

“The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white.
Neither need you do anything but be yourself.” – Lao Tzu



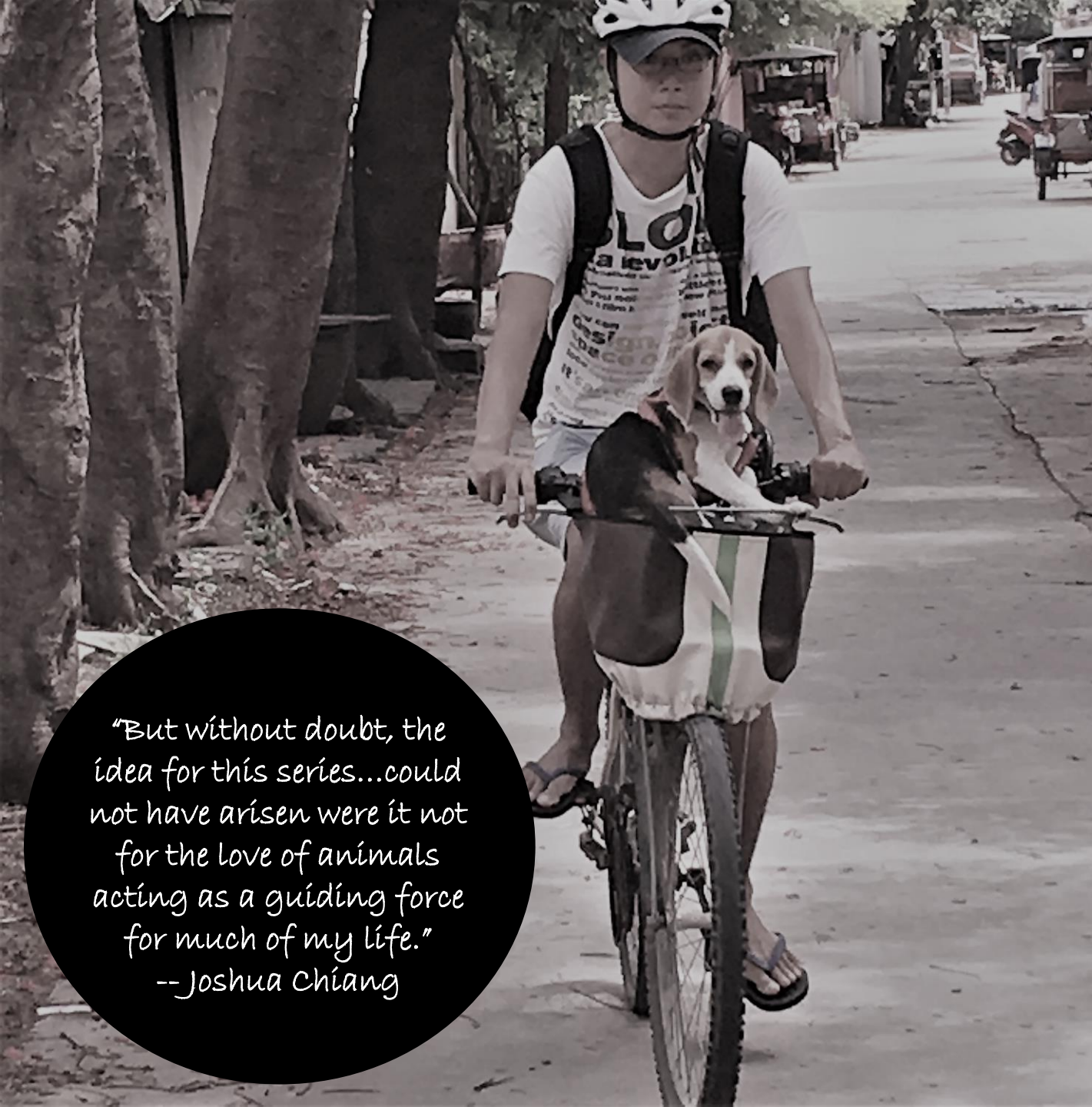
ANIMAL WISDOM CARDS

— Catalogue 2017 —

ANIMAL WISDOM CARDS

is a collection of greeting cards that pairs wisdom sayings with anthropomorphic animals. The sayings which inspired the illustrations in this collection come from a diverse range of spiritual (and the occasional non-spiritual) sources from different cultures and time periods, covering themes from love, to courage, to coping with grief, and are chosen for their ability to inspire, heal and challenge. The diversity is intentional; wisdom and Truth, are not confined to any creed or denomination and there is always beauty in every spiritual tradition.





"But without doubt, the idea for this series...could not have arisen were it not for the love of animals acting as a guiding force for much of my life."

--Joshua Chiang

About the artist

Joshua Chiang is a self-taught illustrator and writer from Singapore. He is the illustrator for several print books and ebooks such as *Monsters on The Wall*, *Javier's Day*, *The Chronicles of Oujo* series and *Hae: The Cat with a Crooked Tail*. In 2003, he co-wrote and co-directed the digital feature film *S11*, which has been screened at various international film festivals such as the 9th Shanghai International Film Festival. He has also written for animated series such as *Nanoboy*, *Master Raindrop* and *Zigby*.

In addition, Joshua Chiang is the founder and CEO of Cerealbox Studios, which has produced illustration and animation works for Canon, Singapore Repertory Theatre, Singapore's Ministry of Education, Operation ASTHA, People in Need, and many other organisations and individuals.



One of the hardest things for us to do as adults is to completely forget ourselves and surrender to the moment. For this piece, I wanted to express that feeling of uninhibited exuberance and genuine enjoyment, and at the same time convey that child-like innocence found in Lennon's drawings. The result is one of my favourite illustrations in this entire collection.

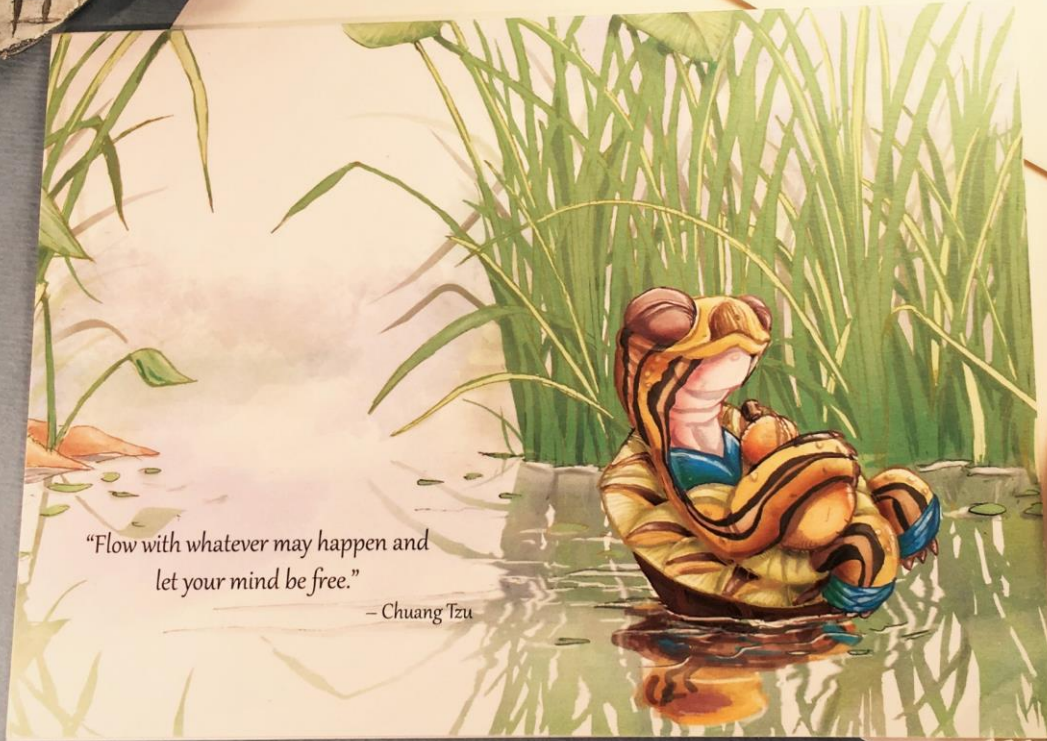


The desert had always held a special place in the Abrahamic faiths. It is an inhospitable region of death, loneliness and despair, but it is also a place of trial and transformation.... And like our brave Persian cat in this illustration, if we have to unfold our own myths, we will also have to leave the security of our comfort zone and undergo a journey through the metaphorical desert.

"Do not be satisfied with the stories that come before you. Unfold your own myth."
— Rumi



But even though the turtle is a symbol of longevity and wisdom, I didn't want mine to have the cliché "elderly wise man" look. Instead, his wisdom should be conveyed by virtue of him being completely carefree, almost childlike. Chuang Tzu also said, "Happiness is the absence of the striving for happiness" and I wanted this spirit of non-striving to shine through in the illustration.





"The path of the enlightened one leaves no track –
it is like the path of birds in the sky." – Buddha



For this illustration, I wanted to convey the sense of an enlightened being unladen by any emotional baggage, and so the elephant literally walks on air. The raccoon-dog pilgrim represents the spiritual journeyman who tries to faithfully follow the Buddha's path every step of the way but is left bewildered, for he fails to understand that every person's journey to Enlightenment is a different one.



Here I have the Elder koala depicting a Dreamtime story on a rock wall as his young charge watches, and learns. But it isn't merely a drawing lesson; when an aboriginal artist paints, it is a transcendental experience, a way to connect oneself to the Creation Ancestors. What is being transmitted is an entire thought-system and way of life that had remained largely unchanged for hundreds of thousands of years.



This illustration is both an attempt to articulate the joy and freedom that one feels when one finally takes a leap of faith into the unknown, as well as to pay tribute to the many contributions the Muslim world has made in the field of science, especially during Europe's Dark Ages. One of the early pioneers of flight was the Andalusian inventor Abbas Ibn Firnas who purportedly made the first successful glider flight in recorded history six hundred years before Leonardo Da Vinci was born.

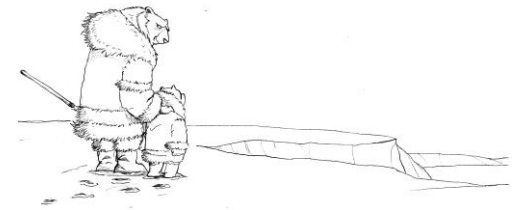
"I'd rather die deceived by dreams than give my heart to home and trade and never live."
— Fariduddin Attar





The loss of a loved one, especially if it's completely unexpected can be extremely devastating, and I felt compelled to offer a message of not just comfort, but hope. I settled on this beautiful Eskimo quote eventually. The choice of a father-and-son pair instead of a single individual looking up to the heavens is to illustrate that we can move from our collective loss by finding strength in those left behind. I also depicted the mother spirit not as a single star, but a face made up of many, many stars to suggest that not only do our dearly departed live on, but their presence is everywhere watching over us.

"Perhaps they are not stars in the sky, but rather openings where our loved ones smile down to let us know that they are happy." — Eskimo Proverb



I portrayed the wolf and sheep as children - a reminder that non-discriminatory love is the natural state that we are born into, but have largely forgotten as we grow into adulthood. Hate is something that is taught, but we can all unlearn that by remembering what we are created for.



The traditional Yoruba religion, which originated from West Africa, has a strong emphasis on collectivism as well as the interdependence between human beings and other living things, including Earth itself. Our modern society, with its celebration of individual achievement could do with a dose of the Yoruba ethos. We are often like the little ape preening on the shoulder of the adult gorilla; so caught up with the belief that we alone are responsible for our success, and forget that many people, past and present, have indirectly contributed it.



"If we stand tall it is because we stand on the
shoulders of many ancestors."
— Yoruba Proverb



The saying "poor as a church mouse" immediately comes to mind when I pondered over what animal best illustrates that saying. After all, Saint Francis of Assisi was known for living a life of poverty and simplicity. The five loaves of bread and two fishes the church mouse is giving away is meant to recount The Gospels' account of Jesus feeding the multitude.

"When there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance."
— Saint Francis of Assisi



Best known as the author of the beloved novella *The Little Prince*, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was also a pioneering aviator (his ordeal after this plane crash in the Sahara Desert formed the basic plot line of the novella). The albatrosses in the illustration symbolise not only Saint-Exupéry's love of flying, but also fidelity, as albatrosses bond for life.



"Love does not consist in gazing at each other,
but in looking outward together in the same direction."
— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



Norman Rockwell is a huge influence on this illustration. I wanted to avoid the cliché of the pious individual kneeling in prayer, and so I decided to create a humorous scene where everyone in the scene is doing different things (which Rockwell does so well), and yet convey the meaning of Eckhart's words.



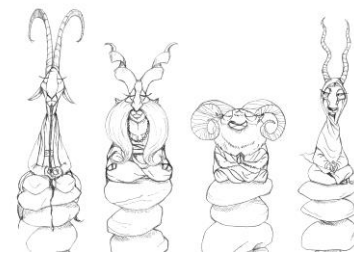
"If the only prayer you ever say in your entire
life is thank you, it will be enough."
— Meister Eckhart



Trackless Paths, The Book

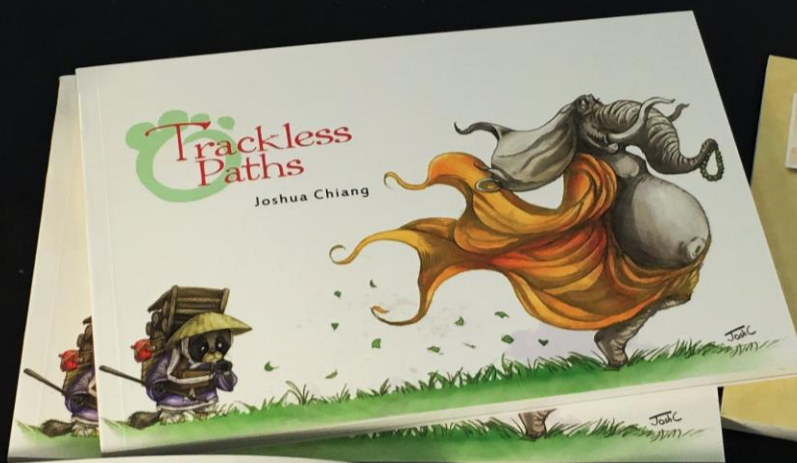
This coffee table book is a compilation of 36 illustrations by Joshua Chiang. It is a work of love, where the artist shares his artistic approach and inspiration for each of the sayings. All of these 36 illustrations have the potential to be adapted into greeting cards, thus extending Trackless Paths' current collection of Animal Wisdom Cards.

Other sayings from the book which is not featured in this catalogue: Jesus, Zen proverb, Baal Shem Tov, Carlos Castaneda, Chinese proverb, Roger Miller, Albert Camus, Anthony de Mello, Guru Nanak, Lao Tzu, Hafez of Shiraz, African proverb, Thich Nhat Hanh, Tibetan proverb, Roger Williams, Paulo Coelho, Burmese proverb and Ikkyu.



Product No: TPB0001

Product Name: Trackless Paths Book



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The founder of Taoism, Lao Tzu lived during a time when China comprised petty states which frequently warred with each other. The violence and upheavals gave rise to many philosophies including Confucianism, Legalism, Mohism and Taoism. The period ended when the state of Qin conquered all the other states and Qin Shihuang founded the Qin Dynasty. Among the visible legacies of the Qin Dynasty are the terracotta warriors which the design of our horse soldier is largely based on.

"He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty."

— Lao Tzu



LET'S TALK

We are looking for retail partners globally to bring this timeless collection to those seeking inspiration. Please contact us if you will like to hear more about our work.

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