

One of China's best sci-fi authors is getting an English-language collection

In recent years, Chinese science fiction has grown in popularity among English-speaking audiences, urged on by blockbuster books like Cixin Liu's *The Three-Body Problem*. Liu isn't the only such writer whose works are available in English – this year will see several new translations from Chinese science fiction authors hitting bookstores. One of the best science fiction authors working in China now is joining them – Xia Jia (pen name of Wang Yao), who is getting a translated collection of her short fiction by way of a Kickstarter from *Clarkesworld Magazine*.

Clarkesworld has been steadily translating and publishing short fiction from the country over the last couple of years, as part of a partnership with StoryCom, a Chinese startup that sells stories overseas to publications. *Clarkesworld* began its translation project back in 2014 with a Kickstarter, intending to bring the works of authors such as Chen Quifan, Cixin Liu, and Jia to western audiences. (Editor Neil Clarke recently announced that the site received a grant to bring in science fiction from Korea as well) Now, Clarke is starting a book imprint dedicated to translated fiction, *Clarkesworld Books*, first with a collection of Jia's stories, *A Hundred Ghosts Parade Tonight and Other Stories*.

A preliminary cover for the collection

Art: *bangqiaoyan*

Jia is a notable author writing now. She's a prolific author and scholar in China, and translations of her work has appeared in publications such as *Clarkesworld*, *Nature*, and

anthologies such as Theodore Huters and Mingwei Song's *The Reincarnated Giant*, and Ken Liu's *Invisible Planets*.

The Kickstarter for her collection is currently funding – it's reached \$10,819 of its \$18,500 goal as of the time of writing – and offers up several tiers for backers, including an eBook edition (\$10), a trade paperback edition (\$20), a hardcover editions (\$50-100), and packages of other science fiction anthologies published in China (\$135), which are expected to ship in November 2019.

The final product comes with an exciting lineup of stories, some of which have previously appeared in *Clarkesworld* through its translation partnerships, while others will be translated into English for the book. Clarke notes that the collection's title story is the second translation that his magazine ever published, and that "when I thought about who I wanted to see more stories by, the first person to come to mind was Xia Jia. Everyone might know who Cixin Liu is, but Xia Jia is someone they should also know about."

'different perspectives and ideas make the genre stronger'
Clarke tells *The Verge* that he doesn't have a definitive reason for why translations have become popular in recent years, but he attributes the rise in part to a greater appetite from fans for new and diverse works, the ease of submissions from foreign authors, as well as the efforts of specific champions, such as author and translator Ken Liu. He also says that translating fiction is a priority for the magazine. "It's our opinion that different perspectives and ideas make the genre stronger and that to get the best stories, you have to cast the widest possible net." This book and the new imprint, he says "came out of a discussion about how we could expand our translation efforts and open the door to the English language market a bit wider." The end result has been positive: people have "responded favorably," he says, and that they've encouraged him to publish more.

Short fiction, Clarke explains, is an ideal entry-point for readers to discover new authors, especially those from overseas, and “is a great way to introduce a wider variety of new voices” to the genre at large. Clarke says that they “plan to continuing building on our relationship with the Chinese SF community” in the future, but notes that he wants to break out beyond China, noting that the recent Korean partnership might yield a book for 2020. He says that they might also compile some “mini-anthologies” that consist of 3-5 stories “that focus on specific languages as a way of laying the necessary foundation to do bigger projects.”

‘China is a kind of possibility rather than a group of tags’
For her part, Jia notes that this forthcoming book is a wide showcase of her work. “Here, you may find the lines between science and magic, ghost and machine, east and west are intentionally broken and confused,” she told *The Verge*. “I feel it attractive and challenging.” She notes that the China’s increased visibility on the world stage has helped encourage more attention towards the country’s artistic and literary efforts, and notes that she hopes that readers take away the fact that “China is a kind of possibility rather than a group of tags,” saying that “ant to show such possibility by exploring how science fiction can be Chinese and how China can be science fictionalized, to encourage the readers to go cross the frontiers of their worlds to think about this possibility and imagine more, no matter where they are and which language they speak.”

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