and the technical aspects of the new version. We hope that this first attempt will help build confidence in the project.

—Fabrice Prél-Cléach, French producer for "The Monster of the Monsoon" short animated film. Fabrice is a well-known producer, founder of the Paris-based production company Offshore, chairman of the French Independent Producers' Guild, and a member of Unifrance Movie Association's short film committee. He has produced more than 30 films of varying lengths, some of which have been awarded honors which include the César Award.





Children at Large: Nursery Rhymes, Games, and Words



Publisher: SDX Joint Publishing Company

Number of books: 3

Publishing runs: 1

Binding: Hardcover

Publishing date: May 1, 2013

Format: Sixteenmo

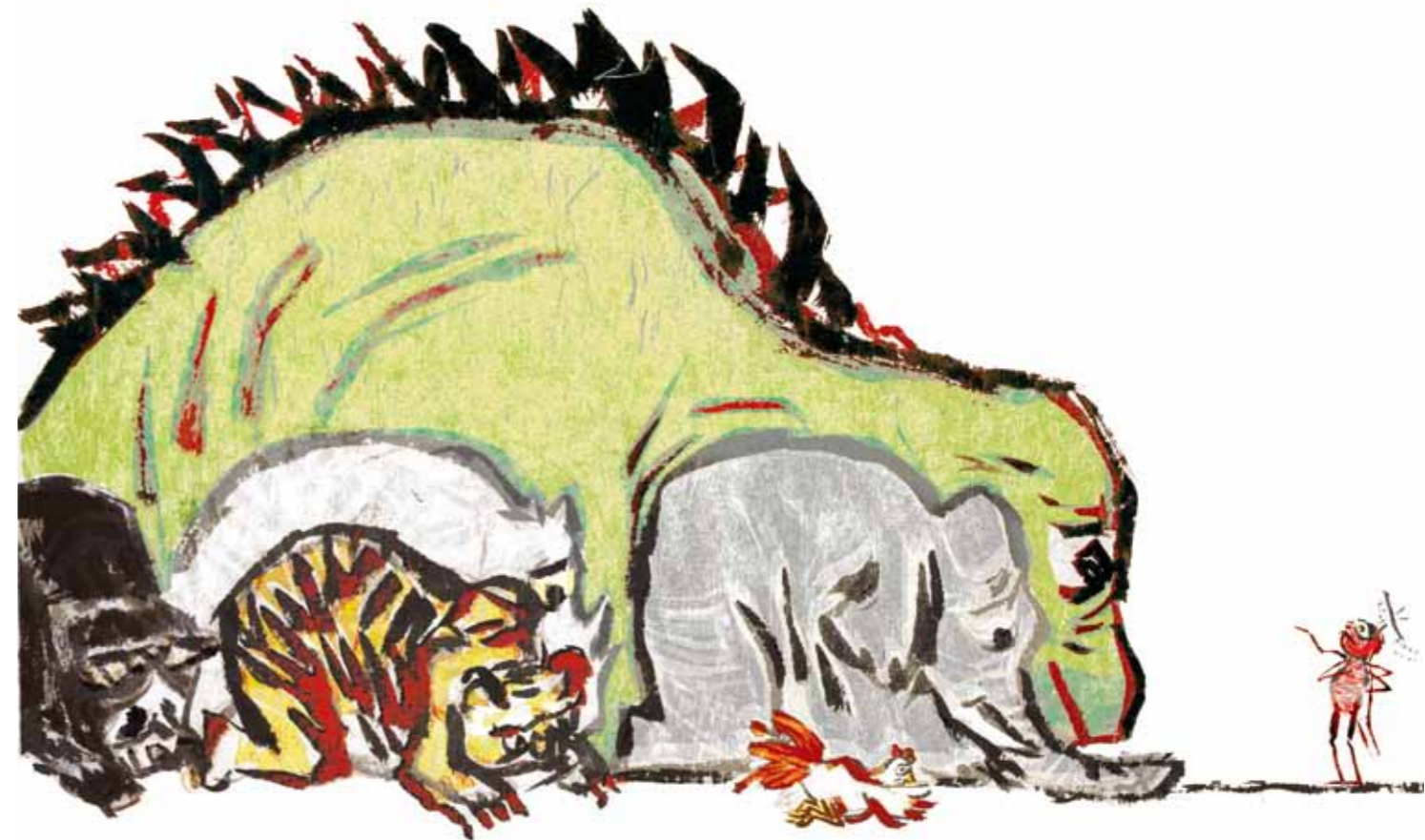
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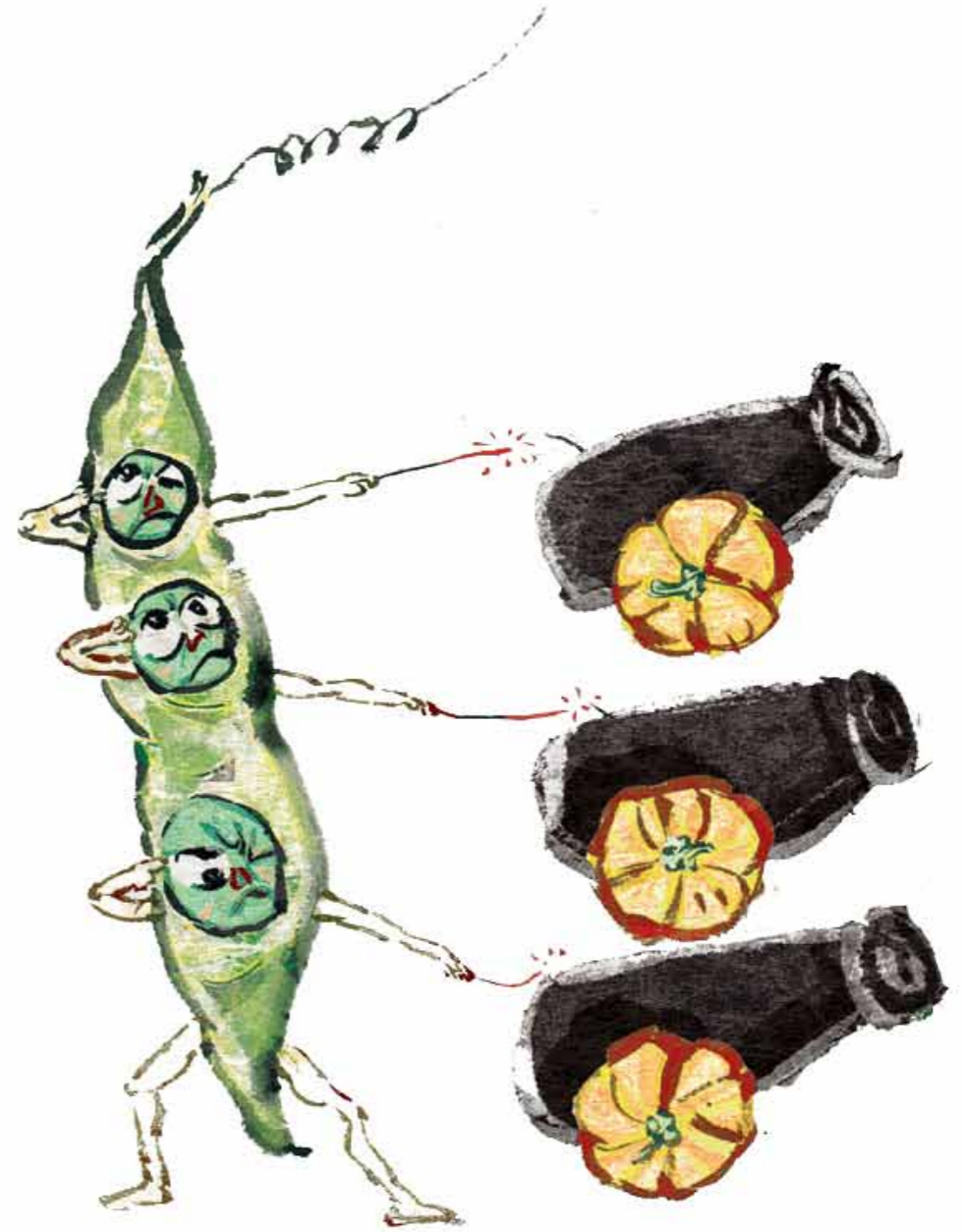
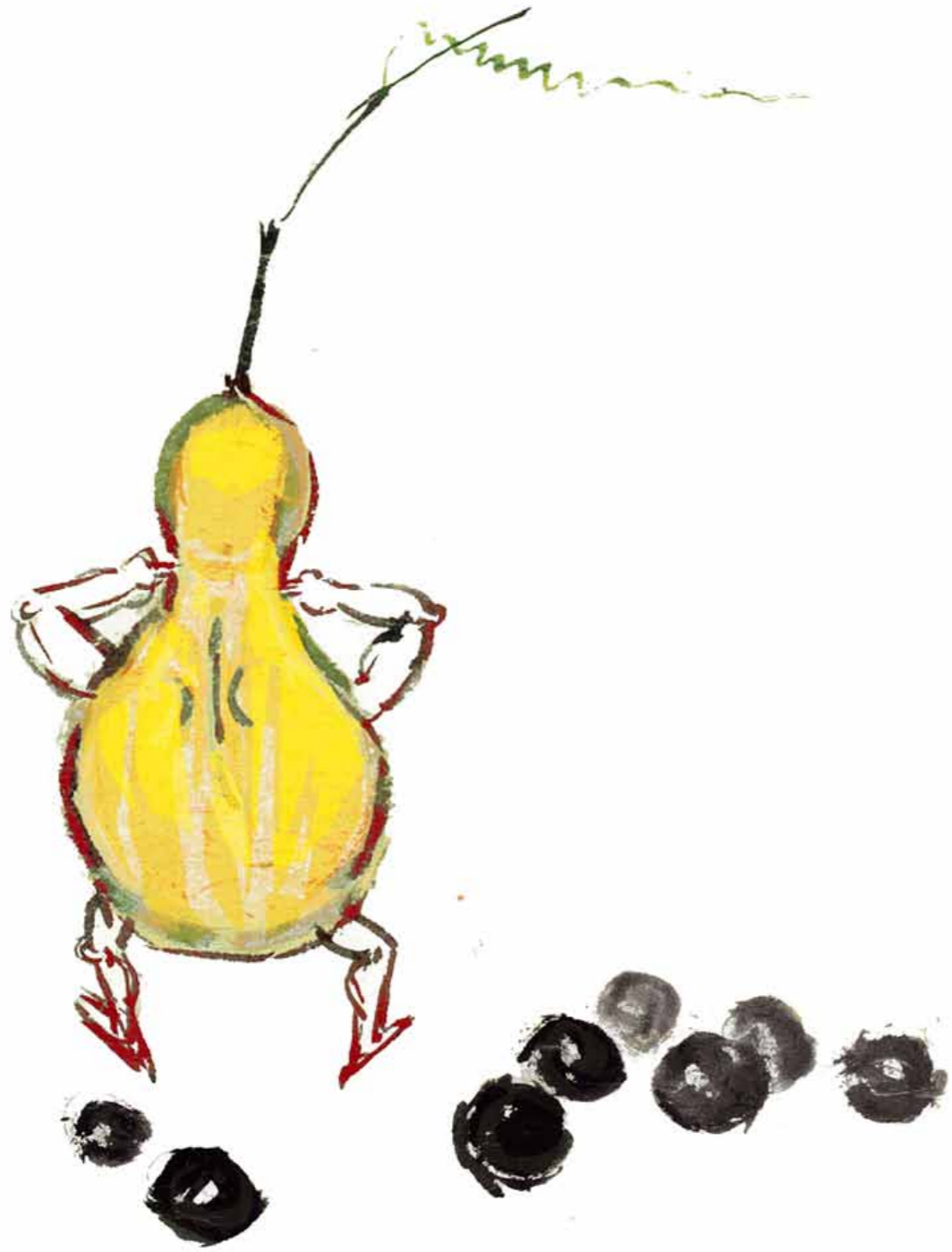
Xiong Liang integrates China's unique 'xiangsheng' tradition into this collection of six children's stories, told with wildly hilarious abandon. The art inside is similarly uninhibited, with ink wash and woodblock paintings coming together to form a rhythm all their own.

Commentary

Someone once asked me whose picture books were the best. I recommended Xiong Liang without a second's hesitation. He's not just one of the best authors out there, he's also possessed of a rare sense of humor. This collection, Children at Large, "brings together nursery rhymes, Peking Opera, and other forms of traditional culture in a thigh-slappingly funny story collection." "Xiong Liang's illustrations are endearingly clumsy, beautiful and clumsy." A child's dream of bare little bottoms waiting for a needle's prick, that's the kind of image that gets a little kid's attention.

—Magua Shihang, noted Chinese editor and cultural commentator





In the Artist's Own Words: Views on My Illustrations

Illustration in Three Words: Nature, Inspiration, Diversity

Nature

In its modern usage, "nature" is often used to mean the forests and rivers, seas and oceans and life, the environment that we humans rely on to survive. Sometimes 'nature' is contrasted with the artificial, or set apart from the boundless, unthinking universe. But perhaps these understandings are all, in a certain sense, part of the same larger picture; even our society, our rules, our language are, after all, 'nature' in their own way. They all, in one way or another, refer to the outside world. Traditionally speaking, however, the word 'nature' in Chinese is used to mean something's 'original form'. To go back to one's original self, to the world's original state, is the most interesting spiritual discovery many over-regimented adults can make, one which opens up a shifting, changing world of diverse possibilities.

Inspiration

As we usually understand it, 'enlightenment' is part of the process of education, something whose purpose is to facilitate learning. Illustration is not like this. The relationship between words and text goes beyond simply pairing the one with the other, or layering words on top of images. It is, rather, a true form of 'thinking'. Adults use language, concepts, experience, and logic to 'think'. Children (or illustrators), on the other hand, reject limits; their thinking is a form of experiencing that uses their entire mind and body. They think through a radically open form of perception. It is a kind of discovery that breaks through the walls of abstract words and concepts, thus serving as a way to discover oneself while discovering the world, and to connect to self with the world. Enlightenment must be inspired, natural (in its original form, that is), not taught. This is where the fun of illustration lies.

Diversity

Every person has a cultural tradition that's all their own. But instead of being static, this tradition is living, and can thus grow into something modern in ways that are impossible to predict.

Every country and ethnic group, every district and street corner all have different people, and all therefore have countless different traditions born from each person's innovation. The best thing to do is to allow all these innovations to be expressed. In a world trending towards increased conformity, where the clamor of the mainstream is deafening, children should have the chance to see a larger variety of illustrations, and see the world of beauty and thought from a variety of perspectives.

Each time I finish a book, I lay aside its ideas and illustration style to try something completely different, and explore unknown territory. This is why creativity is a journey fraught with risk.

—Xiong Liang



Two Commentaries on Xiong Liang

Xiong Liang's Contributions to the Development of Children's Literature in China

A Jia, noted illustration commentator and founder of "Red Clay Reading"

Xiong Liang's work is emblematic of writers and illustrators working in children's literature in China today, and Xiong himself is a towering figure in the field. His groundbreaking experimentation has not only produced eye-popping results, but—in his quest to give original illustration in China its own voice—has also yielded up extremely valuable experience.

The largely self-taught Xiong took his first steps into the world of illustration at the turn of the century. As of this writing he has published more than 70 children's books, 50 of which were illustrated. The books he wrote and illustrated himself span at least 17 different categories. Considering the scarcity of illustrated books in the Chinese children's literature market at the beginning of the 21st Century, it's fair to call his output 'prodigious' (indeed, it is unmatched inside China). Even more remarkable is the variety of styles he has boldly taken on from the very beginning, from works of ink wash painting and cut paper dripping with Asian tradition, to modern art bursting with color and individuality. His topics are similarly diverse, ranging from traditional Chinese folk art, nursery rhymes, legends, and Buddhist stories to children's works of pure fantasy. Some of his stories even draw on the everyday lives of today's children (especially those from rural areas). No matter his choice of medium, style, or subject, Xiong drive for artistic perfection has gradually brought into being a flawless, one-of-a-kind fusion of traditional and modern art. His artistic accomplishments and ceaseless illustration

output has won him wide public influence. It's because of him that many people know that China has its own illustrated books, and because of him that many artists have made illustration their specialty.

Apart from his work on his own books, Xiong is gracious in sharing his experience with other illustrators. Through joint projects in workshops, leading classes, and any number of other different ways, he has worked to develop young artists. As a result, he's overseen the creation of almost as many books as he's made by himself. It's no exaggeration to say that Xiong has had a profound influence on an entire generation of Chinese illustrators.

—A Jia

November 29, 2016



Xiong Liang's Illustrations Belong Not Only to Asia, But to the World

Sanchuan Ling, Children's Book Publisher and Childhood Education Expert

In 1980, five year-old Xiong Liang picked up a paintbrush for the first time, and made his first picture. At the time, children's reading materials in China were limited largely to comic strips. In 1991, fifteen year-old Xiong started work on his first collection of illustrations. In 2002, now twenty-seven, Xiong started composing his first illustrated book; the very first shoots of original illustration in China were beginning to bloom. In 2014, with thirty-nine year old Xiong's publication of "The Solar Terms", the rest of the world began to take note of illustration in China.

Xiong's journey is a microcosm of the development of illustration in China, and his journey to creative maturity is likewise reflects the maturation of his field in his home country.

Firstly, Xiong Liang's work uses global, modern, artistic means to express the cultural magnetism of history, tradition, and Asia itself.

Most of Xiong's works choose one thing from China's ancient past on which to focus. This thing could be an image, for instance the little stone monkey from "Little Stone Monkey", or the small clay monkey from "The Toy Rabbit Story" (a local gift of choice to people visiting Beijing); or it could be a supernatural being, like the Kitchen God from the eponymous story "The Kitchen God", who legend has it lives in the homes of the common people, and ascends to heaven each year to report to the Jade Rabbit Emperor on the happenings down below.

Or it could be a calendar system. After millennia of tilling the soil, the people of ancient

China subdivided the year into 24 segments, the first day of which was called a 'solar term'. For each solar term, there were certain things a farmer must do to guarantee each year's harvest.

It could also be a particular way of being. In "The Monster of the Monsoon", the monster spends the entire year in the rain, calmly looking forward to the day the sun will burst through the clouds. "I don't complain about things I can't change", it says, expressing a very Asian way of being.

It could even be a gust of wind, as in his newest book "Wandering with the Wing", where Xiong illustrates a section from the 2,300 year-old poem "The Wind's Gift", written by Song Yu.

If you know going into his books what they're about, you might feel a certain reluctance to dive in. You might think you would have to be an expert on China, or even on ancient Chinese culture, to have any idea what they were about. The truth is though, no matter whether you are from the East or West, an adult or a child, everyone can easily pick up and enjoy one of Xiong's books.

Secondly, Xiong's works hint at some of the most essential elements of a child's psychology. Xiong himself is a kid through and through, and uses the tools of a child to create the books children most want to read.

Xiong's works offer stories from legend that don't require much background to understand, or much knowledge of ancient Chinese culture. What they offer, instead, is a kind of understanding, an understanding of the world seen through the eyes of one innocent to its ways—in other words, through the eyes of a child, exploring a new, unknown world.

Take "The Solar Terms" as an example. Open up any Chinese person's smartphone and call up the calendar app, and you'll see that—apart from normal holidays like New Year's and National Day holiday—it will have dates on it that make it what we call a 'new calendar'. The calendar will have the dates of the Spring and Autumn festivals, two traditional holidays that Chinese people love even today. It will also have Christmas, Easter, and Halloween, holidays with a fresh, 'foreign' feel to them inside China, which young mothers love to take part in along with their kids. The calendar will also mark the dates of events like the Spring Equinox and Grain Rain, the fourth and sixth 'solar terms' of the year, important dates for farmers in ancient China that, if missed, could ruin the whole year's harvest. Chinese urban dwellers love to think on these holidays, and the wealth of unusable knowledge and experience they represent.

Even so, nowhere in "The Solar Terms" is there anything like knowledge or experience, even though not too long ago the 24 Solar Terms were chosen for inclusion on the United Nations list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Instead, Xiong draws a small clay person, lying under the pure white snow. The small clay figure slowly awakens, then stands up. As the scenes and the pages roll forward, little green shoots begin to grow up on the little clay figure's body, eventually growing into a lush covering of vegetation that it drapes over its shoulders. The little clay figure can walk, can jump, can dance, can dive into the water on the hottest days to cool itself off. As the book reaches its end, the little figure lies back down as the flying snow covers it. If you want to pass another year, or see it again, you have only but to begin again from the first page.

Children have no experience upon which to draw. For them, the world is brand new, unknown. They must go experience the world before they can form a connection with it. The image of the little clay figure is one designed to forge that sense of intimacy.

Children harbor suspicion, even fear, of an unknown world. But if a beloved little clay figure can experience everything with them, they'll feel safe and warm, and pay closer attention to the progress and outcome of things than they would otherwise. In the world of child psychology, the power of figurative stories such as this to heal is widely understood.

Xiong believes that illustrated books for children are the best way to pass on culture. They're made for the innocence of childhood, and can thus be easily understood across cultures and age groups. There's a kind of equality to illustration that makes it the most grounded, natural form of narrative.

Thirdly, Xiong's works have a uniquely natural beauty to them, a pure and harmonious beauty. It is an eastern kind of beauty, and a human one also.

Xiong lives a life anchored in tradition. He is a vegetarian and uses a phone that's wildly out of date. He almost never reads the paper or watches the news. He studies martial arts, and can easily scamper up a tall tree.

All of Xiong's works are illustrated with Chinese brush techniques, and drawn on paper made of rice or silk. He draws on classic recipes for his coloration, made from pigments with names like 'cinnibar', 'malachite', 'muddy gold', 'ocher', 'garcinia', and 'rouge'. He both idolizes and studies in minute detail the work of famous 5th Century Chinese painter Zhang Sengyou and 17th Century painter Xiao Yuncong. These ancient masters taught him how to use Chinese calligraphic techniques to control the lines of his creations, how to render faces in a style both 'spare and vivid', and to create landscapes in the lofty, refined style appreciated by the intellectuals of ancient China.

But children reading his books don't need to know any of this to enjoy them—they're

able to feel the warmth of their culture, and to understand that Chinese painting isn't something far removed from their lives, but rather something they can find in a storybook. For children outside China, his books leave a refreshing, unique impression, helping them to gradually develop their impressions of Asian art forms, and begin to enjoy forms of culture that are distinctly Chinese.

Fourthly, Xiong's works draw on plays, movies, novels, and even installation artwork. His books draw the reader into a sumptuous artistic journey through a mastery of various artistic forms that more often than not are fused into structures that lend the works a rich structural beauty.

Xiong loves the stage, a passion which has seen him create works like "Peking Opera Cats", and incorporate aspects of live performances into his illustrations. His illustrations have a distinct visual language reminiscent of the stage, or the view through a camera lens. He sometimes divides a thought into cross-sections that jump and change from page to page, driving deeper inside the thoughts layers, its transformation depicted with changes in colors, size, and perspective.

This is the structure of the stage inherent to his works, such that no matter their content, they all have an enchanting rhythmic and structural beauty. His regimentation of structure ensures that his work is of a consistently high level, instead of just occasionally brilliant.

Xiong is also an educator. In this role he's organized countless workshops for young artists, teaching them to create illustrations that children can appreciate, with their own structural beauty. In this way he is able to pass on his experience, and develop a new generation of talented Chinese illustrators.

Xiong's works connect the people of today's China with the wisdom of their forefathers,

children with the wisdom of adults, and make it possible for the West to appreciate the wisdom of the East.

The hand with which Xiong creates his illustrations is not only his own, but that of his era, and the illustrations created belong not only to the East, but to the entire world.

—**Sanchuan Ling**

December 13, 2016



