CHAPTER 13

Intercalary Words

笑府卷十三
閏語部

墨憨子曰：語云，美言可市，洵然哉！但取解頤，何虞亂德？余故採影語之巧者，謔語之善者，及澹語之可味者，以足十二部之遺，蓋歸餘于終，周之閏法然矣。集閏語部。

The Inky Simpleton Master says: There is a saying that beautiful words have a ready audience in the book market—how true! As long as they are meant only for harmless entertainment, there is no need to worry that they would confound our moral virtue. So I conclude the volume with selections of intricate metaphors, benign jokes, and tasteful nonsense that have been left out of the preceding twelve sections. I thus compile the section “Intercalary Words,” just like having an intercalary month in the lunar calendar to make it complete.

造人

玉帝私行，見夫婦行房者，召土地問之，答曰：「造人。」問一年造幾箇，答曰：「一箇。」曰：「既如此，何消得這等忙？」

(519) Making a Human Being (13:1a-b)
The Jade Emperor takes a secret trip to Earth, where he sees husband and wife doing the bedroom thing. Curiosity aroused, he summons the Earth God to inquire about their activity and is told that they are making a human being. The Jade Emperor asks how many they make yearly; the answer is “one.” “If that is the case,” asks the Jade Emperor, “why are they busying themselves so much?”

仙女

董永行孝，上帝命一仙女嫁之。眾仙女送行，皆囑咐曰：「此去下方，若更有行孝者，千萬寄箇信來。」

(520) Fairy (13:1b)
Dong Yong performs a filial act of selling himself into servitude in order to collect funds to bury his father. To reward him, the Celestial Emperor orders a
fairy to marry him. Upon her departure, all the fairies get together to send her off, with the instruction, “When you arrive at the Lower Realm, if you know of more performers of filial acts, be sure to send us a letter to inform us.”

千里馬

關公乘赤兔馬，日行千里。周倉握刀從行，日亦千里。公憐之，欲覓一良馬賜焉，而遍索無千里者，止一馬日行九百，乃厚價市之贈倉。倉乘馬從公，一日差百里，兩日差二百里。倉恐失公，仍下馬步行，而又不忍棄馬，乃以索攢馬蹄，懸之刀頭，掮之而飛走。

(521) A Galloping Steed (13:1b-2a)
Riding his galloping steed Crimson Hare, General Guan Yu is capable of traveling a thousand leagues in a single day. His lieutenant Zhou Cang, holding his Green Dragon Crescent Knife, runs behind and is able to cover the same distance. Out of consideration for Zhou's well being, General Guan hopes to bestow on him a horse that is Crimson Hare's equal. But a steed of that quality is hard to come by; after a long search, he has to settle on one that is capable of galloping nine hundred leagues per day, which he acquires at a high price and gives to Zhou. Zhou Cang then rides the horse to follow General Guan, but falls one hundred leagues behind the first day and two hundred leagues behind the second day. Fearing that he might lose track of the General, Zhou Cang decides to dismount from the horse and resume running on foot. But he cannot bear to abandon the prized steed, so he ties its hooves together, hangs it from the crescent knife as a pole over his shoulder. He then takes off at flying speed with his heavy load, in hopes of making up for lost time.

尤俞

人有姓尤，俞者，各誇所姓之美。姓俞者曰：「公之姓，犬牛等耳，惟我姓屬人。」姓尤者曰：「何徵？」曰：「徵于孟子。孟子云：犬之性（姓）猶（尤），牛之姓猶，人之性與（俞）。」

(522) You and Yu (13:2a)
A man surnamed You and another surnamed Yu are each boasting of the beauty of his surname. Mr Yu refutes Mr You's self-celebration, saying, “Your

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1 This parody alters the meaning of the quote by substituting three words with homophones, as indicated in the text, omitting one phrase, and deliberately punctuating the sentence wrong. The original should read: （然則）犬之性，猶牛之性；牛之性，猶人之性與？