

吳趸人：《新石頭記》

New Story of the Stone: excerpts

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Chapter 1

**In which Baoyu encounters an old servant and past events
are strangely indistinct; he reads the newspaper and
becomes alarmed over the passage of time.**

IT IS THE CASE that anyone, regardless if one is building a career or writing a piece of work, must establish a unique style in order to make something outstanding and proficient. If you take after others then you become a case of the newly labelled term, ‘dependent nature’, and moreover, you accomplish nothing of value. We needn’t speak of more weighty matters; even fiction is like this. If you don’t believe it, take a look at the *Western Chamber* 西廂; after the ‘Startled from a Dream’ scene, a later writer added a four-act sequel and was roundly condemned by the critic Jin Shengtan 金聖歎 (1610–1661). Then there was the *Water Margin* 水滸傳 followed by its sequels and *The Story of the Criminal Bandits* 蕩寇志, all subject to criticism. Finally there was the *Journey to the West* 西遊記, while the *Later Journey to the West* 後西遊記 is all but unknown.

If we look at it this way, why trouble to ‘pin a dog’s tail to a marten’ and give occasion for ridicule? And now I myself have composed this *New Story of the Stone* out of thin air; am I not also ‘drawing a snake and adding feet’? Now *The Story of the Stone* is the original name of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Since *Dream of the Red Chamber* 紅樓夢 by Mr Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 (1717–1763) was published, later authors have written countless sequels to the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, such as *The Later Dream of the Red Chamber* 紅樓後夢, *The Supplementary Dream of the Red Chamber* 紅樓補夢, *Dreaming Again of the Exquisite Chamber* 綺樓重夢—all sorts of preposterous and absurd tales too numerous to be mentioned individually. No one who has read them has said they are any good. Isn’t this *New Story of the Stone* of mine also committing the very same mistake? Yet, it seems to me that

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Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, Writer of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, 20th Century
Courtesy of the Hong Kong Museum of Art

if a person raises his pen to write, he always begins with an intention. When he writes, he naturally does not expect admiration; he just follows his fancy, simply writing down what's on his mind. The praise or censure that comes later is never relevant. I have, therefore, taken this to heart and set about composing this *New Story of the Stone*. If readers say it's good that's fine, if they say it's hideous that's also fine, in any case I can't hear what they're saying. But enough of this digression; let's get to the story.

To begin with, people who compose sequels to *Dream of the Red Chamber* always use the ploy of bringing Lin Daiyu 林黛玉 back to life, writing endlessly about the secret passions of youth. What if I were to say simply that Jia Baoyu 賈寶玉 doesn't die, and engages in some quite proper undertakings? Even though it sounds preposterous, at least it might be good for a laugh. Dear readers, first listen to me spin together some introductory remarks.

Bringing peace and stability to the nation
Stalwart is the heart of worthy youth
A cosmos no bigger than a pellet
How can it withstand the hostile buffeting of powerful storms?
The 'Dragonspring' blade, but three feet long
Shoots forth a boundless radiance
The splendid light of the sun and moon—
Blocked, alas, by hundreds of layers of demons and barriers

It brings a passion like madness!
It brings a passion like madness!
A good head has no place to ruminare or rest
There remain but a thousand streams of hot tears
And hot blood filling the breast
Scattered over the great eastern ocean,
Roiling it into frightful billows and waves.
Suddenly looking back,
Past events all mere folly!
What are the world of letters, the battlefield, fame, and profit?
If you reckon them up,
They come to nothing but a five-thousand-year muddle.

The story goes that, in that year Jia Baoyu took Jia Lan 賈蘭 to sit for the official examination. When the three sessions were completed and he left the examination grounds, the Buddhist mahāsattva Impervioso and Daoist illuminate Mysterioso were waiting outside to return him to nature and discover his pure self; thus it was that once Jia Lan turned his head Baoyu had disappeared. You must know that he had come to a thorough understanding of his karma and thus instantly cast everything aside; so no matter what kind of chaos this threw his family into, he abandoned them without looking back. The Buddhist adept and the Daoist master first led him to Piling post station and had him bid farewell to his father Jia Zheng 賈政, then took him to the foot of Greensickness Peak in the Great Fable Mountains, put up a thatched hut and set him to arduous self-cultivation.

Hereafter, untold years and countless kalpas passed, with a mind like dead wood and cold ashes, seeing hundreds of thousands of years like one day. It was fated to happen and on this day Jia Baoyu suddenly began thinking, 'The day when Nüwa smelted the five-coloured stones to repair heaven, all 36,500 blocks were used, only I was left unused. Later, although I came to life, all I did was fritter away the years with those girls. I did not fulfil my pledge to mend heaven. How can I accomplish this? If only I could, then even were I to become ash and smoke, I would have no complaint.'

Once these worldly desires were awakened, before he knew it, a tide of blood rose in his heart and his mind caught fire; he forgot all about karma and retribution, and longed only to return home, to fulfil this pledge. But then he remembered that he had become a monk, and shaved his head, so how could he return in this awkward state. Not only would his father get angry if he saw, but the girls too would consider him filthy. It would better to be patient for a while, and

go after his hair had grown out. Having settled on this plan, he let his hair grow out day by day.

It is strange to tell; he had no idea how many aeons and kalpas passed while he was engaged in spiritual practice, yet the time passed as though it were a single day. But now that he was growing his hair out, a single day was actually harder to bear than a year. Every day he longed for his hair to grow, but the hair was perversely unwilling to grow quickly, irritating him to the point that he spent each day at home moaning and groaning. With great difficulty he managed to bear it for a little over a year until it grew to the length of one foot or so, such that he could more or less braid it, whereupon he was overjoyed and braided it up as best he could. He opened his bundle and saw that the suit of layman's clothing he had worn to the exams was still there, only a bit worse for wear, so he took them out and put them on. He also put on his precious jade. He happened to notice something in his pocket, which, when he pulled it out, turned out to be the little mirror he had asked Zijuan 紫鵑 for so long ago; he looked into it, and considered his own appearance to be the same as ever. Thereupon he straightened up his clothes, left the thatched hut, and, with no idea where he was headed, went on his way.

He hoped he would meet someone he could ask directions of. Who would have thought that, even though he walked on and on, he did not encounter a soul. He saw that the sun was setting in the west, and though he didn't know how far he had walked, luckily his legs had not yet failed him. Looking back, he couldn't see the slightest trace of Greensickness Peak and he did not know where he now was. As he wandered on, he suddenly looked up to see black clouds, spreading far and wide, and not a moment later rain began sprinkling down. A worried Baoyu stomped his foot and said, 'This time I'm really done for! There are no dwellings in any direction. Where can I go to take shelter?' With no idea what to do, all that was left to him was to pick up his heels and run. He ran ahead and, seeing a small forest, he hurriedly turned into it. He initially hoped that there might be people living in the woods, and he could take shelter with them. Once he had entered the woods, however, he found that although there were no houses, luckily there was a run-down temple. At this point it was as if Baoyu had received a great gift, and he promptly ran in. But the temple gate had collapsed, and it would be difficult to avoid the rain by standing under it, so he had to run up into the main hall.

Now it was already twilight and the temple was surrounded by numerous trees of great height, throwing the hall into complete darkness. Baoyu was rushing in and just as he reached the porch he kicked something and tripped over it.

Just as he was about to get up, a person stood up at his feet with a whooshing sound and cursed, 'What blind bastard just kicked his master!' Baoyu was

just about to apologize when he realized that the voice was quite familiar and unthinkingly fixed his gaze on him looking him over carefully. The person sized up Baoyu as well, then suddenly took a step closer and embraced him saying, 'Oh! My dear little master, you have finally shown up! Please forgive your wretched servant!' As it turns out, this person was none other than Baoyu's personal servant Beiming 焙茗.

'What are you doing here? What is this place?' Baoyu replied happily.

'Master, you've been gone for so long, so how is it you haven't changed at all? And you came here yourself, so how can you not know where it is?' Beiming said. While speaking, he took a look outside. In the half-light he caught sight of the collapsed temple gate, and blurted out in shock, 'This is bad! I've slept myself silly—how did I come to a place like this? Second Master, what time is it now?'

'You really are a silly little bugger! How could you sleep yourself into forgetting the time—it's evening now, isn't it?' Baoyu remarked.

'This is bad! Last night I went to bed early—how could I have slept the whole day through? This is clearly an abandoned temple, so there's no one here. How can we get a fire going?' Beiming thought a bit, and fortunately he still had his fire-starter bag with him. He fished it out, picked up the flint and started striking it wildly; it made lots of sparks, but the kindling would not light. He grew impatient and started groping around in all directions; when he had felt his way to the east side of the room he found a small door. He pushed it and entered, only to come across another courtyard and two small rooms; lamplight shone from the rooms. 'There are people here,' he enthusiastically declared. He strode right into the room finding an old Daoist monk squatting on the floor by a fire.

The monk raised his head, and, shocked to see Beiming, let out an, 'Ah!' and hid in the corner, repeatedly calling for Buddha.

'I'm a perfectly normal human being. Why are you calling on the Buddha?' Beiming asked in astonishment.

'Aren't you the statue of the celestial youth that's fallen over by the veranda?' the Daoist monk asked.

Beiming paid him no attention. Suddenly he smelled the aroma of porridge emanating from the pot; he was instantly famished and was eager to pick it up and eat it, but he immediately realized that Baoyu would also be hungry, so it would be best to invite him in and ask for a bowl from the Daoist monk; they would get through the night one way or another and then take stock. His mind made up, he went out and invited Baoyu to come back in with him.

Just as they reached the door, someone suddenly brushed past them, rushed out and vanished like a puff of smoke. Baoyu was taken aback, and did not know what

was going on. He followed Beiming into the room, and by the time Beiming had a chance to look around, the Daoist monk was gone. He went into the inner room to look, and nobody was there either. Now that there was light, Baoyu took a good look at Beiming, and said with a start, 'How'd you get so filthy, you little bugger?'

'Filthy?' Beiming asked.

Baoyu took out the little mirror and told him to have a look. Beiming looked and saw the accumulated dust and dirt on his face was over an inch thick; he felt astonished and amused at the same time. He hurriedly put down the mirror and looked around for a washbasin and towel; he also found a water jar, and not caring whether it was hot or cold, he scrubbed himself down. He was aware his body was covered in dust too, so he had to take off his clothes and shake them, all the while swearing, 'What bastard did this to me!' After he had shaken them out and put them back on, he found a bowl and chopsticks, washed them, filled the bowl with porridge, and served it to Baoyu.

Baoyu ate one bowl then stopped. 'Where does this porridge come from?' he asked.

'Master, don't worry about it, just eat,' Beiming said.

Baoyu asked further, 'What on earth is this place anyway?'

At this point, Beiming was starving, so while ladling up the porridge and eating he explained, 'Ever since you disappeared the family was running around like chickens with their heads cut off. Among the higher-ups, all the way from her ladyship on down, there was not one who wasn't in tears. As for us servants, we were sent frantically searching everywhere. Later when the results of the examination were released, you, young master, placed seventh among the provincial candidates.' Stopping here he suddenly said, 'Oh yes, I haven't congratulated you on that yet.' So saying he set to kowtowing then got up and continued, 'At the time there was so much trouble that even the emperor learned of it, so he put out a decree calling on every yamen to search for you, but still there was no news. Later on, once the Master, your father, returned, he said he had met you at Piling Post Station and that you had left home to become a monk. The Mistress, your mother, believed this at first, but later after giving it more thought she no longer did so; she said that when the Master met the monk they did not in fact speak face to face and it was probable that his eyes blurred and mistook him for Baoyu. So she called for another search. The capital was searched high and low, as well as the regions near the capital. She then dispatched people to different parts of the south; I was dispatched to Jinling. They thought that perhaps on a sudden whim you had returned to the southern mansion to stay for a while, and that's why they had me come. When I entered the precincts of Jinling, it was already getting dark, and I

was still more than ten *li* from the city. I was afraid I would not get to the city gate before it closed, so I went to what they called the Palace of the Jade Firmament to lodge for the night. That Palace of the Jade Firmament was resplendent in green and gold, and there were more than 100 Daoist monks in residence. They provided me accommodations in the side-wing. I don't know how it could have been that I slept until now, and I don't know how I came to sleep here. I am pretty confused.' As he spoke, he finished his porridge.

Baoyu was also dazed to the point of not being able to make head or tail of the situation and asked, 'Whose porridge is this, how is it that no one is here?'

'Master, just don't ask. There's a bed here, so go on in and make do and get some sleep, tomorrow we'll go into the city and go to your own place,' Beiming said. Baoyu did as he was told, and Beiming brought the lamp in.

When Baoyu came into the inner room, he saw a table standing under the window, and several books spread out on it in disarray. He sat down by the table and picked up a book at random, intending to read it to relieve his boredom. He opened it to have a look, and it was *Investiture of the Gods* 封神榜; he put it down unread. He took up another book, and it turned out to be *Tracks of the Immortals in the Green Fields* 綠野仙蹤; neither of these books was worth reading. Then he saw several books wrapped in printed paper, which, he found were Buddhist scriptures when he took them out and examined them. He felt that the printed paper the books were wrapped in was extremely strange, so he spread it out to have a look. Horizontally arranged at the top of the page was the word 'News', and beside it a hole had been torn; it seemed as if there should be another word, but he did not know what it could be. Below, however, were some smaller words, and when he looked carefully he saw it was an essay. When he read to the end, on the back there were set out a lot of news items and notices of current affairs. He couldn't help but feel puzzled.

Holding the paper he read it back and forth, and over and over; there were some things he could understand and some he could not. He turned back to the front and abruptly caught sight of the first line, which read: 'Such-and-such a day, such-and-such a month, the twenty-sixth year of Guangxu of the great Qing;¹ in the Western calendar, such-and-such a day, such-and-such a month, 1901, a Sunday'. He couldn't help being utterly astonished. If you want to know what had startled him, listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

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¹ The author is in error here: The twenty-sixth year of Guangxu actually corresponds to 1900.

Chapter 21

In which Baoyu fires a gun and ties up a robber; hit spot on by a sniper's arrow, Beiming manifests his original form.

AS THE STORY GOES, once Baoyu received Xue Pan's 薛蟠 letter he wanted to take a trip to Freedom Village. 'There's nothing going on now, so why bother to run up north again?' Bohui 伯惠 asked.

'It's precisely because nothing is going on that I can roam wherever I please, but it's also because I want to go on a tour,' Baoyu replied.

'I've only heard of people going abroad on tours, I've never heard of anyone "touring" the countryside!' Bohui remarked.

Baoyu responded, 'That's exactly what I resent. I've heard them speak incessantly about touring abroad, but I don't know what good it does! The strange thing is that every person who goes on tour keeps a diary. No matter what country they visit, the first page of the diary will without fail have a map of the globe sketched on it, but they record nothing regarding the politics, local conditions, social relations or natural products of the people they visit. And even if they do include one or two things like this, the discussion is incredibly vague, with nary even one informative sentence. Instead they record things like how far they travelled on such-and-such a day; how on such-and-such day they saw such-and-such a person and had such-and-such a conversation; how on such-and-such day they toured such-and-such a factory and saw the manufacture of such-and-such a product. What's more, they invariably exaggerate how prosperous foreign countries are, and how beautiful! Reading their diaries is absolutely useless. If they have the time to draw a world map, why don't they draw the country's geography and strategic points? If they have the time to walk about, why not inspect the local products? If they have time to talk with people, why not inquire after their political and social conditions? If they have time to tour factories, why not find out about their manufacturing methods? What benefit comes from their wasting all that travel money, time, and energy to make the trip!

'In addition, if they're touring foreign countries, they should naturally be familiar with China's own conditions. But just try and ask one of these travellers how many places they've been to in their own country China? How many dialects of different provinces can they speak? This is why I say that touring China is more important than touring abroad. You just need to get together several students, have them decide for themselves which provinces they are interested in touring, and then send them there. As for the manner of their tour, they should visit each

prefecture, department, sub-department, and county, and carefully examine local conditions and social relations, the difficulties people are in, local advantages and disadvantages, as well as the output from farming and mining of each place. They should record all these things in a diary and they should be permitted to add policy proposals. Send one person this year, and another the next. After several people have gone, compare their journals with one another. Whoever examines things most clearly and proposes the best plan should be sent to serve as an official in that location. Would people and the government still be divided? If we do this, will there still be any places that are ill-governed?

‘Your brilliant remarks are correct, of course! But just now you have no intention of becoming an official, nor do you intend to visit each prefecture, department, sub-department, and county; you merely plan to go to this “Freedom Village”. Last year there was that upheaval in the north, with people killed all over the place, so the area is still thick with pestilence. There will surely be numerous epidemics this year, and the weather will gradually be getting hotter from now on; on a hot day the diseased air is even worse. If you don’t have any urgent business, why even get near it?’ Bohui responded.

‘Why should I be afraid of an epidemic? Think about it—people killed by epidemics are mostly the poor. If not them, then it’s those who are careless in their daily routines and who eat and drink irregularly. People who are cautious in their daily routines are rarely victims of disease,’ Baoyu answered.

‘If that’s the way you’re thinking, I take it you’re determined to go.’

‘Actually, I just want to roam around but I’ll go there first, and bring Xue Pan’s remittance while I’m at it. Can you take it and change it to a bank draft? By now it should have gone through.’

‘It’s gone through, sure enough, but this Freedom Village—I’ve never heard of it. Where am I supposed to send the remittance?’ When Baoyu heard this, he went silent, and they did not discuss the matter further.

After a few days Baoyu told Bohui, ‘I really think I need to get Cousin Xue’s funds to him. Since a bank draft might not be valid in Freedom Village, I’ve come up with an idea. If I get it in silver, there’s no way it won’t be too cumbersome to carry; it would be better to exchange it for gold and take it to him that way. Fortunately gold can be exchanged for silver anywhere.’

‘So you’re serious about going?’ Bohui replied.

‘If he were anyplace else I would feel free not to go; but since he is in Freedom Village I just have to go. I’ve been hearing so much talk about the advantages of freedom these days that I want to have a look at the freedom in Freedom Village. I just want to make a quick visit, then come back down south. I also want to go to

Guangdong and Fujian and have a look around.'

'When will you leave?'

'I plan to set out in the next few days. Since it's the season for wearing light clothing, I don't need to bring a lot of luggage; a few unlined jackets and some summer clothing will do. I don't even need to take a trunk; I'll just buy a foreign leather suitcase and that will be it. At most I'll be gone a month or two.'

Bohui knew he would not be able to keep Baoyu from going, so he exchanged all of Xue Pan's funds into gold bars for him and handed them over carefully one by one. Baoyu bought a leather suitcase, packed his luggage and prepared to leave. Luckily the *Taishun* steamship was about to set sail. Wu Bohui had previously worked as accounts officer on this ship, and there were still two of his old colleagues on it, so he saw Baoyu aboard, entrusted them to take care of everything, and bid them farewell.

After two days' voyage the *Taishun* anchored at Yantai. They had a large quantity of goods to load and unload, and after quite a long delay, they were still not ready to go. Baoyu suddenly had an inspiration and thought, 'This is Shandong. There's no reason why I shouldn't go ashore and wander around a bit before taking the land route to the capital. Or I could just stay here a few days until there is another ship that I can take to Tianjin.' So he hastened to call Beiming to pack their bags, said his goodbyes to the people on the boat, called for a sampan, and went directly ashore. After staying at a guest house for a few days, Baoyu thought, 'Since I've come to Shandong, why not climb Mt. Tai?' Once he'd made up his mind, he had the guest house hire a long-distance cart for him, and the two of them, master and servant, got on board and started out toward the west. After eight or nine days on the road they arrived at Tai'an, then proceeded to Mt. Tai. And of course they went to feel the Fifth Rank Pines, viewed the steles which testified to the history of the mountain, visited the Qingdi Palace, and toured the Azure Clouds Temple. They gazed out toward Chang'an of Qin, and toward Kuaiji of Yue, staying on the mountain for two nights before coming down.

Next they hired two pack animals and went to Qufu, first checking in at an inn before visiting the family mausoleum of Confucius, admiring the ancient inscriptions, and heading off to the Apricot Altar; they spent more than a day there. Baoyu felt at ease everywhere they went, and thus thought to go on to the capital from where they were, going via Jinan and visiting Mt. Li along the way. Based on discussions with the people at the inn they decided they needed to hire two long-distance pack animals or hire a cart. The innkeeper said, 'It's too late to hit the road today. You should leave early tomorrow morning instead!' Baoyu agreed. The innkeeper followed them to their room and said, 'This room is no

good, sir, I'll give you another.'

'It's only one night, so we can put up with it. Why should we move now?' Baoyu replied.

'You gentlemen come from the south and are accustomed to comfort. Let's change your room,' the innkeeper said. With eager attentiveness he carried Baoyu's leather suitcase and took their bedding to the other room. Sure enough, the new room was cleaner than the other and it was freshly papered in white with a silver floral design. The innkeeper saw that everything was in order before leaving.

Baoyu looked at the room, and although the décor was just what you would expect of common village taste, there was calligraphy hung on all four walls, and in the corner hung a large scroll depicting varicoloured peonies. Baoyu thought to himself, 'Even a village shouldn't be as rustic as this; why hang a large painting in the corner?' He sat for a bit, then ate dinner; after dinner he lit the lamp while Beiming made the bed. Baoyu saw out of the corner of his eye that there was a scorpion crawling up the painting. He told Beiming, 'Take care of it, but just don't let it bite you.' Beiming did not dare touch it. He picked up a small piece of tile, aimed it at the scorpion and threw it straight on. He made a direct hit, but didn't kill or even wound it, and with a 'whoosh' it skittered away. After some time he couldn't find it, so he just let it go. Baoyu, being an attentive person, thought, 'He clearly hit it, so how come it didn't die, or even get wounded? That piece of tile hit the painting pretty hard, but it made only a very weak sound when it hit. It's as if there were an open space behind that painting—why would that be?'

With that thought, he pulled back the painting, and it turned out there was a doorway behind it, not a wall; there was a wooden door that opened from the inside. There was a tiny crack in the door, and when he edged closer and took a look, he could see that there was faint light inside, but couldn't make out clearly what was in there. He let down the painting, extremely puzzled. In front of this painting was a table, and when he looked under the table he could see solid wall. He wondered if it could be a window, but when he pulled back the painting again, he saw that the 'window' was five or six feet high from top to bottom—how could there be a window that big? 'I've often heard that there is a kind of shady inn in the north that specializes in hiding robbers who steal the belongings of guests, which certainly seems like what we have here. So what do I do now?'

He lowered his head and thought silently for a while. Suddenly he remembered the six-shot revolver he had bought in Shanghai. He had been carrying it for some time and although when he was in the capital he had fired it a few times at the guildhall in order to practice his aim, he had never used it to shoot anyone; today, however, he had no choice but to rely on it. So he quietly instructed Beiming

not to go to sleep and to be on the lookout. Meanwhile he took out the gun, loaded it with bullets, and put it beside his pillow. He thought, 'If it's one or two people then it'll be fine, but if there are more it will be disastrous. I have no option, however, other than to use the gun in a last ditch effort. In any case, it's already night time, so where can we go?' He told Beiming to close the door and trim the lamp and then sat for a bit. It was already ten o'clock so he went to bed fully clothed and pretended to doze off. Beiming tiptoed over to lie down as well.

After midnight, when it was completely silent, he heard a faint rustling of the painting and when Baoyu snuck a look he saw a young man steal out from behind it. In his hand he was carrying a large, shiny knife, and he stepped out slowly onto the table. Baoyu could see him quite clearly from where he lay on the bed; he took the gun, raised it, and pulled the trigger. 'Bang!' Thick smoke welled up. A bullet the size of a chicken's heart penetrated the bandit's thigh. He lost his footing and fell off the table, the knife in his hand dropping to the ground. Beiming shouted, and Baoyu hurriedly sat up and called out to Beiming to catch him. That bandit pulled himself up to get away, but Beiming pushed him backward with all his might and he fell back down. Then Baoyu came over to hold him down himself, and told Beiming to grab the rope that bound the bedding and tie him up.

By now there were people outside beating the door like a drum and calling out over and over to spare his life. Baoyu paid them no attention, and told Beiming to tie him up first. Beiming could not tie him up by himself, so Baoyu helped tie his four limbs together. Outside the sound of pounding on the door was still like banging on a drum. Baoyu held the gun in his hand and told Beiming to open the door. The innkeeper came staggering in through the doorway, and when he saw Baoyu he knelt down and kowtowed, pleading, 'Spare his life!'

'What kind of inn are you running here, hiding thieves so they can plunder people's belongings? Now that I've brought him down you ask me to spare him; but what would have happened if it was you who had captured me?' Baoyu responded.

The innkeeper kowtowed and said, 'Master, take pity on me, I have only this one son, so please spare him. I will bless and protect your lordship for generations to come.'

Beiming spluttered with laughter, 'So you can bless and protect people! If you can protect people, why didn't you first protect your own son from getting hit by my master's palm thunder.'

When the innkeeper had come in he had been so frantic that he hadn't even seen the pistol in Baoyu's hand, so when he heard Beiming say this he took it as the truth. He was so frightened he immediately kowtowed again saying, 'My divine lord, if you used palm thunder then my son's life is over for sure. My lord,

will you please spare his life?’

‘This blockhead is so stupid it’s funny. How could there ever be such a thing in this world as “palm thunder”?’ Baoyu thought.

Just as he was about to hide the revolver and seize the opportunity to scare him, the already bound up bandit son called out, ‘I was hit by a Western style gun; it’s not palm thunder!’

‘If I’d have used palm thunder, this whole building would have already crumbled to the ground!’ Baoyu retorted.

By now the rest of the guests had already been awoken, and the innkeeper’s wife had also woken up and come to kneel and plead for forgiveness. The innkeeper was busily running in and out of the room, telling his workers to make tea and prepare snacks. Baoyu did not dare to go back to bed at this point, and was happy to just keep harassing them. ‘Why did you decide to pick on me?’ he asked.

‘In this inn of ours, we usually choose those with lots of luggage before making a move. When you arrived, I helped you with that leather suitcase, and felt that the weight of the two sides was uneven, so I knew that it held more than a little silver, and we came up with our scheme. If it had been a larger group of guests, we’d have had to invite in a few more partners. Since we saw it was only the two of you, my son didn’t bring in anyone else—he wanted it all for himself. Who knew that he would be laid low by you?’ the innkeeper replied.

Dawn began to break as they were speaking. Someone knocked on the outside door, and the innkeeper went out to check. He returned and said, ‘The pack animals have arrived. The first stage of your journey today is a long one, so you’ll need an early start. I would hope that you get going now.’ Baoyu told Beiming to get everything packed up, so he first put the bedding on the back of a horse then put the leather suitcase case on his own back, after which they released the bandit, went outside, mounted up, and departed.

They had travelled four to five *li*, yet day had still not dawned. On either side it was densely forested. Beiming was in front and Baoyu was at the back. As they were going along they suddenly heard a ‘whoosh’ as a sniper’s arrow hit the leg of Baoyu’s horse. The horse, in pain, bucked Baoyu to the ground and ran off, reins trailing. Baoyu fell to the ground and immediately reached for the revolver in his shirt. Because of the events of the previous night Baoyu had made a special point of being prepared, and had tucked the gun into his shirt. Sure enough, before he’d gone very far he already needed it. Just as he grabbed the gun he saw in front of him that Beiming had also fallen off his horse and that horse had run off as well. Needless to say the groom was chasing after his own horse. But Beiming just stood there rigidly without moving. Baoyu did not know

how many bandits there were, so he didn't reveal himself, but lay there on the ground and watched for any activity. He saw four or five torches coming toward him from either side; they headed directly toward Beiming, but Beiming still stood without moving.

Suddenly he heard the voice of one of the bandits calling out, 'Yah! How could we have shot a Bodhisattva?' At once Baoyu came to a realization. That day when he encountered Beiming at the Temple of the Jade Firmament he initially thought he was some sort of spirit. Had he made some kind of transformation now? He looked over, and in the blaze of the torches saw that Beiming had an arrow stuck in his shoulder. Four or five bandits were all standing there stupefied; one had even knelt down and was kowtowing to Beiming. Baoyu thought, 'These are the kind of people who are superstitious of ghosts and spirits, so I can take advantage of this to scare them.' So he leaped up and ran over. The bandits were stunned and made no effort to protect themselves but instead were frightened out of their wits. Baoyu shouted, 'You curs! You've just shot my servant! Now what are you looking at?' But when he looked at Beiming—there was no Beiming there, rather a wooden statue of an immortal youth, with his facial features virtually obliterated. Baoyu himself was inwardly bewildered, but it would not be good to reveal this to the bandits. So he lamented at the statue, 'I told you your spiritual efforts were inferior, and now you've suffered this calamity!' The bandits were scared speechless, believing simply that Baoyu was an immortal and so they all kowtowed to him. Baoyu paid them no mind, but took the leather suitcase from the wooden statue and put it on his own back. To the bandits he asked, 'What do you have to say for yourselves?'

The bandits did nothing but kowtow and pleaded, 'Oh divine master, please spare us.' Baoyu replied, 'I don't think you are worth killing. Your arrow has injured my immortal servant boy; I'll have you know that he had to leave for a bit, but he will come back later. You'd better pick him up and carry him back with you, and make incense and candle offerings to him. If you henceforth give up evil and return to the good, I will spare your lives.' The bandits immediately agreed. They kowtowed in thanks, then picked up the statue and left.

By now the sky had begun to brighten. Baoyu watched the bandits leave, laughing to himself. But still the good Beiming had been transformed into a statue. He was puzzled and thought, 'I've never believed in demons, foxes, or other spirit beings, but now I've seen this strange event for myself.' As he thought he walked on. He did not know how far he had walked when suddenly he raised his head and saw the sun rising. He was startled in spite of himself and thought, 'Jinan is to the north, so why am I heading east?' When he took

a careful look he saw myriad beams of auspicious light and countless strands of propitious air. Within the auspicious light and propitious air an arch faintly appeared. If you do not know what place this arch was, then listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

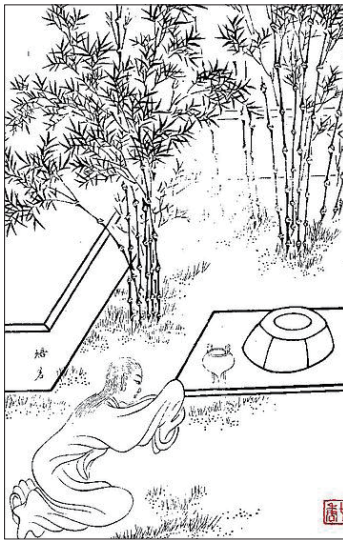
* * *



Lin Daiyu 林黛玉



Zijuan 紫鵲



Beiming 焙茗



Jia Lan 賈蘭

From *Hongloumeng tuyong* 紅樓夢圖詠 by Huaipu jushi 淮浦居士 dated 1879

Chapter 22

In which Jia Baoyu enters the Civilized Realm for the first time; Old Youth speaks about rebuilding heaven.

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER Beiming was hit with an arrow and turned all of a sudden into a wooden statue. For me, your author, to suddenly tell such a preposterous tale in this age of opening up to civilization, will I not be cursed by my readers for this embrace of barbarism? Little do you know that there is a principle here; your author has a hidden intent, and left this section in on purpose, so that my readers would stop and think about it. Who could have known that before I'd completed the manuscript, a 'Mr Mirror-image' would appear and in one simple statement lay bare my hidden meaning. He also said that upon the completion of my manuscript he would add commentary to it for me. Readers, if you cannot figure out this hidden meaning, then just wait to read Mr Mirror-image's commentary.

Enough digression: since Baoyu had lost his horse and was also without Beiming, even though he had scared away the bandits, he had to shoulder the leather case himself and set out on foot. Far in the distance he spotted a memorial arch, above which was shining a quantity of auspicious light and a propitious aura, so he kept on walking. When he arrived at the foot of the arch, it had already been light for some time, and when he looked up he saw written at the top the two words, 'Civilized Realm'.

'No wonder the recent catchphrases have been "civilized" and "barbarian", as it turns out there is a "Civilized Realm". But I don't know anything about the civilization in this land. By some stroke of luck I've come here, so I might as well go in and have a look!' So thinking, he walked in, and when he turned to look at the inscription on the inside of the arch, he saw it consisted of the two large characters: 'Confucian Way'. He thought, 'These words probably just mean "main road".'

Scarcely had he finished the thought when from the side appeared a man with a broad face and large features, glowing with health and vigour, and sporting a black moustache. He was handsome and dashing and welcomed Baoyu with a bow, clasping his hands, saying, 'Honoured guest, it is not easy to come such a distance.'

Baoyu immediately returned his salutations, saying, 'I've lost my way and ventured here by chance. Might I be permitted to pay my respects to your honourable realm?'

'Our humble realm is vast, and we turn away none who are willing to honour

the rules of civilization. Honoured guest, in as much as you are here, please come first to our humble lodge and rest for a bit,' the man said and then led Baoyu forward.

After just a few steps they came to the doorway of a very large building. A tablet hung above the lintel with 'First Immigrant Hotel' written on it. The man ushered Baoyu into the guest-room. Baoyu put down his case and they took seats opposite one another. They began by asking one another's names, at which point Baoyu learned that the man's surname was Old and his given name was Youth. A boy brought them tea. When Baoyu took the cup in his hand and had a look, he saw that it was a cup of clear water, but when he put it to his lips and had a sip, he tasted the rich fragrance of tea, and thought to himself how odd it was. He raised his eyes to look around the guest-room, and saw that it was kept exceptionally clean.

After finishing the cup of tea, Old Youth had Baoyu go to another room to sit, a room quite different from the guest-room. Although the four walls were painted a spotless white, there was no furniture other than a few chairs in the middle of the room. After they had sat for a bit, a small side door suddenly opened and a person walked out—an aged man with an ash-grey beard. He spoke to Old Youth saying, 'This honoured guest has a crystalline character, but his digestive system is not quite clean, due to the fact that he has been careless in choosing his food and drink; once he's been here a few days he'll be fine.' Old Youth was greatly pleased and led Baoyu back to the guest-room.

'Who was that old man?' Baoyu asked.

'That was a doctor of our humble realm. The room we just sat in is where we examine people's character. Everyone who comes from the outside is brought here by me. I take them into the Character Examination Room and the doctor checks them with the Character Examination Lens in the side room. If the person has a civilized character then they are encouraged to stay. If their characters are a bit barbarous, then we send them to the Character Reform Centre. Once the doctor has reformed their characters they will be invited to stay. Some are complete barbarians who cannot be reformed, so they are sent away. Just now the doctor verified your character as being crystalline, which is extremely rare among guests coming from the outside. It goes to show that you, sir, belong to the class of civilized people, meaning that on the outside you are "a shining metal amid iron, and an outstanding person among the ordinary".'

'I'm a simple man of little knowledge with no civilization to speak of. But I have always heard that character is an intangible thing and that one must examine it through careful observation of a person's everyday conduct. How can you use a lens

to test it? What's more, how can character be improved? What ingenious method can there be for improving it? If your honourable realm has such a method, why haven't you gone abroad and reformed everyone in the world?"

Old Youth replied with a sigh, "That's easier said than done! At present the character of the people of the world is in the majority of cases completely barbaric and cannot be reformed. Although we do have a method, there's simply nothing to be done, and we can only wait for them to die off on their own. As far as those whose characters can still be improved, there's no need for us to go and change them, for they will come here themselves to seek improvement. So we have no obligation to meddle."

"If character is an intangible thing, how can it be tested? Please enlighten me."

"Once science has flourished, there is nothing that cannot be tested! For example when the atmosphere is carefully examined, a myriad of things are found to be hidden there. Barbarian, semi-civilized types commonly use the word "atmosphere" to refer to everything altogether—how can that be any use? If you say that an intangible thing cannot be tested, then how is it that European and American experts on acoustics have measured sound waves? However, even though experts on acoustics measure sound waves, the graphs of the sound waves that they chart are still abstractions. Whenever the scientific researchers of our humble realm investigate something, they invariably establish a means for the eye to see it. So for the testing of character they use a lens created by advanced medical researchers who use chemistry to manufacture the glass, then use medicinal liquids to refine it several times. If you examine a person's body through this lens, neither the flesh, blood, tendons nor bones are visible, only the person's character can be seen. If the character is civilized then it is crystalline like ice or snow; if it is barbarian then it is murky and turbid like smoke or fog. By looking at the density of the smoke one can determine the level of barbarism. If it is densely black like ink, then the person cannot be reformed."

"This lens really is an amazing invention. Not only have I never seen it before, but I've never even heard of it," Baoyu remarked.

"This was also something that was originally developed from concept. A great deal of the fiction of the ancients records things like spirits and immortals, and every time they bring up the subject of good and evil, they say that good people have a scarlet radiance several feet high above their heads, while evil people have a black miasma circling about above them. They also talk of people having an aura of prosperity or an aura of decline, which cannot be seen by people, but only by spirits and immortals. The people who wrote books in those days had never been spirits or immortals themselves, so how could they know this? It was

no more than a concept, but because the concept existed, we could later see it through to realization. So medical researchers in our humble realm worked with all their heart to construct the lens.' Baoyu couldn't help but nod and sigh in admiration.

As they were talking they suddenly heard somebody say loudly, 'The time is exact *chen* and one quarter.'

When Baoyu looked up he saw that there was a man standing in the corner. He was wearing traditional style clothing, and was holding in his hands a sign on which was written 'exact *chen*, one quarter' in four large characters. The man's eyes were looking at him, and his face bore a faint smile. Baoyu was surprised in spite of himself, and thought, 'I wasn't paying attention just now and didn't see him.' He was just about to get up and greet him, when he noticed that he seemed not to be moving, so he kept watching him in fascination. After a bit he saw that under the four large characters 'exact *chen*, one quarter' the two small characters for 'one minute' appeared. He couldn't help but silently marvel at it.

Old Youth had already noticed this, and smiling at Baoyu said, 'This is the timekeeping machine. It announces the time at regular intervals, just like the clocks of Europe and America.'

'Clocks are already ingenious enough, but this is so much more so that I can't even fathom it.'

'Although clocks are ingenious, unfortunately their system of notation is not the same as ours. We have always used the twelve two-hour periods from *zi* to *hai*, the Earthly Branches, to make a day and a night; but they use twenty-four hours. The notations on the face of a clock have only twelve symbols, so if you want to note the time you have to clarify whether it's a.m. or p.m. Isn't that a lot of trouble? For example, right now it is exact *chen*, one quarter, but if you want to say it according to the Western clock it is a quarter after eight. When you ask somebody in person what time it is, then you can still figure it out, but if you are recording events then you must add the words 'a.m.', otherwise, if you get it wrong, then you will be off by twelve hours. Not only is this inconvenient, but also why must we give up our own ways to follow others?'

Then he pulled out a watch from his pocket and handed it over to Baoyu to have a look. Baoyu took it in his hand and saw it was only as big as a copper cash. In the middle was the character '*chen*', to the left were the three characters 'exact, one quarter', and on the right were the two characters for 'three minutes'. When Baoyu looked at the timekeeping machine again it had also changed to 'three minutes'. He finished looking at the watch and handed it back to Old Youth, expressing endless admiration.

A boy came and invited them to have breakfast and Old Youth insisted that Baoyu go first. Baoyu was incredibly hungry at this point and did not demur, so they went into the dining hall together. The boy served a cup of tea and when Baoyu saw it, it looked just like clear water, only slightly thicker. He saw Old Youth drink it so he also took a sip. He felt that the flavour, besides being sour, salty, bitter and spicy, also had a kind of pleasant freshness. Without thinking about it he drank it all down one sip at a time. It is strange to say but after drinking only this one cup he was no longer hungry.

The boy came and asked about the lodgings for the newly arrived guest. 'It's room number one,' Old Youth said. The boy listened and left. Old Youth led Baoyu to room number one, where he saw that his leather case had already been delivered. The furnishings were elegant but without the slightest air of opulence or vulgarity. A canopied bed and bedding, ink, ink-stone, writing brush, and paper atop the desk were all in place. To the side there was a shelf of books, and to the side of the bookshelf there was a reclining chair, with a row of chairs on the other side of the room. In the corner there was also a timekeeping machine; in this case in the form of a boy, fat and round, with snow-white skin and a smile from ear to ear. He held a sign above his head in the shape of a scroll. It happened to be precisely *chen* exact and two quarters and the boy announced it, sounding just like a human speaking.

'I think this voice must be produced the same way as phonographs,' Baoyu remarked.

Old Youth shook his head, 'No, no it's not. The phonograph does not have such clear enunciation. It creates sound by grinding it out, whereas this is based on the respiration of the human lung and uses a flexible casing on the inside, along with a fan. When the time comes and the machine turns on, the fan blows and the casing opens and closes alternatively, creating sound. If when going to bed at night you object to the noise of it announcing the time, there is a mechanism in the left ear that you turn so it will automatically disable the announcing. The next day when you want him to announce aloud again just turn it back where it was before and that's it.' Then he turned it to show Baoyu.

'This is truly better craftsmanship than nature itself,' Baoyu said.

While they were conversing a fresh fragrance unexpectedly reached their nostrils. Baoyu turned his head to look and saw a vase full of green-stemmed plum blossoms placed atop a small round table right in the middle of the room. Baoyu was astonished and said, 'It's June now; where did these plum blossoms come from?'

'Nothing strange about it. In our humble realm there are four parks, divided

into the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Besides providing entertainment the parks also allow people to pick flowers. So the flowers and trees of all four seasons can be enjoyed at any time.’

‘If the weather isn’t right, how can the flowers blossom?’

‘The chemists in our humble realm can manufacture weather. For example, since it is the beginning of summer now, the weather in the three parks of spring, autumn, and winter is completely manufactured. After the passing of summer, when we approach autumn, the summer park will start being manufactured.’

Baoyu sighed, ‘It’s not just that this manufacturing of the weather is such an uncanny feat, but how on earth could anyone even have imagined anything like it before it had been done?’

‘This is actually an invention from 100 years ago, when science in our land was still in its rudimentary stages, and most of our people lived in poverty. There was a year where they lost the cotton harvest and the following winter was exceptionally cold, so even though there were charities and philanthropists that made aid available, there was unfortunately no way to buy cotton and so it was all to no avail. At that time there was a chemist named Hua Xing 華興, courtesy name Bizhen 必振, who made a proposal to the effect that, “Rather than providing aid to each person individually, would it not be better to find a way to keep the weather from getting cold? Would this not be even more ingenious?” The people of the time mocked him as being preposterously wrong. But who knew that once he made this statement he would bring it to fruition.’

Old Youth continued, ‘He had people let loose several dozens of balloons all at once, sending them out into the atmosphere to release saltpeter, sulfur and the like so as to drive away the cold air, even as he used several dozens of large stoves to emit warm air and spread it in all directions. To everyone’s surprise it brewed up weather like the middle of spring with grass and trees sprouting up. Our impoverished citizens were immediately overjoyed. Although it couldn’t cover the whole realm, within an area of 300 square *li* you actually would not know that there was a winter that year. But in accomplishing this feat, Hua Bizhen used up most of his family fortune. The government eventually realized he had this consummate skill, and had him carry the research further with the government paying the bill. He gradually discovered the method for manufacturing the weather of all four seasons, and also reduced the expense. By now the citizens of the Civilized Realm are flourishing and the country has prospered, so we don’t actually need this any more, but since we cannot bear to bury his contribution, we still use the method he bequeathed to us, and in every district we have built four public parks that accord with each of the four seasons and in the middle of

each park we have erected his statue. I can take you to have a look whenever you please.'

'This really can be called an accomplishment to rival Heaven and Earth,' Baoyu said.

'Back then people gave this Mr Hua an honorary name, "Rebuilder of Heaven". Now, the men and women who tour the parks and pay their respects to his statue are unwilling to use his actual name, but instead refer to it as "The Statue of Heaven's Rebuilder",' Old Youth said.

'Mr Hua is completely deserving of this appellation. Initially I had intended to go to Freedom Village but on a whim I came up with the idea to climb Mt. Tai and pay my respects to the Confucius family mausoleum. I inadvertently came upon this place, and it has truly opened my eyes—it's been three lifetimes' good fortune! But I still don't know how big your estimable realm is, so I really must experience each and every part of it.'

'Our realm altogether has 2 million districts and each district is 100 square *li*, forming five large regions—north, south, east, west, and central. Each region has jurisdiction over 400,000 districts. Each district uses a single word as its designation and a number, from 1 to 100,000. The designations in the central region are: Rites, Music, Literature, Rules; in the east they are: Benevolence, Propriety, Rites, Wisdom; in the south they are: Friendship, Compassion, Respect, Confidence; in the west they are: Firmness, Strength, Bravery, Resoluteness; in the north they are: Loyalty, Filiality, Incorruptibility, Morality. The place we are right now is the 100th Strength District and we abbreviate it to 'Strength 100'. You just said you wanted to go to Freedom Village; Freedom Village is also the name of a village here.'

'When my relative went to Freedom Village he said it was not far from Changxindian in Beijing, so how can it be here?' Baoyu inquired.

Old Youth was taken aback and said, 'Besides the one here, how could there be another Freedom Village?' Baoyu took Xue Pan's letter from the leather case and gave it to him. Old Youth read it and was shocked. If you do not know what was so shocking, then listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

* * *

Chapter 40

In which an omen for civilization is found in the realm of dreams; the romance of the new stone is completed

THE STORY continues that Baoyu believed Old Youth to be in his forties. Old Youth laughed, 'Actually your guess is only a fraction of my age.'

Baoyu was shocked and asked, 'How can that be?'

'This old man has already frittered away 140 years.' Baoyu shook his head in disbelief and Old Youth smiled as he said, 'I'm not taking the exams to get an official position, so why would I lie about my age?'

'When taking the exams for official position you always understate your age, nobody exaggerates it,' Baoyu remarked with a smile.

'Actually this isn't rare at all. In the future, once other countries have learned our medicine they will also be able to have people look young and extend their lives. A human being's life depends on nothing more than his spirit and vitality. He needs only to regulate his energy so that his vitality does not run out and his spirit remains abundant, and that's it. You must know that people's life expectancy is indicative of whether or not their medicine is refined or rudimentary. It's just ridiculous when the countries with a life expectancy similar to everyone else's boastfully claim that their medical science is so refined while everyone else's is so crude!' Old Youth said. The more Baoyu listened to this talk that living to be over 100 was not at all remarkable, the more attentive he became.

'My vacation time will be over come tomorrow so I have to report back. Where will you go?' Old Youth asked.

'I want to go to Freedom Village to pay my respects to the venerable Mr Wenming's 文明 old home.'

'Then tomorrow we'll have to say goodbye for the time being. We should go to bed early tonight so we can get up early tomorrow.' Thereupon they each went to bed.

Baoyu tossed and turned, unable to sleep. He got up and sat for a bit then went back to bed. Just as he was about to doze off the servant boy brought him a letter and reported, 'The messenger is awaiting your reply.' When Baoyu looked at the front of the envelope, written very clearly were the words: 'To: the Civilized Realm, First Benevolence District of the Eastern Region, Attention: Mr Jia at the Dongfang 東方 household' and so on ... in Wu Bohui's handwriting.

'How did he know that I'm here?' Baoyu wondered and opened it reading that Bohui was asking him to return to Shanghai immediately on urgent business.

‘Where is the messenger?’ Baoyu asked the boy.

‘Outside.’ Baoyu got up and went outside, finding that it was Huang Fu 黃福.

When Huang Fu saw Baoyu, he stepped forward to greet him and said, ‘My superior is requesting Master to come to Shanghai for a spell; he has urgent business.’

‘Wait for me to hire a flying car,’ Baoyu responded.

‘We don’t need a flying car. I’ve already readied horses.’ When Baoyu looked, he saw there were indeed two horses which each of them mounted, with Huang Fu following him. When they let loose the reins, the horses set off as fast as the wind. They crossed several high mountains, passed through numerous thickets until they finally arrived at the seaside, where they saw an anchored steamship. Intending to board the steamship Baoyu reined his horse to a stop, but who could have thought that Huang Fu’s horse was not reined to a stop, instead leaping directly into the sea? Baoyu was shocked and was about to call for help when he suddenly saw Huang Fu turn around and beckon to him. It turned out that when the horse went into the sea it could gallop on the surface of the water, surging through the swells. Baoyu was delighted, and loosened his reins to follow. Sure enough, his horse could make its way on water in the same way.

‘I have heard others talk about a Thousand-*li* horse that can cross the waters and ascend mountains as if they were flatlands. I simply didn’t believe it, but in fact such a thing actually exists,’ he thought to himself.

When the two horses had galloped for quite some time, they arrived at Shanghai. Wu Bohui greeted them with delight and talked at length about what had happened since they had parted. Baoyu then asked what the urgent matter was. ‘There isn’t one, but I hadn’t seen you for a while so I asked you to meet me, chat a bit, and then to go travel together,’ Bohui said with a smile.

‘Once I arrived at the Civilized Realm, every place I saw there can only be hailed as perfect, so where else would I want to travel?’ Baoyu said.

‘I guess you haven’t heard. There’s been lots of news since you left. When the Empress Dowager and the Emperor returned to Beijing after their flight from the Boxer Rebellion, they instituted a series of new policies, which are almost exactly the same as those of the Hundred-day Reform of 1898. But back then they were implemented precipitously, whereas this time it was done very deliberately, so they were not particularly effective. Then all of the sudden it was 1904, time when the American law prohibiting Chinese immigration had to be renewed. The Act in name only excluded workers, but actually excluded all Chinese, so people from the business and educational communities in China discussed ways to boycott it, and together, pledged not to use American products. This was initiated in Shanghai

then taken up in every province and in every port. There wasn't a single place that didn't hold meetings and lectures, and for several months in a row there wasn't a single day that wasn't buzzing with correspondence. When the matter made its way to Beijing, the government heard this news and recognized that the spirit of the Chinese people could be put to use.

'Moreover, someone had submitted a memorandum to the emperor stating that "implementing the new policies in this vague manner will not produce results. We must implement a constitution if we want them to work. Otherwise, just look at the case of the Russo-Japanese War. Japan is a small nation that was victorious, while Russia is a large nation that was defeated. The Japanese didn't have any special skill for overcoming the great by the small; it was simply a case of a constitutional government versus an autocracy. This war can't be considered as the small defeating the large, but rather as a constitution defeating a dictator." When this memorandum was submitted, the court saw reason, and considered creating a constitution; it's just that they didn't know where to start.

'So they dispatched five officials to go abroad and research constitutional government. Each of the five went out separately and they were gone for quite some time carefully inspecting each nation's key points. Back in Beijing they set up a bureau for constitutional government, where the five officials went every day to compare the different constitutions they had each examined. If for this clause England's was best they used England's. If for that clause, Japan's was best they used Japan's. There were some clauses that were not suitable for China so they were simply deleted. If there was something none of the countries had but China could not do without, they added it. Once they had deliberated to the fullest extent they promulgated a constitutional government. As expected, the effects of establishing a constitution played out with incredible speed and it wasn't long before China had changed itself.

'Would you say that today's Shanghai is still the Shanghai of yesterday? It is not at all the same. Foreign extraterritorial rights have been taken back, the city walls have been torn down and commercial districts have been opened up in both the City and the Southern City—all the way down to the Kiangnan Arsenal. The Wusong market is bustling and a fair ground has been opened in Pudong, where right now a World's Fair is taking place. This is the first reason why I asked you to come. This World's Fair is a rare event and you simply can't miss it. The second thing is the World Peace Summit. Currently the World Peace Summit is taking place in China by the agreement of all nations and they have selected the Chinese Emperor to be its head. Outside the Yongding Gate in Beijing they have already built an enormous convention centre. After the World's Fair has been held here,

the first Peace Summit will open. Once we've seen the World's Fair we'll go up to Beijing.'

Spellbound, Baoyu responded, 'And all this has happened even in China?'

Bohui said, 'Let's go see the fair.' Saying this he led Baoyu along. As soon as they were out the door they were at the fair ground, where each nation had been allotted its own space on which they had constructed buildings and where all sorts of commodities were displayed. Each of China's provinces had also built its own exposition hall, and these places were buzzing with excitement, full of countless strange and rare products. Baoyu was just looking at the newly published books from the official China publishing house when all at once he saw Dongfang Wenming up front. Baoyu put down his books to go talk with him, but he had unexpectedly disappeared. As he was looking around he felt as if he was on a steamship and that the steamship was moving incredibly fast. He looked to both shores and saw a forest of tall buildings and smokestacks. In spite of himself, he said aloud, 'Where am I? I've never been here before.'

Suddenly he heard Bohui behind him exclaiming, 'This is the Yangtze River!'

Baoyu turned and asked, 'Where along the Yangtze are there so many buildings?'

'You still don't know? Nowadays, starting from Wusong and all the way to Hankou, both banks are an unbroken succession of Chinese factories.'

In the blink of an eye the ship had arrived at Hankou. He did not know how, but his body was now on a train, a train that was moving as quickly as the wind. On both sides mulberry woods, tea tree forests, rice and wheat fields all seemed to be flying swiftly by. Everybody got off of the train one after the other, as did Baoyu. He raised his head and saw an enormous building to the side of the road with an empty plaza in front. A flagpole as high as the heavens was erected on the plaza on which a yellow flying-dragon flag fluttered in the wind. There was also a long rope extending from the tip of the flagpole to the roof of the building from which the flags of all the nations of the five continents hung in a row. When he looked at the doorway of the building he saw the three words, 'World Peace Summit' carved there and decorated in gold leaf. Reflecting the sunlight, they dazzled the eye. Baoyu strolled into an assembly hall set up inside with seats full of countless Chinese and foreigners. He sat for a while, and it was absolutely silent.

Suddenly he heard the sound of a bell and somebody to his side whispered, 'The chairman is coming on stage—it's the Emperor of China.' Baoyu turned around and saw that it was Bohui who was talking to him. Just as he was about to respond he heard a thunderous sound of applause. When he hurriedly looked

toward the stage, he saw standing at the podium none other than Dongfang Wenming.

He began his speech, 'Today is the first day of the World Peace Summit. I have been chosen as head by the various nations. Every nation in attendance at this meeting is represented by its emperor in person or by high officials. I am humbled to act as head. Prior to the discussion of our methods by each nation's leaders and high officials I should first announce our general objectives. Since this meeting is called a peace summit it ought to have peace as its objective. However, in holding this Peace Summit, we must make clear what kind of peace it is we seek.

'The Peace Summit does not merely seek peace among the many nations, since only seeking peace among the nations is an international issue, the scope of which is perhaps a bit too small; even if we attain this supreme accomplishment, it would be no more than a matter of avoiding military bloodshed. This Peace Summit should seek peace for all of global humanity, and each government should shoulder its responsibility of preserving peace, such that the red, the black, the brown, and every race of people should be treated equally, and neither their governments nor their people should be mistreated. This is self-protection for the human race, and the rejection of tyranny forever. And if one race is not as advanced as another, all of us civilized nations—be it the individual or the society—share equally the responsibility to guide and educate the ignorant.' Baoyu heard this and without thinking started to applaud, with the rest of the assembly applauding thunderously as well. The chairman continued, 'We cannot treat each other as alien races, alien peoples and then, relying on our wealth and power, bully others at will. Therefore from this meeting on we must eliminate militarism and practice pacifism.' The whole assembly, both on and below the podium, applauded together. Baoyu applauded without cease and was even about to stomp his feet but as soon as he did so he unexpectedly stamped into empty air and fell into an abyss. His eyes immediately went black and he was terrified into a cold sweat. When he forced open his eyes he was still sleeping in the guest room at Dongfang Wenming's home. It had all been a dream.

Baoyu looked at the timekeeping machine; it was already 4:15 a.m. and the sky was still not completely light. He felt dry and hot so he got up to go outside and take the air. When he got outside he found to his surprise that Dongfang Wenming was already up and had gone out into the yard to look at the lotus flowers. 'Venerable sir, it's so early,' Baoyu said.

'Since I began to meditate, I generally go to bed and get up early. Good brother, why are you up this early?' Wenming replied.

‘I happened to have awakened so I decided to get up. It’s rare for me to get up as early as you, sir.’ The two of them sat on porcelain stools and chatted.

‘Good brother, during the night were you able to remember where we met before?’ Wenming asked.

‘I really can’t remember. I beg of you to tell me.’

Wenming sighed, ‘Following the year that brought the passing of your grandmother Lady Shi, during your period of bereavement Good Brother, what guests did you receive?’

Baoyu turned and thought, then said, ‘I didn’t receive any guests.’

‘Think again whether there might have been a certain close friend or relative come to the residence?’

Baoyu thought it over yet again then replied, ‘Only the Jinling Zhen 甄 family came to visit.’

‘That’s it. Your good father was staying in the mourning shed and sitting on thatched ground. When we met each other, it was not appropriate for us to be formally seated. Your good father was indulgent to this unworthy youth, taking his leave and excusing himself, allowing us to have a chat. How could you forget?’

Baoyu was shaken and responded, ‘You are Good Brother Zhen! How is it that you are now an old gentleman with the surname, Dongfang?’

‘Dongfang is my original surname. Because the Zhen clan had no heir I had gone over to take their name. Later when the Zhen’s had a son of their own I returned to my own family. The year we met I had a lot to say about statecraft, and you seemed not very happy to hear it. At the time I knew that we weren’t singing from the same hymnal. Much to my surprise, we meet again all these years later. But you are carefree and without worries, and have come from a state of oblivion, so no matter how many generations and kalpas have passed, you still look just the same. I’ve been creating and managing things all my life and now that I’ve reached this point, I’m pale of face and white haired. So when we met you didn’t recognize me.’

Baoyu listened as if he had just awakened from a dream and thought, ‘If he hadn’t mentioned them, I would have completely forgotten everything about the past. I had every intention to carry out my vow to mend Heaven; how could I have imagined that all these worthy undertakings have been accomplished by him. Once again my vow has been in vain. I’d better just go to Freedom Village now and entrust myself to his protection.’

Just as he was having these thoughts Old Youth also got up. After combing his hair and cleaning up Old Youth had to return home and report back. For

his part, Baoyu was also going to Freedom Village, so they bade Dongfang Wenming farewell, each hiring a flying car. Baoyu shook Old Youth's hand and said, 'We were strangers that met by chance, but you have taught me many a thing. So we part now and I don't know when we will see each other again. I have something that I wish to present to you in all sincerity. Although not the greatest of treasures, it is rather rare: it is no gemstone, but it was in my mouth when I was born. Perhaps you can keep it for your personal enjoyment or give it to a museum, as you see fit.' Saying this, Baoyu handed over his precious jade, which Old Youth received with gratitude and repeated expressions of wonder. As it happened, since Zhen Baoyu had become the champion of Jia Baoyu's desire to mend Heaven, holding onto the jade would not only be pointless, but would also grieve him whenever he saw it. It would be better not to see it at all, so he generously gave it to Old Youth. He boarded the flying car and headed for Freedom Village.

Old Youth received the precious jade and could not help but marvel at it. He boarded his flying car and kept it in his hand along the way. Since the weather was very hot he opened a window and leaned against the sill to enjoy the cool air, the jade still in his hand. He accidentally dropped it, however, and the precious jade fell straight down. Old Youth immediately told the driver to descend, keeping his eyes fixed on the jade. The further it fell the bigger it became, until it fell straight into a valley in the mountains, which he could see quite distinctly. The flying car stopped at the foot of the mountain, which Old Youth recognized. It was located in the 100,000th Benevolence District of the Eastern Region and its name was The Mountain of Heart and Mind.

He walked to the mountain valley, where he came across a cave. At the mouth of the cave the name was carved into the stone, 'Cave of the Oblique Moon and Three Stars', a place Old Youth came often. But when he looked for the precious jade, he couldn't find it anywhere, not even a trace. At the mouth of the cave stood a towering stone of curious shape, refined and exquisite in appearance, with interconnected cavities. One surface of the stone was polished smooth, and on the flat area had been carved numerous words. As Old Youth read them, he realized that it was an exceptionally marvellous piece of writing, amounting to some 120,000 to 130,000 words. He thought, 'This amazing writing is hidden deep within the mountains and no one can see it, a real pity. Why don't I copy it out so I can make it known to the world?' Since there was no paper or brush around, he had no choice but to get on the flying car as fast as he could and go to the market to purchase some. When he saw the stone again there was a song added to the end of the writing, which went like this:

Inside Heart Mountain, there is a terrace called 'spirit',
The form of Heart Mountain is an oblique moon and three stars.
Within it is an object, the precious jade,
The precious jade holds the essence of the sun and moon.
Those with hair and teeth
Contemplating the troubles of the age ignites a fervour.
Ceaseless heartbreak over worldly affairs,
Interminable grief over the younger generation.
No vehicle to mend Heaven,
Time will tarry no longer,
Mice as far as the eye can see, criss-crossing as they please.
I wish the ears do not hear,
Oh, how well my ears hear!
I wish the eyes do not see,
Oh, how can my eyes not close!
My anger is dense and heavy, but I cannot let it go,
If I could only die peacefully,
I impart this insignificant history crying against injustice.

Old Youth copied it all down and took it back with it him. He wanted to have it published, but he was afraid that the work was too abstruse and people would not be able to fully understand it. And if it were read by narrow-minded scholars, they would speculate about the meaning in accord with their own intentions, adding commentary and explications of the text, and generally utter a bunch of nonsense that would completely miss the point. So he thereupon spent the quiet evenings—outside of his days in the office—expounding upon the meaning of the work, changing the writing to a romance, using only the vernacular so as to fulfil his aspiration that the work would suit both refined and popular tastes. He named it *New Story of the Stone*. And from that time forward the remnant stone of those used by Nüwa moved from the foot of Greensickness Peak in the Great Fable Mountains to the Cave of the Oblique Moon and Three Stars in The Mountain of Heart and Mind in the Civilized Realm.



Cover of *New Story of the Stone*

Dear Reader, if you do not believe this, please visit there yourself and you will then realize I am not making up stories. However, only those who are Gentlemen of warm heart and sincere intent, who love their race and nation, Heroes of refined energy and concentrated spirit who protect the national essence will be able to reach this place and see it. Those who brown-nose foreigners, on the other hand, even if they were to go to the Cave of the Oblique Moon and Three Stars in The Mountain of Heart and Mind would be utterly unable to see these marvellous words. Do you know why? As it turns out, these words were made for true men to read and not for the slavish. They were made for gentlemen and not for the petty. So if a brown-nosing, foreign-worshipping slave or petty man goes there, then some crabbed, slanted words will appear on the stone, which state:

*All Foreigners thou shalt worship;
Be always in sincere friendship.
This 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.²*

² Wu himself provided this English translation of the Chinese verse in the original novel. The last English line is not an accurate translation of the last Chinese line. The Chinese: ‘你的同胞無法容忍’ should be translated as: Thy countrymen will be unable to tolerate [this behavior].