



Short-Eared Bunny 1: A Rabbit with Short Ears

短耳兔 1：我是短耳兔

Author: Julia Liu **Illustrator:** Leo Tang **Publisher:** Commonwealth Education Media and Publishing

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BFT2.0 Translator: Brenda Lin

The short-eared bunny, Dong Dong, has small, round, chubby ears that resemble two little mushrooms. While his mom reassures him that his ears are cute and special, Dong Dong longs for long, white ears like the other rabbits. Determined to grow "long" ears, he embarks on a series of plans to make his wish come true. But will Dong Dong succeed in achieving his dream of having long, white ears?

The *Short-Eared Bunny* picture book series presents gentle, heartfelt stories that explore themes like self-identity, helping others, managing anxiety, and developing empathy. Over the past 20 years, it has offered countless young readers strength and courage in the face of challenges, providing comfort and naturally guiding them to grow into kind and principled individuals.



Author **Julia Liu**

Julia Liu, a graduate of Tamkang University's Department of Educational Technology, is an editor with a deep passion for reading and storytelling. She has held editorial roles at Han Sheng Publishing, Yuan Liu Publishing, and Green Publishing. Currently, she dedicates her time to creating and developing charming animal characters. Her published works include picture books such as *So Hungry, So Hungry, So Hungry*, *Hippo Hippo Big Mouth*, the *Short-Eared Bunny* series, *Riding a Brontosaurus to School*, and the *Fox Says* series. Her works have won major awards and have been licensed in several countries, including China, Japan, South Korea, the UK, and France.



Illustrator **Leo Tang**

Leo Tang, or Tang Shou-Nan, enjoys creativity and finds joy in reliving childhood through picture books. Since 2003, he has published works, among them *Short-Eared Bunny*, *Puppy Pupu Moves to a New Home*, and illustrated novels such as *The Little Deputy of Sun Dynasty*. His works are loved by both children and adults and have been translated into multiple languages. He has received numerous accolades, including the Golden Butterfly Award and selection for the Catalonia Illustration Biennial. Tang has exhibited widely, and his works are part of many private and public collections.

Children's Books: *Short-Eared Bunny* Turns 18! An Interview with Author Julia Liu and Illustrator Leo Tang

by Lan Yiqin
(originally published on Openbook)

Short-Eared Bunny turns 18 this year! Since its debut in 2006, it has been a companion to many children throughout their growth journeys. This article features interviews with author Julia Liu and illustrator Leo Tang, shedding light on their collaboration, creative process, and the enchanting world of Dong Dong.

Years of Unspoken Understanding

Liu and Tang, long-time friends and former neighbors, have built a strong collaborative relationship grounded in trust and mutual understanding. Liu explains that while she contributes during the early stages of a project, she steps back to allow Tang the freedom

to unleash his creativity. Tang, in turn, approaches each illustration with meticulous care, often exploring dozens of potential scenes before selecting the one that best captures the story. Throughout the process, Liu provides the space he needs to interpret the narrative in his own way.

When writing, Liu often visualizes scenes in her mind but appreciates that the illustrator will bring his unique perspective to the story. For example, she initially imagined Dong Dong's ears as short and strawberry-like. However, Tang suggested a slight change to avoid them appearing too "mouse-like," a tweak that worked perfectly and delighted Liu with the final result.

Realizing the Power of Picture Books

On the 10th anniversary of *Short-Eared Bunny*, Tang shared the story of a young reader with a condition that caused smaller ears. After reading the book, the child gained the courage to embrace his unique appearance. Although Tang hadn't initially intended to address themes of body image or physical differences, stories like this highlight the unexpected and meaningful impact of the book.

Tang also shared that he did not initially anticipate the book's emotional power. However, after interacting with readers, Tang realized how important it is to convey positive messages to children during their learning and personal development stages.

Emotional Growth Through Stories

Throughout the *Short-Eared Bunny* series, Dong Dong and his friends face various challenges that help them learn and grow. Liu places great emphasis on crafting a narrative that includes both highs and lows, aiming to portray a realistic journey of personal development. Her characters experience not only

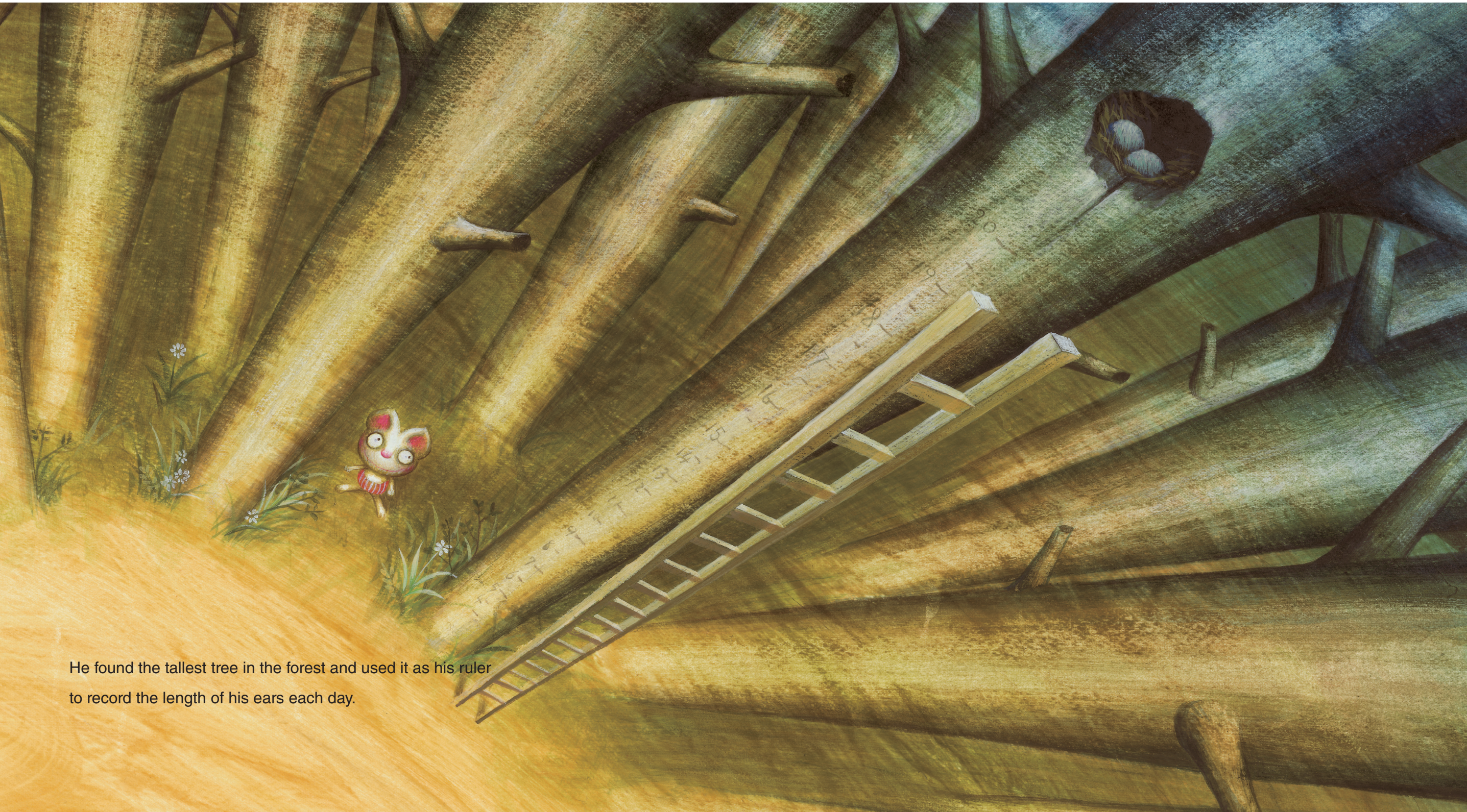
victories but also setbacks, reflecting the complexity of growth. While some parents may view certain events in the stories as "negative," Liu argues that struggles are a natural and essential part of learning.

Tang, on the other hand, describes himself as an "old-school" creator who approaches each project with precision and care. Viewing his illustrations as a sequence of continuous frames akin to a film, he focuses on ensuring the scenes flow seamlessly. Tang carefully considers elements like composition, perspective, and color, using dramatic contrasts and shifts in tone to evoke emotion and create moments of surprise for the reader.

Liu confirms that the *Short-Eared Bunny* series will continue, possibly in new formats. Readers can look forward to more stories from Dong Dong and his friends!

This essay has been edited for the purposes of this booklet.

Lan Yiqin loves reading, and adores children. Lan aspires to be an adult who retains a childlike heart and a sense of fun, she served as editor of Picture Book Planet 212-7.



He found the tallest tree in the forest and used it as his ruler
to record the length of his ears each day.



Sunday
5 centimeters



Monday
5 centimeters



Tuesday
5 centimeters



Wednesday
5 centimeters



Thursday
5 centimeters



Friday
5 centimeters



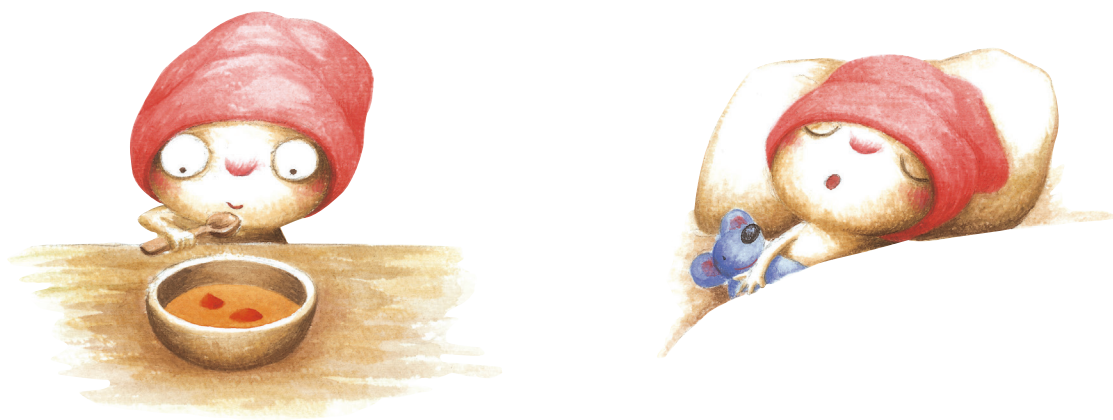
Saturday
5 centimeters



Several weeks passed.
No matter how he
checked, his ears still
measured only five
centimeters.
Dong Dong wondered,
was there something
wrong with the ruler?



Now, Dong Dong became upset.
Every day, he wore a thick knit cap to cover up his ears.
Even when the weather was hot, he refused to take it off.



One day, a big gust of wind blew Dong Dong's cap
into the air and it flew up and away.
The little animals in the field pointed at his ears and laughed.
"What short ears you have!"
Dong Dong covered up his ears and ran away like the wind.