

黑武林鵟

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The Black Samurai, Black Eagle

A Full English translation is available.

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Meet the Black Eagle, Taiwan's largest raptor by wingspan. Living high in the mist-shrouded mountain canopy, this elusive hunter comes to life in an exquisitely illustrated book. A mated pair defends their territory, raises their young, and fights for hunting grounds. From the moment a hatchling is born, it faces one peril after another, learning—step by step—how to fly, hunt, and survive.

After Taiwan's Wildlife Conservation Act was enacted in 1989, the Black Eagle was listed as endangered, and few believed it could recover. Yet through conservation efforts—and the eagle's own resilience—it was reclassified from “endangered” to “rare and valuable” in 2019. Today it is one of the very few species in Taiwan to edge back from the brink.

Against this powerful story runs another: a quiet farming village in the foothills, slowly aging. Two seemingly separate timelines converge into a moving encounter between humans and raptors—and the young eagle grows into a true “Black Samurai” of the forest skies.



Author **Su Ching Chang** (Kiki Chang)

Su Ching Chang (Kiki Chang) holds a Ph.D. from the Graduate Institute of Children's Literature at National Taitung University and the Editor-in-Chief of Sacca Publishing Company. She loves traveling, photography, and storytelling. Every two or three days, she makes a point of taking a walk—breathing in the scent of the wind and nurturing an endless curiosity about the world.



Illustrator **Jian Xin Zhou**

Jian Xin Zhou is a visual creator who earned his Ph.D. from the Graduate Institute of Children's Literature at National Taitung University and a master's degree from the Graduate Institute of Fine Arts at Taipei National University of the Arts. A full-time illustrator and author, he delights in themes of escape and hiding and enjoys crafting a distinct visual style for each picture book he creates.

Samurai of the Sky: From the Brink of Extinction to Life Shared with a Village

by Wen-Horn Lin

A great eagle that dwells in mist-shrouded mountains, once standing on the brink of extinction. A foothill farming village whose population has steadily declined and aged. Two seemingly unrelated timelines unexpectedly converge, weaving a beautiful story of encounter between humans and raptors.

The Black Eagle is Taiwan's largest resident bird of prey by wingspan. It originally inhabited undisturbed primary forests in deep mountains and was a rare sight. When Taiwan first enacted the Wildlife Conservation Act in 1989, the species was listed as endangered; few were optimistic about its future. Yet, with the growing public awareness of conservation and the eagle's own resilience, it gradually expanded its range from the high mountains into the foothills. Over the past decade, its population has finally shown a slight increase. In 2019, when experts revised the national list of protected wildlife, the Black Eagle was downgraded from "endangered" to "rare and valuable," becoming one of the very

few species in Taiwan to have successfully escaped the brink of extinction.

Huanan Village in Gukeng Township, Yunlin County, is a traditional *satoyama* community, a border area between mountain foothills and arable flat land. Its scattered residents have farmed the land for generations, producing citrus fruits, longan, and other crops. Yet its already small population has continued to shrink and migrate outward; today fewer than 120 people remain, making it one of the least populated villages in Taiwan.

As the community ages, it has faced many challenges. Huanan Elementary School, the village's most important landmark and a repository of shared memories, was repeatedly proposed for closure or consolidation. This threatened to erase a vital part of local history. Fortunately, a group of devoted teachers, villagers, and newcomers from outside Yunlin who fell in love with this land joined forces to revitalize the community in diverse ways. Through their collective efforts, Huanan Experimental

Elementary School was not only saved but transformed into a prize-winning school that attracts students from afar. The village itself was reenergized through initiatives such as eco-friendly farming in shared fields, hands-on environmental education for children, farm-to-table cuisine made from local ingredients, and seasonal festivals that weave together ecology and culture.

One day, a large Black Eagle flew low over the campus of Huanan Experimental Elementary School, circling in the air. Neither teachers nor students had ever seen such a magnificent bird, and the grounds filled with gasps of amazement. This marked the first encounter between the community and the Black Eagle. Thereafter, the eagle began to visit Huanan frequently, becoming the focus of eager attention and warm welcome from both villagers and schoolchildren, and eventually a new symbol of the *satoyama* landscape.

As a raptor researcher who has observed the Black Eagle for more than thirty years, I was fortunate to hear this true story from Ms. Ya-mei Lai of the Huanan Community Development Association, who has long been devoted to local revitalization. A raptor that had escaped the brink of extinction came to a once-declining village and uplifted the spirits of its people and children. How wonderful it would be, I thought, if this beautiful encounter could be recorded in some form and shared widely.

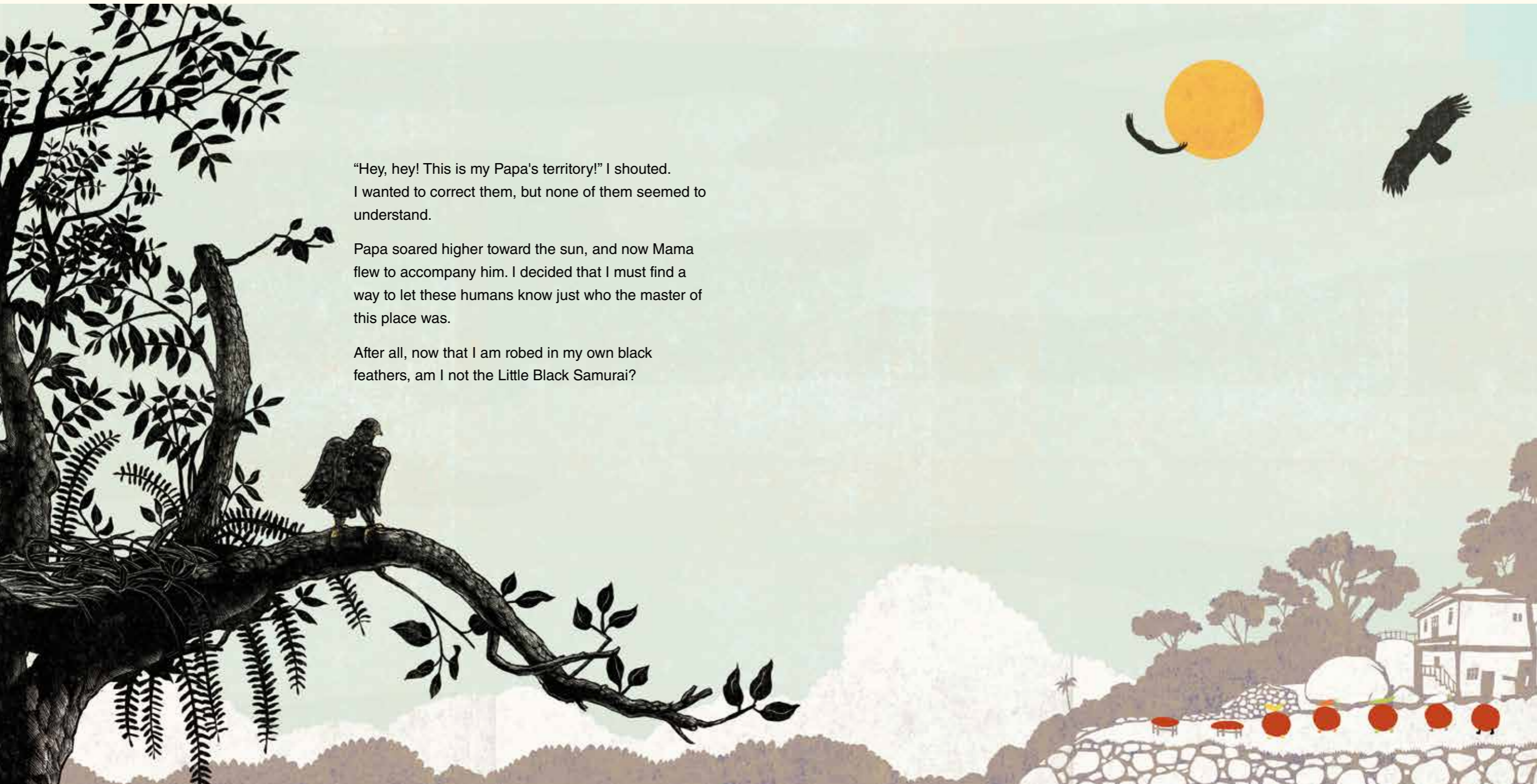
To my delight, that dream came true. The Huanan Community

Development Association used hard-won funds to publish the picture book *The Black Samurai, Black Eagle*. In vivid and lively prose, children's author Su Ching Chang (Kiki Chang) narrates the struggles of a young eagle before and after leaving the nest, drawing readers into its precarious world. Renowned artist Jian Xin Zhou employs the meticulous, demanding technique of printmaking. He carves more than forty exquisitely detailed plates, producing images so lifelike and dynamic that they leave one in awe.

This is Taiwan's first picture book to feature the Black Eagle as its protagonist. It portrays the young eagle's journey of transformation into the "Black Samurai" and subtly links its fate with the people and land of the Huanan community. This story offers a fresh testament to the old saying that heaven never seals off all exits. I hope that, through this book, the fighting spirit of the Black Samurai and of the Huanan community will spread far and wide, bringing inspiration for the revitalization of many more *satoyama* villages across Taiwan.

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

Wen-Horn Lin was born in 1962 in Bangka (Wanhua), Taipei City. From an early age, he developed a deep love for nature and joined the Taipei Birdwatching Society in 1979, where he learned the knowledge and skills of bird observation and later served for many years as a volunteer interpreter.



“Hey, hey! This is my Papa’s territory!” I shouted.
I wanted to correct them, but none of them seemed to understand.

Papa soared higher toward the sun, and now Mama flew to accompany him. I decided that I must find a way to let these humans know just who the master of this place was.

After all, now that I am robed in my own black feathers, am I not the Little Black Samurai?



I hopped out of my nest, continuing with a few small hops along the branch.

A gust of wind nearly swept me off my feet. With all my strength, I flapped my wings and took off!



Oh—Ow!



Higher! A little higher, don't fall down!



Arrgh! My eagle head seems to have become an orange head!

I shook off my orange, let out two piercing
“Yeioo—yeioo” cries, flapped my wings, and
tried to advance to my right.



Aggghh! What is my right talon tangled up in?
Rah! It's the snare of a creeper vine!

I forcefully shook my right foot, reaching down
with my beak to grip the vine. It was a great
struggle to get free.



Flapping, hopping, and now a leap
into the air, I beat my wings, harder,
harder, and now I'm aloft!



How am I wearing a little yellow dress?

