

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-

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.

into the advertising business and tried to draw cartoons part-time. I would return home after work and start drawing till late in the night, with the aim of producing one book per year. But it is quite costly to produce and distribute a book. Not long after, I had to stop because I wasn't financially prepared.

One thing led to another. A friend in the publishing line recommended me to his manager, who decided to support me financially. The two books produced were spotted by a Taiwanese publishing company. They asked me to contribute to their monthly magazine but, after a while, the magazine stopped.

Then Asiapac saw my cartoons in the magazine and assigned me to illustrate science-fiction writer Ni Kuang's books. However we ran into problems with copyrights in Hong Kong. Fortunately gongfu writer Jin Yong saw my Wisely cartoons and decided to ask me to illustrate Shendiao Xianu. So I resumed work. As you can see, my career as a cartoonist is fraught with difficulties.

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.

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

also being circulated in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, China, United States, Thailand and Indonesia.

For his comics Shendiao Xianu, Wee

Singapore and Malaysia, the series is

Asia Comics Conference, Besides

received the Special Award in the 1997