A Historical Quest for Little People (Hobbits) in English and Chinese Literature

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ABSTRACT

Written records on little people (Homo floresiensis) or ‘Hobbits’ are legions in either occidental or oriental history, let alone the excavation finding of a 1.06 meter (3.6 feet) 30-year-old adult female at Liang Bua cave on the remote Indonesian island of Flores in 2003. In English and Chinese literature, there are indeed no meagre narratives of little people, let alone the records found in the Chinese historical documentation and Buddhist scriptures as early as 770 BC. The main thrust of this qualitative research is to examine the little people in literature believed to be a different species or new human by comparing English and Chinese mythologies, literary creations with historical documentations and current archeological findings in light of historical research—an approach which identifies social and cultural history drawing from three main sources, namely, primary, secondary and oral tradition where accessible.

INTRODUCTION

Little people (Homo Floresiensis), commonly known as ‘Hobbits’, have been mentioned in written records and mythologies as well as literature over the centuries, not least in archeological findings of late. In the archeological excavations between 2001 and 2004 at Liang Bua (cool) cave in island Flores of Indonesia archipelago conducted by a joint team of Indonesian and Australian archaeologists led by Peter Brown and Michael Morwood, a 1.06 meter 30-year-old adult female (Homo floresiensis) remains were unearthed together with several individuals. This discovery provides strong evidence for the existence of little people as reported on written documentations over the centuries in both occidental and oriental world, beside the unearth teeth and bones of the Homo luzonensis in Callao cave of the Philippines between 2007-2015 (Greshko & Maya, 2019), as well as the excavation of one-meter-tall Elephas falconeri or pygmy elephant (Sukumar, 2003; Hadjisterkoti, 2012) fossils and the like. This human-like hominin fossils which had small-bodied and small-brained were found together with stone tools and other extinct mammals and birds, including the elephant-like Stegodon. The scientific announcement of ‘a new human’ from these discoveries virtually shook the intellectual foundations of palaeoanthropology (Jungers & Baab, 2009, p. 160). As documented, the fossils of Homo floresiensis discovered were between about 100,000 and 60,000 years ago, and tools made in stone by this species can be dated back to between 190,000 and 50,000 years old. Homo floresiensis individuals were approximately 3 feet 6 inches tall; they had shrugged-forward shoulders, no chins, tiny brains, large teeth, receding foreheads, and relatively large feet attributed to their short legs. Jungers and Baab (2009) further pointed out that “statistical analyses of skull shapes find modern humans in one grouping, microcephalic humans in another and the hobbit, together with ancient hominins, in a third. The almost complete skeletal remains reveal a body design decidedly unlike that of any modern human” (Jungers & Baab, 2009, p. 162). Since the differential medical diagnoses of various dwarfish syndromes and microcephaly reveal no resemblance to Homo floresiensis, thus dismissing the categorization of the hobbits as pathological people. It is evident that “there is no systemic human pathology that reduces a modern human to the size and shape of a hobbit and simultaneously transforms one into an ancient, ancestral phenotype. There are no known sick humans that look like Homo floresiensis because no known illness reverses the evolutionary changes of a species. The hobbits therefore cannot be a diseased sub-population of healthy humans” (Jungers & Baab, 2009, p. 163). Jungers and Baab (2009) subsequently raised two postulations suggesting that the remains found were island dwarving of Homo erectus or migrants of a more ancient
and unknown species from Africa (Jungers and Baab, 2009, p. 164).

Notwithstanding the 'still more ancient and unknown species' conclusion, skepticism remains as the height of little people in the written reports in the pre-statistical period like the reputed encyclopedia of Buddhism Fa Yuan Zhi Lin (法苑珠林) and Taoism classic Lie Zi (列子) and authentic history documentation Shi Ji (史记) ranged from 1 chi 5 cun (53.7 cm) to 3 chi tall (107.4 cm), yet the skeletal remains unearthed in 2003 at Liang Bua cave is 106 cm tall which can hardly prove that less than one chi (35.8 cm) little people ever existed but can only show that an unknown species of humans with a height of 3 feet 6 inches had ever existed as informed by the Liang Bua cave discovery previously. In this sense, the 2003 discovery is evidently a proof that shorter than four feet ‘new human’ once lived on earth. On the other hand, it is noticed that in both Chinese and English literature, fictional little people are used to ridicule social ills to quest for Arcadia which is believed to be free from human vices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stories of little people are aplenty in both English and Chinese mythologies (Shan Hai Jing, Sou Shen Ji,搜神记, Hobbits/Halfings/Kenders, pixies, leprechauns, knocker, Lilliput and Blefuscu, etc.) and not less in literary creations such as Taiping Guang Ji (太平广记) by Li Fang (季方), Yueweicaotangbiji (阅微草堂笔记) by Ji Yun (纪昀), Zhibu (子不语) by Yuan Mei (袁枚), The Stories of Emperor Han Wu (汉武帝故事) by anonymous writer(s), Nan Cun Chuo Geng Lu (南村辍耕录) by Tao Zong Yi (陶宗仪), Jinghuayuan (镜花缘) by Li Ru Zhen (李汝珍), Er Tan (耳谈) by Wang Tong Kui (王同轨), Xiang Zu Bi Ji (香祖笔记) by Wang Shi Zhen (王士禛), Su Yi Ji (述异记) by Dong Xuan Zhu Ren (东轩主人), J.R.R. Tolkien’s classic The Hobbits and The Lord of the Ring series, The Spiderwick Chronicles by Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black, Gulliver’s Travel by Jonathan Swift, The Borrowers by Mary Norton, The Nome Trilogy by Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black, The Lord of the Ring series by J.R.R. Tolkien, and The Spiderwick Chronicles by Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black.

Besides all these sources of bias, Shi Ji (史记), the authentic records of Chinese history and the reputed encyclopedia of Buddhism Fa Yuan Zhi Lin (法苑珠林) as well as the Taoism classic Lie Zi (列子) likewise reported little people in various height ranging from 12 cm to 3 chi (107.4 cm) which corroborates the existence of little people in history.

In addition, since Jinghuayuan and Gulliver’s Travel are nautical fictions, or popularly known as maritime fictions, they will be examined under this framework but not domestic literature. Nautical literature is a genre which focuses on human relationship with the sea and sea voyages; it highlights sea-related scenarios in these contexts. In the west, one of the basic characteristics of nautical literature is its ‘predominantly male, anti-domestic universe’ (Soren, 2014, p. 319). The ship represents freedom symbolically; its crew, in similar way, delight in the challenge of the voyage. Yet in Chinese literature, Shan Hai Jing is reckoned the first nautical fiction, and maritime literature is defined as ‘a genre of literature dealing with the portrayal of the sea or directly writing about seafaring through the depiction of the life of island, humans and the human relationship to the sea’ (Duan Wuhan/段汉武, 2009).

Further, the term ‘little people’ in Chinese bears the following implications and connotations: (1) ordinary people; (2) inferior men with despicable personality; and (3) a humble self-address term.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Mythologies and literary creations are employed in this study to cross examine the historical reports of little people from the English as well as Chinese speaking region. Simply put, the objective of this paper is twofold: to comparatively cross examine fictional reports with authentic history inter-disciplinarily on little people to discern the possibility of the past existence of little people in the world, as well as examining the use of fictional little people to mock social ills satirically and perhaps, if not more, to fulfil the desireous quest for a utopia in both Chinese and English literature. For the purpose of this postulation, little people as a fictional creation in both Jinghuayuan by Li Ru Zhen and Gulliver’s Travel by Jonathan Swift will be specifically singled out for interpretation.

FRAMEWORK OF THE INVESTIGATION

The historical research methodology adopted for this study identifies with the cultural approach. Traditionally, diplomatic, economic, and political history were the research interests of historians yet they changed over time. Lately newer approaches, particularly social and cultural studies was seen. In British universities, of 5,723 faculty in the History Departments, 1,644 (29 percent) identified themselves with social history and 1,425 (25 percent) identified themselves with political history in 2007 (Archived 2006-05-30 at the Wayback Machine, http://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/resources/Teachers/a27.html). From 1975 to 1995 in American universities, an increase from 31 to 41 percent was noted in the proportion of professors of history identifying with social history, whereas political historians decreased from 40 to 30 percent (Haber et al., 1997). As justified by Glassberg (1996), there saw a special interest in the memories and commemoration of past events since the 1980s.

Buckley’s (2016, p. 879) claim that “A critical analysis of all “texts” (sources), time series analyses, comparative methods across time periods and space, counterfactual analysis and the examination of outliers are shown to have the potential to improve research practices;” and the primary concern of historical research methods, the role of time (Buckley, 2016, p. 880) likewise holds water in this study.

Further, Kipping et al. (2014) argue, the fundamental to any historical research is source criticism and that reliability cannot be assumed. Therefore, an author’s trustworthiness establishes a basic level of credibility for each statement, as long as every element is evaluated separately. That said, the examination of the provenance of the text and its internal reliability is required, comprising attention to language translation issues if pertinent. In addition, the use of at least two
independent sources to triangulate the evidence is important (Kipping et al., 2014).

On the other hand, Mahoney (2004, p. 82) posits, “comparative-historical methodology offers tools well adapted to the analysis of necessary and sufficient causes”, meaning, the method needs not rely on deterministic logic because necessary and sufficient causes can be expressed in a probabilistic framework as well as aligning with expressing variables in a continuous rather than in a dichotomous fashion and these techniques are helpful in this research.

RESEARCH METHOD

For this study, a historical research methodology identifying with the cultural approach is adopted. More precisely, the methodology employed in this investigation attends to the temporal factor (chronological attention), sequencing and process and is an internationalization research—the process of deliberately incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the research. Moreover, for the convenience and reference of foreign readers, a glossary for terminological translation was appended.

LITTLE PEOPLE IN ENGLISH MYTHOLOGIES AND LITERARY CREATIONS

Tolkien (1937, 1954-1955) describes hobbits in his fictions as between two and four feet (60-120 cm) tall, with the average height being three feet six inches (107 cm). In this paper, little people or tiny people are defined below the height of four feet (120 cm). In addition, English literature in this study only refers to that within the United Kingdom and the United States of America, not other native English-speaking countries.

To begin with, terms such as brownies (Scottish), pixie (British), leprechauns (Irish) and knocker (Welsh) are household names in English mythologies yet these mischievous figures are only near-human stature or human-sized mythical creations except knockers (two feet tall) and not little people; while in English literature, Gulliver’s Travel (1726) by Jonathan Swift, J.R.R. Tolkien’s classic The Hobbits (1937) and The Lord of the Ring (1954-1955), The Borrowers by Mary Norton (1952), The Nome Trilogy (1989-1990) by Terry Pratchett, The Spiderwick Chronicles (2003-2004) by Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black, et cetera are the accessible literary creations on little people. Besides further definition of these terms, the literary creations will likewise be discussed in turn chronologically in the forthcoming.

In Scottish folklore (Scottish Gaelic, AD 500), a brownie or broonie is a household spirit which come out at night to do chores and farming tasks when everybody is asleep. Characteristically, brownies are mischievous. They are generally human-sized or larger in the oldest stories yet in recent times, they are small and wrinkled.

Pixies, mythical creatures of British folklore drawing origin from the Celtic, are believed to be found in the high moorland areas around Devon and Cornwall. They are generally benign, naughty, short and childlike and they enjoy dancing and gathering in large number outdoors. Near-human stature Pixies sometimes wrestle to celebrate through the night as in the medieval period.

A diminutive supernatural being in Irish folklore (the Middle Age, 5th to 15th centuries), a leprechaun is usually thought as a mischievous, little bearded men with coat and hat classed as a type of fairy. They are in later times depicted as shoe-makers owning a hidden pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

The knocker in Welsh, Cornish and Devon folklore, is a mythical human-like being. It is a two feet tall human-like creature with larger head, longer arms, wizened skin, and white whisker. Characteristically, mischievous knocker wears a miner’s garb and steals miner’s unattended tools and food.

On the other hand, in Gulliver’s Travel the English novel, Lilliput and Blefuscu are two island nations inhabited by tiny people (one-twelfth the height of human beings). The two neighboring islands—ruled individually by an emperor—are separated by a 730-meter-wide channel in the South Indian Ocean.

Hobbits in Tolkien’s classic The Hobbits and The Lord of the Ring are small furry footed creatures; they tend to their gardens, fish and spend the days in their cozy holes. Some hobbits are adventurers despite their tendency to live boring respectable lives. In Tolkien’s later books, halflings and kenders who “borrow” other people’s possessions right out of their pockets and pouches are introduced.

Similarly, in The Borrowers, some resourceful tiny beings only 6 inches (15 cm) tall secretly live underneath the kitchen floor of an old English country manor and “borrow” necessities from the house owners tromping above them every day. These little guys are members from the Clock family: Homily, Pod, and their daughter, Arrietty.

Also known as The Bromeliad Trilogy, The Nome Trilogy is a trilogy of children’s books authored by Terry Pratchett the British writer; the books Truckers (1989), Diggers (1990) and Wings (1990) made the trilogy. The trilogy is an account of 10.16-cm tiny people from another world living secretly among humans.

Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black’s The Spiderwick Chronicles (written from 2003 to 2009) tells the adventures of the Grace children, twins Simon and Jared and their older sister Mallory. It goes that after they had moved into the Spiderwick Estate, a world of fairy was discovered. Obviously, the species of fairies in The Spiderwick Chronicles are taken from European mythology and folklore and Medieval bestiaries, including brownies, goblins, dragons, sprites, and elves, among others.

Quoting from the said literature, the height of the little people can be tabulated as in Table 1.

Obviously, the height of the little people documented in English literature ranged from 10 cm to four feet (120 cm). In sequence, Gulliver’s Travel evidently is the trailblazer of all the following novels on little people, namely, The Hobbits, The Borrowers, The Lord of the Ring, The Nome Trilogy, The Spiderwick Chronicles alike which owed tribute to the regional lore. In England, despite the circulating lore of two-feet tall knockers or short stature pixie besides other
mythical creatures, spirit or diminutive supernatural beings which can be traced as early as the Celts (600 BC), it was only late until 1726 then little people were mentioned in literary creation (Gulliver’s Travel). In this vein, no authentic document—for instance, verbal recounts, photos and videos, etc.—is available for the presence of little people in English in the measurable past notwithstanding the available mythological and literary records, yet they cannot be the testifiable proof of the existence of little people in the United Kingdom or the US alike.

**LITTLE PEOPLE IN CHINESE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION AND LITERARY CREATIONS**

Zhang (丈), otherwise known as chang (Wade-Giles), is an old Chinese measure of length equal to 10 chi (尺), or 3.58 meters (11 feet 9 inches). In two treaties (1842–1844 and 1858–1860), the value was agreed upon by China with France and England. Since then, this value was used by Chinese maritime customs as the standard value for all tariff duties assessment. As informed, the length of one chi varied throughout China from 27.9 to 40 cm (11 to 15.8 inches). This treaty chi was defined as 35.8 cm or 14.1 inches for customs purposes (Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/topic/zhang-ancient-unit-of-measurement).

Using this standard value, the approximate height of the little people recorded in both official Chinese historical document and literary creations will be roughly as follows (Table 2):

From Table 2, it is prominent that the written records of little people in Chinese illustrious documents can be traced as early as 770 BC (Guan Zi, Lie Zi). The height of the little people ranged from 1 cun (3.58 cm) to 3 chi (107.4 cm). To further quote evidence from historical records and authentic documents in China, the manuscripts are tabulated in Table 3 for discussion.

As can be seen from Table 3, the authentic documents or historical records of little people in China are of height between 1 cun (3.58 cm) to 3 chi (107.4 cm). These little guys had all the features of humans (Fa Yuan Zhu Lin: Chapter Eight); some dressed in yellow, wearing yellow hat beside yellow hood and rode on tiny horse and enjoyed fast ride. If you called it by its name, it would ride a thousand miles in 24 hours. In this vein, no authentic document—for instance, verbal recounts, photos and videos, etc.—is available for the presence of little people in English in the measurable past notwithstanding the available mythological and literary records, yet they cannot be the testifiable proof of the existence of little people in the United Kingdom or the US alike.

In Shan Hai Jing, a 3.3 cun (11.81 cm) tiny man donned in white gown was found in the crop of a great swan, yet in Er Tan, a some 6 cun (21.48 cm) tall old man was discovered in the stomach of a softshell tortoise; about 1 chi (35.8 cm) little men who rode on cart or walked were spotted in Chiyang, Shanxi province (Sou Shen Ji, Chapter 12). The

**Table 1.** Height of little people as in english mythology/literary creations

| Height                  | Mythology/Literary Creation | Year of Appearance/Publication |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Short Stature/Childlike | Pixie                        | 600 BC                         |
| Two feet                | Knocker                      | 5th to 15th centuries          |
| One-twelfth the height of ordinary human beings (17.78 cm) | Gulliver’s Travel             | 1726                           |
| 10-15 cm                | The Hobbits                  | 1937                           |
| 12-15 cm                | The Borrowers                | 1952                           |
| 0.6 m-1.2 m, the average height being three feet six inches and between 3 and 4 feet | The Lord of the Ring         | 1954-1955                     |
| 10.16 cm                | The Nome Trilogy             | 1989-1990                      |
| Not Applicable          | The Spiderwick Chronicles    | 2003-2004                      |

**Table 2.** Height and chronological presentation of little people in chinese authentic documentation and selective literature

| Height of Little People | Documentation/Literary Creation | Year of Appearance |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 4 cun (14.32 cm)        | Guan Zi*                        | 770-476 BC         |
| 9 cun (32.22 cm)-1 chi 5 cun (53.7 cm) | Lie Zi*                      | 770-256 BC         |
| 3.3 cun (11.81 cm)      | Shan Hai Jing                   | 202-220 BC         |
| 3 chi (107.4 cm)        | Shi Ji*                         | 202-220 BC         |
| 7 cun (25.06 cm)        | The Stories of Emperor Han Wu   | 156-87 BC          |
| 1 chi 6 cun (57.28 cm)  | Fa Yuan Zhu Lin*               | 659-668            |
| 2 chi + (71.6 cm +)     | Su Yi Ji                        | 420-589            |
| 4 cun (14.32 cm) -1 chi (35.8 cm) | Sou Shen Ji                    | 345                |
| 7 cun + (25.06 cm +)    | Bao Pu Zi                      | 266-420            |
| 1 cun (3.58 cm)         | Bo Wu Zhi                      | 266-420            |
| 3 chi (107.4 cm)        | Guang Zhi                      | 266-420            |
| 7 cun (25.06 cm)        | Shen Yi Jing                    | 202-209            |
| 6 cun (21.48 cm)        | Nan Cun Chuo                   | 1271-1368          |
| 6 cun + (21.48 cm +)    | Er Tan                         | 1368-1662          |
| 1 chi + (35.8 cm +)     | Xiang Zu Bi Ji                 | 1636-1912          |
| 1 chi + (35.8 cm +)     | Zi Bu Yu                       | 1788               |

*Authentic historical and revered documentation

**Stories of Emperor Han Wu** otherwise reported little people derogated from heaven to earth; Su Yi Ji informed a 2 chi (71.6 cm) little man tributed from abroad who squeaked like a monkey when deliberately touched. Moreover, a 6 cun (21.48 cm) tall human specimen was witnessed being sold
Table 3. Selective scripts on little people in Chinese historical records and authentic documentation

| Authentic Documentation | Original Scripts |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| 法苑珠林 卷八 引外国图 | 据《法苑珠林》卷八，引自外国图。人民在乔雅国的长为1 chun 6 cun（57.28 cm）。它们迎风则伏，背风则立，眉目具足，但仍野外生存，无法求得三尺之长。该国农作物夏死冬生，距离九疑山万里。 |
| Fa Yuan Zhu Lin Chapter Eight, quoted from foreign picture | People in the country of Jiao Yao were 1 chun 6 cun tall (57.28 cm). They ducked when they were against the wind; they lied flat with face down when the wind came from behind. They had all the features of humans but lived outdoor. They could grow as tall as 3 chun (107.4 cm). In this country, plants and vegetation withered in summer but grew in winter, it was located thirty thousand li (1500000 m) from Mountain Jiu Yi of Hunan. |
| 史记 大宛列传 括地志 六十三 | 据《史记》“大宛列传”，《括地志》卷63。乔雅国，长3 chun（107.4 cm），其国草木夏死而冬生，去九疑三万里。 |
| Shi Ji ‘Da Wan Lie Zhuan’, Gua Di Zhi 63 (West Han) | The country of tiny people was located in the south of the country of Da Qin. They were 3 chun tall (107.4 cm) tall. Having the risk of being eaten by cranes when ploughing and sowing, guards from Da Qin protected them, that was, people from the country of Jiao Yao. These tiny people lived in caves. |
| 列子 汤问第五 | 据《列子》“汤问”，第5章。从东州以东四十万里得憔侥国。人长一尺五寸。东北极有人名曰诤人，长九寸。 |
| Lie Zi ‘Tang Wen’, Chapter Five (East Zhou) | The country of Jiao Yao was located four hundred thousand li (400000 x 500 m) east of Zhong Zhou (Henan). The people there were one chun 5 cun tall (53.7 cm), while at the end of northeast there were 9 cun (32.22 cm) tall tiny people called Jing Ren. |
| 管子 | 据《管子》卷32。庆忌者，其状若人，其长四寸，衣黄衣，冠黄冠，戴黄盖，乘小马，好疾驰，以其名呼之，可使千里外一日反报。 |
| Guan Zi 'Shui Di' (Chun Qiu Zhan Guo) | Qing Ji were like humans with a height of 4 cun (14.32 cm). They dressed in yellow and worn yellow hat beside yellow hood. They rode on tiny horse and enjoyed fast ride. If you called it by its name, you could make it ride a thousand li (500000 m) within a day to and fro. (Translated by author) |

Table 4. Selective scripts on little people in Chinese mythology and literary creations

| Mythology/Literary Creations | Original Scripts |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 山海经 | 齐桓公猎，得一鸣鹄，宰之，嗉中得一人，长三寸三分，着白圭之袍。 |
| Shan Hai Jing | When the Duke Huan of Qi was hunting, he shot down a hammering great swan. Upon slaughtering it, a tiny man was found in its crop. The man was 3.3 cun tall (11.81 cm) and donned in white gown. |
| 海经新释 卷一 | 后王莽建国四年，池阳有小人景，长一尺余，或乘车，或步行…… |
| New Interpretation of Hai Jing, Chapter One (475-220 BC) | After Wang Mang (45-23 BC) had acclaimed king and founded a new state for four years, little men were reported in Chiyang (Shanxi province). These little men were reported to be some 1 chun (35.8 cm) tall, rode on cart or walked… |
| 搜神记 卷十二 | 从东郡送上一个矮人，七寸高，衣冠全有，武帝怀疑这是山精，经常让他在案子上行走。召东方朔询问，朔来到，呼唤矮人说：“巨灵，你怎么忽然背叛而来，阿母康健吗？”矮人不回答，只是指着东方朔对武帝说：“王母种桃，三千年结一次果，这小子不好，已经过去偷了三次了，于是失去王母欢心，所以被贬来此。”武帝大惊，才知道朔不是人世间人。矮人对武帝说：“王母让我来，陛下求道的方法，只应清虚纯净，不适宜急躁搅扰。再有五年，与您相见。”说完话就不见了。 |
| Sou Shen Ji Chapter 12 (345) | From the east county, a 7 cun (25.06 cm) dwarf in full attire was presented to Emperor Han Wu. Emperor Han Wu wondered if it was a troll and let it walk on his table regularly. The emperor later asked Dong Fang Su the man of letters about the little man, Dong Fang Su reached the palace and questioned the little man, “Great spirit, how dare you come here after betraying your master? How is the Queen of Heaven getting on?” The dwarf did not reply him but only pointed at Dong Fang Su and told Emperor Han Wu: “The Queen of Heaven grows peach and it fruits only once in every three thousand years. I regret to have stolen the fruits three times and therefore she gradually distrusted me and later derogated me here.” Emperor Han Wu was astounded to be informed and came to realize that Dong Fang Su was not an earthish. The dwarf then proceeded, “The Queen of Heaven appointed me here to tell your majesty that the correct approach for your quest of the truth is to be clean and pure and should not be impetuous and impatient. Five years later, we will meet again.” After having said this, the dwarf vanished. |
| 汉武帝故事 The Stories of Emperor Han Wu (141-87 BC) | (Contd...) |
Table 4. (Continued)

| Mythology/Literary Creations | Original Scripts |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| 述異記 (東軒主人) Su Yi Ji (Dong Xuan Zhu Ren) (The Northern and Southern dynasties, 420-589) | 康熙三十一月五月，女國貢小人一，其長二尺餘，面目肢體與人無異，似四十許人，四譯館為制小人衣冠，故奏進上。此人手持小傘蹣跚而行，傘式與中華同，人故嬲觸之，輒吱吱作響如猴，觀者塞路。 |
| 南村辍耕录 卷十四 Nan Cun Chuo Geng Lu Chapter Fourteen (Yuan dynasty, 1271-1368) | 至正乙巳春，平江金国宝、袖人腊出售。余获一观。其形长六寸许，口耳目鼻与人无异，亦有髭须，头发披至臀下，须发皆黄色，间有白发一根。偏身黄毛长二分许。脐下阴物，乃男子也，相传云：至元间，世皇受外国贡献，以赐国公阿你哥者。无几何时即死，因剖开背后，剜去肠脏，实以他物，仍缝合烘干，故至今无恙。 |
| 耳谈 卷一 (王同轨) Er Tan Chapter One (Wang Tong Kui) (1368-1662, Ming dynasty) | 萬歷己卯，嚴州建德縣有漁者獲一鱉，重八斤。一酒家買之，懸於室中，夜半常作人聲。明日剖烹之，腹有老人長六寸許，五官皆具，首戴皮帽，大異之。以聞令，令以聞郡首楊公廷誥。楊時入覲，命以木匣載之，攜之京師。諸貴人皆見，皮冠宛然逼真，無毫髮不類。 |
| 阅微草堂笔记 (紀昀/紀曉嵐) Yueweicaotangbiji (Ji Yun/Ji Xiao Lan) (Qing dynasty, 1636-1912) | 在西歷九月，馬靄見小人高尺許，男男老幼，一一皆具。遇紅柳吐花時，輒折柳盤為小圈，著頂上，作隊躍舞，音呦呦如度曲。或至行帳竊食，為人所掩，則跪而泣。縶之，則不食而死；縱之，初不敢遽行，行數尺輒回顧。或追叱之，仍跪泣。去人稍遠，度不能追，始驀澗越山去。然其巢穴棲止處，終不可得。此物非木魅，亦非山獸，蓋僬僥之屬。不知其名，以形似小兒，而喜戴紅柳，因呼曰红柳娃。 |

(Contd...)
APPLICATION OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH APPROACH ONTO THE DATA

Applying historical research onto the documented data, viz., to compare the data in the light of time, sequencing and process in a probabilistic framework, it is sayable that little people were first recorded in China as early as 770 BC, whereas in the west it was 270 years later (500 BC) if not less. Moreover, the data also show the difference in traits of little people in England and China: in China, they were friendly, peaceful and hardworking tiny living creatures (ran errands for human when their name was called; grew crops, rode on tiny horse; well-donned and mannered), at other times heartless and untrustworthy (Jinghuayuan), yet in England in particular, they were mischievous, playful and vindictive little guys (take for instance, leprechaun, brownie, pixie, etc.) and in Gulliver’s Travel, they were narrow-minded and selfish.

Despite the aforementioned records and documentations of little people, there was no sources from journal articles, biographies, media like film or tape recordings for triangulation and therefore their existence cannot be testified. But the excavation discovery of Liang Bua caves technically supports the plausibility of their existence and thus it is only fair to conclude that a more ancient and unknown species of humans 1.06 meter (3.6 feet) in height did live on earth in between 100,000 and 60,000 years ago and in this vein backs the existence of little people recorded in China as early as 770 BC despite the inaccessibility of triangulation source. In English literature, little people were of a height from 10 cm to four feet (120 cm); whereas in China, they were between 1 cm (3.58 cm) to 3 chi (107.4 cm).

On the other hand, the term ‘little people’ in China translates ordinary people (Shu Jing: Wuyi); inferior people with despicable personality (Yi Jing: Jicixia); and a humble self-address term (Zuo Zhuan: Jicixia). Drawing the derogatory sense of little people in Chinese, viz., inferior people with desirable personality, it also reveals the satirical function of little people as a fictional creation in both Chinese and English society.
To delve deeper into *Jinghuayuan* and *Gulliver’s Travel* in this connotation as nautical literature, be it *Gulliver’s Travel* or *Jinghuayuan*, obviously little people are the fictional symbols for social ills, as well as vices like narrow-mindedness, selfishness and injustice alike finely presented in the topical allusions and witty strokes of satire.

Like *Gulliver’s Travel*, *Jinghuayuan* took place in maritime location, the mythological places and creatures depicted in the novel were obviously taken from *Shan Hai Jing* alike. In the novel, Tang Ao resolved to join the seafarers for a sea voyage despaired by being degraded in his academic title for having connection with a rebel of the kingdom. The social custom of little people found in a faraway land out in the sea was frivolous and people were heartless. The words they utter were just the opposite of the truth. This was their way of life and had become a norm. In this sense, these little heartless guys can be read as the reflection of his desplicable contemporaries and his contradictory dream for a better world presented in a non-traditional manner; whereas in Part One of *Gulliver’s Travel*, Gulliver (sounds like gullible, meaning easily persuaded to believe something) was able to win the trust of the little people Lilliputians (in Latin, ‘lilli’ means pure and passion) and get along well with them at the outset but due to their narrow-mindedness and selfishness—such as the Lilliputians would stage wars over the correct way to break open an egg incited by their enemy Blefuscuans; the king appointed ministers depending merely on their skill of rope dance—eventually he had to leave the utopia he discovered. The author Jonathan Swift in the novel sets himself ‘to vex the world rather than to divert it’ (Rawson, 1995) while showing what humans are really like; take for instance, humans tend to reject and refuse people who are unidentical in size and status with them. Swift suggests, the only way to counter enemies is to let go of prejudice and compromise for their own safety or else, mutually destructed. *Gulliver’s Travel*, written by Jonathan Swift during the reign of King George I in 1726 stirred an overnight sensation, written by Jonathan Swift during the reign of King George I in 1726 stirred an overnight sensation, due to his narrow-mindedness and selfishness—such as putting these together into this book of seafaring taking place in ‘South Indian Ocean’ satirically.

Nonetheless, the despicable little people also imply the authors’ underlying wish for a better world out in the sea which is free of greed, anger, poverty, sadness and stupidity where everyone enjoys a life of opulence, satisfaction, equality and harmony or, in Soren’s (2014) words, to compromise with the sea will translate ‘attempts to re-enchant an otherwise disenchanted world through their intensifies orientation towards concrete place and the human body’ (Soren, 2014, p. 330).

**CONCLUSION**

The 2003 Liang Bua cave discovery backs authentically the existence of little people on earth in between 100,000 and 60,000 years ago, and tools made in stone by this species excavated between 190,000 and 50,000 years old apart from the extant historical documentation in Chinese history and Buddhist sutras. Though only unauthentic sources are available in English mythology and literature, it similarly suggests the possibility of the existence of little people or the postulation that humans have always had a curiosity for little people in their imaginative pursuits. Another possibility could be that our ancestors in time immemorial had genuinely witnessed little people and thus it was passed down verbally and later recorded, perhaps distorted over time, in the form of mythology.

Finally, what is clear from the discussions in the light of historical framework may be summarized. In short, little people existed on earth backed by *Fa Yuan Zhu Lin*, *Shi Ji*, *Guan Zi* and *Lie Zi* would further ring true and self-explain the Liang Bua cave and Callao cave archeological discoveries. In other words, it is evident that little people did exist on earth in the measurable past, at least they were recorded in written documents, in spite of the little people skeleton discovery in Indonesia Liang Bua cave. Furthermore, the fictional little people in both Chinese and English nautical literature likewise carry the implication for the quest of a utopia and are used to ‘criticise their respective cultural traditions and glorious philosophies’ (Wang, 1995) thus attacking and mocking social ills and evils, among other vices of humans in a non-traditional way.

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**GLOSSARY**

Aisin Gurun (Manchu language ᠠᡳᠰᡳᠨ ᡤᡠᡵᡠᠨ or ᡤᡠᡵᡠᠨ)
金国 (满文)
Bao Pu Zi 抱朴子
Bo Wu Zhi 博物志
Da Zang Jing 大藏经
Dong Fang Su 东方朔
Dong Xuan Zhu Ren 东轩主人
Er Tan 耳谈
Fa Yuan Zhu Lin 法苑珠林
Guo Yi Gong 郭义恭
Guang Zhi 广志
Ji Yun 纪昀
Jin Dynasty 金国
Jinghuayuan 镜花缘
Li Fang 李昉
Li Ru Zhen 李汝珍
Lü Zi 列子
Nan Cun Chuo Geng Lu 南村辍耕录
Ping Jiang 平江

Shan Hai Jing 山海经
Shen Yi Jing 神异经
Shi Ji 史记
Shu Jing: Wuyi 书经·无逸
Sou Shen Ji 搜神记
Su Yi Ji 述异记
Taiping Guang Ji 太平广记
Tang Ao 唐傲
Tao Zong Yi 陶宗仪
The Stories of Emperor Han Wu 汉武帝故事
Wang Shi Zhen 王士禛
Wang Tong Kui 王同轨
Xiang Zu Bi Ji 香祖笔记
Yi Jing: Jicixia 易经·系辞下
Yuan Mei 袁枚
Yueweicaotangbiji 阅微草堂笔记
Zhang Hua 张华
Zhi Zheng 至正
Zibuyu 子不语
Zuo Zhuan: Yungongyuannian 左传·隐公元年