

Armando Menendez: “The little soldier Lu” is a chant to the humble and to those who ask for forgiveness”

The doctor and voice of the Foundation helping the third world, which bears his name, writes a Buddhist fable against war

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The well-known doctor from Gijón, Armando Menéndez (1957), combines the hyperactivity of a doctor devoted to the cause of poverty of the third world, from Nepal to India, with the same silence and calmness he seeks in his meditations in the Buddhist monasteries of the Himalayas. From that living relationship with the world and with the true example shown by Jesus or Siddharta, Teresa of Calcutta or Vicente Ferrer, it gives birth to such overwhelming expositions as "Women's Role in the Reconstructions of Nepal" or texts of refined spirituality, such as "The Lying Monk." As an outstanding figure, nothing human is foreign to him. He has just published "The little soldier Lu," an anti-war fable or story. "It is a chant to the humble, to the good, to the generous, to those that ask for forgiveness before accusing and to those who embrace before judging," he explains.

"The little soldier Lu," imbued with the moral conviction that all

small gestures are necessary to stop violence and war, has its origin in a paternal concern: "To explain to my son Guillermo, who is an aerospace engineer and holds a Master in planetary exploration, and also to all the young people, the causes of wars, who are its instigators and the horrible consequences." "We live in a violent culture; violent video games, violence on television, sport and even in the stands," added the doctor. The author, who studied in the China of Mao and worked in hospitals in the Bronx, in New York, further adds on grounds of his last text: "He warns young people not to behave like rats behind the Pied Piper of Hamelin." Furthermore: "Behind an anthem and a flag there is not always patriotism."

The story, which tells us how the novice monk Lu is capable with his modest mop of stopping the warmongering of the warlords at the borders of Bhutan and Tibet in the year 1740, has been published in Spanish, Asturian and English. It has beautiful illustrations by the Argentine artist, Margarita Inés



Doctor Armando Menéndez, author of "The little soldier Lu." | MARA VILLAMUZA

The book has been illustrated by Margarita Ines Rossano and published in Spanish, Asturian and English

Covadonga Garcia, well known by her participation in "Masterchef Junior," will present the book on October 29

Rossano, and it will be presented at the *Centro de Cultura Antigua Instituto Jovellanos* Covadonga García, the Asturian girl who was one of the winners of the third edition of "Masterchef Junior" liked

this fable of Armando Menéndez so much, that she will be the master of ceremonies of the presentation of "The little soldier Lu".

"Children wonder how they can avoid wars which as an everyday scenario, nobody takes notice anymore. I answer that they are the sum of many small hatreds," says the doctor, who conducted some seminars about ancient Eastern philosophy, invited by the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Oviedo, last March. He further says: "We must keep away from the barbarians and violent ones, from the doctrines seeking culprits to sacrifice and from everything that does not bring peace to our hearts."

For Armando Menéndez, one has to take action wherever possible and to the best of our own capacities, like Lu learns from the

scrubbing lama the importance of the most modest gestures: "A child cannot avoid the massacres of Aleppo, but it can avoid shunning or teasing other children; welcome are those who seek to solve problems with dialogue, because the real superheroes are those which prevent wars, while the villains are those that cause it in their benefit."

The author of "The little soldier Lu" believes that the greatest war is the one every person frees with his heart: "If not won, we become selfish and insensitive beings." "Lu says that behind every thought, although it does not coincide with yours, there is a human being; embrace that being, pierce his shield and reach his heart because all hearts speak the same language," he says.