

# The Tragic Life of Kong Yiji from the Perspective of a Little Fellow at the Salty Hotel

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**Abstract:** Kong Yiji, an article included in secondary school textbooks, is one of the representative works of China's modern literary giant Mr Lu Xun, and one of the classic short stories in the history of modern Chinese literature in the 20th century. Mr Lu Xun's unique perspective is from the point of view of a teenage child -- hotel mate, with a twelve-year-old "little fellow" who has not yet experienced the world of youth as a narrative perspective, using a child to describe the facts to ensure that the "Kong Yiji" image of justice, objectivity and truthfulness. The use of a child to describe the facts can ensure the fairness, objectivity and truthfulness of the image of "Kong Yiji". Through what "I" heard and saw, the ups and downs of feelings cleverly conceived, vividly and imaginatively portrayed Kong Yiji, a traditional bookworm who was cruelly abandoned at the bottom of the society by the traditional feudal rites and rituals, with no food, no clothes, no food, and ultimately helplessly engulfed by the reality of the powerful forces of darkness. In the article "Kong Yiji", the background of the Xianheng Hotel is always used as the perspective of the humble shopkeeper, who is both a bystander and a participant as well as a spectator and a besieger, and Lu Xun has seen the picture of Kong Yiji's life in the Xianheng Hotel several times through the viewpoint of the shopkeeper and heard the legend of Kong Yiji to unfold the story. The story unfolds through the images of Kong Yiji's life as he visits the Xianheng Hotel several times from the perspective of "I", the shopkeeper, and the legends he hears about him. Through the words and deeds of Kong Yiji and other people in the shop, the story reflects the social status quo at that time, reproducing the dilemma of the poor intellectuals in the society and the living environment of the people at the bottom of the society, so as to criticise the feudal system of the feudal society and the feudal education system, which is a thought-provoking story.

**Keywords:** Kong Yiji; Little chap; Tragic life.

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## 1. Introduction

Lu Xun reflects the miserable life of Kong Yiji and the dark social reality of that time from the perspective of the lower class people through the daily life of the shop boy in the shop and what he hears, sees and feels, so as to criticise the concrete manifestation of the feudal morality of "cannibalism" under the atmosphere of traditional Chinese culture. However, it also reflects the process of assimilation of a small fellow who was gradually blackened and poisoned by the society, from an onlooker to a spectator, to a person who disdained and despised him, to a person who participated in the persecution and was assimilated into the environment. The following is a look at Kong Yiji's misery from the little fellow's journey.

## 2. The Little Chap Meets Kong Yee for The First Time - The Fringe

The little chap "I" from the age of twelve years old, in the town of the mouth of the hotel as a mate of Xianheng, first served outside the hotel short clothes patron, under the supervision of the patron is difficult to adulterate the water and then turned to warm the wine duties. It can be seen that the little fellow is an honest and kind, from a poor family children, because they will not speculate, people are not flexible enough to bring greater profits for the hotel, the shopkeeper is naturally fierce face, the patron did not have a good anger, the little fellow's simplicity, honesty, and will not be able to see the wind at the helm of the characteristics of the performance here. The daily life of the shopkeeper in the hotel is monotonous and boring, and only when Kong Yiji arrives

at the shop can he laugh a few times, and the shopkeeper will never blame him. From the point of view of "I", the shop boy, he is both curious and sympathetic to the marginalised people like Kong Yiji, who also comes from the lower class. The little fellow was an onlooker. Although he was not used to it and did not feel comfortable with it, he did not show anything. Only in the crowd laughed, he was able to laugh and relax, because this time to laugh, the shopkeeper will never blame[1]. Kong YiJi why can bring happiness to the boring life of everyone, the shopkeeper also do not blame, Kong YiJi is what kind of fairy? Kong Yiji in the eyes of the little fellow is really different, Kong Yiji although and wear short shirts of the group stood together drinking, but is the only person wearing a long shirt, and his long shirt is dirty and torn, it seems more than ten years have not been mended, and not washed[2]. Mr Lu Xun used only a few strokes to bring out the pedantic and anachronistic image of Kong Yiji. The customers the little fellow saw standing outside the Xianheng Hotel were mostly short-clothed gangs who paid four copper coins to stand and drink, and these people were the lower class, while the people in long shirts could pace into the house to ask for wine and food, and slowly sit down and drink, and they were the upper class people with status. Kong Yiji in the eyes of the little chap is so incestuous that he becomes a sandwich man, i.e. a marginal man, between the upper and lower classes. It is both the fringe of the upper class and the fringe of the lower class that he does not want to belong to. The fact that Kong Yiji is standing and drinking suggests that it is outside the hotel and he can only be with the short-clothed gang, but he is wearing a long shirt, suggesting that he is different. His tunic is dirty and tattered, indicating that he has been abandoned by the upper class. It seems that he has not

washed it for more than ten years and he is unwilling to take it off, indicating that deep in his heart he is still a superior scholar. And his speech "always full of literary phrases, calling people half-understand" also confirms this idea. Kong Yiji still has a strong concept of inferiority and superiority in his mind, and the value of "all things are inferior, only the book is high" advocated in the feudal society at that time has a deep influence on Kong Yiji, and has penetrated into the bone marrow[3]. From the little fellow's point of view, the customers are consciously or unconsciously creating a kind of living space that shows the difference of "status", and Kong Yiji's peculiar behaviour reflects the contradiction between his economic status and his ideology. At this point, the little fellow is just an onlooker, a casual observer, and although he is teased on the basis of Kong Yiji's embarrassment and awkwardness, the little fellow still finds it "pleasurable". His "pleasure" is only that of a bystander who takes advantage of Kong Yiji's boredom, and he is definitely not an onlooker, nor is he an accomplice to Kong Yiji's persecutors.

### **3. What the Little Fellow Heard About Kong Yiji - The Down-and-Out Man**

The little fellow learnt from people's behind-the-scenes talk that "Kong Yiji had originally studied, but finally did not go to school, and did not know how to make a living; so he became poorer and poorer, so that he was about to beg for food. Luckily, he had a good writing skill, so he wrote books for other people to get a bowl of rice. However, he had a bad temper, that is, he was lazy. Within a few days, he disappeared, along with his books, paper, pens and inkstones. He had read books and was considered a scholar, but he did not go to school and did not know how to make a living, so he was reduced to a hard life. He wrote good words, that has a skill, but the influence of feudal culture and feudal education ideology on him, so that he developed a lack of love for labour, despise the vice of labour, he was not willing to use his handful of good words to do the work of labour to earn a living, to the back of the even the problem of food and clothing, there is no way but to use the occasional theft to fill the stomach. It can be seen that in the feudal education ideology, the imperial examination system, the lower intellectuals under the pressure of real life, to enter the school, career, livelihood are all worrying, lazy, poor, and misdemeanour. Although the "career" under the imperial examination system is already a mirage for Kong Yiji, he still refuses to take off the "tunic" that symbolises the status of a scholar. This is the core of Kong Yiji's tragic character: self-deception and insistence[4]. In the eyes of the little fellow, although Kong Yiji had a bad reputation with others, he was of good character at the Xianheng Hotel and never defaulted on his payments. "Although there is no cash money from time to time, and it is written down on the chalkboard for the time being, but in less than a month, it will certainly be repaid, and Kong Yiji's name will be wiped off from the chalkboard." It shows that Kong Yiji is honest and trustworthy although he has difficulty in securing his livelihood. He is always ridiculed by others, but in the eyes of the twelve-year-old, he is still an honest and trustworthy person. At this point in time, the little fellow is sympathetic to Kong Yiji, much less thinking of joining in the siege or persecution.

### **4. The Little Fellow's Friendship with Kong Yiji - The Despised One**

Influenced by the surrounding environment, the twelve-year-old innocent and simple child, who could not make any false pretences, gradually became cold and worldly. When Kong Yiji arrived, the people inside the shop laughed at him and asked him, "How come you can't even get half of the Xiu Cai?" The people laughed in the face of Kong Yiji's dishevelled and uneasy state, and the little fellow also laughed along with him. Kong Yiji talked to the little man and asked him "Have you ever read a book?" The little man only nodded his head briefly. When Kong Yiji quizzed him on how to write the word fennel, the little fellow thought, "A beggar is worthy of quizzing me," so he turned his face back and paid no more attention to him, and impatiently walked away with his mouth full. "Go far" means that "I" don't bother to communicate with him, so as not to make others think that "I" is the same as him and feel a loss of status, so I simply walk away and don't bother to talk to him. So I just walked away and didn't care about him. This cold shot made Kong Yiji very embarrassed, and the scene was once very embarrassing[5]. According to common sense, a person of such a lowly status as the little fellow, who knew a little about writing and could be yelled at, should show due humility and respect to such a well-read and educated elder as Kong Yiji, and should be grateful for his teaching, but not only did he fail to show respect and gratitude, but he did not even give Kong Yiji a chance to teach him[6]. If it is Ding Juren who teaches him how to write the word fennel for fennel beans, what kind of face will the little fellow have, not to be sure not the way it is now, and then look at Kong Yiji but regardless of the attitude of the little fellow, earnestly teaching him how to write the word fennel, and saying under his breath in order to do the availability of the shopkeeper, Kong Yiji faced with the little fellow's impatience, lethargic answer Kong Yiji still shows great patience, knocking the long nails of the two fingers against the counter Nodding his head to speak. It can be seen that Kong Yiji's heart stored the factor of goodness, is sincere and kind, is thinking of changing his position. In the face of other people's ridicule and mockery of himself, Kong Yiji can only show off his knowledge and show that he is different and superior to the younger and lower social status of the little fellow, which further demonstrates Kong Yiji's pedantic and poor character that he wants to show himself in every way. The portrayal of Kong Yiji through the perspective of the little chap exposes the decadence of the feudal culture and education, and the imperial examination system, and hopes to arouse people's reflection, resistance and defiance of the feudal system. At this time, the little fellow has shifted from curiosity and sympathy to contempt, indifference and disdain for Kong Yiji, and participated in the siege of Kong Yiji. At this time, Kong Yiji is empty and lonely, and the hotel visitors ridicule, humiliate and besiege him, Kong Yiji does not have a confidant and a friend, and he takes his own good intentions to help others in exchange for disdain and indifference, and the little fellow unintentionally puts Kong Yiji in the path of the abyss of tragedy and pushes him a hand!

### **5. Little Buddy Bye Bye Kong Yiji - The Despised One**

Towards the beginning of winter, the weather turned cold, the little chap put on his cotton jacket, and Kong Yiji came to

eat wine again, and sat down under the counter against the threshold. "His face was black and thin, already out of shape; he wore a torn jacket, with his legs crossed, and a futon underneath, hanging on his shoulders with a straw rope; when he saw me, he said, 'Warm up a bowl of wine' ". By this time, Kong Yiji had already taken off his tunic, and had broken his leg stealing a book, and could no longer stand and drink in his tunic. Kong Yiji's leg was broken by Ding Juren. He stole a book from He's family and was hanged and beaten; after stealing it from Ding Juren's family, he first wrote a "service defence" and was beaten for most of the night, which broke his leg.

Kong Yiji and Ding Juren were both scholars, but Ding Juren passed the imperial examinations, while Kong Yiji fell from grace. Ding Juren, who climbed up to the feudal ruling class, was able to dominate and brutalise Kong Yiji, and finally pushed him to his death. The novel tells us through this detail: the imperial examination system has created two kinds of people, a few climbed up, doubled in value, rich and powerful, and became the cruel oppressor, while most of those who can not climb up such as Kong Yiji was subjected to bullying and abuses, and some were even pushed to the end of the road[7]. The novel through the little boy's seen and heard from the perspective of the little boy reflects: the imperial examination system has created two kinds of people, a few climbed up, doubled in value, rich and powerful, and became the cruel oppressor. The majority of those who could not climb up, such as Kong Yiji, who was poor, poor, poor, and fell into the lower class, became the victims of misery.

Kong Yiji, who wore a "long shirt", now wears a "ragged jacket" like everyone else, and while he used to stand and drink, he now sits and "walks" in to take a sip of wine[8]. As Kong Yiji's situation deteriorates, the little fellow's attitude towards Kong Yiji changes little by little, from the belief that Kong Yiji is more honest because he doesn't owe any money to the disdain of teaching him how to write to the distaste of serving him wine. "Warm the wine, serve it out and put it on the threshold." At this point he has become cold and indifferent, Kong Yiji has broken his leg and walks with his hands, the little chap should hand him the wine, but instead just puts it on the threshold, the environment of society inculcates the little chap to become snobbish, and does not show sympathy against his indifference. At this time, the little chap has been inculcated by the social vat into a person who sees the wind and participates in the persecution of Kong Yiji. Mr Lu Xun outlines the little chap's distaste for Kong Yiji from the few strokes of handing over the wine and putting it on the doorstep, his unwillingness to get close to him, and even playing tricks on him, so that he struggles to drink the wine in disguise of participating in the persecution of him with no compassion, no sympathy, and unconsciously spreading salt on the wounds of other people. At this stage, the little chap's psyche has changed dramatically. From being a relatively pure and honest person at the beginning he has become a spectator-like being. From the attitude towards Kong Yiji - "put it on the threshold", it can be seen that the little fellow has been gradually assimilated into this society, and darkness, snobbery and coldness have grown inside him, a piece of white cloth gradually being blackened by the society[9]. At first, the child "little chap" in the novel is different from the attitude of the drinkers and the boss towards Kong Yiji, and there is a certain distance between them. Pure and simple, kind and honest young man but living in this environment for a long time, the little chap and others are

unconsciously assimilated, changed and reduced.

## 6. The Little Fellow's Imaginary Kong Yee - The Dead Man

At the end of the article, it says, "I have not seen it until now - about Kong Yiji is indeed dead" and in the article, "Kong Yiji is such a pleasure to live with, but without him, other people will live like this. " The plain and indifferent tone of the article reflects the indifference of the little fellow, as well as the numbness, indifference and heartlessness of the society. It also reflects the insignificance and irrelevance of Kong Yiji in people's mind. Kong Yiji not come can not make fun of but there are other can make fun of the joke, not to mention life is not also not a lack of laughs, although many of them are ruled, enslaved, fooled grassroots, and often become the laughing stock of others, but they are still interested in watching the fun, happy [10].

The ignorance and cold-bloodedness of the Short Clothes Gang, the The short-shirt gang is ignorant and cold-blooded, the shopkeeper is mercenary, Ding Juren is cruel and vicious, and the young man is scornful. Together they weaved a big net, and there was no room for Kong Yiji to survive under this big net [11]. The author is not only concerned about the misfortune of Kong Yiji's persecution, but also about people's attitudes and reactions to Kong Yiji's misfortune. Through the narrative of the young man and the reflection of the adult, the author not only shows the tragic fate of one person, but also reveals the attitude and reaction of a group of people to the tragedy--their coldness and numbness. numbness [12].

## 7. Conclusion

The little fellow starts out as a simple and kind-hearted person who finds Kong Yiji honest and trustworthy, and then becomes more and more callous, echoing other people's ridicule of Kong Yiji, and unwilling to lend a helping hand or even tease Kong Yiji, who is mobility impaired, as a result of the influence of the social reality and the environment. This is precisely the effect of the cruel feudal society on people, which distinctly maps out the concept of feudal hierarchy and feudal thinking in his mind from light to heavy. And ridiculous and pathetic Kong Yiji, the feudal system of imperial examination into the bitter sea of life bamboo pole, but he saw it as a life-saving straw to save his life of misery, towards the bright hope of life. This group of spectators is like a group of executioners who push the wave, they kill people invisibly, and the Xianheng Hotel is the slaughterhouse of Kong Yiji. If Kong Yiji does not study or is not enthusiastic about fame, business or labour may be able to live, but he took the ruling class of feudalism as their sacred mission, sincerely defend the imperial examination system as their own, in exchange for the indelible mental and physical double torture. This pretentious, in reality, time and time again, hit the wall, hit the head and blood, and had to succumb to fate, pathetic and laughable in the tragic situation let a person saddened! Kong Yiji heart no disillusionment with life, but his life is hopelessly towards disillusionment. The tragedy of Kong Yiji is his own tragedy, but also the tragedy of the community is the tragedy of the little fellow.

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