

# HK writer's stories now available in comic form

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**STORIES** from the pen of popular Hongkong novelist Ni Kuang will now be available in comic form to an English-speaking audience.

Followers of one of Ni's most popular characters, Wisely, can now follow the Indiana Jones-like hero's adventures in the novelist's first comic book in English, *The Return Of The Hermit*.

The 184-page book, published by Asiapac Books, is now available in major bookstores for \$9.70 before GST.

The Chinese-language book version will be launched later this month, after the English one, because of distribution matters, says managing editor for the Singapore publisher, Ms Lydia Lum.

Asiapac, known for its English translations of Chinese works, approached Ni in the middle of last year for the right to produce comic editions of his books both in Chinese and English. Ni agreed readily.

Bringing Wisely from the written word to comic life is Singaporean artist Wee Tian Beng. A great fan of Ni's novels, it was Wee who came up with the idea of adapting the author's books in comic form.

The 28-year-old illustrator is trained in advertising art and is a director of NCA Graphics, a graphic design firm in Singapore. He has

been producing sci-fi comics since 1989.

Freelance translator Clara Show, a Singaporean who had previously translated five other titles in the Asiapac Comic Series, was a natural choice to translate the book into English.

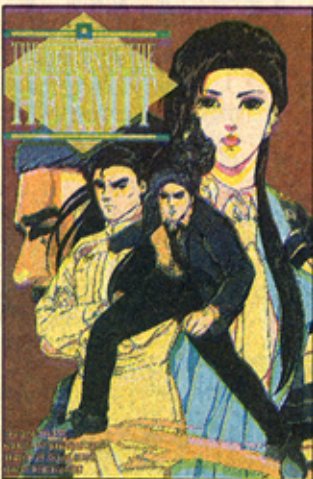
Ms Lum says the Wisely stories were picked because these were the most representative of Ni's works. In fact, the author is so closely associated with the character that he has adopted the name Wisely.

There are altogether more than a hundred stories on the character. In this first book, the hero gets involved in a search for the buried wealth of 25 triads. It also tells of how he meets his wife to be, Bai Su, the daughter of a triad leader.

The comic drawings of Wee show a definite Japanese influence, although the drawn version of Bai Su at times resembles a rather buxom version of Hongkong songstress Vivian Chow.

A second Wisely story will be released in comic book form at a later date, with a total of 10 volumes being planned over the next 2½ years.

Asiapac's books are also available in Malaysia, Hongkong, Taiwan, Australia, Britain and the United States, and it says it plans to distribute the English language comic versions outside Singapore.



The Return Of The Hermit ... drawn by Wee Tian Beng.