

A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

Several issues that have occupied us during the translation process should be noted. First, because of the length of the book in Chinese and some of its discursive tangents, we have trimmed and edited passages, sections, and discussions that seemed to us either too wordy or too specialized for the type of book we hope this to be in English. The outside readers for Duke University Press also urged us to trim passages cited from various literary texts. We have done as much pruning as we thought we could without depriving Cai Xiang's book of its flavor and textual richness. Those capable of reading Chinese will probably want to consult Cai's original alongside our translation. In the interest of readability and accessibility, we have not indicated in the text where we edited. Cai gave us total freedom to make these choices, and we took him at his word. No thematic material has been eliminated; what we have trimmed are repetitions and discussions of intricate plotpoints in and/or digressions about literary works that were not directly related to the discussion at hand. Some of this material has been summarized so as to provide appropriate segues, some has been paraphrased, and some simply has been eliminated.

Second, we have provided some assistance in the form of annotations for readers who may not be familiar with Chinese history, literature, or the mul-

tiple debates about them. Wherever in the text we deemed it necessary, we have added notes, with the notation “Tr.” indicating our additions. So as not to add to the bulk of the book, we have kept these to a minimum. We have also trimmed Cai’s notes, for the most part retaining only the information required for scholarly accountability. We would also like to mention here that a good number of the Chinese-language sources cited in Cai’s book were missing page numbers. Where possible, we have tracked those down; many have been elusive. We have indicated in relevant places where we do not have proper pagination. In addition, Romanization systems for Chinese changed in the 1970s; for English-language translations, we cite in the system used at the time of the translation.

Third, again for the most part, we have not retranslated from Chinese back into English those passages that were originally written in English; nor have we retranslated other works whose original languages were not English, but which have already been translated into English. To the best of our ability, we have tracked down the existing English and dropped that into the text instead, with proper citation to the English-language versions. The Chinese versions are not cited in translation, unless we have been unable to find the existing English. We thank Xu Daoheng and Chen Xi for doing the bulk of that tedious but necessary work, as noted in the acknowledgments.

Fourth, we have tracked down and dropped into the text as needed citations from those originally cited works of fiction that have been translated into and published in English; these mostly include the Chinese novels of the 1950s. All other translations of Chinese works are our own.

The translators have each gone over all the chapters, in Chinese and in English, to ensure accuracy and unity in usage. All errors and translational choices are of course ours, and we take full responsibility for them.