

Prominent Children's Literature Writers in China

By Tang Shufei

China has numerous outstanding children's literature writers. Through their works, the authors have contributed to the healthy development of young children, becoming valuable mentors and friends on their journey to maturity.

Cai Gao

Cai Gao was born in 1946 in Changsha, Hunan province. Over her writing career of more than 30 years, Cai Gao has produced numerous picture book classics that have gained popularity both domestically and internationally, such as *The Little Mermaid* (《海的女儿》), *King Lear* (《李尔王》), *Ganjiang and Moye* (《干将莫邪》), *Double-Sixth Festival* (《六月六》), *Invisible Leaf* (《隐形叶子》), etc.



In 2022, Cai Gao was awarded the Special Contribution Award at the 34th Chen Bochui International Children's Literature Award. In 2023, the collaborative book *The City in Fire: 1938* (《火城1938》), co-created by Cai Gao and Xiao Aozi, received the Best Picture Book Award at the 35th Chen Bochui International Children's Literature Award. In 2024, Cai Gao was nominated for the Illustrator Award of Hans Christian Andersen Award for the first time. *The City in Fire: 1938* presented as a poignant black-and-white scroll, recounts the story of "Wenxi Fire" sweeping through the ancient city, Changsha, from the perspective of a little girl. To write this book, Cai Gao, even in her 60s, not only drew inspiration from the old streets of Changsha in person but also conducted field research in cities such as Suzhou and Shanghai, referring to thousands of images during the six-year-long writing.

Cai Gao enjoyed drawing from a young age. After more than ten years' teaching career, at the age of 36, she joined the Hunan Juvenile & Children's Publishing House. Cai Gao truly started painting when she was nearly forty. She once jokingly talked about herself "I am a late maturing variety, short but robust and sturdy."

Cao Wenxuan

Cao Wenxuan was born in January 1954 in the rural areas of Yancheng, Jiangsu province. His major works include literary collections such as *The Melancholy Countryside* (《忧郁的田园》), *Red Gourd* (《红葫芦》), and novels like *Goats Do Not Eat Heaven Grass* (《山羊不吃天堂草》),



The Straw House (《草房子》), and *The Bird* (《根鸟》). His works have created the most beautiful world of children's hearts and the purest literary kingdom, gaining acclaim on the world stage and becoming well-known and beloved by readers from many countries.

His representative works, such as *The Straw House* and *Bronze and Sunflower* (《青铜葵花》) have been printed over a hundred times, his works have been published in 13 languages. Cao Wenxuan has received more than forty authoritative awards, including the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 2016, becoming the first Chinese author to receive this prestigious award.

Cao Wenxuan has been actively engaged in the

compilation of Chinese language textbooks and has been strenuously promoting children's reading. In 2016, he published the *Da Wang Ge Series* (大王鸽文库), a collection created by Cao Wenxuan based on his years of literary creation, research experience, and expertise in Chinese language education and textbook writing. The selected works in this series are literary masterpieces from ancient to modern times worldwide and are suitable for children to read, reflecting Cao Wenxuan's literary and reading perspectives developed over time.

Tang Sulan

Tang Sulan was born in 1965 in Ningxiang, Hunan province. She is the first-tier writer in China and was elected as the chairperson of the Hunan Writers Association in March 2023. Tang Sulan has dedicated over thirty years to the creation of children's literature, publishing more than sixty books. She has been honored with awards such as the National Outstanding Children's Literature Award, Song Ching-ling Children's Literature Prize, the Bing Xin Children's Literature New Work Award, Chen Bochui International Children's Literature Award, etc. Some of her representative works include *Stupid Wolf* (《笨狼的故事》), *What a Beautiful Witch* (《小巫婆真美丽》), *Attic Spirit* (《阁楼上的精灵》), and so on.



The rights of *Tang Sulan's Picture Book Series* have sold to thirteen countries and regions, including Australia, Britain, and Singapore. Her works like *Stupid Wolf*, *Secret of Sweet Strawberry* (《甜草莓的秘密》), and *A-Lian* (《阿莲》) have been translated into English, Korean, Singhalese, Nepali, and published abroad. *A-Lian* was honored as the Best China Books of 2017 and received the 2018 Chen Bochui International Children's Literature Award.

Stupid Wolf is a classic work of Tang Sulan, with a circulation exceeding 10 million copies. In 2013, Hunan Juvenile & Children's Publishing House established the Tang Sulan Studio, focusing on the construction of *Stupid Wolf* as a classic IP, engaging in three-dimensional and diversified development. This includes ventures into animation, dolls, themed restaurants, children's plays, literary summer camps, and more. Tang Sulan said, "*Stupid Wolf* has been around for 29 years since its birth. I hope the story will never end. I will continue to uphold my literary standards and strive to create more and better works."

Shen Shixi

Shen Shixi was born in 1952 in Shanghai. His representative works include *Sacred Fire* (《圣火》), *The Seventh Hound* (《第七条猎狗》), *The King of Wolf's Dream* (《狼王梦》), *The Last War Elephant* (《最后一头战象》), and *Gorge-Leaping Gorals* (《斑羚飞渡》), etc. many of his works have won varied Children's Literature Awards, or have been selected for elementary and middle school Chinese language textbooks.

Shen Shixi excels in writing animal novels and is

known as "China's King of Animal Storytelling". He has a deep emotional connection to the animal world, utilizing animal as a lens to reflect on human society and expressing the contemplation of human weaknesses as well as the complexity of life. The vivid portrayal of animal behavior and psychology in his works, coupled with the philosophical interpretation ascribed to animal protagonists, often leaves a profound impact on adult readers.



More than ten years ago, Zhejiang Juvenile and Children's Publishing House launched the Shen Shixi's *Animal Novels Collection*, triggering a new wave of animal novel writing and reading in the arena of domestic children's literature.

Shen Shixi emphasizes the importance of reading based on children's interests and their age, developing steadily. He stresses the significance of "joyful reading" to children's growth and childhood. He encourages children to choose books they love based on their age, and follow their reading interest, steadily progressing in their reading journey. Over time, children will embark on a wonderful path of reading.

Yang Hongying

Yang Hongying was born in Chengdu, Sichuan Province in 1962. She began publishing children's fairy tales in 1984. Her best-selling works include *Yang Hongying Fairy Tale Series*, *Yang Hongying Initiation Story Series*, *Mo's Mischief Series*, and *Diary of Smiling Cat Series*. She has won awards such as WIPO-NCAC Copyright Awards, Chinese Excellent Publication Award, China Publishing Government Award, and Bing Xin Children's Literary Award.



In the past two decades, her works have not only achieved good results in the field of original Chinese children's literature but have also been translated into multiple languages such as English, French, German, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese for global publication. *The Panda's Diary Series* (《熊猫日记》) is the first book with its AR book rights sold overseas, the British company Inception obtaining the global production and distribution rights for the bilingual AR book series. It was selected as the "selected global rights-selling work" by *Publishing Perspectives* magazine. Driven by the rights-selling of the *Panda's Diary Series*, many other series such as *Mo's Mischief Series*, *Yang Hongying's Campus Initiation Story Series*, *Yang Hongying Fairy Tale Series* and other 91 works' audio bookrights have been sold overseas.

Yang Hongying once said that her greatest wish throughout life is to understand the hearts of children. She holds a sincere affection for children and a genuine desire to be their friend, which is the original intention of her writing.