



Cartooning is his life and career

Shendiao Xianu (Return of the Condor Heroes), a novel written by swordplay writer Jin Yong and highly popularised by Hong Kong television series, is available as a series of comics books, in both the Chinese and illustrations were done by Wee Tian Beng, the first venture into the Taiwan and Hong Kong markets. Wee's *The Adventures of Wisely*, by outstanding science-fiction

How did you get to be interested in cartoon-drawing?

I started drawing in primary school. I've always liked to read comics. Initially I imitated the drawings. Later, I invented my own characters and stories. The stories revolved around science-fiction, life of students, environmental issues and so on.... I still have the copies with me. Through them, I can trace the progress I made as an illustrator.

When did you decide to pursue drawing as a career?

Since young, I've been thinking of turning my interest into a career. At that time, I was not bothered by pragmatic issues like "would I make money out of it?" and so on. Besides, compliments from my friends were very encouraging.

Any objection from your parents?

As a kid, I'd always told them that so-

English languages. The Singaporean cartoonist to works also include writer Ni Kuang.

and-so had been able to earn much money out of his cartoons, or so-and-so had become a millionaire from drawing cartoons. In a way, I'd conditioned my parents that cartooning could be a lucrative career. So there was no objection.

How did you go about fulfilling your ambition?

I studied graphic designing in the polytechnic, and learnt about the publishing process. After the army, I went

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How do you operate?

I'm paid by the number of pages. I try to finish six pages a day. A book in the *Shendiao* series, for example, would take about two months to complete. There are a few of us working on any story. I decide the sections of the novel to be put into drawing and which dialogue to include. The characters are drawn by me while my colleagues contribute to the background.

How do you find your job as a full-time cartoonist?

I don't see this as a job because of my interest. Previously, I had to set aside time after work to do this. Now I can indulge in it the whole day. I've never dread coming to work. It's an enjoyment.

What are your goals now?

Of course, I hope that my cartoons can reach out to as many places as possible. It's also my wish that, one day, I'll be able to be involved in animation so that my cartoons can be produced as a movie. ♥

For his comics *Shendiao Xianu*, Wee received the Special Award in the 1997 Asia Comics Conference. Besides Singapore and Malaysia, the series is also being circulated in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, China, United States, Thailand and Indonesia.