

Application Analysis of Ku Shulan's Paper-Cutting Characteristics in Children's Picture Books

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Abstract: Gardner's theory of stages in children's art perception suggests that children favor artworks that are superficially more appealing. Simply put, children are drawn to artworks featuring vivid colors, anthropomorphic or exaggerated forms that spark curiosity and capture their affection. Ku Shulan's paper-cutting art aligns perfectly with these aesthetic preferences. However, some creators still encounter missteps in practical application. To address these issues, the author proposes corresponding optimization strategies, primarily analyzing aspects such as form, color, and composition.

1. Introduction

Folk paper-cutting art and children's art share commonalities in symbolic expression and imagery. Children's artworks are characterized by innocence, romance, novelty, and spontaneity—unadorned, vibrant, and bold in color. Their structures defy perspective and natural laws, brimming with the unique charm of childlike simplicity, purity, and natural beauty. Folk paper-cutting art embodies humanity's simple, natural, and naive artistic sensibilities. Its unconventional, non-naturalistic forms evoke a primal, innocent charm and a profound sense of harmony with nature, where the self and the world become one. Both share this essence of simplicity and authenticity.

In children's art creation, many techniques from folk paper-cutting works can serve as sources of inspiration for fostering imagination. Children's art can freely draw upon the colors, forms, and decorative elements of folk paper-cutting, allowing imagination to flourish—a mindset perfectly aligned with the characteristics of children's artistic expression. Folk paper-cutting, with its simple form and use of exaggeration, personification, metaphor, and symbolism, is an art form ideally suited for children to learn from. Among these, the paper-cutting art of Ku Shulan—honored by UNESCO as an "Outstanding Master of Chinese Folk Art"—displays childlike ingenuity and fairy-tale-like imagination, presenting a world of innocent wonder particularly well-suited for inclusion in children's picture books.

2. The Reason for Introducing Ku Shulan's Paper-Cutting Art into Children's Picture Books

2.1 Kusulan's paper cuttings share similarities with the "animism" theory in Piaget's theory

2.1.1 Piaget's "Animism"

Piaget's "animism" posits that children attribute life and consciousness to all natural objects, representing a cognitive experience of symbiotic coexistence and shared sensibility with the natural world.

2.1.2 The "Animism" in Ku Shulan's Paper Cuttings

Ku Shulan's paper-cutting world embodies a mature spirit of animism. Amidst material scarcity, she immerses her entire being in nature's rhythms and breath. Every blade of grass, every tree, flower, and bird possessed a spirit in her eyes. The "peculiarities" found in wind and rain, dawn and dusk, human emotions and worldly affairs did not create barriers but instead became channels for her dialogue with all things. Using scissors as her brush, she transformed the warmth of dawn, the rhythm of birdsong, and the laughter and sighs of humanity into vibrant patterns brimming with life.

Ku Shulan's folk songs and paper-cuttings embody the panentheistic consciousness of universal love, rooted in the animistic belief of "everything has a spirit" as proclaimed by primitive religions. Thus, "in Ku Shulan's paper-cuttings, the most spirited and authentic elements are her spontaneous fusions of flora and fauna. Her scissors, imbued with spirit, gather the essence of all things to create. She bestows a religious yet grounded compassion especially upon pigs and dogs—creatures forever companionable with humans. " [1]

Reflecting on Ku Shulan's life: as a child, she endured the agonizing pain of foot binding while wandering with her parents due to poverty. After marrying Sun Baoyin of Sunjiatai at 17, she endured a life of constant hunger and backbreaking labor, often subjected to her husband's brutal beatings[2]. Amidst a turbulent society where people struggled to survive, and amidst the rugged terrain of deep valleys where food and clothing were scarce, she labored year-round in the fields, dwelling in dilapidated cave dwellings, living a life of constant fear and hardship. Despite the hardship, she maintained an optimistic outlook. She found the surrounding flowers, trees, birds, and fish all endearingly familiar, the clouds and stars above her head gentle and benevolent. She even seemed to understand the joys and sorrows of her household animals—chickens, pigs, and dogs. Why was this? Because in that era and isolated environment, she spent year after year toiling in the fields, facing the earth and the sky, keeping company with plants, insects, and birds, and befriending the sun, moon, stars, and clouds. She developed a pure aesthetic connection with the natural world beyond her immediate surroundings. Thus, though she lived in an environment where food and clothing were scarce and domestic violence was a constant threat, her mind roamed freely in the beautiful world where all things possessed spirit. She keenly observed the "oddities" in both nature and social life. In this seemingly harsh and difficult living environment, she sensed the myriad "beauties" of nature and the various "oddities" of human society, which became an endless source of creative material for her scissors.

2.1.3 Mutual Resonance

Though operating in different fields and at different stages of life, both reveal that innate, empathetic perspective within the human spirit that resonates with all living things.

2.1.4 Feasibility of Applying Ku Shulan's Artistic Paper Cuttings to Children's Picture Books

In summary, applying Ku Shulan's paper-cutting art—imbued with animistic sensibilities—to children's picture books constitutes an aesthetic education practice grounded in profound cognitive synergy. Children aged 2 to 7 are in the "animistic" stage of Piaget's theory, naturally believing all things possess life and sentience. Ku Shulan's paper-cut world artfully portrays this spiritual cosmos: flowers and plants smile, birds whisper, brimming with dialogues and emotions between living beings. This artistic expression aligns perfectly with children's innate cognitive schemas of the world, transforming picture books from external aesthetic objects into visual reflections and extensions of children's inner worlds. This approach not only significantly reduces children's cognitive barriers, sparking resonance and imagination, but also achieves the dual purpose of enlightening and transmitting indigenous aesthetic genes through aesthetic pleasure, while creatively transforming folk art and nourishing children's souls.

2.2 Ku Shulan's Paper Cuttings has something in common with Piaget's "egocentric" theory

The "egocentric" cognitive trait proposed by Piaget in children aligns profoundly with the "self-centered" creative mindset evident in Ku Shulan's paper-cutting art, forming a deep resonance and dialogue at the core of imagination.

2.2.1 Piaget's Theory of "Egocentrism"

Piaget's concept of "egocentrism" describes how children understand the world based on their own experiences and emotions. This is a core characteristic of children's cognition during the preoperational stage.

2.2.2 Ku Shulan's Paper-Cutting: "Self-Centeredness"

Ku Shulan's "self-centeredness" manifests in an artistic universe entirely centered on personal life experiences, rural beliefs, and emotional needs. Her "creation from nothing" is expressed through scissors that reject objective representation, instead directly obeying the call of inner imagery. Memory, wishes, and legends are woven into a visually epic tapestry of vibrant colors and animism [3]. Her art embodies a highly conscious and mature "self-centeredness", where compositional structure, figurative arrangement, and narrative logic all submit to her inner emotional order and symbolic system.

She identifies herself as the "flower-cutting maiden" in her work. To her, this maiden embodies a deity who both crafts floral decorations and dispenses medicinal herbs to heal the sick. This self-centered artistic perspective reveals Ku Shulan's deep connection to local folk customs and traditions. In folk rituals and disaster-warding practices across Guanzhong and northern Weihe regions, a peculiar phenomenon emerges that validates Kushulan's self-expression. Divination by fortune sticks is commonplace in rural villages, where behind this superstition often appears the "divine impersonator." "The so-called "spirit impersonator" refers to an ordinary person appearing in the name of a deity. Such occurrences typically gather crowds during night gatherings, where the impersonator might speak with great conviction, recite incantations, and even claim to occupy a specific divine position. They distribute medicine and talismans to the faithful, with rumors circulating that chronic illnesses were cured after consuming the "spirit impersonator's" remedies[4]. This peculiar phenomenon of self-deification occurred in the life of Ku Shulan herself. Ku Shulan was indeed a participant and practitioner of folk shamanic activities. She styled herself as the "Flower-Cutting Lady," embodying the folk shamanic practice of "spirit impersonation." Over the past decade, she has been passionately expressing a perfect theme. Whether large or small, featuring

figures or flowers and birds, each piece is vibrantly colored, densely composed, and covered with countless dots of color like a starry sky, dazzling and brilliant. In the creative expression of color, form, and concept, "The Paper-Cutting Lady" has formed the unique artistic aesthetics of Ku Shulan's paper-cutting[5].

2.2.3 The Convergence of Both

The connection between the two lies in their shared revelation of a fundamental aspect of human creative thinking: a psychological capacity centered on strong subjectivity, enabling the active assimilation, reconstruction, and attribution of meaning to the external world. Piaget described its natural state in early individual development, while Ku Shulan demonstrated through her lifelong practice how this capacity can be elevated into profound cultural expression and aesthetic achievement. Understanding this connection not only provides a cognitive psychological perspective for interpreting folk art but also reveals that within children's seemingly "immature" ways of thinking lie precious seeds leading to great artistic creation.

2.2.4 Ku Shulan's artistic paper-cutting is feasible for application in children's picture books

Applying Ku Shulan's paper-cutting art, characterized by its "egocentric" aesthetic qualities, to children's picture books is entirely feasible both theoretically and practically. This feasibility is grounded in a robust cognitive psychology foundation. The creative logic in Ku Shulan's art—dominated by inner imagery and imbuing all things with emotion and personification—highly aligns with children's preoperational stage cognitive traits of "egocentrism" and animistic thinking. This congruence in inner psychological structures enables children to intuitively understand and emotionally resonate with such artistic imagery, significantly reducing cognitive barriers during the reception process.

Second, its feasibility manifests in clear aesthetic education value. Ku Shulan's works feature intense colors, rich compositions, and naive yet vibrant imagery. This visual form effectively stimulates children's perceptual interest and cultivates foundational aesthetic abilities such as color, shape, and rhythm perception. Simultaneously, the "creating something from nothing" spirit embedded in her art provides children with a highly exemplary paradigm for imagination and creation.

Finally, at the operational level, the inherent flatness, decorative quality, and narrative potential of paper-cutting art naturally align with the page layout and text-image relationship of picture books. Through appropriate adaptation and arrangement via modern design, it is entirely feasible to create high-quality picture books that preserve the essence of Ku Shulan's art while catering to children's reading habits.

Therefore, this initiative is far from a pie in the sky; it represents a viable path connecting ancient artistic wisdom with the hearts of contemporary children, grounded in both academic support and practical implementation.

3. Application Analysis of Ku Shulan's Paper-Cutting Characteristics in Children's Picture Books

3.1 Incorporating Paper-Cutting Stylization

Paper-cut style children's picture books refer to those that draw inspiration from traditional Chinese paper-cutting and its artistic characteristics. Incorporating paper-cutting techniques into children's picture books preserves the essence of paper-cutting while enriching the artistic form of picture books, making it an excellent method for artistic re-creation. However, the current

application of paper-cutting in children's picture books still faces many problems, such as inflexible application and rigid imitation. To achieve a more effective integration of paper-cutting and picture books, the author suggests addressing the following three aspects:

3.1.1 Emphasize the concise and exaggerated characteristics of paper-cutting imagery

Paper-cut designs are refined, featuring crisp lines and decorative charm. This artistic quality of abstraction and exaggeration shares similarities or common ground with children's simple, naive thinking patterns. Readability is a crucial measure of children's picture book quality. Since picture books target young readers, readability must be a primary criterion to align with children's cognitive development, thereby providing them with the most enjoyable and effective reading experience. Children possess varying cognitive abilities at different ages, including their capacity to recognize object forms. Overly intricate imagery can be difficult for them to grasp. Simple, dynamic forms better align with children's cognitive abilities and aesthetic preferences. Therefore, when applying paper-cutting art to children's picture books, simplicity should be prioritized, avoiding overly complex designs. Some creators have already successfully employed this approach in their work. For instance, Ian's 's paper-cut children's picture book "The Snow Sprite's Song" (Figure 1). He captures the essential characteristics of rabbits and birds through abstraction, discarding unnecessary details and ornamentation to retain only the most fundamental forms. This results in illustrations that are simple yet not simplistic, helping children grasp the outward features of subjects. This approach aligns perfectly with children's cognitive development, making it easier for them to understand.



Figure 1 Children's Picture Book: The Snow Sprite's Song. (Source: <https://image.baidu.com/>)

3.1.2 Emphasize the fun and anthropomorphic characteristics of paper-cutting images

Many artistic figures from Ku Shulan's paper-cut works can be adapted for children's picture books through artistic transformation. Psychology tells us that perception is selective. This characteristic manifests in picture book reading as children follow the visual elements within the book. The actions, expressions, and even decorative details of the characters in a picture book captivate children's hearts. They experience emotional fluctuations alongside the characters' journeys, sharing their joys and sorrows to create emotional resonance. The author believes that many artistic figures from Ku Shulan's paper-cuttings can be adapted for children's picture books through artistic transformation. These figures are exaggerated yet simple, robust and powerful, often filling the entire frame. Despite their large heads and small bodies, they maintain balanced

proportions, creating a strong comedic effect. Incorporating these elements into picture books not only heightens children's reading interest but also presents the traditional Chinese art form of paper-cutting in a fresh medium—children's picture books. This breathes new life into these "old images," allowing them to radiate their inherent cultural depth and artistic charm.

(1) Characters aspect:

Adapt the strikingly vibrant character heads from Ku Shulan's paper-cutting art through artistic transformation for picture books. By cleverly using the shapes of figures from paper-cutting, the characters in the picture book become even more adorable. Features include large, round heads with rosy cheeks, plump figures, and endearing childlike charm. Sword-like eyebrows, centrally positioned eyes, a peach-shaped nose, and a crescent-shaped mouth adorn a full, rosy-cheeked round face. This is complemented by jagged bangs and hair ornaments composed of rows of layered dots and small flowers (Figure 2). This is the bright-eyed, full-frontal face in Ku Shulan's work, and also the woman cutting fabric for shoes in "the Little Tiger Head Shoes" picture book (Figure 3).



Figure 2 The Little Tiger-Head Shoes picture book. (Source: <https://image.baidu.com/>)



Figure 3 Comparison of Character in Little Tiger-Head Shoes Picture Book and Paper-Cutting Woman. Note: Illustration by Gao Ting (2025)

(2) Animals aspect

Paper-cut style children's picture books refer to those that draw inspiration from the characteristics of Chinese paper-cutting art. Paper-cut forms express rich qualities such as unique

shapes, vivid expressions, natural simplicity, and childlike innocence.

According to Piaget's cognitive development theory, children aged 2-7 are in the preoperational stage, characterized by animism—the belief that all things possess life and spirit. Huang Jie considered this cognitive trait in his work, anthropomorphizing horses, cats, and dogs as living, emotional entities.



Figure 4 Animal designs in the Little Tiger Head Shoes picture book. (Source: Bao Dongni, 2018, "Little Tiger Head Shoes", Tomorrow Publishing House, pp. 3-4)

The image of a person riding a horse in "the Little Tiger-Head Shoes" picture book borrows from Ku Shulan's paper-cut art (Figure 4). The horse, depicted with a robust body and thick limbs, is rendered in vivid colors and adorned with varied patterns, creating a childlike and adorable image that leaps off the page. This design draws inspiration from the horse's form in Ku Shulan's Jiangwa Lamas Meixiangqi work (Figure 5).



Figure 5 A Comparison of Characters in "Little Tiger-Head Shoes" and "Jiangwa Pulling the Horse and Meixiang Riding". Note: Illustration by Gao Ting (2025)

The tiger shoes in "the Little Tiger-Head Shoes" picture book borrow the cat imagery from Ku Shulan's paper-cut art. The tiger shoes carry a child soaring into the clouds, personifying the tiger shoes as tangible objects imbued with life and emotion (Figure 6).



Figure 6 Comparison between the tiger-head shoes in the Little Tiger-Head Shoes picture book and the tiger design in Ku Shulan's paper-cut artwork. Note: Illustration by Gao Ting (2025)

3.2 Drawing Inspiration from Ku Shulan's Paper-Cutting Colors

Considering children's color preferences, multi-color paper-cutting is employed. Previous research indicates that most children's picture books incorporating traditional Chinese art elements currently draw from monochrome paper-cutting. However, prior research and teaching practice reveal that preschool-aged children prefer picture books with vibrant, rich colors. Compared to monochromatic or colorless books, these vividly colored illustrations better stimulate children's visual systems, enhance their reception of visual information, and elevate their aesthetic awareness and color comprehension. Folk art, with its rich palette, possesses strong visual impact and emotional resonance, capable of evoking viewers' feelings. Therefore, creators should employ colors based on children's preferences. Only by genuinely adopting a child's perspective and considering their color preferences at this developmental stage can picture books truly align with children's aesthetic inclinations. Some creators have already undertaken valuable explorations in this area.

3.2.1 Drawing inspiration from the Five Elements color theory of traditional Chinese folk art

For instance, the children's picture book Little Tiger-Head Shoes (Figure 7) employs multi-color paper-cutting techniques, drawing inspiration from Ku Shulan's paper-cutting style to create a richly festive visual atmosphere. The creator harmoniously pairs colors to suit the narrative needs of each scene. Throughout the book, white backgrounds create transparent, refreshing harmony, while black backgrounds paired with vibrant yellows, reds, and greens bring lively detail. The use of hue contrast, complementary contrast, warm-cool contrast, and continuous contrast achieves a strong visual impact without appearing tacky or rigid, ensuring harmonious color unity. The colors in the picture book are consistent with the color schemes of Kushulan. Typically employing white as the base to provide visual stability, the "Five Elements colors" serve as the primary hues, with complementary colors added as needed to harmonize the composition, resulting in an overall balanced aesthetic.

The children's picture book "Little Tiger-Head Shoes" employs the coloring characteristics of folk paper-cutting art. Its forms are rustic and simple, its style bold and unrefined, imbued with a rich earthy quality and distinct regional characteristics. This allows young readers to appreciate the charm of traditional culture while enjoying the paper-cut artwork.



Figure 7 Folk-inspired colors in the children's picture book Little Tiger-Head Shoes. (Source: Bao Dongni, 2018, "Little Tiger Head Shoes", Tomorrow Publishing House, pp. 10-15)

3.2.2 Drawing Inspiration from Traditional Chinese Red Color Schemes

Children have a strong preference for warm colors with high purity and saturation, such as red, orange, and yellow, exhibiting exceptional sensitivity and perceptiveness toward color. Additionally, bright hues are more easily recognized and distinguished. In traditional Chinese art, many colors carry unique connotations—for instance, red symbolizes celebration, while green represents vitality. Due to the constraints of technique and materials, paper-cutting colors must be "few but exquisite," predominantly using high-purity hues with strong contrasts. Simultaneously emphasizing subjective expression, these colors possess distinct imagery, serving as a direct manifestation of the paper-cut artist's emotional palette (Bie, 2010). The color characteristics of paper cutting perfectly match children's ability to recognize and understand colors. In recent years, it has been gradually used in children's picture books. For example, the paper-cut picture book "Little Tiger Head Shoes" (Figure 8) uses the traditional Chinese red color scheme, interspersed with black, green, purple and other colors to evenly divide the picture. The overall picture is dignified and elegant without losing its stability. Such a color system can attract children's attention at first glance and also prevent them from becoming aesthetically fatigued.



Figure 8 Children's Picture Book "Little Tiger Head Shoes". (Source: <https://image.baidu.com/>)

3.2.3 Incorporating Color Contrast and Complementary Colors

The vibrant, vivid colors characteristic of paper-cutting art are applied to children's picture books. Previous research has noted that while children are the primary readers of picture books, the creators are adults. Therefore, creators must approach their work from a child's perspective, understanding children's psychology and aligning with their natural inclinations. Children tend to

favor bright colors, particularly the vivid hues at the warm end of the spectrum. Ku Shulan's paper-cutting art is characterized by its vivid colors and expressive form. The colors are bright and vivid, with strong contrasts. Through the juxtaposition of highly tense and stimulating colors, it achieves a loud and clear effect. As Xu Lian stated, the fundamental significance of folk art colors lies in their role as stimuli and counterparts for emotions and feelings . Therefore, applying this approach to children's picture books aligns with children's visual patterns and color preferences while also conveying traditional Chinese artistic color expression through the novel medium of picture books. Currently, few children's picture books draw inspiration from Ku Shulan's color palette, but some creators have begun exploring this direction. For instance, Cai Gao's picture books draw upon both the external elements and core essence of Chinese folk art, embodying a unique Chinese aesthetic sensibility.

"Bao'er "serves as a highly successful example (Figure 9). The book fully employs color coordination techniques from paper-cutting, utilizing red-green and red-black contrasts. For instance, Bao'er's top features expansive red accented with green and blue dots, while her pants display red-and-green stripes. The contrast between Bao'er in her red attire and the black-clad fox servant against the dark surroundings is striking. The book masterfully combines these highly dynamic, impactful, and stimulating colors to achieve a dazzling, eye-catching visual effect.



Figure 9 Children's Picture Book "Bao'er". (Source: <https://image.baidu.com/>)

Imagine if Ku Shulan's paper-cut art, known as "Paper-Cut Lady, " were transformed into a continuous narrative—it would undoubtedly make an exceptional paper-cut picture book!

3.3 Drawing Inspiration from Ku Shu-lan's Paper-Cutting Compositions

Based on previous research, the application of traditional Chinese art elements in children's picture books remains limited in diversity. The following compositional styles, such as the scattered-point composition and screen-style composition found in Chinese painting, offer valuable forms to enrich picture book layouts.

3.3.1 Scattered-Point Composition

Piaget's stages of cognitive development theory indicates that children aged 2-7 are in the "preoperational stage, " where their spatial concepts differ significantly from adults'. Therefore, children's picture books must account for the spatial cognitive characteristics of this age group. On

one hand, this promotes children's spatial cognitive development; on the other, it prevents overly complex spatial arrangements from diminishing children's interest. Children's visual perception and cognitive development are still immature, making it difficult for them to discern spatial relationships between objects in an image. Concepts like "near large, far small" and "near solid, far blurred" in focal perspective are hard for them to grasp. The scattered-point composition partially addresses this issue.

The scattered-point composition technique is a distinctive approach in Chinese painting, featuring multiple viewpoints and vanishing points. It integrates various objects observed and remembered by the artist across different times and locations, reflecting the continuous shifting of the viewpoint. Children are naturally lively and active, preferring to observe things with a wandering gaze and shifting viewpoint. The "scattered-point" composition method, which changes perspective with movement, aligns well with the observational style children favor. Moreover, the scattered-point perspective technique carries profound Chinese artistic connotations and charm. Incorporating this method into children's picture books allows young readers to engage with traditional Chinese art. This approach not only represents a deep exploration and adaptation of traditional Chinese artistic elements but also actively promotes the transformation of children's picture book creation toward a more distinctly Chinese direction.

For instance, "Little Tiger-Head Shoes" unifies both the interior and exterior of a temple within a single frame (Figure 10). By shifting the viewpoint, the artist creates a flat, distant visual effect where the size and proportions of objects remain consistent regardless of the viewer's position. This non-fixed perspective composition transcends the limitations of a static field of view. Characters, buildings, mountains, trees, and rocks are depicted from varied angles, arranged according to the artist's subjective perception to construct the temporal and spatial realm envisioned by the creator.



Figure 10 Scattered-point composition in the picture book *Tiny Tiger-Head Shoes*. (Source: Bao Dongni, 2018, "Little Tiger Head Shoes", Tomorrow Publishing House, pp. 5-6)

3.3.2 Symmetrical Composition

Creators design text, colors, patterns, and visual elements symmetrically on both sides of a central axis within picture book illustrations, adhering to the principle of "parallel arrangement with equal measure." This embodies the traditional Chinese aesthetic of "harmonious balance", evoking a sense of neatness, stability, and tranquility, rich in symmetry and rhythm. The right panel of the picture book "Little Tiger-Head Shoes" (Figure 11) perfectly inherits the symmetrical characteristics of paper-cutting. The flat composition, disregarding spatial perspective, effectively highlights the image of the "mouse." This allows children to more easily grasp the story's theme and content during reading. Simultaneously, the use of symmetrical paper-cutting and a complete compositional form imbues the entire image with a sense of rhythm and melody.



Figure 11 Symmetrical Composition in the Picture Book "Little Tiger-Head Shoes". (Source: Bao Dongni, 2018, "Little Tiger Head Shoes", Tomorrow Publishing House, pp. 7-8)

3.3.3 Segmented Composition

The creator places the main elements at the center of the picture book page, adorned by patterns, flowers, plants, birds, beasts, insects, and fish around the edges. This arrangement facilitates the balanced interplay of solid and void elements within the decorative patterns, achieving appropriate density and creating a distinct sense of layering and progression.

Ku Shulan often depicts multiple scenes within a single work, frequently employing decorative borders or strips like door curtain patterns, coin chain motifs, and petal designs to divide the composition into distinct panels. These patterns create a grid-like structure where each panel contains its own graphic element, giving the impression of multiple works combined. The picture book "Little Tiger-Head Shoes" borrows Ku Shulan's segmented composition, dividing the top third of the page into three sections with colorful borders (Figure 12). It depicts a pond scene outside the window featuring lotus flowers and small fish, along with flowers arranged on the windowsill. The remaining two-thirds of the space is dedicated to portraying a child learning to wear tiger-head shoes. This segmented composition captures both the interior and exterior scenes, enhancing the richness and playfulness of the entire illustration.

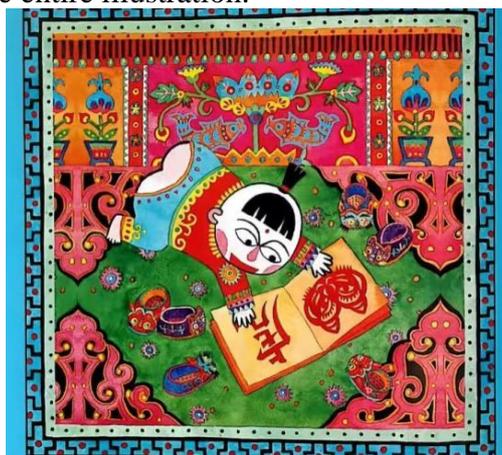


Figure 12 Divided Composition in the Picture Book Little Tiger-Head Shoes. (Source: Bao Dongni, 2018, "Little Tiger Head Shoes", Tomorrow Publishing House, pp. 6)

4. Conclusions

As a representative of China's intangible cultural heritage, Ku Shulan's folk paper-cutting art

boasts a long history and unique artistic value. Introducing folk paper-cutting into children's picture books not only aids in preserving intangible cultural heritage but also offers children a fresh way to learn and appreciate art. Folk paper-cutting art allows picture books to incorporate richly diverse paper-cutting elements, showcasing the exquisite techniques and unique charm of this craft. This enables children to appreciate traditional culture while reading. Displaying the allure of paper-cutting art in picture books also promotes cross-cultural exchange and understanding. This holds significant importance for protecting and passing down China's intangible cultural heritage and for promoting the nation's outstanding traditional culture.

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