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Postcards of

These line drawings are folk sketches.

They are mostly fortuitous fruits. Girls in old times had to learn to copy the established designs before they started needlework. They reserved the set of patterns passed from generation to generation for later use. The patterns usually include a pomegranate, a peony, a fish swimming leisurely amidst lotuses as well as a human figure and an animal. They are of the same as these line drawings, whose purpose is also for paper clipping, embroidery, or for chest or *kang* (heatable brick bed) pictures as a draft.

In the early 1980s, in order to discover and develop folk art, some local museums organized local farmers for artistic creation. But most of the farmers were old ladies. Being unable to work out pieces of political theme demanded by the museums, they had no way but simply to refer to their own life. So they made use of the traditional patterns and these line drawings came into being.

The old ladies kept these pleasant sketches originally used for painting colors, although the concept of "sketch" did not really exist in their minds.

In the line drawings, the bodies of human beings and animals act as a symbol or sign to echo nature, a pattern of good luck and tender feelings. The bodies are sprinkled with grass and flowers, animals, fish and dragons moving around. Here, a perfect combination of memory with imagination is made possible. Here, the earth, heaven and living creatures within are mingled into oneness. Here is brimming with a detached air which can dissolve all kinds of rules into nothing while laughing and talking.

A popular song in Northern Shanxi goes like this: "So long a plait cannot reach the sky, so good a girl cannot be brought to my face; so big a pot cannot boil two grains of rice, so passionate a heart cannot warm you." There is despair behind the song, but even so, such way of expressing love is romantic. In fact, every artist of line drawings has undergone many hardships and weariness so much so that their agony can almost touch the sky. As a result, they don't want to weave these sufferings into their dreams. Pain can be folded and placed within their bodies. Now they only wish to stick joy and happiness on a new garment.

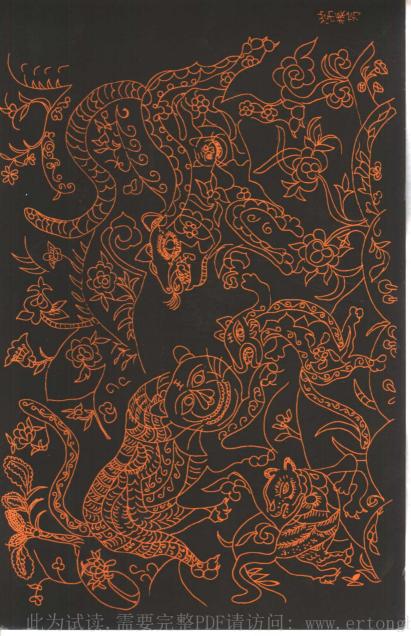
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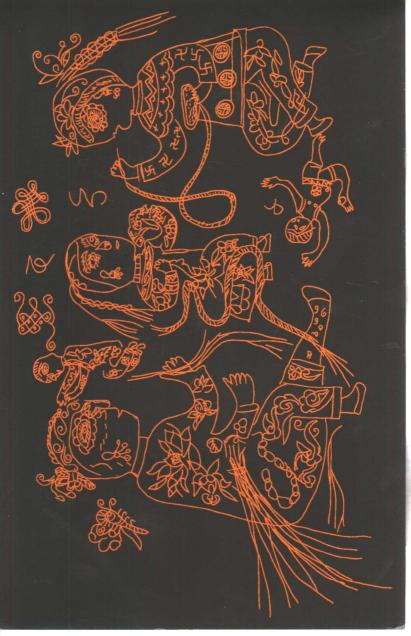
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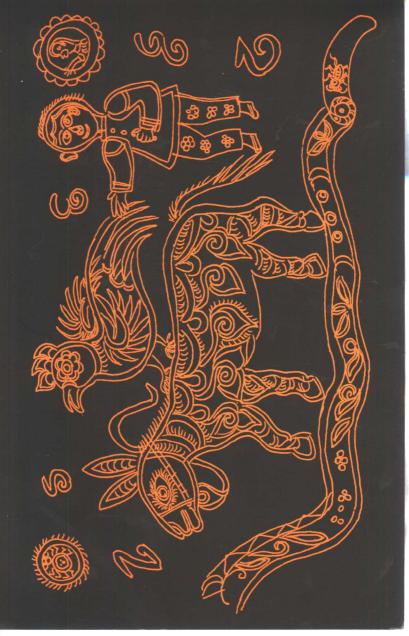
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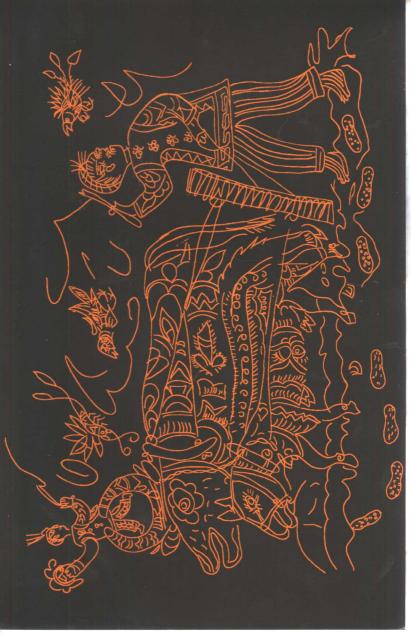
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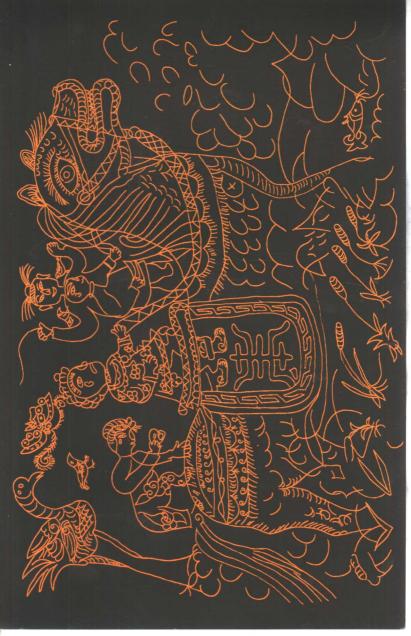


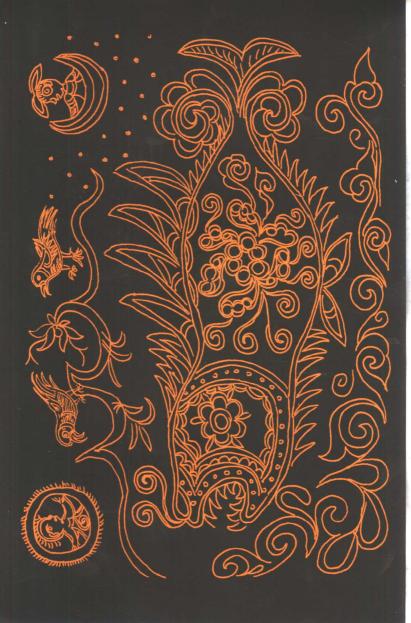


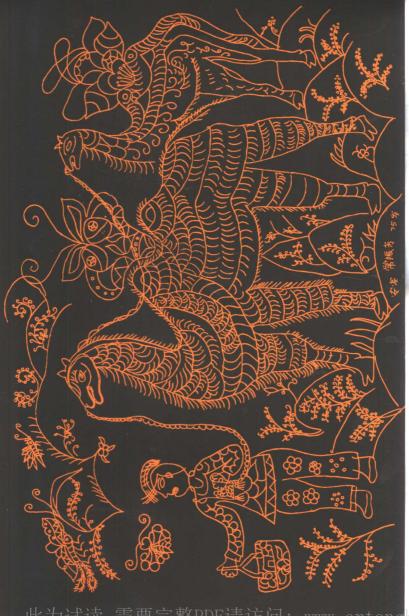




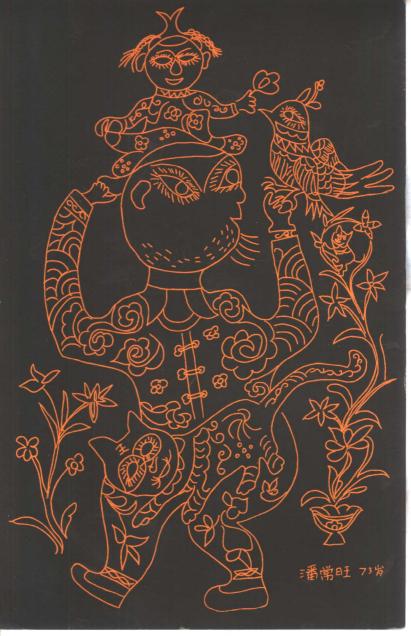


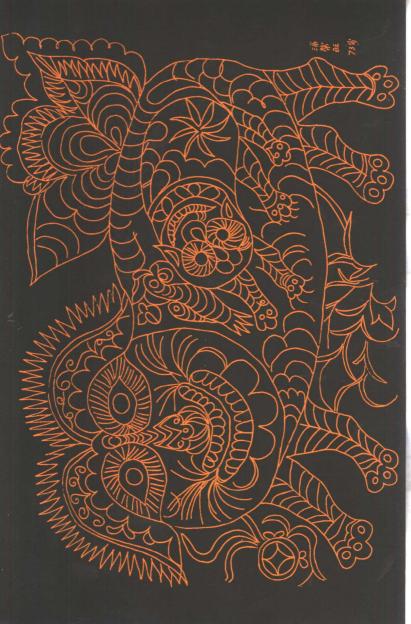


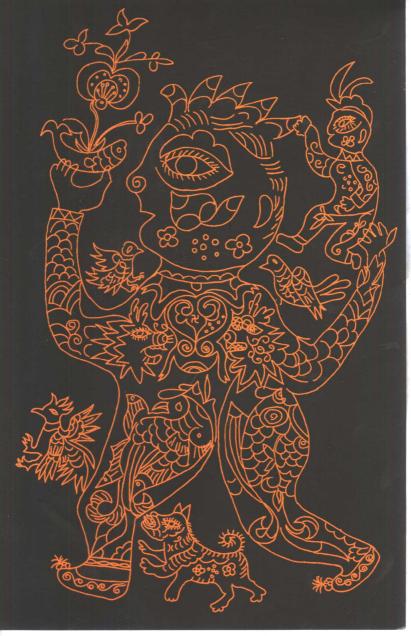


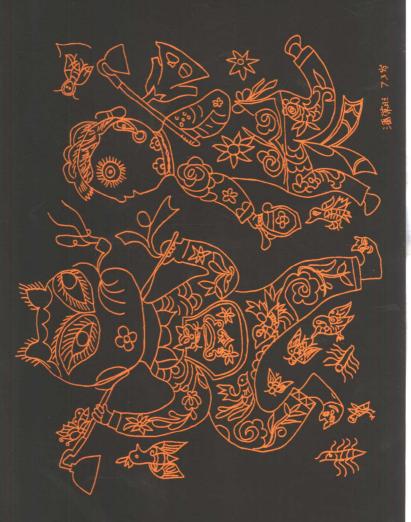


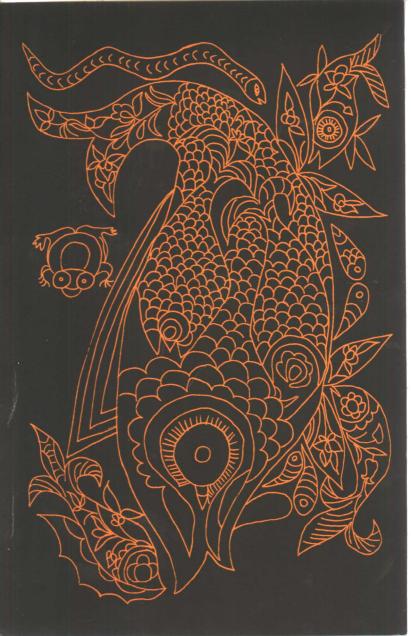
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