ABSTRACT

Among LU XUN's writings, there is one whose subject matter is based upon the ancient myths, legends and historical facts, that is the historical novel - "New Version of Stories". It consists of eight single novels, of which, the following four are based on the ancient myths and legends, "Mending Heaven" (補天), "The Flight to the Moon" (奔月), "Curbing The Flood" (理水) and "Forging the Swords" (鍛劍); while the other four, that is, "Gathering Vetch" (獲薇), "Leaving the Pass" (偷關), "Opposing Aggression" (非攻), and "Resurrecting the Dead" (起死) are based on historical facts. Initially, LU XUN started to write his first novel - "Mending Heaven" in 1922 and his last novel in the series, that is, "Resurrecting the Dead", was completed in 1935. Altogether, it took him thirteen years to complete.

Although "New Version of Stories" is based on ancient materials, LU XUN has at times, added modern themes in it. It is therefore not only an outstanding historical novel, but also an excellent satirical work as well.

This paper, which comprises seven chapters, attempts to study extensively the literary achievements of such an outstanding piece of work by LU XUN, with a view to determining its literary value.

The first chapter is an introductory remark.

The second chapter deals with the biography of the Novelist, and his creative life in general. It also discusses the gradual changing of his thinking, progressed from evolution to Marxism, which is evidently reflected in many of his writings.

The third chapter deals largely with the original sources of these eight novels to which LU XUN has referred.

The fourth chapter analyses the themes of "New Version of Stories." In this collection of novels, LU XUN not only interprets the old stories and
their old characters from a modern point of view, but has also added some new contents to them according to the needs of a contemporary society.

The fifth chapter would deal with the artistic achievements of "New Version of Stories". In this regard, the Novelist has successfully applied the contrasting method to mould the images of various characters. In addition, with a strong sense of imagination, the Novelist has, besides filling his work with a strong sense of realism, coloured his novel with a touch of romanticism.

The sixth chapter discusses general problems of the creation of historical novel on the basis of "New Version of Stories". What is worthy to note in this connection is the "Past-Present-Cross Reference Approach" (古今交融) to the writing of historical novels ever invented by the Author. Moreover, as mentioned in the Preface by the Author, the methods of "Extensive Reference to Literature with sound evidence for every word" (博考文献, 言必有据) and "writing up the story with free elaboration" (随意点染, 铺成一章), and the impact of the "Liberal-and-Fluent Method" (油滑浮法) on the writing of historical novels are also examined.

Finally, the concluding chapter is a general appraisal of LU XUN's contribution towards historical novels as well as a discussion of the position which the book "New Version of Stories" should appropriately be placed in modern Chinese Literature.