

## Unit 13

### Reading A

#### China's Classic Novels 《中国古典小说》

1 Four long fictional novels are usually thought to be the best novels in Chinese literature. What all four have in common is that they were written in a spoken language of their times unlike most ancient literature that was written in the literary classical language. Also, all four have disputed authorship. The four works were seminal for the development of Chinese societies in past eras. They were widely read by the literati and administrative rulers and contained philosophical ideas, history, and ideas about human society, family life, and politics that defined part of the world view of the literate and politically influential. Two of these, *Water Margin* and *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, are semi-historical, long novels sort of like *War and Peace* by Tolstoy for impact. *The Dream of the Red Chamber* was very highly regarded when it was published and is reminiscent of a psychologically complex work like Dostoyevskiy's. *Journey to the West* is a mythology-filled legendary account reminiscent of *Odyssey*. These four books are called the Four Great Classic Novels of China.

四部长篇虚构小说通常被认为是中国文学中最出色的小说。这四部作品的共同之处在于它们都是用各自时代的口语写成的，不像大多数古代文学作品是用文言写成的。此外，这四部作品的作者都存在争议。这四部作品在过去的时代对中国社会的发展起到了开创性的作用。它们被文人墨客和统治者广泛阅读，包含了哲学思想、历史以及关于人类社会、家庭生活和政治的观念，这些观念定义了有文化和有政治影响力的人的部分世界观。其中两部，《水浒传》和《三国演义》是半历史性的长篇小说，在影响力上有点像托尔斯泰的《战争与和平》。《红楼梦》在出版时就备受推崇，让人想起像陀思妥耶夫斯基的作品那样具有复杂心理描写的作品。《西游记》是一部充满神话色彩的传奇故事，让人想起《奥德赛》。这四本书被称为中国四大古典小说。

2 The first two of the four classic novels are traditionally and commonly thought to be written during the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368). The Yuan Dynasty were Mongol tribesmen, and they headed the first large non-Chinese dynasty. Perhaps for this reason, the great literature and operas from that period were written in a vernacular language instead of the complex literary language. *Water Margin* and *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* influenced the development of the genre and are still widely read now. The two novels set a standard for classical literary works.

中国四大古典小说中的前两部传统上和普遍认为是在元朝（1279 - 1368）期间写成的。元朝由蒙古族人统治，他们建立了第一个大型非汉族王朝。也许正因如此，那个时期的伟大文学作品和戏剧是用白话而非复杂的文言写成的。《水浒传》和《三国演义》影响了这一文学体裁的发展，并且现在仍然被广泛阅读。这两部小说为古典文学作品树立了标准。

#### The Romance of the Three Kingdoms

3 The *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is a semi-historical work said to be written by Luo Guanzhong. It is historical fiction about the lives and struggles of rulers and the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty and in the Three Kingdoms Period. The Han Dynasty had broken up into three big rival kingdoms. These kingdoms fought viciously. The big battles described are famous historical events. The novel describes the machinations, court intrigues, and the shifting alliances

of the three kingdoms that emerged from the Han Empire. At first, the three kingdoms were led by Cao Cao, Liu Bei and Sun Quan. Special emphasis is laid on the two famous historical rulers Liu Bei and Cao Cao who were antagonists.

《三国演义》是一部半历史作品，据说是罗贯中所著。它是一部历史小说，讲述了汉朝末年和三国时期统治者的生活和斗争以及战争。汉朝分裂成三个强大的敌对王国。这些王国进行了激烈的战斗。书中描述的重大战役都是著名的历史事件。这部小说描述了从汉帝国中崛起的三个国家的阴谋、宫廷争斗和不断变化的联盟。起初，三个国家分别由曹操、刘备和孙权领导。特别强调了两位著名的历史统治者刘备和曹操，他们是对手。

4 Historically, three kingdoms actually did divide up the Han Empire. But how much of the account is true and how much is fiction or untrue legend is debatable. There are accounts of ghastly deaths and of rulers dying after meeting avenging ghosts.

从历史上看，三个国家确实分割了汉帝国。但是这个故事中有多少是真实的，又有多少是虚构的或者不真实的传说，这是有争议的。书中有关于可怕死亡以及统治者在遇到复仇的鬼魂后死亡的描述。

5 Actually, the authorship and the date the novel was originally written are also debatable. Chinese traditionally say that the novel was written by Luo Guanzhong at the end of the Yuan Dynasty period that would be about 1368 or so. But some scholars say that the book contains material that indicates that the book was written in the mid or late Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) or about two hundred years later. It could be that the earlier date is valid and that material or information was added by revisers. It is known that a major revision was published by Mao Lun and Mao Zonggang in 1522 during the Qing Dynasty era. They revised the structure and deleted a lot of material. So now there are two major versions: an older version that has about 900,000 words and the more popular 1522 version that has about 770,000 words.

实际上，这部小说的作者和最初的创作时间也存在争议。传统上中国人认为这部小说是罗贯中在元朝末年，大约 1368 年左右写成的。但一些学者表示，这本书中的内容表明它是在明朝中叶或晚期（1368 - 1644）写成的，也就是大约两百年后。也有可能较早的时间是正确的，后来的修订者添加了一些材料或信息。已知在清朝时期，毛纶和毛宗岗在 1522 年出版了一个重大修订版。他们修订了结构并删除了很多内容。所以现在有两个主要版本：一个是较旧的版本，约有 90 万字，另一个是更受欢迎的 1522 年版本，约有 77 万字。

6 In the book and in history, Cao Cao, Liu Bei, and Sun Quan were contemporaries who fought or were sometimes allies. They and their successors battled until the Cao Wei defeated the Shu Han. Cao Wei becomes the comparatively small empire of the Jin Dynasty.

在书中以及在历史上，曹操、刘备和孙权是同一时代的人，他们相互争斗，有时也结成同盟。他们以及他们的继任者们不断争斗，直到曹魏击败了蜀汉。曹魏后来变成了相对较小的晋朝。

#### Water Margin

7 Water Margin is about the lives and ideals of a group of characters who fought against the corrupt Song Dynasty that the Mongols conquered. It is said it was written in vernacular language by Shi Nai'an, but scholars debate about the authorship of this book also. Many scholars think that the first 70 chapters were written by Shi Nai'an and that the last 30 chapters were written by Luo Guanzhong who they say was also the author of The Romance of the Three Kingdoms. It is

considered to be one of the top two historical novels.

《水浒传》讲述了一群反抗被蒙古人征服的腐败宋朝的人物的生活和理想。据说它是施耐庵用白话写成的,但学者们对这本书的作者也存在争议。许多学者认为前七十回是施耐庵所写,后三十回是罗贯中所写,罗贯中也被认为是《三国演义》的作者。它被认为是最优秀的两部历史小说之一。

8 The Yuan Dynasty was founded by Mongols. They conquered the Song Dynasty and much of Eurasia, and the large eastern part of Mongol territory was ruled by a family known as the Yuan Dynasty. The setting of the novel is during the Northern Song Dynasty era before the northern part of the Song Empire was overrun by a northern tribe and before the Mongols conquered the whole area. According to evidence from other accounts, there may have actually been a group of about forty outlaws who lived in a mountain and who fought troops. Legends and tales developed about this group of people and became very popular during the Yuan Dynasty. During the Yuan Dynasty era, there was an earlier story written about a group of about 100 men who successfully fought Song troops.

元朝由蒙古人建立。他们征服了宋朝以及欧亚大陆的大部分地区,蒙古领土的东部大部分地区由一个被称为元朝的家族统治。这部小说的背景设定在北宋时期,此时北宋的北部尚未被北方部落侵占,也在蒙古人征服整个地区之前。根据其他记载的证据,可能实际上有大约四十名不法之徒居住在一座山上并与军队作战。关于这群人的传说和故事在元朝时期发展起来并非常流行。在元朝时期,有一个更早的故事是关于一群大约一百人成功地与宋军作战。

9 Water Margin is reminiscent of the story of Robin Hood. Likewise, there may have been actual outlaws, and popular legends and stories later grew. But Water Margin is probably more fictional and less historically accurate than The Romance of the Three Kingdoms. In the early tales or accounts, there were only about 40 outlaws but the number in the band grew to more than 100. In the novel, the band fights the corrupt Song rulers. There are several versions of the novel. One version that has many more chapters than the others describes how the band gets amnesty from the Song rulers and battles their common foes for the rulers.

《水浒传》让人联想到罗宾汉的故事。同样地,可能曾经有过真实的不法之徒,后来流行的传说和故事不断发展。但是《水浒传》可能比《三国演义》更具虚构性,历史准确性更低。在早期的传说或记载中,只有大约 40 名不法之徒,但这个群体的人数后来增加到了 100 多人。在小说中,这个群体与腐败的宋朝统治者进行斗争。这部小说有几个版本。其中一个版本比其他版本的章节多很多,描述了这个群体如何从宋朝统治者那里获得赦免,并为统治者与他们共同的敌人作战。

### Journey to the West

10 During the Tang Dynasty, a Buddhist named Xuanzang left Chang'an (Today's Xi'an) that was the capital of the Tang Empire to travel to India in order to collect scriptures and information. Chang'an was near the mouth of the Gansu Corridor that was a part of the Silk Road route in northwestern China. He traveled through the Gansu Corridor and passed the Flaming Mountains near Turpan. He was helped by Buddhists along the way, and spent about 13 years in India before he returned bearing Buddhist scriptures. This historic journey was retold in many legends and tales about an accompanying monkey. In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) era, the fantastic tale was written, and it is regarded as one of the four best novels.

在唐朝时期，一位名叫玄奘的僧人离开长安（即如今的西安，当时是唐帝国的都城）前往印度收集佛经和佛法信息。长安靠近甘肃走廊的入口，甘肃走廊是中国西北部丝绸之路的一部分。他穿越甘肃走廊，经过吐鲁番附近的火焰山。一路上他得到了佛教徒的帮助，在印度度过了大约十三年后带着佛经返回。这段历史性的旅程在许多关于一只随行猴子的传说和故事中被重新讲述。在明朝（1368 - 1644）时期，这个奇幻故事被写成小说，它被视为中国四大最佳小说之一。

11 The long tale about a fantastic journey to the west of a group that went to India was written at a time that the Silk Road land routes were blocked by Mongol and Muslim countries. Perhaps one of the reasons the novel was popular was that people during the Ming era wanted to travel to the west, but they couldn't. The later Ming Dynasty was isolationist.

关于一群人前往印度的奇幻西游记故事是在丝绸之路陆路被蒙古和穆斯林国家阻断的时候写成的。也许这部小说受欢迎的原因之一是明朝时期的人们想要去西方旅行，但他们却不能。明朝后期是孤立主义的。

12 In the novel, a great intelligent monkey and a small band of characters protects a defenseless monk during his journey. Buddha commissioned the monk to help India that had fallen into gross sin and immorality. The monkey and other characters have magical skills. Cartoons and movies about this group of characters are popular with children.

在小说中，一只聪明强大的猴子和一小群角色在一位手无寸铁的僧人旅途中保护他。佛祖委派这位僧人去帮助已陷入严重罪恶和不道德之中的印度。这只猴子和其他角色拥有神奇的技能。关于这群角色的卡通片和电影深受孩子们的喜爱。

13 Journey to the West is thought to have been published anonymously by Wu Cheng'en in the 16th century though scholars have doubt about the authorship. The trend during his era was for people to write in classical Chinese and imitate the literature of the Tang Dynasty and Han Dynasty, but this book was written in a vernacular language of his era.

《西游记》被认为是吴承恩在 16 世纪匿名出版的，尽管学者们对其作者身份存在疑问。在他那个时代的趋势是人们用文言文写作并模仿唐朝和汉朝的文学，但这本书是用他那个时代的白话写成的。

The Dream of the Red Chamber 《红楼梦》

14 The fourth major novel that made an impact on Chinese history and literature is The Dream of the Red Chamber. It was the last of the Four Classic Novels to be written. It is about the fortunes and lives of the people of two branches of a clan in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) era. The two families had adjacent compounds. It is sort of like a soap opera novel like the TV series Dallas. However, it is said that much of it actually happened. It is appreciated because it gives a view into the lives of two ruling families of that time. One of the members of the clan was made a concubine of an emperor. But then the imperial court turned against the two families.

对中国历史和文学产生重大影响的第四部主要小说是《红楼梦》。它是四大名著中最后一部写成的。它讲述了清朝（1644 - 1911）时期一个家族的两个分支的人们的命运和生活。这两个家族的宅院相邻。它有点像一部类似电视剧《豪门恩怨》那样的肥皂剧小说。然而，据说其中很多情节实际上都发生过。它之所以受到赞赏，是因为它让人们了解了那个时代两个统治家族的生活。这个家族的一名成员成为了皇帝的妃子。但后来朝廷与这两个家族反目。

15 The book was first printed in the late 1700s during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). It also has an uncertain authorship. Like the other three great classic novels, it was written in a vernacular language — the Mandarin language that was the language of the Qing capital. It is probably mostly composed by Cao Xueqin (about 1715–1763) in the middle 1700s. It is thought that Cao did not live to see the first printing. It is thought that another person or other people contributed the ending of the story since the original ending of the story was lost. The book has a lot of textual problems, and there are different versions. In a preface to a printed version in 1792, two editors claimed to have put together an ending based on the author's working manuscripts that they had bought from a street vendor.

这本书于 18 世纪后期清朝（1644 - 1911）时期首次印刷。它的作者也不确定。和其他三部伟大的古典小说一样，它是用白话文写成的——即清朝都城使用的官话。这本书可能主要由曹雪芹（约 1715 - 1763）在 18 世纪中叶创作。人们认为曹雪芹没有活到看到这本书第一次印刷的时候。由于故事的原始结局丢失了，人们认为另一个人或其他人贡献了故事的结尾。这本书有很多文本问题，并且有不同的版本。在 1792 年一个印刷版本的序言中，两位编辑声称他们根据从一个街头小贩那里买来的作者手稿拼凑出了一个结尾。

16 This book was very popular in China. It still is. And the plots and characters are studied and analyzed. The textual problems of the novel are extremely complex and have been the subject of much critical scrutiny and conjecture.

这本书在中国非常受欢迎，现在依然如此。书中的情节和人物被研究和分析。这部小说的文本问题极其复杂，一直是众多批判性审视和推测的对象。