

MANGA Award Committee Chairperson Machiko Satonaka presents the Gold Award to Xiao Bai for *Si loin et si proche...*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

The 4th International MANGA Award

Japanese manga such as *Doraemon*, *Dragon Ball* and *Naruto* fascinate people across the world, inspiring many to become manga artists themselves. As part of the active use of pop culture in public diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan established the International MANGA Award in 2007 to honor non-Japanese manga artists who have helped spread the culture of manga overseas.

The 4th International MANGA Award was held earlier this year. It received 189 submissions from thirty-nine countries and regions. By country, the most applications came from Thailand and Brazil, with twenty-eight apiece; followed by Belgium and Spain, fourteen apiece; and eleven from Kazakhstan. From these entries, judges selected the winner of the Gold Award for the best work, the three winners of the Silver Award, and other award winners as well. The winner of the top prize was the French-language *Si loin et si proche...* (2010) published in Belgium by

artist Xiao Bai (China). It is a story about a university student living in her dormitory in Beijing whose future son one day suddenly appears before her.

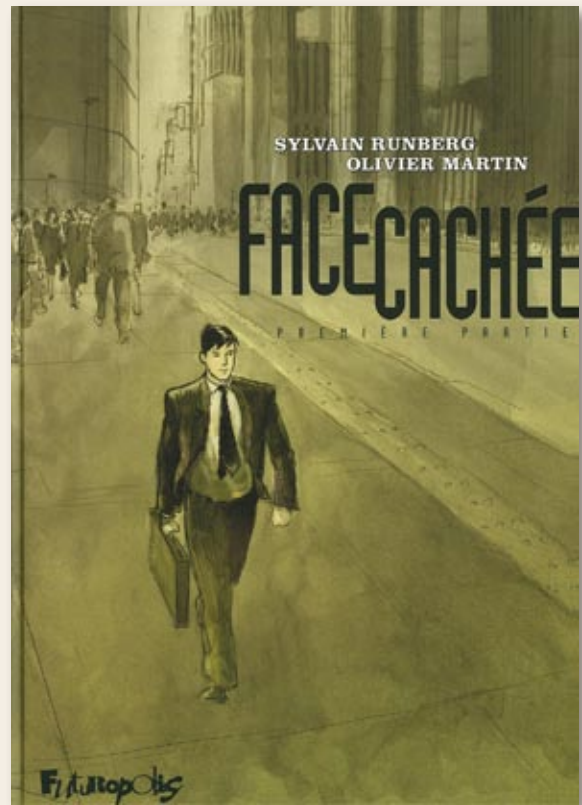
The three Silver Awards were picked up by the French pairing of Olivier Martin (artist) (France) and Sylvan Runberg (author) for *Face cachée*; artist Enrique Fernández (Spain) for *La Isla sin Sonrisa*; and artist VERACHAI DUANGPLA (Thailand) for "THE STORY BEGINS WITH..." The 4th International MANGA Award ceremony and reception were held on February 23 in Tokyo. Then Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara, the executive committee chairman, and well-known manga artist Machiko Satonaka, award committee chairperson, presented certificates and trophies to the award winners.

"Today has been an unforgettable day," Xiao Bai said at the award ceremony. "Creating manga is like a journey for me. Winning this award is the most wonderful scenery along this arduous trip."



Si loin et si proche...

by Xiao Bai, published by KANA (DARGAUD-LOMBARD s.a.), Belgium.



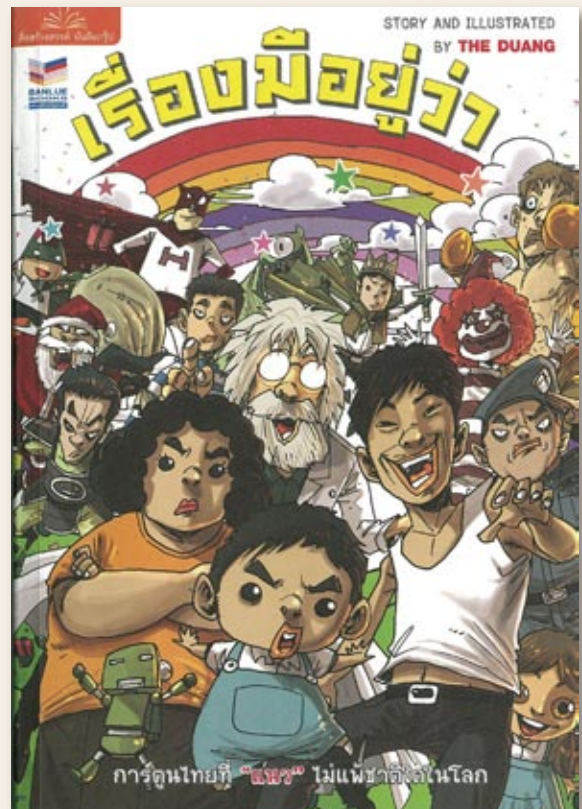
Face Cachée

by Olivier Martin and Sylvain Runberg, published by Futuropolis, France. The home life and romances of Japanese businesspersons.



La Isla sin Sonrisa

by Enrique Fernández, published by Ediciones Glénat Spain, Spain. A geologist has built an emotional barrier following the loss of his family. He visits an isolated island to carry out a survey when he encounters a young girl living on the island who opens up his heart.



"THE STORY BEGINS WITH..."

by VERACHAI DUANGPLA, published by Banlue Publications, Thailand. A humorous satire and lessons pertaining to the daily life and events of a young boy, his family and others around him.