

何三坡推荐序：《大桶》——亚洲版《魔戒》

《大桶》是一部兼具史诗气度与寓言深度的神话小说，也是朱大可先生神话小说系列中最令人着迷的一部。我将它视为亚洲的《魔戒》。

与伟大的英国作家 J. R. R. 托尔金极其相似，朱大可先生长期在中国大学担任教职，而作为汉语文学中首屈一指的文化批评家，他渊深的知识储备与犀利的文化洞见，使他的小说呈现出非凡的思想质地，他抛弃了学者的安全距离，以八年的“灵魂逃生”书写，完成了对学术自我的反叛。作品甫一出版，即登上《亚洲周刊》十大杰作榜单，广受瞩目。

《大桶》将殷商遗民的羽蛇神信仰与中美洲雨林文明熔于一炉，在永动机驱动的圆形城市提佐克中，构建了一个关于权力、信仰与反抗的封闭宇宙。小说以墨尔斯一家的命运为线索，通过波波卡的科学理性与安吉的神性觉醒之间的张力，揭示了暴政如何寄生在神话之上，又以爱与牺牲作为唯一的解药。

霍皮靠恐惧统治，洛伦佐家族遁入地心——两种绝境中的选择，映照出当代人面对技术与暴政时的精神困境。死亡与重生、时间与遗忘，在旋转的城市中循环往复。

朱大可并未将反抗者塑造为纯粹的英雄，墨尔斯的牺牲、安吉从“死亡女神”到真正觉醒者的蜕变、波波卡对科学主义的执着与局限，共同构成了人性的复杂光谱。而“永动机”这一核心意象——看似永恒运转、实则封闭循环——恰恰是对一切僵化权力体系的绝妙隐喻。

与《魔戒》不同，托尔金笔下的中土世界充满对“返乡”与秩序重建的渴望，而《大桶》中的提佐克城则是一个无法停转的牢笼，居民渴望的不是回家，而是逃出“中心”本身；此外，如果说魔戒象征权力对人心的腐蚀，那么《大桶》里的永动机则隐喻权力系统的自我循环与无解僵局——前者尚可销毁于末日火山，后者却只能被放弃、逃离。

小说末尾，洛伦佐家族选择迁往地心而非重建地上乌托邦，这一反高潮的结局耐人寻味：真正的自由或许不在于推翻旧神、建立新秩序，而在于彻底告别“中心”的逻辑本身。这不仅是民族寓言，而是权力异化与精神逃亡的文明史，更是人类如何从幻梦中醒来的启示录。

眼下，英译本终于如期付梓，意味着它从亚洲走向世界，抵达更加广大的读者视野。

He Sanpo's Preface: *The Great Barrel* — An Asian *The Lord of the Rings*

Great Barrel is a mythological novel that combines epic grandeur with allegorical depth. It is also the most captivating work in Zhu Dake's series of mythological fiction. I regard it as an Asian counterpart to *The Lord of the Rings*. Like the great British writer J. R. R. Tolkien, Zhu Dake spent many years teaching at a Chinese university. As one of the foremost cultural critics in Chinese literature, his profound erudition and incisive cultural insight lend his fiction an extraordinary intellectual texture. Abandoning the safe distance of the scholar, he devoted eight years to what he calls a "spiritual escape," completing a rebellion against his own academic self. Upon publication, the work was immediately listed among the Top Ten Masterpieces by *Asia Weekly*, attracting widespread attention.

Great Barrel fuses the feathered serpent beliefs of the remnants of the Yin-Shang people with the rainforest civilizations of Mesoamerica. Within Tizoc—a circular city driven by a perpetual-motion machine—it constructs a closed universe centered on power, faith, and resistance. Following the fate of the Mers family, the novel reveals, through the tension between Popoka's scientific rationality and Angie's divine awakening, how tyranny parasitizes myth, while offering love and sacrifice as the only antidote.

Hopi rules through fear, while the Lorenzo family retreats into the depths of the earth—two choices at the edge of despair that mirror the spiritual predicament of modern humanity in the face of technology and tyranny. Death and rebirth, time and oblivion, recur in cycles within the revolving city.

Zhu Dake does not fashion his rebels into pure heroes. Mers's sacrifice, Angie's transformation from a "goddess of death" into a truly awakened being, and Popoka's commitment to—and limitations of—scientism together form a complex spectrum of human nature. The central image of the "perpetual-motion machine"—seemingly in eternal operation yet in fact a closed loop—serves as a masterful metaphor for all rigid systems of power.

Unlike *The Lord of the Rings*, where Tolkien's Middle-earth is imbued with a longing for "homecoming" and the restoration of order, Tizoc in *Great Barrel* is a cage that cannot stop turning. Its inhabitants do not yearn to return home, but to escape the very logic of the "center" itself. Moreover, if the *the Rings* symbolizes the corrosive effects of power on the human heart, then the perpetual-motion machine in *Great Barrel* represents the self-perpetuating

cycle and inescapable deadlock of power systems: the former can be destroyed in the fires of Mount Doom, while the latter can only be abandoned and fled.

At the novel's conclusion, the Lorenzo family chooses to migrate to the earth's core rather than rebuild a terrestrial utopia. This anti-climactic ending is deeply thought-provoking: true freedom may lie not in overthrowing old gods or establishing a new order, but in bidding farewell to the very logic of the "center." This is not merely a national allegory, but a civilizational history of the alienation of power and spiritual escape—and, ultimately, an apocalypse of how humanity awakens from illusion.

The English translation has finally been published as planned, which means it has gone from Asia to the world and reached a wider readership.

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