

## The Bond of Stone and Flower in *The Story of The Stone*

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*The Story of Stone* (红楼梦, also translated as *Dream of the Red Chamber*) is generally considered the greatest among Chinese classical novels, and one of the most read in China. It has been argued that the book is—partially—a biography of the author, Cao Xueqin, and it is generally agreed that Cao included aspects of his early life and later disillusionment in the narrative while his aristocratic background, familiarity with high culture and sophisticated taste give the book a rare artistic texture. His achievements also lie in the vivid portrait of contemporary life and the creation of many well-rounded characters given substance by descriptive detail and realistic interactions. In a plot that mainly focusses on the daily life of the prosperous and aristocratic Jia family, the characters come to life in the gradual unfolding of the narrative and grow ever more vivid as their public and private selves are revealed.

Love is one of the main themes of the narrative. The love story between Bao-yu and Dai-yu is not the traditional love at first sight between talent and beauty, but love nurtured over a long period and built on mutual understanding and shared values. The hero and heroine also differ from others in and outside of the narrative in their bold pursuit of personal autonomy and freedom, and refusal to conform to the prevailing Confucian norms. This paper will focus on episodes and scenes that reveal an alliance growing out of childhood intimacy between the two—the poetically named “bond of stone and flower,” and demonstrate Cao adroitly employs *Zhuang-zi* and *Chan* (Zen in Japanese), two important alternative philosophies to Confucianism, as well as poetry to highlight the bond and emphasize the special talents and dispositions of the hero and heroines.

This paper also discusses a more practical attachment of the “marriage of gold and jade” between Bao-yu and Bao-chai, a relationship that contrasts with “the bond of Stone and Flower” and consequently highlights the different nature of these relationships.

### The “Bond of Stone and Flower” in the Fairy Tale

Bao-yu, in the eye of his father, is disobedient, unruly, and “incapable of caring about serious matters and preoccupies himself with poetic frivolities and other such impractical nonsense as a substitute for solid learning.”<sup>1)</sup> Dai-yu, far from being a conventional modest maiden, is highly intelligent, sharp and even mischievous sometimes. The seemingly supernatural “bond of stone and flower” between them proves to be a philosophical metaphor as the narrative unfolds. Stone and flower,

two commonplace objects used in the metaphor, indicate the genuine and spontaneous nature of the love between the two, whereas the “marriage of gold and jade,” an apparent good match of valuable items, exemplifies contemporary feudal hierarchy and the practice of arranged marriage.

In the introductory chapter, a monk tells the fairy tale of Divine Luminescent Stone-in-Waiting (Stone) in the Court of Sunset Glow and Crimson Pearl Flower (Flower). Stone came across Flower when Flower was still in a vegetable shape. Stone conceived a fancy for Flower so that he took to watering her with sweet-dew, which helped her shed her vegetable shape and assume the form of a girl. Flower was consequently obsessed with the idea that she owed Stone something for his kindness in watering her. She yearned to repay him with the tears shed during the whole of a mortal lifetime if she and he were ever to be reborn as human. Later the two were sent down into world to take part in the great illusion of human life. This fairy tale foreshadows the relationship between Bao-yu and Dai-yu.

In the second chapter, when Jia Yu-cun introduces the Jia family, we know there is a teenage boy in the family called Bao-yu who had “a piece of beautiful, clear, coloured jade in his mouth” at the moment of his birth.<sup>2)</sup> Then in the third chapter, Dai-yu, after losing her mother, comes to live with her maternal grandmother, who is also Bao-yu’s paternal grandmother. When they first meet, the boy quickly notices her difference from other girls and claims that he has seen Dai-yu before. Denied by their common grandmother, he corrects himself: “but her face seems so familiar that I have the impression of meeting her again after a long separation.”<sup>3)</sup> Recognizing a special familiarity with Dai-yu, the divine Stone and Flower meet in their mortal forms, and start to experience the “illusion of human life.”

### **The Bond reinforced by common interests in Chan and *Zhuang-zi***

The two young cousins Bao-yu and Dai-yu, live with their grandmother. Because of the matriarch’s indulgence, Bao-yu is exempted from a formal Confucian education, which displeases his scholar-official father. Long before that he had disappointed his father by choosing womanly objects on his First Twelve Month celebration when the father tested his disposition. Growing into a teenager, he hates “meeting or making conversation with senior males of the scholar-official class and detest[s] all occasions which involved dressing up, such as visits of congratulation and condolence and the various other formal exchanges to which members of that class devote so great a part of their time.”<sup>4)</sup> Instead, he entertains himself with *Zhuang-zi*, Chan and poetry that he finds suit his disposition better.

Chan became one of the most influential schools of Chinese Buddhism in Tang Dynasty. To most people, it may be considered as a unique method of thinking rather than a religion, and is transmitted through minds, seeking a state of harmonious emptiness beyond worldly cares. Over centuries, Chan has earned a broad appreciation among the literati, and it is believed that the cultivation in Chan can give people wisdom and inner peace.<sup>5)</sup>

On the other hand, *Zhuang-zi* was an indigenous Chinese philosopher who lived before the development of Chan. *Zhuang-zi*’s ideal end state seems to be a world where all people calmly pursue their own naturalness, interacting freely with others

but always defaulting to a solitary path, a state said to be like fish forgetting about each other's presence as they enjoy themselves in rivers and lakes. Zhang-zi also believed that the tendency to make distinctions between right and wrong, and to submit to the social control of the individual mind is our defining flaw, something that needs to be eliminated.<sup>6)</sup> Despite differences between Zhuang-zi and Chan, they are frequently referred to together as *Zhuang-Chan* because of their similar approach to life's worries and frustrations and the fact that Chan Buddhists transformed some of Zhuang-zi's teachings into Chan koan.

Bao-yu is an admirer of these two philosophies. In chapter 21 "Righteous Aroma discovers how to rebuke her master by saying nothing," the disheartened Bao-yu decides to distance himself from his maids after a quarrel. Out of habit, he picks up a volume of *Zhuang-zi* and comes to a chapter called "Rifling Trunks." It argues that precious things invite people's greed, which suits his mood and inspires him to add some lines in the margin:

Away then with Musk and Aroma, and the female tongue will cease from nagging. Discard Bao-chai's heavenly beauty, destroy Dai-yu's divine intelligence, utterly abolish all tender feelings, and the females heart will cease from envy. If the female tongue ceases from nagging there will be no further fear of quarrels and estrangements... These Bao-chais, Dai-yus, Aromas and Musks spread their nets and dig their pits, and all the world are bewitched and ensnared by them.<sup>7)</sup>

"Musk" and "Aroma" are his maids' names. After the quarrel, he blames them for being jealous, and his cousins' beauty and intelligence for causing jealousy. Dai-yu sees the lines the next day. Seeing them both vexing and amusing, she adds the following quatrain:

What wretch would here, with scurrile pen,  
The text of *Zhuang-zi* plagiarize,  
And, heedless of his own great faults,  
Fright others with his wicked lies?<sup>8)</sup>

Dai-yu's comments show her familiarity with *Zhuang-zi*, and she duly criticizes his twisting of the classic to excuse himself. In their relationship, Dai-yu always get the upper hand, because of her great intelligence which is not considered a female merit in their time but nevertheless genuinely admired by Bao-yu. She is also well read, for example, an old woman who visits her room in chapter 41 mistakes it for a man's study. In chapter 37, Dai-yu again shows her familiarity with the classics. When the girls in the Jia household gather to form a poem club, Tan-chun chooses a penname of "Under the Plantains" for her love of plantains. Quickly Dai-yu makes fun of her by calling her a deer, a name which puzzles the others. Seeing them fail to understand the joke, she undertakes to explain that "under the plantains" is "where the woodcutter in the old Taoist parable hid the deer he had killed."<sup>9)</sup>

Returning to the text, in the next chapter "Bao-yu finds Chan enlightenment in

an operatic aria,” the boy finds himself trapped again by his beloved cousins. When watching an opera together, Xiang-yun offends Dai-yu by her improper comments on a resemblance between Dai-yu and a leading actress. Foreseeing the trouble, Bao-yu casts a quick look to stop Xiang-yun. Dai-yu notices and misunderstands Bao-yu’s intention. Reflecting that he only acts to keep the peace between his cousins, yet the only outcome of his good intentions is a telling-off by both parties, puts him in mind of something he reads in *Zhuang-zi*:

The cunning waste their pains;  
The wise men vex their brains;  
But the simpleton, who seeks no gains,  
With belly full, he wanders free  
As a drifting boat upon the sea.<sup>10)</sup>

The first two lines describe a similar situation to that Bao-yu finds himself in, and combining them with a line from the aria that Bao-chai appraised—“naked and friendless through the world to roam,”<sup>11)</sup> he sees the irony in his futile efforts and disability to get on with the few people he lives with. It triggers a Chan gatha of frustration:

I swear, you swear,  
With heart and mind declare;  
But our protest  
Is not true test.  
It would be best  
Words unexpressed  
To understand,  
And on that ground  
To take our stand.<sup>12)</sup>

Feeling powerless about his failure to make his true feelings known to his cousins, Bao-yu desires the world of Chan in which feelings and understandings are transmitted without words. It gives him a temporary relief after producing the gatha. Disturbed by his absence, his cousins come to his place the next day and find the gatha. Bao-chai worries that her comments on the line of “naked and friendless through the world to roam” have led him astray, but Dai-yu, who knows both the boy and Chan well enough, volunteers to “drive this nonsense from his mind once and for all.”<sup>13)</sup> Following Chan practice, Dai-yu first presents Bao-yu with a puzzle koan, which he cannot solve, she then adds a few lines to his gatha.

But, I perpend,  
To have no ground  
On which to stand  
Were yet more sound.  
And there’s an end!<sup>14)</sup>

Bao-chai immediately praises Dai-yu's lines for their resemblance to those of Chan master Hui-neng's. According to Chan teachings, Hui-neng was appointed the sixth Chan Patriarch after producing the following gatha:

No real Bo-tree the body is,  
The mind no mirror bright.  
Since of the pair none's really there,  
On what could dust alight?<sup>15)</sup>

What the gatha advocates is the ultimate state of calm and empty harmony and nothingness. Needless to say, Dai-yu shows her awareness of the master's gatha by producing one on the same lines. Believing he has attained an enlightenment, but unable to answer Dai-yu's instructive koan, Bao-yu sees his limit and realizes enlightenment can only be gradual. The narrative as a whole is to witness his gradual enlightenment as the circumstances around him change.

Dai-yu's gatha also prepares the reader for the emptiness and nothingness of the finale—another theme of the narrative, as the narrative itself is called an “illusion.” Though proven to have an inadequate enlightenment here, Bao-yu shows his insight into Chan and *Zhuang-zi*, which both provide explanations for his “eccentric” behavior. Unlike his scholar official father, or his male cousins who indulge themselves in extravagance and sexual lust, his so called “eccentricity” lies in his lack of ambition for either rank or wealth, which is regarded improper for a heir to the prosperous Jia family. To make it worse, he opposes most Confucian teachings, and prefers *Zhuang-zi*. In chapter 31, for example, he gives his *Zhuang-zi*-like theory when arguing with Skybright, whom he scolds for breaking a fan carelessly:

If you want to break it, by all means break it... These things are there for our use. What we use them for is a matter of individual taste. For example, fans are made for fanning with; but if you prefer to tear them up because it gives you pleasure, there's no reason why you shouldn't. What you mustn't do it to use them as objects to vent your anger on... As long as you don't get into a passion and start taking it out on things—that's the golden rule.<sup>16)</sup>

His fan theory is strongly influenced by *Zhuang-zi*'s theory on the uniformity and interchangeability of things in saying that a fan can be torn up if it eventually serves the same purpose of being useful.<sup>17)</sup> The naughty maid seems to like his theory very much and ends up tearing several more fans. The smart but unworldly Skybright, who resembles Dai-yu in many ways, alludes to Dai-yu on many occasions. This episode, which provides the chapter title of “A torn fan is the price of silver laughter,” seems to work in the same way to allude to Dai-yu and show that Bao-yu and Dai-yu understand each other in their own ways, though their ways might look bizarre to others because of their different values.

Bao-yu's most notorious “eccentricity” is that he admires the “inferior sex” of

women, especially young girls who in his eyes still maintain their naturalness, in comparison to rank-and-fame-seeking men who he calls “career worms.” Such uncommon values and behavior are appalling to many, but not to Dai-yu. In fact, she is considered self-willed and sharp-tongued, and not reserved enough sometimes. Like Bao-yu, she has no interest in or respect for rank or fame, for example, she refuses disdainfully some rare fragrant Indian beans that Bao-yu carefully keeps for her after getting them from the Prince of Bei-jing, and calls it “a thing that some coarse man has pawed over.”<sup>18)</sup> Of course she can only behave like this in front of people she really trusts. Likewise, one of the most poetic moments in the narrative is their sharing the book of *The West Chamber* (still a forbidden book for their class then) in the park, with neither of them hiding their admiration of it. On her way back alone later, she accidentally overhears the rehearsal of *The Soul’s Return* (from *the Peony Pavilion*) and loses herself in the beauty of the libretto. Deeply impressed by the two love stories, she cites from them later without knowing it when playing a drinking game with the Jia family female members: “Bright air and brilliant morn feed my despair,” “No Reddie at the window seen,” from *Soul’s Return* and *The West Chamber* respectively.<sup>19)</sup> This is noticed by Bao-chai, who later advises her not to read polluting books and certainly not to cite from them in public as it is improper for girls of their status to do so.

Lacking worldly wisdom, but more enlightened in terms of Chan and advanced in understanding of *Zhuang-zi*, Dai-yu’s early life has a part to play in her being so. Orphaned and self-conscious of her orphanhood, she must have found Chan and *Zhuang-zi* helpful because both in many ways offer relieving interpretations of hardship in life. She is necessarily more disillusioned than others. The omniscient narrator observes: “Dai-yu had a natural aversion to gatherings, which she rationalized by saying that since the inevitable consequence of getting together was parting, and since parting made people feel lonely and feeling lonely made them unhappy, ergo it was better for them not to get together in the first place.”<sup>20)</sup> This observation is actually an annotation of Dai-yu’s Chan gatha: the desired state of nothingness. Losing all of her immediate family at a very young age, Dai-yu is understandably pessimistic and melancholy.

### **Daiyu’s Poem: her hidden inclination to Chan and Taoism**

Reading and producing poems is another entertainment for the aristocratic youths, and poetry is another tool the author uses to embellish his characters. Dai-yu and Bao-chai are the two outstanding poets in the Jia household though, understandably, their poems express strikingly different values. Bao-yu is a consistent supporter of Dai-yu’s poems, which are closer to his artistic taste.

In chapter 48, when Caltrop comes to her to ask for advice on making poem, Dai-yu advises: “The really important things are the ideas that lie behind it. If the ideas behind it are genuine, there’s no need to embellish the language for the poem to be a good one. That’s what they mean when they talk about ‘not letting the words harm the meaning.’”<sup>21)</sup> In the last sentence, Dai-yu is actually quoting from Yuan Mei, the eminent Qing Dynasty poet and writer. Yuan advocates the theory of “Xing Ling,” which breaks through the restriction of traditional Confucian emotion theory and

promotes the pursuit of liberal thought. This theory of poetry stems from the influential Ming Dynasty thinker and writer Li Zhi, whose theory on childlike innocence holds that literature should express real feelings and get rid of the rigid Confucian forms and values. Li further believes that people should preserve their real selves and not lose their naturalness and spontaneity.<sup>22)</sup> Seemingly a subconscious follower of the theory, Dai-yu's poems are highly original, stylish, and heavily marked by her personal feelings. Her model poet is Wang Wei, whose poems are known to contain a profound Chan concept of emptiness and possess a characteristic vacant and implicit beauty. Dai-yu's poems show a similar quality. In her poem *On White Crab-flower*, one of the poems that exemplify her style, she writes,

Beside the half-raised blind, the half-closed door,  
Crushed ice for earth and white jade for the pot,  
Three parts of whiteness from the pear-tree stolen,  
One part from plum for scent (which pear has not)  
Moon-maidens stitched them with white silken thread,  
And virgins' tears the new-made flowers did spot,  
Which now, like bashful maids that no word say,  
Lean languid on the breeze at close of day.<sup>23)</sup>

The poem builds a tranquil and vacant atmosphere with the images of the moon, trees and flowers, and Dai-yu emphasizes the purity of the flower by using the image of ice, jade, white flowers of plum and pear-trees, and then has the holy and solitary moon-maidens stitch them into clothes, which is probably a self-portrait. Like Wang Wei, Dai-yu distances herself from the mundane world with the help of her superb imagination and subtle treatment of various topics, but unlike Wang's leisured stance her poems inevitably have a melancholy touch. When the above poem is judged second to Bao-chai's by the conservative Li Wan, Bao-yu disagrees and argues for its elegance and originality. The widowed and chaste Li, who follows the Confucian teachings, naturally finds Bao-chai's poem (to be discussed later) more proper for its orthodox treatment.

Dai-yu also admires the poet Tao Yuanming, who she praises when lecturing Caltrop on poetry. Tao was influenced by Taoist thought and in his "Homeward Ho!" expresses his innate love of nature and his desire to return to a simple life and let things take their natural course, which is a basic Taoist attitude.<sup>24)</sup> Tao is one of the best admired reclusive poets, and is believed to be Wang Wei's personal role model.<sup>25)</sup> Wang refers to Tao and his work repeatedly in his own poems.<sup>26)</sup> Tao is also remembered for his love for chrysanthemums, the flower used often as a metaphor of personal integrity in Chinese literature, and he wrote numerous poems on this flower. In her chrysanthemum poems, Dai-yu salutes the poet.

#### *Celebrating the Chrysanthemums*

Down garden walks, in search of inspiration,  
A restless demon drives me all the time;

Then brush blooms into praises, and the mouth  
 Grows acrid-sweet, hymning those scents sublime.  
 Yet easier 'twere a world of grief to tell  
 Than to lock autumn's secret in one rhyme.  
 That miracle old Tao did once attain;  
 Since when a thousand bards have tried in vain.<sup>27)</sup>

The first half of the poem praises the flower—the joy and inspiration it gives—and the second half salutes the poet Tao, who adroitly captures the spirit of the flower in his widely admired poems. Personally, Dai-yu must have found it easy to relate to Tao, who called himself a world-disdainer for his lonely soul and heavy grief. The double images of a chrysanthemum that blooms in the cold of late autumn and the poet who returned to country life after resigning from his post both represent personal integrity and this must be what Dai-yu admires.

In her next poem, Dai-yu continues her admiration of the poet Tao, whom she joins in his praise of the chrysanthemum flower.

*The Dream of the Chrysanthemums*

Light-headed in my autumn bed I lie  
 And seem to chase the moon across the sky.  
 Well, if immoral, I'll go seek old Tao,  
 Not imitate Zhuang's flittering butterfly!  
 Following the wild goose, into sleep I slid;  
 From which now, startled by the cricket's cry,  
 Midst cold and fog and dying leaves I wake,  
 With no one by to tell of my heart's ache.<sup>28)</sup>

In her dream, she pursues the company of the poet, whom she believes can understand the anguish of her own heart. She is also employing a parable from *Zhuang-zi*, which explores the nature of human existence. The parable tells that Zhuang-zi once transformed into a butterfly in his dream and woke up later wondering whether he was a butterfly transformed into the shape of human being or vice versa.<sup>29)</sup> Being a young girl, Dai-yu would not boast of such a transcendent experience, but is aware of the poet's Taoist stance and she makes the parable into a perfect couplet to emphasize her admiration for the poet, and echo the title of the poem: the dream of the Chrysanthemum.

**The Foil of Bao-Chai**

Bao-chai is a well acknowledged model of Confucian female virtues. As the golden locket she wears indicates, she is from a wealthy family and brought up in an orthodox Confucian way. She is admired everywhere in the Jia household for her beauty and good manners. Intelligent but modest, she refrains from anything that is against Confucian teachings. In the Chan gatha episode, she tells the anecdote of the Chan masters, but warns that “[t]hose Taoist writings and Chan paradoxes can

so easily lead people astray if they do not understand them properly.”<sup>30</sup>) It shows her cautious and conservative stance.

As the twin heroines in the narrative, Bao-chai and Dai-yu are portrayed as two polarized examples of female virtue and talent. Bao-chai’s poem on white Crab-flowers below strongly suggests the difference in their personalities as well as in values:

Guard the sweet scent behind closed courtyard door,  
And with prompt waterings dew the mossy pot!  
The carmine hue their summer sisters wore  
These snowy autumn blossoms envy not—  
For beauty in plain whiteness best appears,  
And only in white jade is found not spot.  
Chaste, lovely flowers! Silent, they seem to pray  
To autumn’s White God at the close of the day.<sup>31</sup>

In comparison to Dai-yu’s “half-raised blind” and “half-closed door”—a balanced stance between her maidenly reserve and Taoist naturalness, Bao-chai chooses to “[g]uard the sweet scent behind closed courtyard door” which indicates her modesty and chastity, as does her line “[f]or beauty in plain whiteness best appears,” which seems to echo the Confucian teachings that Bao-chai lectures on Dai-yu in chapter 64: “‘A stupid woman is a virtuous one’: that is what the old proverb says. A girl’s first concern is to be virtuous, her second is to be industrious. She may write poetry as she likes as a diversion, but it is an accomplishment she could just as well do without.”<sup>32</sup>) She is a conscious practitioner of these Confucian virtues. Brought up to be a female ideal, she is almost spotless (according to the Confucian teachings), but secretly ambitious. In her poem on willow floss, she consciously changes the conventional image of the plant in literature, rootlessness and temporariness, into an image of ascent:

In mazy dances over the marble forecourt,  
Wind-whorled, into trim fluff-balls forming,  
Like fluttering moths or silent white bees swarming:  
Not for us a tomb in the running waters,  
Or the earth’s embalming.

The filaments whence we are formed remain unchanging,  
No matter what separates or unifies.  
Do not, earth-child, our rootlessness despise:  
When the strong wind comes he will whirl us upwards  
Into the skies.<sup>33</sup>)

Her poem is applauded by Li Wan for it shows her character and depth. In the poem, the willow floss are depicted as the active “moths” or “bees” swarming. Acknowledging the short life of the plant but denying its “tomb in the running water,” she believes in the “strong wind” that could whirl her to the skies. Paying a eulogy

to the floss that waits for the right time to fly, she shows her ambition in her own future and strong belief in and commitment to the Confucian hierarchy.

Although Bao-chai is such a perfect ideal of female virtues of her time, Bao-yu finds her flawed. In chapter 32, when Bao-chai tries to lecture him on his social obligations (to study hard and pass the civil exam to start a career), Bao-yu does not hide his repulsion and takes his leave immediately. It leaves the girl in deep embarrassment, and when later challenged by his maid for such rude behavior to Bao-chai but never to Dai-yu, he replies “Cousin Lin never talked that sort of rubbish”<sup>34)</sup> to openly acknowledge a mutual understanding with Dai-yu. In another case, he is even straighter with his criticism on Bao-chai’s conscious conformity with Confucianism:

‘Why should a pure, sweet girl like you want to go imitating that ghastly crew of thievish, place-hunting career worms,’ he would say, ‘bothering her head about “fame” and “reputation” and all that sort of rubbish? All these notions you are parroting were dreamed up by meddling old men in days gone by for the express purpose of leading astray the whiskered idiots who came after them. I really think it’s too bad that I should have to live in an age when the minds of nice, sensible girls are contaminated by such idiocies. It’s a rank abuse of the intellectual gifts that you were born with!’<sup>35)</sup>

Bao-yu never hides his distaste in Confucian norms that deny personal autonomy and free pursuit of one’s self, and openly deplores Bao-chai’s loss of her innocence and naturalness in spite of her intelligence. Though admiring her beauty and good manners, and even sexually attracted to her when seeing her naked arms, he sees clearly the difference in their values, as he declares before her in his dream: “I don’t believe in the marriage of gold and jade. I believe in the marriage of stone and flower.”<sup>36)</sup>

The “bond of stone and flower” in the narrative is the shared resistance by Bao-yu and Dai-yu to the rigid Confucian principles that dictate unconditional conformity. The novel’s huge popularity over centuries has been the greatest tribute to their spontaneous and mutually acknowledged love. Of course, *The Story of The Stone*, did not appear without literary precedent. *The West Chamber* and *Peony Pavilion* (*The Soul’s Return*), the two well-read love stories that are directly referred in the narrative, and *The Plum in The Gold Vase*, the controversial novel before *The Story of The Stone*, prepared a wide audience for *The Story of The Stone* and raised expectations for true love that had so far been denied by the feudal marriage system. The contemporary literary climate that called for tolerance and fair expression for rational human desires also enlightened readers to accept more natural, unaffected female characters like Dai-yu, who is naturally intelligent but unworldly and emotionally spontaneous, and therefore can be responsive to Bao-yu’s love. Without these traits of the hero and heroine, the real love of Stone and Flower would not have been possible in the real world. The “bond of stone and flower” contains this naturalness and spontaneity that set hearts free from rigid Confucian morality.

## Notes

- 1) Cao Xueqin, *The Story of The Stone*, trans. David Hawkes, (London: Penguin Classics, 1973–1986), vol. 1, 458.
- 2) *Ibid.*, 75.
- 3) *Ibid.*, 103.
- 4) Cao, vol. 2, 194.
- 5) Liu, Tao, *Chinese Chan Buddhism*, (He Fei: Huang Shan Shu She, 2013), 47–51.
- 6) Yang, Muzhi, “Preface to The Library of Chinese Classics,” *Zhuangzi*, trans., Wang Rongpei, (Hunan: Hunan People’s Publishing House, 1999), vol. 10, I, 21–26.
- 7) Cao, vol. 1, 421.
- 8) *Ibid.*, 423.
- 9) Cao, vol. 2, 217.
- 10) Cao, vol. 1, 439.
- 11) *Ibid.*, 440.
- 12) *Ibid.*
- 13) Cao, vol. 1, 442.
- 14) *Ibid.*
- 15) *Ibid.*, 443.
- 16) Cao, vol. 2, 116.
- 17) *Zhuangzi*, trans., Wang Rongpei, vol. 10, I, 15–41.
- 18) Cao, vol. 1, 307.
- 19) Cao, vol. 2, 301.
- 20) *Ibid.*, 109–110.
- 21) Cao, vol. 2, 457. The original quotation is from *Sui Yuan Shi Hua* by Yuan Mei, (Bei Jing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1982), vol. 7, I, 66.
- 22) Li, Zhi, “Tong Xin Shuo,” *Fen Shu, Xue Fen Shu*, (Bei Jing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1975), 98–99.
- 23) Cao, vol. 2, 224.
- 24) Tao, Yuanming, “Homeward Ho!” *The Complete Works of Tao YuanMing*, trans., Wang Rongpei, (Hunan: Hunan People’s Publishing House, 2003), 242–43.
- 25) Yang Jingqing, *The Chan Interpretation of Wang Wei’s Poetry*, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2007), 74–81.
- 26) For example, in Wang’s poem of “Tao Yuan Xing” which directly borrows from the title of Tao’s “Tao Hua Yuan Ji” and his minor poems like “Tian Yuan Le” in which Wang refers to Tao as Mr. Five Willows.
- 27) Cao, vol. 2, 251.
- 28) *Ibid.*, 253.
- 29) *Zhuangzi*, vol. 10, I, 39.
- 30) Cao, vol. 1, 441.
- 31) Cao, vol. 2, 223.
- 32) Cao, vol. 3, 256.
- 33) *Ibid.*, 388.
- 34) Cao, vol. 2, 131.
- 35) *Ibid.*, 195.
- 36) *Ibid.*, 203.

