

# Xiong Liang

and His Fairy Tale World

## C B B Y 2022



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# Xiong Liang

Writer, Painter,  
original picture book creator

Xiong Liang, Chinese children's literature writer,  
original picture book writer and painter.

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.

In 2018, he became the first Chinese artist chosen in the shortlist of International Andersen illustrator Award.

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New Books



# ***The Little Mu Ke - A long folklore with footwork***

The little Mu Ke is a mythical story combining nature and fantasy. Rooted in a deep and extensive collection of Chinese classical culture, it aims to reinterpret traditional worldliness from children's eyes to make it come to life.

Xiong Liang went deep into the villages and forests and collected stories step by step for his creation. He got to know the local folklores, non-fictional histories, local beliefs and customs of each place he visited, and sorted out and integrated the complex information. This is a series of stories about how children grow up in a new way and change the world, which deserves Xiong Liang's sincerity.



咔嚓! 咔嚓!







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# 游侠小木客

桃花源迷踪



熊亮

# 游侠小木客

可怕的预言



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# 游侠小木客

决战屠龙谷



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# 游侠小木客

消失的记忆

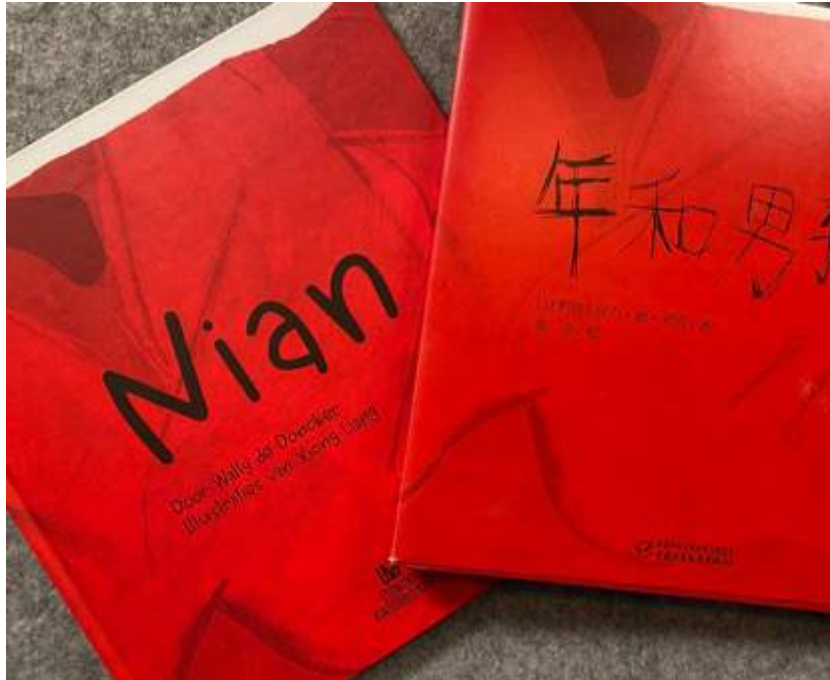


游侠小木客  
The Little Mu Ke

In 2019,  
*Swordsman Mu Ke* was selected  
into the literature and art category of “Excellent Youth Book  
Publishing Project” by the National Press and Publication  
Administration.  
Only 19 books in all original works throughout the country were  
selected into this category.

# ***Nian and the Boy***

- Interpreting cultures and traditions with an international perspective



Xiong Liang, with Wally De Doncker, a Belgian writer and children's literature expert, co-created the picture book *Nian and the Boy*. Although this picture book describes the story of the “Chinese Year”, it implies the idea of “cultures all over the world have things in common”. The picture book actually depicts the relationship between human beings and nature, aboriginal people and immigrants, and finally moves towards balance.

The core of the book is how to face this history of human development. Besides, it also aims to make children understand the barriers and boundaries between people, and to finally understand life.





# Reviews of Five Books

## Why do I want my child to read *the Little Mu Ke*?

Chang Li, Doctor of Arts of Fudan University, teacher and associate professor of the College of Humanities, Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), graduate tutor of the Children's Culture Research Institute, ZJNU.

*Herzen wrote in My Past and Thoughts: "It seems that adults should understand that the first two or three years of childhood and youth is the most complete and beautiful parts of our lives; it unconsciously defines our future."*

*It's hard to describe my feelings when I read the above passage. As a parent of two children, I once tried my best to make the first two or three years of childhood truly belong to my kids, but I know that the first two or three years of their youth definitely not really belongs to my kids themselves. It may belong to intensive cram schools, loads of homework and time management accurate to the minute level at school.*

01

If you feel sad for children losing their own time, then you'd feel joyful reading Xiong Liang's new work *the Little Mu Ke*. Based on the following three reasons, I hope my children will read *the Little Mu Ke*, and fall in love with it.

First of all, it is guarding a childhood that may no longer exist, and also echoes the good time in the past.

The story starts from the Peach Blossom Spring, whose importance in Chinese culture is self-evident. Like the Garden of Eden, it is a paradise that has long been lost. With the guidance of the girl Xiaoyu, readers become Wuling people, and once again embarked on a journey to the Peach Blossom Spring of "seeing a spring which came from a cave in the hill, noticing that there seemed to be a weak light in the cave".

There were several obstacles for Xiaoyu in the story. Mountain Guardian Beast, Cloud Maker, Water Guardian, Wind Guardian, Illusion Guardian, Wood Guardian and Hermit Guardian were in charge of guarding the Peach Blossom Spring. It was interesting that these seven guardians played the role of helpers by coincidence. Xiaoyu seemed to have a special skill making all the people she met (including the hostile) helpers. If you dissect the story, you'll find this special skill nothing more than curiosity, kindness, and innocence.

## Why do I want my child to read *the Little Mu Ke*?

Out of curiosity, Xiaoyu entered the forbidden forest, crossed the forbidden stone fence, and tracked the Dwarf into the Peach Blossom Spring all the way. Out of kindness, Xiaoyu cared about the sneezing Wind Guardian, and sent him a steamed dumpling with ginger soup to keep him warm. Out of innocence, Xiaoyu chose the only correct one among the thousands of streams, just because the otter “did not even say a word, so surely he didn’t lie”... That’s it. The super power that allows her to overcome all obstacles is just a child’s instinct. Can you still believe such fairy tales as an adult? It was once disputed over whether children’s literature should be written “for children” or “about children” in academia. The works of Xiong Liang, the author of *the Little Mu Ke*, gives a third narrative position, which is “as children”. At every critical moment when there is no way out of doubt, the author turns himself a child to see with a child’s eyes, to listen with a child’s ears, to touch with a child’s hands and feet, and most importantly, to think about the world with a child’s mind. That’s how he came up with smart ideas one after another, and make the future become brighter after difficulties. The Peach Blossom Spring is not the ideal world of ancient literati in the book, but a long-lost childhood for today’s adults as well as the good time for children that we urgently need to help them protect.

02

Second, it accurately inherits the most worthy part of traditional culture, the unique imagination. Readers can easily find a large number of traditional cultural elements in the book. There are even full reprints of classical literature (such as *The Goddess of Mountain*). These elements are not the most important, though, and children are not required to understand it at first reading. But there is one thing that children can know at a glance, the imagination hidden in thousands of ancient books.

The second story of *the Little Mu Ke* is like an exposition of Chinese imagination. Readers followed the intruder, Xiaoyu, to tour the various wonders of the Peach Blossom Spring Wonderland: the big tree in the shape of the heavenly sacred tree, the bird group summoned by the wooden bird whistle, the Monster of Monsoon living in the Great Rain Mountain, the small dwarfs, the forest aboriginals, the dark cloud ones with vague looking, the fungus that only appear in the rainy days, the Dragon Slayers who have never found the dragon, the Qingji little ones said to be extinct, and Lin Kui, the natural enemy who scared all Mu Ke to death... These imaginations are not only in word form, but also in pictures.



## Why do I want my child to read *the Little Mu Ke*?

The book that Lu Xun wanted most when he was a child was “the picture book version of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*”. It was shockingly strange and intoxicatingly beautiful. I think for children, *the Little Mu Ke* is also such a wonderfully beautiful “treasure book”. With the passage of time, the knowledge, lessons, and truths that children learned from traditional culture may be forgotten, questioned, and replaced, but the wonders and beauty they feel from Chinese imagination will last forever.

The guardians of Peach Blossom Spring, Mu Ke, and Xiong Liang, want to protect not only the physical childhood, but also the cultural childhood. They remind readers to remember the hearty happiness “before the heaven and the earth are broken” and sprout a new force from this kind of happiness, as “I would enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing.”

03

Third, it's not a condolence to the past glory towards the past, but expectation and hope for the wider world towards the future. Because of its isolation from the world for a long time, the Peach Blossom Spring Wonderland has become a testing ground for the Chinese philosophy of harmony between man and nature. But the Wonderland is not a pure land of bliss. The cracks are growing quietly, and the shadows are appearing in the dark. Between the Tree the Elderly and Granny Mu Ke, between Mu Ke and Lin Kui, between the elves and the Qingji little ones, between the Peach Blossom Spring and the human world, there are gaps everywhere. And the story comes from this gap; and light is shining in from this gap.

Regardless of the rough and wrong paths ahead, one only needs to look at the enlightenment of the Hermit Guardian in the forest to know the solution. “The boundary between Mu Ke, elves, animals and plants, even microorganisms, and everything in nature is totally wrong. No one ever takes time to understand and accept each other!” Does this mean only the different ethnic groups in the Peach Blossom Spring Wonderland? Can't human beings with constant disagreements learn anything from it?

Russell once thought about the moral reason that mankind would not perish in the next millennium. “Love is wise and hate is stupid.” In a world that is increasingly connected, tolerance for differences is essential. I think this is the answer that the ancient oriental wisdom might offer, and also a key to the future given to children by Swordsman Mu Ke.

As a literary work written at a certain moment in the past by the author of a specific historical era can it help readers reach the distant future? When we read a literary work, we not only feel the ideas of the characters in the story, but also the ideas implied by the author. Of course all authors' works may be constrained by their own historical backgrounds, but do not ignore that excellent literary works can always break through those limitations. To give a simple example, Shakespeare has been pointed out as anti-Semitic, especially in *The Merchant of Venice*, but after many years, the Jewish businessman Shylock's line “If you prick us do we not bleed?” in this play became a moving voice against Nazism.

## Why do I want my child to read *the Little Mu Ke*?

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There are indeed many works of children's literature with a closed world view, implying authors' value system of being addicted to and contented with backwardness, crawling on the ground but calling the narrow vision "realism". I hope my kids will not read or read such books less, and that even if they have to read, they can pass through the past and look into the future with their innocent eyes.

However, *the Little Mu Ke* neither evades the sharp or even major problems in reality, nor succumbs to the various constraints and pressures in reality, so I am very happy to add the following words after what I've written.

"I will quietly put some other books on my kids' desks: Lindgren's books, Tove Jansson's books, Michael Ende's books, Silverstein's books, Shaun Tan's books, Xiong Liang's *the Little Mu Ke*... If their desks are big enough (and I have enough money), I will put more and more books endlessly, really. This is beautiful literature, beautiful reading, isn't it?"

## *Nian and the Boy*

Wally De Doncker (Belgian) Author/ immediate past president of IBBY

In the picture, the overall color is bold and unassuming, using bright red and yellow colors to express happiness, and dark colors to express sentimentality. In terms of layout, several spreads are unique in design. They are presented with full-page text plus background color or full-page image plus very little text, which is extremely visually conflicting and renders a strong emotional atmosphere. At the climax of the story, with the help of folding pages, the creator using four layouts to present the panic “Nian” who escape in a fiery red, which gives people the ultimate shock. That arouses readers' empathy and reflection.

Generally speaking, the whole book is very memorable. The storyline is full of imagination, the pictures are very expressive, the text design is ingenious, the graphics and words are parallel, and complement with each other.

This book is full of conflicts, struggles. There are also blood which are rarely seen in children’s literature. Because of its strong and exaggerated images, it looks a bit “violent”. However, if you read carefully, you will find the warmth and love hidden in it: Nian and the boy waved and smiled at each other when they first meet; the boy is helping Nian during the conflict; at the end, The boy also shows the trust and kindness.

At first glance, this picture book is the story of Nian and the boy. But when you read more, you will find it’s about the relationship between man and nature. The absurdity of the story makes us rethinking and be vigilant: when we are dealing with the nature, we must not only consider the needs of human beings, we also need to see the existence of other races; when are facing conflicts,we need to listen, understand. And sometimes tolerance can find a symbiotic and win-win solution. Monsters are not scary. The scary thing is that we never approach them. May we all keep innocent and kind eyes like boys.





*Nian and the Boy*

This story goes back several centuries. Somewhere in the mountains where no humans existed, there was a family of monsters living a peaceful life. They eat grass, flowers and small trees, and they prefer cherries, juicy cherries. One day, when humans moved into the valley, the peaceful life of that monster family was broken.

I like to pursue the essence of things. The painter Xiong Liang interprets the story in a special way. He combines elements of both modern and traditional styles to enhance the richness of the story, in a specific artistic way.

Therefore, I hope “the Nian and Boy” can arouse readers' questions. The questions do not necessarily have answers, but people can think further.

## *The Solar Terms*

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

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.



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## *Wandering with the Wind*

Yimin Mao, Founder of Meridian

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.





## **"Little lions, hometown longing."**

Peng Yi, Associate Professor of Children's Culture, Research Institute of Zhejiang Normal University

When we grow up, when we travel far away, and when memories of home gradually become unclear, like fog, who will still care about us so far away?

Did you figure out who this is? It is the stone-carved lion on the handrail at the end of the bridge in my small hometown!

Even though this lion cannot speak, it has a lively spirit.

After we have gone, we are left free without any worries. We walk away for years, or even decades, but the lion seems as if it will stay there forever, in the town, guarding our childhood memories. Its only companion is time. The stone lion is our history, it is a witness, it is the guardian spirit of the town. One day, the people who have left, will come back. They will look and suddenly remember the lion. They will burst into tears and they will find that the small lion has been guarding us and watching for us for many years. They will also find that they miss the lion too, because it has a mother's eyes, full of kindness.

This is an illustrated book that requires the reader to slow down and concentrate on the book.

Read slowly, and after reading the text then read paintings, or read the paintings then read the text. In this way, you will read the mood of the book and understand the meaning behind the story.

In fact, you will think that there is a small stone lion in everyone's heart. But we often forget this.



# Ten Landmark Works

***The Beijing Opera Cats and  
Battle Of Chang Ban Po***

Language – Chinese/English/French<sup>[SEP]</sup>

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

Edition<sup>[SEP]</sup>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



*The Beijing Opera Cats and  
Wu Song Fights the Tiger*

Language – Chinese/English/French<sup>[SEP]</sup>  
Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2007), Traditional Chinese  
Edition<sup>[SEP]</sup>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



## *The Little Stone Lion*

Language published – Chinese/English<sup>[SEP]</sup>

Heryin Books, Inc., USA (2005) Chinese Edition<sup>[SEP]</sup>Heryin Books, Inc.;

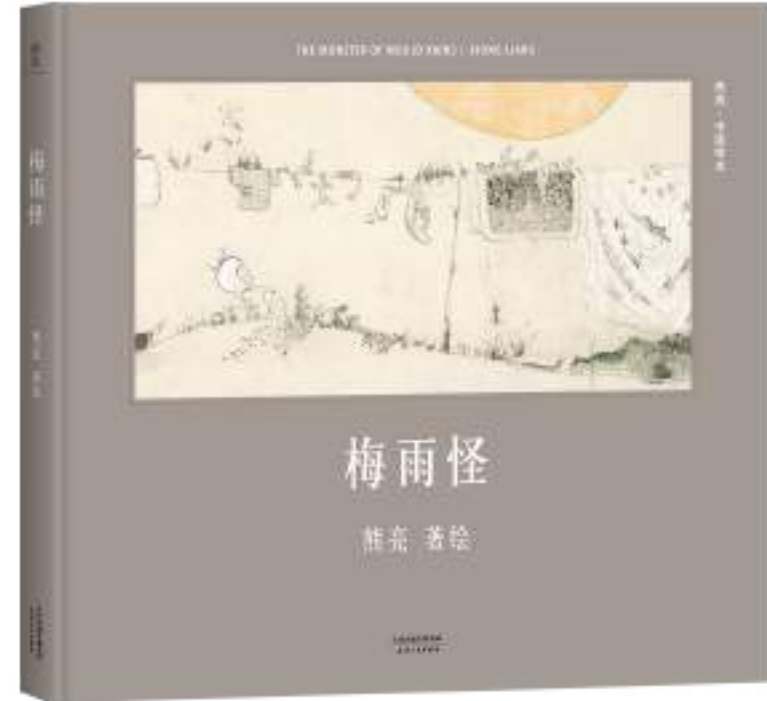
1st English Ed edition (June 1, 2006)<sup>[SEP]</sup>Tomorrow Publishing House,  
Beijing CHINA (2007) Chinese Edition



*The Monster Of Monsoon*

Language - Chinese /French

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



## *Story Of The Year*

Language published – Chinese/English<sup>[SEP]</sup>  
Tomorrow Publishing House, Beijing CHINA (2007), Chinese Edition  
Better Chinese LLC (2007), English Edition<sup>[SEP]</sup>Dragon Totem Cultural,  
Taiwan (2011)





*The Solar Terms*

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)



*Wandering with the Wind*

Language – Chinese

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



***Little Mu Ke: Whereabouts of  
Peach Blossom Forest***

Language – Chinese

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd.,  
Beijing, CHINA (2019)



***Little Mu Ke: Horrible Prediction***

Language – Chinese

Published by Hangzhou GUOMAI Culture & Media Co., Ltd.,  
Beijing, CHINA (2019)



***Nian and the Boy***

Language – Chinese、 Dutch

Published by China Children's Publishing House Beijing, CHINA  
(2019)

Leonon Media, (2019)



# 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.

# 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.

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.

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



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

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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.

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

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

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.

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

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'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.

# Children's Art Education

## *Chinese Nursery Rhyme*

### *Children's Poems*

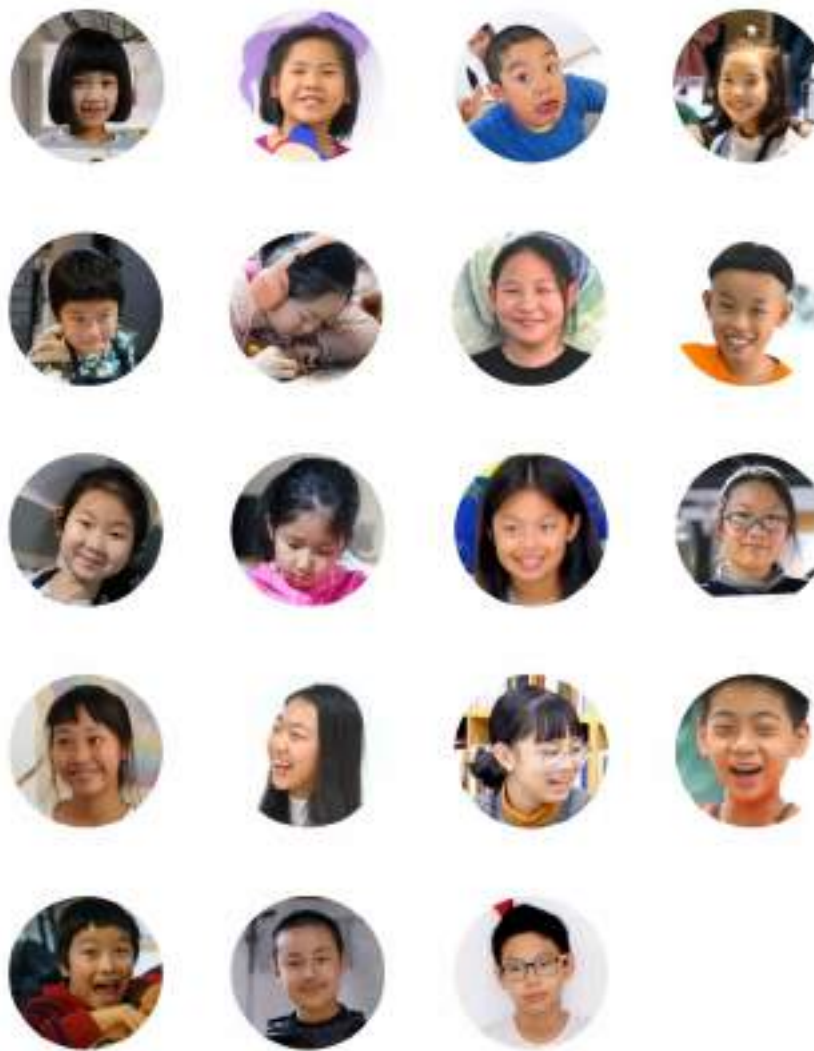
#### *Moon, Moon, Please Stop* -Opening a door to children's heart

Since 2012, Xiong Liang has designed an art course named “Xiong Liang Art Class” for children, and thousands of families were involved. “Xiong Liang Art Class” not only teaches painting, but also develops an interesting way of artistic thinking. It combines traditional art with contemporary vision, domestic and foreign perspectives at the same time, expands children's artistic senses, and makes them keep their own individuality and creativity. Meanwhile, Xiong Liang led young artists, picture book creators and children to jointly create a cross-age group “Kingdom of Picture Books”, and together created and published *Chinese Nursery Rhyme* (picture book version) focusing on traditional nursery rhymes and *Children's Poems* focusing on children's poems, bringing higher quality spiritual food for children.





*The Chinese Nursery Rhyme* (picture book version) edited by Xiong Liang features 56 classic Chinese nursery rhymes handed down from generation to generation. It is classified from 8 aspects, including children's first nursery rhyme, counting numbers, fantasies, animals, nature, life, funny stories and folklores, giving children necessary language and artistic enlightenment during their growth. Paintings in the book are all completed by students in Xiong Liang's class. It took 2 years for them to finish this book, and it contains a wealth of knowledge of nature, rules and common sense in life.







*Children's Poems*, edited by Xiong Liang and written by children, includes not simply children's poems, nor those full of punch lines, but poems full of playful lines and natural speech consciousness. Poems are the clues of this book, allowing readers to experience like children, see the "3 moons" with the "binoculars", and get a glimpse of children's innocent world.



3 Moons

MaDa 9 years old

Binoculars!  
In the binoculars  
There're moons.

3 moons lined up,  
Bright and dark.  
One is soft,  
Pale yellow brush layer after  
layer,  
It's the street lamp with bugs  
live in.

The other moon is crisp,  
Fulfill with white  
Dancing with black shadows,  
Like the girls with brown  
braids.

The last moon,  
Just so small,  
So small,  
Only a faint light with it,  
So weak,  
That worth almost nothing.

Mind

YuTou 6 years old

A bad idea  
And a good idea  
Bumped together

A bad dream  
Followed by a sweet dream  
And a crowd of dream words

A memory  
When I remind of it, it's an island  
When I can't remember  
It's the heavy seas

The children's sentences are small, but they are shining with big light, and they shine straight into my heart. What's a child's world like? Following each word, readers enter a whole new field.

- Comment from the media

编 者 江 雁 主 编  
绘 本 图 陈 安 之 文 本 图 熊 亮

# 月 亮 月 亮 停 一 停

中国原创绘本精品系列

国际安徒生奖提名作品

春江花月夜

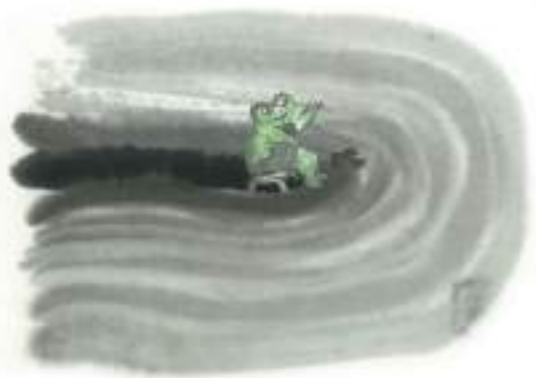
国际安徒生奖短名单入围艺术家  
陈伯吹国际儿童绘本奖得主  
——  
熊亮 主编

诗人**蓝蓝**、音乐人**小河**倾心推荐！！

孩子们惊人的创造力和想象力，刷新了古典诗歌的当代阐释。  
整本书从画面到文字，给我们带来心灵的震撼。是极具独特  
视角的儿童教育和审美的典范之作。——蓝蓝



到了半山，泰山一个人影也没有，也和不到车前马后的人群。  
他正纳闷大家到底都去哪儿了  
远远就看见拾得坐在小板凳上，端着小猫在煎了。



不等煎过锅，  
拾得就跳进水里，  
冲得石头池过水，位前煎的手。

呱呱

喵喵



他拉鼻孔，嚼葵花，  
对着树木，石头，动物和天空说着话，  
采那一棵树上的水珠，在下面画画，挖笑，  
在树木，草叶，石头上写各种小诗。





*The Wish of Cow Dung*

*The Manul That Wants It All*

*The Little Ghost* - Leading young artists to create together

In addition to class and studio work, Xiong Liang also leads young artists to conduct nature inspections and communicate with different industries.

From 2013 to 2016, he took the artists to Sichuan and Qinghai many times, and cooperated with the Nyanpo Yutse Conservation Association and the SHAN SHUI Conservation Center to jointly create works on mountain gods, snow leopards, pikas, manuls, cow dung, etc. The creation of different themes reveals the deep connection between man and nature. Up to now, nature picture books created by Xiong Liang and those young artists have been published, namely *The Wish of Cow Dung* and *The Manul That Wants It All*.

In 2019, Xiong Liang made a breakthrough in materials by using paper-cutting collages, chalk retouching and other drawing techniques to once again get together the young artists to create the series of *The Little Ghost*, releasing more power back to children and presenting an alternative “children’s world”.





*The Manul That Wants It All*



*The Wish of Cow Dung*





# Building Community

## *Don't be afraid of Darkness*

Cross-sector cooperation presented a variety of color possibilities for musicals and movies

In 2014, Xiong Liang worked with drama director Ke Lu to inject literary and philosophical features into the adult fairy tale drama *Don't be Afraid of the Dark*. They put on blindfolds in person, and learned about the inspiration and performance state of dark in the long-term closed visual behavior experience for their creation, and finally presented a classic drama focused on “darkness”.



## *The Wandering Song*

In 2020, Xiong Liang created the theme poster for Magnificent Culture's 2020 creative musical play *The Vagabond Song*, written and directed by Yan Nan and starred by the River Band, including members Anais Martane, Wan Xiaoli, Xiao He, Zhang Weiwei, and Guo Long.





熊亮一席“绘本分级创作”主题分享  
The lecture of "Classified Picture Book "



Some of Liang's community works

# Exhibitions

# Gaillac, France

2019

Invited by a French governmental foundation, Xiong Liang held a twofold solo exhibition in Gaillac, a small town in southern France. The whole city welcomed him.

48 original works of different sizes of the series “Flowers of Day and Night” and 30 illustrations including *Wandering with the Wind* were on exhibition.

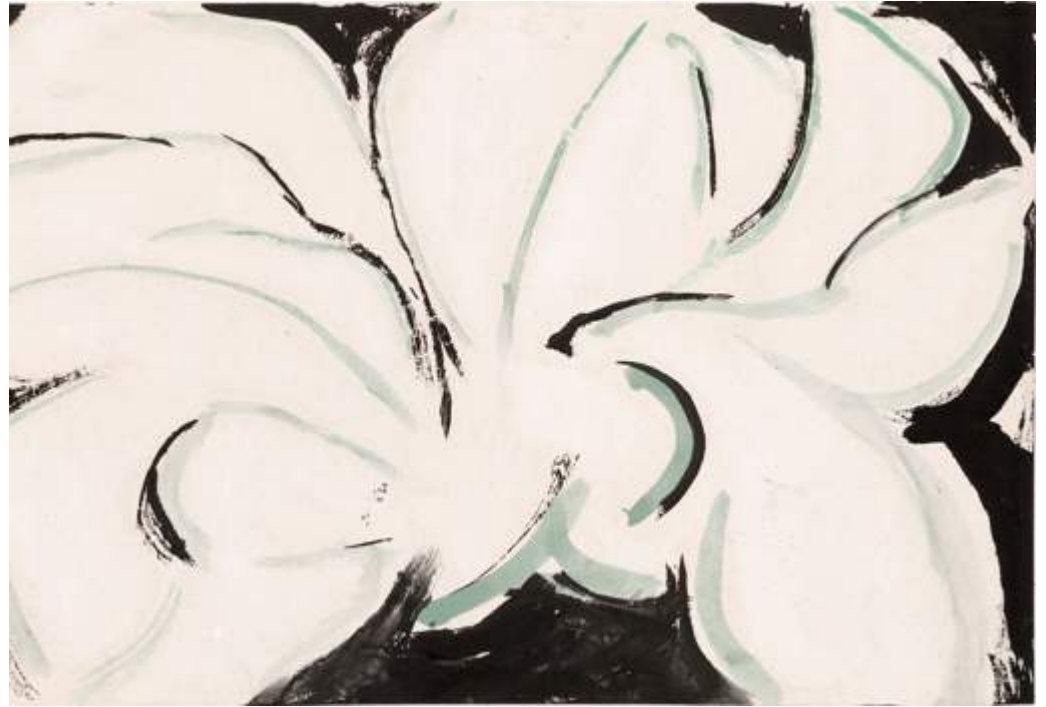








102.5\*109CM



37.5\*24.5CM



*Day and Night Flower*



*Day and Night Flower*



*Night Flower 46\*53CM*



*Day Flower 66\*78CM*



*Night Flower 46\*53CM*



*A Walk with the Wind*

# Chiba City Museum of Art, Japan

2018

Invited by the local government, Xiong Liang held a world-class exhibition of original paintings of Chinese picture books.

Works such as *Wandering with the Wind* and *WU KONG* were on display.

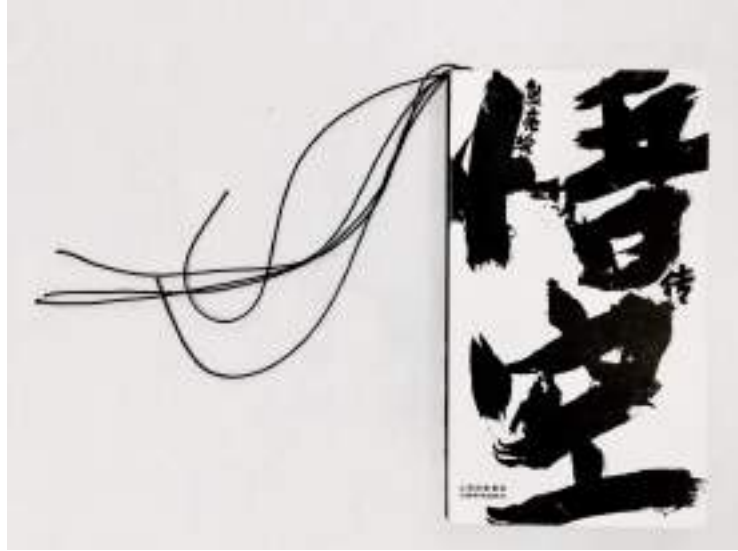
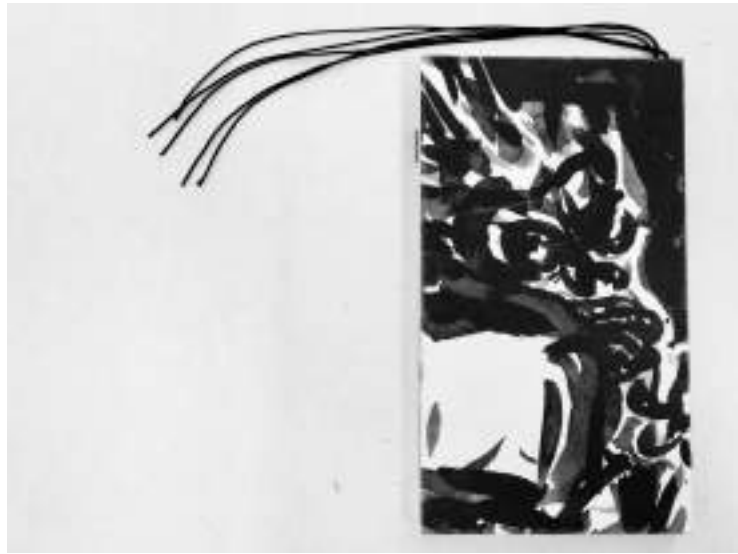


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The Story of Wukong



- **2017, Fnji Gallery, Beijing**

Xiong Liang Solo Exhibition - *Wandering with the Wind* original work and *The Solar Terms* print exhibition.

- **2016, New Delhi World Book Fair, India**

Invited to the New Delhi World Book Fair in India, and exchanging and discussing with many international artists.

- **2016, Frankfurt Book Fair**

Participating in the “Children Picture Books from China” organized by the Confucius Institute.



# Social

## Activities 2019

Xiong Liang attended the Tehran International Book Fair in Iran. Taking *Nian and the Boy* as an example, he innovatively integrated Chinese folk culture and modern painting to showcase Dunhuang and folk art languages.

2018 The Brera Fine Arts Academy in Italy invited him to the lecture “Infinity in One” on oriental paintings.

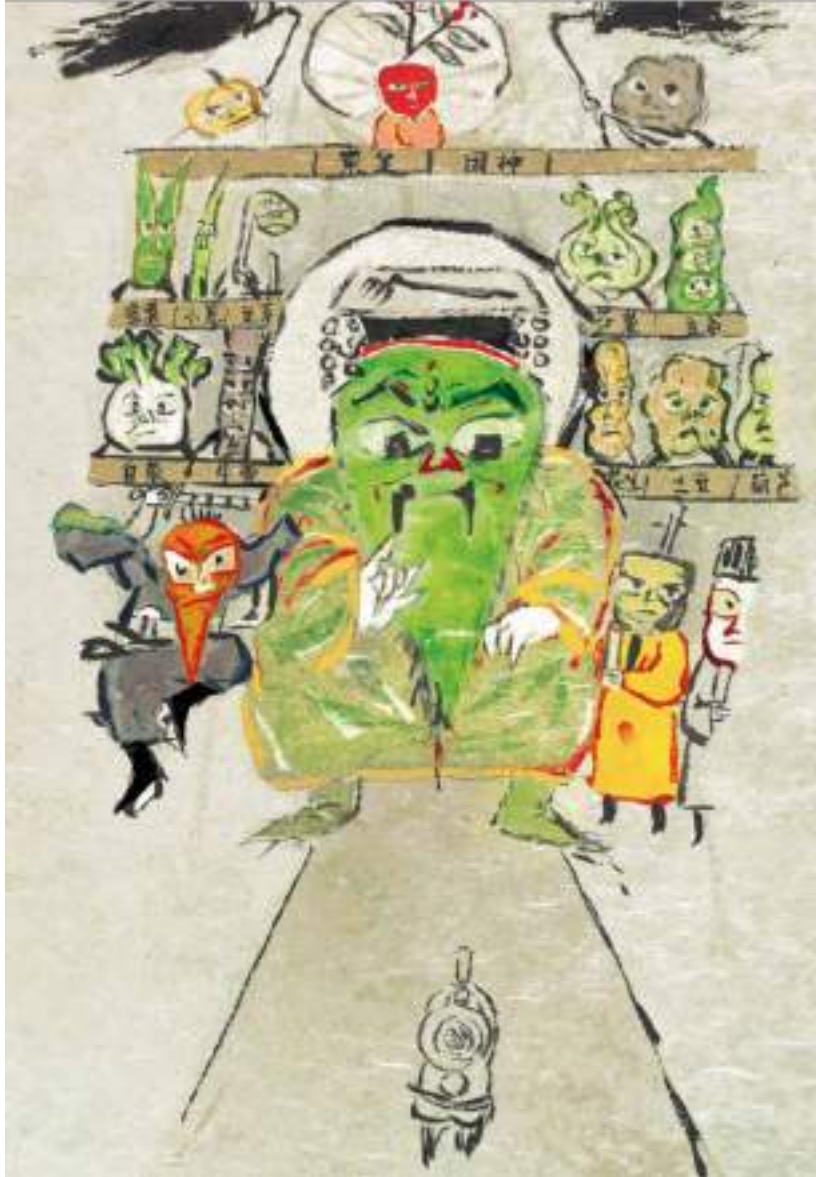
2012 Xiong Liang’s illustrations were exhibited at the British Museum in London, where he shared his experience in picture book creation with British artists.

2009 Invited by the International Institute for Children’s Literature, Osaka, Xiong Liang held a special lecture to introduce the creation and development of the original painting book.



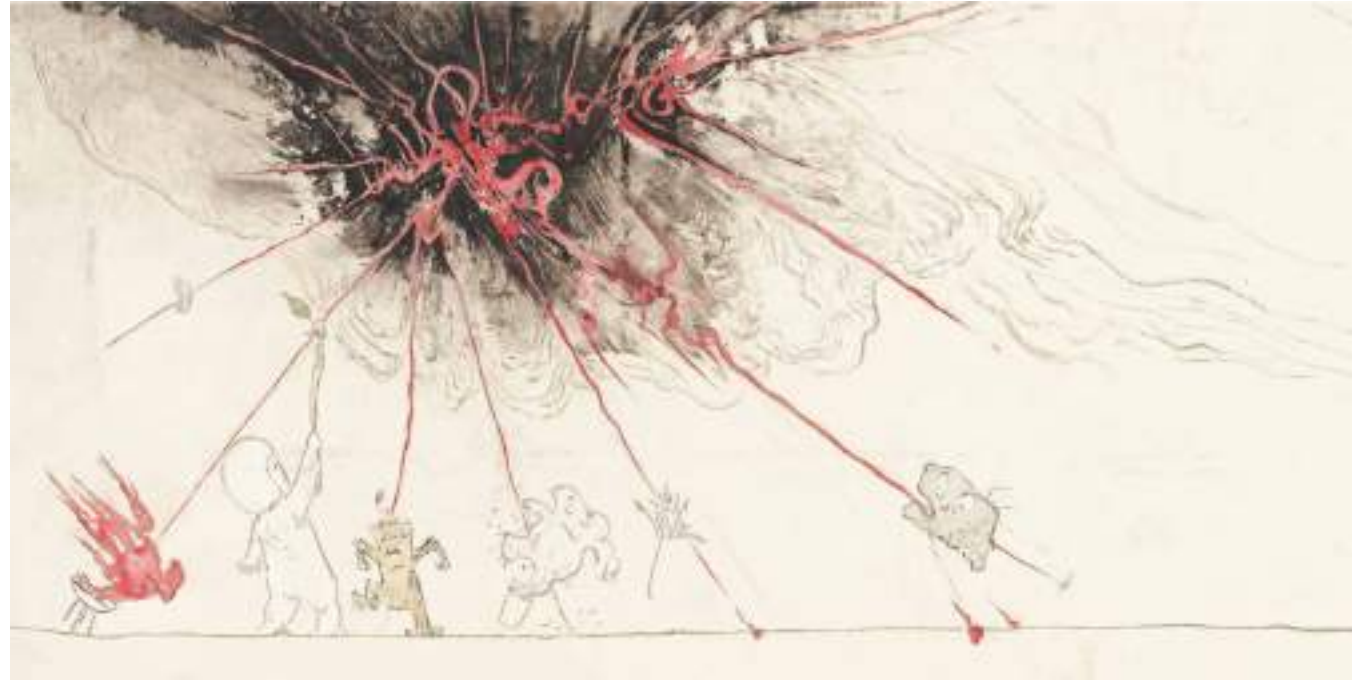
# Art Style

Xiong Liang's art style  
varies from works, never repeating



2005-2012 Chinese Traditional Series









2012 Feast on the Moon







2017 *Wandering with the Wind*







2019 *The Ranger Xiao Mu Ke*



2019 *The Ranger Xiao Mu Ke*





2019 *The Little Ghost*





2019 Year and Boy



*2019 Year and Boy*

# **Worldwide Language: Tradition and Contemporary**

## **Culture**

Xiong Liang comes from a diverse family and has a deep understanding of Chinese and Western cultures. As a painter, he is also a writer and poet, that gives him a unique ability to tell stories. So he can easily transfer Chinese elements into contemporary and global new languages. From a perspective of an artist and a child, he discovers unimaginable viewing dimensions, make the story full of humanity and childishness, and become a reading that children can understand.

## **Art**

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. In his eyes, every story is different, and the painter cannot be limited to any artistic inertia.

## **Personality**

Xiong Liang emphasizes personality, language and originality, and never follows himself, so he is still full of pioneering and experimental.



# **List of Awards and Other Distinctions**

# 2020

represented China as a finalist for the Astrid Lindgren Prize

# 2016

Xiong Liang Chinese Story Series  
10 Best Books by the SINA Parenting

# 2013

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

# 2018

INTERNATIONAL ANDERSEN ILLUSTRATOR AWARD  
Xiong Liang became the first Chinese artist chosen in the award shortlist

# 2014

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

# 2012

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



# 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

# 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

# 2008

*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

# 2007

*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

# 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

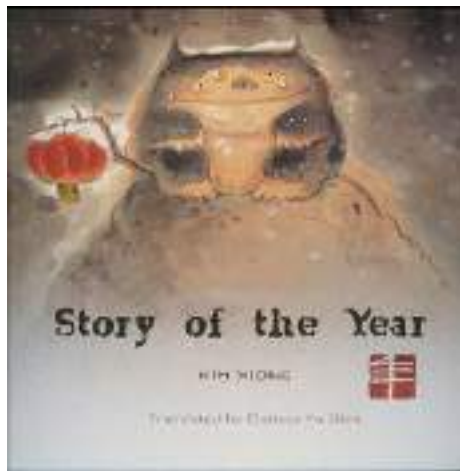
# **A Complete Overseas Works**



***The Little Stone Lion***

**Publisher:** Heryin Books, Inc.; 1st English Ed edition (2006)

**Language:** English



***Story Of The Year***

**Publisher:** Better Chinese LLC (2007)

**Language:** English



## Kitchen God

KIM XIONG

Translated by Clarissa Yu Shen

### ***Kitchen God***

**Publisher:** Better Chinese LLC (2008)

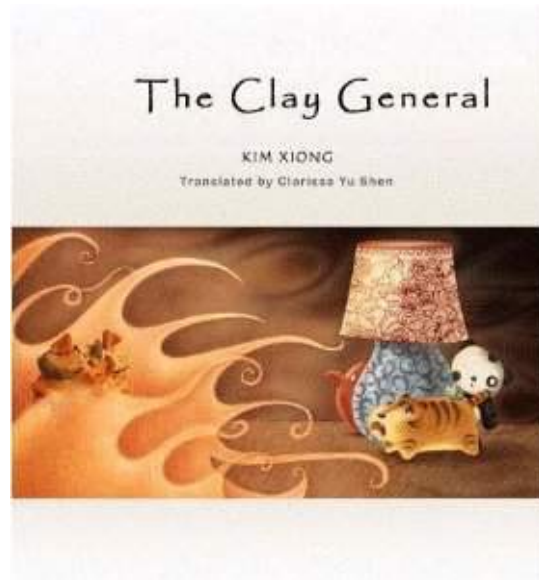
**Language:** English



### ***LE GÉNIE DU FOYER***

**Publisher:** Editions Horiaon Oriental (2012)

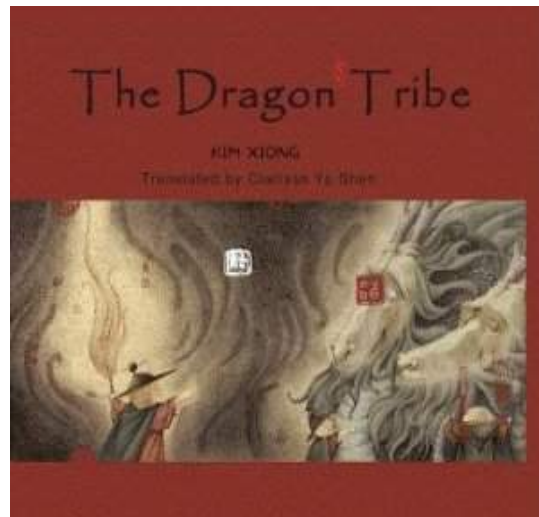
**Language:** French



***The Clay General***

**Publisher:** Better Chinese LLC (2008)

**Language:** English



***The Dragon Tribe***

**Publisher:** Better Chinese LLC (2008)

**Language:** English



*Paper Horse*

**Publisher:** Better Chinese LLC (2008)

**Language:** English



*Lotus are Back*

**Publisher:** sallim Publishing Co. South Korea (2012)

**Language:** Korean



***Le Mystère des dragons disparus***

**Publisher:**Éditions du Centenaire-MilleFleurs, Pour la traduction et l'adaptation françaises (2012)

**Language:**French



***LE PETIT BONHOMME Meiyu***

**Publisher:**Editions Horiaon Oriental (2012)

**Language:**French





***LE CHAT GÉNÉRAL ZHANG FEI***

**Publisher:** Editions Horiaon Oriental (2012)

**Language:** French



***LE TUEUR DE TIGRE***

**Publisher:** Editions Horiaon Oriental (2012)

**Language:** French



***The Solar Terms***

**Publisher:** PASTEL DE LUNA,S.L. (2015)


**Language:**Spain



***Nian and the Boy***

**Publisher:** Leonon Media, (2019)

**Language:**Dutch

A child's drawing of a rainbow arching over a landscape. The rainbow is drawn with thick, expressive brushstrokes in the colors of the spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The background is a mix of grey and blue tones, suggesting a sky and a landscape. The text is overlaid on the rainbow.

Stories can be understood  
by children all over the world  
regardless of culture or ethnic group,  
giving children more space  
and making everyone grow freely.



Thanks