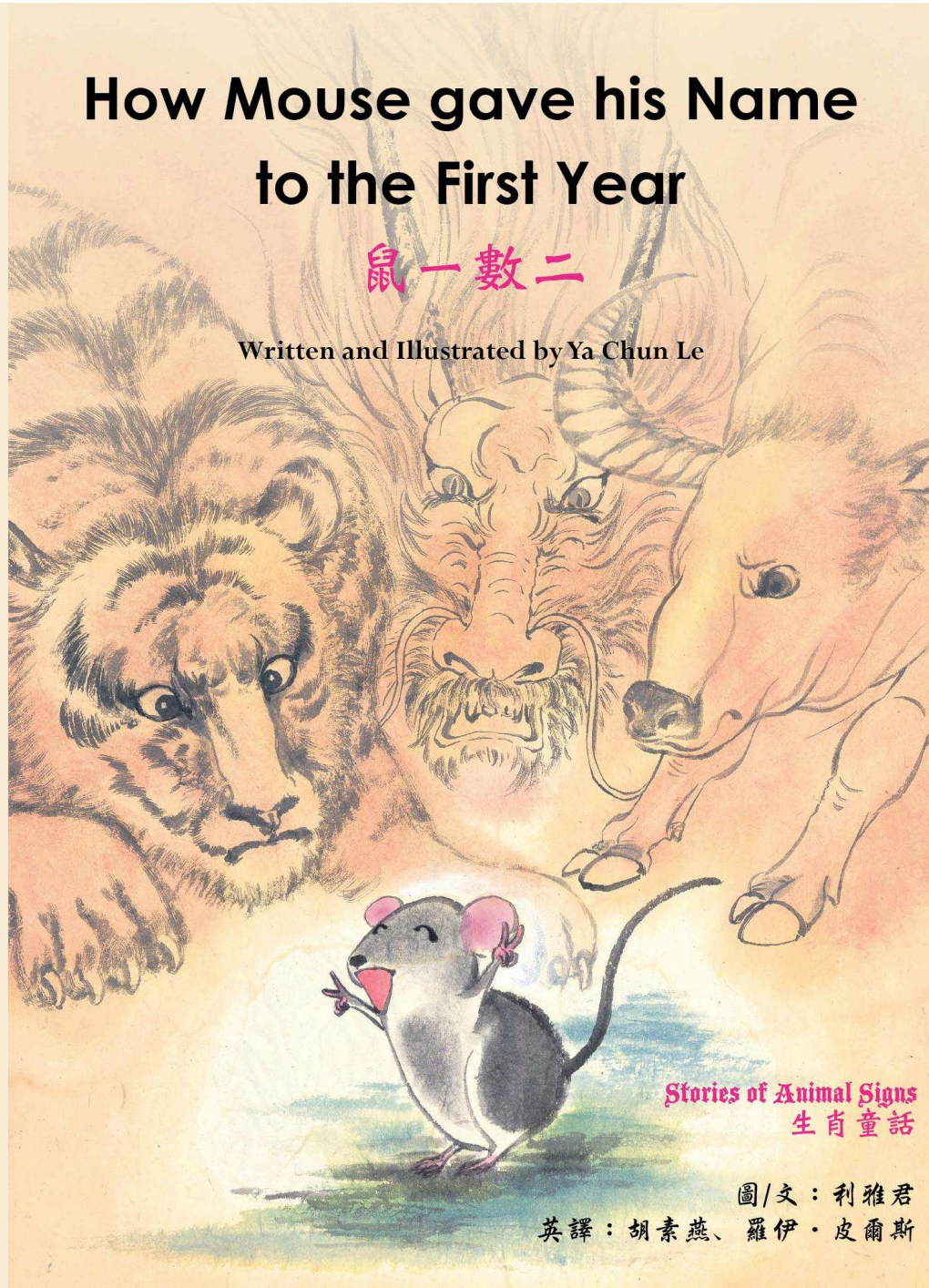


How Mouse gave his Name to the First Year

鼠一數二

Written and Illustrated by Ya Chun Le



Stories of Animal Signs
生肖童話

圖/文：利雅君
英譯：胡素燕、羅伊·皮爾斯

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How the Chinese character for “mouse” was developed from the picture of a mouse

中國字的“鼠”如何由圖形漸漸變成字體



Mouse
老鼠



Transforming
開始變形



Small Seal Script of Han Dynasty
(about the 1st century AD)
漢代小篆 (約西元一世紀)



Current style of writing
沿用至今的通行字體

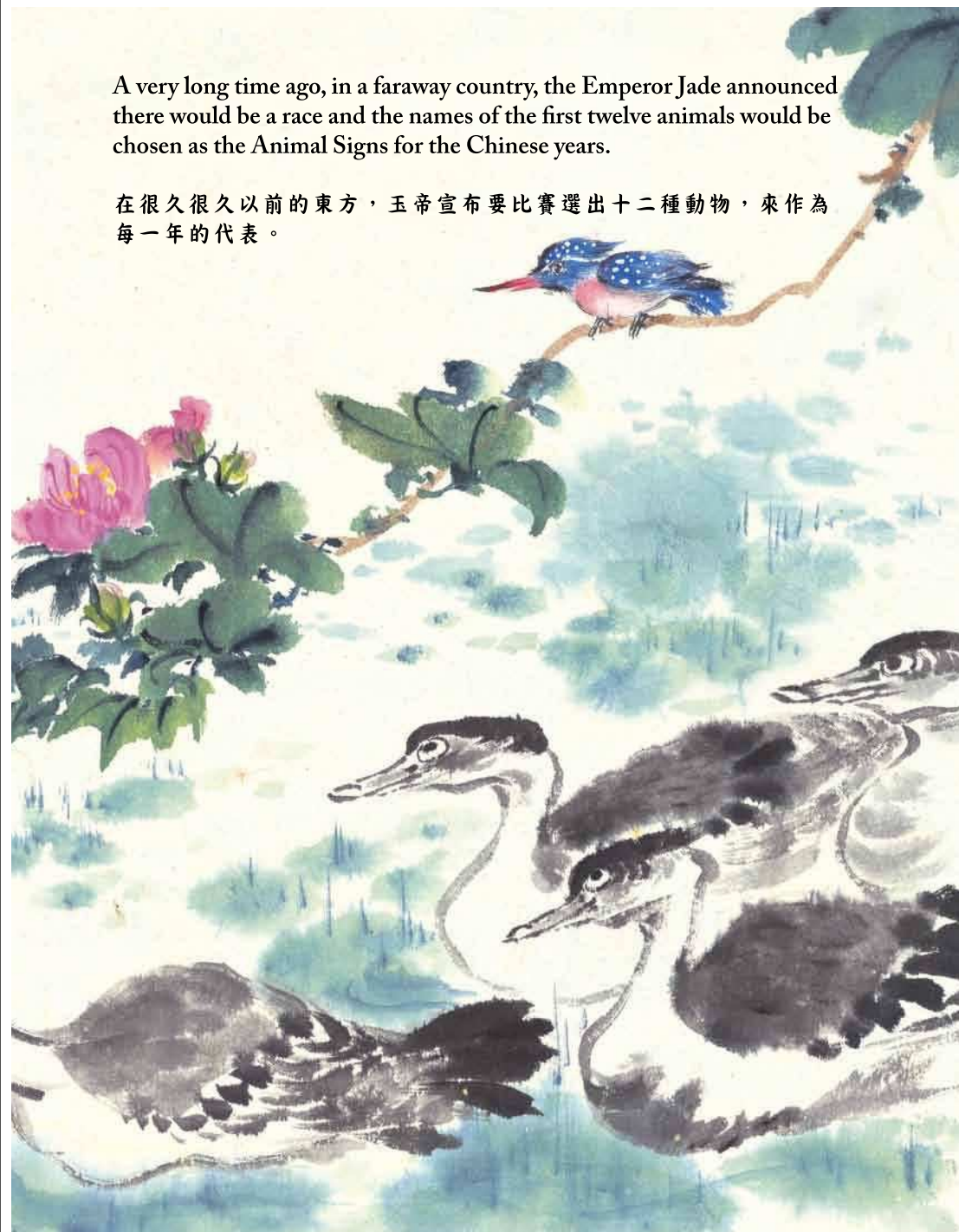


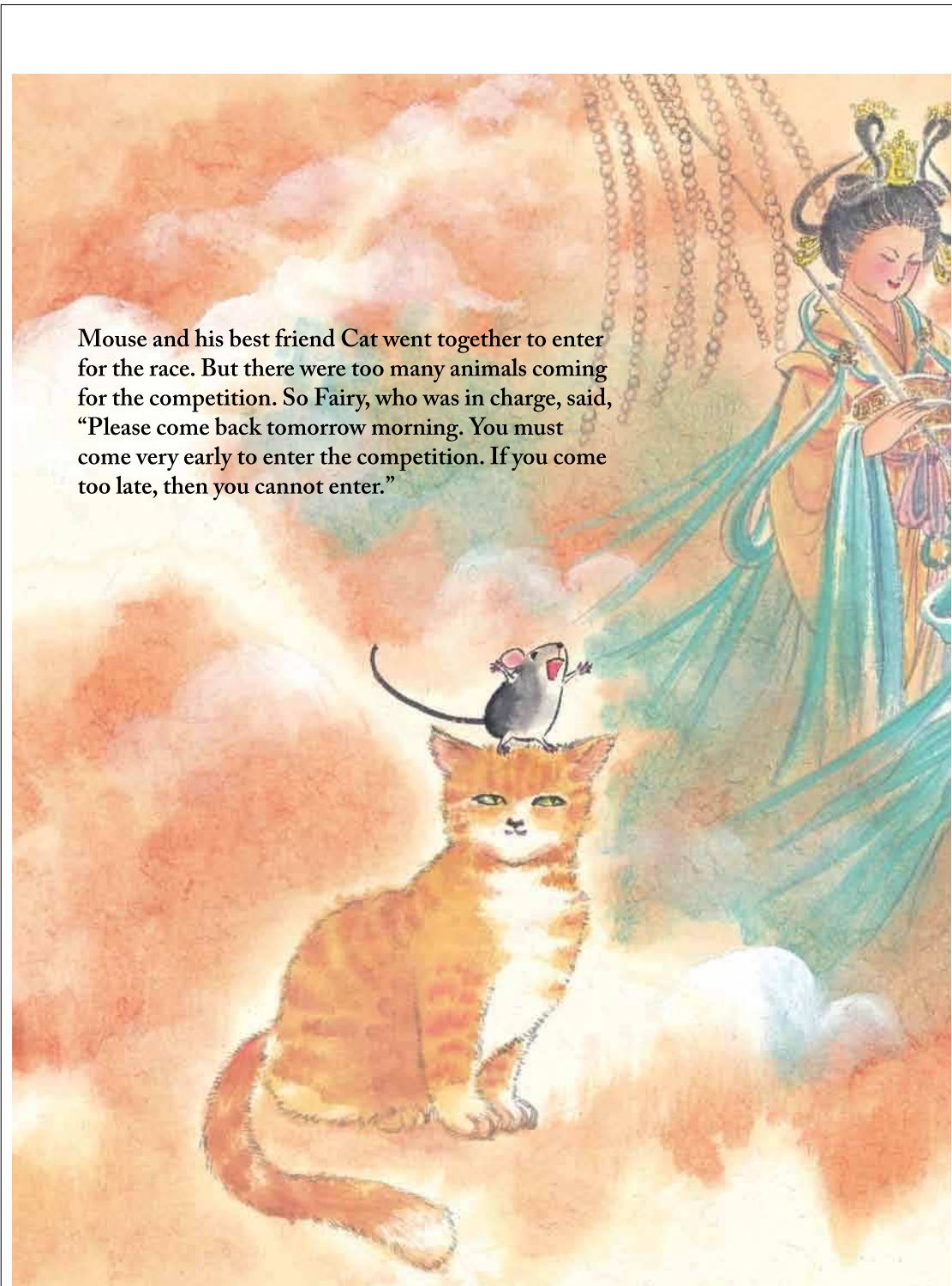
Artistic style based on hieroglyph
脫離文字符號的藝術形式



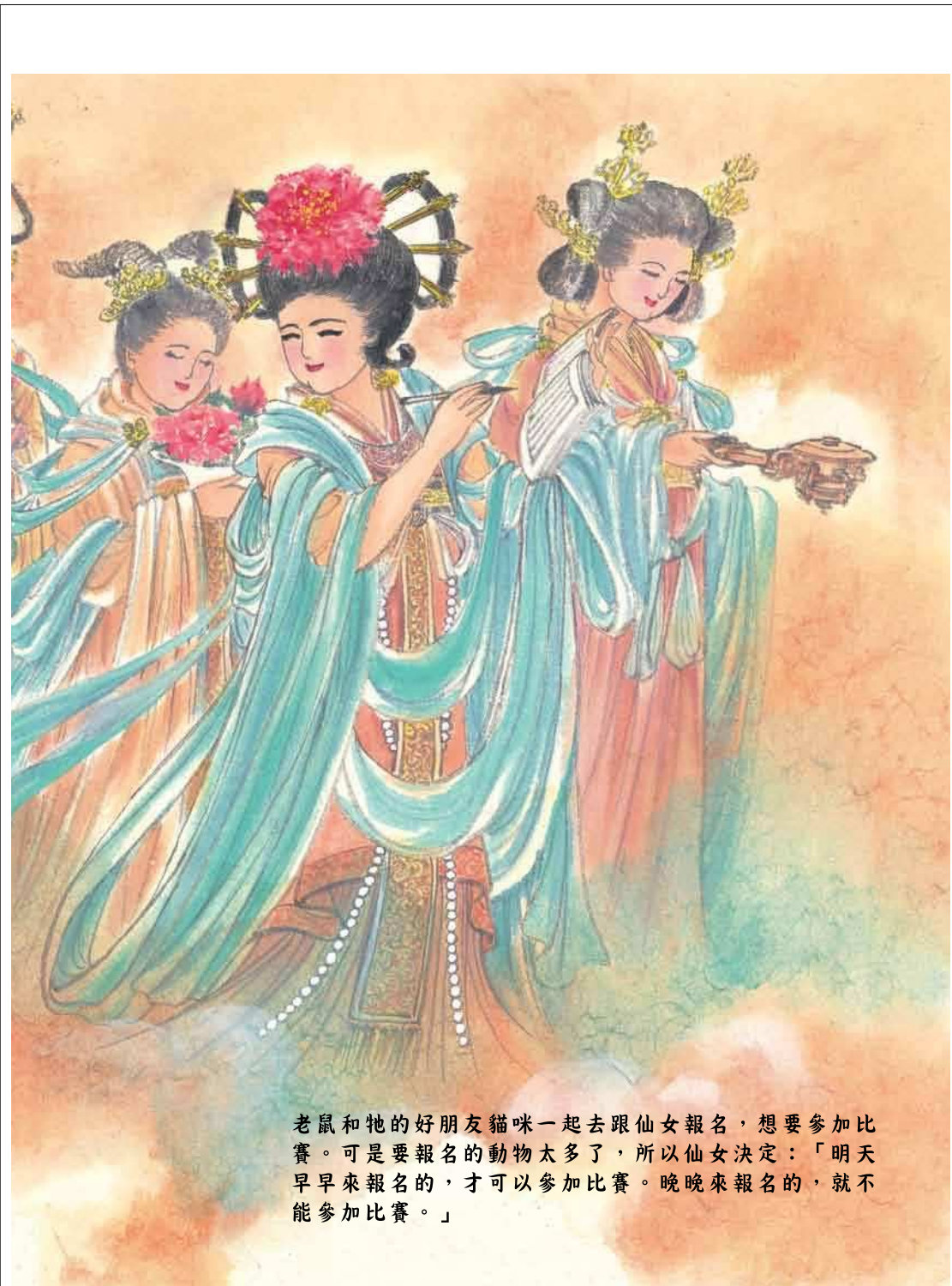
A very long time ago, in a faraway country, the Emperor Jade announced there would be a race and the names of the first twelve animals would be chosen as the Animal Signs for the Chinese years.

在很久很久以前的東方，玉帝宣布要比賽選出十二種動物，來作為每一年的代表。



An illustration showing a small grey mouse with its mouth open, perched on the head of a ginger and white tabby cat. The cat is sitting on a white, fluffy cloud. In the background, a woman in traditional Chinese attire with a large pink flower in her hair and long blue and orange robes stands on a higher cloud. The scene is set against a backdrop of soft, orange and yellow clouds.

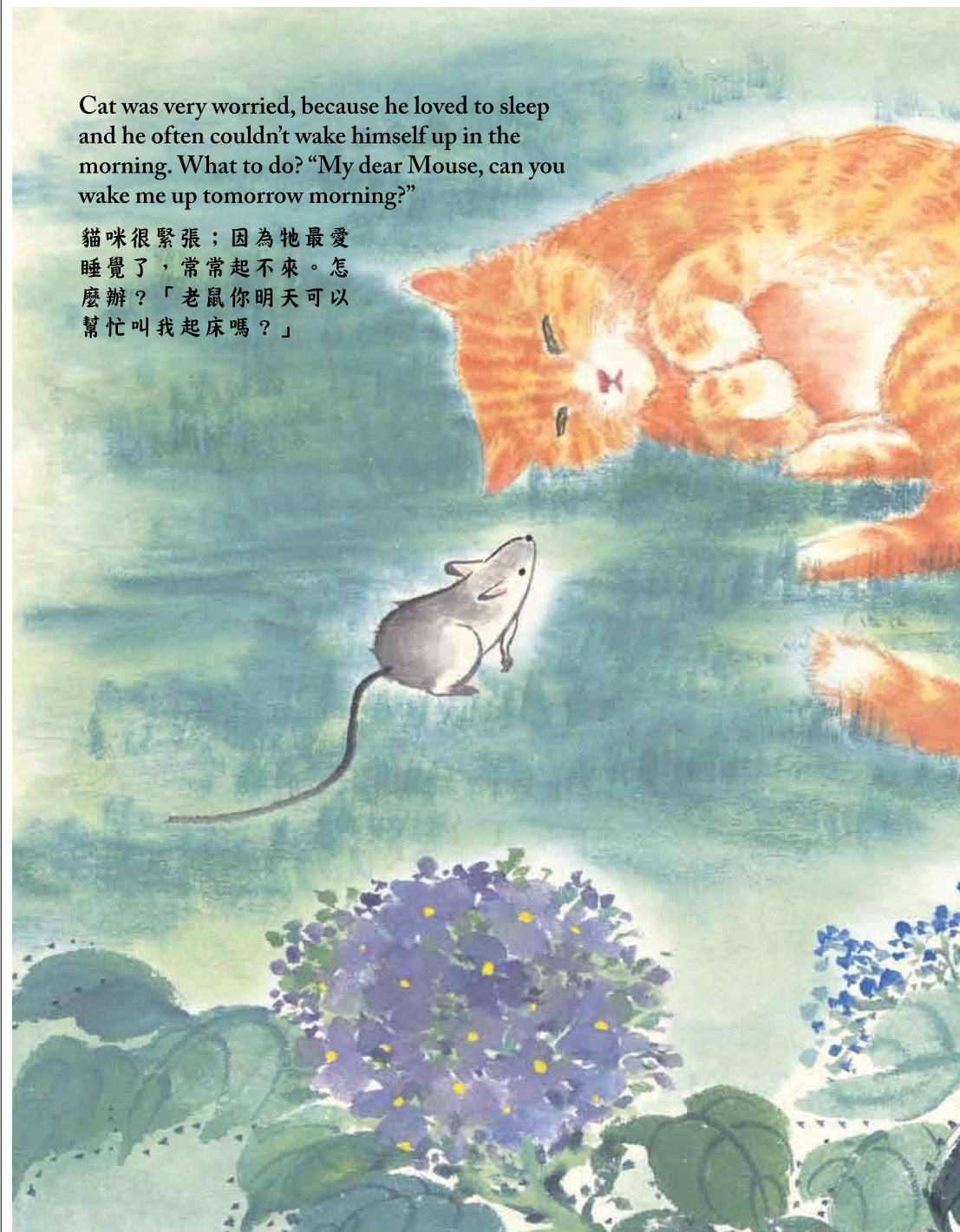
Mouse and his best friend Cat went together to enter for the race. But there were too many animals coming for the competition. So Fairy, who was in charge, said, "Please come back tomorrow morning. You must come very early to enter the competition. If you come too late, then you cannot enter."

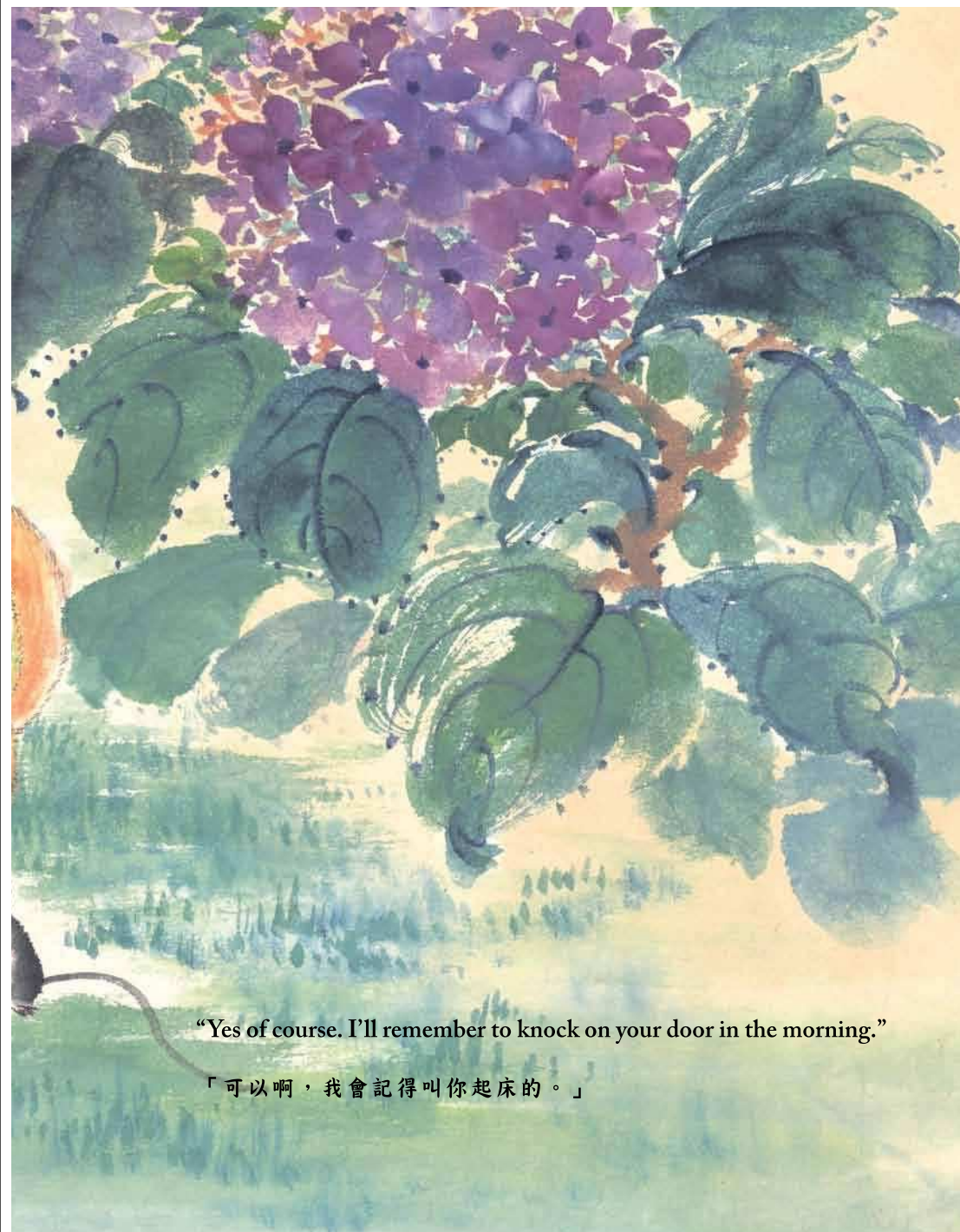
An illustration of three women in traditional Chinese attire, likely fairies, standing on a white, fluffy cloud. They are wearing long, flowing robes in shades of blue, orange, and red. The woman in the center has a large pink flower in her hair and is holding a small object. The woman on the right is holding a small, ornate object. The background is a soft, orange and yellow sky.

老鼠和牠的好朋友貓咪一起去跟仙女報名，想要參加比賽。可是要報名的動物太多了，所以仙女決定：「明天早早來報名的，才可以參加比賽。晚晚來報名的，就不能參加比賽。」

Cat was very worried, because he loved to sleep and he often couldn't wake himself up in the morning. What to do? "My dear Mouse, can you wake me up tomorrow morning?"

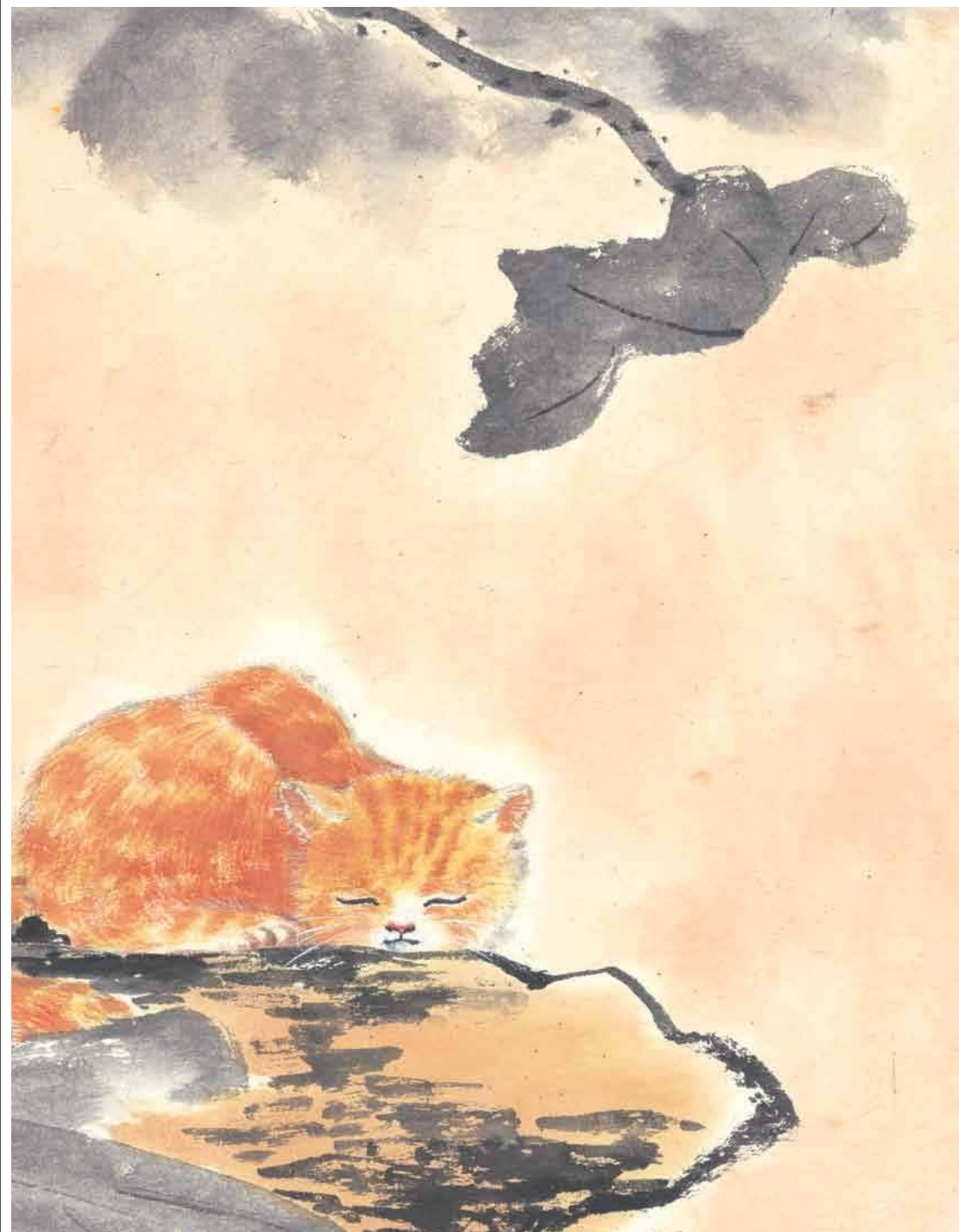
貓咪很緊張；因為牠最愛睡覺了，常常起不來。怎麼辦？「老鼠你明天可以幫忙叫我起床嗎？」

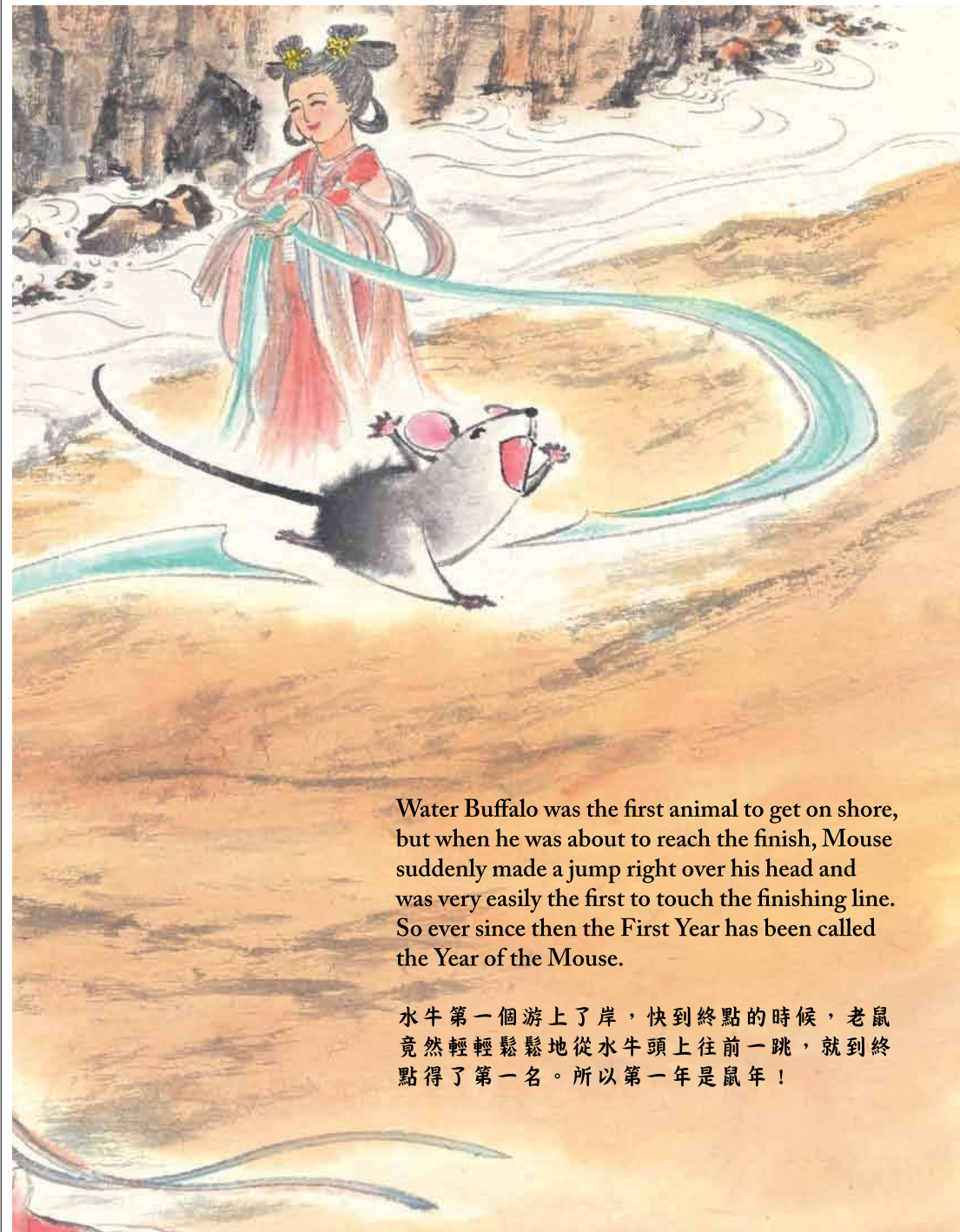




“Yes of course. I’ll remember to knock on your door in the morning.”

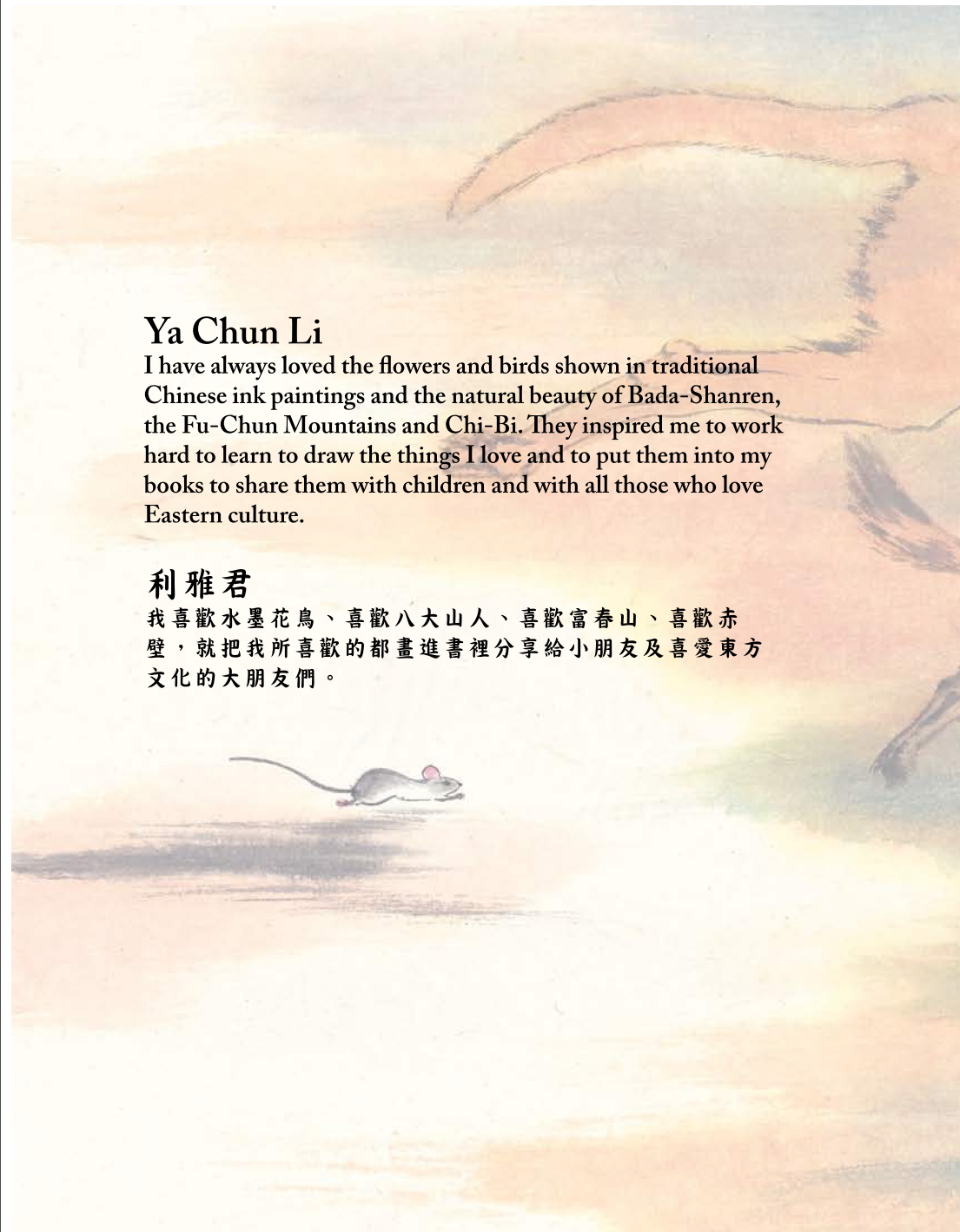
「可以啊，我會記得叫你起床的。」





Water Buffalo was the first animal to get on shore, but when he was about to reach the finish, Mouse suddenly made a jump right over his head and was very easily the first to touch the finishing line. So ever since then the First Year has been called the Year of the Mouse.

水牛第一個游上了岸，快到終點的時候，老鼠竟然輕輕鬆鬆地從水牛頭上往前一跳，就到終點得了第一名。所以第一年是鼠年！



Ya Chun Li

I have always loved the flowers and birds shown in traditional Chinese ink paintings and the natural beauty of Bada-Shanren, the Fu-Chun Mountains and Chi-Bi. They inspired me to work hard to learn to draw the things I love and to put them into my books to share them with children and with all those who love Eastern culture.

利雅君

我喜歡水墨花鳥、喜歡八大山人、喜歡富春山、喜歡赤壁，就把我所喜歡的都畫進書裡分享給小朋友及喜愛東方文化的大朋友們。