ABSTRACT

This is primarily a critical study of a much neglected Chinese novel Qi-Lu-Deng (<< 崖路灯 >>) written in the early Qing dynasty.

After the manuscript of this literary work was completed in 1777, the transcript of the novel began to circulate around Henan Province (河南), the hometown of the author. However, it never spread out of Henan and hence did not attract enthusiastic response. It was not until 1927 that an incomplete printed-edition was first published and started to gain attention. More importantly, it was only in 1980 that the complete Qi-Lu-Deng (108 chapters) was issued in book form. Hence, the position of Qi-Lu-Deng in the history of Chinese literature is still not established.

In order to offer a just and objective evaluation of this 're-discovered' novel, an indepth study is extremely necessary. This Academic Exercise attempts to fulfil this task.

Structurally, it is divided into 9 chapters. Chapter one is an introductory chapter whereas chapter two deals with the life and career of the author Li Luyuan (李绿园). Chapters three and four delve into the historical background of the story and the different editions of Qi-Lu-Deng. Chapter five examines the thematic significance while
chapters six and seven highlight the techniques of characterization and other artistic accomplishments. Chapter eight provides evaluative comments on the novel and chapter nine concludes the study by re-emphasizing the significant qualities of the novel.

The findings show that Qi-Lu-Deng is a pedagogical novel which intends to educate the readers. The didacticism found in the novel impedes the storyline. Nevertheless, the writer did manage to achieve creative artistry with its balanced structure and the use of Henan patois and idiomatic expressions.