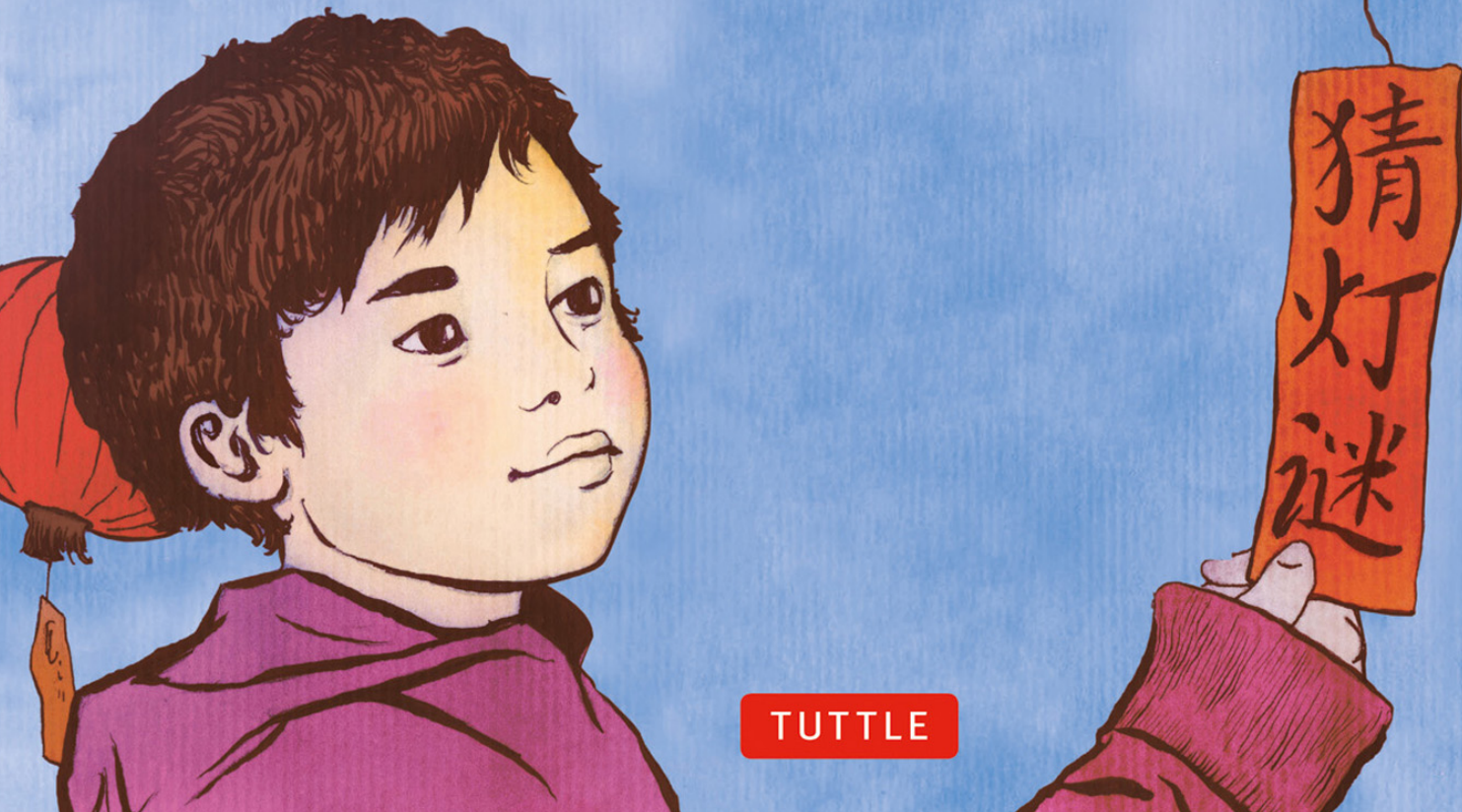


# My First Book of CHINESE WORDS

AN ABC RHYMING BOOK

BY FAYE-LYNN WU ILLUSTRATED BY AYA PADRÓN



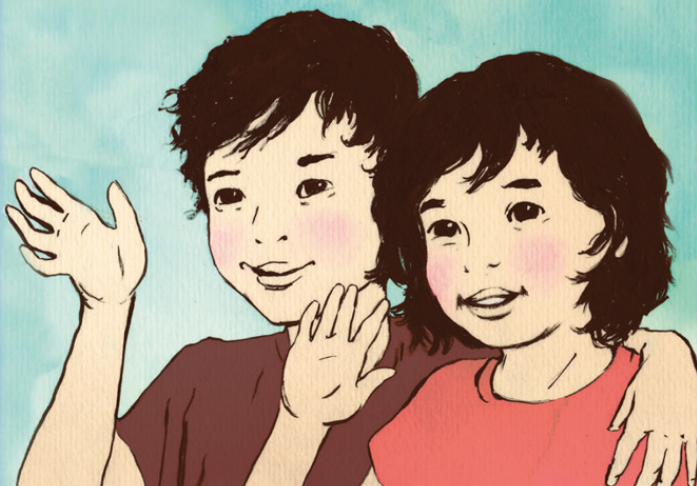
TUTTLE

*My First Book of Chinese Words*

introduces **Chinese** language to preschool children in a gentle, playful way. The **ABC structure** provides a familiar framework that encourages fun and easy learning. The everyday words presented in this book include many that have special significance in Chinese culture.

Each word is presented in **Chinese characters** (both Simplified and Traditional) as well as in **Romanized form** (Pinyin). Cultural and linguistic notes enhance the learning experience. And kids will love the wonderful Chinese family who will take them from page to colorful page!

To listen to the Chinese words in this book, visit the book's page at [www.tuttlepublishing.com](http://www.tuttlepublishing.com).



My First Book of  
**CHINESE WORDS**

AN ABC RHYMING BOOK



Published by Tuttle Publishing, an imprint of Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd.

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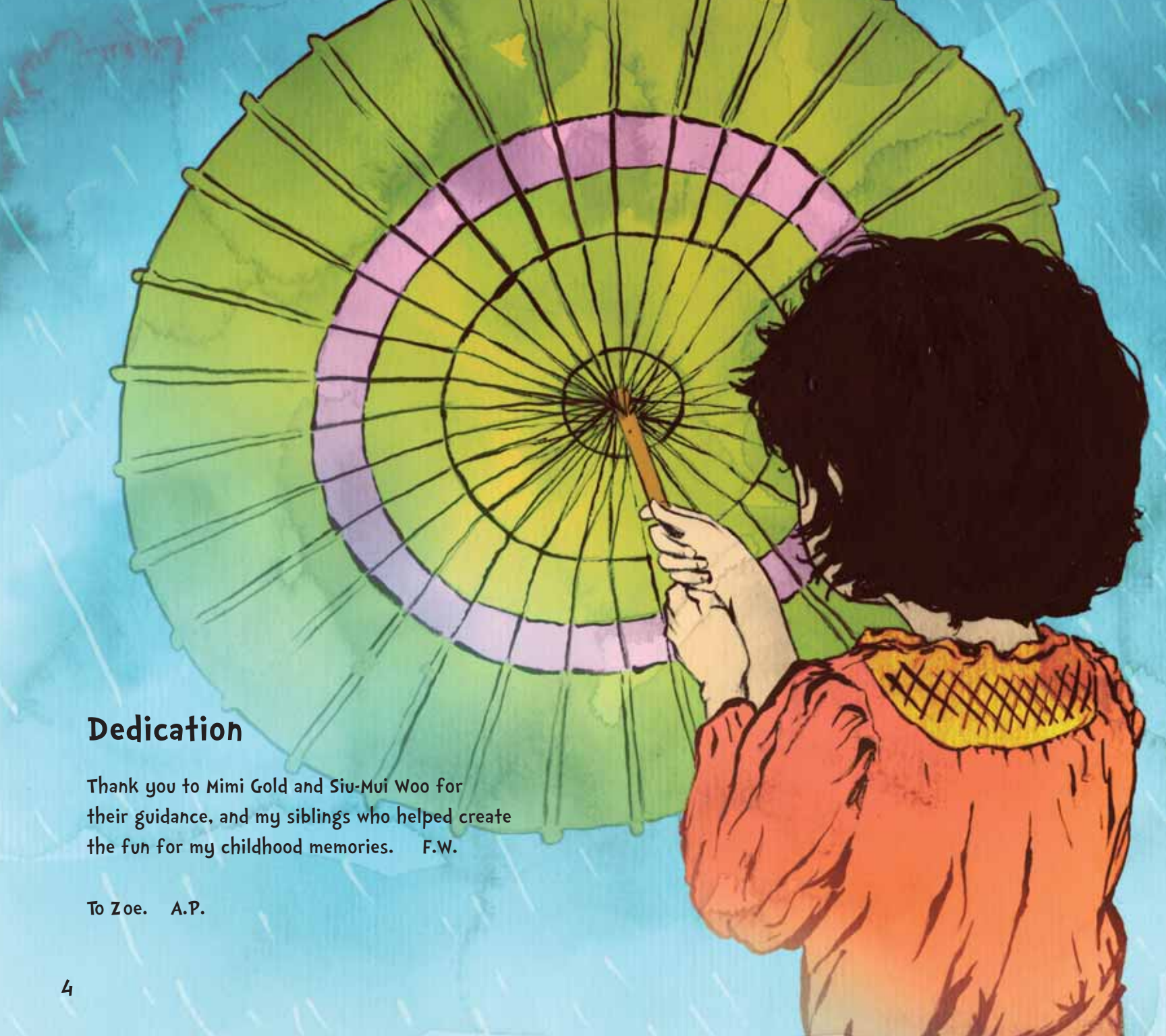
# My First Book of CHINESE WORDS

AN ABC RHYMING BOOK



BY FAYE-LYNN WU  
ILLUSTRATED BY AYA PADRÓN

TUTTLE Publishing  
Tokyo | Rutland, Vermont | Singapore



## Dedication

Thank you to Mimi Gold and Siu-Mui Woo for their guidance, and my siblings who helped create the fun for my childhood memories. F.W.

To Zoe. A.P.

## Preface

Similar to other Roman-based languages, the English language's phonetic and writing systems are tied together. Each letter in a word represents one of its sounds. Unlike English, Chinese writing is a pictographic system that evolved from pictures and symbols. The characters represent words and meanings, but not necessarily the sounds.

The goal of this book is to use playful rhymes and illustrations to introduce the Chinese language to young children. The words covered in this book include objects and actions that children across cultures are familiar with, such as body parts, moon, sun, saying goodbye, and words that specifically relate to the Chinese culture, such as bāozi (a Chinese snack food) and kuàizi (chopsticks).

You will see that each Chinese character is spelled in Pinyin, a phonetic sound system that uses Roman letters to transcribe the Chinese sounds. Pinyin assigns letters different sound values from those of English. For example:

c is pronounced as ts in “its”

ch is pronounced as ch in “chirp”

j is pronounced as j in “jeep”

q is pronounced as ch in “cheap”

x is pronounced as sh in “she”

r is pronounced as z in “azure”

sh is pronounced as sh in “shut”

z is pronounced as ds in “woods”

zh is pronounced as j in “jam”

To hear the Chinese words in this book spoken aloud, please visit this book's page at [www.tuttlepublishing.com](http://www.tuttlepublishing.com).

You'll also note that several of the words chosen are written in Traditional as well as Simplified characters.

Although Chinese differs greatly from English, it is a fun language to learn, and young children are ideal learners of new languages. We hope you'll enjoy sharing the Chinese language with your child through these fun rhymes.

An illustration of a woman with long black hair hugging a young child from behind. The woman has her eyes closed and a gentle smile. The child also has their eyes closed and a peaceful expression. The woman is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, and the child is wearing a green patterned shirt. The background is a warm, textured brown color.

爱

simplified

愛

traditional

A is for ài,  
a word that means love,  
like the gentle hugs  
that wrap us like the  
soft wings of a dove.



# 包子

**B** is for *bāozi*.

A bun of soft dough  
filled with tasty bits –  
when it's hot eat it slow!

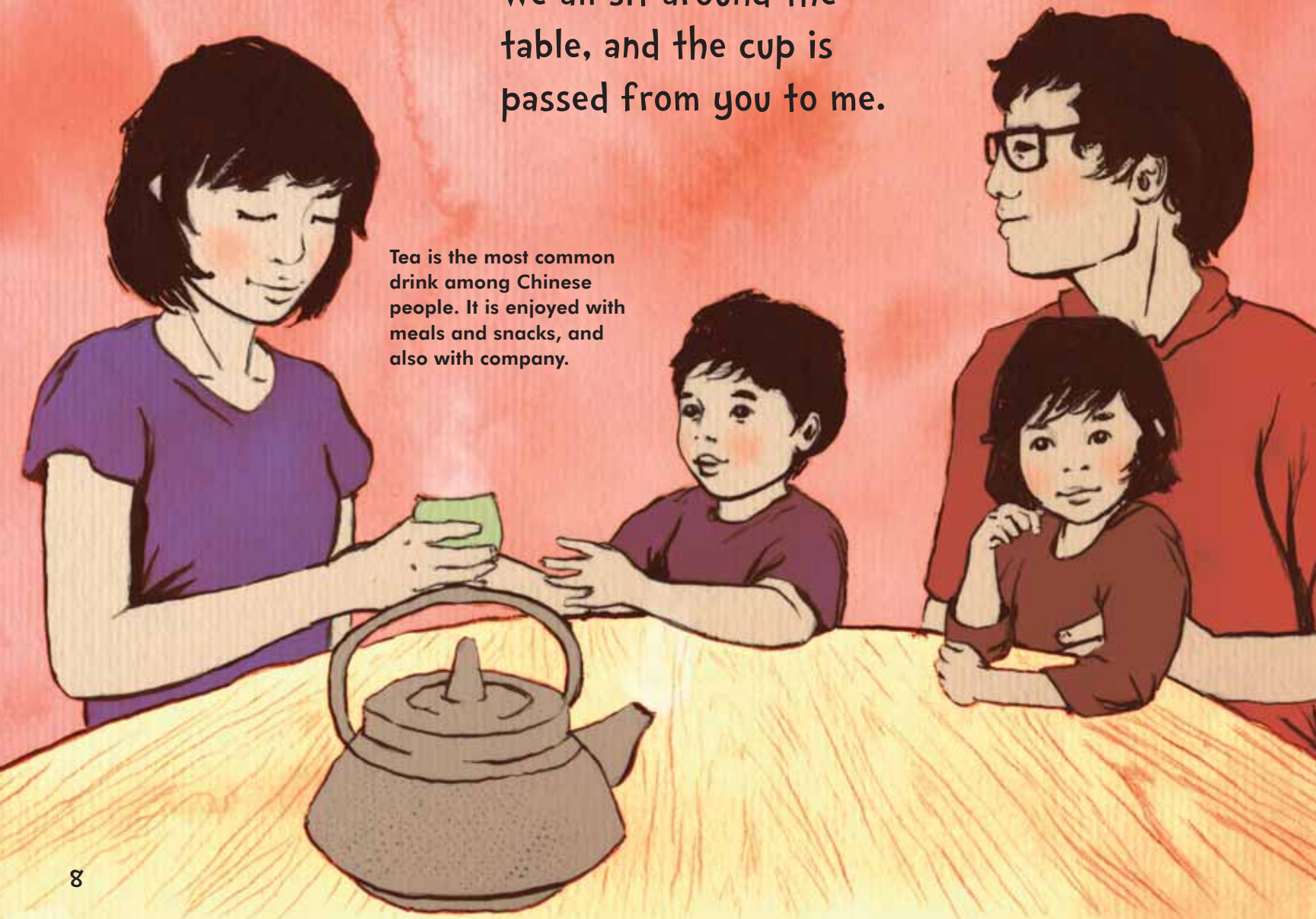
Bāozi is a traditional Chinese snack.  
It can be filled with meat or veggies,  
or with sweet bean paste. Yum!



茶

C is for *chá*,  
a steaming cup of tea.  
We all sit around the  
table, and the cup is  
passed from you to me.

Tea is the most common  
drink among Chinese  
people. It is enjoyed with  
meals and snacks, and  
also with company.



# 灯笼

simplified

D is for *dēnglóng*,  
lantern hung up high—  
a bright paper lamp  
against the night sky.

# 燈籠

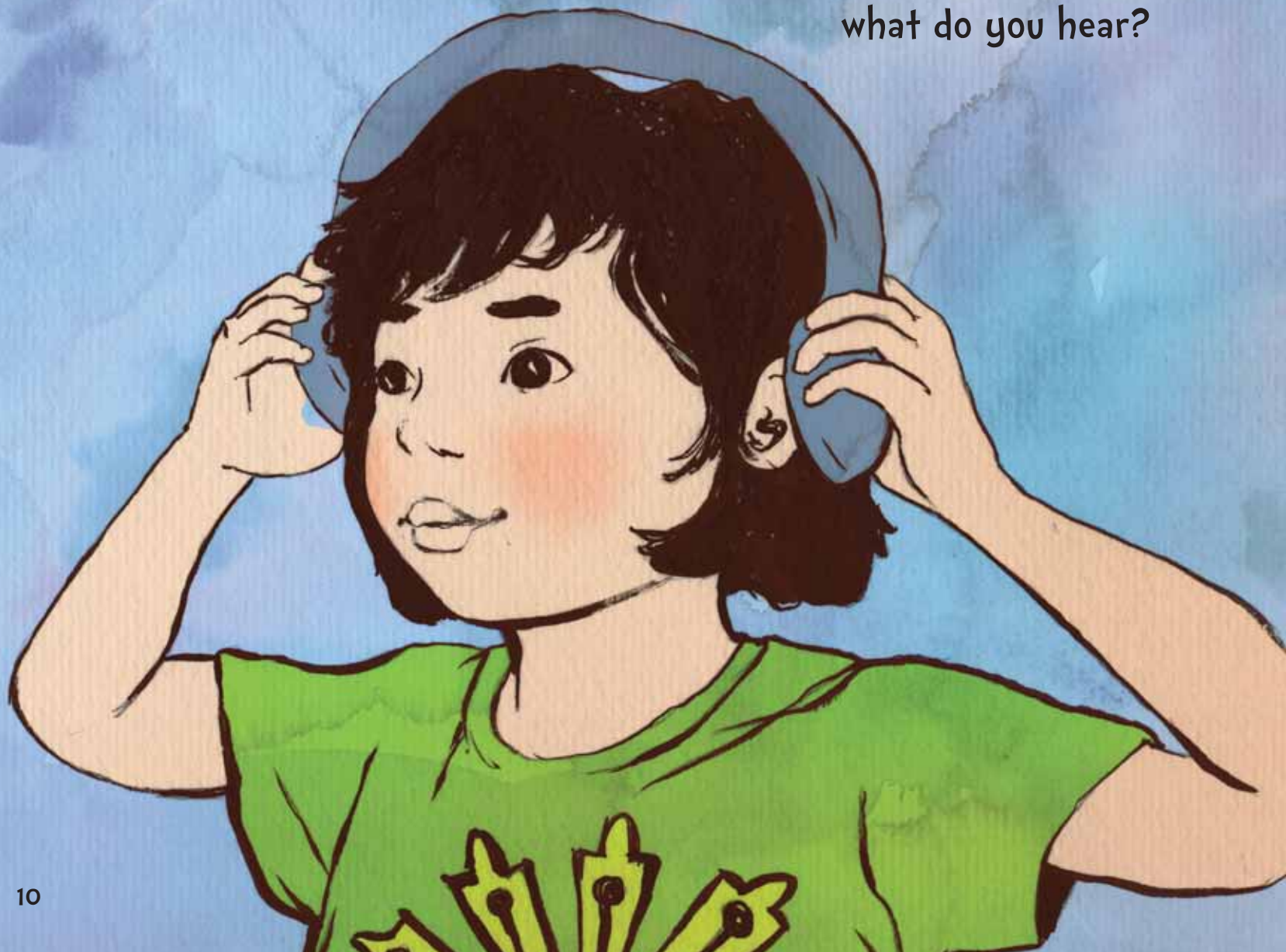
traditional



Lanterns represent joy,  
harmony, and good luck.  
At Lantern Festival people  
like to hang riddles from  
them so their friends can  
have fun guessing.

耳

E is for ěr.  
This is your ear,  
listening, listening—  
what do you hear?





风  
箏

simplified

風  
箏

traditional

F is for *fēngzhēng*.  
A kite soars in the sky  
like a beautiful dancer,  
swirls, twirls, waves goodbye.

It's said that the Chinese invented kites thousands of years ago!

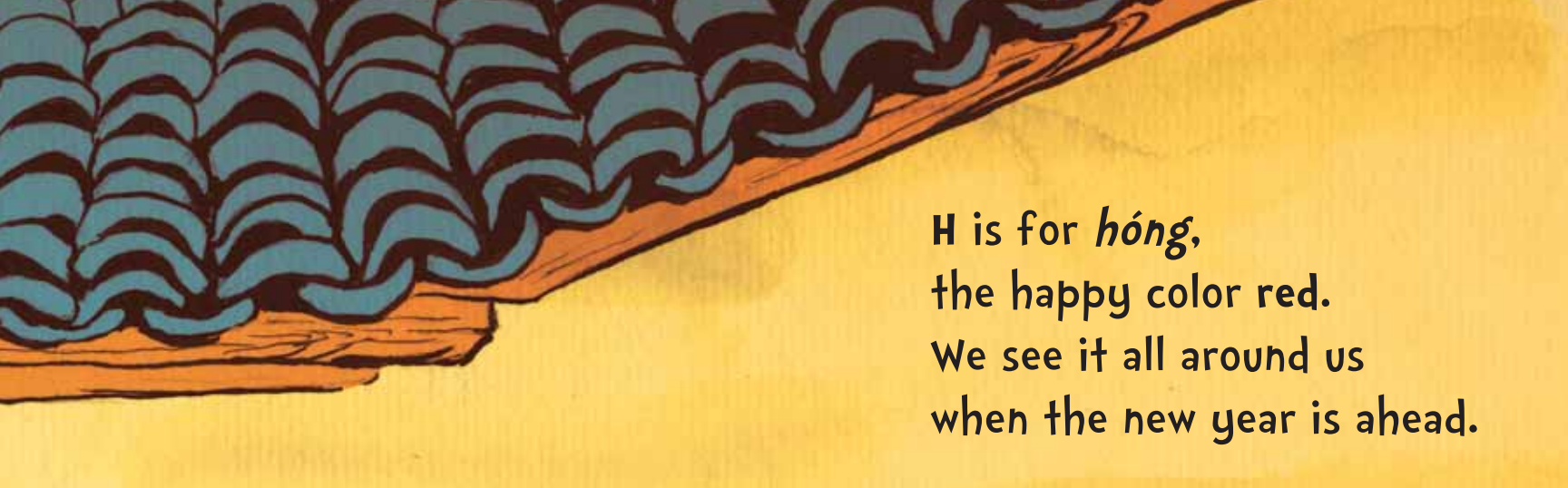
# 狗

G is for *gǒu*.

Our dog very dear  
gives a happy “wang wang!”  
when friends come near.

Different people hear and describe  
sounds differently. The Chinese  
hear cats say *mee mee*, ducks say  
*gua gua*, and cows say *mou mou*.  
What do you hear?





H is for *hóng*,  
the happy color red.  
We see it all around us  
when the new year is ahead.

红

simplified

紅

traditional

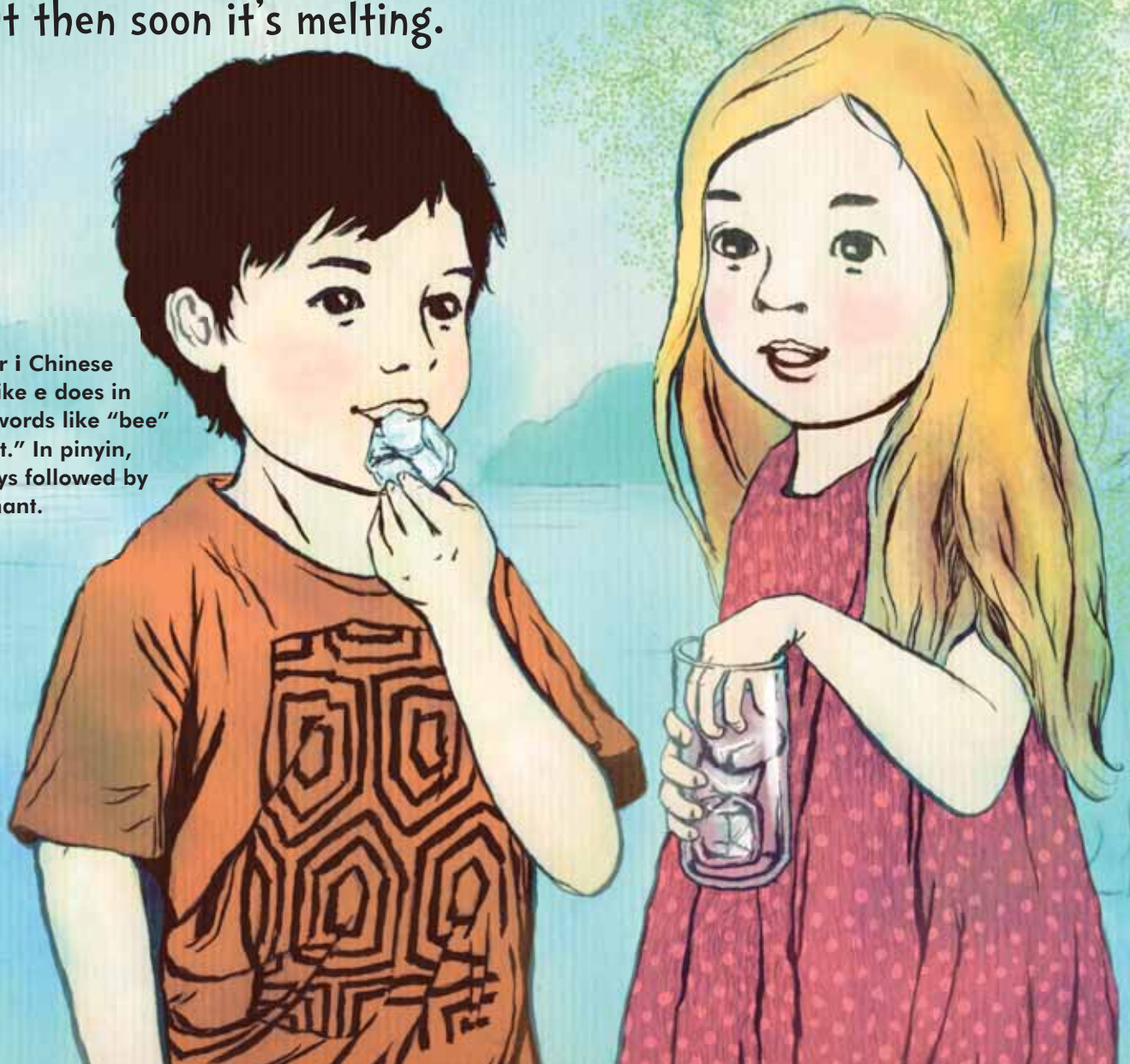


The color red stands for happiness. It is usually used to decorate when festivals come around, like Chinese New Year and weddings and many other celebrations.

# 冰

I is for ice.  
We call it *bīng*.  
It's cold in my mouth,  
but then soon it's melting.

The letter *i* Chinese sounds like *e* does in English words like "bee" and "feet." In pinyin, *i* is always followed by a consonant.





# 家

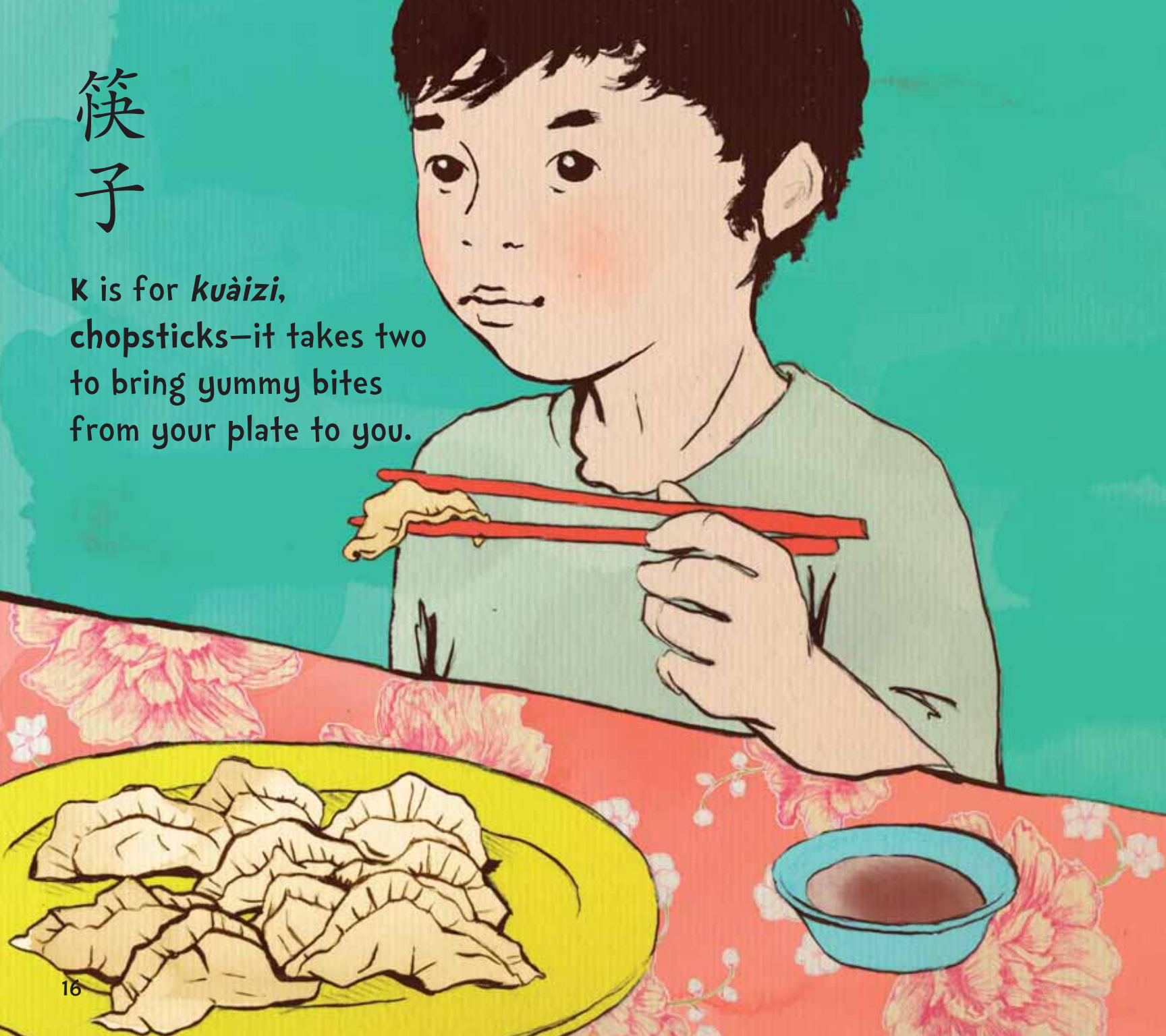
J is for *jiā*.

My home is my nest,  
a place to return to—  
that's where I rest.



# 筷子

K is for *kuàizi*,  
chopsticks—it takes two  
to bring yummy bites  
from your plate to you.





龙

simplified

L is for *lóng*.  
Dragon power is good.  
With a big, mighty roar  
dragon guards our  
neighborhood.

龍

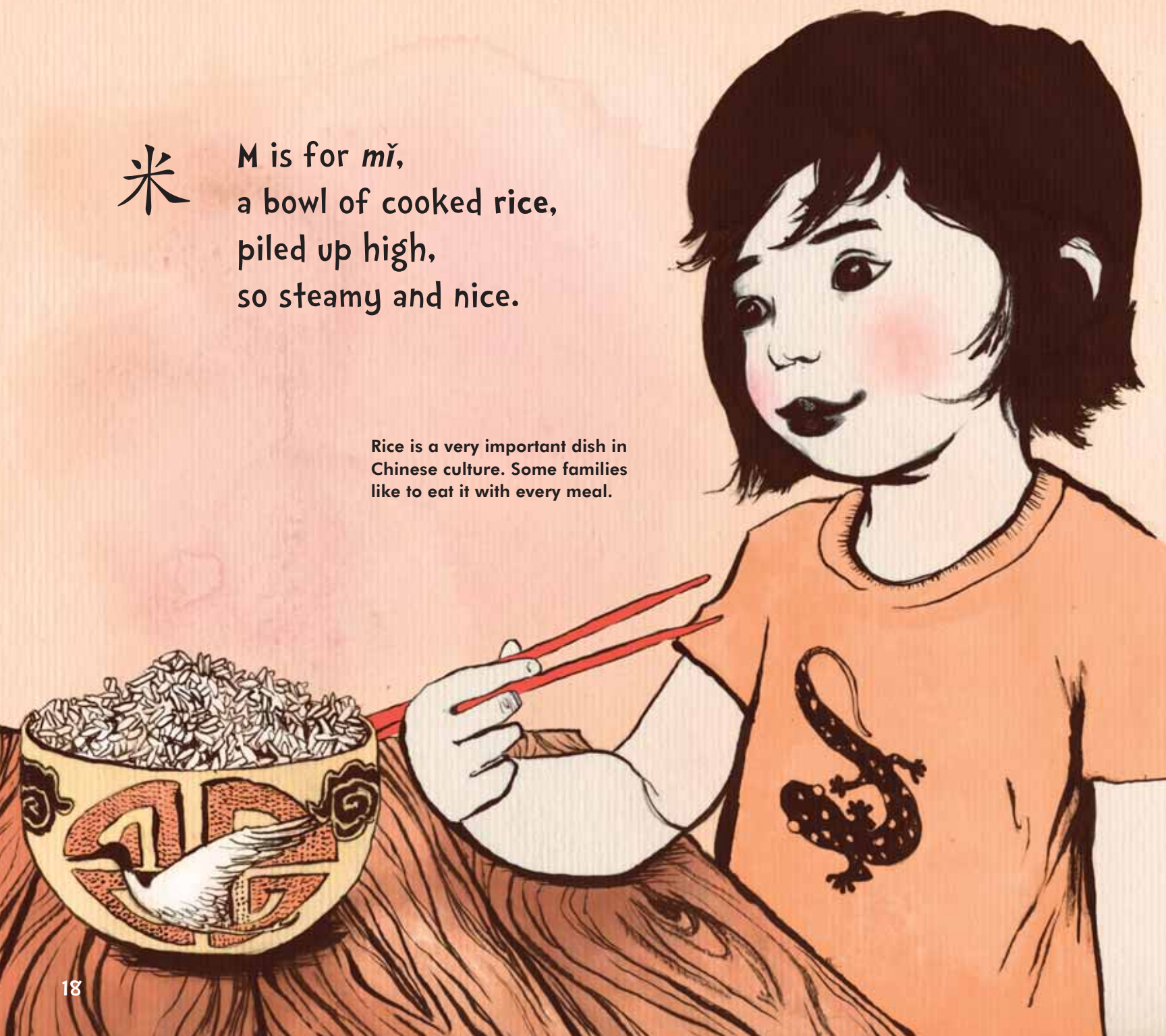
traditional

In Chinese culture the dragon means strength, generosity, and good luck. In Chinese neighborhoods all over the world the dragon dance celebrates happy occasions.

米

M is for *mǐ*,  
a bowl of cooked rice,  
piled up high,  
so steamy and nice.

Rice is a very important dish in  
Chinese culture. Some families  
like to eat it with every meal.





# 奶 奶

N is for *nǎinai*.  
Grandmas are sweet.  
They give us hugs and love  
and, sometimes, a treat.

There are lots  
of ways to say  
"Grandma" in  
Chinese, like *popo*,  
yinyin and *ama*.

O is for ōu.  
See how the gull flies.  
Circling above,  
“o-o I’m hungry!” he cries.

鸥

simplified

鷗

traditional



# 朋友

P is for *péngyǒu*, the friends we see each day. Laughing, holding hands, together we play.



球

Q is for *qiú*.

A ball smooth and round  
bounces high to the sky  
and comes back to the ground.





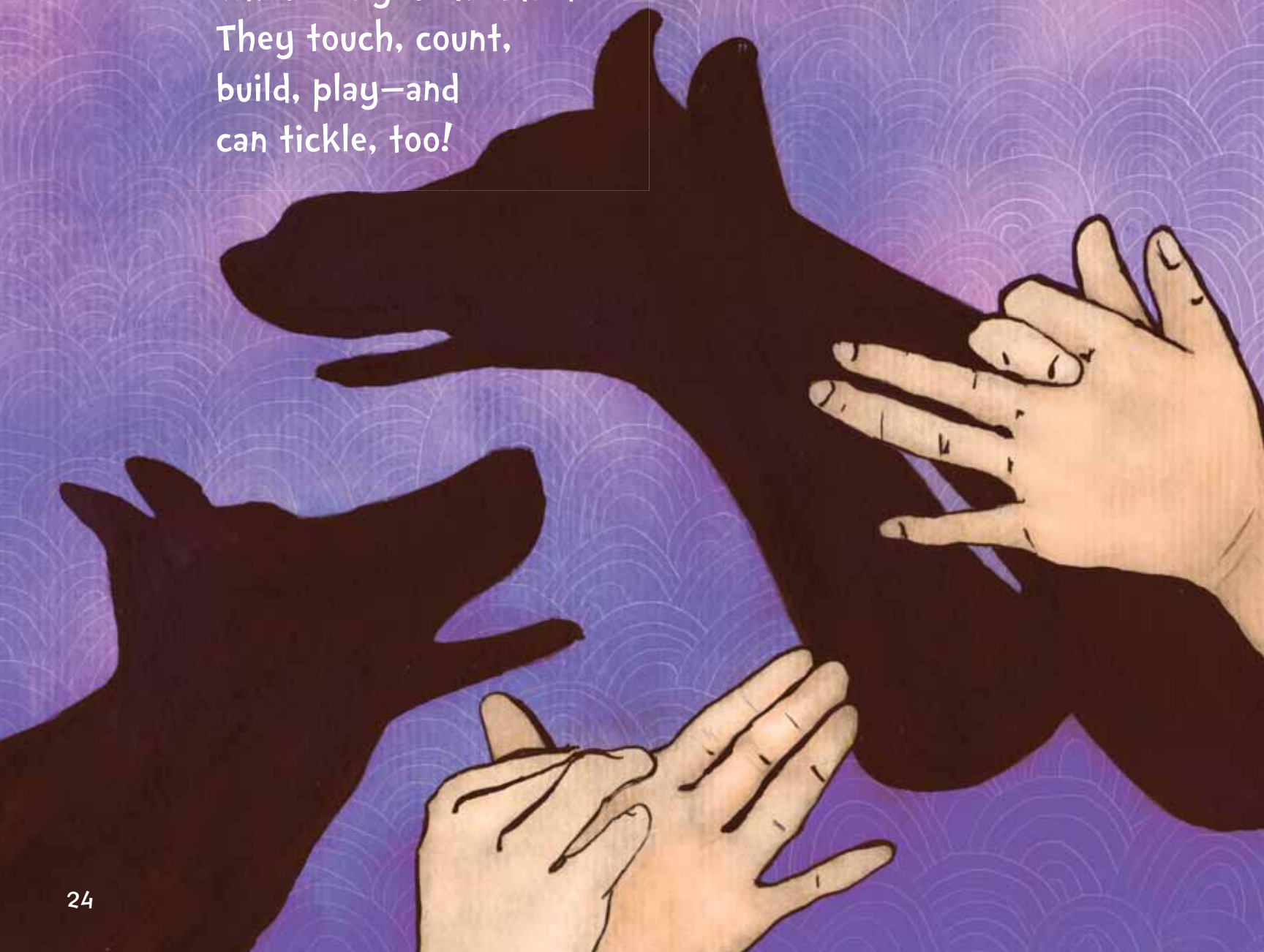


日

R is for *ri*.  
The bright, hot sun  
with a shining  
happy face says  
“Get up! It’s time  
for fun!”

手

S is for *shǒu*.  
What can your hands do?  
They touch, count,  
build, play—and  
can tickle, too!



头

simplified

頭

traditional

T is for *tóu*.

Your wonderful head

lets you see, hear, smell, taste and talk,  
and remember what is said.



雨  
傘

simplified

雨  
傘

traditional

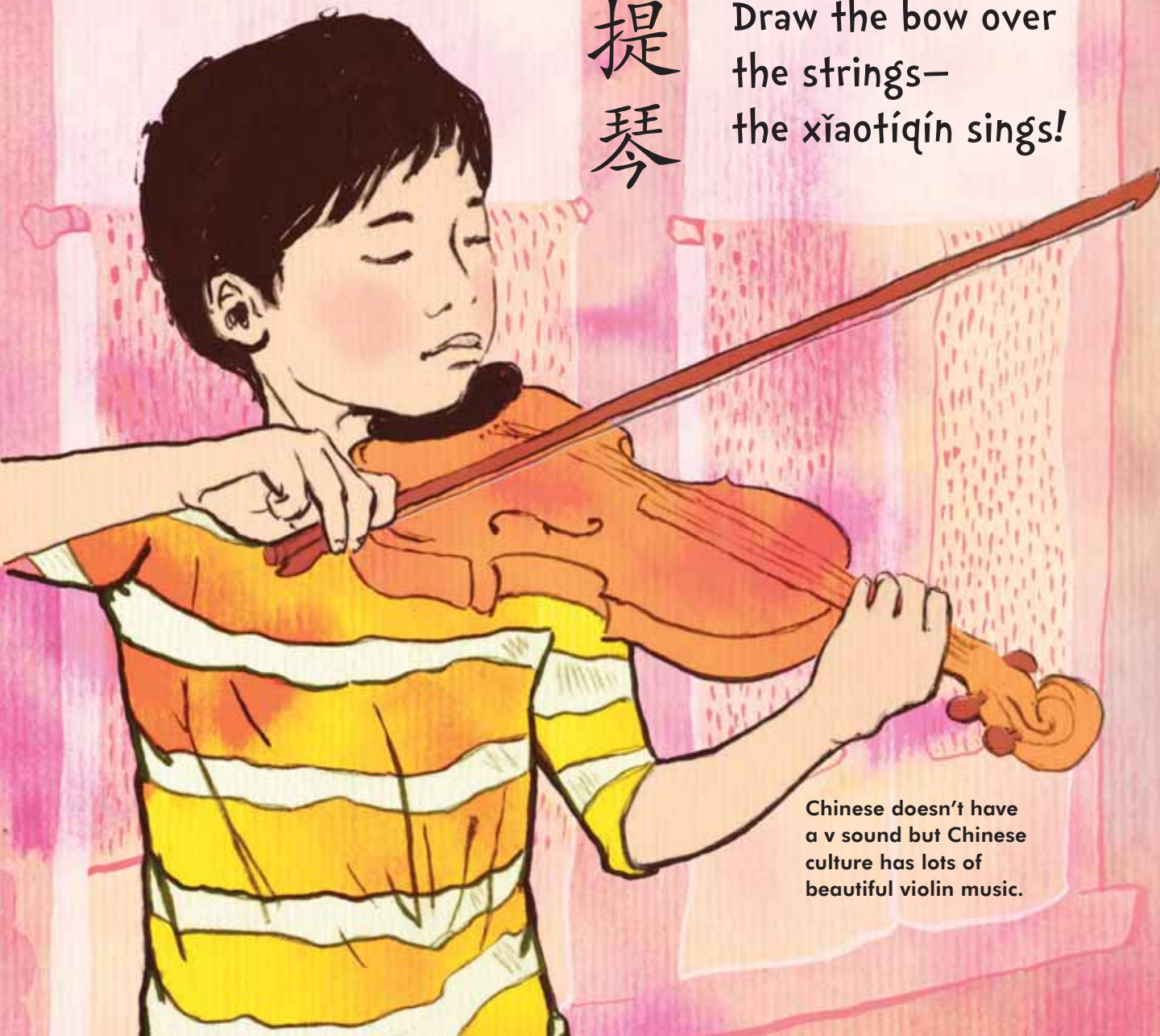
**U** is for umbrella.  
When rain falls from the sky  
we need our *yǔsǎn*  
to keep us dry.

In pinyin the letter u rhymes with the English word "blue." This letter is never used at the beginning of a word.



# 小提琴

V is for violin.  
We call it *xǎotiqín*.  
Draw the bow over  
the strings—  
the *xǎotiqín* sings!




Chinese doesn't have  
a v sound but Chinese  
culture has lots of  
beautiful violin music.

# 尾巴

W is for *wěibā*.  
A happy wagging tail  
greet you with joy  
day or night, without fail.





# 熊 猫

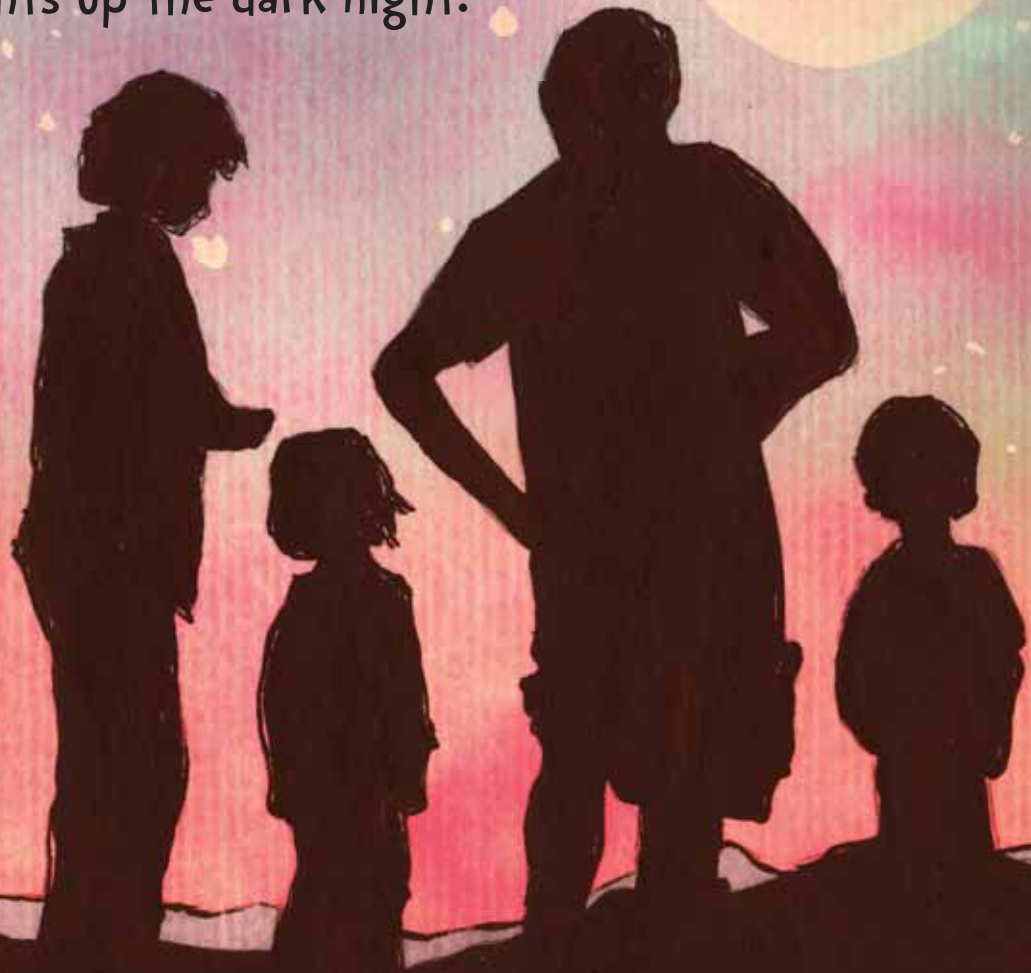
X is for *xióngmāo*.  
Furry panda, soft as  
sheep, munches on  
bamboo leaves and  
drifts off to sleep.

月

Y is for *yùe*.

The moon shines so bright.

Dancing with twinkling stars,  
it lights up the dark night.





再  
見

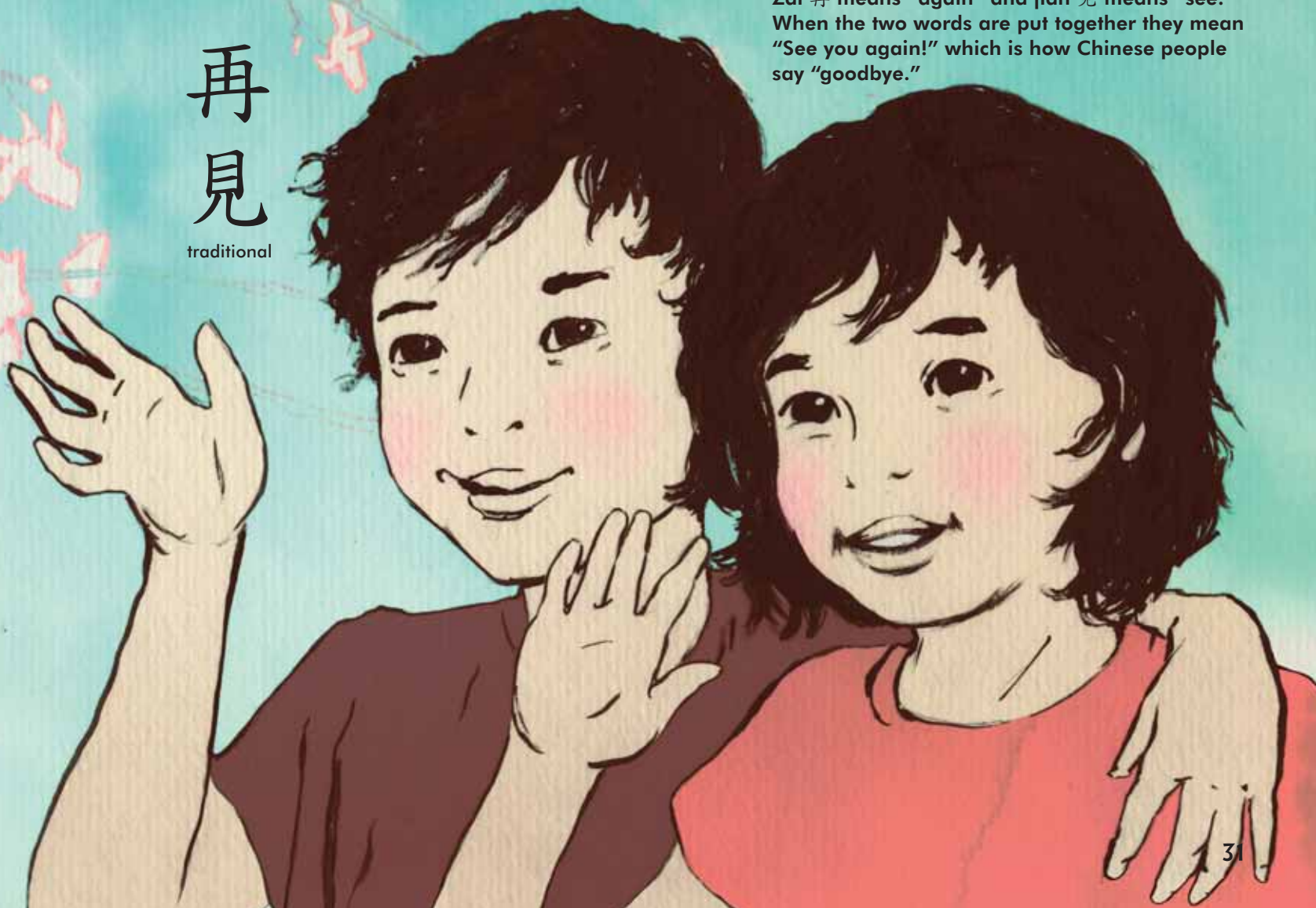
simplified

Z is for *zàijiàn*.  
“Goodbye!” we say—  
more good times together  
when we meet another day.

*Zài* 再 means “again” and *jiàn* 见 means “see.”  
When the two words are put together they mean  
“See you again!” which is how Chinese people  
say “goodbye.”

再  
見

traditional



## The Tuttle Story: “Books to Span the East and West”

Most people are surprised to learn that the world’s largest publisher of books on Asia had its humble beginnings in the tiny American state of Vermont. The company’s founder, Charles Tuttle, came from a New England family steeped in publishing, and his first love was books—especially old and rare editions.

Tuttle’s father was a noted antiquarian dealer in Rutland, Vermont. Young Charles honed his knowledge of the trade working in the family bookstore, and later in the rare books section of Columbia University Library. His passion for beautiful books—old and new—never wavered throughout his long career as a bookseller and publisher.

After graduating from Harvard, Tuttle enlisted in the military and in 1945 was sent to Tokyo to work on General Douglas MacArthur’s staff. He was tasked with helping to revive the Japanese publishing industry, which had been utterly devastated by the war. When his tour of duty was completed, he left the military, married a talented and beautiful singer, Reiko Chiba, and in 1948 began several successful business ventures.

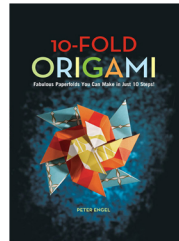
To his astonishment, Tuttle discovered that postwar Tokyo was actually a book-lover’s paradise. He befriended dealers in the Kanda district and began supplying rare Japanese editions to American libraries. He also imported American books to sell to the thousands of GIs stationed in Japan. By 1949, Tuttle’s business was thriving, and he opened Tokyo’s very first English-language bookstore in the Takashimaya Department Store in Ginza, to great success. Two years later, he began publishing books to fulfill the growing interest of foreigners in all things Asian.

Though a westerner, Tuttle was hugely instrumental in bringing a knowledge of Japan and Asia to a world hungry for information about the East. By the time of his death in 1993, he had published over 6,000 books on Asian culture, history and art—a legacy honored by Emperor Hirohito in 1983 with the “Order of the Sacred Treasure,” the highest honor Japan bestows upon non-Japanese.

The Tuttle company today maintains an active backlist of some 1,500 titles, many of which have been continuously in print since the 1950s and 1960s—a great testament to Charles Tuttle’s skill as a publisher. More than 60 years after its founding, Tuttle Publishing is more active today than at any time in its history, still inspired by Charles Tuttle’s core mission—to publish fine books to span the East and West and provide a greater understanding of each.



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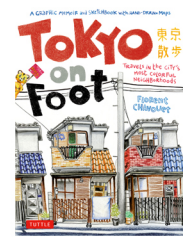
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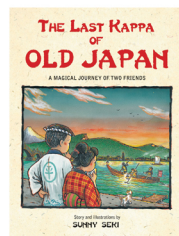
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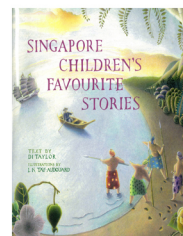
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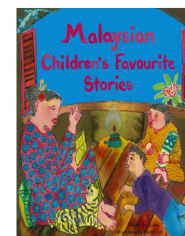
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**FAYE-LYNN WU** was born and raised in Taiwan. Her experiences in teaching her own children in the U.S. and in managing language programs for early education have helped her introduce language to kids in the most positive way possible.

She serves on the board of a Chinese language school and teaches Mandarin. She is the author of *Chinese and English Nursery Rhymes* (Tuttle Publishing 2010).

**AYA PADRÓN** is a freelance artist who works in many media, among them painting and photography. She is the illustrator of *Korean for Beginners* and *My First Book of Korean Words*.

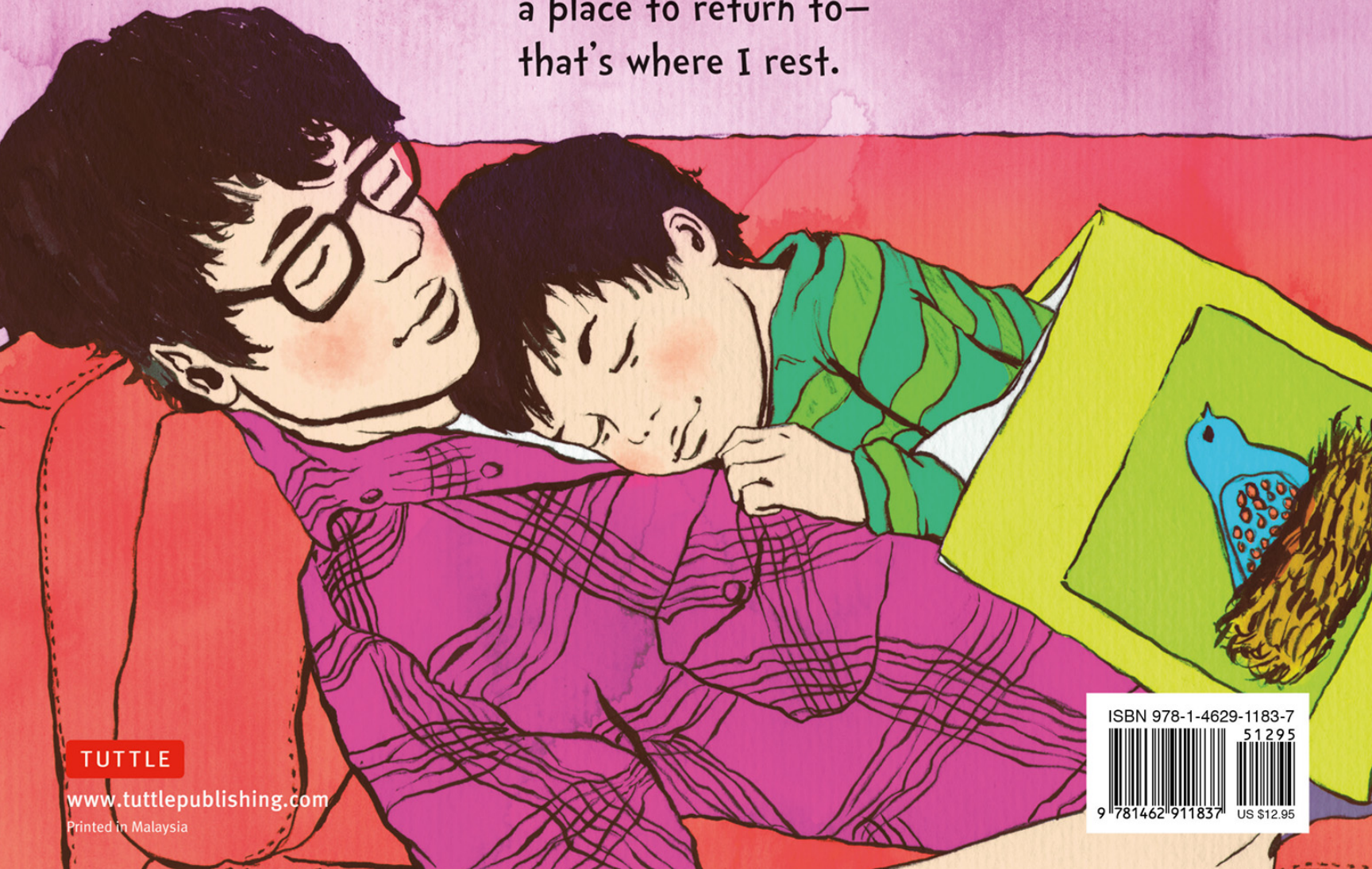
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# 家

J is for *jiā*.

My home is my nest,  
a place to return to—  
that's where I rest.



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