

[THE IMAGINATIONS OF SPACES IN *THE NEW STORY OF A STONE*]

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ABSTRACT

[This thesis discusses the imagination of spaces in the late Qing novel *The New Story of a Stone*. Analyzing the imagination of the spaces such as “museum” and “submarine” in the novel, this thesis explores the author Wu Jianren’s attitude toward China and the West, Chinese traditional culture and modernity at the turn of twentieth century. The thesis argues that the novel embodies Wu’s ambivalent values towards traditional indigenous culture and foreign modern culture.]

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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BODY OF DISSERTATION

1. Introduction

This study discusses a novel called *The New Story of a Stone*, written in the late Qing dynasty. The novel is a combination of realistic and science fiction and of Chinese classical culture and advanced Western science and technologies. The central theme of this thesis is to analyze the author Wu Jianren's attitude towards China and the West, tradition and modernity through the analysis of the imagination of museum and submarine spaces in *The New Story of a Stone*. Here, "modernity" refers to "cross cultural trafficking of ideas, technologies, and powers in the wake of nineteenth-century Western expansionism...the call for constitutional democracy; the discovery of psychologized and gendered subjectivity; the industrialization of military, economic, and cultural production; the rise of an urban landscape; and, above all, the valorization of time as an evolutionary sequence" (Wang 5-6), and "the West" refers to the countries that brought modernity to China through business, missionary activity, and war, for example, Britain, United States, France and Japan, etc.

The reason why this thesis chooses to study about the spatial aspect of this novel is that the narration of space is very important for the plot development in *The New Story of a Stone*, and the spaces in the novel are not only physical spaces, but also with multiple meanings. To begin with, the plot in the novel develops when main characters move from one space to another: from cities including Nanjing, Shanghai, Beijing, and Hankou to the utopian space called the Civilized Wonderland. Many different spaces in the cities are also described in detail in the novel, for example, a school, government, church, museum, or submarine. Hence

the spaces play a very important role in the novel. Moreover, spaces described by Wu Jianren are not only physical spaces, but have multi-layered meanings. According to Edward Soja, “urban spatial specificity refers to the particular configurations of social relations, built forms and human activity in a city and its geographical sphere of influence.” (Soja 8) Here he indicates that physical urban spaces intertwine with social issues and human activities. Through the study of spaces, one can study social relationships, built forms and human activities in the spaces.

To study a space, Soja suggests that scholars should not only study a space in a materialized or conceptualized way, but should combine the materialized and the conceptualized aspects of a space together: “the spatial specificity of urbanism is investigated as fully lived space, a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual, locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency.” (Soja 10) The theory applies to the spaces in *The New Story of a Stone*: both the realistic and the utopian spaces in the novel are a combination of real and imagined, actual and virtual, and individual and collective experiences. Therefore, when Wu Jianren was trying to portray a seemingly realistic space, he was not exactly writing about his reality. He added his own emotions and his opinions towards this place in his writing. Meanwhile, when Wu Jianren was trying to construct an imaginative space, he did not make up this space out of nowhere. He constructed places based on his experience and attitude toward reality. According to Robert Alter, “through all these considerations of urban experience in the novel, it is clear that what a writer will pick up in the city depends on his or her own sensibility, psychology, and preoccupations-on

which urban frequency the writer tuned in.” (Alter 158) Therefore, the complex combination of reality and fiction reflects Wu Jianren’s attitude towards the world he lived in, and his imaginative solution for his dissatisfactions to the world. By describing real spaces, Wu tried to point out the social problems existing in China and the international conflicts between China and western countries in the 1900s’; by imagining utopian spaces, Wu tried to both satirize the reality and suggest a possible solution for the social problems and international conflicts. The possible solution Wu suggested was represented by the utopian “Civilized Wonderland” that he created in the last twenty chapters of the novel.

The reason why this thesis chose *The New Story of a Stone* for study is that the novel is an interesting combination of Western advanced technologies and Chinese traditional culture. In the novel, Wu Jianren could not explicitly explain the principles of advanced technologies in the utopian world he created. Instead, he could only describe science and technology in a superficial way. According to the scholar Wu Xianya, as late-Qing novelists did not receive enough training about modern science and technologies, it is hard for them to explain the principles behind scientific inventions (Wu 47). Furthermore, Wu added some traditional Chinese elements into the scientific inventions in his novel. According to the modern scholar Feng-ying Ming, “the utopian vision of the late Qing intellectual is based less on scientific and technological mastery than on humanistic and moral issues...In fact, it should be emphasized that it is this dimension which forms the deep structure of the future ideal, whereas the external material construct is but a superficial crust.” (Ming 161) Wu take western science and technologies as a “superficial crust”: it was Chinese traditional culture

that he truly valued in his novel. By analyzing the relationship between Western technologies and Chinese traditional elements in the novel, this thesis explores Wu Jianren's attitude towards Chinese tradition and Western modern science. After the analysis of the imagination of spaces in *New Story of a Stone*, this thesis tries to argue that Wu's position toward China and the West is contradictory. Even though Wu emphasizes the importance of never forgetting Chinese traditional moral values, his narration of the utopian spaces shares lots of similarities with western colonial culture; even though he tried to persuade people to combine western technology with Chinese traditional moral values, he could not combine them in a rational way: he insisted that the predictions made by ancient Chinese people would be proven in the future world. By imagining that the predictions made by ancient people would be proven in the future world, he tried to change the depressing situation that many people had lost their confidence about the Chinese traditional culture in the late Qing period.

In the following, this thesis will introduce the social background and the author of the novel, as the discussion of social background could help readers understand what China had been experiencing in the late Qing period and why Wu Jianren needed to balance between Chinese and Western cultures in his novel. And the discussion of the author of the novel could be beneficial to the later discussion about the author's attitude towards China and the West. Then the thesis will also introduce current scholarship, the different editions and the plot summary of *The New Story of a Stone* before a discussion of the museum and submarine spaces.

2. Social background of the novel

The novel was written in the 1900s when China had been experiencing a number of important political and social transformations. In the year of 1898, the Hundred Day Reform, which was a movement in which reformers tried to force the Qing government to learn Western technologies and political systems, failed. In 1899, a peasant revolt called the Boxer Rebellion, which claimed to fight against the Western powers in China arose, but was repressed by the Qing government and the Western powers in the year 1901. In 1901, the Eight-Nation Alliance from Western countries invaded Beijing, and forced the Qing government to pay a huge indemnity, about 335 million US dollars, to the Western countries.

As China had suffered from a great many invasions by western powers, several attempts had been made by the Qing government in order to enhance China's national power, including the self-strengthening movement and the Hundred Day Reform. Unfortunately, all those reforms had failed. Due to the desperate circumstances, the reformer Liang Qichao launched a revolution in the field of fiction, advocating for novelists to educate the masses through fiction writing.

Science and technology were highly valued at the turn of the twentieth century. Many thinkers in the late Qing period had reached a consensus that science and technology would be the key to the change of China's destiny. For example, Yan Fu argued that western science and technology could bring enlightenment to the Chinese people, making the country become

strong and wealthy, and could help save the Qing government from destruction (Yan 521). First, many science research institutions were established. In the year 1895, the “Suanxue she” [The Arithmetic Association] was founded in Hunan province, which is the first natural science association in China. After that, associations of agriculture, medicine, chemistry, etc. had been founded at the turn of the 20th century. Second, the government bureaus of translating and publishing had also been built. For example, “Qiang xuehui” [The Strengthening Association] founded by Kang Youwei, “Datong yishuju” [The Great Harmony Translating Publishing House] and “Guangzhi shuju” [Intelligence Promoting Publishing House] founded by Liang Qichao (Li 56). The main purpose of these agencies was to translate the Western books about natural and social science. Thirdly, many scientific periodicals had been founded in order to introduce the science knowledge to the masses. From the year 1872 to 1911, 44 kinds of scientific magazines newly emerged (Wang and Xu 67). As would be discussed in the latter paragraphs, the way science and technology were highly valued at the turn of the twentieth century and the way many scientific periodicals had been founded created the knowledge base for Wu Jianren’s novel writing.

3. Current Scholarship

Both Western and Chinese scholars do content, context and cultural studies about *The New Story of a Stone*. However, Western scholars try to figure out Wu’s attitude toward tradition and modernity, while the Chinese scholars are less interested in Wu’s attitude. They

tend to analyze the literary aspects of the novel in multiple angles, including the narration, the image studies, the metaphor, and the cultural interpretation of *The New Story of a Stone*.

3.1 The Western Scholarship

Western scholars mainly discuss the social context and the central themes of *The New Story of a Stone* in its specific historical situation. At the same time, they are interested in Wu's attitude toward tradition and modernity.

The scholars such as Theodore Hutters, Feng-Ying Ming, and Nathaniel Issacson argue that Wu Jianren was anxious about China's future, even though he constructed a perfect world in his novel. In the sixth chapter "Meldling East and West: Wu Jianren's New Story of the Stone" of the book *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*, Theodore Hutters made a detailed analysis of the novel. He concludes that this novel presents Wu Jianren's paradoxical feeling of trying to reject China's past and building the future of a perfect China upon its past at the same time¹.

Some other scholars, including David Der-wei Wang, evaluate Wu Jianren's utopian world in *The New Story of a Stone* in a critical way. In the book *FIN-DE-SIECLE SPLENDOR: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911*, Wang argues that Wu Jianren was deeply influenced by the political reformation of late Qing and Kang Youwei's hypothesis of a Chinese utopia. He also insists that the utopian world Wu created is actually barbarous instead of civilized: on the surface, the Civilized Wonderland advocates that every country and race is equal; as a matter of fact, the governors of the Civilized Wonderland

discriminate against people from Africa and Australia. Andrew Jones, in his book *Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture*, argues that Wu Jianren's utopian narration collapsed at the end of his novel, as he could not solve the contradiction between pre-modern culture and postcolonial epistemic regime. In comparison, Patrick Hanan and Marling argue that the aim of Wu's creating a utopian world is to criticize the Western culture. In the seventh chapter of Patrick Hanan's book *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: Essays*, Hanan mainly analyzes the narration and the content of *The New Story of a Stone*. He argues that Wu's aim of creating a utopian world in his book is to criticize Western modern culture instead of Chinese traditional culture. He analyzes that Wu tried to criticize the barbarity of western wars and western religions in his novel².

3.2 The Chinese Scholarship

The first critical review of *The New Story of a Stone* appeared in 1907, in the sixth volume of the magazine *Yueyue xiaoshuo* [Monthly Fiction]. The author Bao Pi spoke highly of *The New Story of a Stone* by saying that the novel is outstanding among late Qing literature works because it is both aspiring and inspiring.

In contrast to the favorable reception of the Wu Jianren's contemporaries, later modern scholars have focused on the analysis of the literary aspects of the novel. Comparing to the Western scholars, the angle Chinese scholars took in studying *The New Story of a Stone* is

more diversified. For example, Chen Pingyuan analyzes the image of the flying car in various late Qing novels to discuss how the late Qing literati dealt with advanced Western technologies³; Chen Wenxin talks about the symbolic meanings of Baoyu's different experience⁴; Zou Xiaojuan analyzes how the image of the West was presented in *The New Story of a Stone*⁵. However, many of them do not have a central argument about Wu's attitude towards tradition and modernity, which is the part that different from what some Western scholars discussed above tried to do.

4. About the Author

The author of *The New Story of a Stone*, Wu Jianren, is a late Qing novelist. He was born in the year 1866. Originally his name was Baozhen, or Woyao. His style name was once Jianren [The Cocoon Man], and later he changed it into Jianren. His ancestral home is Nanhai in Guangdong province, and he was born in Beijing. He had a number of style names, including Wo Foshan Ren, Yeshe Shi, Lao Shanghai, Chou Jin and Zhuren.

Wu Jianren's father and grandfather were government officials. When he was 18 year old, he left home and went to Shanghai. There he tried various jobs, including waiter at a teahouse, copyist and draftsman. One day he happened across the book *Gui Youguang Wenji* [*The Collected Works Of Gui Youguang*], and that was the moment he got interested in literature and decided to become a novelist. Because he spent 18 years in Beijing and 27 years living and working in Shanghai, he made lots of lively and realist descriptions of Beijing and Shanghai in *The New Story of a Stone* (Pei 70-75).

From the year 1897, Wu became the founder of several newspapers, including Zilin Hubao [The Zilin Newspaper of Shanghai], Caifeng Bao [The Collecting Newspaper], Qixin Bao [The Strange and the New Newspaper] and Yuyan Bao [The Fable Newspaper]. After year 1903, he began to write novels using the style name Wo Foshan Ren [I Am A Citizen Of Fo Mountain] in the magazine Xin Xiaoshuo [The New Novel], edited by Liang Qichao. In the year 1906, he became the staff writer of the magazine Yueyue Xiaoshuo [Monthly Fiction] (Li 124-126). Therefore, it is likely that he was influenced by Liang Qichao's thought due to the relationship that he established with Liang Qichao when he was involved in newspaper production.

He left Shanghai and spent one year in Hankou in 1902, working for the *Hankou Daily*. Later he traveled to Shandong and Japan, and went back to Shanghai in 1905. After he went back to Shanghai, he actively engaged in the movement of Chinese people protesting the Chinese Exclusion Act introduced by the U.S. government. He wrote essays and made speeches in favor of this movement for two years (Ren 39). Hence, his experiences in the places mentioned above are likely the reason why he could make lively descriptions about Shanghai, Hankou and Shandong in *The New Story of a Stone*; his experience of protesting the U.S. government is likely the reason why he criticized western culture in his novel.

Wu Jianren was a hard working novelist, but frequently suffered from poverty and disease. He didn't earn much as a novelist. All his family members, including his wife and his children, relied on his remuneration. He died in the year 1910 at Shanghai when he was only 45 years old (Li 128).

Lu Xun spoke highly of Wu Jianren's novel, *Er Shi Nian Mudu Zhi Guai Xianzhuang* [*Bizarre Happenings Eyewitnessed Over Two Decades*]. Lu said it is one of the best four satirical novels in the late Qing period. Hu Shi also spoke highly of Wu, saying that he is a first-rate novelist (Ren 198).

5. Editions of the Novel

The New Story of a Stone was originally a story serialized in *Nanfang Bao*, from August 21st, 1905 to November 29th, 1905. Currently only part of the *Nanfang Bao* is available at the Shanghai library, and only 11 chapters of *The New Story of a Stone* are found in the extant *Nanfang Bao* (Huang 196). As it is difficult to identify the exact date of the suspension of publication of *Nanfang Bao*, it is currently not clear whether Wu Jianren finished his serialization of *The New Story of a Stone* on *Nanfang Bao*.

The first edition of the complete version of *The New Story of a Stone* was published by Shanghai Reformation Novel Publishing Press in 1908, containing 40 chapters. The author's name on this book is Wo Fo Shan Ren, one of Wu Jianren's style names. The book was separated into 8 volumes, each of which contains five chapters. The full name of this version is *Huitu xin shitou ji* [*Illustrated New Story of A Stone*], with illustrations before each chapter (Huang 200).

However, according to the article *Shuo xiaoshuo xin shitou ji* [*Talking About the Novel The New Story of a Stone*] in the 6th Volume of the magazine *Yueyue xiaoshuo* in February, 1907, there are forty chapters in the book *The New Story of a Stone* (Wei 119). Therefore, the

complete version of this novel was likely completed before February 1907.

The second complete edition is from Zhongzhou Guji Publishing Press in the year of 1986, collated and annotated by Wang Liyan, based on the 1908 version. Wang Liyan attached 195 annotations about book names, people's names, location, folktales, newspapers and literary quotations in the novel. For the book names appearing in *The New Story of a Stone*, Wang attached the information of their edition. Wang also explained the meaning of some rarely used Chinese characters appearing in the novel (Wang vi-viii).

In the year 1987 there was another version of *The New Story of a Stone* published by Hua Cheng Publishing Press, collated by Wang Xinggen and Lu Zhengyan, without annotations. This version is based on both the incomplete *Nan Fang Bao* version and the 1908 version. According to Wang Xinggen, the proofreader, they enclosed a note about which part of the book they had corrected at the end of the book. But currently the enclosed note could not be found in this book. (Lu and Wang ii-v)

At 2010, the Dong Fang Publishing Center published a series of books called *Shibo menghuan sanbuqu* [*The Trilogy of World Exposition Fantasy*], and *The New Story of a Stone* was included with annotations by Huang Lin. This version of annotation seems to be more reader friendly than Wang Liyan's version. Huang explicates more about the literary Chinese writing that he feels hard to understand for the contemporary readers. Also he explains about the historical figures that appeared in *The New Story of a Stone* (Huang iii).

The 1986 edition of *The New Story of a Stone* is used in the translation section and the places that quoted the original text in this thesis. The reason why this thesis chooses the 1986

edition is that the annotations in the 1986 edition are much more elaborate and easy-to-understand than the other editions, which could provide more background information about the novel for the thesis. Moreover, the source of the original text used in the 1986 edition was explained much more explicit than the other editions by the editor, which could be beneficial for this thesis and the readers.

6. Plot Summary

There are in total forty chapters in *The New Story of a Stone*, and it can be divided into two parts. The first half talks about Chinese society in the early twentieth century. The second part, chapter 21 to chapter 40, talks about a utopian world made up by the author and the utopian world was built about a hundred year after the first 20 chapters.

The New Story of a Stone, according to the author Wu Jianren, is a sequel of the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*, one of the most successful and classical Chinese traditional novels. Before *The New Story of a Stone*, there were already lots of sequels of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, but most of them are about the love story between the characters Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu. But Wu Jianren's *The New Story of a Stone* is very different from other sequels, which has nothing to do with romance.

The story begins with the ending of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, when the main character Baoyu is tired of secular life and decide to become a monk. One day when Baoyu is meditating in the temple, he suddenly realizes that he has an unfinished dream, which is to

help China to become a better country. So he goes out of the temple and decide to go home. What he doesn't realized is that hundreds of years had slipped by during his meditation, and most of his acquaintances had passed away, while his appearance hadn't changed at all through the hundreds of years. Luckily he runs into two people who have had the similar experience with him: his old servant Beiming and his old playboy friend Xue Pan. These two people also preserve their appearance from hundreds of years ago.

Xue Pan went to the new world earlier than Baoyu, so he serves as a tour guide in the novel. Xue Pan shows the naïve Baoyu what the new Shanghai looks like. It is 1901, and Shanghai have already become a settlement for Western countries. Western science, culture and technologies are also introduced into China. Shanghai have gone through rapid changes after it became settlements: modern schools, factories, transportations, banks and theatres have been built. The lifestyle has also been changed: according to the playboy Xue Pan, the life in Shanghai is all about getting onto a rickshaw and going to theatres and brothels. Baoyu, on the other hand, examines the new world in a completely different way. Although he admires all the convenience Western technologies have brought to people, he is disappointed about how Chinese people can not master the technologies by themselves and completely rely on Westerners. What upset him most is how some Chinese people blindly worship Western culture and have forgotten all about Chinese traditional culture.

Baoyu then goes to Beijing and finds more social problems in the 1900s. He finds that the Qing government is corrupt and easily compromised by Western countries. China is also experiencing lots of turmoils. For example, the Boxer Uprising, which, according to Wu in

the story, is a group of people who try to use superstition to gather people and fight against the Western power, but who quickly surrendered to Western power after the allied forces of eight Western countries invade Beijing.

Different from the realistic style of the first part, the second part of the novel describes a fantasized utopian world. Baoyu feels disappointed about the Chinese society in the 1900s. He then accidentally travels to the future through a path called “Kongdao,” which is a homophone for “The Road of Confucianism” in Chinese, to a place called the Civilized Wonderland. The Civilized Wonderland is a utopian world Wu Jianren constructed. The Civilized Wonderland is Wu’s imaginative solution for China’s problems in the 1900s. The citizens in the Civilized Wonderland are highly educated and follow Confucian moral standards. The regime of this place is called “the Civilized Monarchy,” which means their emperor, whose name is Dongfang Wenming, makes decisions according to the wills of the people. The technologies in Civilized Wonderland are highly developed, so that they use flying cars as transportation, win a battle by using an illusion bomb and without killing their enemies, and enhance their intelligence by taking smart pills.

Wu Jianren suggests that the Qing government should combine advanced Western technologies with Chinese traditional moral values to help China to become stronger. He also thought that Chinese Confucian moral values were the ultimate way of achieving world peace. In the end of the story, Baoyu had a dream about how the Chinese emperor became the moral leader of the world and eliminated all the wars in the world.

7. The Imagination of Spaces

This thesis will study the spaces “museum” and “submarine” in *The New Story of a Stone*. As has been discussed in the beginning part of this thesis, space is not only a physical concept but also “a social product” (Lefebvre 26), so the study of space is not only a geographical practice but has multiple meanings. Even though the spaces “museum” and “submarine” only appear in the utopian world that Wu created in the novel, Wu created these spaces based on his realistic experiences and reading experiences. Wu’s constructing of utopian places is a combination of real and imaged, individual and collective experiences. By analyzing two of the utopian spaces that frequently appeared in the fantasized part of the novel (the word “museum” appeared 14 times, and the word “submarine” appeared 40 times in the novel), this thesis will discuss about how these two places are imagined based on Wu Jianren’s individual and collective experiences. Wu Jianren’s creation of the two utopian spaces represents his dissatisfaction to the social reality and his idealized imagination to a better future. As can be inferred from the social background and Wu’s life experiences discussed above, Wu’s dissatisfaction toward the social reality derived from his experience in a special era: an era that China was in collision with the West, indigenous culture and economy was in collision with the foreign culture and economy, and Chinese tradition was in collision with Western modernity. Hence, by analyzing Wu’s imagination of the two different spaces, this thesis will try to explore Wu Jianren’s attitude toward China and the West, tradition and modernity.

7.1 The Imagination of Museum

According to the description in chapter 27 and chapter 28, there were lots of museums in the Civilized Wonderland. Different types of exhibits were displayed in different museums, including the museums of books, pearls, corals, jewels, handicrafts, inventions, animals, plants and minerals. The standard of the classification of different museums had not been described in the novel. But the order that the spaces were introduced is well worth discussion.

To begin with, the novel introduced about the museum of books, and then the museums of various kinds of treasures, including pearl museum, coral museum and jewel museum. The difference between the museum of books and a public library is that the books in the public library could be borrowed by masses, while the books in the museum of books could not: they were only for display. The “books” here symbolize the cultural history of the Civilized Wonderland, and the books displayed to the masses in this nation to help them recognize their national identity as “Chinese people.” After that, the chapter briefly introduced the museums of handicrafts, inventions, minerals, animals and plants (Wu 217).

The first time the museum of books appeared in the novel is in chapter 27, and two paragraphs were used to describe the museum of books in detail. In the museum of the books, the museum curator showed the exhibits to Baoyu in chronological order. He firstly showed Baoyu the rope knots used by ancient people to keep records, saying that the rope knots are “the ancestor of characters” (Wu 213). It could be assumed that the rope knots, being the

origin of Chinese characters, were highly valued in the Civilized Wonderland, as “there was a delicately carved rosewood table located at the center of the building. On the table there was a rosewood showcase, with glass on its four sides, located on the five-colored brocade mat. At the center of the showcase, there was a rope knots” (Wu 213). As can be seen from the above description, the rope knots were cautiously kept in a delicate case, and placed at the most important location at the center of a museum. It could be inferred from the important location and the delicate showcase of the rope knots that rope knots is highly valued by the decision maker in the Civilized Wonderland. Furthermore, the word “center” repeated twice in a single sentence, which also suggests the importance of the rope knots. Therefore, the origin of Chinese cultural history, by the understanding of Wu Jianren, was highly valued in the Civilized Wonderland. The reason why the rope knots, which symbolizes the origin of Chinese cultural history, is important for Wu Jianren is that he tried to lead the novel readers to be proud of their identities as “Chinese people” by emphasizing that China has its own unique and well-established cultural history. The well-established Chinese cultural history symbolizes China’s past glory and the source of Chinese identity. To elaborate the Chinese cultural history, the origin of the history, the rope knots, therefore needed to be carefully treated.

Then the curator showed Baoyu some Confucian classics, including *Shijing*, *Shangshu*, *Lijing*, *Yuejing* and *Chunqiu*. Nowadays the academia had not reached a consensus about who are the authors and the editors of these Confucian classics. But according to the understanding of the author of this novel, Confucius is the editor of *The Book of Songs*,

Shangshu, *Lijing* and *Yuejing*, and the authors of *Chunqiu* are Confucius' disciples. Then Baoyu was shown the books that survived in the event of burning books and burying Confucian scholars alive in the Qin dynasty.

At last the museum curator showed Baoyu some newly published books, including the law book of the Civilized Wonderland and a book about scientific inventions. The content of the law book of the Civilized Wonderland was not introduced in the novel. However, as the Civilized Wonderland applied a new political system called the "civilized monarchy," it could be inferred that the laws in the book were constructed according to the new political system, the civilized monarchy, which is a political form that invented by Wu Jianren. Civilized monarchy means that there will be an emperor for the country, but the emperor could only introduce policies according to the will of the people. The most important premise of the civilized monarchy is the popularization of the moral education of Confucianism. As all the people in the Civilized Wonderland have received Confucian moral education, they could always be friendly to each other, and the emperor could always make decisions that are beneficial to the masses.

Wu Jianren thought the Chinese cultural tradition and the advanced technologies were two very important issues for the Civilized Wonderland. The exhibits were shown to Baoyu in chronological order. Moreover, among all the books introduced by the museum curator, the Confucian classics were introduced special in detail, which implies that Wu especially emphasized the importance of Confucian moral values. After introducing traditional Chinese books, the curator also introduced the books about western science and technologies. It could

be inferred that Wu thought the western technological culture could be beneficial to the development of China. Therefore, for Wu Jianren, a combination of Chinese traditional culture and western technological culture is needed for the future China.

Furthermore, the layout of the exhibits in the museum needed to be discussed. In the museum of books, there were twenty rooms for the books, according to chapter 27, “at the center of the museum, there were ten rooms for ancient and modern Chinese books, and each of the two sides of the museum had five rooms to store books from other parts of the world” (Wu 213). Chinese books were located at the center rooms of the museum to show their importance over books from other parts of the world. The museum of handicrafts shared a similar layout: Chinese local handicrafts were in the center, while foreign handicrafts were located at the two sides of the museum (Wu 218). In chapter 28, the layout of the exhibits was especially emphasized in the description of the museum of jewels. According to the chapter, jewels from all over the world were used to construct the museum, rather than brick or wood. The layout of jewels from different places was introduced in detail: “The jewels from the eastern part of China were used to construct the east wall of the museum; the jewels from the western part of China were used to construct the west wall of the museum; the jewels from western countries were used to pave the floor of the museum” (Wu 217).

As can be concluded from the three examples above, the location of the exhibits in the museum symbolizes Wu’s attempt to put Chinese exhibits as a priority in the hierarchical order. Even though he thought China should learn advanced science and technology, and some part of the political theory of the west, he still thought that Chinese culture is superior

to other cultures, that's why in the museums of the Civilized Wonderland, the Chinese exhibits were located at the center of the museums, while the foreign exhibits were located in less conspicuous places, including the "sides" and the "floor." As has been discussed in the background part of this thesis, lots of western technologies and cultures flew into China after the 1840s', and the masses could not figure out which part of the western culture should be learnt and which part should be abandoned, and Xue Pan in this novel is one of the examples of the masses. Wu's attempt to create a cultural hierarchical order was to advocate his readers to cherish Chinese traditional culture instead of blindly accepting all kinds of western cultures. It is Wu's attempt to emphasize China's uniqueness among other countries in the world.

More importantly, the order and the layout of the exhibits in the museums show Wu's attempt to reconstruct Chinese identity for the Chinese people. As has been mentioned above, the exhibits in the museum of books were shown to Baoyu in a chronological order. This is Wu's attempt to display the Chinese cultural history to the readers. The way Wu tried to show readers the Chinese cultural history is his attempt to advocate the readers to discover their cultural identities as "Chinese people." According to Q. Edward Wang, "This goal of making a modern nation compelled historians to look back at the country's past from a new, different perspective. Instead of regarding the past as a holistic entirety, for instance, they looked for multiplicity in the past and searched in tradition for elements useful to create a national history... As a result, in the practice of nationalist historiography, there appeared an almost reversed relationship between the past and present; the past was no longer viewed as a

guidance but as a genesis of one's imaginary as a nation" (Wang 2). In pre-modern times in China, the past was generally viewed as a repository of moral knowledge and of universal human values, history was cyclical, an endless repetition of dynastic rises and fall (Ng and Wang 25). But Wu Jianren constructed a lineal cultural history, which is different from a repetition of dynastic rise and fall, emphasizing the importance of Confucian culture, to serve as the cultural foundation of the Civilized Wonderland. Wu's construction of a lineal cultural history implies that although Wu Jianren emphasized the centrality of Chinese civilization, his reconstruction of the Chinese past adapts the new way of imagining history from cyclical to lineal, that is, the temporal progress of history. Wu Jianren take rope knots as the origin of Chinese history, take Confucian culture as the foundation of Chinese history, and he try to construct Chinese history in a lineal way. Wu's way of emphasizing the origin and the foundation of the Civilized wonderland is his attempt to find the genesis of people's collective imaginary of "China" as a nation. Constructing the common cultural history for the Civilized Wonderland could help people to have the common national identities.

Constructing the national identity for the people in the Civilized Wonderland, which is a future version of perfect China in Wu's imagination, is not the only goal for Wu Jianren to write about the museums in the Civilized Wonderland. The reason why "museum" was not mentioned in the first half of *The New Story of a Stone* is that China didn't possess any museums for the public at the time the book was written. Zhang Jian, a Chinese intellectual, established the first museum in Nantong, Jiangsu Province, in 1905 (Lu 4). Even though China didn't have a public museum by that time, many intellectuals had already advocated

the idea of constructing museum, for the purpose of educating the masses. Chinese intellectuals strongly believed that educating the public, not only males but also females, was one of the most crucial approaches for the salvation of the nation, as they believed that only knowledgeable people would be able to command the science and technologies introduced from the West, along with developing China's own industries, infrastructures, technologies, arms and sciences (Liang 8).

After being defeated by the Western powers, some Chinese intellectuals had the chance to go to European countries after the 1840s' and visited museums, which seemed to be institutions that could help people to broaden their knowledge and increase their intelligence, particularly museums on science and technology, as full-time education was a heavy burden for ordinary families, 90 percent of the ordinary Chinese could not; therefore, they argued that museums should also be established in China, and that museology should be included in the school curriculum (Ma 10). In the Hundred Day Reform, founding museums was one of the items on the agenda of the new policy, though it could not be implemented owing to the failure of the new policy (Ma 15). Liang Qichao was a leader in the Hundred Day Reform, and as mentioned earlier in this thesis, Wu Jianren had some connections with Liang Qichao, as he was the staff writer of the magazine Liang edited. Hence, it is likely that Wu had accepted the idea that museum should be constructed in China in order to educate the masses. Therefore, by constructing museums in the Civilized Wonderland, Wu tried to express his wish that the government in reality could establish museums in order to educate the masses and to help them recognize their cultural and national identity as Chinese people with

Confucian traditions.

On the one hand, Wu expressed his idea that people should always respect traditional Chinese culture, and Chinese culture is superior to other cultures. On the other hand, by analyzing the exhibits in the museums, it can be seen that Wu was deeply influenced by the western colonial culture. According to Strausz-Hupé and Hazard, the U.S. academia had not reached a consensus about the definition of colonialism (Strausz-Hupé and Hazard 470). According to Horvath, “It seems generally, if not universally, agreed that colonialism is a form of domination—the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/ or behavior of other individuals or groups. Colonialism has also been seen as a form of exploitation, with emphasis on economic variables.” (Horvath 46) According to chapter 35, Baoyu and Old Youth hunted six hundred martens, hundreds of fishes and corals from the South Pole and Australia and sent them back to the museums in the Civilized Wonderland. In order to store all the corals and fishes, the government in the Civilized Wonderland even built a new place for those new treasures (Wu 276). Exhibiting hundreds of similar corals and fish was apparently not only for the aim of educating the masses. If it was for educating the masses, one or only a few same kinds of corals and fish were needed in the museums. It could be deduced that exhibiting hundreds of similar corals and fish was for the aim of emphasizing the strength of the Civilized Wonderland, showing the masses that the nation is so strong that it could take anything from foreign countries back to the Civilized Wonderland. It is a behavior of resource exploitation over other countries and areas. Moreover, Baoyu and Old Youth took the treasures back without the permission of any countries, which shows Wu’s

subconscious hopes that Chinese people could have the right to step into any territories freely without limitation, just like many colonists do. As can be concluded from the above description, the symptoms of Wu's colonial desire are slightly shown in the structure of his museums.

Hence, Wu's idea of constructing a museum is self-contradictory. On the one side, Wu Jianren thought that Chinese cultural tradition, especially the reconstructed Confucian tradition, is crucial to an idealized and utopian China. He believed that constructing museums in China could help reconstruct Chinese cultural history, as well as educate the Chinese masses and help them form a cultural identity as "Chinese people." He argued that people should combine Chinese traditional culture with Western science and technology to help the future China to become stronger, meanwhile he emphasizes the importance of maintaining China's cultural uniqueness among other countries. On the other side, even though he seemed to advocate the idea that Chinese culture is superior to western culture, he was actually deeply influenced by colonialism. The characters in his novel exploited some other countries' resources without their permissions, which shows Wu's colonialist desire over other countries. Wu's attitude toward West and China is therefore paradoxical: on the surface he highly valued Chinese traditional culture, but deep down he intended to use some Western colonial way to solve the Chinese problems.

7.2 The Imagination of Submarine

The submarine appeared forty times in *The New Story of a Stone*. All of the descriptions of the submarine appeared only in the last half of the novel, which means that it only existed in the fantasized version of the future China, the Civilized Wonderland. Apparently, Wu Jianren emphasized the importance of submarine for the Civilized Wonderland, as four whole chapters, from chapter 29 to chapter 32, were used to describe the story of Baoyu and Old Youth's adventure in the submarine under the sea. Therefore, by analyzing the description of the submarine in this novel, this section will try to find out (1) what the submarine was like, (2) why Wu Jianren chose to make detailed descriptions about the submarine and Baoyu's adventure in the submarine, and (3) what can be inferred from the description of the submarine.

The submarine in the Civilized Wonderland was designed for people to hunt undersea. According to David Der-wei Wang, "Wu Jianren was probably inspired by the translation works of Western popular science fictions, especially Jules Verne's works, for example, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *Around the Moon* and *20000 Leagues Under the Sea*" (Wang 313). I agree with Wang's argument about *20000 Leagues Under the Sea*. There is a good chance that Wu Jianren's depiction of the submarine was deeply influenced by Jules Verne's book *20000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and here are two reasons. Firstly, the Chinese translation of the book *20000 Leagues Under the Sea* was first serialized in China in *New Fiction* magazine in the year 1902, when the chief editor of *New Fiction* was Liang Qichao. Wu Jianren also serialized many novels in *New Fiction* magazine. Therefore, there's a great chance that Wu Jianren may have read the Chinese translation of the book *20000 Leagues*

Under the Sea from the *New Fiction* magazine. Secondly, the submarine “Nautilus” in *20000 Leagues Under the Sea* and the submarine in *The New Story of a Stone* have lots of similarities. According to *20000 Leagues Under the Sea*, (1) “Ships at sea had encountered an enormous thing, a long, spindle-shaped object, sometimes phosphorescent, and infinitely larger and faster than a whale.” (Verne 3); (2) “There is a powerful agent, responsive, prompt, facile, that meets our every need on board. That agent is electricity (Verne 77)”; (3) “Tall pieces of furniture, made of black rosewood inlaid with brass, contained in their deep shelves hundreds, thousands of books, uniformly bound.” (Verne 69) As can be concluded from the three quotes from *20000 Leagues Under the Sea*, the submarine in the novel is (1) in the shape of a whale, (2) uses electricity as its energy, and (3) has big rooms for thousands of books. According to the description in the 29th chapter of *The New Story of a Stone*, “(1) the submarine is in the style of a whale...and (2) it is run by electrical machine... (3) on the four walls of the study are thousands of books” (Wu 224). In addition to these similarities, both the submarines had gone to the Pacific Ocean, Oceania, and the South Pole, and had discovered undersea tunnels near the South Pole.

However, Wu didn't simply imitate Verne's *20000 Leagues Under the Sea*, but he made some adjustments to the submarine by adding traditional Chinese elements into it. The room in Baoyu's submarine that has thousands of books was not exactly the same as the Nautilus in *20000 Leagues Under the Sea*. For example, in the submarine Nautilus, “side by side were masterpieces ancient and modern, all the classics of history, poetry, fiction, science, from Homer to Victor Hugo, Xenophon to Michelet, Rabelais to Mme (Verne 70)”,

all of these books are Western classics; while the submarine in *The New Story of a Stone* had the four treasures of the study (Wu 225), which are the four most important stationaries for the Chinese traditional literati. Moreover, soft porcelain was used on the metal surface and the interior wall of the submarine to protect people in the submarine from getting hurt by the electric generator of the submarine (Wu 226). According to the Old Youth, the soft porcelain is a scientific invention that derived from Chinese traditional culture: “As had been mentioned in Liu Yueshi’s poetry: ‘How come the steel that had gone through water and fire became something so soft that it could be twined around a person’s finger?’ Such things had already existed in the ancient times. So the soft porcelain that could protect the submarine is not at all surprising.” (Wu 226) It could be inferred that Wu tried to use the Chinese traditional culture to prove the uniqueness and superiority of the future Chinese science and technology. He refused to admit that advanced science and technologies were derived from Western culture alone, which implies that he thought Chinese elements need to be integrated into the future development of technology, so that the future Chinese science technology could hardly be transcended by other countries, as the Chinese elements are hard to be imitated by other countries.

Furthermore, a western submarine was described in Chapter 31 to serve as a foil to the submarine that belonged to the Civilized Wonderland. After Baoyu and his companions had arrived at the northern part of Oceania through an undersea tunnel, they encountered a submarine that belonged to a western country. Baoyu found that the western submarine was covered with shellfish and seaweed, while the submarine of the Civilized wonderland wasn’t.

According to the explanation of the Old Youth, it was because that the shell of the submarine in the Civilized Wonderland was specially designed to get rid of shellfish and seaweed. He also emphasized that the travel speed of the western submarine was only half of the travel speed of the submarine in the Civilized Wonderland (Wu 246). From the comparison between the western submarine and the submarine of the Civilized Wonderland, the author of the novel tried to fantasize that the submarine in Civilized wonderland was far better than the western submarine, from which it could be inferred that Wu tried to prove that the science and technologies in the future China would be much better than the science and technologies in western countries.

After analyzing the narration of the interior part of the moving space, this thesis also tries to analyze the spaces that outside the moving space, as submarine was used to explore the exterior spaces. In the South Pacific Ocean, Baoyu and his companions hunted a big fish called the Tiao fish, which was recorded in the Chinese classic text *Classic of Mountains and Seas*. He also hunted the Kun fish that was described in the book *Chuang Tzu* (Wu 236). Here, the novel tried to fantasize that many biological and geographical records that had been described in the Chinese traditional books were not fictional. In chapter 30, Old Youth also criticized some scholars who completely repudiate the information recorded in Chinese traditional books: “The group of people I hate most is the people who claim that they know everything about astronomy and geography, while they completely deny the authenticity of Chinese traditional books without any personal experience. All they had done was to read some western geological books that had been translated into Chinese. Today I have found the

Tiao fish, which will help me redress the injustice that those scholars had imposed on the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*.” (Wu 236) By criticizing the scholars who believe in the western books without their own investigation and by describing the legendary animals of ancient Chinese books, Wu tried to emphasize the importance of Chinese traditional culture through submarine, the product of advanced science and technologies. The reason why Wu made the argument things that had been recorded in ancient Chinese books would be discovered by the future advanced technologies is that he tried to imagine that the predictions made by ancient Chinese people would be proven in the future world. In this way, the rationality of Chinese traditional culture could be proven, which could make the contemporary Chinese readers be proud of their own traditional culture. By emphasizing the importance of Chinese traditional culture, Wu tried to change the depressing situation at his time that many people had lost their confidence about the Chinese traditional culture.

Nevertheless, Western culture and technologies had inevitably influenced Wu Jianren’s view, even though he kept trying to prove Chinese culture’s superiority over Western culture: the narration of submarine and its related descriptions in the novel share lots of similarities with Western colonial culture, even though the author announced in his novel that modern Western culture is barbarous.

The reason why submarine was chosen as transportation for Baoyu and Old Youth to use is worthwhile discussion. Baoyu and his companions explored several places, including a deserted island on the Pacific Ocean, a coral island in the Antarctic Ocean, the sea under the ice sheet of the South Pole, a subsea tunnel near the Oceania, and the sea under the equator

(Wu 225-249). None of these places were controlled by Western powers. The reason why submarine was chosen as transportation is that submarine can explore the new spaces under the sea that had not yet been discovered and controlled by the Western powers. However, different from Andrew Jones's argument that the Civilized Wonderland "occupies a position of unquestioned global hegemony (Jones 51)", this thesis holds the opinion that the novel does not reflect any of the author's attempts of occupying the undersea spaces that had not yet controlled by the Western powers. Even though the characters in the novel took resources from the undersea spaces, they did not think about occupying the spaces. As had been mentioned in the former part of the thesis, Wu was deeply annoyed by the way that Western powers took control of lots of places in China. Therefore, even Wu himself might have not realized that his story about Baoyu's adventure in the Civilized Wonderland shared lots of similarities with western colonial culture.

There are several similarities between Baoyu's explorations of the undersea world in the submarine with western colonial culture. To begin with, both Baoyu's exploration and western colonial culture emphasize the importance of the ocean. According to the book *Colonialism & Modernity*, "it would have been impossible to retain overseas colonies without ocean-going sailing ships, disciplined and well equipped armies" (Gillen and Ghosh, 15). Hence, ocean and a country's power over the sea are essential for a country to enforce influence over its colonies. "In the fifteenth-century age of discoveries, that colonial 'empires' are established by sea powers" (Kohn, 7). Taking control of sea power was the first step for a country to form its own colonial 'empire'. The fact that submarine was chosen as

an important form of transportation in the narration of the Civilized Wonderland also represents the author's emphasis on the importance of the ocean. The advanced technology of the submarine in the Civilized Wonderland represents the author's attempt to imagine the future China taking control of the power of the sea.

Secondly, both Baoyu's exploration and western colonial culture advocate the spirit of adventure. "For centuries to come the hazardous romance of exploration and conquest would fascinate Europeans and their descendants." (Gillen and Ghosh, 12) The western countries' taking control over the colonies began with the adventurers' discoveries of "new" land. The adventurers' discovery of "new" land requires the spirit of adventure. In the description of *The New Story of a Stone*, Baoyu and his companions fought with various kinds of monsters, and discovered various kinds of treasures under the sea. After they went back to the Civilized Wonderland and brought back various kinds of treasures and creatures, Baoyu and Old Youth were highly praised by the emperor of the Civilized Wonderland, Dongfang Wenming, who praised their spirit of adventure (Wu 273). The emperor's avocation of the spirit of adventure in the Civilized Wonderland could become the motivation for more people in the country to travel around the world and discover new places. Even though occupation of the new places is never mentioned in the novel, discovering a new place could be the basis for colonizing or taking control over this specific place.

Thirdly, both the Baoyu's exploration and western colonial culture involve violence and exploitation over other areas. According to Loomba, "Colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods." (Loomba 2) In the story of *The New*

Story of a Stone, five hundreds of martens, tons of fish and corals was taken back to the Civilized Wonderland, much like colonists taking control over other people's goods. According to Gillen and Ghosh, "A colony is a community of emigrants to a new territory, the previous inhabitants, if any, being killed, driven out, enslaved, assimilated or accommodated in some way." (Gillen and Ghosh 14). In *The New Story of a Stone*, Baoyu's companions fought with the mermaids in the South Pacific Ocean. They also killed tons of Tiao fish and seahorses there. The mermaids and other sea creatures could be seen as the inhabitants of the South Pacific Ocean, but Baoyu and his companions treated them with violence through the weapons provided by the submarine.

Fourthly, even though Baoyu and Old Youth didn't try to take over the land or territories under the sea, as had been mentioned above, they explored the world undersea to prove that the spaces that had been recorded in the old Chinese classic, *Classic Of Mountains and Seas*, truly existed. This is Wu Jianren's way to reconstruct the narration of geographical discoveries that was mainly narrated by the Western scholars. In the western world, from the second half of the 18th century, "governments began to fund expeditions at least partly motivated by 'pure science'. These expeditions charted coastlines, collected geographical, biological and anthropological data, and thus stimulated colonization and settlement." (Gillen and Ghosh 34) Wu tried to make Chinese narration of the geographical discoveries through exploring the mysterious, undeveloped underwater world. By doing so, Wu expressed his wish that future China could compete with western powers' control over the realm of geographical science.

On the one hand, Wu tried to prove that Chinese traditional culture and future technologies are better than Western culture and technologies through his description of a submarine. He tried to use modern technology to prove the legitimacy and superiority of traditional Chinese culture, which could help readers in reality identify proudly with their own traditional culture. On the other hand, from the description of the submarine, it could be seen that Western culture and technology deeply influenced Wu Jianren's view toward time and space, even though he kept trying to prove Chinese culture's superiority over Western culture. His ideas shared lots of similarities with Western colonial culture, even though his novel claimed that modern Western culture is barbarous. Both Wu's ideas and western colonial culture emphasize the importance of sea power and the spirit of adventure; both Baoyu's and colonialist's behaviors involve violence and exploitation, and tried to reconstruct a new narration of geographical discoveries for the world.

8. The Conclusion

In conclusion, by analyzing the two spaces museum and submarine in Wu Jianren's novel *The New Story of a Stone*, this thesis argues that Wu holds a paradoxical proposition towards China and the West, and traditional indigenous culture and foreign modern culture: he tried to express his opinion to the readers that even though China needed to learn the advanced science and technology from the Western countries, Chinese people should always respect and be proud of Chinese traditional culture, and should never forget their identity as

“Chinese people”. However, his portrayal of utopian spaces reveals the fact that his ideas share lots of similarities with Western colonial culture. In the discussion of the museum, this thesis argues that Wu attempted to put Chinese culture as the priority in the hierarchical order and to guide the Chinese masses in the late Qing dynasty to recognize their national identity through the reconstruction of Chinese cultural history. Through the analysis of the submarine, this thesis argues that although Wu tried to integrate Chinese traditional culture into future imagination of advanced science and technology, in order to enhance the Chinese masses’ confidence toward Chinese traditional culture, he was actually deeply influenced by the Western colonial culture. His idea shared similarities with the colonial culture in four perspectives: the emphasis on the importance of the ocean; the advocacy of the spirit of adventure; the violence and exploitation of other areas on the earth; the attempt to rewrite the history of global geographical discoveries.

There are lots of issues that remain to be solved, for example: what is the relationship between Wu Jianren’s political views and Liang Qichao’s political views? To what extent did the Wuxu politicians influence Wu Jianren? How did other spaces describe in the novel present Wu Jianren’s view toward China and the West? What is the difference between the Confucianism of the Civilized Wonderland and the Chinese classical interpretation of Confucianism? What influences had *The New Story of a Stone* taken to the readers in the late Qing dynasty?

APPENDIX

Translation from Chapter 1-2, 36-40

Chapter 1

It is a fact commonly acknowledged that any person who is successful in his or her career, or good at writing, must be quite unique in his or her area of expertise. If a person's career relies on other people's works, the person might be named after a new term that has come into vogue recently. This term is "dependent personality". In addition, it is likely that

nothing good would come of this person. Needless to say, the theory mentioned above could be easily applied in the area of novel writing. If you find it hard to believe me in saying so, we might take *Xixiang Ji* as an exemplar of this. Later generations wrote four sequel chapters to the book *Xixiang Ji* based off the original fourth chapter, *Roused From A Dream*. Jin Shengtian was unsparing in his critique of these four chapters. After the surge in popularity of *Shuihu zhuan*, sequels to both *Shuihu zhuan* and *Dangkou Zhi* appeared, and were criticized by later generations. After the appearance of *Xiyou Ji*, there was a book called *Hou Xiyou* that a few people had heard about. Having told you about these few examples, you might wonder: why should people even write the sequels of books, as if one were adding a dog tail onto a marten, only to be subsequently ridiculed by others? Me writing the book *Xin Shitou Ji*, is it not like drawing a foot on a snake? After the publication of Mr. Cao Xueqin's book *Dream Of The Red Chamber*, the later generations wrote countless continuations of *Dream Of The Red Chamber*: *Later Dream Of The Red Chamber*, *Supplemenedt Dream Of The Red Chamber*, *The Second Dream Of The Red Chamber*, etc. There are so many absurd works of this genre that the precise number defies calculation. There's not a single reader that speaks highly of these works. Could it be said that my work *The New Story of a Stone* has the same problem? However, in my opinion, a writer must have plenty of good ideas before he puts pen to paper. When he or she is writing, the writer doesn't necessarily require the admiration of others. All he or she wishes for is to put into writing whatever he or she wants, and to write about one's own ideals. The praise or denigration of later generations has little to do with the author. This is the opinion that I hold. That is why I wrote *The New Story of a Stone*,

paying little heed to the opinions of others. Regardless, I will likely never hear the opinions of my readers, no matter their opinions good or bad.

Let us return to the issue at hand. The people who undertake the continuation of *Dream Of The Red Chamber* always write about how Lin Daiyu rose from the dead. All they could write about is a love affair between a man and a woman. How about I simply tell a story about how Jia Baoyu never died and become a very accomplished individual? Maybe the story is absurd, but it can also be a story that could make readers laugh. Please see below the opening words I came up with:

There was a brilliant teenager who wanted to bring peace and stability to the country. How great is this ambition? The universe was as small as a pill, but how could it bear such change and turmoil? Even though the dragon spring was only three inches deep, it shined with boundless radiance. Sunlight and moonlight were gorgeous. It was just a pity that there were two hundred or three hundred layers of evil spirits blocking people from the sun and moon. It made people yearn for the light so much that they nearly went mad! I had a good brain, but there was not a single good place for me to settle my thoughts. All I had left is blood, sweat and tears! I poured all my blood, sweat and tears into the Sea of Japan. My blood, sweat and tears then turn into frightful billows and terrible waves. Suddenly I looked back to my life, finding that all the things I had done before were so absurd! The most frightening thing is: the literary circle, the battlefield, the fame and the wealth, were in reality nothing more than a muddled account-book that spans five thousands years of human existence.

Let us tell only the story of Jia Baoyu took Jia Lan with him to participate in imperial examination. After three rounds of examinations, they left the examination room to find that the Mangmang Dashi and Miaomiao Zhenren were waiting for him outside. They wanted to take Baoyu to return to his original nature. However, when Jia Lan turned around, Baoyu was nowhere to be found. You should know that Baoyu had already thoroughly grasped the nature of his preexistence, and had tried to get rid of all his desires in just one day. So that although Baoyu's family members created a great deal of disturbance, like men and horses thrown off their feet, Baoyu just gave up and ignored them. Dashi and Zhenren first took him to the Kunling Yi to bid goodbye to his father Jia Zheng, and then sent him to the Qinggeng Feng of Dahuang Mountain. They built a grass temple and made Baoyu engage in spiritual rituals there.

After that, I don't know how many generations had passed, and how many inexorable dooms had befallen the world, yet Baoyu's heart remained peaceful, like withered wood and dying embers. For him, hundreds or thousands of years were like a single day. On one of these days, something rather special occurred. On this day, Jia Baoyu suddenly thought about how the Goddess of Creation Nü Wa once created and refined the five-colored stone to fix a hole in the vault of heaven. He thought: "all of the thirty-six thousand and five hundred stones were used except one: me. Later, even though I came to life and was embodied with spirit, I spent many years of my life simply cavorting with womenfolk. But my wish to fix the sky was never accomplished. If I could accomplish this desire, I could end my life happily and with no regrets." In this way, Baoyu's worldly desires became unsettled, and he couldn't

help but getting seized by sudden wild whims. His wishes were so urgent that it felt as if he would burst into flame at any moment. He then forgot everything he had experienced. All he wanted was to go back to his home and accomplish his dream. But later he thought about how he had shaved his head and became a monk: "how could I go back home looking so ungainly? Not only my father would be mad if he saw me, but also my sisters would dislike me because my hair is such a mess. It is better for me to wait for a while, and go back when my hair grows longer." After he had made up his mind, he waited, day by day, for his hair to grow back out. It was most peculiar that several generations felt as if they were but a single day as he was undertaking this spiritual practice. At this time when he was trying to grow his hair back out, a day felt as long as a year. Every day he wished for his hair to grow longer, but the hair stubbornly refused to grow faster. Baoyu was so anxious yet all he could do was to sigh and huff in his room. It was not easy for Baoyu to wait for a year and more, and his hair was only inches long, barely enough to be plaited into a braid. Yet Baoyu was so excited by this peculiar development that he roughly plaited his hair and opened his parcel, finding out that his half-old, half-new lay clothes that he had worn in the imperial examination room were still there. He changed into those clothes and put on his jade. To his surprise, he felt something in his pocket. When he took it out and looked at it, he found that certain something was a small mirror he got from Zi Juan years ago. He held the mirror and looked at his own reflection, finding out that his look was just the same as the old days. He therefore sorted out his outfit, went out of the grass temple, and began to walk, paying no heed whatsoever to the directions of north, south, east and west. All he hoped was that he might meet some people

and could ask them for directions. However, he didn't see anybody. He looked up, realizing that the sun was descending toward the western mountains. Baoyu didn't know for how long he had walked, but fortunately his feet were not yet tired. When he looked back, he could not even see the shadow of Qinggeng Mountain. He didn't know where he was standing. When he was wandering, he suddenly looked up and found that he was standing right under a piece of dark cloud. The cloud became larger and larger; and rain began to pour out of it after a while. Baoyu was so worried that he stamped his feet and said: "how unlucky I am! There's no house nearby, where can I take shelter?" He found no immediate solution to this conundrum, and all he could do was to run aimlessly hither and thither. He ran for a while until he saw a forest in front of him, and he ducked hastily into it. Originally, he had hoped to find a house in the forest for him to hide. But when he went into the forest and looked around, he found no houses whatsoever, just an old temple. Baoyu was as excited as if he found some priceless treasure, and ran hurriedly into the temple. He found that the gate of this temple had already collapsed upon itself, so it was hard to get away from the rain under the gate. He could only run inside the hall.

It was midnight and a cluster of extremely tall and ancient trees surrounded the four sides of the temple, making the hall extraordinarily dark. Baoyu was in such a rush that his foot was caught by something as he ran down to the corridor, and he tripped. As he was standing up, all of a sudden, a person near his feet stood up and cursed: "which blind good-for-nothing dares to kick their superior?" Baoyu was about to make his apologies to the person he had kicked, but suddenly realized that his voice was rather familiar. Baoyu couldn't

help fixing his eyes on this person. The person also looked Baoyu up and down. All of a sudden, he walked closer, hugged Baoyu and said: “this is my little master! You’ve finally appeared! Damn it, I really have put my foot in it now!” The person turned out to be no stranger, but was none other than Beiming, Baoyu’s servant. Baoyu was in ecstasy and said: “why have you come here? What exactly is this place?” Beiming said: “dear master, you are still who you are after you left. You really don’t know where you have been walking into?” He then looked into the half-bright, half-dark environment, caught the sight of the crooked gate, felt astonished and said: “damn it! I was muddled because of too much sleep. How was I been taken to this place? What time is it, my master?” Baoyu said: “you truly are confused, my dear fellow. How could you sleep without remembering the time? Isn’t it midnight right now?” Beiming said: “oh no. I slept early yesterday. How could I sleep for a whole day today? This is an abandoned temple with no inhabitants; we’d better find some wood.” He thought for a while, and then remembered by some stroke of fortune he had brought his kindling kit with him. He took the kit out of his pocket and began to scratch at the flint. Sparks flew from the stone, but the tinder did not catch. He felt so anxious that he began to explore the space around them. When he explored the east side, he groped in the dark and felt a small door. He pushed the door open and slipped inside, finding that there was another courtyard behind the door. In the courtyard there were two small rooms, with light coming out of them. Beiming was delighted and said: “there’s someone in the room.” He then stepped into the room, finding that an old Daoist priest was crouching on the floor and trying to light a fire. The priest looked up and saw caught sight of Beiming. “Ya!” he cried in fright,

and ran to hide in the corner. He then cried “buddha” over and over again. Beiming was surprised at this odd exhibition and said: “I’m but a regular person, why would you call me the Buddha?” The Daoist priest asked: “aren’t you the immortal boy statue that lay at the end of the corridor?” Beiming was only barely paying attention when, suddenly, a scent of porridge came out of the pot. At once he was overcome by such hunger that he could have eaten the porridge with his bare hands. When suddenly he thought Baoyu must be hungry, he thought about asking the priest for a bowl of porridge, so that they could endure the night. After thinking this plan through, he resolved to ask Baoyu to come into the room with him.

As he walked through the small door, a person suddenly ran out of the room and was passing by them, and then ran out so fast as if he was flying. Baoyu was astonished but he didn’t know what happened. Following Beiming, he went inside of the room. Beiming found that the priest had disappeared. They checked the back room, but no one was there, either. Under the light, Baoyu glanced at Beiming and was frightened by the way he looked. “You bad boy! How did you make such a mess of yourself?” Beiming said: “am I a mess?” Baoyu took the mirror out of his pocket and asked him to look at himself in the mirror. Beiming did what Baoyu said, and found his face covered in dirt, a quarter-inch deep. Beiming felt both astonished and amused. He hurriedly put down the mirror, and looked everywhere for a basin and towel. He eventually found a water basin and washed his face regardless of the temperature of the water. Then he found that his body was also covered in ash. So he had to take off his clothes, shaking the dirt out of them, and cursing at the same time: “that good-for-nothing monk was trying to play a trick on me.” After shaking down the dirt, Beiming put

on his clothes, found and washed some bowls and chopsticks, filled the bowls with porridge, and served Baoyu. Baoyu stopped after just one bowl and asked: “where did this porridge come from?” Beiming said: “my master, you needn’t concern yourself with such trifles: ask again after you finish the porridge.” Baoyu again asked: “where exactly is this place?” At the time, Beiming was so hungry that he filled his bowl with porridge, eating and answering at the same time: “ever since you disappeared, our family was in such a mess that even the dogs were jumping around and chickens were flying everywhere. As for the masters, there was not a single one who was not reduced to tears. As for us servants, we searched for you outside the house every day. Later on, the result of the imperial examination came out, and you became a first-degree scholar in the government, ranking the seventh in that exam.” As he mentioned this fact, he suddenly said: “oh yes, I never congratulated my master.” He performed a series of obeisances towards Baoyu. Then he got up and continued to talk: “what a state we were all in! So bad that even the Emperor knew about it. He made an order to all the government officials to look for you. But there was still no result. Later, our Lord came back and told us that he had met you at the Kunling Yi, and you had decided to become a monk. At first, our lady believed him. But later on, she didn’t believe in what our lord had said. She claimed that our lord didn’t talk to the monk face to face, so that he must have mistaken someone else for you, and his vision must have been blurred. So they ordered us to search for you again. This time, we truly searched everywhere including Beijing and its suburbs. In order to find where you were, people were also sent to the southern part of China. I was sent to Jinling. They guessed that you might chose to live in our southern mansion on the spur of the moment.

That's why they sent me here. It was late when I reached Jinling. But I was still ten or more miles away from the city. I was afraid that the city gate might be closed before I arrived. So I was put up at a place called Yuxiao Palace for the night. The Yuxiao Palace was splendid and magnificent. It was so prominent that there were more than one hundred Daoist priests living in the palace. They asked me to stay in one of the wing rooms. I don't know what transpired since then but I slept until now. I am also confused about how I ended up here." He finished his porridge while he was talking. Baoyu was also confused and worried, and he asked: "whose porridge is it? And why is no one here?" Beiming said: "my master, do not ask such questions at this moment. Here is a bed and a quilt. You can sleep here for the night. We can go into the city tomorrow and go back to our own mansion." Baoyu agreed. Beiming therefore took the light into the room. Baoyu went into the back room and saw that there was a square table under the window. There were some books piled randomly on the table. Baoyu sat beside the table and grabbed a book at random to pass the time. When he opened the book, he found it was *The First Myth*. He put down the book and grabbed another one. This book was called *The Wizard of Oz*. All the books were deadly dull. He saw that there were some other books that was wrapped in paper. He picked one up and opened it, but it was just a selection of the Confucian classics. His curiosity was piqued by the paper that the books were wrapped in. He spread open the papers and found the two Chinese characters "Xin Wen"[News]. Beside the character "Wen" there was a hole. There should have been another character written in the place of the hole, but he could not make it out. Beneath the "Xin Wen" there were some small characters. He carefully read it and found that it was an

editorial. He felt confused as he read on to a number of articles about current affairs. He took this paper up, reading it again and again. He could understand some of the articles, but could not understand a number of others. Flipping back through, written on the first line, he saw that it was the X day of the X month of the 26th year of the Guangxu reign of the Great Qing; in the Western calendar this was the X day of the X month of the year 1901, Sunday. Baoyu was so astonished. If you want to know what Baoyu was astonished about, you should read the next chapter.

Chapter 2

In the last chapter I told how Baoyu was astonished by the newspaper. He thought to himself: “How many days exactly has it been since the day I left home? According to the content of this paper, he guessed that it must be something like the Peking Gazette. But this paper was not exclusively about things that happened in the government. It also wrote about things that happened outside of the Emperor’s palace. Normally, one of these papers would be published everyday. According to the date on the paper, even the title of the reigning dynasty had been changed since I left home. It is pity that I was so muddled when I was meditating in the temple that I didn't remember the date. I could see the year 1901 under the headline. It is even harder to understand.” When he was thinking, Beiming came in with laughing and said: “my master, look at this.” He handed Baoyu a small case after finishing

speaking. Baoyu took it and saw a case made of yellow paper glued together. On the small case were two characters written across horizontally: "Harmony Prosperity." On the back of the case was a small, delicate painting. When he tried to open it, he found the case was without a lid. He turned it over and over and observed it, finding that it was a nested container. He pushed the box to find some small wooden splints. On each end of the splints was a small red dot. He gave back it to Beiming and said: "these are just children's toys." Beiming took it, and he took out one splint and observed it closely. He said to himself: "how on earth do people play with this?" After finishing speaking, he lifted the stick and tried to burn the red-dotted end with the lamp. To everyone's surprise, the stick burst into flames with a big whooshing sound and frightened Baoyu. Baoyu said: "stop it! It's clearly very flammable." Beiming wouldn't listen to him and said: "the flame is too small when only a tiny tip of the stick burns. We should put all the match heads together and create a fire ball in the yard." He found a nail as he was saying this. He squatted on the ground, poured out the small sticks, and scratched the red dots. After he tried twice, out of nowhere, the third stick burst into flame with a loud "pa!" Beiming was surprised and happy. Baoyu was watching on the side and said: "stop it now, let me have a look." Beiming handed the stick over to Baoyu. Baoyu said: "where is the case?" Beiming handed the case over, too. Baoyu looked it over and told Beiming: "you see, this side of the case is quite rough, like it is made of sand. There are several red marks on the coarse side. Maybe the stick would burn when you strike it on this side. You should try one." Beiming then took a stick and struck it, but the stick broke. Baoyu said: "you silly boy. Try again, but with a lighter touch." Beiming took another one

and struck it gently. He struck twice but nothing happened. He then struck it for the third time but was too afraid of the stick breaking. Baoyu said: "your movements are too soft." Beiming tried another time. The stick burned with a sound of "Pa" as expected. Beiming said with ecstasy: "my second master, you are so smart. I wouldn't have known the stick would burn like that for my whole life if you hadn't told me." Baoyu said: "put it back in your pocket, hurry! We could use this to make fire. You should treat it gently without striking it. The stick would burst into flame when you scratch it with a nail." Beiming took it back and said: "this case is much more convenient than the steel flint kit. I have no use for the flint as I have this case now." Baoyu picked one of the sticks that had been used and looked over, finding that the red dot had turned into charcoal. He took the case and struck it, and the stick broke. He thought: "one stick can only make fire once. It would be better if the stick could make fire several more times." Beiming took it back and said: "second master, please go to sleep. After you go home tomorrow, I shall send the good news back to Beijing." Baoyu said: "I can sleep here on this bed tonight. How about you?" Beiming said: "little master, don't worry about me, I have a place to sleep." Baoyu wrapped his clothes and lay down. Beiming said: "anyhow you should take off your clothes and sleep. Or you may catch a cold." Baoyu said: "today I'm not the same as the old days, I can make anything do with tonight. I won't catch a cold, as I'm getting stronger." Beiming closed the door. He put several chairs in front of the door and lay down. Baoyu said: "how can you sleep like that?" Beiming said: "I'm afraid that you would run away again. I couldn't take that risk." Baoyu laughed and said: "don't worry. I won't run away again."

Nothing else out of the ordinary happened that night. The next morning, Baoyu got up and roused Beiming. They heated some water in the outer room, cursorily washed their faces and went out. Once again they went out through the small gate. It turned out that there were three main halls outside their room, but the halls were destroyed. Most of the corridors had caved in upon themselves. The immortal statues were lying on all sides. When they went out of the mountain gate and looked back, they found that the placard inscribed with “Yuxiao Palace” was still there, but was hanging crooked. Beiming was confused at that moment. He thought: “the Yuxiao Palace I stayed at had carved beams and painted rafters. How could it have changed into a place like this as I slept?” He was confused as they began their journey. Baoyu was also confused after he read about the date on the newspaper. They didn’t know their location, so they just walked at random.

After they walked for four or five miles, they arrived at a small village and ran into an old man with some farm tools. Beiming walked over to him and asked: “can you tell me how could we get to Jinling city, and where are we right now?” The old man said: “the name of this place is Wuwei Village, which is under the jurisdiction of the Jinling government. If you want to go to the city, just head to the east, and you will arrive in ten miles.” Beiming thanked the old man and went east with Baoyu. People’s houses began to appear little by little. After they got into the city, Baoyu said: “sure enough we have got into the city, but where is our mansion?” Beiming said: “my master, please don't worry. We are the family of the eminent marquis. We will know the mansion’s location as soon as we ask people about it.” After finishing speaking, he stopped a passerby and asked: “where is the Rong mansion?”

The passerby answered: "I don't know." Beiming asked other five or six people, but no one knew. Baoyu said: "how could these passersby possibly know where the Rong mansion is? You should ask someone inside one of the stores." Beiming listened to him and asked several people in the stores, but still, no one knew about the place. Baoyu was confused, he thought: "should we take this as that this is not Jinling, and we've taken a wrong turn?" Beiming said: "you must be tired having walked for so long. Can you see the tea house over there? There are lots of people having tea. Why don't we go in, have a cup of tea and take a rest, and then set off again?" Baoyu nodded and agreed.

They picked a neat teahouse and went inside. Baoyu picked a seat; Beiming picked another seat at the other side and sat down. The waiter made and served them tea, Baoyu sipped at the tea slowly. Baoyu thought about the reason why no one knew about the Rong mansion even though Beiming had asked after it so much. It must have been simply that Beiming doesn't have a ready tongue. It occurred to him that it would not be convenient for him to ask someone in the street, so he might have a better chance if he asked someone about the Rong mansion under the pretext of drinking tea. After they sat for a while, he saw a customer with gentle manner come and sit at a nearby table. He thought: "this person may know about the Rong mansion. I should ask him." He therefore stood up, made a bow and asked: "I am someone who has lost his way. I would like to ask a few questions, if you would be so kind. Could you help me?" The person hurriedly stood up, greeted Baoyu and said: "I would answer everything I know when you ask for directions. Please, it's not bothering at all." Baoyu said: "I want to go to the Rong mansion. But I don't know which street I should

go to.” After he had heard Baoyu’s question, the man looked Baoyu up and down and said: “It seems that you have never left your home. You seem to have asked me the wrong question.” Baoyu said: “why do you say that?” The person said: “I only know about a Ning mansion, but I don't know about a Rong mansion.” Baoyu was delighted and answered: “that’s great. If only you could tell me the location of Ning mansion, I could find where the Rong mansion is.” The person then asked: “how peculiar. How could you find the Rong mansion by finding the Ning mansion?” Baoyu said: “you don’t know this, but these two were originally one family. If I could find the Ning mansion, naturally I could find my own home.” The person became impatient and said: “If you want to get to the Ning mansion, you should firstly take a boat to the Wu lake, and then hire a private boat or a horse, so that you could get there. Why should you ask for it at Nanjing province? You should know that the Ning mansion belongs to Anhui Province!” Baoyu was shocked after he heard these words, he said: “I wasn't asking about that Ning mansion. I’m asking for the mansion that belonged to minister Ning and minister Rong.” The person shook his head and said: “I don't know. I don't know.” Before Baoyu answered, Beiming interrupted from the side: “my master, ignore him. There’s no one in Nanjing province and Beijing who don't know about the mansion of our Jia family. If he doesn't know about it, he must be a peasant. There’s really no point asking him.” The person ignored Beiming when he heard the words. Beiming then spoke to himself: “even though grandma Liu is a woman, she could find our home. Our mansion at the south is no less good than other mansions. It is very peculiar that no one here knows about it.” The person looked first at Baoyu, and then turned to Beiming after he heard Beiming’s

words. He turned around and asked Baoyu: “what were you talking about just now?” Baoyu said: “nothing. If you don't know about it, it is okay. I can just ask somebody else.” The person said: “I heard about you just now. Were you talking about Jia Baoyu’s family in the book *Dream Of The Red Chamber*?” Baoyu was delighted and said: “yes that’s it! That’s it! But I don't know about *Dream Of The Red Chamber*.” The person said: “did you become a dork after reading the novel?” He then laughed and said: “do you want to know the location of the mansion, or you want to see Jia Baoyu or Lin Daiyu?” Baoyu said: “I am Jia Baoyu.” Beiming interrupted from the side: “how could you mention his full name in front of my second master? You really have forgotten your manners.” The man was stupefied for a moment, pointed at Beiming and said: “who is he?” Baoyu said: “he is my servant, Beiming.” The person looked up to the sky, rubbed his eyes and said: “gosh. If it’s not ghosts who I’ve met today, then it’s certainly a bunch of madmen.” As he spoke, another young man came nearby. The person saw the young man and asked him to sit with them and said: “I have always said that you young men should not just read novels. Now here are some people who have read too much novels so that they have become a joke. I read a book the other day. In the book there’s a story about how a person loved Miss Yingying in *Xixiang ji* so much that he made himself sick. I thought the writer only made up this story to admonish his readers. Who knows ...” Having said this, he pointed at Baoyu and said: “and here stands this person who claims to be Jia Baoyu, and who keeps going on about the Rong mansion and the Ning mansion. Did you became a madman after you read *Dream Of The Red Chamber*?” The man kept speaking and criticizing, which motivated the customers of the teashop to gather around

and look at Baoyu. Baoyu felt very awkward. He stood up sheepishly, asked Beiming to pay for the tea, and then walked out of the teahouse. He then said to Beiming: “I was confused to begin with! Yet I am even more so now, having heard that person’s words. It seems that we won’t be able to find our home for the moment. How about we discuss about it after we find a place to stay?” After their talk, the two of them found a neat room in a hotel and unpacked their luggage. Beiming firstly came into Baoyu’s inner room and made his bed, and then went to his own outer room and made his own bed. Baoyu asked Beiming to go out and buy a pen and some ink to use. Beiming agreed and went out.

A moment later, Beiming came back with writing brush, ink stick, ink slab and paper. He also brought back tea and some tea bowls. When Baoyu was at home, he enjoyed enough of the luxurious life, and his life was filled with girls. When he became a monk, he lived with wood and stone, and his neighbors were deer and pigs. His ears were devoid of sound, and his eyes were devoid of color. After countless generations, he thought that even the ordinary stuffs seemed delicate. He couldn't help but observe those stuffs for a while. He then suddenly thought about the person he met at the teahouse: “he said something about *Dream Of The Red Chamber*, and it would certainly appear that *Dream Of The Red Chamber* is a novel. He then surmised that I have become crazy having read such a novel and that’s why I call myself Jia Baoyu. I am Jia Baoyu. What do I know about *Dream Of The Red Chamber*! Several years before, Zhen Baoyu shared the same appearance and the same first name as me, which is strange enough. Does someone in the *Dream Of The Red Chamber* share both the same first name and the last name with me? I must see what this book is all about!” After

finishing his thoughts, he wrote the three Chinese characters *Dream Of The Red Chamber* with his writing brush and asked Beiming to buy it from the bookstore. After a while, Beiming came back with the book. Baoyu looked at the one-foot high book. He didn't read the whole book word by word at first. To begin with he just took out the first volume and tried to skim through the chapter titles. Who would have thought that this was a book filled with images? He then silently admired the people's names in the book as he causally turned the pages. He found the table of contents at the end of this book. He then carefully read the chapter names one by one. He was both astonished and confused. After he read through the chapters' names, he began to read the texts. All he wanted was to read about "Jia Baoyu." He overlooked the irrelevant passages of text and only read the most essential content. When he read more, he became more and more anxious. After reading the stories in the book, he thought back to his life, as if he had been cut off from the outside world for ages. That he could read his own life story from a book was nothing short of a dream. The more he read, the more he thought about it. The more he thought about it, the more he read about it. The more he read about it, the more he felt confused. Suddenly, Beiming came in laughing and said: "master, guess how much this lot costs!" If you want to know what Beiming had just brought in, please see the next chapter.

Chapter 36

In the last chapter, we told the story of how Baoyu and Old Youth went to the Loyalty District in their flying cart. When they arrived at the military camp, Old Youth handed in

their name cards, and the two of them went in together to meet Zizhang, on account of the fact that it was Zizhang who had invited them. Old Youth introduced Zizhang to Baoyu. Looking at Zizhang, Baoyu noticed that Zizhang was a handsome man with a sparrow's jaw, a kite's shoulder, and a dignified bearing. Moreover, he later found Zizhang gentle, respectful, reserved, friendly and hospitable. Old Youth told Zizhang about the intention of their visit, saying, "We are afraid that we may disturb your government officials, so we decided to pay a special visit to your camp. We are sorry for taking such a liberty." Zizhang answered: "it's quite alright for you to watch the drills. But I'm afraid it's not so convenient for us to set up seats at the general's platform. What do we ought to do?" Old Youth said: "we understand that it's not so convenient for you to set up guest seats. We could dress ourselves up as two soldiers and watch by the side." Zizhang replied: "you are talking nonsense! How about you two wear the uniform of a staff officer and watch the drill? After all, this is an important once-a-year type of event. How do you expect us to go about it so unceremoniously?" Old Youth said: "I'm afraid that your reception place is crowded with visitors." Zizhang answered: "I have another solution. There is a man who was once my personal secretary, and he is free tomorrow. How about I ask him to accompany you as you watch the drill?" Old Youth said: "that's a wonderful idea!"

During their talk, the time-keeper in the military camp announced that it was twelve o'clock in the afternoon, so Zizhang asked both visitors to get onto the flying cart and to take lunch in their own apartment while meeting the personal secretary. The secretary's name was Gao Pan, and he styled himself as "Yutian." After lunch, Zizhang said: "please sit here,

respected guests. I'll let Yutian talk with you. I still have some errands to do in the camp. Please do excuse me for now. I'll talk to you this evening." Old Youth answered: "please feel free to go as needed." Zizhang bid goodbye to them and went out, and Gao Yutian led the two visitors to a pavillion in the backyard to relax in the shade. Baoyu said: "nearly each household in this place has a garden. There are gardens even in the tunnels, which is quite rare." Old Youth answered: "a garden is indispensable for a household. Each household relies on their garden to self-cultivate, so the garden is a quite necessary feature. Gardens are unnecessary only in under-privileged households." Gao Yutian said: "actually the circumstance you are describing has been improved greatly already. According to the new investigation of this year, the amount of families without gardens has decreased whole two thirds from last year. Maybe after two years, every household in this country would own a garden, though size of the gardens may vary." Baoyu then asked: "how come the government care so much about the gardens?" Old Youth answered: "flowers, grasses, trees and bushes are most related to sanitation. As a result, the government would cast its focus on these issues." Baoyu said: "the result of the investigation shows how large your country is." Gao Yutian said: "recently many fields in the West and the North have been developed into arable land, all of which were uncultivated land. The government first held a meeting on the uncultivated land. People from different nations came to this meeting. Domestic residents were sure to attend, and made this kind of meeting bustling with noise and excitement. The government sold all the official fields to the domestic residents, and then constructed tunnels. Many people were attracted to this place, which resulted in a uniform distribution of

population in our country.” Baoyu asked: “is that to say all the people here are evenly distributed?” Gao Yutian answered: “that’s not quite right. The farming business in Kindness District of the South and the Benevolence District of the East is flourishing. People in these two places are fewer because much of their land is cultivated.” Old Youth said: “the Trust District is filled with markets. Aren’t there many more people? Therefore the average population is basically the same. ”

During their talk, a boy came and gave them some watermelon juice to relieve their summer-heat. Baoyu asked: “I went to several places, and found that all the waiters are boys, what is the reason for that?” Old Youth answered: “they are all from poor families who could not afford the tuition for a whole day. So the boys would receive half-a-day’s education each day, and work for the other half of the day. Some of them work in the morning and study in the afternoon; some of them work in the afternoon and study in the morning.” Baoyu sighed: “all of them are so studious.” Old Youth answered: “we have a custom in our country, which says that the most humiliating thing in one’s life is being a person without general knowledge, morality, and the knowledge of literature. No family would teach their children not to read.” Baoyu asked: “are there any free schools in your country?” Old Youth answered: “we used to have a number of free schools, but not any more. We’ve spent a great deal of time discussing whether or not free schools should exist. There are mainly two kinds of opinions that originate from two different groups of people. One group of people argue that free schools are different from other kinds of schools, because they are closely related to education. Hence, the schools have to be constructed for the benefit of the poor. Another

group of people claim that even though free schools can be taken as a form of charity, it would facilitate a person's so-called 'dependent personality'. It costs nothing for a student from a poor family to receive an education. Yet it is a most frightful thought for someone to develop this kind of 'dependent personality'. If free schools do exist, how could a person develop his or her independent spirit? These two groups of people have argued for a long time over this subject, but still cannot reach a consensus. Neither side could win over the other, and so they turned to the emperor for guidance. The emperor called up hundreds of government officials to join the discussion, but still they could not reach an agreement. Later, there was a certain person who claimed that free schools were established for the benefit of the poor, yet the government officials could not be classified as 'the poor'! How could they make such a decision? Even if they did indeed reach a decision, such a decision could not represent the will of the poor. It would better to draft an official document and to inform governments of every district of this decision-making process, and thereby allow poor people from each district to express their own opinions. It is, ultimately, down to the poor to decide whether free schools should exist or not. The government should make the decision according to the approval rating of the people. The government then approved this proposal, wrote a document about this issue and sent it to every district. They asked poor students from each district to write up their own opinions into critical articles, distributed the articles among local government officials, and these officials sent the articles to the central government for the final decision. In the end, all the articles were accumulated, and all the opinions were received. The staff went through all the articles and found that more than half of the articles

advocated abandoning free schools. But the main argument in these articles was that, if every person paid for tuition himself or herself, the financial expense for society could be curtailed. On the other hand, if the government did continue to set up free schools, there would be a huge financial burden on the government to support people in receiving education. It was thus deemed better for the government to save the budget and have every student pay for themselves. After the government received these opinions, the staff was so worried that poorer students might misunderstand their opinion poll that they rewrote the arguments into a separate series of government documents, and asked the people to reread and to make amendments accordingly. Surprisingly, all the articles they received this time still argued that free schools should be abandoned. Therefore, the government finally abandoned the free school system because of the appeal from poorer groups. The government thenceforth was entirely uninvolved in funding for education. As a result of this, scholarship funding became a prize for top results in primary school exams.”

Baoyu commented: “in light of this story I can tell that every resident in your respected country has an independent spirit, and I truly respect that. But do you have schools for girls?” Gao Yutian laughed and answered: “if there were no schools for the girls, where would all the girls go for education?” Old Youth added: “with all the people in the world, half of them are men, and half of them are women. Therefore, a girl’s school always comes with a boy’s school. Pray tell, how could the quantity of schools favor one gender over another?” Baoyu asked: “are there any restrictions between men and women?” Gao Yutian answered: “how do you define restrictions between men and women?” Old Youth laughed and said: “you were

born in this place, so there are things that you don't know. I often host foreigners who visit this place, and they often bring up such issues, so I have an idea of where you are coming from.” Old Youth then continued to explain to Baoyu: “there’s no boundary between men and women. Though there are no crude customs as holding hands, hugging and kissing, women do not necessarily need to avoid men in public. When a man and a woman meet, it is same as if a man were meeting another man, or a woman meeting another woman.” Baoyu then asked: “if what you say is true, then how come you set up men and women’s schools separately?” Old Youth answered: “that’s another issue. What we value most is the education of morality. The basic moral standards for men and women are the same. However, in regards to private moral standards, there are some differences between men and women. Therefore, the books that women read are different from the books that men read, not to mention that women will end up mastering different kinds of vocational skills from men.” Baoyu said: “can I ask what kind of vocational skills women might learn?” Old Youth answered: “there are so many different types! Apart from needlework, many women choose to study certain crafts and techniques that require less physical strength. Recently, in the medical field, gynecology and pediatrics have fallen under the rubric of female vocational knowledge.” Baoyu interposed: “according to your argument about no boundary between men and women, then all the manners from the *Li Jing*, including ‘women and men should not sleep on the same bed for seven years’ and ‘women and men should not contact with each other directly’ should therefore be abandoned.” Old Youth said: “there’s another fact in this issue. The unhealthy custom of lechery will become more inevitable the less developed a

society is. That's why the sage philosophers established these rules and regulations to avoid these kinds of negative consequences. If you don't believe me, you could read the *Guo Feng*, and you will find that seven or eight poems out of every ten are licentious, which could be used to evince my argument. However, when a civilization is fully developed, everyone understands the meaning of morality. Morality has been internalized in our minds. Then why the regulations are needed? It is funny that there should be some people who blindly study the ancients with complete intransigence: they worship the ancients, frequently talking about how contemporary social morality can never compare to the social morality of the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties. Yet they don't appreciate that these dynasties were great only because they had great emperors like Yao, Shun, Wen and Wu. But the fact they actually need to know is that the emperors Yao, Shun, Wen, and Wu were products of their times. Not all the common folk of those days were as great as the sage emperors, Yao, Shun, Wen and Wu. This is not to mention the wanton practices of that time; for instance the common folk were all like Ji Rang, an old man who cared only for pleasure and entertainment. What is the point of these people if they do not possess any knowledge? If all the citizens of today were like that, our country would have collapsed in on itself. In my opinion, people should follow the ancestors who existed before the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties." Baoyu asked: "what could you mean by saying that?" Old Youth explained: "back in the time before the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, people created new things out of thin air. They invented clothes-making, temple-building, characters, herbal medicine tasting, crop-growing, fire-making, and time-calculating. Is this not something deserving of people's praise? The ancients who existed

before the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties paved the way for everything that came after them, and then emperor Yao and Shun governed the country well and peacefully without doing anything. People should know that the world was peaceful because the ancients before them had already laid a solid foundation for their society. How could some people worship the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, and yet forget about all those who came before them?” Baoyu commented: “I have always had a distaste for those who blindly worship foreigners, and yet have never thought about how those ancients were not deserving of worship.” Old Youth added: “but neither should we consider different matters as the same. If there are some advantages of the ancients that deserve our praise, why shouldn’t we praise them? I feel unsettled when there are those who claim that no one can compare to the people of the past.” Baoyu said: “the ancient people aren’t worth mentioning today; let’s talk about the people of here and now. In your country, everybody is independent and can provide for their own family. There are no beggars in your country. But I’m curious about whether or not there are brothels?” Old Youth shook his head and answered: “who would want to be a prostitute! There’s no such a thing as prostitution here. Moreover, we do not even have words like prostitute, courtesan, or brothel in our dictionaries. Do you know that there are countries in this world who call themselves ‘civilized,’ while those very same countries have brothels inside the rooms of which are mirrors hanging on each of their four walls. When men go to these brothels, they would firstly pay a small fee, and then the Madam of the brothel would press an electric bell. When the prostitutes hear the bell ringing, they will push the door made of the mirror and enter the room. When twenty or thirty of them come in naked, they would

roll onto the ground and hug each other, acting out hundreds of strange and disgusting poses, which could be called watching a sample or something... If this man is satisfied with one of them, he would take him or her into a room and have sex. The bed is placed in the center of the room. There are four small holes on the four walls. People who paid could watch through the holes into the room. You could never imagine that such a country could describe itself as a civilized country. The word “civilization” has never suffered such misuse since Creation itself!” Baoyu then said: “well, are there any theatres in this country?” Old Youth laughed and said: “neither do we have the words ‘theatre’ or ‘actor’ in our dictionary. Who would be so thick-skinned to dress himself or herself up as an actor? We do have words and music of several songs, but those are only a testament to certain ancient lyrics and musicians. When we are in a good mood, we will sing the lyrics, but only to cultivate our own taste, and would not dream of making a profit out of it.” Gao Yutian asked Old Youth: “what are you two talking about? You have lost me.” Old Youth smiled and told Baoyu: “you can see that Mr. Gao hasn’t quite understood our conversation. This shows that I haven’t been lying to you.” Thereupon Old Youth explained to Gao Yutian about what prostitutes do. Gao Yutian’s face blushed deep red and his ears grew hot. He said: “I used to read about prostitution in history books, and I thought those things were only ironic fables thought up to alert the readers. Then I read the collection of poems of the ancient people; some of the poems have the title of ‘for the singer’ or ‘for the prostitute,’ I thought such a phenomenon existed only in history books, and had disappeared in today’s world. I didn’t know that there were still such shameless people in the world. How strange!” Baoyu heard his words and was inwardly taken aback. He

thought to himself: "I used to think that my knowledge was limited. I didn't know that his knowledge was even smaller than mine!"

During their discussions, they didn't aware of the sun going down in the West. Gao Yutian asked the two to rest in the study room. At six o'clock, Zizhang came back. After dinner, he went back to the military camp once again, and finally returned at ten o'clock. Old Youth welcomed him in and said: "you truly are a busy military officer!" Zizhang laughed and answered: "it is ten o'clock, and it's nearing midnight. You could call me 'the busy boy.'" Everyone burst into laughter. Zizhang added: "I've been busy recently because I have had to prepare for tomorrow's military drill. Before this event came round, I used to have a lot more spare time, and often had nothing whatsoever to do. Why didn't you come and chat with me when I was less indisposed?" Old Youth answered, "How could I have found spare time when you were free? I asked for leave back in these days, and it just so happens that it's time for the military drill, so I've dropped by with my friend." Zizhang asked: "have you decided where to watch the drill?" Gao Yutian answered: "no, not yet." Old Youth said: "Is it alright for us to watch the drill from the sky, in the flying cart?" Zizhang refused: "not tomorrow. Tomorrow is the drill for the guerilla detachment, in which they'll be shooting towards the sky. It would be no laughing matter for us if they accidentally hit you with a stray bullet. I have already asked my staff to set up a tent with tables and chairs on the highland on the east side. You can watch the drill from there tomorrow." Old Youth asked: "how many days will the drill last this year?" Zizhang answered: "three days, as usual. However, this year we combine the military formation practice with the cannon drill, and save the third day

for training the flying cart team.” Old Youth was curious and asked: “foreigners don’t have flying carts. Do we need to train the team in advance? Do you really afraid that foreigners might invade the borders with flying carts?” Zizhang answered: “why should I wait to train my team until foreigners get their own flying carts? By the time foreigners get flying carts, it will be too late. Furthermore, if I could successfully train my team, and then foreigners invade, we could undertake a punitive expedition against them with our flying carts. The day after tomorrow, we will also experiment with a potion that Dongfang De recently invented. If the potion works as expected, it would be much more powerful than the chlorine bomb from those barbarous countries, but in a more gentle way, which would be a ideal product for the army.” Old Youth asked: “what kind of potion is both powerful and gentle? It is quite puzzling! ” Zizhang answered: “it is hard to understand when I describe it, but it is some knockout drops. What Dongfang De hates most is how doctors treat patients with their knives and needles; therefore he also hates their anesthetics. Hence, he took some anesthetics to his place, trying to find out whether they are harmful to human beings. To his surprise, though surely anesthetics are harmful, it could be improved. Unfortunately, he could not find a practical function for the improved anesthetics. Later he realized that they might be used as weapons for the army. So he intensified the dose of the anesthetics and sent them to me for an experiment. You’ll see them work when we carry out the experiment.” When Old Youth tried to ask more information about the weapon, Zizhang bid goodbye to them and went into his bedroom. If you want to know what exactly the potion is, please go on to read the next chapter.

Chapter 37

In the last chapter we talked about how Zizhang was preparing for a busy next day. It was nearly midnight, so they wrapped up the conversation early. The next morning, after Gao Yutian had finished having breakfast with Old Youth and Baoyu, they went to the drill ground accompanied by a young servant. As expected, there was a tent made of cloth on the highland, east of the commander's platform. Even though it was temporary, the tent was very neat and furnished with a table and several chairs. Baoyu saw that the general's flags had been set up on the commander's platform. Ximen Guan, dressed in his livery, sat atop the platform. By his side were staff officers, commanding officers, lieutenants, assistant commanders, attacking officers and defending officers in their brand new military uniforms, equipped with knives and swords. All the soldiers in the military camp arranged themselves into lines and went onto the drill ground in sequence. The military band on both sides of the commander's platform played martial music. When all the soldiers in the queues were still, the commander officer took out his signal flags and waved them in the wind. When the command was given, several assistants emerged carrying supports onto the drill ground to support the guns, and then carried out two large baskets of stones. When the supervising officer gave his command, one row of soldiers, comprising five people, arrayed themselves on one side of the gun shelf, and leant their guns against the shelf. Each of the five people picked a stone out of the large basket and threw it into the sky. After this, they picked up their

guns and shot, aiming at the stones. With a sound of “whoosh,” the stones broke into pieces. This row of soldiers would then go to the end of the lines with their guns. At that point another row of soldiers at the front marched onto the drill ground and made the same performance. Baoyu was stunned. At the same time, ten or more flying carts went up to the sky with flags hung up high on the carts. The carts flew in all four directions to block the passage of other flying carts, in case anyone would accidentally get hurt. Baoyu said: “how can these soldiers be so accurate? I truly admire that.” Old Youth answered: “strategically speaking, the soldiers have been trained to the point where they can use their hands as their eyes, or they wouldn’t have the time to aim after they saw the rubble.” Gao Yutian said: “the principle is similar to that when a person throws any object. If a person throws an object into the sky and then tries to catch the object without looking at it, his hands would naturally move to grab the object. This is because the person will follow his body’s instinct without reasoning. The accuracy of our soldiers’ technique is no more than an extension of the principle of parabolic motion, as well as their own instinct. That’s how they practiced and how they succeed.” All Baoyu could do was to stare stunned, as the soldiers stepped out row by row. When he found that not one soldier missed a single shot, unable to restrain himself, he cried: “how strange!” Gao Yutian said, “It is true that all the soldiers are experienced. But you wouldn’t imagine that such practice requires much more skill on the part of the commander! Even though five people are standing in the same row, the height of the five pieces of stones when thrown in the air are different, and so are the bullets that follow the stones. From our point of view, all we can see is whether or not the bullet met the stone. How

could we tell which bullet is from which gun? However, the commander is able to distinguish them well. If there's a missing bullet, he is able to point out the responsible soldier straight away. "After hearing this, Baoyu tried to fix his eyes on the soldiers. He found that there was no time to follow the path of the bullets after being shot. He couldn't help but smile. "This is surely a hard job!" The drill stopped only at noon when the army was ordered to pause. Two boys sent meals in baskets up to Baoyu, Old Youth and Gao. After the three of them had finished their meal, Baoyu looked up to the red sun beating down in the bright sky, and began to feel rather hot. He asked, "Why would you choose to drill on such a hot day?" Gao Yutian answered, "We practice twice a year during the summer and the winter. We have the soldiers practice in both the cold winter and the hot summer in preparation for the potential wars outside the borders. This is so the soldiers can adapt themselves to both the extreme hot weather in tropical areas or the truly cold weather in frigid zones." Baoyu found that the soldiers still stood in lines even though the drill had paused, and each of them was sucking from a small tube in their hands. He therefore asked: "what are they sucking?" Gao Yutian answered: "they are having their lunch. There is food in the leather bags they are carrying, and the tube is coming from the leather bag." Baoyu said: "how much food could a single leather bag carry?" Gao Yutian said: "that bag can contain food for five days." Old Youth said: "after seeing this, I can't help but think that armies from the ancient times are so silly for carrying cooking ranges everywhere with them!" Baoyu said: "it is more than just silly. According to the ancient novels, the soldiers would dig a hole in the earth and place a pot over the top to cook, and they would also set up stoves in the camps. When the army planned

to set off, they had to pack up all the cooking ranges and carry them along as they marched.”

As their talk went on, the time reached one o'clock in the afternoon. At this point military music started up and the order was made. The drill continued. The drill finished only at six o'clock in the afternoon.

After the three of them went back to their own place, Baoyu commented: “apparently today’s drill was for the guerrillas. I think it’s a drill for the hunters.” Gao Yutian said: “these soldiers were originally hunters. In the past, the government made plans to reform the army and the military system. Someone put forward a proposal to train hunters as army soldiers. He argued that hunters could shoot accurately without looking. Thus he proposed that the government could hire hunters and form them into an army, and then use that army as a guerrilla force. At the time, some people ridiculed the proposal. However, the respected father of our general, whose given name is Zhen and style name Jingbo, was the officer in charge of military training at that time. He believed in the content of the proposal. Unfortunately, there were not enough hunters at that time to form armies. Therefore, he altered this proposal, hiring hunters to be military trainers. The skill of the hunters gradually spread, and eventually thirty thousand people had received good training from these hunters. These well-trained soldiers were formed into the border defense force, and we place them in different areas of the land. Whenever there is war, the soldiers from the large camps undertake a frontal attack on the enemies, while the hunters’ teams, which consist of three or five soldiers, encircle all around the attacking force. These teams detect information from the enemies, and attack at opportune moments. That’s why these teams are called guerrillas. ”

Baoyu asked, "How many people in total were there in today's military drill?" Gao Yutian answered, "All the different teams were gathered together today, so there were thirty thousand people in today's drill. The drill is finished now, so the soldiers have returned to their respective border defense camps." After dinner, the three of them relaxed in the cool summer night, and then went to sleep. Zizhang didn't go back to his quarters that evening.

The second day was a drill for battle formation and artillery. Gao Yutian once again watched the drill with the two visitors for the whole day. The third day was a drill for the flying carts. Baoyu woke up very early that morning and invited Old Youth and Gao Yutian to watch the drill with him. Gao Yutian said, "It is nearly six o'clock in the morning, and I am afraid the time is too early." Baoyu said, "I was hoping to see the soldiers getting into their carts." Gao Yutian said, "How could we see that? The flying cart army won't come until the order is given. Let's go and eat something for breakfast." Thereupon he asked the servant boy to bring in some snacks. The three of them went to the drill ground after eating. The general's platform was silent and no one had yet arrived. They were sitting there when, suddenly, martial music began to play. The general's flag was set up in the location where the music was emanating from, and unfurled in the wind. Zizhang, with dozens of staff officers, assistant commanders and other military officers, went up onto the general's platform. The music then stopped. Two small rockets were handed down to two messenger soldiers from the general's platform. The messenger soldiers took the small rockets in their hands and lit them. With a loud "boom," the two small rockets shot up to the sky. Then with another loud roar, the small rockets exploded, and two flags appeared in the sky. One had a flying dragon

with blue teeth on it, the other was white and emblazoned with the shape of a tiger. Baoyu thought to himself, “These are the Japanese rockets that I saw in Shanghai. Why should they use this kind of product in such a solemn drill?” As his thoughts lingered, suddenly a team of flying carts with flags came from the west side, and another team came from the east side. All the carts were arrayed in the sky. Baoyu then realized that the Japanese rockets were in fact being used as signals for the flying carts. He then looked at the two teams of flying carts. They were about 50 feet from the ground, and arrayed into lines facing one other. All the flying carts were equipped with steel boards on the front to protect themselves. The teams then shot at each other, face to face. Baoyu turned to Gao, astonished and said, “How could they actually shoot at each other? Aren’t you afraid that someone might get hurt?” Gao Yutian explained: “the bullets they are using are made of rubber, and won’t hurt them. The bullets are painted with white powder. A white mark will be made on the body of whoever is hit by a bullet. If the bullet hits the location of a vital organ, he will be hypothetically dead. If the bullet hits flying cart, the cart will be assumed destroyed. The people and carts that are marked will no longer be allowed to participate in the drill. That’s how we decide the winner.” After hearing this, Baoyu looked up and found some white dots on the steel boards as expected. The two teams of flying carts hovered in the sky, moving left and right and up and down. Both guns and cannons were used, as if enemies were truly invading. There were approximately fifty carts in one team, and the teams battled in different ways and in different formations. The carts from the west side were suddenly formed into straight line and flew backwards, and the carts from the east side then were formed into a Y shape and flew

forward to chase the carts from the west side. When the carts on the east side began to close into the carts from the west side, the latter suddenly flew reversely in an attempt to surround the former. As the east carts were flying forward, they could not stop quickly enough, so they used their guns and cannons. The east side carts were unable to defend themselves from their enemy, so they all flew downward and stopped on the drill ground. The west side carts then hovered in the sky. All of a sudden, bullets dropped onto the west carts from above like raindrops. The west carts were unprepared, not one was left unscathed and so they landed together. It turns out that five of the flying carts from the east side had put invisible glass around themselves and had headed upward when the west carts were cornering them. The five carts looked down from above and descended when they found their team was in danger. They shot down from a higher point in the sky onto the carts from the west side. Not a single bullet missed its target, and the east team turned failure into victory. After their victory, they descended onto the drill ground. The team leaders went onto the general's platform to receive their next command. Zizhang asked the soldiers to go back to their own team. The two team leaders bowed and bid their farewells. The two teams went back separately under the supervision of the team leaders. Afterwards, there were again two small rockets shot from the general's platform. After the small rockets exploded, a red and a black flag appeared in the sky. After a while, a flying cart team came from the south, and another came from the north. The two teams confronted each other. Guns and cannons were used. They fought from the left side to the right side, and no one gave up. Zizhang therefore made a command of truce, asking soldiers to land on the ground and be inspected by the commanding officer. The

officer judged that the north team had more white marks than the south team on their carts, but the south team had more white marks than the north team on their soldiers' bodies. Therefore the battle was settled as a tie. The team leaders then went to retrieve their teams.

At midday, Zizhang went to have lunch with the officials and took a rest. Baoyu, Old Youth and Gao Yutian discussed the flying carts after their lunch. Baoyu said, "I used to read novels which would talk about fantastical events such as ghosts, gods, and battles in the clouds. I didn't expect that I would ever have the opportunity to witness an actual battle in the clouds." Old Youth said, "The great battle atop the clouds, as I read about in the ancient stories, has become reality. There are still a few magical weapons missing though, such as the Flying Blade, or the Rope of Binding Immortals. Perhaps in the future we might experiment in developing such objects based on these ideas." Gao Yutian said, "They're all pure fantasy. How could you hope to experiment with such things?" Old Youth answered, "Riding the mists and flying into the sky used to be fantasy. Yet was it not so that these things came into reality after flying carts were invented?" Baoyu said, "I remember the time we released the Peng bird in Li village. The cart kept flying up and up, and stopped at a height of about five or six thousand feet. I doubt even the clouds are that high." Gao Yutian said, "It was a pity that no one was watching from the ground, to see whether or not they could spot you from the ground." Baoyu said, "It is said that there's no oxygen in the sky. We should take our air-producing machine up into the sky and make another trip. Perhaps we'll be lucky and alight on another planet, and we can see whether or not that planet can host a new world. Otherwise fantasy will always be fantasy. These are now just baseless, empty words." Old Youth said,

“Some people have already thought of that. Or we could do as you said. Space is a vacuum without any air. All the machines would burst into flame once they get into space. The only way we could produce air is if we close the doors and windows very securely. People produce and consume oxygen in the room. The air cannot leak out to the outside. The wheel and the engine of the cart both require electricity, wouldn't the whole cart burst into flame? This is why no one has dared to do this before. Otherwise there would already be someone there.” Baoyu said, “We ought to find a way to get to space. Otherwise the space will always be an enigma, like a sealed calabash.”

Gao Yutian said, “That’s enough of that for now. Let’s watch the drill.” Suddenly, they heard a burst of military music, but no one could be seen on the general’s platform. They looked far over to the camp and found that five small rockets were rising from the ground. Five flags with five different colors appeared when the small rockets exploded. Following the flags, several teams of flying carts appeared. One of the carts had a yellow flag with a flying dragon on its headstock. Another was a flag with the Chinese character for “general” on its mast. The cart went onto the drill ground, and that’s when Baoyu noticed that Zizhang had stepped onto this cart. All of a sudden, teams of flying carts from north, south, east and west had all arrived. A signal flag rose from the general’s cart. Every cart went back to their own team and arranged themselves into battle formation, and then began practicing with their guns and cannons. Baoyu said, “It is wonderful that the electronic guns and cannons are silent, otherwise the sound would be positively ear-splitting.” Old Youth said, “It is wonderful not only because the cannons and guns are silent, but also because they do not

produce smoke. Otherwise the place would be filled with smoke and fog after several shots. Then how could we see the flying carts?" Baoyu said, "Then that truly would be a riding on the mist and flying through the clouds!" As they were speaking, suddenly a fine spray floated down from the general's cart, and drifted over to the camp borne by the south wind. A cart flew forth from team, waving a flag with the Chinese character for "medicine" written on it. The cart flew for a short while before landing in the military camp. At the same time, the team of flying carts began to fly upwards. Baoyu, Old Youth and Gao looked up and found that the carts were rising higher and higher. Soldiers became smaller and smaller, but were still arranged in neat order. Before long, they had risen too high to be seen. The citizens who watched the drill from the ground began to applaud. The sound of the applause was like thunder. But the carts didn't come down after a long time, for about four hours. Baoyu said, "Are they going up beyond the air?" Gao Yutian said, "They would burst into ashes if they went into the vacuum of space." Old Youth looked to the west side, stunned. He pointed and asked, "What now, wild geese?" Baoyu looked in the direction where Old Youth was pointing. As Old Youth has said, he did indeed see two rows of wild geese. He fixed his eyes on them and found that they were heading towards them. Gao Yutian said, "That is not wild geese. That is our flying cart teams flying back." As they spoke, the teams came closer and closer until they finally arrived. A signal flag rose from the general's cart. All the teams dispersed. Zizhang's team also landed on the drill ground. Zizhang, with his officers, dismounted from the cart, went up to the platform, and was about to make an order, when two flying carts dashed to the ground like wind and landed on the drill ground from the

southeast side. From the cart a person came out and walked to the side of the general's platform, took an envelope out of his pocket, and handed it to the messenger. The messenger sent the envelope up to the platform and handed it to Zizhang. Zizhang opened the envelope to read. A smile appeared in his face. He then asked the messenger to come over to him. The messenger went down after a few words had been exchanged. Baoyu was somewhat put out. He thought to himself, "The drill was so good. Why have we been interrupted by this?" He saw that men were coming down from the platform, and carrying a box down from one of the carts. The person then hurriedly opened the box and took out some objects and accessories and installed them under the platform. After the installation, he took a cannon out of the box. Baoyu looked at the cannon and was stunned. Old Youth was also surprised by this. Even Gao Yutian, the secretary of the ground force general, was slightly perplexed, though he had seen innumerable weapons and artillery in his time. What did the cannon look like? We will find out in the next chapter.

Chapter 38

The cannon turned out to be the result of experiments undertaken by Dongfang Fa, Duoyi Shi and Hua Zili. They had devoted a great deal of time and energy into developing this state-of-the-art electric cannon. The body of the cannon was made neither of gold nor stone, but was made of pure glass. Only the generator was metallic, made of steel, iron or gold. How could anyone who had never seen such a cannon not be surprised by it?

The saga of the cannon continued after it had been erected. The three inventors wrote a

letter together and sent it to Ximen Guan, the general of the ground force. In the letter they wrote instructions for the use of the cannon, and explained that the cannon was smokeless, soundless and even bullet-less. If nothing blocked its route, the energy of the cannon would be so strong that it could shoot all the way to the horizon. They sent an engineer along with the cannon and a letter, explaining that the engineer was to install and test the cannon. He rushed to deliver it, knowing that there would be a grand drill for the ground forces within these three days. Zizhang was delighted after receiving the letter. He quickly asked the engineer to install it. He commanded the teams of flying carts to go back to the camp; he also asked the assistant to erect a long pole at the end of the drill ground, and set up caution flags on both sides of the pole. The spectators took notice of the flags and turned away. After the installation, Zizhang commanded his assistant to bind a pig by its feet and hang it up high on the pole. Zizhang oversaw the cannon test personally from his seat. The engineer took aim at the desired location, the tip of the cannon trained on the pig, and put his hand on the cannon's trigger. He pulled the trigger. There was neither smell nor sound. The pig was already dead when the engineer asked the assistant to set it down. The entire audience was amazed by the performance. Among the audience there were some who did not believe what they had seen. They insisted that the pig was killed by the rope, asking themselves how a magic trick could have killed a pig. Zizhang was also astonished. He therefore commanded his assistant to tie up a cow and hang it on the pole, and asked the engineer to shoot the cow. The cow on the pole kept hawing and struggling. As soon as the engineer turned the machine on, the cow suddenly froze. The audience finally believed in the special power of this cannon, and a

sound of applause rose up like thunder. The engineer then took a stick out of his case and said: this is an anti-electricity stick. Zizhang took the stick and examined it, finding that the stick was a like a spear used by the ancients: it was made of wood and surrounded by a layer of porcelain. On the end of the stick there was a one-inch long piece of iron. Zizhang then asked the engineer how to use this stick. The engineer asked the assistant to find another cow and tied the stick horizontally to the cow. The assistants then tied up the four legs of the cow and hung it up high on the pole. The engineer then told Zizhang, "If we do this, the cow won't die when we shoot." Zizhang didn't believe him. So he went to the scope of the cannon himself and turned the machine on. As expected, he could not shoot the cow. So he commanded the assistant to take the cow down. The engineer explained that the iron that was located at the top of this stick was a piece of magnetic metal. When the cannon fired, the electricity would be attracted by the magnet, which would distort the trajectory of the cannon's shot. As a result, all the electricity would be absorbed by the stick. By inventing this stick, we could protect ourselves from attacks from other countries if they steal the technology to make this cannon. Zizhang asked, "Have you ever found out how far exactly this cannon can shoot?" The engineer answered, "We tried to calculate, but there was no reliable result. It's likely that there is no limitation on the range of this cannon." Having finished talking, he swung the wheel and lifted the cannon up. He set the angle at sixty degrees, and again turned the engine on. The audience fixed their eyes up to the sky. Suddenly, a line of fire appeared in the sky like a lightning. The engineer said, "The sky has burst into flame because the electricity was shot outside of the atmosphere." Mr. Hua said,

“The lightning in spring and summer is also caused by electricity that bursts into flame in a vacuum.” After his explanation, Hua used the cannon several more times. People could still see the lines of electricity shimmering in the sky like countless golden snakes. Zizhang was ravished with joy. He led the officials and the engineer back to the military camp, and wrote a letter back to the three inventors of the cannon. The engineer then went back by himself.

Gao Yutian went to their apartment with Old Youth and Baoyu. At that time, neither of them could understand how the cannon functioned. All they could do was to share their own assumptions with one another. At midnight, after Zizhang shifted his works with Zichu visited their apartment, the three of them were excited to ask Zizhang about the cannon. Zizhang then explained the function of the cannon to them in detail. All of them were highly impressed. Baoyu said, “Why, then, is it called a cannon? It is actually an electric-shooting machine!” Zizhang said, “This is a good weapon indeed. However, there’s no sympathy in this weapon. It is alright to use it on the ground, as we just have done. However, if this weapon was used in a battle under water, I couldn't imagine what would transpire. All battleships are made of iron or similar materials, which means that they conduct electricity. Once the cannon shoots the battleship, the battleship will be full of electric charge.” Baoyu said, “It is hard to have a heart filled with benevolence, and yet to maintain that heart of benevolence during war.” Zizhang disagreed: “I don't think so. Two countries indeed become enemies once their friendship breaks down, yet the battle between them is still human versus human. If a person only cares about his reward in the army and kills others as he pleases, he will forget what a cruel act it is to kill another human. He will become a violent individual.

As an outsider, if you observe a person kill other people due to a temporary impulse, wouldn't you think that the behavior is the opposite of benevolence?" Baoyu said, "It is hard to follow the rules of benevolence when we are faced with enemies." Zizhang said, "We must follow the rules of benevolence! The weapon is a new invention of Dongfang De. However, even if this weapon was never invented, we still ought to fight righteously. Even if there were people killed in the war, we should kill them in a righteous way. Recently there have been some countries that have invented a chlorine cannon out of pure malice. They would pack chlorine into the cannonball. Once the cannonball is shot, it explodes and releases chlorine. It is hard to estimate how many people would be killed once the cannonball exploded. It is funny that these countries have hypocritically claimed that this weapon should be prohibited. However, they too would use this weapon if they found that the battle was not going in their favor. They would then explain that the use of such weapon is a one-time thing. How could they call themselves civilized countries after they have done such cruel things!" Baoyu asked, "What is the benevolent weapon that you recently invented?" Zizhang said, "It is the knockout drops that I mentioned to you the other day but never finished explaining. I tested it today. I spread some of the knockout drops into the military camp, and all the soldiers passed out as expected. They didn't wake up until the doctor gave them the antidote. In the future, when battle begins, we could use this single weapon to catch all of our enemies alive. Isn't that a benevolent weapon in the war? However, these knockout drops are hard to use. You have to estimate the strength of the wind when you use the weapon. You could of course pour the knockout drops directly onto the enemy army even when there is no wind. Nevertheless,

when the power of the wind alters, the height of the flying cart changes and the knockout drop's trajectory varies. The weapon could be safely used only if the power of the wind is accurately estimated. I'm confident about the wind calculation only when I'm at the height of fifty inches. The calculation would not be accurate if the height increases." Baoyu said, "I never expected that these scientific inventions could be used in such a marvelous way. You could unify the entire world without firing a single shot." Zizhang said, "As a matter of fact, if our government commands us to annex other countries, we could accomplish that within a few hours. I'm not exaggerating. The government used to have such intentions, but our respected Dongfang Wenming didn't want to. He was in power in our country for fifty years, and retired last year to live in the forest. The wish of his life is to construct a truly 'civilized nation,' rather than a nation that just claims itself to be civilized. The fake civilized nation would feel so ashamed that they would try to learn from our real civilized nation, so that our world will become a civilized one without any battles." Baoyu said, "This is a great gentleman who is willing to be tutor to the whole world. It would be fantastic if I could meet him in person." Old Youth said, "It's not hard to meet him. He is a very affable person who likes to entertain guests. He is also a good orator. Since we're finished watching the drill, we could visit him tomorrow." Zizhang said, "You two should stay here for a few days before you go. I've been so busy with official business for the past two days that we never had a good talk. I have finished all my official business now. I have even finished the memorial that reports the grand military drill and the application document to the government. Why have I made myself so busy? We could have these two days free to talk. How could you go

away in such a rush? I should rest early this evening. Let's talk more tomorrow." After that, he bid goodbye to them and headed towards his room. Suddenly, he stopped and took an object out of his pocket and put it on the table. Take a guess, what could it be? He went into his room after putting the object on the table. The three people gathered around to have a look, founding that it was a small bunch of dried grass tied up by a thread. The grass was similar to puzzle grass. However, puzzle grass is hollow inside, while the kind of grass that he had placed onto the table was solid. They could not figure out what it was. So they didn't think further and retired to their rooms separately.

Nothing out of the ordinary happened that evening. The next day, Baoyu wanted to head back, but Zizhang asked him to stay longer with great sincerity. After finishing several routine jobs in the camp, Zizhang went back to the apartment and chatted with Old Youth and Baoyu about military strategies. That evening, the messenger sent by the emperor came back with an imperial decree. Zizhang was conferred with the title 'Flying General' by the emperor because he had supervised and trained the flying cart team. Old Youth said, "This title was made just for you!" Zizhang said, "Even though I supervised and trained the flying cart team, I shouldn't take this job. I should resign tomorrow and ask the government to appoint another general for this." Baoyu said, "The messenger came back within one day and one night. As long as we have a flying cart, we no longer need the magic trick of travelling underground." Zizhang said, "Piece of cake! Do you know where our flying cart teams went yesterday?" Gao Yutian said, "It takes them about six hours to go and come back. How far could they go within one or two hours!" Zizhang said, "Where's that bundle of grass I left

here yesterday?” Gao Yutian took it out of the drawer and said, “Here it is. Neither of us could recognize what it is.” Zizhang said, “I put it here as a kind of piece of evidence in case you didn’t believe me. This is a kind of grass used by the Arabs to clean their teeth.” Baoyu stuck out his tongue and said, “They went to Arabia yesterday?” Zizhang said, “We planned to head west and go to Turkey. However our route was diverted southward, so we ended up in Arabia. When we landed in Arabia, the local people who sold this grass took me as a god and bowed to me. I hoped to take some evidence back. So I gave them two jars of our military rations in exchange for a bunch of grass from them.” Baoyu said, “You came down from the sky. No wonder they were astonished and took you as a god”. Zizhang said, “They are barbarous and uncivilized. Thus, they would take things they have never seen. Long ago, the Spanish people invaded Mexico with only a few cavalrymen and horses. The Mexicans had never ridden a horse. The local people treated the Spanish cavalrymen as half-men and half-horse gods, as they didn't know the cavalrymen were riding horses. By the time the local people heard the sound of the cannon, they took the Spanish people as gods who manipulated thunder. It is very silly. ” Having finished speaking, Zizhang asked his assistant to invite a scribe from the military camp to help him draft a memorial. In the memorial, he asked to resign his duty as a flying general, and pick another general for the flying cart team. Baoyu and Old Youth stayed for two days and bid goodbye to Zizhang.

Baoyu heard that there was a market in the Integrity District of the south. He asked Old Youth to visit there with him, and Old Youth agreed. Together they took a flying cart and went to the south. During the flight, Old Youth suddenly asked the driver to stop. The driver

descended slowly onto a vacant field. Baoyu looked around from the cart, finding that the field was filled with yellowish clouds. It was the harvest time for wheat. Old Youth said, "You told me that you wanted to see views of the wilderness two days earlier, therefore I asked the driver to land here for you to have a chance to see the view. This is where agriculture is most flourishing in the south part of Mercy District." Baoyu looked around, finding that the cornfields stretched all the way to the horizon. He asked, "The wheat should already have been harvested in April. Why is there so much wheat at this moment?" Old Youth answered, "The fields have been reconfigured in our country. Both rice and wheat are harvested every season, which means that they harvest four times each year." That said, they raised the flying cart to hover two inches from the ground and slowly passed through a series of forests. Baoyu watched attentively, finding that there were various kinds of trees, including fruit trees, mulberries, willows and oaks. Baoyu therefore asked, "Apparently, mulberries are used for sericulture, and oaks are planted for rubber. What about willows?" Old Youth answered, "Willows are also planted for sericulture." Baoyu was astonished: "Does it mean silkworms eat the leaves of willows and oaks?" Old Youth said, "The willow silkworm grows on the willow, and the oak silkworm grows on the oak. People didn't know this fact, and they called them wild silkworms. Some people used those wild cocoons to produce silk. The silk is so rough that people see these wild cocoons as useless. What they didn't know was that the silk was rough only because nobody took care of the worms when they are born, grow and ultimately produce the cocoon on the tree. We managed to find their eggs and raised them as regular silkworms. Isn't their silk the same as the regular silk? It is

just that the wild silk has less gloss. It is a pity that people haven't appreciated this." Baoyu said, "I am rather ignorant about oak silkworms. But I know that willow silkworms have large wings and can fly after turning into moths." Old Youth said, "I'm afraid that people these days do not want to breed willow silkworms, for they are afraid that the moths would fly away without leaving any eggs. What they don't know is that we could build a room whose walls are covered with sticky paper for the willow silkworms, and put the cocoons in this room. Once the moths came out of the cocoons, they were not able to fly out of the room. As a result, they would lay the eggs on the papers." During their conversation, they finished watching and asked the driver to elevate the flying cart, accelerating, and landed in the Integrity District. The president of this market was a man called Dongfang Ying. All matters pertaining to import and export had to be registered with him. He would compare the gain and the loss in each year. He also hired one hundred observers to investigate people's preferences in different countries and report the information to him. After seeing the reports, he would announce the results to each factory. Therefore, he was always so busy with official duties that wouldn't see guests unless it was the weekend. Hence it was not a good time for Baoyu and Old Youth to visit him. So they wandered around the six streets and the three markets. In the markets, there was merchandise from all over the world and thousands of businessmen. In the market there was a merchandise showroom. They came in and found that there were local products in the center and foreign products along the two sides. Baoyu looked at them one by one. Strangely, when Baoyu was in Shanghai, he felt dizzy when he saw the lustrous and dazzling foreign products, as though he was walking on the Shanyin

Road. Compared to the pure, clean, and elegant local products, when he came in the showroom he found the lustrous and dazzling foreign products rather tawdry. After visiting the showroom, they wandered twice around the street. Then they went to the car rental company and rented a tunnel car to visit Dongfang Wenming. If you want to know what happened after they visited Dongfang Wenming, please read on to the next chapter.

Chapter 39

After Baoyu went to the civilized wonderland, he had travelled everywhere. He had heard everything he hadn't heard before, and he had seen everything he hadn't seen before. As he had admired Dongfang Wenming for a long time, he asked Old Youth to visit Dongfang Wenming with him at No.1 Benevolence District in the east. It was already late in the evening when their car arrived. Baoyu felt that it was not respectful to visit an old man, retired and virtuous as he was, so late in the evening, especially for his first visit. So they spent their night at the railway station.

The next morning, Baoyu and Old Youth went to Dongfang Wenming's place and submitted their name card. Dongfang Wenming invited them in hurriedly. The two guests went and stood in front of the guest seats. Baoyu was about to perform an obeisance with his hands clasped, but Dongfang Wenming made a faster move. He came to Baoyu and held his hands and said, "My dear brother, how have you been after we parted from each other?" Baoyu was amazed and said, "I have long wished to meet you, sir, so I came here especially

to see you. I thought this was our first time meeting. I was unaware that we had met before.”

After Wenming had seated Baoyu while still holding his hands, Wenming said, “We haven’t met for many years, which is for sure. Maybe you, my dear brother, have forgotten temporarily, but your memory will come back to you later.” Baoyu was filled with doubt, saying to himself that he had never had such old friends as him in his whole life. Upon closer inspection of Wenming, Baoyu found that he had silver hair and silver beard, long eyebrows and thin eyes, red lips, and white teeth. His appearance was no different from that of a young man. Baoyu thought again and again, but couldn’t remember making the acquaintance of anyone like Wenming. Wenming then said, “It is hard for my old friend to visit from afar. Today it happens to be the weekend; my sons, daughters and sons-in-law usually come to see me on this day. They should spend the whole day entertaining you and recalling the old days.” Baoyu was left speechless. Then Old Youth said, “Mr Jia came for a visit out of admiration, never expecting that you two had been acquaintances.” Baoyu said, “Recently I visited General Ximen. He told me that you wanted to set the rules for a real civilized country, which could provide a good example for the fake civilized countries, and you would become the moral tutor for the whole world. Therefore I specially came here to visit you and hear about your brilliant ideas. But I cannot recall where I have met you.” Wenming sighed, saying, “It is not easy. I was in charge of my country for fifty years. With years of effort, the country has finally become what it is today. However, there are so many things yet to be accomplished, and I don’t know who could accomplish my dreams for me. All my sons and daughters devote themselves to science, so they have no time to carry out my will. I also

talked to the ministers who are in power, but most of them were afraid that they would resort to using military force to accomplish my will, so they hesitated. If my will could be accomplished, maybe there would be some hope for the world to become a civilized utopia.”

Old Youth said, “Allow me to ask, but what is your greatest dream?” Wenming said, “All the creatures in the world who possess hair, teeth, a round head and square toes in the world are humans. Some of them are intelligent; some of them are less intelligent. This is because people in some parts of the world are uneducated. But we should always treat everybody with the greatest benevolence. The entirety of the human species is a gift from Heaven. Nowadays, red people, black people and brown people had suffered from all kinds of disasters and are soon to become extinct. Whenever I think about this issue, I become so anxious that I can neither walk nor sit comfortably. We are all humans, but why do these races keep suffering misfortune? I have always hoped to save them from fire and flood, and to provide a place for them to live in peace. However, this is such a large endeavor that I haven’t come up with a proper solution.” Old Youth said, “This issue is always related to war.” Baoyu said, “I hear that black slaves could not find food after they were set free in America. They kept moving but could not find a place to live; all they could do is to look into each other’s eyes when they are starving to death. They had much more food and warmer places to live when they were still slaves. If they were born with foolish temperaments, it is hard to get them educated.”

Wenming said, “That’s why I said this is a hard and huge issue. After we saved them from fire and water disasters, our mission is not accomplished unless we could find a place for them to live. If we simply saved them from the fire and flood, and told them to find a place to

live all by themselves, there is a possibility that they could not find a place to live and would suffer from fires and floods all over again. Otherwise, we could simply use our military power to help them get away from the disasters; why couldn't that be a solution? We have no choice but educate them after we help them get away from their misery. Our mission wouldn't be completed until we educate them with our knowledge and make them ready to become independent." Baoyu said, "This is a much harder option." Wenming said, "We have to tell truth from the falsehood when we observe others. If we are not a real civilized country, the fake civilized countries will always be able to deceive others with their veneer of civility. Take the slave emancipation movement in America as an example: on the surface, it was a civilized and charitable movement. But only a few people knew that the initiator of this movement had other intentions. All he wanted was to become the President of the United States, but he didn't have many supporters. So he came out with a fanciful idea of advocating the liberty of black slaves. He thought that once the slaves were liberated, they would feel grateful for him because they obtained freedom and are on equal footing with white people. Therefore, they would root for him in the presidential election after they obtained suffrage. Who would have thought that the black people were so uneducated that they could not make a living after they got emancipated? Their life was better when they used to be slaves. Instead of being grateful for his help, black people actually hated him."

During their talk, Dongfang Ying and his other two brothers came in to see their father. Hua Zili came to see his father in law with his wife Dongfang Mei. Wenming said, "Today I have guests who have travelled a long way to get here. You should come in and meet them."

I've been sick with loneliness; it is really rare to get to meet an old friend. You should drink with us for the whole day." All his sons, daughter and daughter-in-law agreed. Wenming then asked his sons and daughter to call Baoyu "uncle". Baoyu felt unsettled, thinking to himself: "this old man is very peculiar. He keeps saying I'm an old friend of his, even though I have never met him. Why should his son, who already possesses a very long beard, call me an uncle? And he refused to explain to me when I asked, which is confusing." Yet then he thought: "I should not worry about this right now, because I don't think they are ill-intended." At the same time, he observed the brothers. The only one he had met before was Dongfang Fa. The other two were both dignified in appearance, and were valiant and heroic in bearing. Dongfang Mei looked gentle and peaceful, with a dignified manner. Hua Zili looked slightly different: he was born with a caramel-colored face, but not in an unsightly way. His caramel-colored face glowed with health, and he had dark eyebrows with big eyes, which highlighted his righteous temperament. Dongfang Ying treated his father cordially at the same time as he entertained his guests. Dongfang Mei was both natural and graceful. She was neither flirty nor bashful. She naturally talked with others and engaged in the social activities. During the discussions, she never identified herself as a woman; even the people who talked to her forgot about her gender. Old Youth and Baoyu firstly talked with Dongfang Ying about business, and then they chatted with Dongfang Fa and Hua Zili about skills and artistry. Later they talked with Dongfang De, asking him about the new inventions in the field of medical science. Dongfang De answered, "The most recent invention in medical science has been the powder of intelligence. Recently I have been working on two projects, but I

don't know whether they will be successful or not. The only thing I can do is to try my best. If I can not finish this project using all the knowledge I have learnt in my life, I will be left to rely on my successors.” Baoyu asked about what the projects are about, and Dongfang De answered, “In my view, the most unfortunate thing in life is death, and no one can escape from death. I hope to figure out a way to help people stop dying. Eating is the most energy-consuming thing in life. People can not do anything until their stomachs are full, no matter how important the matter at hand may be. Eating is also time-consuming. It takes at least fifteen minutes for a person to finish a single meal. If a person eats twice a day, it would take a person one hundred and eighty hours to eat within a single year. How many great events have been delayed by eating? Therefore I have another project which aims to study how to keep people alive without eating.” Baoyu said, “If a person neither eats nor dies, wouldn't the person become a celestial being?” Dongfang De said, “I believe in the Daoist theory of immortality. I used to think that immortality was just an ideal or a fable. After I read the ancient Daoist books, I found that immortality might not be an absurd theory. That's why I chose to study it. However, even though there was indeed a way to achieve immortality, the secret was only grasped by one person, and that one person never told other people about this secret. I plan to dig out the secret and spread the knowledge to the masses.” Old Youth said, “If no one ever died, wouldn't the earth be filled with too many people?” Dongfang De said, “I'm afraid people won't give birth to children after they achieve immortality. If you don't believe me, you could read the ancient books about celestial beings. You will find that there's not a single immortal Daoist priest who gave birth to children. The ancient people may not

have thought about what we have discussed, but we can learn from these books that people naturally give up having children after they achieve immortality.” Baoyu said, “If your idea become into truth, a person would become a Buddha instead of a Daoist immortal.” Old Youth said, “Why a Buddha instead of a Daoist immortal?” Baoyu smiled and answered, “In the Buddhist books, they talk about no birth and no death, no increase and no decrease.” He then asked, “A moment ago, Mr. Dongfang Wenming told me about his ideal of rescuing red, black and brown people from the water and fire disasters, and finding a good place for them to live. However, he worried about those unintelligent people who are hard to educate. Why don't you use your intelligence powder on those people?” Dongfang De said, “This is not possible. The intelligence powder I invented can be used as snuff, helping people to become smarter. People will become knowledgeable once they have more thoughts and ideas. The intelligence powder is used for increasing the amount of good ideas within a person. However, the powder will only work if a person initially possesses good ideas. The powder will be useless for those who don't have any ideas or thoughts in their minds to begin with. Therefore, intelligence powder can help civilized people to be more civilized, while it could also help the barbarous people to become more barbarous. The thoughts of the red and the black people can be summed up in one word: idleness. These people would become much lazier if they take the intelligence powder.” Everyone laughed at De’s words. Wenming sighed and said, “My dream of saving the red and black people from disasters is nothing more than neglecting what lies close at hand and seeking for something far away from me. I neglected my compatriots and cast my focus on other people. As a matter of fact, lots of our

compatriots are suffering from the same disasters that barbarians suffer from. It is a great pity that I didn't handle this issue well when I was in power. All of my sons and daughters happen to be interested in science and technology instead of politics. I hope that my grandsons can accomplish my dream." During their conversation, Baoyu and Old Youth found that Dongfang Wenming had already had lots of grandsons. His grandsons Dongfang Wen, Dongfang Wu, Dongfang Tao, Dongfang Ling and Hua Wuben were working in the government. His great-grandsons Dongfang Xin, Dongfang Sheng, Dongfang Zhen, Dongfang Xing, Dongfang Rui, Dongfang Meng, Dongfang Wei, Hua Rijin and Hua Rixin had all graduated from high schools, and were attending professional colleges. His great-great-grandsons Dongfang Datong, Dongfang Dazhi and Hua Fuyi were at kindergarten. All the female family members were teaching at various kinds of female schools. All the family members were supposed to be visiting Dongfang Wenming during the summer vacation. However, Wenming had asked them to spend a holiday at a summer resort, for they were too busy within the whole year and only had a month to take a rest. Wenming felt they would have fewer restrictions in the summer resort, and he himself could enjoy a peaceful summertime. Some of Wenming's daughter-in-laws wanted to come and fulfill their filial duty. Wenming refused them repeatedly and asked them to go to the summer resort. He said, "If you don't listen to me, you will fail to live up to my sincere concern for you. " The daughter-in-laws had no choice but go back to their homes, and they kept coming back to see Wenming every three or five days. Some of Wenming's great grandsons were self-studying in their schools and didn't even go home even though it was the summer vacation.

I won't mention more details about the family's visit. For now, I should talk about Baoyu, who had drunk ten or more cups of liquor. Luckily, the liquor here could not get people drunk. The more you drink, the happier you feel. Another good thing is that the liquors are made from fruit juice. People's stomachs won't bloat even if they drink a lot. Wenming then asked Baoyu about where he came from. Baoyu told him about how he tried to find Xue Pan in Liberty Village and how he came across a robber on his way to Shandong province. Wenming said, "How could a place be livable if it is a place where not only Xue Wenqi chose to live, but also Liu Xuesheng spoke highly of? As for the obstacles you encountered, these are obstacles you had to suffer before you came to our country." Baoyu said, "Do you also know my relative Xue Pan?" Wenming said, "I haven't met him before, but I certainly know the name: it is very famous." Baoyu felt puzzled and thought to himself: "what the old man says is too vague to understand. I really am too perplexed today." At this moment, the fumes of liquor came to his throat, which made Baoyu felt cheerful and forgot about all his discomfort. Wenming then continued, "My dear brother, you have to visit Liberty Village. There is another place also named the Liberty Village, which is located twenty miles east of here. I used to travel and go fishing out there. We could go and visit tomorrow. I'm afraid that place is better than the place where Wenqi lives." After finishing speaking, Wenming cordially invited Baoyu to drink more, and they drank for the whole day. When the sun was about to go down, Dongfang Ying and other family members bid goodbye to Wenming and took their leave from one another. Wenming said, "I've been accustomed to living peacefully, and a frenetic day like today is quite rare for me. If it were not for my old

friend coming to visit me, I would normally just chat with my family members about their daily lives and ask them to leave after a few words.” Baoyu said, “I am very grateful for your wine and your food. But I have been so confused about where and when we first met. I hope you can give me a clear answer to this.” Wenming laughed and said, “You can stay here tonight and think it through. I’ll tell you the answer tomorrow if you cannot remember.” He then asked his boy servant to clean the guest room in order to have a pleasant place for the two guests to rest. At the time when lights were needed, Wenming said: “I’m nearly ninety years old, so I am used to getting to sleep early. Please excuse me. You two can rest after you chat for a while.” After finishing speaking, he bid farewell to them and retired to his bedroom.

Baoyu said, “I came here especially to visit this old gentleman because I have been eager to meet this famous man for a long time. I hope to learn from his words and enlighten myself. However, I’ve ended up coming across two more questions.” Old Youth asked him what those two questions were. Baoyu answered, “The first one is why he recognized me, and yet I couldn’t remember him.” Old Youth said, “Perhaps you have simply forgotten him. This is not for certain.” Baoyu said, “I may not remember some vague points. However, I am certain I have never had a friend who has a beard in my whole life.” Old Youth showed his mustache and smiled, “How about me?” Baoyu also smiled and said, “You are the first one.” Old Youth said, “What is the other question?” Baoyu said, “His three sons look like people who are forty years old, and the daughter looks like a woman less than thirty years old. How could Wenming have great grandsons?” Old Youth said: “there are many concoctions in the

world that can help people preserve their youthful appearance, so this is no surprise.” Baoyu said, “That’s a misleading theory.” Old Youth said, “How can you call it misleading after you have seen the results with your own eyes? Unlike certain ancients who used medicine to preserve their youthful appearance, this method is particularly widespread in this country. All the food and drink in our country have the function of preserving one’s youthful appearance. When this method of preserving one’s appearance first began to become widespread in this country, there was not a single old man who didn’t recover his youthful vigor. If you don’t believe me, you could take yourself as an example! Think, how have you been feeling since you entered this country?” Baoyu pondered for a while and found that he had indeed felt lighter while walking, and had become stronger. He felt tired when he spent time with the Peng bird. But he felt much more powerful when he spent time with Old Youth. Therefore Baoyu acknowledged: “I have certainly become much healthier. But how is it that people could avoid looking old? I just can’t believe it.” Old Youth said, “How old do you think I am?” Baoyu said, “I think you are at most forty years old.” Old Youth burst into laughter and said something that astonished Baoyu. If you want to know what the Old Youth said, please read on to the next chapter.

Chapter 40

In the previous chapter we discussed how Baoyu assumed Old Youth was forty years old. Old Youth burst into laughter and said, “you guessed right about the tens digit in my

age.” Baoyu was astonished, and asked: “what do you mean?” Old Youth said, “I’m one hundred and forty years old.” Baoyu shook his head to show his disbelief. Old Youth smiled and said, “I don’t need to donate money for a position in the government, nor do I need to take the imperial examination. Why should I lie about my age?” Baoyu also laughed and said, “People usually report a younger age in order to donate less money or to take the imperial exam. No one would report an age older than his real age.” Old Youth said, “This is nothing to be wondered. People from other countries will also be able to preserve their youthful and extend their lifespans once they learn my country’s medical techniques. A person’s life always relies on his or her spirit, blood and vigor. Should a person manage to preserve his or her blood and vigor, he can render himself or herself full of spirit and energy. That’s the trick. We should know that the average lifespan of a country reflects the medical skill of this country. It is odd that some countries brag about their advanced medical level and sneer at the crudeness of medical science of other countries, even though these countries share the same average life span of other countries.” After Baoyu heard Old Youth’s view that, in his country, being aged one hundred years or over was nothing to be marveled at, he was quite captivated by this land.

Old Youth said, “My holidays have come to an end. I have to go back to work now. Where are you planning on going next?” Baoyu answered, “I’m planning to go to Freedom Village and visit Mr. Wenming’s old house.” Old Youth said, “If that is so, then tomorrow we shall go our separate ways. Don’t rest too late tonight, so that you can get up early tomorrow.” With that said, they both retired separately to bed. However, Baoyu tossed and

turned and couldn't fall sleep. He sat up for a moment and tried to sleep again. Just as he was finally about to drift off to sleep, a boy servant came in with a letter. He said, "The messenger is expecting your response immediately." Baoyu looked over the cover of the letter. On the letter was unequivocally written: "to Mr. Jia, the apartment of the Dongfang family, the eastern Benevolence District No. 1, the civilized wonderland." Was this the handwriting of Wu Bohui. Baoyu thought to himself, "How could he know where I am?" He opened the letter which explained that whoever had written the letter wanted Baoyu to return to Shanghai right away. He had something urgent to tell Baoyu. Baoyu asked the boy servant, "Where is this visitor?" The boy servant replied, "He is waiting outside." Baoyu stood up and stepped outside, and found that it was Huang Fu who was waiting outside. Huang Fu took two steps forward when he saw Baoyu. He greeted Baoyu and said, "Sir, my master has invited you to Shanghai. He has something urgent to tell you." Baoyu said, "Let me rent a flying cart and I'll be off." Huangfu said, "A flying cart is not needed. We have already set up the horses." As he had said, Baoyu saw two horses waiting there. He stepped onto the horse, and Huang Fu followed after him. After the bridle was loosened, the horse shot forward like a howling wind and lightning. Having traversed several high mountains and brambles, the horses began to travel along the seafront. A steamship was floating on the sea. Baoyu stopped his horse and wanted to get onto the steamship. To his surprise, Huang Fu was unable to stop the horse and it continued into the sea. Baoyu was shocked and was about to come to the rescue when he saw Huang Fu had turned his head and was waving to him. It so turned out that the horse was able to dash on the waves like the wind. Baoyu was beside him with excitement. He let

go of the bridle and followed Huang Fu. Sure enough, his horse also walked on the surface of the sea. Baoyu thought to himself: "I used to hear that horses that can cover one thousand miles in a day and can walk across water and mountains as if it were walking on the plain. I didn't believe it to be true, but it is so." The two horses ran for a while longer before eventually reaching Shanghai. Wu Bohui was pleased and welcomed Baoyu, talking a great deal with Baoyu about what happened after they parted. Baoyu asked him what urgent matter he had to discuss. Baohui smiled: "there's nothing urgent. We haven't met for a long time. I invited you to see and have a chat, and afterwards we can travel to all sorts of different places together." Baoyu said, "Having been to the civilized wonderland, I found that nothing could be better. Where else could we travel having already visited such a wondrous place?" Bohui said, "You don't seem to know what's been going on. A lot of news came out after you went away. After the Emperor and the Queen came back to the palace, the government undertook a sequence of new reforms. All of these were similar to the Hundred Day's Reform of 1898. However, in 1898, the Emperor carried out his reforms with focus and clarity, while this time he reformed slowly, and the reform was not as effective. All of a sudden, the Chinese Worker's Exclusion Bill of America had expired and needed a new round of signatures. In the view of Chinese businessmen and scholars, on the surface, the bill is designed to exclude Chinese workers; as a matter of fact, the bill is designed to disregard all Chinese people. So the businessmen and scholars discussed boycotting all American products. The boycotting proposal was originally drafted in Shanghai, and it received support from every province. There was not a single place that didn't have meetings and speeches. For several months, not

a single day passed where the provinces didn't contact with each other through letters and telegrams. The news spread to Beijing. The government officials were amazed by the spirit of Chinese people after hearing this news. Just at this moment, a person presented a memorial to the emperor, saying that the regulations in the reform were vague and ineffective. The only solution was to put constitutional monarchy into practice. Otherwise, China would suffer a similar fate as Russia, who lost its battle with Japan, even though it was a much bigger country than Japan. It wasn't that Japan possessed an ability to overcome superior forces. It was just that Japan was a constitutional monarchy, while Russia was an absolute monarchy. This was not a battle of the weak overcoming the strong, but a constitutional monarchy overcoming despotism. After the memorial was presented, the government was awakened and decided to establish a constitutional monarchy, but they didn't know where to start. Therefore, the government appointed five ministers to go abroad and study constitutional monarchy. The five ministers went abroad separately for a while, and learnt the essence of the constitutional monarchy system from different countries. A constitutional office was set up in Beijing. The five ministers went to the constitutional office every day and compared the systems they observed from different countries. If they found it beneficial, they would select one policy from the English system, while at the same time selecting another policy from the Japanese system if they found it beneficial to China. They deleted some of the policies that were not suitable for China; they also added some essential policies that hadn't been used in other countries. They discussed it over and over again until the policies were nearing perfection, and then carried these policies into effect. As expected, the effect of the

constitutional monarch was good and fast. China had changed completely within several hours. Do you think Shanghai is still the way it was? It is now completely different. The extraterritoriality of other countries has been ended. The old Shanghai city has been demolished, and malls have been built in the southern part of the city, which extend all the way to the General Bureau of Manufacturing. The markets in Wu Song are now bustling with noise and excitement. An exhibition hall has been built in Pudong, and China is hosting the World Exposition there. The main reason I invited you here is to attend the World Exposition. It is quite rare to experience the World Exposition, so you have to see that. The second thing you need to see is the World Peace Meeting. At this moment, all the other countries voted China to be the host of World Peace Meeting, and they asked the Chinese Emperor to be the president of this meeting. A great exhibition hall has been constructed outside the Yongding Gate of Beijing. The first World Peace Meeting will begin after the World Exposition. We could go to Beijing after we have seen the World Exposition.” Baoyu was surprised and puzzled, and asked, “Could China really be as flourishing as you say it is today?” Bohui said, “Let’s go and see the World Exposition.” He dragged Baoyu out as he was still talking. They saw the exhibition hall once they got out of the door. Each country has a space to build their own pavilion and exhibit their products. Each province of China also has its own space, and these provincial exhibitions were especially lively. In the pavilions there were countless rare and strange treasures. As he was reading the newly published book by the Chinese official publishing press, Baoyu suddenly found Dongfang Wenming standing in front of him. Baoyu put down the book and made to speak to him, but Wenming

disappeared. Without noticing, suddenly he found himself on a steamship. The steamship was moving very fast. On both sides of the river stood tall buildings and chimneys like forests. Baoyu couldn't help but say to himself, "Where am I? I have never been here before." Suddenly he heard Bohui explain behind his back, "This is the Yangzi River!" Baoyu turned around and said, "Why are there so many buildings like this on both sides of the river?" Bohui said, "You don't know? From Wusong to Hankou, both sides of the river are filled with Chinese factories." After a short while which seemed to last only an instant, the boat had arrived at Hankou. Baoyu didn't know why, but suddenly he was sitting in a train. The train moved like lightning, as if the mulberry forests, tea trees, rice fields and wheat fields on the two sides were flying backwards. All the passengers got off the train, and so did Baoyu. When he looked up, there was a huge house on the side of the road. In front of the house there was a patch of vacant ground, on which stood a flagpole stretching up into the sky, and a yellow flag with the pattern of a flying dragon unfurling in the wind. There was also a long rope that connected the flagpole and the rooftop. The flags of the five continents and thousands of countries hung on the rope. The five Chinese characters standing for "Ten Thousand Countries' Peace Meeting" were carved on the gateway of the house and were decorated with gold leaf. The Chinese characters were shining in the sunlight. Baoyu stepped inside and found a huge conference room in the house. The conference room was filled with countless Chinese and foreigners. Baoyu sat for a while, but there was only silence. Suddenly, Baoyu heard the bell ringing, and someone whispered near his ear: the president has come onto the stage. This is the Emperor of China. Baoyu turned around and found

Bohui talking to him. When Baoyu was about to answer him, suddenly he heard the sound of thunderous applause. He quickly looked over onto the stage and found Dongfang Wenming standing on the platform. Dongfang Wenming began to make his speech: “today is the first day of the World Peace Meeting, thank you all for electing me as the president of this meeting. Emperors or ministers from every country have come to attend this meeting. As the president of this meeting, I first wish to announce the purpose of our meeting, so these emperors and ministers from foreign lands might discuss their strategies. As the name of our meeting is World Peace Meeting, we should take the guiding principle of our meeting to be this word: peace. However, we should be clear about what kind of peace we are looking for in this meeting. The Peace Meeting is not only about the peace between different countries. The scope of peace between different countries is too constrained, for it only deals with international relationships. Achieving peace between different countries can only be used to prevent wars. The purpose of our meeting is to achieve peace for all human beings across the globe. Every government from every country should be responsible for keeping peace. All races should be treated equally no matter if they are red, black or brown. No one should ever abuse the people and governments of other countries. In this we could prevent our human race from hurting or abusing each other. If some races are less educated, then all other civilized countries, no matter individuals or communities, ought to help and educate those less educated races.” When Baoyu heard these words, he couldn't help but applaud. All the other people in the conference room began to applaud too. The president of the meeting then added, “No one should use his or her strength to bully the weak, nor should they name other

races as alien groups or races! From this meeting onwards, we should eliminate hegemony and pursue peace.” Everyone in the conference room began to applaud. Baoyu felt clapping was not enough, so he began to stomp his feet. Unexpectedly, all of a sudden, his feet found no solid ground to stomp on, and he kept falling down, down for over three thousand meters, until his eyes blacked out, cold sweat perspiring from his body... Baoyu managed to open his eyes with great effort, and then found out that he was still sleeping in the guest room of Dongfang Wenming. He had just had a great dream.

Baoyu looked at the clock. It was fifteen minutes past five in the morning, and the sunlight was still dim. Baoyu felt dry and hot, so he went out and relaxed in a cooler place. When he walked outside, he unexpectedly found Dongfang Wenming had already gotten up and was admiring the beauty of the lotus flowers in his yard. Baoyu said, “You get up so early.” Wenming said, “Having retired from work, I always sleep early and rise early. Why are you up so early, too?” Baoyu said, “I woke up by accident and got out of bed. It is quite rare for a person to get up as early as you.” The two of them then sat on the porcelain chair in the yard and chatted face to face. Wenming said, ‘Dear brother, have you recalled where you have met me before?’ Baoyu said, “I still cannot remember, I hope you might give me some more explicit hints.” Wenming sighed and said, “When your grandmother died, did you happen to meet any guests at the funeral?” Baoyu turned and thought, and finally said, “I didn't meet any guests.” Wenming said, “Please continue to think about whether or not you have welcomed certain relatives or friends into your mansion?” Baoyu again thought and said, “There was only the Zhen family from Jinling that visited me in the mansion.”

Wenming said, "That's right. At that time your father was attending the funeral and sat on a straw mattress. We met but didn't get to sit high on the chair to chat. Your father showed his empathy towards children. He went out to give us a chance to chat with each other. How could you have forgotten?" Baoyu was astonished and said, "You are my brother Zhen! Why have you become an old man, and why is your surname now Dongfang?" Wenming said, "Dongfang is my original surname. The Zhen family didn't have any descendants, so I was given the last name Zhen to show respect for their ancestral temple. Later, the Zhen family produced a son of their own, and I regained my original last name. When we met that year, I told you about how to govern our nation, and you didn't seem to be happy to hear it. At that time I knew that we were after different things. I didn't expect that we could meet again after so many years. However, you didn't have any sorrow or anxiety, and you came from a place where you didn't know what was happening in the world. In this way you retained your original appearance after several reincarnations and kalpas. I worked so hard to construct my civilized wonderland, and as a result I've aged and had grey hair. This is why you were unable to recognize me when we met each other." Having heard Wenming's words, it was as if Baoyu had awoken from a dream. He thought to himself, "If he hadn't mentioned it to me, I would have forgotten all about the things that had happened before. I came out here originally to fulfill my dream of fixing the sky. Who would have thought that he has already taken all the credit for this? My dream has again come to nothing. It's better now for me to go back to Freedom Village and live under his protection." As he was thinking about it, Old Youth got up. After showering and combing his hair, Old Youth needed to go back to his

work. Baoyu also needed to go to Freedom Village. So together they bid farewell to Dongfang Wenming, and hired separate flying carts. Baoyu held the hands of Old Youth and said, "We two met by chance, but I am ever so grateful to you for your help. After today's parting, I do not know when we will meet again. I have an object for you as a gift. It is not so precious, but still it is quite rare. It is neither a jade nor a stone. I was born with this object in my mouth. You can either take it with you or donate it to a museum, it is entirely up to you." After finishing speaking, he handed the Tongling Jade to Old Youth. Old Youth took it and thanked Baoyu several times. It turns out that Baoyu felt saddened by his brother Zhen beating him to it and fixing the sky before him. The Tongling Jade was now useless, and would only add to his depression, so it was better for him to no longer see the object. That's why he generously gave it to Old Youth as a gift, and went to Freedom Village by flying cart.

Old Youth was amazed by the Tongling Jade after he had received this gift. On the way to work, he looked it all over in the flying cart. It was a hot day, so Old Youth opened the window, leaned by the window to enjoy the cool breeze, with the Tongling Jade in his hands. To his surprise, he accidentally dropped the Jade, and the Jade fell straight to the ground. Old Youth asked the driver to land right away. His eyes followed the Tongling Jade as it was descending. He found that the Jade became larger and larger and fell into the saddle of a mountain and, even from such a distance, he could still see the jade. The flying cart stopped at the foot of the mountain. Old Youth recognized this mountain. It was located at Benevolence District of the East, No. 1,000,000, and its name was Lingtai Fangcun Mountain. When he went up into the saddle of the mountain, a cave appeared. Atop the

entrance to the cave were carved five Chinese characters, "Crooked Moon Three Stars Cave." This was a cave that Old Youth often visited. He then began to search for the Tongling Jade, but how could he find it? He could not find even a trace of it. At the entrance of the cave stood a strange stone. The stone looked transparent, and all the holes on the stone were connected with each other. There was a flat surface on the stone, and many words were carved on the surface. Old Youth looked at it and found that it was a literary masterpiece of twelve to thirteen thousand characters carved on the stone. He thought to himself, "What a shame that such a masterpiece is hidden up in this mountain where no one can read it. Why don't I copy it down and show it to the world?" Unfortunately he hadn't brought a pen or paper with him. So he went to fetch some quickly via his flying cart. When he looked at the strange stone again, he found some lines of verse had appeared behind this literary masterpiece. The lines went:

"This platform is located in a small place named Ling. On this platform is a small cave named the cave of the Crooked Moon and Three Stars. In this place is a magical object. The object absorbs the essence of the sun and the moon. The object equipped itself with hair and teeth, for the hardship of the world elicited its sympathy. It feels sad about today's society, and regrets that it was not born several years earlier. I was unable to fix the sky, nor was I born at a good time. All I can see is rats running all over the world. I wish I were deaf, but my ears continue to hear! I wish I could be blind, but still my eyes go on seeing! I feel so saddened that I would rather be silent and die. I shall write my tale as an unofficial record of history, so that I might express my own feelings of desperation."

Old Youth copied this poem down together with the literary masterpiece and took it back with him. Originally he hoped to publish it and distribute it to the world. Later he was afraid that the literary masterpiece was too difficult to be understood by others. If a Confucian pedant read this work, he would blindly guess its meaning, try to explain it word by word, and talk much nonsense about it, which would make such a literary masterpiece lose its original charm. Therefore, in addition to working in the mornings, Old Youth recomposed the masterpiece into a historical novel written in vernacular Chinese, without changing the original meaning of the masterpiece, hoping the work could suit both refined and popular tastes. He named the book *Xin Shitou Ji*, or the *New Story of the Stone*. From that time on, the stone that the Goddess of Creation Nü Wa left behind had moved to Crooked Moon and Three Stars Cave on Lingtai Fangcun Mountain in the civilized wonderland. If you, dear reader, do not believe me, you might visit this place in person. You will then know that this is no falsehood. However, only those who possess warm blood and righteous ardor, those gentlemen who love their race and nation, those who possess a refined spirit, and those who love and protect the essence of traditional culture will be able to access this place and read the stone. Even if they walk up to the Crooked Moon and Three Stars Cave on Lingtai Fangcun Mountain, those who worship and have blind faith in foreign things will never be able to read this masterpiece. Do you know why? It is because this masterpiece is aimed at gentlemanly readers, not for slaves and villains who blindly worship Western culture. If and when these sorts of people find their way here, there will be naught but several crooked sentences etched into the stone, which will read:

“All Foreigners thou shalt worship. Be always in sincere friendship.

Tis the way to get bread to eat and money to spend.

And upon this thy family’s living will depend; There’s one thing nobody can guess:

Thy Countrymen thou canst oppress.”

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NOTES

1. Feng-Ying Ming’s essay “Baoyu in Wonderland: Technological Utopia in the Early Modern Chinese Science Fiction Novel” and Nathaniel Isaacson’s dissertation “Colonial Modernities and Chinese Science Fiction” also hold the similar attitude with Theodore Hutters, see Ming, pp. 152-172 and Isaacson, pp.30-35.

2. Marling’s essay *Wu Jianren’s New Story of the Stone and interrogating turn-of-the-century urbanist ideology in China* holds the similar attitude, see Marling, pp.35-40.

3. See Chen, pp.136-158.

4. See Chen pp.22-40.

5. See Zou pp.11-19.

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