

Who is the Real Author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*

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Abstract

Hu Shi considers that the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is Cao Xueqin of Qing Dynasty. The opinion in this paper is that the author of the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions* is Emperor Jianwen, Zhu Yunwen, of the Great Ming Empire (大明帝国建文帝朱允炆). And “Cao Xueqin” (曹雪芹) in the novel is, in fact, Zhu Yunwen (朱允炆).

Key words: “Cao Xueqin”; Emperor Jianwen- Zhu Yunwen

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INTRODUCTION

About the real author of the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*, there are a lot of controversies in academic field since the novel had been published. And the most influential idea is from Hu Shi. He thinks Cao Xueqin lived in Qing Dynasty (Hu, 2016, p.43). But, many scholars, like Bai Yixiang (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.717), Du Yingtao (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.1367), Zhan Lu (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.1376), Dou Yun (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.754) etc., don't agree with Hu Shi. They think that Cao Xueqin, is not the “Cao Xueqin” Hu Shi considered. “Who is the real author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* indeed is an unsolved question.” (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.754)

A Dream of Red Mansions is like the expanse of the universe. What people now see in it probably is not the real meaning, and there are a lot of unknown for people to explore and secrets for people to decode. Thus, this paper aims at reconsidering: who is the real author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

Actually, this surprising secret, who is the real author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, hides in the novel itself. Decoding this issue should start with the writing practice of this novel.

Talking about *A Dream of Red Mansions*, no can could get rid of the attraction of the author's lament in the first chapter: “满纸荒唐言，一把辛酸泪！都云作者痴，谁解其中味？” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1) These sentences at least disclose this piece of information to people: who is the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, which is the important “indication” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 87) the author intentionally arranged, as well as the words that the author wanted to “but did not dare to say” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 98). Since *A Dream of Red Mansions* had been published, this deafening exclamation has been lingering on, which intrigues people to pursue “inner meaning” from “pages full of absurd words”, to explore who is the real author, and to seek for author's writing purpose.

Who is the real author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*? In the first and the last chapter of the novel, the name “Cao Xueqin” appears for five times. Literally, “Cao Xueqin” should be the author of the novel. While, his real “identity” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 37, Chapter 79) is not the “Cao Xueqin” of Qing Dynasty which Hu Shi deemed, nor the literal “Cao Xueqin” in the novel, but Zhu Yunwen. (1377.12.5-), the second Emperor Jianwen of the Great Ming Empire (大明帝国建文帝朱允炆). This is an incredible “secret hidden in” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 116) *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

1. DISCUSSING “EMPEROR JIANWEN ABDICATING HIS THRONE”

Emperor Jianwen of Ming Dynasty remains unknown after the big fire in the Palace, which Zhu Di called “Jianwen suicided in fire”. But related historical materials and words in the novel reveal that after “Emperor Jianwen abdicated his throne”, he secretly lived out of the Palace and completed the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

1.1 The Truth Lies in “the Mundane”

In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Zhu Yunwen utilized several ways to “explain” his survival by chance. And these “explanations” perfectly coincide with historical materials and folk tales.

1.1.1 Using Fire in Temple to “Explain”

In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, the author describes fire in temple for two times. The first one is the fire in Hulu Temple (葫芦庙) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1). Zhen Shiyin luckily survived in that fire and wandered away from home. The outline of the Forbidden City in Nanjing looks like the structure of “凸”, (Ma, 2014a, p.353) which is like the shape of Hulu (葫芦). And the “temple” (庙) refers to the Court. Thus, “Hulu Temple” undoubtedly “hides” Nanjing Forbidden City. The fire in “Hulu Temple” is describing the big fire in Imperial Palace in the fourth year of Jianwen. Using Zhen Shiyin’s escape from fire, the author “explains” that he luckily survived from the big fire in the Palace in the fourth year of Jianwen, and “took other places as his hometown” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1); The second one is when Jia Yucun was passing by a temple and met Zhen Shiyin in meditation, Zhen Shiyin pretended not to know Jia, but said “lingo” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 95). Yucun insisted that Zhen Shiyin couldn’t reveal “who he really is” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 103). When Jia Yucun just stepping out, the temple was in big fire. Zhen Shiyin was considered to be dead in that fire, but later on he appeared on Jiliujin Juemi Dukou. The author still uses the big fire in temple to indicate the big fire in Imperial Palace in the fourth year of Jianwen. Moreover, “who he really is” is an “introduction” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 18), expecting people could “aware” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 22) that the man who survived from the big fire in the Palace is just Zhu Yunwen, Emperor Jianwen of Ming Dynasty.

1.1.2 “Explaining” by “Many Master Guan’s Tombs”

Zhu Yunwen, Emperor Jianwen, is well-respected and loved by people. Thus, his tomb had been constructed in many places, over two to three hundred in total. (Ma, 2015, p176) By the story that “Master Guan” has many tombs, Zhu Yunwen wrote the scene of constructing tombs for him in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. “The whole lifetime of Master Guan can be traced. Why are there

so many tombs? Of course, people in later time admire and love him for events he did when he was alive. And by admiration, it also makes sense for people to build these tombs. In *Guang Yu Ji*, not only Master Guan, since ancient times, well-known people always have many tombs, and there are even more undocumented relics.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 51) In these sentences, the author uses “Master Guan’s many tombs” to point out that he is Emperor Jianwen. It is he who is a “well-known person with many tombs, and there are even more undocumented relics.”

1.2 Writing Family Affairs “Following Clues and Trails”

What did Emperor Jianwen do after his “martyrdom”? The answer lies in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. When Imperial Palace fell, Emperor Jianwen didn’t die in that fire, he had “abdicated his throne” and hidden in “mundaneness” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, chapter 78). Jianwen Court collapsing, and thousands of Jianwen “heroes” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 22) perishing in national crisis make him “complain by himself and feel guilty, sorrowing day and night”. (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1) For memorizing this history and these heroic stories, he uses “stone” as a clue, and “family trifles, leisure time within girls, and poems and riddles” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1) in “a well-educated and political-related clan” to decorate the novel with gorgeous colors in either reality or fantasy. By this chance, “all joys and sorrows, and rises and falls traced by trails, not daring any fabricating in case of losing reality” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1), he uses “brushstroke” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 18) saturated with blood and tears and with absurd words “to record” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1) the prosperity and collapse of Jianwen Court, to state his inner admiration and mourning for “martyrs” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 36) and to write the deepest hate for “the robber Yan, usurper” (<Qing Dynasty> Xia, 1980, p.595). He, sparing no effort, writes *A Dream of Red Mansions*, this “masterpiece” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1) in thousands years with surprising secrets, to relief depression accumulated in chest, to look forward to good human nature and lifestyle, and to express extensive and profound “family- country” emotion.

From the brief analysis of historical materials and the description in *A Dream of Red Mansions* above, we can see Zhu Yunwen, Emperor Jianwen, was hiding in folk after Nanjing Forbidden City had collapsed, and completed this great novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*, with blood turning into words and tears compiling into sentences. “Burned in fire” from Zhu Di is totally a lie. This is the surprising secret “arranged” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 78) elaborately by Zhu Yunwen in *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

2. "INSIGHT" HIDDEN IN "CAO XUEQIN"

As Zhu Yunwen is the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, why the sentence "in Dao Hong Xuan, Cao Xueqin (曹雪芹) writing for ten years, adding and deleting for five times, compiling into catalogue, and classifying into chapters" appears in the first chapter? Moreover, in the last chapter, the name Cao Xueqin has been mentioned for four times, leaving people an impression that he has a really close relation with *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Actually, here lies in the key problem. In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Cao Xueqin definitely is not an ordinary name, nor random words with no importance, but the "device" "arranged" in the novel, "secrets" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1) "secretly lying" under the literal words. "Understanding" this, "none of the novel is beyond understanding" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 116). This "device" is that author "secretly hides" his "identity", Zhu Yunwen, Emperor Jianwen, in the character "Cao Xueqin" cautiously and skillfully, telling people "Cao Xueqin" is Zhu Yunwen, who is the real author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

2.1 The Surname "Zhu" Resides in Chinese Character "曹" (Cao)

Based on the statement above, this segment of history should be Zhu Yunwen's "family history". But why did he use the surname "Cao" (曹)? It will be simply discussed in the following.

Surname "朱"(Zhu) is simplified version of "邾"(Zhu). It is said that Cao Xie(曹挟), the ancestor of family, is a descendant of Zhuan Xu. Cao Xie was entitled by King Wu in Zhou Dynasty with the place 邾 (Zhu), and Cao Xie established the state of Zhu (邾国, Zoucheng, Shandong Province in today). Because the state of Zhu (邾国) was weak, it had to attach to a strong state ——Lu. In Warring State Period, the state of Zhu had been wiped out by the state of Chu, and the royal family members of the state of Zhu had escaped to Pei (沛, Pei county, Jiangsu Province in today) and gave themselves the surname "邾" (Zhu) after the name of their state Zhu (邾国). Later on, they deleted the right side of "邾" (Zhu) and turned it into surname "朱"(Zhu). (Wang, 2006, p.70) Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋) is the founding emperor of the Great Ming Empire and his grandson Zhu Yunwen is the second emperor. And Zhu Yuanzhang's ancestors "lived in Xiang county(相县), state of Pei from generation to generation. After that, descendants who lived in Jurong(句容) held great families, which was called Zhujiaxiang(朱家巷). Ancestors Gaozu, Zengzu, Yizu, Zuxizu did good works age by age, working hardly in the field. In the end of Song Dynasty, ancestor Xizu started to move, crossed river Huai and lived in Si State." (Ma, 2014a, p.2) Later on, Zhu Yuanzhang's father led all family members wandering many places and finally settled down in Zhongli, Hao State, Zhu Yuanzhang's birthplace, which was renamed as Fengyang(凤阳) in the seventh year of

Hongwu Court (in the year 1374). (Ma, 2014a, p.316) The author frequently "arranges" these names of different locations, such as Jurong, Zhongli, Fengyang, in which his ancestor lived before in the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*, like from the first to the sixth chapters, the forty-eighth chapter etc., or keeps "laying out" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 76) Chinese character: Fengyang, Zhongli, etc. by using expressing technique of "indicating common things" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 50), like "tying hair with pearl hairpin decorated by five noble phoenixes"(绾着朝阳五凤挂珠钗) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 3), or by using characters' names. For example, Wang Xifeng(王熙凤), commonly, Chinese characters "阳"(Yang) "日"(Ri) must be "laid out" every time when Wang Xifeng appears, which "indicates" Fengyang; Chinese character "Feng" in names of Cai Feng, Xiu Feng "indicates" Feng Yang; the Chinese character "蓉"(Rong) in name Jia Rong(贾蓉) pronounces the same as"荣"(rong), which "indicates" Jurong; based on "homophony theory" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 4, 20, 21, 101), character"佩凤"(Pei Feng) both "indicates" Fengyang and Pei State, as "佩"(Pei) shares the same pronunciation as "沛"(Pei); character Xiangyun(湘云) "indicates" Xiang county, for "湘"(Xiang) has the same pronunciation as "相"(Xiang). Seeing from these, the author uses these evidences to "verify" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 2) himself as the descendant of Zhu's family. Referring from these, Zhu Yuanzhang should be the royal member of the state of Zhu, migrating to Pei, Jiangsu Province, and his ancestor is Cao Xie. Choosing "Cao" (曹) as surname is because of the author's "unavoidable" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 78) dangerous situation. "Accompanying the past" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 50), only "away from the spy" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 9) could "avoid disasters" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 120). In order to cover real identity, surname "Zhu"(朱) definitely can not be used, only ancestor Cao Xie's surname "Cao"(曹) could appear. Such carefulness and thoughtfulness make people heartbreaking! Thus, in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, the surname of "Cao Xueqin", Cao, is just the surname Zhu, with such concrete evidence.

2.2 The Intention of "Abolishing Seignior" "Lies in" Chinese Character "雪" (Xue, Snow)

This Chinese character "雪"(Xue, snow), just like "stone" described in the novel, gets through the whole novel from beginning to end. Starting from Chinese character "雪"(Xue, snow), "mystery" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 22) in "family history" of Zhu could be "decoded".

The author gives out a decoding method of Chinese character "雪"(Xue, snow): Chinese character "雪" in "heavy snow in good-harvesting year" "refers to" a surname "薛"(Xue), "雪" and "薛" are homophones. (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 4) In this way,

“雪” (Xue, snow) could also have other homophones, not only refer to a surname “薛” (Xue) for if it only means the surname “薛” (Xue), the author does not need to cover the whole novel with such a poetic imagery of “white snow” “colored- glass world” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 49). So, we can conclude that the author uses various ways to describe “snow” aiming at “expressing emotion by using metonymy of other items” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 9). What are “other items”? After the enthronement, Zhu Yuanzhang’s first son, Zhu Biao, was entitled as the crown prince, and other sons were all entitled as seigniors. When they had grown up, all these 24 seigniors would go to their own states. In the late years of Emperor Hongwu of Ming Dynasty, these seigniors were strengthening their power and seignior Yan was the most powerful one. (Hu & Ma, 2005, p.62, p.64) Each seignior “treating pearl as dust and gold as iron” got massive military forces to enforce their own power, and break the law violently. As the crown prince Zhu Biao had died, Zhu Yuanzhang followed the teachings of the deceased and passed the throne to the first grandson Zhu Yunwen. Because seignior Yan and other seigniors were endangering the imperial court, Zhu Yunwen decided to weaken their power. The character Xue Pan (薛蟠) created by the author is the typical representative of these revolting seigniors. The Chinese character “薛”(Xue) in “薛蟠”(Xue Pan) sounds the same as “削”(xue, means abolish); the Chinese character “蟠”(Pan) shares the similar form with the word “藩”(seignior) in Chinese writing, and they are homophones. So, all the “snow” described in the novel can be “translated” into the same pronunciation “xue”(削, abolish). Thus, these “other items” means “abolish”seigniors(削藩). It is self-evident that the person who had failed in “abolishing seigniors” and had lost his throne is Emperor Jianwen, Zhu Yunwen.

2.3 History Blending With Tears and Blood “Covered by” Chinese Character “芹”(Qin)

The author writes that “nowadays, there are always sorrows feeling crying wandering. And he is even more stupid than an idiot that starts to crying when seeing people cry.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 107) Which part of “family Zhu’s history” would make the author feel such “sad”? (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 58) The answer “was covered” in Chinese character “芹”(qin). The author called himself as “芹”(qin) to “state” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 104) the history blending with blood and tears, with intention that he is the participant and recorder of this bloody and tearful history, who is the author of the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*. The Chinese character “芹”(qin) has three different meanings, which are “侵”(qin, invading), “擒”(qin, arrest), and “草头皇帝”(Emperor caotou, common herd). This is called “explaining in an ingenious but interesting way”. (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 49)

2.3.1 “Invading”

The first meaning of Chinese character “芹”(qin) is “侵”(qin), means “invading”. The meaning “invading” is concluded from four pieces of evidence: the first one is based on “homophony” the author hints, Chinese character “芹”(qin) is sounded the same as “侵”(qin, invading); the second is “Emperor Jianwen’s self-confession”(罪己诏) when he asked the whole people in the land to be dutiful to the throne. When Zhu Di had occupied north part of Jiangsu Province and was endangering the capital city Nanjing, Emperor Jianwen “issued self-confession, dispatched officials out, and calling military force to save the court.” (<Qing Dynasty> Gu, 1997, p.268) “Yan is immoral.... invaders are invading the Huaihe River, intending to cross the River and invade the Royal Court” (燕人不道.....寇兵侵淮, 意在渡江犯阙) (Ma, 2014b, p.315). From this “self-confession”, we can see that Zhu Di’s usurping behavior had been defined as “侵”(qin, invading); Zhu Di had been called as “燕人”(Yan) and “寇”(invader). The author Zhu Yunwen writes the words “侵”(qin, invade), “燕”(Yan), and “寇”(invader) into the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Referring these pieces, it is not hard to see that these words “invade”, “Yan”, and “invader” in the novel means that Zhu Di had betrayed and invaded royal court, which perfectly proves that what Zhu Yunwen wrote is Zhu Di’s usurpation, and Chinese character “芹”(qin) is “侵”(qin, invading). The third one is “offence” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 58) “guiding” by the author. Zhu Yunwen was entitled to the grandson who would inherit throne. All seigniors, especially Zhu Di, “were not respecting Zhu Yunwen just because they were his uncles.” (<Qing Dynasty> Gu, 1997, p.225) On the thirteenth of September in the 25th year of Hongwu, on the coronation ceremony entitling the grandson Zhu Yunwen who would inherit throne, Zhu Di was severely scolded by Zhu Yuanzhang, because he beat Zhu Yunwen. Instead, innocent Zhu Yunwen still hid the evil and advocated kind heart, and defended Zhu Di: “My uncle love me so deep that beat me!” (Ma, 2014b, p.99); When Zhu Yunwen became the Emperor, all seigniors “was walking on the royal road, and stepping the royal stairs” (<Qing Dynasty> Xia, 1980, p.548). By using character in the novel, the author writes both his mild and gentle personality and Zhu Di’s tyrannies and recklessness in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Zhu Yunwen is Baoyu in the novel, and Zhu Di is Wang Xifeng in the novel. For example, because Bao Yu “has temperament as beautiful as orchid and talents just like fairy does” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5), even “cuckoo and swallow are twittering and feeling jealous” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 70). “Swallow”(燕, yan) refers to seignior Yan(燕王), Zhu Di, because “Yan” and “Swallow”(燕, yan)are homophones. Zhu Di was jealous of Zhu Yunwen inheriting throne in future, and even more jealous of Zhu Yunwen becoming Emperor. By

using the words said by Jia Zheng, he says Baoyu in the novel, “is just a voluptuary who should not be cherished and valued.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 2) By using words said by Dai Yu, he says Zhu Di, Wang Xifeng in the novel, “is unbridled and discourteous.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 3) The author is “inferring” the fact that Zhu Yunwen were beaten by Zhu Di but still concealed for him by writing the story that Jia Huan (贾环) used candle oil to scald Baoyu’s face (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 25). “贾环”(Jia Huan) “have similar sound with” “家换”(Jia Huan) which means changing the home. The author here is inferring that because he did not restrain Zhu Di’s evil behavior, his “home has been changed”, namely his throne has been robbed. Intelligent and merciful Emperor Jianwen only wants to be a good emperor all the way long, but he didn’t realize “people always be jealous of the one who is aiming at high, and people always abhor the one who is so pure and upright.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5) “Abolishing the seigniors” is just an excuse for Zhu Di, who is eager for the throne, to execute his “rebellion” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 68). “East ocean lack of bed made of jade, the Dragon King is inviting(请) Jinling King”, Jinling is the used name of Nanjing, which was chosen as capital by Zhu Yuanzhang; Jinling King refers to Emperor Jianwen; “Dragon King” “implies” “Zhu Di”; “请”(qing, means inviting) is sounded the same as “清”(qing), which “implies” Zhu Di, covered by the claim “of purging Jianwen Court”, openly “rebelled” and “invaded” the royal court. The fourth one is based on rhyme of the Chinese word “侵”(qin, invading), which is “guided” by the author “listening Chinese Koto.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 87). “Seignior Yan”, Zhu Di dispatched military forces to invade Emperor Jianwen in four critical stages. The author “hints” this by describing Baoyu and Miao Yu “listening Chinese Koto together”. The rhyme “qin”, rhyme “yang”, “another beat”, and “string breaks with sound ‘bang’”, these represent Zhu Di “started invasion”, occupied Yangzhou, rebel army attacked Nanjing directly, and his conspiracy prevailed.

2.3.2 “Arrest”

The second meaning of “芹”(qin) is “擒”(qin, arresting). On one hand, based on “homophony”, Chinese character “芹”(qin) is pronounced the same as “擒”(qin, arrest), on the other hand, looking for the author’s “guidance”, we still can get the same meaning. For example, “looks like he killed the king of rebel force and arrested the traitor” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 58); Zhu Di, Wang Xifeng in the novel, said “capture(擒, qin) a ringleader first in order to capture all his underlings” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 55), which “hints” that Zhu Di was intending to “qin”(擒, arrest) Emperor Jianwen. Zhu Yunwen “equipped with mercy and virtue” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 18) never thought of Zhu Di massacring ministers madly after

Zhu Di usurped throne. So, when Jianwen Court was in national calamity, like “mansions collapsing instantly and light burning out miserably” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5), he still naively thought Zhu Di “wants the throne not the person” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 117), and as long as he gives away the throne and “discards all family relatives and homeland” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5), they all will “keep safe respectively”, even though “will be apart”. (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5) Zhu Yunwen, therefore, called on Zhu Di: “I am willing to leave, please don’t implicate others.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5) But, the author didn’t know Zhu Di is “a wolf in mountains, a ruthless beast, who completely forgot emotional ties” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5). He not only denied the reign title Jianwen heartlessly, which makes Jianwen Court “has no record to be verified” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, Chapter 1), but also slaughtered loyal ministers madly, which makes people distressed and indignant. And this indeed is an “unprecedented rite within thousands of years” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 78).

(a) “Ladies From Noble Families to be Obscene”

After Zhu Di usurped throne, he “cleared Imperial Palace for three days, most of maids, female officials and officers in the Palace were killed” (<Qing Dynasty> Gu, 1997, p.273); “ministers’ wives and daughters in Jianwen Court were sent into Jiao Fang Department. Custom and civilization are decaying and Emperor Wen (Zhu Di) did the most, which were never heard since ancient times.” (Ma, 2014a, p.393) JiaoFang Department is brothel. The whores in brothel wear black 巾 headband and a special costume in red and green. (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, p.1654) Some scholars, Sheng Shou (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.1294), Shen Shou (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.1398, p.1399), Meng Zeng (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.469), etc. find out that all the girls in *A Dream of Red Mansions* are ending in tragedies. Indeed, the author, Zhu Yunwen, uses many ways to describe various “miserable” girls. Sometimes he uses poems, like “catkin falling in a land full of flowers, beauty dying in the Yanzi building”, and based on above historical materials, “Yan” means Zhu Di and Yanzi building refers to Imperial Palace which was occupied by Zhu Di; “Be trampled on, ladies from noble families have to be obscene” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5). “Flourishing in spring and falling in autumn, all flowers meant to death” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5); “wishing higher than sky, but lying in nasty place.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5) Or using the symbol “𠂔”: “She said her mother had a dream when she was borne by her mother. In the dream, her mother got a bolt of brocade(锦, jin), representing wealth and good luck, which is full of the symbol “𠂔” never being cut, so she was named Wan Er.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 19) Based on the analysis of historical

material and “Yun Er(云儿), the whore, in Jinxiang Yuan”(锦香院) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 28), “锦”(Jin) is the name of the brothel, “got a bolt of brocade”(得一匹锦) refers to being sent to brothel as a whore, and “云”(Yun) has similar pronunciation with “允”(Yun) referring to Zhu Yunwen, which indicates that loyal ministers’ wives and daughters have been implicated and sent to brothel because of Zhu Yunwen. “never being cut” means daughters of minister’s wives, who were born in brothel, will be forced to be whores when they have grown up. Or the author uses characters in the novel. For example, Miao Yu(妙玉), in one hundred and thirteenth chapter, is descendant of the “well-educated and official’s family”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 17). Based on the way of “the analysis of Chinese character”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 23, 94, 116), Chinese character “妙” can be taken apart into words “少女”(young girl), Chinese character “玉”(Yu) “is sounded the same as “御”(Yu, means imperial). The author uses the daughter Miao Yu of the “noble and official’s family”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 17) to imply that those daughters of the loyal ministers’ families are pure and noble, but they are deeply involved due to Zhu Yunwen. And they are totally innocent. He also uses “robber”(贼) to refer to Zhu Di. In the end, Miao Yu was “taken away by robbers”, which indicates the loyal ministers’ daughters at Jianwen Court had been dispatched to brothel as prostitutes. In conclusion, the “miserable”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 79) scene of “chaste ladies”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, seventy Chapter 78) at Jianwen Court makes people feel heart-breaking. And Zhu Di is indeed an “animal”, who is even more brutal than beasts. (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 7)

From these historical materials, scholars’ research, like Sheng Shou etc. and the “miserable” ending of girls portrayed in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, we could know that the reason why there are many “miserable” girls in the novel is because they are the characters derived from those “chaste ladies” of the loyal ministers. The author puts the deepest sympathy and the strongest emotion for those women’s “miserable”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 82) destinies. Thus, Jia Baoyu in the novel, transformed from Zhu Yunwen, shows the deepest “infatuation” for the girls in Da Guan Yuan, which makes people moved spontaneously.

(b) “Bones of Dead Piled Into Mountains and Forgot Their Names”

Over one hundred “loyal ministers” who lost lives in the national calamity have been documented, but countless of them “can not be found in any record”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5), who were soldiers died for the country and the implicated relatives. For example, “sobbing in Bai Yang village, dead whispering in maple woods. Accompanying with tombs covered by

grass connecting to the sky.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5) Even more sad, “bones of dead piled into mountains and their names forgotten, only can be remembered they are either sons or daughters of ministers”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 8). The author uses “the ground is completely clean”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5) to perfectly describe the destruction that “capital chief supervisor Chen Ying executed tens of the whole clan relatives of loyal ministers of Jianwen Court and ten thousands of people had been involved.” (Ma, 2014b, p.347)

2.3.3 From Emperor “to Common Herd”

The third meaning of “芹”(qin) is the author was forced to step down from the throne and became common herd. The author “states” this historical fact from the following perspectives:

(a) Four Generational Hierarchies in Jia’s Family

The author uses four hierarchies to “explain” his ending. There are four generational hierarchies in Jia’s family: “dai”(代), “wen”(文), “yu”(玉), “cao tou”(草头), which “secretly hide”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 116) the author’s life experience. These four generational hierarchies mean: someone (Zhu Di) “dai”(replace) “wen”(Zhu Yunwen/ Jianwen), real identity of “wen” is “yu”(玉) which is pronounced the same as “御”(yu, means emperor), and this emperor has become the Emperor “cao tou”(the common herd). All these information “indicates”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 17) his throne has been “robbed”, and he has become the common herd.

(b) “Xi Bei Cao Jin”

In ninety-third chapter, the author takes apart the name “贾芹”(Jia Qin) into “西贝草斤”(Xi Bei Cao Jin). Following such pattern, Chinese character “芹”(qin) in name “曹雪芹”(Cao Xueqin) can be taken apart into “草斤”(Cao Jin). The homophony of “斤”(Jin) is “今”(jin), which means “今上”(Jin Shang, referring to emperor). Thus, “芹”(qin) can be explained as “the common herd”.

(c) Common Herd’s Costume

“Si Bai Li”(四拜礼, fall on bended knees for four times) is a kind of etiquette used in grand ceremony after Emperor Hongwu of Ming Dynasty stabilized the country. (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, p.1347) Baoyu also performs “Si Bai Li” in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. “On that day, suddenly cold and snowing ... in the shadow of snow on prow, there was a man, with barefoot and bareheaded and in a bright red cloak, fell on knees to Jia Zheng... on bended knees for four times”(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 112). The author Zhu Yunwen is Baoyu in the novel. Baoyu’s abject image, with barefoot, bareheaded and only in a cloak, makes a distinct contrast with the emperor’s ceremonial dress and crown Baoyu wears in the third chapter when he first appears. Emperor ceremonial dress and crown represent emperor’s majesty and symbolize divine right of the emperor. Here,

he uses metaphor that he is blending in “snow”, which indicates he has become common herd because of the fail in weakening power of seigniors and completely lost his prestige. There are two meanings in “on bended knees for four times”(四拜). The first one indicates he was defeated(败) by Zhu Di. “拜”(bai, means in bended knees) and “败”(bai, means lose) are homophones, and “four times” refers to the fourth uncle Zhu Di. The second meaning is a kind of ritual at Hongwu Court. The author purposely guides people to imagine the one, who performs on bended knees for four times with bare foot and head, must be expelled out of Imperial Palace. This is really unusual for a man to be a monk in this way. It means to “introduce” he was the dethroned emperor Zhu Yunwen.

Synthesizing from above information, three Chinese characters “曹雪芹”(Cao Xueqin) in *A Dream of Red Mansions* “secretly covers” such a “mystery”: Emperor Jianwen is “arrested” because of the fail in abolishing the power of seigniors. That means, Zhu Yunwen’s abolishing seigniors project leads to his throne being “looted”. And Zhu becomes a mundane citizen, and his loyal ministers are “killed” by Zhu Di. “Cao Xueqin” (曹雪芹) is indeed Emperor Jianwen, Zhu Yunwen, (建文帝朱允炆) who is the real author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

3. “RIDDLE IN POEM” EXPLAINS “WHO HE REALLY IS”

The author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* intendedly introduces Zhen Shiyin(甄士隐) who could not tell “who he really is.” And “who he really is?” The answer can be “comprehended” in two perspectives. The one is to explore the fire in temple and the person luckily survived from the fire, namely who is the person not dying in the big fire in Imperial Palace? The second one is to explore the implied meaning of name “Zhen Shiyin”. The homophony of “甄”(Zhen) is “朕”(Zhen, emperor calling himself in ancient China). From this, we can see that the survivor of that big fire is an emperor. From these two perspectives, it is not hard to “comprehend” that author is “guiding” people to explore this emperor who did not die in big fire happened in Imperial Palace. In fact, browsing historical materials, it is easy to know that the emperor is just Emperor Jianwen in Ming Dynasty. The author Emperor Jianwen “dare not explain explicitly” in the novel, but he purposely “composes riddles in poem” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 22). He uses the “titles to imply deep meaning.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 38) Using writing skills, like Bei Mian Fu Fen(背面傅粉) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 38), to compose titles, the author wants readers to guess the answer. And the answer of “who he really is” lies in such “titles”, which “faintly showed” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 17) in them. This is

another path by Zhu Yunwen, another art perspective and art level, to further explain he is Emperor Zhu Yunwen who did not die in the big fire in Imperial Palace. And Zhu Yunwen, “who is the real person”, is the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

3.1 “Title” “Implies Deep Meaning”

Besides using “Cao Xueqin” to “imply” he is Zhu Yunwen, the author also uses various “titles” to “guide”, further “explaining” “a deep meaning”: Zhu Yunwen is the real one, who did not die in the big fire in Imperial Palace.

3.1.1 Using Characters’ Name “to Guide” “Who He Really is”

The author “arranges” names “Zi Jian” “Wen Jun” which can be taken apart and combined into the reign title “Jianwen”, term of address “Jianwen Jun”. In historical materials, it is said “In the past, I opened Jinchuan Gate and sent out Jianwen Jun” (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, p.3604). The author “arranges” name “甄费”(Zhen Fei) which are sounded the same as “朕废”(zhen fei, I, emperor, dethroned), to “explain” the author has become a dethroned emperor. The author also “arranges” names “Zhu ER” “Rui Zhu”(蕊珠) “Rui Zhu”(瑞珠) “Bao Zhu” “Zhen Zhu” “Jiang Zhu Xianzi” “Shi Guangzhu” “Zhu Daniang” “Zhu Saozi” “Xiang Yun” “Cai Yun” “Su Yun” “Cui Yun” “Yun Er” “Yun Guang” “Jian Yun” “Tan Yun” “Qing Wen” “Qiu Wen” “Li Wen” “Wen Xing” “Wen Hua” “Wen Guan” “Wen Er” “Zhu Wen Xianggong” “Chen Ruiwen” “Jin Wenxiang”, all these names can be taken apart and combine into the name “Zhu Yunwen”.

3.1.2 Using Zhu Yuanzhang and “Ma Dajiao” “to Guide” “Who He Really is”

(a) **Zhu Yuanzhang.** It is said that Zhu Yuanzhang had once drunk a bowl of bean curd soup from an old woman and kept alive. That old woman told him the name of the soup is “珍珠翡翠白玉汤”. So, the author composes two characters “珍珠”(Zhen Zhu, means Pearl) and “翡翠”(Fei Cui, means Jade) from such beautiful and life-saving soup, and the words “白玉”(baiyu, white jade) and “汤”(tang, soup) can be found everywhere in the novel. The author strongly boosts “steamed stuffed bun made of thin sheet of bean curd”(豆腐皮儿的包子) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 8) to imply the above story of Zhu Yuanzhang. Zhu Yuanzhang created the beautiful name “moon cake”. (Ma, 2014a, p.1187) It is so persuasive because of originality. The author purposely writes “eating moon cake” and enjoying moon at Mid-Autumn Festival in the seventy-fifth chapter, and the words “moon cake” has been mentioned for five times to “guide” people to think of Zhu Yuanzhang who firstly created “moon cake”. Zhu Yuanzhang is really frugal and prohibits accepting gifts throughout his whole life. In a certain year, a businessman gave Zhu Yuanzhang “Qiang Wei Lu”(蔷薇露) as present, which can be used either as

medicine or cosmetics. Zhu Yuanzhang refused on spot, because he doesn't want to "start a lavish lifestyle for no reason." (Ma, 2014a, p.1192) The author writes this moving and respected story in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. From chapter fifty-nine, the author starts to "underlying" "Qiang Wei Xiao" (蔷薇硝). Following on, in chapter sixty, the author uses large amount of words to describe a dispute caused by this "Qiang Wei Xiao". It undoubtedly causes reader to think: What "secret" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 75) is "hidden" under this "covering herb" (隐身草儿) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 59) ? The description of "Qiang Wei Xiao" both reminds people of the frugal story of Zhu Yuanzhang and "secretly reflects" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 17) Zhu Yuanzhang advocating frugality's manner, like "emperor's consort advocates frugal lifestyle" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 17), and Yuan Chun, "emperor's consort" "implies" Zhu Yuanzhang. Thus, "Qiang Wei Xiao" "implies" "Qiang Wei Lu".

(b) "Ma Da Jiao". Empress Ma (马皇后), the author's grandmother, is famous for "Ma Dao Jiao" (马大脚, big feet), because she did not have her feet binded. "She makes a profound impact on Zhu Yuanzhang, Zhu Yuanzhang's family and even Ming Dynasty." (Ma, 2014a, p.1200) Words "Da Jiao" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 73) and "Lou Chu Ma Jiao" (露出马脚, leaking out fact unintentionally) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 72) written in the novel all refer to Empress Ma. In the years of war, Zhu Yuanzhang was confined by Guo Zixing and had nothing to eat. Empress Ma secretly took cooked pancakes out of kitchen to save Zhu Yuanzhang (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, Scroll 113); Once Zhu Yuanzhang was defeated in war, Empress was carrying Zhu Yuanzhang on her back and escaping, and finally they survived from the capture. (Ma, 2014a, p.1205) Empress Ma often kept and gave food to Zhu Yuanzhang, but herself was still starving (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, Scroll 113). In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Jiao Da (焦大) "is carrying great grandfather on his back and getting out of the dead, and they survive; he steals food for his master, but himself is bearing starving; two days without water, he gets half bowl of water and gives it to his master, he himself has to drink horse urine" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 7). Tan Chun (探春) also says: "otherwise, is he also the man who is herding horses, and putting master on his back and saving master's life?" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 55). The plots between "Jiao Da" and "great grandfather", the past story by Tan Chun, are surprisingly similar with the story that Empress Ma helped Emperor Taizu, Zhu Yuanzhang fight for state power! Name "焦大" (Jiao Da) are sounded the same as "脚大" (Jiao Da, big feet), which can be understood as "大脚" (Da Jiao, big feet), and combing with "underlying" word "马" (Ma, horse) into

"马大脚" (Ma Da Jiao). These "indicate" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 116) Empress Ma's legendary life. Synthesizing historical materials about Empress Ma, and examining descriptions in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, obviously, the author Zhu Yunwen is writing his imperial grandmother, Empress Ma's "heroic" story. The author uses legendary stories between Zhu Yuanzhang and Empress Ma aiming at "indicating" his grandparents-grandchild relationship with Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang and Empress Ma of Ming Dynasty.

3.1.3 Using Numbers "to Guide" "Who He Really is"

The author uses numerous numbers. Using "guessing meaning based on taking apart words" method (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 23) which is "guided" by the author, we can "decode" "mystery" about "who he really is" residing in numbers.

(a) "thirteen, twelve, two, four". Looking at "thirteen" (十三) first. "Under the Qing Geng Mountain Peak, haven't seen for thirteen years" (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 25), "十三" (thirteen) is "一十三" (one ten three) in ancient times. Reversing these numbers, it is "三十一" (three ten one), which imply that Zhu Yunwen ascended to throne in the thirty-first year of Hongwu (洪武三十一年). Then looking at "twelve". On emperor's Mianfu (冕服, the dress and crown worn by emperor on grand ceremonies), there are twelve tassels, twelve beads, twelve heraldry, twelve cicadas, twelve sewing lines. From beginning, the author describes hard stone with "twelve zhang" (length unit) in height, Baochai's "Leng Xiang pill" with each kind of medical ingredients of "twelve liang" (weight unit). These numbers "twelve" coincide with the numbers of "tassel" "bead" "heraldry" "cicada" "sewing line". Thus, the author uses number "twelve" aiming at "guiding" himself as an emperor. At last, turn to "two" and "four" which appear frequently. "two" implies the second emperor, like Baoyu is called "second master Bao" (宝二爷) in the novel. "Bao" (宝) means imperial jade seal (玉玺), and "second master Bao" "implies" second emperor. "Four" "implies" the author has been an emperor for four years. By analyzing these numbers, obviously "the real person" is Emperor Jianwen, Zhu Yunwen.

(b) Four "Chun". "Chun" (春, spring) means one year. Four daughters' names in Rong's family and Ning's family all have Chinese character "Chun". These four "Chun" symbolize the author has been on throne for four years. The eldest daughter Yuan Chun, Yuan (元) means beginning, which indicates the 1st year of Jianwen; the second daughter Ying Chun, which indicates 2nd year of Jianwen, "implying" Jianwen Court fighting against rebel Zhu Di; the third daughter Tan Chun (探春), which indicates the 3rd year of Jianwen. The homophony of "探" (Tan) is "谈" (tan), "implying" ministers of Jianwen Court persuading Zhu Di into changing his mind; the fourth daughter Xi Chun, which indicates the 4th year

of Jianwen, when capital city collapsed, Zhu Di usurped throne and the loyal ministers of Jianwen were killed miserably, with bones of the dead everywhere and blood of the dead flowing into rivers. All these scenes make people feel deep sad and sorry! These four names, for this reason, including Chinese character “Chun” perfectly conclude all the difficulties within the four years of Jianwen Court.

3.1.4 Using “Habit of Loving Red” “to Guide” “Who He Really is”

In the third year of Hongwu, all the ministers’ costumes “are better in red” (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, p.1634). In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Baoyu’s favourite color is red, “having a habit of loving red” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 19). Contrasting historical materials with Baoyu’s favourite red color, it is not hard to understand why Baoyu loves “red” so deeply. Firstly, “red” symbolizes Jianwen Court, also represents ministers of Jianwen Court, implying that the author loves his court and ministers. In addition, “red” (红) is another name of “Zhu” (朱). Originally, “Zhu” is the name of a kind of tree, and the heart of tree is red. After that, “Zhu” is specifically referring to red. Thus, “red” is “Zhu”, and consequently Baoyu’s “habit of loving red” implies Baoyu is a portrait of Emperor Jianwen, Zhu Yunwen. And “who he really is”, therefore, is Zhu Yunwen.

Actually, this kind of “title” can be read anytime in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. For example, in eighty-seventh chapter, words “myself-centred” “reveal” the author Zhu Yunwen’s “identity”—— emperor; in fifty-second chapter, using “sawing and mending peacock fur coat”, the author “hints” “Bu Zi”(补子) on ministers’ costumes in Ming Dynasty, which “infers” “who he really is” is Emperor Jianwen of Ming Dynasty. The author is “underlying” “titles” “with excellent gorgeousness and charming” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 78). Combining historical materials with “these titles”, they are really in accordance, which makes it easy to “understand” that “these titles” imply “deep meaning”, and naturally lead out the conclusion that “who he really is” is Emperor Jianwen Zhu Yunwen of Ming Dynasty.

3.2 “Real Identity” “Hides in” “Bei Mian Fu Fen”(背面傅粉)

In the first chapter of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, the author uses a poem which is “Bei mian fu fen”(背面傅粉, appearance underlain by essence) to “imply” he is Emperor Jianwen, Zhu Yuwen: “都云作者痴, 谁解其中味?” (Du yun zuo zhe chi, shui jie qi zhong wei) What is “covered” under the “粉”(fen, powder)? In *Lin Daiyu’s Sarcastic Sweet Words* (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 20), the author “gives out” a way of decoding. Lin Daiyu smiles and says: “Only the lisper talks a lot. He couldn’t pronounce “二”(er, second) brother, only say “爱”(ai, love) brother, “爱”(ai, love) brother. I suppose when we start dicing, you will be shouting ‘ai’ three.” Bao Yu smiles and says: “When you getting used to it, maybe

you will also lisp tomorrow.” Based on this “guiding” method, “味”(wei) could be pronounced sweetly “weir”(熯或文); another meaning of “都” is “capital”, sounded “du”, in here “都”(du) infers capital Nanjing; and the homophony of “云”(yun) is “允”(yun). Now the critical information, “都”(du, capital), “作者”(author), “允”(yun), “熯”(weir), is just like “figure of lotus” “looming on pond” after clouds and smoke disappeared (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 79). Thus, these two sentences can be explained: “This crazy author is Zhu Yunwen of the Great Ming Empire in Nanjing, but who can think of him?”

In the last chapter of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, the author again uses the method of “Bei mian fu fen” to “imply” the real author of this novel is Zhu Yunwen. “Emperor expressed wonder and issued a decree: Baoyu’s article is really fresh and fantastic. He must be an experienced person, so could he write such article. If he works at court, he could take important position; As he dare not accept a title of nobility, he could get a Tao title ‘Wen Miao Zhen Ren’(文妙真人, master of fantastic article)”. By “not need getting far to comprehend the nature” “guided” by the author, “the ‘secrets’ have already been understand” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 48). “Wen Miao Zhen Ren” can be explained as: “the real author of this novel is “wen”; “emperor” and “Imperial Palace” “implies” the author is an emperor; “if you works at court” and “dare not accept a title of nobility” “imply” this emperor is no longer at court and dare not appear. Who is the emperor meeting all these requirements? The author “underlies” a word “见(jian)”, which is the homophony “建”(jian), before “Wen Miao Zhen Ren”. And after that, the author also writes “弟”(di) which has the same pronunciation as “帝”(di, emperor). Thus, these words can be combined into “见文第”(Jian Wen Di) which can be sounded the same as “建文帝”(Jianwen Di, Emperor Jianwen). Following that, the author also “underlies” “建文地”(Jianwen Di), “地”(Di) can be sounded the same as “帝”(Di, emperor). After cleansing the “powder”(粉, fen), the real content appears, and consequently the real identity of “Emperor Jianwen” can be seen. Just like words said by Zhang Tianyi: “Becoming Buddha and Bodhisattva also requires orthodox family background? ... Even do not mind disturbing the Emperor (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.844). The author intentionally writes this “unreasonably”, because only being such unreasonable can draw readers’ attention to think why the author is writing like this? Who is the monk? The author “guides” all readers to look through complicated words and intentions, to see the reality and to find out the “real identity” Zhu Yunwen. It really proves the sentence that “looking so unreasonable, but after a thorough thinking, it is so reasonable and sensible.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 48) This is a helpless condition when Zhu Yunwen is experiencing dangers, and is also a brilliance about Zhu Yunwen’s writing skills.

All in all, the author firstly uses “titles” as various “guidance”, then “underlies” by writing skill “Bei mian fu fen”. The real author of *A Dream in Red Mansions*, Zhu Yunwen is coming out!

4. “RECORDING” PAST STORIES TO COMPENSATE FOR “AFFECTION”

The author, Emperor Jianwen, Zhu Yunwen, “is recording” the past stories for “compensating sky”. Actually, what the author compensates for is “affection”, because he comes from “sea of sin coming from addicted affection” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5). And this “affection” is he owed “affection” debt to the martyrs of Jianwen Court. “With heaven and earth, affection never ends since ancient times; women and men addicted in love, love between them never get repaid.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 5). “Men addicted in love” implies Zhu Yunwen, “women addicted in love” implies “the martyrs” and their relatives getting involved in Jianwen Court. The emotional debt is hard to “get compensated”. The primary way Zhu Yunwen uses to repay this debt is writing *A Dream of Red Mansions* as a “condolence” to give expression to his inner accumulated grief. That is to say, Zhu Yunwen both has this strong wish and equips with specific conditions to realize this wish.

4.1 “Smart” and “Talent” can “Compensate Heaven”

In Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang’s family, most of them have talents in art and literature. Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang composes *Zu Xun Record*, *Zhou Dian Xian Biography*, *Dream Recording* etc., and more than a hundred masterpiece of poems. Before Ming Dynasty, there is no custom about Spring Couplets in Spring Festival. But Zhu Yuanzhang originally created it (Ma, 2014a, p.1185). The author writes this original Spring Couplets created by his imperial grandfather Zhu Yuanzhang into *A Dream of Red Mansions*, with abundant words and strong emotion, e.g., in the fifth chapter, and the seventeenth chapter. And in the fiftieth chapter, the author elaborately writes over 30 Spring Couplets; Zhu Yuanzhang pays a lot attention on his children’s education: “ finding books of ancient times and the present, employing famous scholars to teach crown prince and seigniors, being on duty in turn throughout the whole night, selecting talents to accompanying their study” (Ma, 2014a, p.1208). Thus, all of the Emperor’s children have abundant compositions. For example, Zhu Quan, the seventeenth son, writes masterpiece *Shi Duan*, *Wen Pu*, etc. (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, p.3592); Zhu Zhan, the sixteenth son, writes *Annals of Ning Xia* etc.; Zhu Su, the fifth son, writes *Jiu Huang Ben Cao* etc. (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, p.3566); Zhu Chun is called “Shu Xiu Cai” by Zhu Yuanzhang (<Qing Dynasty> Zhang, 1987, p.3579), and so on.

The reason why Zhu Yunwen could compose *A Dream of Red Mansions* is that, on one hand, he is deeply influenced by his strong “family education background” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 78), especially, he is influenced by great leaders in literature before and after being an emperor: At the beginning of Ming Dynasty, “Tai Ge literature form” is so prevalent for its grace and elegance taste, and Song Lian, Liu Ji, Gao Qi and Fang Xiaoru, all of them serve for Zhu Yuanzhang and Zhu Yunwen’s government together, not only are popular and respected leaders in literature, but also are really good at writing in “Tai Ge form” (Ma, 2014a, p.404); and on the other hand, Zhu Yunwen himself has a brilliant artistic ability, (<Qing Dynasty> Xia, 1980, p.617) which is more important, and he proudly writes his talent into *A Dream of Red Mansions*: “He is so intelligent and clever, and even a hundred people can not be as clever as he can.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 2) The literature style, therefore, in *A Dream of Red Mansions* is so graceful and elegant, various and spectacular, which is undoubtedly deeply influenced by literature leaders in that time and “Tai Ge literature form”.

The author Zhu Yunwen has deep affection for his grandfather Zhu Yunwen and father Zhu Biao. For “recording” this beautiful experience, expressing his deep missing for his grandfather and father, as well as “guiding” readers to understand he is the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, when composing, he intentionally writes poems composed by his father and himself at imperial banquets granted by his grandfather Zhu Yuanzhang. Looking at the crown prince Zhu Biao’s poem at first: “Who lost a fish hook at Yanling yesterday, and who is on the clouds. Although not a full moon it is, your radiance can spread onto the whole country.”(昨夜严陵失钓钩, 何人移上碧云头。虽然不得团圆相, 也有清光遍九州。)(Ma, 2014b, p.90) In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, there is a poem: A full moon it is on the 15th day each month, radiance covers handrails made by jade; the full moon in the sky just appears, all the people on earth raise their heads to look.”(时逢三五便团圞, 满把清光护玉栏, 天上一轮才捧出, 人间万胜仰头看。)(*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1) These two poems are really similar in artistic feeling and implied meaning. In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, the poem directly uses or paraphrases certain words from Zhu Biao’s poem, like “清光”(radiance) directly quoted from original poem; “团圞”(tuan luan) from “团圞”(tuan yuan). In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, the poem also “implies” certain words in Zhu Biao’s poem, such as, “三五”(on the 15th day each month) “implies” “昨日”(yesterday), “护玉栏”(covers handrails made by jade) “implies” “遍九州”(spread onto whole country), “天上一轮才捧出”(the full moon in sky just appears) “implies” “何人移上碧云头”(who is on the clouds). In order to help readers “comprehend” his purpose better, the author

instantly follows a sentence “someday could stepping over clouds”(不日可接踵于云霄之上了) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1) to further “explain” which has the exact same meaning as “who is on the clouds”. The author’s purpose has been shown obviously.

Then looking at Zhu Yunwen’s poem: “Whose graceful nails, nipping the blue sky into crescent.”(谁将玉指甲, 掐破碧天痕。) (Ma, 2014b, p.90) In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, character’s name “Bi Hen”(碧痕) derives from words “Bi Tian Hen”(碧天痕, crescent); Qing Wen “bit hard, with a ‘crack’ sound, two white nails off, holding Bao Yu’s hand, and put them in his hand.” Bao Yu “put her nails into his pouch.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 77) Here, the author repeatedly emphasizes “nail”, which is intentionally arranged by the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* Zhu Yunwen, aiming at helping readers comprehend that “nail” comes from his poem “Whose graceful nails, nipping the blue sky into crescent.” May it be asked, the author writes both his father’s and his own poems into *A Dream of Red Mansions*, could there have any more concrete evidences to prove the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is just Zhu Yunwen?

4.2 “Who Would Feel Sympathetic” for Dethroned Us

Besides “family education background”, personal talents, it is unusual experience of being an emperor and being dethroned that makes Zhu Yunwen to complete *A Dream of Red Mansions*, and especially such unusual experience, which is an indispensable requirement. In Chinese history, there are many dethroned emperors, but before Zhu Yunwen, the one being dethroned and having brilliant literature talent only can be Li Yu of Nan Tang Dynasty. Hence, Zhu Yunwen considers Li Yu as his confidant, and , in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, uses Li Yu’s poems and words for many times either by directly quoting or paraphrasing to extinguish suppressed depression and indignation by Li Yu’s wine glass. For example, “Like river draining away and flowers perishing with passing of spring, from heaven to earth” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 23); “This life is such desolate and lonely! It is really like words from Li Yu ‘tears covering the face all day’! (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 87)”; sentence “Silk gauze quilt can not resist coldness brought by wind in autumn” is paraphrased from Li Yu’s “Silk gauze quilt can not resist coldness at midnight”; “The frown can never be smoothed, hourglass always remains and cannot reach dawn; Ah! Just like distant green mountains can never be covered, green water runs endlessly” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 28) are paraphrased from Li Yu’s “Asking how much depressed you feel, it just like endless rivers in spring running towards the east.” The author uses Li Yu as a “guidance”, aiming at “explaining” that he has four same points as Li Yu: both being dethroned,

experiencing misfortunes similarly, “both being reduced to be the common herd”, both being a writer, in order to prove his “identity” that he is the emperor and is the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, to pour out his deep grief and anger for “Flowers are perishing, blowing by wind and rotating in sky, red color is vanishing, sweet smell is disappearing, who will show sympathy for these flowers.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 27)

The author, “being much more humble than rubbles” and “experiencing sweetness and bitterness”, “comprehend a little bit about social rules and methods of interacting with others” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 115). Tragedy of falling from “heaven” to “earth” and great ups and downs in life make the author have abundant life experience. Now, “being reborn and seeing the world from a new perspective” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 115), he could re-examine life, treat human nature from common people’s perspective with common people’s mind, elevating ideological level.

Without such unusual dethroned experience, even equipped with an exceedingly brilliant literature skill, it is also impossible to write this profound *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Unfortunate experience being an emperor and being dethroned, hard and endless mundane life after falling from “heaven” to “earth”, are misfortunes for Zhu Yunwen, because he “experiences” all the “bitterness” in life. Meanwhile, this unusual experience is a good luck for Zhu Yunwen as being a writer, because such experience helps him to becoming the great novelist, and to accomplishing the great novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*. This is called “biggest good luck hides in biggest misfortune.” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 26)

Indeed, it is Zhu Yunwen’s plentiful and zigzag life experience, falling from an emperor to a “common person”, that accomplish this “masterpiece with mystery” *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

By Jingbian Fosheng (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.19), Yuan Shengshi(Lv & Lin, 2015, p1393.p.1394) and other scholars, *A Dream of Red Mansions* contains a large number of characters, complicated personalities and intricate plots. Only these three features cannot be handled by the author “Cao Xueqin” Hu Shi recommended, not to mention the description that “major disasters occur repeatedly, downfall and death successively happen after the eightieth chapter”. The author “Cao Xueqin” claimed by Hu Shi could never experience such “major disasters”! Without experiencing by himself, or life experience and accumulated life, it is hard to complete such masterpiece like *A Dream of Red Mansions* only by imagination. On the contrary, Zhu Yunwen is totally different. He is the one experiencing “heaven to earth” big crisis. Zhu Yunwen has special experience, being an emperor and being dethroned, which is different from common people. When being an emperor, Zhu Yunwen interacts with many imperial ministers, imperial family members and

“usurper” every day, which provide him with personal experiencing and practicing opportunities, which is called “anxiety accumulated from the past”(旧愁) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 28) by the author. After he has fallen down from throne and wandered in folk places, he has a deep feeling and close observing of common people living in the lowest social class and numerous hardships in their life. And this is the author called “anxiety deriving from the present”(新愁) (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 28). Only aiding by specific “family education background” and “talent” born with, and persistence in looking through hardships and being diligent writing, could he complete *A Dream of Red Mansions*, which is plentiful, broad and profound, deep and resplendent, and immortal within thousands of years.

According to Bai Yixiang (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.712), Wang Mian (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.578), this masterpiece *A Dream of Red Mansions* appears at the beginning of Qing Dynasty. Yuan Shengshi said *A Dream of Red Mansions* “suddenly appears in Beijing” (Lv & Lin, 2015, p.1387), which feels like there is a person who suddenly brings *A Dream of Red Mansions* to Beijing, just like the “fairy” descending to ground from “Jing Huan Fairy Palace” (*Dream of Red Mansions*, 1979, Chapter 1). The statements from these scholars just verify that the real author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is Zhu Yunwen, not “Cao Xueqin” who lives in Beijing in Qing Dynasty claimed by Hu Shi. Hu Shi says “Cao Xueqin” was born in about late years of Kangxi (about 1715-1720) and died in about the 30th year of Qianlong (about 1765) (Hu, 2016, p.30). May it be asked: how could “Cao Xueqin” who was born in middle or late periods of Qing Dynasty write *A Dream of Red Mansions* which was spread all over the world at the beginning of Qing Dynasty? This adequately proves that *A Dream of Red Mansions* is written by Zhu Yunwen of the Great Ming Empire.

CONCLUSION

Based on all the statements above, the paper can get the conclusion that: the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is Emperor Jianwen, Zhu Yunwen, of the Great Ming Empire (大明帝国建文帝朱允炆), and the character “Cao Xueqin”(曹雪芹) in the novel is, in fact, Zhu Yunwen (朱允炆).

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