

A Novella of Pseudo-History and Philosophical Satire

NOODLARIANISM

COOPER GAO

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1. THE EMERGENCE OF NOODLARIANISM

The emperor of QIN sits at the dining table with two bowls in front of him. One is filled with dark **gravy**, while the other is stacked with long doughy strips. One makes these strips by cutting the flattened dough into pieces. The authentic way of tasting this food is to pour the gravy onto those long strips and then use chopsticks to stir the strips until all of them are evenly coated with the gravy. The proletarian soldiers and imperial servants firstly savoured these strips in such a gastronomic manner. They named the food **noodles** out of mischief. Since then, noodles spread around the empire. Not long ago, the emperor began to eat noodles regularly. Putting the taste aside, the emperor hopes to use this action to demonstrate a specific self-evident bond between him and the lowest class of the imperial military and intelligence agents. He assures those people that the bond is just as solid as before, as the moment when they supported him in winning QIN's throne.

Three more persons are presenting for today's dinner. Two invited generals sit on the both sides of the emperor, and not far from them, a eunuch stands by. These three have been following the emperor since he was a child hostage in the Kingdom of ZHAO. At that time, they were regarded as proletarian entourages. Now two generals have respectively seized the imperial military power of the North and the South, and the eunuch has been in charge of manipulating political opinions in the court.

"How is the recent situation? The six kingdoms have been settled. The next step is to pass on this centralised system for generations." The emperor posts the question to the generals.

"The situation is not optimistic, Your Majesty." One general replies, "My secret report said that the remaining nobles of the six kingdoms are preparing revenge. Several counterattacks are brewing."

The other general adds, "The military officers complain that the days are not as good as the wartime. The salary is reduced, the subordinates are demobilised, return to the farm fields. There are not enough servants in the army to support the seniors. The generals feel their power has been disarmed, Your Majesty."

The emperor turns to the eunuch, "How is everything in the court?"

"Yes, Your Majesty," the eunuch lowers his head, says in fear, "the backgrounds of the lately promoted civil servants are quite diverse. Most of them follow the classics of various schools of thought. They have quite critical views about the centralisation policies published by the imperial court. In addition, the various nobles and royal members who were used to control the diplomacy have lost their glory. They also complain a lot."

The emperor nods. After the six kingdoms' pacification, the peaceful scene, which was supposed to last for a long time, seems to be only a flash in the pan. The existing centralised institutions cannot fully accommodate the surviving nobles from the vanished countries. However, the unified empire had to absorb some of the original bureaucrats and nobles to maintain the local law, which allowed *potential opponents* to slowly penetrate the central system of the empire. And this threat is more obvious in the military. For the recently incorporated legions of the annihilated kingdoms, the officers were unable to obtain military exploits because they had no battle to fight, while the soldiers at the bottom were in danger of being disbanded due to the reduction in military expenses.

The overwhelming defeat against the six kingdoms succeed. The success was attributed to the support of grassroots military groups in these countries, their passive resistance towards QIN's legions. Such support was guided by the beautiful vision of unification proposed by QIN. The shattering of the current vision has shaken the voices that were initially on QIN's side. The loudest speakers with doubts are the nobles who are now in the centre of the current system. Indeed, they are the prominent skeptics of this centralised system and perhaps the only ones who can threaten its existence. The emperor is not surprised by this feedback. It's just that he thinks some pieces are missing in the whole picture.

"These nobles just want to snatch their privileges away. They will not give up unless this goal is achieved. They will form an intangible historical force and will endlessly entangle my massive system!" Knowing the hatred of the three people against the nobles very well,

the emperor takes the opportunity to express his position, and at the same time, encourages the three to elaborate more on their ideas.

But none of the listeners is intended to continue this unpleasant topic. The emperor thinks that it is the right moment to raise the question of his real concern. He asks, "What happened to the proletarian soldiers and intellectuals I ordered you to promote?"

"A lot of them are on their way to grasp the actual powers, but they lack prestige," one general says. "Their voices are often suppressed in crucial meetings. Their roots are still too shallow. Without further promotion, many of them are discouraged and devoted to activities outside their careers."

The emperor silently tilts his head to the left.

How much prestige do you have in the army? Prestige is accumulated step by step in the process. Where does the prestige come from if you don't give them a chance? Even at the top of the echelons, you got your hands on each critical battle's supreme command. And what did you do? You created the kind of mass graves without national morality, just hoping to add more prestige to yourself. Why didn't you think about the root of QIN at that moment? But I won't argue with you in person.

The other general adds, "Losing passion is at least harmless. In fact, many officers collude with businessmen to engage in various illegal activities. These people also act as the spokespersons of various forces in the army and often impede the important meetings."

The emperor rubs his chin.

When you were in the Kingdom of ZHAO, you were the one who was most keen on getting benefits from merchants. How much ZHAO's commercial influence is behind you for supporting me as a monarch? Without those commercial interests, I seriously doubt that I would have your support. Your appearance always reminds me that you could be a profiteer. Maybe someday, you will rebel against the monarch for personal gain. But I am not going to humiliate you for your contradicted argument.

"What about the proletarian intellectuals?" The emperor asks impatiently.

"Yes, Your Majesty," the eunuch replies, "they are absorbed in researching and improving the academic works of their predecessors. They are often shy about proposing their own views. They are basically attached to the existing school of thoughts and are mainly used as hatchet men by their masters to fight against different ideas."

The emperor looks at the eunuch indifferently.

When you suggested using the imperial power to burn books and perish the thought of scholars for defeating this centralised system, why didn't you make the defence with your own views? No one in the court under your management can put forward arguments for defeating the system. If your idea is superior, you would have the knowledge and ability to shut up those hundred scholars with opposite opinions. But these words can only be buried in my heart.

The emperor loses in his thought of combining the clues.

The missing components of the picture are found! While I was competing for leadership with the aristocracy from the existing orders, I created another disorderly force. I deliberately made it incompatible with the various existing orders, but I failed to set up an order to control this disorderly force. These three proletarian leaders are not willing to establish any sustainable order for their groups. The pool certainly doesn't lack talents. But these three will not have the incentive to develop a mechanism to select the best candidate efficiently because the selected one is either from the aristocracy they dislike or from the proletarian who shares similar backgrounds with them and most likely threatens their existence. In fact, my loyal servants are afraid of the proletariat more than the aristocracy. Their support comes neither from the family's reputation nor from the existing hierarchy. The support merely comes from the prestige of destroying the existing order. And this short-term destructive behaviour itself is surely despised by the current morality. The righteousness of the act of destroying the order can only be granted as an "order" through the supremum ruler's ideology, that is, the empowerment from the Highest. In that case, if one more person shares the emperor's blessings, their support will be reduced by one portion; and once they lose their current status, they will face punishment for order disruption. So these short-sighted leaders unconsciously maintain this disorderly situation, slowly corrupting the hierarchy by uncontrollable forces.

The emperor suddenly feels an absurd scene. In this scene, the ancient order morphs into a forest; the emperor calls on many loggers to destroy this forest. However, the short-

sighted masses are unwilling to plant new saplings after cutting down the big trees; inadvertently, the original place of the forest is full of disorderly swamps, into which the emperor begins to sink deep.

If the trend goes on, this centralised system will sooner or later collapse. But the whole trend looks like a historical trap. Ironically, this trap was set by myself! Thinking of this, the emperor loses his temper. He almost blurted out a sarcastic question about how to find someone as virtuous as these three.

But the emperor manages to keep his mind calm. He changes the question. "This crowd can't be relied on, but now the nobles of QIN and the survivors of the six kingdoms are all in the same vein, being attempt to destroy the system which we have worked so hard to establish. What should we do?"

"If the war continues, these problems may be covered up." The eunuch seems to mutter to himself.

"But the war has ended. The six kingdoms have been defeated. The whole central plains belong to QIN. Where to fight and what is fighting for? The East is the endless sea, and the West is an uninhabited desert." The emperor then turns his head to a general.

The general understands the intention and immediately completes the reasoning, "The northern grassland is severely cold. Although there are nomadic tribes, the physique of our soldiers cannot live in that cold climate."

The other general quickly follows the sentence, "The South is full of poisonous insects. The food is prone to spoilage. The soldiers are hard to acclimatise to the hot climate, and the diet problems worsen the army's combat effectiveness."

"Well, it is indeed not easy to continue the war on this land." Without having any concrete clue to continue this conversation, the emperor suggests starting the dinner.

But the idea of war has been entangled in the emperor's mind.

The war seems to be the most effective means to maintain this centralised system. My huge military empire's constitution depends on primitive driving force derived from people's fear of death and the desire for the fruits of victory in war, a mixture of desire for

survival and hunting. Our ancestors showed that collective centralisation is the only feasible emergency system under the powerful threat. Driven by the primitive desire, people are willing to suppress their personal longing and compromise with the system. Yes, the way to perpetuate this system is to let the war continue. It would be better to allow the war to exist forever without being aware of it.

Looking at the noodles in the bowl, the emperor suddenly has an idea.

Launch a self-destructive war. The occurrence, development, and termination of the war are all under the control of the centralisation system so that the system can always take the initiative to create a new order for the recurrence of the war. This could be the ideal resolution.

"Would you like to consume a bowl of gravy or a bowl of white noodles alone?" The emperor asks. Without looking for the response, he answers the question by himself, "Of course not. Your sense of taste tells you to mix gravy and noodles and stir them vigorously until they appease your appetite because you want a bowl of delicious food, neither a bowl of oily sauce nor a bowl of tedious doughy strips."

"Stirring requires energy, so does war," the emperor extends the scope of his topic. "But if this demand evokes human's inner desire, people will spend their energies without hesitating. When stirring gravy and noodles, people forget that they are consuming their energy. After eating the noodles, their desires are temporarily satisfied. They stop stirring. But the next day, when you put other bowls of gravy and noodles in front of them, they will start stirring again, unconsciously."

"No one is willing to give his life to participate in a meaningless war, but if the war brings in a kind of satisfaction of desire, it could even be difficult to stop the emergence of the war. Therefore, we should build an ideology on top of the existing centralised system. This ideology is to let the masses initiate the warfare within the centralised system spontaneously, and then let them get the rewards of the war promptly so as to prevent the system from being completely destroyed."

Finding the confused expressions of the three people, the emperor intends to give a more detailed description.

"The gravy is black, and the noodles are white." The emperor looks into his bowl. "Your appetite instinct tells you to homogenise these two to make a delicious mixture. In this

world, there is evil, and there is justice. Society will be stable when the two forces are distributed under the right proportion by a moral standard. The balance of the two is like the ratio of gravy to noodles in your bowl. The moral standard is your taste. Some people love salty, while some prefer light. Everyone has different standards about righteousness and evil. Some are gentlemen; some are burglars. Therefore, a stable society must balance good and evil. This balance must meet the overall requirements of the legal system and morality. It is hard to imagine a gang full of rogues with law-abiding rules or a group of modest gentlemen living in a bandit country. These groups must dismiss in an instant because they are unstable. Similarly, if one group worships the power of justice and the other group goes to the opposite, then war will break out as soon as the two groups meet up. At this time, the war is set in motion by a kind of moral desire, a subconscious force, just like the instinct of stirring gravy and noodles to satisfy your appetite. This is the driving force of history which neither you nor I can intervene!

"Guide the empire to the infinite war under the twisted moral!" The emperor says emotionally, hoping that his idea can invade the surrounding souls, "Make the centralised system reach eternal life under the infinite war!"

"What we have to do is to separate the 'gravy' from the 'noodles' and then present them separately to the public." The emperor is drawing a specific image for his listeners. "Imagine that our empire is a noodle restaurant. This restaurant supplies noodle dishes, unlimited 'noodles' and 'gravy,' to the masses, our customers with endless appetites. When there are more 'noodles,' we add 'gravy'; when there is too much 'gravy,' we just add 'noodles.' Our dear customers will keep stirring their gourmet meals. After one meal, we prepare the ingredients for the next one. We just need to ensure all the food ingredients, our 'gravy' and 'noodles' servants, support our centralised system. In this case, the masses fed by our *noodle dishes* will become a permanent embodiment of the centralised system." The emperor stops the speech, waiting for the response.

The three avoid having any uncomprehending expressions. Although they may have captured some general ideas, they feel that the whole concept is too bizarre to be convincing.

Finally, the eunuch breaks the silence. He decides to follow the emperor's ideas closely. "Your Majesty, what should the specific implementation process look like?" This question is more like a demonstration by which the eunuch wants to show that he has understood the emperor's thoughts.

"We need an ideology," the emperor gives the eunuch a wink, "let's call it **Noodlarianism**. The doctrine of this ideology is to produce enough elite 'gravy' and 'noodles' and a society of gluttons. The 'gravy' can corrode the original aristocratic class; the 'noodles' can mould a bunch of proletariats into a meritocratic mirage. The majority of the society would be gourmands who worship at the fame and fortune of 'gravy' and 'noodles.' Let's call them *noodle citizens*. Noodlarianism will make the ruling class flooded with 'gravy' and will educate massive 'noodles' to climb the social ladder. The hierarchy will suffer turbulence during these reshuffles. Sooner or later, the mixture of the 'gravy' and 'noodles' would exceed the moral balance point. At this moment, if the whole society is full of noodle citizens, they will involve in the movement of redistributing 'gravy' and 'noodles,' and then the stirring, or the war, will automatically start."

The emperor stirs the noodles in the bowl and continues his speech. "There are a few things to pay attention though.

"The noodle citizens who worship *food* as heaven shouldn't have the ability to think deeply. Otherwise, they will explore the meaning behind 'eating.' Therefore, Noodlarianism must give *eating* the highest sense of justice. Let the noodle citizens work day and night, make them exhausted. For these noodle citizens, *eating noodles with gravy*, or chasing their fame and fortune in riots, is a matter of course and justification. They will have no intention to investigate the deeper intrigue of *eating*. For the qualified noodle citizens, namely who uphold the moral rules of Noodlarianism, they should have many children and many blessings. So they will eventually occupy the whole empire.

"There is no need to put too many restrictions on 'gravy' and 'noodles.' However, since they will be 'eaten' and 'digested' by noodle citizens in the end, we must make sure that these 'gravy' and 'noodles' are the supporters of our centralised system. Therefore, Noodlarianism should train their centralisation spirit under a strong moral indicator. The law of **filial piety** can be considered. Whether they are 'black' or 'white,' they have to listen to the old. As long as they have this moral principle, they will be under the control of Noodlarianism, as they are derivatives of this ideology.

"Well," the emperor concludes, "in short, Noodlarianism will divide the missions of capable agents of our centralised system into 'gravy' and 'noodles' based on the code of conduct and ethics; it will use social environment, language, literature, and customary code to unconsciously guide the noodle citizens, attracting their full attention to their own

desire of survival, diet, and reproduction. In this way, Noodlarianism will enforce the people and society to converge to the centralised system."

The eunuch nods from time to time, indicating that he has understood the specific ideas of this doctrine. But one general seems a little tired of the endless abstract discussion. So he proposes a question in a little dissatisfied voice. "But it's all ideological work. The current empire may not have the environment to implement these ideas. Your Majesty must know that not every officer can do just *eating noodles*."

"Those who don't eat noodles will be filtered out no matter if they are aristocrats or proletariats," replies the emperor. The general seems a little scared and breaks off his planned talk.

"Well, the wash is not now." The emperor feels that he intensified the air, so he immediately changes to a mild tone, "We must make sure that the cleaning will not affect the immature centralised system, and at the same time we need sufficient 'noodles' and 'gravy.'"

But the general's question reminds the emperor that he should give two generals more specific instructions. He talks to the general stationed in the North, "Take your troops to the farther north. If you can't get deep into the grassland, then stay on the border. Find some tasks for your men: Build a wall or harass a nomadic tribe."

Then he turns to the other general and says, "Prepare your troops to take root in the South. Make a kind of local 'noodles.' Let them slowly blend with the local residents so that they can gradually adapt to the local climate and diet."

Without waiting for the reply, the emperor turns to the eunuch. "None of my sons is sage enough to resist the counterattack of the nobles. Don't have any hope on these mediocre guys. Separate them into two groups. Let one group rot into the 'gravy,' and let the other sublimate into 'noodles.' They will be bound to make all the surrounding forces get involved in this separation. The conflicts will be inevitable. After my death, you will design some incidents to intensify the conflict."

The eunuch says worriedly, "The empire will be in chaos."

"This is the first step in cleaning. Only in this state of chaos can the nobility's power be suppressed," says the emperor. "The Noodlarianism 'gravy' can smoothly start the process of corruption. This will be a long process, a purification process. Those who don't want to behave as noodle citizens will be washed out by the 'gravy.'" When replying, the emperor stares into the eunuch's eyes. The eunuch nods in response.

The emperor immediately turns his head to the generals, "You must never get involved in these conflicts. At that moment, you will be looking for suitable candidates in the North and the South to rebuild the empire. After the first step of cleaning, the central plains, which by then should be full of noodle citizens, will be unable to resist your imperial troops. The stirring will begin. After the stirring, the new empire will thoroughly refine our centralised system. The noodle citizens will take a rest, and Noodlarianism will be able to prepare for the next round of stirring under a more friendly environment. Remember that we only need to build up the bricks for Noodlarianism, and the followers will add tiles to the bricks."

After describing his concrete plan, the emperor eats the noodles left in the bowl in one bite.

"One more thing," the emperor says with a smirk, "to ensure that sufficient 'noodles' and 'gravy' exist in society, you must design a selection and evaluation standard that is ridiculous enough. This mechanism must prevent the elites from overly concentrating on the just side. It should also avoid the emergence of the new aristocracy. Well, I have confidence in you. I think you have already done a good job on that." The three people seem to be seen through their minds. They have to smile embarrassedly in response.

The emperor is very satisfied with founding Noodlarianism. Now he finally feels that he could dispel the threat of the nobility. At the same time, he can completely restrain the unruly proletarian leaders around him; also, he has planned their destiny. Putting down his chopsticks, he says in a conclusive tone. "Our lives have limits, and this empire will eventually fall apart, but as long as the 'noodles' and 'gravy' exist, as long as the noodle citizens exist, the centralisation system we have established will embed into Noodlarianism and will get immortality. So will we!"

"Immortal noodles, eternal centralisation!" shouts the emperor. Then he signals the banquet is over.

When the three are about to leave, suddenly the emperor, overcome by a flash of thought, adds, "The tenet of Noodlarianism is: Stir!"

The three look at each other and then shout with one voice, "Stir!"

2. N1545, A YEAR OF NO SIGNIFICANCE

Part I

Noodle calendar: N1300-N1399, the Dark Age

The original entity of TANG empire had been divided into several parts. The northern part was under the rule of the Kingdom of JIN, and the Kingdom of SONG occupied the southern territory. The Orthodoxy Sect of Noodlarianism preserved the roots at the courts of both kingdoms. The southwestern plateau was gradually recovering its order and cohesion under the leadership of the Barley Sect of Noodlarianism. Two hundred years ago, the Barley Sect stirred up turmoil that crashed the prosperous TANG empire. After the purges, the Great Peace Agency (Agency), the Noodlarianism bureau of investigation on politics, military, and diplomacy, drafted several re-unification warfare plans. However, none of them proceeded smoothly because the Pilau and Falafel Association from the West and the Vegetarian Association (incl. Tofu Party and Curry Party) from the South decided to form a coalition. The coalition participants signed an anti-unification treaty and established a fund to financially support the resisting fusion movements led by the Barbecurianism from the steppe tribes in the North.

On the other hand, years of peace had caused the majority of the central plains to think highly of brilliance and material advancement. The aesthetic atmosphere and the public attention had gradually switched from martial arts to hedonism and consumerism. What made the Agency deeply anxious was that the reviving aristocratic powers of these kingdoms began to retake certain controls in education, medicine, business, most importantly, catering and agriculture. Various systematic social organisations and orders were formed to support the bourgeoisie. Even inside the Agency, the voice of re-unifying

the central plains had been suppressed by the opinion of maintaining good social order and sustaining the economic development.

As a school of thought, Noodlarianism insisted on keeping the rudimentary propaganda. This feature had been welcomed by the labouring mass before the arrival of the Vegetarian Association. Nevertheless, the Vegetarian Association continued establishing fast-food chains around the plains and providing cheaper menu options. In the middle of the N14th century, most proletariat "noodles" and "gravies" had more or less adapted their Noodlarianism diets to the cheaper ones designed by the Vegetarian Association. For the upper class, the improvement of the living standards and the recognition of individual self-identity drove them to abandon many traditional Noodlarianism preaching channels. These channels were used to spread the advanced noodlisation theories. Moreover, most governors and officers tended to accept the diets with higher protein content and diversified vitamins, the general doctrines propagated by the Barbecurianism or the Pilau and Falafel Association.

For compromising the declined trend, many elite noodlarianists were seeking a new representation of the ideology. The mainstream opinion within the Agency advocated presenting **three ingredients** –noodles, gravy, and vegetable toppings– in one bowl instead of encouraging restlessly excessive stirrings. However, some ambitious noodlarianists in the Agency found themselves unable to display their talents under such a new framework. These noodlarianists were forced to change their positions. Some went to the research unit to study alchemy and immortal prescriptions. Many others chose the business, education, or health unit where their mastered empirical skills, such as business fraud, fabrication of false knowledge, or food poisoning (mainly on rice), were applicable. By unswervingly aggravating social equality, distorting people's logical thinking, and weakening the public physical conditions, these determined noodlarianists hoped to accumulate, step by step, sufficient needs for stirring.

As a reward for their hard work, the extremists succeed in seducing JIN's army to conquest the capital of SONG and kidnapping the kings and the queens. But they failed to magnify the conflict. The Tofu aristocracy in the Kingdom of SONG soon brought forward a new king and settled the new capital in a city controlled by the Tofu Party. This move worsened the financial situation of the Agency.

A big twist happened in N1374 when a faith-based agent, Agent W, decided to reform the preaching channels in the northern agrarian regions. Through some

simplified noodlisation theories, low-cost rituals, and standardised training, the agent was able to impose the opinion *being noodlised* amongst the grassroots. He converted hundreds of thousands of local representatives into noodlarianists in the following twenty years. With his endless passion and numerous efforts, the embryonic form of a new sect, Everyone's Noodles, emerged.

Agent W also imbued many of his colleagues with his enthusiasm. His way of appealing to the public taste and lowering the bar of stirring standards inspired many southern agents, especially those lurking in the Tofu Party. Agent L, a vegetarian noodlarianist, decided to follow the same manner. He introduced meat and wine to the vegetarian noodle menu and developed theoretical arguments about how a vegetarian should get along with this contradiction. Agent L's theory was immediately circulated and accepted by the bourgeoisie in the kingdom of SONG. The disguised Noodlarianism practitioners in this meat-eating vegetarian group often called themselves Can. The Can Sect effectively magnetised a huge number of swing Tofu members who were obsessed with the purified vegetarianism style but were reluctant to give up the desire for meat dopamine.

The rise of these two sects represented that Noodlarianism had reclaimed the lost force in the ideological battlefield. Noodlarianists bade farewell to the dark age, got ready to welcome the bright moment.

Noodle calendar: N1400-N1545, the Age of Enlightenment

In the early N15th century, Everyone's Noodles successfully launched a high-end product, *cold noodles with sesame paste*. The product was serially developed based on the mode of the longevity noodle, a noodle serving for the elder and a symbol through which the younger generation expresses their filial piety and loyalty. With the complex mixed flavours and the noticeable filial implication, the new product managed to capture plenty of royal guts in the new NOMADIC empire, an empire formed by the steppe tribes in the North.

At the same time, the low-end variety designed by the Everyone's Noodles, the cold noodles, became popular among the proletariat and the soldiers in northern wild regions. These nomadic customers renounced the coarse full-meat barbecue recipes and embraced the sweet and graceful carbohydrate diets.

Through advertising filial piety and cold noodles, Noodlarianism gathered enough influences within the territory of the NOMADIC empire. In the year N1434, the executive officer of Everyone's Noodles successfully met with the lord of the NOMADIC empire, made him recognise the supreme power of Noodlarianism. With the Agency's support, the NOMADIC empire quickly smashed the Kingdom of JIN and smoothly expanded its west border to as far as Volga Bulgaria.

After the death of the founding lord, the central authority of the NOMADIC empire was passed through the representative members within the royal family. With the territorial expansion, some royal members residing in the western border were able to contact with various ideologies, e.g., the Steakism, a more systematic ideology than the Barbecurianism, the fundamentalism in the Pilau Party, a dogma advocating long-grain rice rather than central plains' medium- and short-grain rice, and Pizzarianism. Some royal members were seduced by the western exotic dietary forces in the first sights. Since these members had strong influences in the imperial court, and since their new diet habits didn't consolidate well with the noodles menu, the noodlarianists felt very uneasy with these conversions.

The Agency decided to prop up a more suitable candidate for the emperor position, with whom they could cut off the trend of these conversions. In N1473, Everyone's Noodles and the Orthodoxy Sect successfully committed a mixed barbecue and rice poisoning. The nomadic lord at the time caught the death of the poisoned pilau. Then, through a series of court politics operations, the Barley Sect manages to take the initiative to get its supporting candidate elected as the new emperor. The Barley also persuaded the Can and the Orthodoxy to withdraw their supports from the Kingdom of SONG. The surrender of the southern noodle/tofu citizens enhanced the prestige of the new emperor, who was at that moment questioned by his royal relatives for the disgraceful political tricks of winning the throne.

The Barley Sect gained complete trust from the new emperor. The emperor appointed the sect as the royal brand ideology in his territory. With the support of this vast imperial power, Noodlarianism was able to expand its stirring energy tremendously.

However, the Agency never had full confidence in the nomadic rulers. Extremists in the Agency firmly believed that an entire and perfect stir must rely on a faithful main stirrer who should absolutely worship Noodlarianism: his body and soul must completely harmonise with noodles. Realists in the Agency were against this criterion. They argued

that the qualified candidate would never emerge in the current royal family, and they suggested lowering the bar for the pool full of meat-eating genes.

In the stalemate between the two voices, time slowly stepped into N1545.

Noodle calendar: N1545, a Year of No Significance

At the beginning of N1545, a small episode happened in the empire. The Agency successfully migrated a teenager to an isolated town for *convalescence*.

The teenager was the elderly son of the current emperor. But since his birth, he has been deprived of the right to inherit the throne.

The small town was in the middle of nowhere, so it lacked logistical supplies of fresh meat. However, the town could provide a full set of northern noodles. Hence, it was consistently awarded as the model Noodlarianism town. But to the public, it was nearly as anonymous as the adolescent boy.

From his arrival, everything the young man came into contact with would make him love noodles. Under the double pressure of the isolated *zero-meat* environment and the hunger of adolescence, the teenager soon tried and got used to all kinds of local noodles.

This successful conversion of diet habits made the Agency see the cultivability of the teenager. On the seventh evening of the seventh moon, the municipal council invited the young man to initiate a 5-months long town beauty pageant and suggested he act as one of the judges. By forming a *chaotic* contest process, the Agency conducted a detailed investigation on his aesthetic preferences and assessment criteria. Some male agents even dedicated themselves to testing the sexual tendency of the young man.

When the process nearly approached the end, an *unexpected* riot happened. According to the local news, the riot was caused by the contestants' disputation of the beauty ranking system. The local families took sides to support their candidates, which made the verbal quarrel turn into a fight and then a riot.

The news was delivered to the court. But during its delivery, the content experienced varying degrees of distortion and amplification. Finally, the riot was described as a subversive activity that may lead to *mass rebellion*. Worried that all kinds of rebellion

forces would gather towards the town, the imperial court asked the young man to leave the town. He was arranged to Guilin, a southern *leisure and seclusion* city, to wait for the further investigation of the rebellion incident.

Soon, the rebellion was proved to be a farce. So the only event in this year that could attract the historians' attention lost its significance.

Part II

Today is the last day of N1545.

People in the whole empire are preparing for the new year's festival.

A teenager enters a somber rice noodle restaurant on the left bank of the Li River in Guilin. This rice noodle restaurant is famous for its poor service and the forceful aftertaste gravy.

The young man's dress differentiates him from the locals. But no one paid special attention to him. Obviously, he is a frequent customer of the restaurant.

He picks a seat in front of the chef's working desk and then orders his meal. "As usual, a bowl of rice noodles with double portions of beef."

The chef leans his body forward to whisper words in the young man's ear. "The master will be at the top of the West Mountain today. Be there before the twilight hours." After finishing the sentence, the chef adjusts the posture and continues his work – no further communication between the two.

The young man finishes his meal. When he leaves the restaurant, it's just by noon, cloudy with patchy drizzle.

The West Mountain is one of the highest mountains around the town. It has the name because the top of the mountain is facing the west. In good weather, it provides a splendid panorama of the town. The young man has been to the peak before. Neither the mountain nor the view is comparable to the Altai Mountains in his childhood memory. But to meet the never-met master, he has to climb that mountain one more time.

After some calculation, he is confident to reach the meeting point on time. So he plots a casual route to climb the mountain.

Guilin's subtropical winter is affected by the continental high pressure and the monsoon from the polar regions. But it hardly snows. So even the coldness is inferior to the steppes'.

The West Mountain is filled with mist. Fortunately, the young man can vaguely identify his planned route. It doesn't take him many detours. After a few hours' climbing, the young man finds the peripheral area of the peak. Over there, the rains stop, the clouds have been pushed aside, and the sun slowly peeps out from behind.

The view must be very different from what I saw last time.

Having thought of this, he gives up the casual plan and speeds up his climbing. The diffused light shining from the top draws flat shadows of the shrubs on both sides.

It doesn't take him a while before reaching the top of the mountain. Gazing into the distance, he finds the familiar landscape, numerous limestones, steep cliffs, and karst valleys of various sizes and shapes. But today, the light illuminates a more generous spectrum. The red sandstones and conglomerates coloured in a layer of silver clothes against the backdrop of the clouds and mist. In the vicinity, the rocks look to be uplifted by an endogenous strength, while the narrow valleys look to be eroded by an exogenous force. In the distance, the mountains form a continuous wavelet, like dancing under the sun. One after another forms a very interesting composition.

"A fine prospect, isn't it?"

When he is immersed in the delightful atmosphere of the *mise en scène*, an old voice comes out unpreparedly from his back.

Turning around, he finds an old man and a kid. Neither of them has hair. From their outfits, it is hard to judge whether they are grandpa-grandson or master-apprentice.

The young man asks the elder respectfully, "You must be the master I am waiting for. What should I call you? "

The old man nods, "Names are only used on the stage so that the audience can remember the characters and distinguish their roles. As authors, we will create the stage, so we shouldn't care these symbols too much."

Without waiting for the young man's reply, the old man continues, "Have you finished reading the Noodlarianism chronicle?"

"Yes, I have learned all the details by heart. "

"Which part touched you the most?"

"To be honest, the description of the last navy battle gave me inspiration," the young man titles his head. "Without reading the chronicle, I would never have discovered that the leaders of both sides of the battle fifty years ago turned out to be apprentices to the same noodle master."

"A few years ago," the young man continues, "when I studied the military briefings of that battle, I was confused by the movements of the warring parties. The commanders' decisions and strategies were quite sloppy and unreasonable from the post-hoc analysis. But now I find all these discordant notes undoubtedly point to one conclusion: the purpose of this battle is to preserve the core of noodlarianists, the shadow bureaucrats in the court of SONG, the communicators from the NOMADIC empire, and the hidden military consultants and operators from both sides."

With enlightenment, the young man says, "This juvenile battle easily erases the names of these fleeing felons in the historical and official text. This is the best way to protect them."

"Where are these noodlarianists now?" The young man posts the question. Then he intends to answer by himself, "Let's recall that after that navy battle when the invincible NOMADIC empire armies entered the field controlled by Rice Noodles, Soba Noodles, and the Can Sect, the armies were always resisted by *irresistible* forces. My bold guess, the Noodlarianism ghost fleet supports these forces."

"Do you agree with this guess? " The young man turns to the old man.

The old man doesn't directly reply to the question. "The path of history looks strange and complicated because people can't see the forces behind the historical figures. So when you identify those forces, you won't be too surprised by the historical changes," says the old man.

"Indeed, historical events do not always advance at our pace." The old man pauses for seconds, then continues, "It may be faster or slower, sometimes to the left and sometimes to the right. However, the general direction of its advancement is certain because this direction is not led by one or two finite lifespan creatures."

"Time paves the way for historical figures!" The old man speaks to the young man. "The figures can proceed in their own paths and in their preferred ways, but all their choices and their preferences are fleeting in the long river of history. Only the eternal entity can resist the influence of time. And that is us, the immortal Noodlarianism!"

"This is exactly what I think," the young man nods unceasingly.

The old man is very satisfied with the response. "That means you are ready to take my entrance exam?" he asks.

"I think I'm ready." Although the young man says so, he looks with doubts at the child beside the old man.

"You don't need to worry about this kid. He is much matured than his actual –"

Before the old man finishes the sentence, the kid rushes to speak in a confident voice, "I've studied the beef soup from the Pilau Party. I come up with a better recipe. I am creating a new type of noodles, the beef noodles. I cook the beef in two ways. First, I boil the beef to make a soup, like what the Pilau Party did. But then, I use the beef again. I put it into the gravy to make the stewed beef. The beef soup comes with noodles and is topped with stewed beef. So I make use of the beef to generate two flavours. The beef noodles will definitely noodlise those meat-eaters in the West."

"But go through two processes, shouldn't the meat have less nutritional value than those in the pilau?" The young man asks without any specific intention.

The kid feels that the young man isn't impressed by the recipe. He argues, "Why do we need so much nutrition? Eating noodles is to make people feel full, not to make them strong. The eaters only tell the differences about the taste, not the nutrition. My tasty dish will be more popular than those plain nutritional dishes." The kid's dissatisfaction is already overwhelming.

The old man interrupts the conversation, "Although the boy is four years old, his understanding of Noodlarianism's doctrine is better than yours."

"That's very true." The young man concedes defeat for his vulnerable opinion.

"If I admit you as my apprentice," the old man talks to the young man, "the kid will be your *senior* brother. Therefore, today's exam, he also needs to be present."

"I see." The young man takes a close look at the kid. He finds the kid has a special jaw, similar to someone he met in a foreign land. But he couldn't come up with the exact name. At the moment, a dark cloud happens to block the sun. So the young man withdraws his gaze.

"Let's begin the exam," the old man declares, "I only have two questions, but I want you to give a complete and comprehensive answer."

"I understand."

"What is **noodlisation**, and why does noodlisation need the empire?"

The young man bows his head, pondering over the questions. Then, after quite a while, he raises his head again with confidence. "Noodlisation refers to a metamorphosis," he slowly responds. "This metamorphosis consists of both violent, extreme transformations and slow, gentle alterations. Both types are designed by Noodlarianism. The aim of metamorphosis is to reconstruct an individual, a patriarchal clan, or a state structure, making the object respectively obedient, controllable, and integrable enough for Noodlarianism.

"For individuals, the noodlisation makes them obedient. The strong seasoning noodles carve the heavy flavours into juveniles' hearts and neuro-systems, making them addicted to carbohydrates. After decades, the juveniles become adults, and they are attached to the homogenous dishes. Their digestion systems and intestinal flora resist compromising with diverse foods. Then monotonous nutrition sets up a physical or even mental trap for these consumers. They are destined to live in the noodles' environment."

The young man looks at the dark clouds in the distance, takes a deep breath, continues.

"For patriarchal clans, the noodlisation makes them controllable. Filial piety sorts out the elders of the clans as the representative agents. Under the moral doctrine of obeying the elders, none of the youths can get rid of the moral bondage of the patriarchs. Therefore, as long as the elders are noodlised, the spontaneous control of the tribes is done.

"The elders' eating habits are formed in ages, so noodlising the elders is not a one-shot grand banquet. Controlling the patriarchs is about predicting and satisfying their desires. Given their foreseeable remaining lifespans, the elders must abandon most unnecessary desires, but they must be hard to ignore the basic desire, the desire to survive. Let them notice that such a desire is not shameful and exactly coincides with the longevity creed of Noodlarianism. In addition, push the youths in the clan to uphold the importance of this desire. Under the desire for longevity, the patriarchs will take the initiative to embrace the Noodlarianism doctrine.

"The Noodlarianism doctrine gives the patriarch the greatest right within the clan. As a return, the noodlised patriarch can navigate and interpret all the outside influences to safeguard the interests of Noodlarianism. "

The young man gives his speech while looking at the old man. The old man's brows are frowning; he doesn't seem to be very satisfied with the description.

The young man adds, "Of course, there are other means to control a patriarchal clan – for example, genetic diseases. By limiting the number of surnames, I found that the noodlarianists can effectively infer the potential diseases for a clan. My bold speculation is that after decades, my family clan will be famous for having diarrhoea or cardiovascular diseases."

The old man smiles awkwardly in silence.

"The best control is undetectable," the youth man reiterated his point. "Only by filial piety can the elders and the youths be established in a strict ordering chain. And only in this invisible chain can the noodlarianists efficiently find the pillar of control."

Then the young man stretches his hands, continues.

"For a state structure, noodlisation makes its components to be easily integrable.

"A social structure consists of classes. When all the classes aim for the same goal, the integrable force emerges. Such a unique goal is not easy to be found. However, suppose a single goal can be represented by a dual form. In that case, it is easier to divide all the class members with two different labels: the 'noodles' and the 'gravy.' They serve two opposite

purposes. The antagonistic purposes lead to a grand game. The endless grand game is, in fact, an integrated structure of society.

“Noodlisation is to draw a clear boundary of the dual form and to avoid ending the game or disintegrating the centralised structure. Noodlarianists continue drawing the boundaries by weakening or strengthening either side of the game. Because for two identical grey bars, we cannot identify the boundary. But if we whiten one bar or darken the other, the boundary will emerge. This is the purpose of social noodlisation: generating conflicts and oppositions.

“Different classes have different concerns. But the means of creating conflicts and oppositions in all classes can be similar. Soldiers and workers are unhappy by inequality, merchants and politicians are upset with unequal trades. People are outraged with betrayals, injustice trials, and deprivation of rights. Twisting the cause and the effect of historical events can easily generate all kinds of these emotions. The hatreds from the distorted causalities and the fears of suffering similar historical persecutions will lock the participants in this endless grand game.”

The young man pauses, waits for the response. The old man signals him to continue.

“Why does noodlisation need the empire? An empire with a massive territory and a strict hierarchy is an ideal petri dish. To effectively control the vast territory, the emperor has to design a rigid hierarchical chain to transfer his orders and distribute authority. Such a chain must produce associated friction during the power transfers, a kind of antagonism reaction. The conflicts and oppositions spontaneously appear under friction. That means the greatest strength of the grand stir in an empire comes with the imperial system itself, the desire to destroy this system. Noodlisation will materialise naturally in this petri dish.

“The emperor must realise the friction. But he won’t be able to deprive his own authority. What he can do is reinforce the chain, hoping to diminish the friction. Ironically, such an action will only magnify—”

“Enough!” The old man interrupts. “I know you have a deep reflection on this principle and have developed your own insights. But I have an obligation to tell you that the simple, spontaneous activities you imagined are followed by the sacrifice and dedication of our missionary noodlarianists. Although Noodlarianism is an old idea, it is the only vivid ideology in this land. Without our efforts, this empire would have fallen apart a long time

ago. A centralised empire needs us. Also, Noodlarianism needs the empire to restore the exhausting 'noodles' and 'gravy.' The centralised empire makes the aristocracy fragment into pieces of weak and incompetent clans. They will be the perfect refills."

"Well," the old man changes his tone of voice, "even though your understanding of the principle is not yet perfect, I am impressed by your innovative arguments. I think in a few years, you will become a great noodlarianist. Hereby, I will entitle you –"

"I have a question!" This time, the young man interrupts the conversation.

The old man is shocked and unpleasant, but he holds it back, pretending to be nothing. "Go ahead with your question," he says.

"Although I understand the aristocracy is the main force against centralisation, I am wondering whether the existence of the class is important to maintain the continuation and the sustainability of the social structure?" The young man poses the question carefully.

This time, the old man doesn't hold back his anger; he shouts to the young man. "Are you saying that the existence of the aristocracy is beneficial, and you wonder whether such a class should be preserved? How dare you!"

"The centralisation system is a pyramid," the young man seems to ignore the anger of the old man. "The power converges to the singular peak of the pyramid. An aristocracy's hereditary right makes it a solid and secure middle layer of the pyramid. Isn't it a good thing for centralisation?" Asks the young man.

Finding the old man is still in anger, the young man develops his argument. "As far as I know, some western ideologies, such as Steakism, advocate a stable noble class. So the aristocrats in this class have more security. The security may be transferred into confidence and the willingness to improve or perfect the current social structure. We know that the improvement of the change needs a rational and phlegmatic temperament and a sincere spirit. Most souls addicted to change can only follow the trend of the change, no matter if it is good or bad. We need the force that can lead us to a better state after the change."

The young man states his opinion in a gentle tone, but his expression is firm. Upon seeing this, the old man tries to put away his anger. He speaks earnestly, "The strength of

Noodlarianism is based on denying the existing orders and values. Only when people repeatedly observe the contradictions in the existing structure can people reflect on the validity of such a structure. So we let them see the defects, inspire them to abandon the system, and motivate them to build a new one. This is the process where Noodlarianism can survive. Not the process of pursuing a perfect order. Because once things are perfect, the need for changes will vanish, and once the stirring stops, Noodlarianism ceases.

"You must be wary of those ideologies that aim to perfect the world. I should warn you that the world cannot be perfect. As a noodlarianist, you can borrow their power to defeat the existing order, but you shouldn't trust their creeds. *Negating the present* is the root of Noodlarianism! *Creating a deniable future* is the law endowing immortality to Noodlarianism!" The old man emotionally says.

"I understand your idea of improving the structure." The old man looks at the young man's eyes. "It is true that eating the same kind of 'noodles' and 'gravy' for a thousand years will make people feel resentful, making them suspect the diet. But you have to understand that this food makes them alive. It makes the culture alive."

"What you need is patience." The old man seems to look forward to the response of the young man. He explains, "Any seemingly perfect theory or structure has flaws. Over time, the impact of these deficiencies will continue to expand. What comes with these intensified deficiencies is the force of denying the seeming perfection. So Noodlarianism needs the *change*, but Noodlarianism's purpose of plotting the *change* is to be *unchanged*. You need to be aware of the things that really attempt to *change* you. What Noodlarianists need are the changes followed by the *insecure rules and laws*, the changes destroying the existing structure to the greatest extent, in a word, the unsustainable changes. Noodlarianists need to establish all kinds of disorganised and illusory orders and structures, convenient for destruction and helpful for stirring. Remember: distort the structures, not perfect them!"

"But if an imperfect ideology does not improve itself, how could it be immortal?" Yet, the young man is not convinced.

Without waiting for the answer, the young man continues, "If Noodlarianism is for centralisation, then it should pay attention to the damage of the centralisation. The friction erasing the central authority is caused by the structures of imperfect transmission,

by the elements that resist harmonically transferring orders. Why? Because the system is far from perfect, also because the inhabitants in the system do not appreciate improving structures.

"The friction is caused by the mismatch. For a social system, everyone is controlled by the system, even though some of us participate in designing the system. Thus, everyone has the responsibility to learn to appreciate the beauty of the rules and orders, so that the designers will be sensitive to radical structures and the inhabitants will distinguish the source of inappropriateness. Both groups will participate in perfecting the structure."

The old man shakes his head, saying, "Your idea is simply unrealistic. In front of you, there is one immortal ideology. This is Noodlarianism. According to your logic, Noodlarianism is perfect."

"But this kind of immortality is just a means of long-term governance." The young defends his arguments, "As you just said, the governance must contain imperfectness. For example, filial piety establishes the control chain between the old and the young. Now suppose one ancient wise man made a mistake. This mistaken order can be passed by in generations by the filial piety law, and its disturbance can be amplified. How can a young person rescue the fault associated with this distorted order? An impossible mission within the imperfect structure. This example of contradiction simply follows your argument of the imperfectness."

Finding the old man is speechless to the refutation, the young man decides to continue developing his argument.

"The individuals who cannot understand the source of the imperfectness will not be able to make any meaningful changes. Their solutions are to continue the historical trajectories of the past, repeating the history.

"Any human-oriented order must have a moral origin. As a human being, any order designer must have made mistakes. Along the time, the inherent deficiencies in this order eventually will face an incompatible environment. By then, a contradiction occurs. The contradiction follows bifurcations and chaos, which pushes society to an unknown situation. The majority only can pick up short, temporary actions to tackle such an unknown situation. Noodlarianism takes the opportunity to guide the majority to its favourite direction, a direction of rebuilding a similar world.

“Because in a similar structure, Noodlarianism, as a thousand-year-old ideology, *knows* every detail, every vital point, everything. The repeating structure discloses to noodlarianists a complete loop. Noodlarianism immortality comes with the loop! Noodlarianists use their *prophetic* power to guide the short lifespan majority back to the original tracks, back to duplicate their mistakes, and back to construct a similar world.

“For Noodlarianism and for short lifespan individuals, a repeating world may be the best option. But a repeating world has no uncertainty, thus no possibility of exploring better alternatives. Will this world be the best option for real immortality? I suspect.”

The old man stares at the young man fiercely. He is shocked by the young man’s words and behaviour. But the young man doesn’t seem to care; he continues talking on his own.

“The unknown is powerful and frightening. So the public instinctively resists facing the unknown. People cannot easily contact and decipher the order that they do not comprehend. Because a beautiful unknown structure may be cruel and ruthless, and even its production may not conform to most people’s ethical and moral concepts. It takes time and a living sphere for an individual or a community to perceive the great beauty hidden inside the unknown.

“Ideally, we should cultivate all to acquire this ability. But unfortunately, it is neither economically feasible nor theoretically reasonable. Learning the structure and the order takes time and energy. Scarcely any has the opportunity to approach the great beauty under the current social structure. Society needs more; it needs a class of scrutinisers to interpret and comprehend the great beauty of the unknown.

“This class can support the scholars and the craftsmen to seek some really charming and mysterious structures and then spread the finding to the majority. By observing those works, the public may first learn how to appreciate the beauty of their bodies, the natural, and the living creatures; then, they would appreciate abstract beauty, such as fine arts, music, architecture, poems, or arithmetic figures. Finally, they would approximate the great beauty, the invisible orders that push all other visible ones ahead. By then, they become obedient and spontaneously united. In this case, the stir is not for the physical body but for the spiritual and mental faculties. This stir would unite different souls!

"The responsibility of this class is to illuminate the possibility of better options, to protect the advancements, to lead the evolution out of the maze, to enhance the knowledge of the public, and to let the public appreciate the beauty of the ordering structure. Of course, by then, the public will also involve in perfecting the structure."

The young man finishes expressing his thoughts in a fast speed. He feels relieved.

The old man gives a deep sigh. "You are still fantasising about the aristocracy. Don't you see that they are all greedy and profit-seeking people in the end? Their narrow mindsets and conservative thoughts only can afford an act of pure selfishness."

"Indeed, the noodlised aristocracy is disappointed." The young man also sighs. "Some wealthy families are interested in accumulating possessions which makes them only concentrate in the familiar ordering fields. The prosperity in these fields, sooner and later, will exhaust. But these myopic gangs have neither the strength to resist the progression nor intelligence to alleviate the miseries. When they anticipate their power being vaporised in the stage of history, they will only react more greedily and destructively. Their transient wealth contributed subtle value to the world.

"However, this is not completely their fault. In a repeating historical path, all the existences and achievements could be in question. Therefore, I am talking about another type of aristocracy: a class of explorers, testers, and verifiers who will cultivate and shape new societal orders. Perhaps these nobles would be different from those ancient ones who created the fundamentals, but their new contributions should prove the existence of our current era. We need these kinds of people to stay at the upper side of the pyramids, to maintain the pyramids heading upright.

"Does Noodlarianism provide the soil for exploring the new orders, for testing their existences, and for verifying the imaginary boundaries? Suppose all the members in the upper class are overwhelmed with maintaining their own position. In that case, they are very unlikely to have enough courage and willingness to undertake the mission of learning the unknowns. Even if they were forced to learn, they would only choose the familiar but unattractive areas, demonstrate their existences by archiving some suspicious achievements and pseudo prestige. For example, they may subsidise the diversity of the noodles, innovate the noodle ingredients, promote the land price of noodle shops, *creatively* hedge different types of wheat flour for trading, or share the noodle masters in different shops. I am not saying that these works don't have their values. But they are

simply not the reason for sustaining such an elite class. Because these ideas are simply the known profitable patterns in many other fields. Noodlised aristocracy blindly occupied the upper class's resources without fulfilling the upper class's obligations. In the repeating historical world, this noodlised aristocracy is proceeding on the self-destruction paths by rehashing their own profitable instruments.

"The noodlised nobles dare not touch the unknown, so they can do nothing about the unknown." While saying, the young critic looks at the old man.

The old man turns his head to the distant sun. The yellow sunlight, whose attention-grabbing property was overbearing a few minutes ago, is turning orange. Sunset is about to begin.

"Noodlisation has nothing to do with the falling," the old man responds to the critique. "Everything is destined to fall, like the sun. Noodles preserve the descendants of these farming kingdoms and empires. They will still exist when the sun rises again, and their lives will be the subject of writing history. But nomads without noodles may disappear in the darkest night, just like a group of passers-by in history."

The young man looks at the sky. The cyan sky absorbs the orange sunlight. The clouds in the tertiary stage of colour are perceived as reddish grey in his eyes.

"The centralisation sustains the collective existence in the extreme situation," says the young man. "The meaning of survival is to preserve the culture, the history, generally speaking, the collective information. The collective information will be passed by in generations, as a means of connecting the past and the future.

"But think about how this collective information is transmitted. It is transmitted by individuals, the carriers of any information. Can the noodlised individuals be capable of properly conveying the collective information? No, they cannot. The collective information, the cream of the centralisation, would be easily distorted and erased by the noodlised carriers. Because they are incapable of affording the contents, reproducing the explanations, and extending the scopes.

"In the grassland, a group of herders also work together to resist the harsh environment. Centralisation is an instinct. But when the number of the group members increases, some members will leave the group, voluntarily or involuntarily. They migrate to other places.

The centralisation-decentralisation pattern is a natural formation-demise pattern. The people who left original habitation carry their memories and cultures, then they will start to interact with new people and will form new civilisations somewhere else.

"These changes do not mean that the original civilisations have ended. They just appear in other forms; some may be worse, some perhaps better. I don't think this kind of centralisation-decentralisation pattern results in worst civilisations than the distorted pattern in the noodlised terrain.

"My old entourage told me that the Steakism in the West is very similar to the Barbecurianism in the steppes, but it has an advanced theory on meat-cutting, fire control and has developed better grill equipment. The women are beautiful; the men are strong. Some of them may be from the tribe that was once upon a time defeated by Noodlarianism. No, I don't think the nomads are passers-by. They are still in the grand history, in the distance, in places beyond the reach of noodlarianists' vision."

The old man doesn't seem to be listening. The sun is turning from orange to red. The sky is full of purple clouds reflected by the ray lights. In the far distance, where the sunlight cannot reach, mountains' silhouette is concealed by dark clouds and fog.

After a long time, the old man says, "According to what you said, I think you should have lost your interest in becoming a noodlarianist."

The young man stands in stunned silence. But he quickly recovers. "I am afraid so," he replies firmly.

"You already know too much. You should be able to foresee that you won't be anything else besides 'noodles' and 'gravy.'" The old man sighs again. He says, "Don't forget your favourite scene, the last navy battle. Be ready for this scene. You may be the protagonist on the next repeating stage."

"My enthusiasm for current management methods completely died out." The young man attempts to twist the old man's intention. "In fact, I have some ideas for improving the existing technology. I think the existing mechanical structure will evolve in the near future. Compared with the decadent political arena in this stagnant pool, I am more inclined to explore new ordering concepts. You know the organisational form of Noodlarianism is, in principle, mechanical, and its advancement is deterministic dynamics. As long as the

noodlarianists think deeply in the abstract fundamentals of uncertainty, they may appreciate some other dynamical patterns and organisation formats. My girlfriend in the West has –"

"By then, you will know." The old man doesn't seem to have the patience to hear the young man's narration. He interrupts the young man's last attempt of drawing the alternative possibility. Then he stares blankly at the fading sun.

It was thought to be a harmonious and relaxing ceremony of apprenticeship, but it results in a severe debate on the fundamentals and existences. Now, when both sides cross over the bottom line, any further discussion seems to be meaningless. To dodge the awkward atmosphere, the young man switches his position, shifts his view to admire the beauty of the sunset.

Today's sunset is extraordinary.

The tranquility of the sky is enhanced by the lonely blues and the contented purples of the sunset. The mountain and the forest seem to exhale all the mists, adding a wider spectrum range to the overall light diffusion. The hard edge between the valleys and the smokes produces a high-contrast chain. The chain with an interesting juxtaposition of the light blocks the connection between the sun and the earth.

But slowly, the cloud cover disperses, and the light converts the entire sky into a new source. Several shades of violet in the sky soften the silhouette of the clouds and the sun. The shadiness of the clouds is projected onto the river, giving it an unblemished, porcelain surface. The mist brings in a complimentary tone to the Omni light from the sun. The combination of cloud and mist has created an almost abstract image where most of the canvas has been subdued except for the softened monotone fireball. At this time, an airborne bird glides on the updraft, the bird's grace and poise adding a heavenly dreaminess to the image.

As if thinking of something, the young man says, "I think we can call it an ordinary sunset on an ordinary day."

After a while, the old man answers, "An insignificant year should be closed by an insignificant date!"

The young voice responds, "Assuredly!"

The rest glory of the sun is about to be obscured by the clouds. The young man realises that it is getting late. He talks to the old man and the kid, "I must leave." Then, after noting that both of them have no intention to respond, he leaves the peak on his own.

The adjacency is predominantly dark. Some small lights from the disappearing sun seem to burst forwards. The shadows in the mysterious aura create tension. Finding the kid intimidated, the old man comforts him.

"That guy has a restless mind. His sympathy for the aristocracy and his radical pursuit of structural beauty is completely incorrigible. He is destined to be unqualified, nor will he become a patron of noodlarianists. Unlike him, you will become the pillar of Noodlarianism. He and his entourages will eventually proceed in a completely different direction from yours."

The old man pauses for a second. "But perhaps we need him," he says.

The child doesn't seem to be as scared as before. He asks, "Will we make him as insignificant as this year?"

3. NOODLUTOPIA

Part I

Letter sent to the most powerful city of the world from the capital of the Ilkhanate, addressed to X, member of the Great Peace Agency, dated 6th September N1494.

To the illustrious grandmaster,

Some years ago, as Your Lordship well knows, my instructor and I, in the disguise of flour merchants, headed towards the West to commit the mission of spreading our greatest ideology of Noodlarianism, building a new base of the noodle chain and joining the secular forces to noodlise the local folk food.

For so many years, I dare not forget the original heart; these missions are deeply imprinted in the trajectory of my life.

I am writing to Your Lordship concerning a gravest and mysterious event: the unstoppable fall of the Floury States on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean sea. The Savage Pilau was able to attack and capture many floury protectorates in the past twenty years. The believers of Dough near me are all in the worries of the Pilau's violence. However, I seem to sense something different. I am of the opinion that another kind of dynamic force is driving the crash, and this kind of dynamics shares many similarities with what I learned from the advanced noodlisation theory.

As Your Lordship is already aware, Leavened Dough Guild, what we know as Pizzarianism, seems to face a crisis of overpopulation in its territory. Unlike the civilised noodlarianists, the pizzamen do not have a well-developed stirring scheme. However, I think they were practicing a manoeuvre similar to spitting out the sputum.

I beg Your Lordship to forgive my vulgarity. But this is undoubtedly the most convenient way for Your Lordship to understand this crafty plot. Like stirring up the noodles and gravy, spitting out the phlegm also utilises one's internal force and also satisfies one's desire – clearing up the throat. Imagine a mixture of saliva, sesame sauce, cud of noodles, and mucus sticking in Your Lordship's respiratory tract. Would Your Lordship swallow it, or would Your Lordship spit it out?

In the past two centuries, this mechanism has frequently been spitting out a steady stream of fanatics. Just like Your Lordship's thick phlegm on the floor – although it comes from Your Lordship's sacred body – carries the infected debris that can pollute the environment and indirectly force the pedestrian to absorb the unwanted bacteria. Wherever these fanatical pizzamen went, they caused full of devastation. Although their main bodies – what they call themselves “yeasts” – are merely peasants plus some nobles who lost inheritance rights, they have unrivalled destructive power. This power is no less than that of the converted Noodlarianism herdsmen from the grassland and the pavement heroes of the patriarchal clan who failed the imperial examination.

Your Lordship must find it confused that such a mighty spitting force has become weaker and weaker in recent years and finally fell to the point of being ravaged by the Savage Pilau. I wonder if I might be granted permission to bring some explanations to Your Lordship's confusion?

According to my observations, the decrease of the kinetic energy of the spit seems to be a part of the centuries-long ferment movement led by Pizzarianism. The sacred movement, *Recapture the Original Land of Flour*, against the Pilau may be just the camouflage for a *yeast-transporting* operation, through which the Leavened Dough Guild was able to continuously send yeastlike entities to the territory of the Unleavened Dough Union.

When the transportation finished, pizzamen heated up the sacred movement so that the “yeasts” could ferment smoothly inside the “dough.” The ancient Union had to suffer the self-inflation. The inflation impaired the existing structures. The orders of the Unleavened Dough Union now become soft and fluffy. Eventually, I think the Union is like a fully fermented “dough” that still considers itself “unleavened.”

As Pizzarianism has almost achieved its goal, it gradually stopped transporting “yeasts” to the East. I expect that the shortage of “yeasts” will finally lead to the end of the Floury States.

In my most humble opinion, this two centuries’ enduring ferment movement is a foresighted and well-executed spitting. Just like a perfect stirring, it is worthy of being praised and paid tribute to in history.

Nevertheless, I simultaneously felt a sense of crisis approaches. Although the spitting and stirring movements require different raw materials, the ultimate purposes behind these two share a surprisingly similar logic: creating endogenous destruction.

Currently, Pizzamen can use “yeasts” to ferment the unleavened “dough.” In the future, they might think of making “noodles” with the “leavened dough.” We must not allow this kind of fermented “noodles” to exist! Noodlarianism must beware of this substitute ideology.

My instructor and I decided to make further contact with Pizzarianism. We want to identify the essential operation of the spitting. Also, we will attempt to sell to the pizzamen an idea that spitting and stirring are completely two schemes: one is to stir dark “gravy” in pure “noodles,” and the other is to spit out the impurities caused by the “yeasts.” By pointing out the difference, we hope to eliminate their potential intention of fermenting “noodles.” My instructor will try to meet the chairman of the Guild, and I am about to participate in the election of the eastern patriarch of the Guild. I wish Your Lordship could support our selfless missions.

May the all-powerful Lord guard us against forthcoming darkness. Let the light of Noodlarianism illuminate this dark and ignorant place.

Long live Noodlarianism!

Your Lordship’s faithful servant
M

6th day of September N1494

*Letter sent to the holiest city of the world from the capital of NOMADIC empire,
addressed to X, member of the Leavened Dough Guild, dated 21st September
1294.*

To the respected and reverend lord,

Some years ago, in the disguise of yeast merchants, my uncle and I headed towards the East to commit the mission of spreading our greatest ideology of Pizzarianism, exploring a new hub of pizza, and joining the lay brothers and sisters to acidify and enzymise the local folk food. I drafted some of my experience in the manuscript *A Million of Noodle Recipes* in my spare time. I heard that the manuscript had reached Your Highness's hands. It is my great honour to have Your Highness's comments on this manuscript.

As Your Highness has mentioned, this work values detailed information. When I wrote the draft, my target readers were ordinary Dough practicers rather than pious pizzamen. Therefore, even though I am personally satisfied with the draft as an introductory textbook of noodlisation theories, I found that none of this content would merit so much as a moment of Your Highness's attention.

In this letter, may Your Highness allow me to disclose a completely different perspective of Noodlarianism, a deep investigation report of the ideology?

The main body of Noodlarianism is represented by the proletariats, in other words, the ignorant majority. This is similar to what happens in the Pizzarianism terrain. However, the spectrum of the proletariats here is extremely unitary. In these remote pariah lands, the soldiers are just armed peasants; the workers are skilled peasants who want to earn extra money; the intellectuals are schooled peasants who like to educate the youth. In short, the class of proletariats merely consists of peasants or re-packaged peasants. The other professional citizens only count for a small fraction of the population.

Over here, the *nobles*, including the royal members, convert themselves as noodlarianists. However, they definitely do not belong to the aristocracy classified by the Guild. In my opinion, these *nobles* are closer to the farmers. Because they have been guided by a profound farmer-oriented ideology in their lifestyles and thinkstyles. Nevertheless, these *nobles* do not completely conform to the farmers defined by the Guild either. Their knowledge often spans a substantial number of subjects. They show talents in

arts, tactics, rhetoric, medicine (incl. physical fitness, poisoning, healing), and cuisine, etc., but they lack the enthusiasm to have complete mastery in any of these subjects. They are, in a sense, poly-farms.

As a macroscopic force, the class of poly-farms has tenacious vitality. They use their diversified knowledge to invent a variety of ways to fight against nomads, ranging from armed confrontation to spiritual and physical corruption. A rumour says the current Khan of the empire has also been brainwashed and stomachwashed by these poly-farms. Personally, I hold my skeptic about this canard. But his predecessor was assassinated by the noodlarianists. So the Khan must have scruples about Noodlarianism.

The constituent elements of the poly-farms have never changed since the emergence of Noodlarianism: they are the qualifiers from the imperial examinations and the survivors of various stirred purges. As long as the centralised examination systems still exist and as long as the quasi-periodic stirs still eventuate the dynastic shuffles, this class would be immortal.

Actually, the immortal desire is even praised as the principle of this class or perhaps of almost every noodlarianist. The spirit of noodlarianists is to pursue the continuity of the consanguinity. Their soul, their spiritual love, or even their lives are entrusted with this continuity. Therefore, independence or privacy has little meaning in such a rural mass organisation of peasants and poly-farms.

I am afraid that direct acidification is not a feasible tactic for this kind of condensed agricultural empire. Over here, most followers in the Vegetarian Association have been noodlised. Also, over here, the brothers and sisters from the Pilau and Falafel Association gradually accustom themselves to eccentric filial piety. If Pizzarianism couldn't wait to send the elite pizzamen to these pariah lands, Noodlarianism might easily homogenise our aces.

That is why I shall not cease to supply Your Highness with my humble idea in the hope that even a single one of my words may advance Your Highness's intentions.

My idea, in short, is to cultivate "natural yeasts" from "noodles."

The peasants and poly-farms, although they are indispensable to society, have many weaknesses.

Their monotonous professional background makes them have poor comprehension of abstract and rigorous orders. They lack love for the ultimate in intelligence or knowledge. Their philosophy and extended proficiency in astronomy, geography, arithmetic, management, etc., mostly come from a summary or a collection of thousand-year-old agricultural wisdom.

Their worship of reproductive, survival, and hedonism activities attach themselves with undistinguished exploratory souls. Even though they can construct a set of empirical models suitable for farmers, the poly-farms lack awareness and willingness to explore the unknown world. Once a complete empiricism worldview model is formed, they seem comfortable adhering to that view forever and ignoring or even covering the counterfactual facts.

Their collective happiness is defined by the consanguineous merriment rather than individual joyousness. The actual satisfaction for the individuals is completely suspended or ignored. As a compromise, the individuals are encouraged to look for superficial substitutions, making them believe in materialism or consumerism. Apart from the chases of physical stimulation, gourmet, and longevity, their individuals seem to have no motivation to discover personal happiness, and thus no incentive of examining their personal existences. As the reward system of its meritocracy is to comfort the illusory happiness of individuals, the system is fragile and unsustainable in the long term. The short-term illusory sensations never fill the void of self-identifications, the crypto indicator running in our blood.

Their centralised industries and government can only sustain the pool of craftsmen and experts at a minimal level. Their social norm puts the desires of survival and appetite as of the utmost importance. Meanwhile, it suppresses all other desires. Except for the necessities of living and working, they do not encourage other types of productions, especially the creations that may diversify their styles of thinking and living. So there is little demand for new concepts and ideas. Also, there is no soil for cultivating the enterprising spirit: Their centralised system is rough and rigid. It cannot reasonably adapt itself to novel things, just like their stomachs cannot digest raw beef and fresh milk smoothly.

Last but not least, their stirring system inevitably enters a state of self-corrosion, which makes the progress of their civilisation go backward. This is because their centralisation system cannot maintain the continuously expanding state. The retrogression of the

development process happened in some specific time window. This window ranges from several decades to hundreds of years, but no more than four hundred because the capacity of their centralisation would almost exceed the limit by the time.

Given these weaknesses, my humble idea is not to conquer this union of peasants and poly-farms by force. What we need is a bigger *centralised system*—just like our current system of controlling farmers—to direct this “noodle” system, allowing the members of the “noodle” union to live on their comfort zone, work hard, and pay our great Guild their membership fees, the tax. A closed and self-sustained terrain of “noodles” would be an ideal tax collector for the Guild.

To outsource the taxation duties, we could even take advantage of the “noodles.”

For stirring, Noodlarianism has to drive the citizens to two extreme states: the uncivilised peasants who are easy to be manipulated as they are extremely sensible and fanatical; the noodlised poly-farm who are skilful at many fields but cannot enlighten the public about the fuzzy latency because they are extremely rational and realistic. Noodlarianism utilises its imperial examination to educate the citizens on moving towards these two extremes.

Therefore, exploiting the centralised Noodlarianism system is all about hacking their education system.

The basic logic of the imperial examination is to deform the hereditary power of their *nobles* and redistribute the opportunities based on an individual’s ability. However, this is only a superficial form. The real assessment is based on how the examinees understand and accept the agricultural ethical laws. Those who approve of the agricultural ethical laws and can skilfully apply this ethical framework in necessary agricultural and social management will be included in the “noodle” category regardless of their backgrounds. Other thoughts, no matter how profound they are, will be categorised as the “gravy.” These two categories are incompatible with and hostile to each other, which generates the original force of the regression.

I might be so bold as to believe that Your Highness reaches the same conclusion as his servant. This official noodlised education system is similar to the primary education models in the Guild. However, the peasants and poly-farms believe that such a model for immature intellectuals could also be used for training the top executives. Apparently, their vision of education only focuses on fairness but ignores diversity. I could understand this

vision. Because for those farmers, the quality of crops, the weather, and geographical factors play far more crucial roles than the personality of the cultivator. Any qualified farmer is supposed to harvest similar products given the same natural factors. Therefore, they believe that anyone who passes the imperial examination can become a meritocratic nobleman, a qualified “noodle.”

A peasant often chooses one literate son from many, then gathers the whole family’s strength to invest in his study, hoping him to obtain a “noodle” title and its benefits. Thus, the learning goals of “noodles” are to obtain political benefits. Few have the passion for identifying the authenticity of learned knowledge.

These educated “noodles,” no matter how superb examination skills they acquired, would not be mature enough to explore the unknown fields. The standardised examination filters out those with independent spirits and critical thoughts. But this is good news to the Guild.

The “noodles” do not understand that knowledge comes from the humans’ explorations of the unknown fields. Therefore, they give up their willingness to become explorers. Our pizzamen can use the missionary torch to illuminate the knowledge that is unknown to “noodles,” guide the selective “noodles” to the direction of our interests, and manifest the supremacy of Pizzarianism. By the time when some of these enlightened “noodles” manage to contact their ignorant central Agency, they would soon figure out their inferior Agency is not able to produce the same illumination. The arrogant poly-farms of the Agency would definitely treat those enlightened “noodles” as aliens, a standard peasant attitude towards unknowns. The Agency probably would implement the ostrich policy to suppress the doubts and questions about the inferiority of their ideology. At this moment, the enlightened “noodles” would automatically convert to a “dough” that carries the “natural yeasts.” They are going to “leaven” the whole empire.

For speed up the fermentation, my humble suggestion is to consider some particular fields highly praised by the noodlarianists and lock their research progress in those fields. According to my observation, astronomy seems rather important to Noodlarianism. However, their methods may be less accurate than the Pilau’s. That is why the noodlarianists are making a great effort to noodlise the Pilau inhabitants within the empire. Your Highness may consider grouping some outstanding candidates with fanatical interests in strips and let them conduct further investigations on this possibility.

In the hope that my information will be useful to Your Highness, I kiss Your Highness's hands covered in flour and submit to your grace.

Your Highness's faithful servant
M

September 21st 1294

Letter sent to the most divine city of the world from the capital of MING empire, addressed to X, member of the Society of Pasta, dated September 26th, 1601.

To my most honourable patron,

After a long silence, I am writing to Your Grace in the hope that You Grace will still have cause to bestow upon your faithful servant the attention and care that you have shown him hitherto. As Your Grace well knows, after I graduated from the renowned Université des pâtes, I headed towards the East to pursue my passion for strips, to preach the blessing of pasta, and to commit my mission of witnessing the cross-cultural cuisine, which is a part of Your Grace's grand project *Noodlutoopia*.

After almost twenty years of stay in the Noodlarianism lands, a few days ago, I was permitted to live in the capital of the empire, where I should be to promote the progress of the project further. Therefore, I am hurrying to give Your Grace an account of the project's current progress so that Your Grace can express your most wise opinion upon it and grant me the privilege of once again serving our common goals.

Your Grace may wonder, after so many years, why the number of customers in our Pasta restaurants remains at the insignificant level in this pariah state. I suspect that the leading cause of this tragedy is the sauce. We cannot find qualified cheese over here. It is hard to prepare some standard pasta sauce, such as Alfredo, Amatriciana, or Pesto.

Our main channel for obtaining cheese is through importing the products from the base of the Dairy Association in the southeastern islands. Unfortunately, this trade road is full of Tofu pirates. The Can Sect is the primary supporter of this armed smuggling gang. The Tofu Party, especially the Can, share some common interests with us in overseas trade, but

they held open revolts against the current central government, an Everyone's Noodles' government. Thus, the Noodlarianism navy severely cracked down on overseas trade and restricted the import of all suspicious commodities. Since the Dairy Association supplied some cannon equipment to the Tofu pirates, cheese was also included in the suspect list.

The moratorium on cheese imports lasted a long time.

I must confess to Your Grace that the nasty idea of mixing pasta with gravy often lingered in my mind under such a harsh condition. But thanks to the brothers in the eastern island country, we were finally able to break through the blockade of cheese. These shrewd and reliable pastamen sowed the seeds of the ambition around the noodlised Tofu aristocrats in the island country so that their poly-farm general, who always dreamed that the Can Sect could re-dominate the "noodle" lands, was successfully persuaded to attack the MING Dynasty. This war greatly injured the vitality of the MING's navy. Thus, our trade road can be restored.

We also benefit from a side-effect of this war. The noodlarianists were used to despise the Tofu aristocrats in the islands, even those who belonged to the noodlised Can Sect. But during this war, the Tofu aristocrats, after being enlightened by Pizzarianism, have demonstrated their abilities through defeating the Noodlarianism army. The loss of battles pressed the noodlarianists to change their arrogance and prejudice towards the pasta brothers.

On the other hand, the "gravy" masters among the noodlarianists start alerting to cheese. They realise that cheese, like gravy, relies on a strong flavour to attract customers. So they are now very hostile to the Dietary Association. Personally, I think gravy and cheese are natural enemies. According to my observation, all long-term gravy consumers seem to either resist the taste of cheese or suffer from indigestion of dairy products.

This is marvellous news for Pizzarianism. In the West, our great Guild faced a huge amount of protestors supported by the Dairy Association. But in the East, it is possible to keep all the "noodles" away from dairy products due to lactose intolerance. Thus, the Guild would be the only cross-cultural cuisine supplier leftover in this pariah state. The Society of Pasta could be the monopoly for shaping the contents of this cross-cultural cuisine.

Perhaps now, it is the right moment to submit to Your Grace the next implementation plan of Noodlutopia.

Within the Noodlarianism's central Agency, some members have felt the pressures from the outside world, and they initiate a campaign. Their aim is to modify the classic noodlisation laws and to produce some novel "noodles" based on a so-called *five grains theory*. We need to be cautious with the tactic of this campaign. Because similar strategies happened before, when the Agency attempted to noodlise Vegetarian Association, the Pilau and Falafel Association, and even the oriental branch of the great Guild. The peasantry noodlisations were so successful that now I can hardly restore the tracks marked by the ancient Pizzamen in this pariah empire.

I will take all the necessary precautions to avoid the glory of the great Guild being eroded again by noodlarianists. However, before going to the details of my plan, I will bring Your Grace's attention to the foundation of Noodlarianism ideology.

The ideology of Noodlarianism emphasises the morality in human nature. Since everyone has bright and dark sides, morality encourages the light part and depresses the dark one. But most of the time, we live in the grey part, neither completely white nor completely black. In these grey zones, morality helps us to define norms to distinguish the relative light regions. Nevertheless, these ethical norms in human society need to adapt to the changes in the living spheres because those norms are defined by the human being, who is just a member of living species in nature. Nature always changes, although the span of such a change may surpass generations.

In this pariah empire, a moral system often lasted about four to five generations, namely 2-300 years. The stereotype of "noodle" regimes is built upon the ethical activities against the previous dynasty's corruption, or the invasion from outsiders, or a combination of the two. When the memory of these activities fades out in generations, when the regime becomes more corrupted or a more threatening enemy emerges, the rightness of the current regime would be weakened. Since the moral system is the foundation of "noodle" regimes, the defects in the original moral system would be magnified to impact the current "noodle" regime.

The flawed moral system cannot carry a constantly changing society with its inherently rigid doctrine in the deeper layer. So noodlarianists periodically stir the running processes to reset their system with modified or *novel* moral laws.

In such a system, all the educated “noodles” are extremely submissive to authoritarian laws. The “gravy” gangs are against those laws incompatible with their interests. However, due to the poorly educated background, the gangs have no clear vision about how to modify the inappropriate laws. Thus, noodlarianists can fully control ideological development and supply new moral laws and ideological theories in each stir. After the stir, society can remain peaceful before the emerging issues of these laws and theories.

Given these features, my bold conjecture is that as long as “noodles” confront more profound and more stable laws that can encompass their moral beliefs, they would submit to the new ones.

Most ethical laws of Noodlarianism are inspired by the astronomical and geographical knowledge from farming experience. This knowledge constitutes the Noodlarianism worldview. Thus, Pizzarianism needs to use the laws of nature to defeat those farming experience-based laws.

Noodlarianism is confident with their ideology because those ethical laws have proven reliable through thousand-year life experiments by their ancestors. However, these proofs are empirical, not logical. In other words, their *laws* are likely to be invalidated outside of their arable lands because these philosophical farming laws are strongly regional and sensitive to climate change. The evidence is that no matter how they toss their northern neighbours, including absorption, resistance, assimilation, and alienation, they have not yet completely noodlised the northern nomads. On the contrary, the great Guild has *fermented* the entire Eurasian nomads in a few hundred years. It can be seen as proof that our ideology is absolutely superior to Noodlarianism.

The centralised system of peasants and poly-farms tends to control everything, which results in crude and superficial implementations in almost every layer, especially the grassroots. Although our central council in the Guild only regulates thoughts ideologically, it effectively monitors and reviews various industries. Pizzarianism can infiltrate into deeper layers and can handle the multi-scaled structures more effectively.

Now, the great Guild just needs to demonstrate the advantage of Pizzarianism to the “noodles,” since “noodles” submit to the authoritative scholarship. Pizzarianism needs to promote a solid candidate to grasp the most crucial chair in the authority of Noodlarianism ideological departments.

My humble opinion is to consider the astronomy department. Astronomy encourages free souls to look upward and guides their views from the accessible world to the inaccessible one. The current understanding of astronomy in the Guild is more advanced than the Pilau's, and for sure, it is ahead of the Noodlarianism's. By receiving our knowledge, the "noodles" would soon figure out the difference between Noodlarianism and Pizzarianism. The difference just likes the fire of the candle and the light of the stars in the night sky. Candlelight is the radiance of matter after burning, but the radiance of stars comes from the burst of energy with rigorous material organisations and orders. The "noodles" will understand that the flame of Noodlarianism can only last for about 300 years, while the flame of Pizzarianism is eternal.

The chosen pizzaman or the chosen pastaman of this mission should acquire superb numerical skills to demonstrate the unquestionable advantage of Pizzarianism in predicting the movements of celestial objects. His prestige is enough to astonish all the "noodle" scholars, let them feel that their destiny can also be foreseen under Pizzarianism computation.

On the other hand, the chosen one should also be able to deal with the mass of "gravy." Unlike "noodles," the "gravy" gangs can shamelessly noodlise anything. They distorted the origin of knowledge, added dust to the pure theories, or manipulated the outcomes of preceding researches. A standard Pizzarianism scholar would feel huge discomfort when staying with "gravy." Pizzarianism needs another means to deal with "gravy." One possibility is to drive them out of this continent in the future. For example, we can support a part of "gravy" to move its stirring base to one of our sites, i.e., forming a Sicily in the East, so that Pizzarianism can slowly dilute "gravy" and analyse its principal ingredients. For the moment, there is no available means to avoid "gravy" corrupting our knowledge.

Given this concern, I would beg Your Grace to consider a sloppy astronomer, perhaps a flawed polymath, among Your Grace's outstanding apprentices to conduct this honourable and formidable mission. The chosen one, like Adam, expelled from the Garden of Eden, will continuously enlighten the noodles with his contaminated knowledge. Year after year, his disciplined students and students of students will seize all the crucial ideological positions in the Noodlarianism's central Agency, and they will form a "dough" to spread their corrupted knowledge and punish the disagreed thoughts.

Your Grace will have a better understanding than his servant of this plan. It is nothing else but a stirring plan. Nevertheless, the stirrer in this run will carry the glory of pastamen. He will become the origin "yeast" to ferment the "dough" of "noodles." The ideology driving the stir will be the supreme leavening system. The contaminated formulas and distorted models will become the navigator leading the fools to the chaos. The data-driven peasants and poly-farms will be locked in the mathematical and logical objects which they seldom comprehend. By then, Noodlarianism will be subordinate to the great Guild like their slogan *whoever leads the stir will get the leadership!*

So, my most honourable patron, I have nothing more to say about the plan. All that remains to me is to thank Your Grace once again for your infinite generosity, and to implore Your Grace's continuing favour while I await your choice.

Your Grace's faithful servant
M

September 26th, 1601.

Part II

1

Adam wakes up very late this morning. Last night, he, with great interest, spent a long time reading some manuscripts banned by the Society of Pasta. His brothers from the Guild secretly brought him these manuscripts. Without exception, all the authors of these manuscripts are exploring forward along the research direction of the heliocentric theory. He is not so familiar with this theory. All he learned about this theory during his school was that one of the pioneer heliocentric theorists was executed in an oven. At the time, the Guild was very scared of this heretical belief because its claim – Pizza represents the sun, not the earth – was challenging the traditional metaphoric doctrine in Pizzarianism.

However, some expelled pizzamen seemed to stand by the heliocentric theory, including Adam's idol. This man dropped different sizes of pizza from the pizza tower to demonstrate his belief in the relation between gravity and velocity. Unfortunately, after dropping the pizza, he was locked by pastamen, and the Society banned his works for a long time. But now, after almost 20 years of his death, every pizzaman pursuing the degree has to learn the formula of this relation.

Adam clearly understands what does the forbidden knowledge means to the Guild. It means that the idea is as dangerous as the double-sided medical weed that can both heal a strong mind and destroy a vulnerable spirit. It means that the Guild must prohibit the mass from reaching the idea and place an embargo on this powerful mental weapon to its opponents. It means that the pastamen, as weedkillers of the Guild, should crash the seeds of the idea at any cost. But it also means that the vital seeds will probably survive and secretly grow somewhere else; eventually, the persevering weeds may become strong enough to counter-attack the killers' minds and enrich the Guild's armoury.

The banned heliocentric theory currently attracts generous support from the Dairy Association, just like the theory of the falling pizza before. Meanwhile, Dairy Association is one of the primary opponents of Noodlarianism. So is this all a coincidence?

Regardless of the possible political trick behind the ideological battle, Adam finds the content of the theory very promising. Although it took him a whole night to understand the basic concepts of the heliocentric theory, he has grabbed some intuition of the models.

Adam found that one model from a fellow countryman describes a fascinating situation. Suppose that the earth revolves around the sun. Imagine that the sun is the centre of the pizza, and the earth's moving orbit is the pizza's edge. Every slice of the pizza looks like the area of a sector drawn by the movement of the earth and the distance from the sun. The heliocentric theory declares that the earth circles the sun once a year. If a pizza cutting process follows the same movement, the process will simply cut the pizza into 365 slices. Moreover, as one day is subdivided into 24 hours, there will be 24 smaller pieces in each slice. Then as one hour is subdivided into 60 minutes, one can cut each $1/24$ slice into 60 smaller slices, and so on. In this way, if one continues cutting the pieces, there seems to be nothing left. However, this seemingly zero-area thing represents the **infinitesimal** moment in which the earth moves. And this infinitesimal moment is equivalent to our instant life. One's life is an integral of all these instant moments. So this infinitesimal thing seems to be the fundamental of its collective object. If society is a collection of beings, could the infinitesimal represents some spontaneous soul instantly emerging?

None of these manuscripts gave a clear definition of what this infinitesimal is. Adam was pondering on the definition, which made him hard to fall asleep. Staying up late is really not healthy for Adam, especially he is over 70 now.

Lying on the bed, Adam stretches a bit and then decides to get up.

2

When Adam first arrived in the empire's capital, he was living in a room provided by the Society of Pasta. But as he is now one of the first ministers of the imperial court, the empire offers his living place. Amongst several proposed locations, he chose the current place. This residence can satisfy his dual role: a pastaman and an imperial servant. Adam divided his residence into two parts, one is for living and official meetings, the other is a private pasta restaurant with a courtyard garden.

Adam catered to the local habits and named the pasta *western noodles*. In his restaurant, the standard menu only contains noodles. The pizza dishes are provided in a separate hidden menu that is only available to western customers. The locals love his restaurant and the tastes of the noodlised pasta. Adam is proud of his invented dishes. Because some customers, especially the female customers, decided to convert to Pizzarianism after going to his restaurant, even though most of them had never tasted any pizza in their lives. They must be seduced by the charming flavours of the western noodles.

The various flavours come from the spices grown in Adam's garden. Every day, after getting up and washing, Adam's first formal activity is to cultivate his flowers and plants in his garden.

His garden is quite compact. But it is already a luxury symbol in the Noodlarianism terrain. The emperor's garden is almost the same size as Adam's. However, the garden is smaller than most well-established gardens in Adam's home country. When Adam visited the emperor's garden, he was shocked by the random pile of rockeries, the small pool, and the unreasonable layout. Adam felt like he was standing in a potted landscape, surrounded by artificial mountains and miniature trees. Except that in a bonsai, some clay figurines would be placed, but in the emperor's garden, Adam met the real emperors.

It seems to Adam that the noodlarianists are afraid of nature. The anxiety reflects on their preferences of living in the crowded cities, distancing themselves from the wildness, and owning narrow courtyard gardens. Sometimes, such fear seems to develop a rebellious mind. The Great Peace Agency often drafts the centralised plans to transform the natural environment. Few of these transformations succeeded in the end. Still, the projects undoubtedly established the images of necessarily maintaining the centralisation against nature. An ironic image often comes up in Adam's mind: In this vast and seemingly boundless empire, the senior officers from the Agency enjoy squeezing themselves in their narrow courtyard gardens every day to appreciate the minimised rivers and mountains, the model of their *conquering* territories.

Adam despises the noodlarianists' tastes in gardening. So he designed his garden in his own way, an adventurous and experimental way. The garden sits between the restaurant and his living place. The stone paving in the garden is the same as the restaurant's interior, making the garden path a natural continuity of the restaurant. Rosemary and dill intersperse among the stones.

A few years ago, a noble lady visited Adam to consult with her job application. She applied for a very competitive position. The Barley Sect supported her main competitor. The worries made the lady suffer from insomnia. Adam mixed aromatic herbs and put them inside a mini-pizza model. He suggested the lady carrying this model all the time. Since that night, the lady was able to sleep. She gave all the credits to Adam and Pizzarianism. Later, the lady got the position, the wife of the emperor at the time. Now, she is the mother of the current emperor. She also asked Adam to make another model and

gave it to her mother-in-law. Thanks to rosemary and dill, Adam found two stable patronnes.

The bush of rosemary and dill is thick enough to outline the garden path and lead the customers' attention up to the central garden. There, it sits Adam's standouts, capsicum plants, and their neighbours. From summer to autumn, Adam can harvest gorgeous fruits from these plants. According to Adam's experience, little chillies grow well when he plants tomatoes and aubergines nearby. The little reds can also protect the rosemary, dill, or basil from funguses. But somehow, they do not get along well with fennel and beans. This observation made Adam give up the idea of growing leguminous plants in his garden.

In the summer, chillies plants form magnificent flowers, some white, some purple. Together with the flowers of star jasmine and dog rose that cover the sidewall of the garden, the colourful segments add depth to this vibrant area. A variety of fragrances diffuses in the garden. Closing the eyes, Adam can easily identify his exact location by smelling the fragrance.

For those imperial concubines who were curious about Adam's restaurant but not able to depart from their living quarters, Adam sends them jasmine petals and roseberries as gifts. He instructs the ladies how to make herb tea by using these ingredients. This tea brings the ladies tranquility and peacefulness. As returns, when they share the moment with the emperors, they often put in good words for Adam and Pizzarianism.

Among all the spices, chillies are Adam's favourite. He has modest tolerance to spiciness. However, his noodlised customers, regardless of gender, are totally obsessed with this exotic flavour. Perhaps because they are accustomed to the strong gravy, their taste buds can easily adapt to the spicy food. Customers who were hostile to pasta can immediately change their attitudes once they degust with these western strips covered by the chilli sauce. They have never experienced such stimulative taste before. The chillies allow Adam to conjure up his incredible cuisine.

3

Apart from his passion for chillies, another reason that forces Adam to take care of the garden by himself is that he is not fully confident with his servants. His servants are a group of diligent and attentive people. It's just that sometimes they are too enthusiastic to demonstrate their importance and wisdom. Once upon a time, Adam committed the

laissez-faire policy to his servants, letting them take care of his valuable garden. Very quickly, the chillies became pampered. The plants overindulged in nutrients, their sizes were bulkier, but their tastes were lacklustre. If Adam didn't terminate the policy, the servants would continue frequently changing the soil, excessively watering, and choosing neighbour plants according to their aesthetics; the whole garden would evolve in the direction of *noodlisation* – losing its vitality, becoming fussy, and overdone.

Although Adam succeeded in shielding his garden from his servants' *attacks*, he failed to protect himself. Not long ago, an old loyal servant brought his beautiful young daughter to the residence, hoping to share his workload. Adam upheld his usual frivolous style, dealing with the youth lady in a casual way without setting any sophisticated edge. Almost at the same time, various rumours about the two spread around the town. The rumours described Adam as falling in love with the girl at first sight and initiating a passionate pursuit. To investigate the origin of the rumours, Adam did a few follow-up tests. He planned an episode and restricted the range of initial insiders. Soon the result of tests became available. If Adam could make any positive conclusion on the result, Adam would like to think that his loyal friend and servant fellows wanted to promote this beautiful lady's value in the marriage market. For this intention, Adam wished them success. They did. The youth lady finally found her Mr. Right.

With hindsight, Adam sniffed a strong "gravy" smell from the propaganda campaigns conducted by his servants. Since they are all imperial employees, Adam inferred that the "gravy" gang from the court set up the trap. This deduction surprised Adam because, unlike the usual pastamen, Adam was hoping to maintain a harmonic relationship with the "gravy" gang, at least on the surface. But, apparently, the gang disregarded his unleashed goodwill. Instead, it used the trap to threaten Adam's position and ruin his influence amongst the officers and the concubines.

Adam speculates that the Agency might be planning a new stir, and his role might have been placed in its scheme. But at present, he can't figure out any exact development of this stir. So all he can do is wait for the further signal.

The last big stir Adam involved happened about 40 years ago. The stir made the gigantic dynasty alter its appearance almost instantly. Adam felt like participating in a botched drama in a country theatre. The show was led by a group of amateurs who did not rehearse well. Perhaps, the original script was a severe, long-lasting drama. But the actors successfully turned it into a farce. So the director had to cut the show abruptly and replace

the previous amateur group with a new one. Adam found the new group still full of crappy actors. But few proficient actors were able to stay in both groups. Adam considered himself one of them.

In the script of the previous dynasty, Adam played a subordinate role. When he arrived, that empire had shown the signs of collapse. But it was Adam who successfully guided the development of the show to the ludicrously improbable situations. Because Adam, the arms supplier to the previous dynasty, did not provide proper props.

4

The previous dynasty was operated by a family of noodlarianists. But after almost 200 years of operation, the royal family of Everyone's Noodles and the Agency had already accumulated numerous contradictions. So the Society grasped a good opportunity, sent a group of pastamen to the land. Adam was among them. Adam's main professional area was computation, but he had some basic astronomy and military knowledge. The previous dynasty was planned to renovate the farming calendar, which required a lot of celestial calculations. So it released a chair position in the department of astronomy. This position was used to be offered to a noodlarianist or a noodlised member from the Pilau and Falafel Association. But since the falling pizza theory allowed Adam to provide more precise calculations on the forecast, he finally got the job.

Adam spent a few years in the department of astronomy, doing research on the farming calendar of wheat and educating his students. However, the Agency finally discovered that the falling pizza theory was contrary to the noodle theory of five grains. The Agency withdrew the support to the new calendar. But it was too late. Adam already re-packaged the theory to encompass five grains. Many students of Adam had been convinced. Even the emperor was impressed by the idea of falling five grains. So the previous dynasty insisted on popularising the new calendar.

The Agency was afraid that the new calendar would seriously impact the wheat harvest and taste, further jeopardising the production of noodles. So it called on the "gravy" gangs around the empire to use armed force to oppose the new calendar. The noodlised government army couldn't resist the armed "gravy" gangs. At that time, Adam was assigned a new mission, building cannons for the noodlised army.

Although the falling pizza theory can calculate the movements of both celestial bodies and artillery shells, building a cannon is an entirely different business. Fortunately, Adam had got the relevant materials from the Society, the literature, and the manufacturing drawings. The materials only instructed how to make cannon prototypes. But a half-century ago, those prototypes fooled massive troops of peasants in the civil war on the eastern island country. So Adam thought it was worth giving a try. Adam managed to produce dozens of outdated cannons in a mechanical way. It turned out that they were more than enough.

The court realised the power of Adam's cannons. Meanwhile, the previous dynasty needed a greater military victory to suppress criticism and doubts of the centralised power. The court requested Adam to manufacture more prototypes to act toward the emerging threat from northern Barbecurianism. The emperor even promised Adam to taste his homemade pizza once the mission was completed.

However, Adam hesitated to accept this request. Adam observed that both the Guild and the Agency had shown their impatience with the dynasty at the time. The Guild complained that the expansion of the pizza chain was too slow. Meanwhile, too many celebrities preferred the pizza restaurants rather than the noodle shops caused the Agency discomfort. The previous dynasty tried to please both sides, but in the end, both were offended. Being in a dilemma of consolidating these two forces, Adam told himself that it was time to plot a move.

As a pastaman, Adam thought that he got along with the noodlarianists. For "gravy," Adam held a neural view. He rarely intervened in *gravy's business*. But he had indescribable intimacy about "noodles." Perhaps because most of his students were "noodles." Some, after receiving Adam's education, sincerely considered themselves "western noodles." The "noodles" brought fun and happiness to Adam.

On the contrary, Adam became being incompatible with many of his Pizzarianism peers. He couldn't agree with the aggressive order from the Guild to expand the pizza chain. About the benefits of opening more pizza restaurants, Adam often felt that the Society of Pasta confronted a conflict of interests with the Guild. There might be only a column list of pasta on the menu of a pizza restaurant, but in a noodle restaurant, noodle dishes occupy full of the menu.

As an imperial servant in the department of astronomy, Adam and his pasta fellows were newcomers. The Pilau and Falafel Association had seized several permanent chairs in the department since the NOMADIC empire and had committed the self-noodlisation policy to its members since then. However, the ideological control of the department was still firmly in the hands of noodlarianists. Following the trend, Adam would expect more noodlised orders waiting for him ahead.

If Adam accepted the request to supply more cannons, later, he would have to assist in opening more pizza restaurants to please the Guild and to continue accommodating himself to the ridiculous five grains theory. To him, neither mission deserved any further effort. So Adam kept postponing the response and seeking an alternative opportunity.

5

A turning point happened after the third times Adam delayed the request. One student of Adam was promoted as the commander to station at the northern border. The commander hoped Adam could send him as many “western noodles” and cannons as possible so that the commander could form a novel “western noodles” army over there. Adam guessed that it was a tactful strategy of the court. If Adam agreed to help, the commander would require to continue the manufacturing mission in the future. Although Adam was aware of the intention of this request, he was curious whether his ambitious “noodles” students would follow the orders of the court in the future.

The task of bureaucratic “noodles” in the court is to follow the trend, to climb up the ladder. At the very beginning, Adam understood that his students were not coming to him to learn the truth but to fulfil their political ambitions. Would these “noodles” be happy with stationary defence in such a stirring era instead of looking for shortcuts climbing on their ladders? Adam trusted that his lovely and impulsive students would figure out some marvellous stirring opportunities with the advanced weapons. Adam counted on these opportunities to get rid of his nightmare missions. He admitted to sending almost all candidates with the military potential to this western noodlised troop.

His students didn’t disappoint him. Within one year, a mutiny occurred in this army. The commander was dismissed. The lower-ranking officers, with the cannons, defected to the Barbecurianism. The strength between Barbecurianism and Noodlarianism completely reversed in an instant.

Some students dispatched messengers to Adam afterward, informing him of the situation in the northern steppes and inquiring about some issues on the cannons' maintenance. Through the messages, Adam could grasp some vague ideas about the political tendency of Barbecurianism and his students' intention of conducting such a coup d'état.

The Barbecurianism terrain was occupied by JIN Dynasty around N13th century. When JIN's army took SONG's emperors and empresses as hostages, many noodlarianists infiltrated this terrain in the disguises of the kidnapped royal relatives. Since then, Barbecurianism gradually accepted many noodlised features. For example, cool noodles with sesame sauce and filial piety were also a part of the local culture. But this northern regime definitely preserved many traditional meat cuisines. Adam's students thought that the Barbecurianism regime could be more beneficial to the "western noodles," which was the reason for betraying the regime of Everyone's Noodles.

According to the descriptions, Adam understood that the Barbecurianism nomads had no specific preferences for noodles. It would be possible that Barbecurianism would treat pasta or "western noodles" the same as "cool noodles." He guessed that the full meat diet of Barbecurianism probably was less dependent on gravy so that the pasta sauce might revive in the northern regime.

Adam made an analysis of the situation: At the time, the threat of Barbecurianism and "gravy" gangs made the fundamental Noodlarianism regime quickly lean on Pizzarianism, but the regime was half-hearted about pasta. While in the northern regime, pasta might have a chance of becoming a state banquet. Based on the above analysis, Adam believed that his students had made their optimal choices, for themselves, for the Society, and probably also for Adam.

Adam formally declined the order of cannon manufacture. Also, he stopped teaching the falling theory. He was worried about the new technologies to be leaked to "gravy" peasant army. Instead, he devoted himself to helping his students. He provided the advice, helped them to occupy the real power positions in the northern regime, especially those positions in the astronomy and military departments. Adam's ideal situation was to create a bifurcation: Support the emperor to form a southern Pizzarianism State, have a Barbecurianism State in the North where the pastamen and "western noodles" could reconstruct the vague ideology of nomads. In this way, Society can bet on both ends.

Unfortunately, Adam's plan was not fully realised. The "gravy" peasant armies *miraculously* achieved consecutive victories. They successfully invaded the almost unguarded empire's capital. Adam's friend, the young emperor of the previous dynasty, did not abdicate dignifiedly.

However, the "gravy" gangs could neither support effective government functions nor control those "gravy" masters living in the capital. Not even say that their troops were simply vulnerable to the nomadic army armed with cannons. Finally, the Barbecurianism regime gained the authority of the whole Noodlarianism lands. The second NOMADIC empire was founded.

Adam and other pastamen were invited by Adam's students to renovate the ideology of the second NOMADIC empire. It was the strengths of "western noodles" that lifted Adam to the current position.

6

The golden moment between Adam and his students has long passed. Now, Adam stands on the opposite side of his students' demands. The students wanted Adam to drift with the tide, to continue decorating his theory of falling five grains. But Adam refused. His initial motivation for creating the falling five grains was to simplify the falling pizza theory, to make his noodlised students understand the content. His simplification was a great success. The students welcomed the falling five grains theory. They quickly developed various successive lemmas to support Adam's theory.

Nevertheless, Adam realised the abstract embodiment of the truth gradually lost its glory in the five grains' setting. Giving up the simple and testified relations and looking for complicated and untestable structures seemed to be the goal of many successive lemmas. These thoughts obviously guided the theory heading towards a different direction, favouring Noodlarianism centralisation rather than Pizzarianism's. Adam disparaged his own theory. But this time, his students didn't follow his advice. They continued to support the falling five grains theory. They intended to enhance its reputation, hoping that the theory would be a part of the altar. By then, nobody could defeat the theory, including the inventor himself.

Adam understood this intention. What "western noodles" believed and what they were willing to contribute were always beneficial things to their own or their consanguinities.

They were eventually “noodles.” They calculated the celestial motion, but they never appreciated the great beauty instantly controlling the motion. They falsified the abstractness, as they thought the falsification would uplift their prestige in Noodlarianism. They never devoted themselves to grasp the meanings of the unknown. They would accept a map with inaccurate information only if Noodlarianism controlled the central terrain of the map. They rarely understood that this kind of intellectual compromise, covering a provable fallacy, would lead them to the real failure, even though the failure hardly impacts their lives or their political prestige.

This evidence tells Adam that Noodlarianism is still the final winner of the last stir. The second NOMADIC empire is just a cover. The noodlarianists have controlled the ideology of the army and the court. The noodlarianists made Barbecurianism nomads believe that they were *invited* as the rulers of this territory by Noodlarianism. As a return, the rulers have to follow the Noodlarianism doctrines strictly.

What surprised Adam was that the nomadic noodlarianists were really more barbarian than those he ever contacted. The nomadic noodlarianists created a thousand-year-old “gravy” company whose purpose was for corrupting the Barbecurianism rulers. The company also set up very restrictive rules for “noodles,” asking them to simulate an ideal world of Noodlarianism. Any truth contrary to Noodlarianism doctrines should be inaccessible for the public in this simulated *world*.

Adam knows what would happen if he insisted on advocating the falling pizza theory. One student of Adam, the husband of the insomniac empress, the previous emperor, was very curious about the falling pizza theory and the pizza. The emperor was a man of ideas, but he was easily attracted by the gravy’s smell. His taste bud was so heavily affected by the gravy food that any other food would spoil his appetite. Adam suggested the emperor stop taking gravy food for a while. Adam promised to make him a pizza in his coming 30-year-old birthday and to teach him the falling pizza theory as long as the emperor regained his gourmet taste.

Unfortunately, the emperor couldn’t meet that date. The gravy food ended the emperor’s digestion system. Before his death, the emperor confessed to Adam that he couldn’t resist the taste of gravy. Even when the emperor converted to a vegetarian, he couldn’t help eating gravy tofu. At that moment, Adam realised how deep the root of Noodlarianism was in this Barbecurianism empire.

Sitting in his garden, Adam recalled the past and forgot the time. His most important task of the day is to give his only leftover student the last lecture. The only student, probably his last student, is the current eighth years old emperor. The little one has come to Adam, but he didn't even realise it.

"How you are today, Adam?"

"Oh, Your Majesty! Please forgive my rudeness!"

"That's all right. I saw you immersed in watching these plants, so I took a casual tour around the garden. I like this al fresco style and these fruits. Look at these charming chillies. They must be very delicious."

"Yes, Your Majesty. They can be made into very delicious sauces, but they are a bit astringent when eaten raw. Because its capsaicin is too irritating, it may cause diarrhoea. I am doing some research on improving these drawbacks. Perhaps, I need to improve their soil, diversify the fertiliser, treat them with pesticides –"

Instead of taking Adam's advice, the little emperor takes one small piece, puts it in his mouth. When biting the chilli, the emperor feels a hot gas spreading rapidly in his mouth. He starts to cough. Adam quickly hands some water to the emperor. The emperor drinks the water, but the spicy sensation still stays in his mouth. His tears keep spinning in his eyes.

"I can't handle it, Adam. This is terrifying spicy."

"Me neither. Your Majesty. This is why I make them as a sauce. I grind and chop them into small pieces, adding vinegar, salt, and sugar to dilute the biting taste. The sauce would be less pungent."

"I wish you present me the sauce first." The emperor keeps breathing in fresh air, hoping to dispel the hot feeling in the mouth.

"Your Majesty, the raw materials are full of surprises. Handling the raw materials needs patience."

Suddenly, Adam comes up with an idea. He is going to supply other *raw materials* to the little one. He is curious how the emperor is going to react to new *raw materials*. Adam decides to start his last lecture immediately, first proposing an exploratory question.

"Your Majesty, why do we study astronomy?"

The emperor is stunned for a while. He doesn't expect to be asked questions in this situation. However, he is in excellent condition today. Therefore, he is ready to deal with any tricky questions of this course.

"Because it is the representation of the whole universe." The emperor quickly adjusts himself to the study mode. He is a brilliant student. "The movement of the sun and the stars disclose the changes of the climate, of the environment, then of the human activities. By understanding the changes, people can predict and arrange all sorts of events, from the living schedule on agriculture, work and rest, to the political schedule on the dynasty change or the court's reshuffle."

"That's absolutely right," Adam says approvingly, "Your Majesty, you have already known the precise positions of the important constellations, the procedure of calculating celestial movements. You learned how to calculate the solar eclipse based on the five grains theory. You have acquired all the necessary knowledge of astronomy. This is the last lecture. Let us consider something else."

Adam continues, "The dynasty makes astronomy inaccessible to the public because we don't want everyone to involve in the engagements of all those important events. We convince them that all these important changes are associated with the signs from heaven. We manifest the supreme right of predicting the astronomical movement. So the successful forecasts imply that the following occurrences are under our control. As long as the regime can predict heaven, everything else should be under its control too. So the last lecture, let us consider the prediction of the heavens."

"That sounds interesting," the boy says.

"An object may have many signs, such as a binary sign of good and bad, a pentagonal sign of five grains, or simply a polygonal sign of many elements," says the old man.

"Let's say we are particularly interested in one object, the sun. We don't know which sign the sun would enter in the next period. Still, we can observe the relationships between the sun and many other celestial bodies. For example, whenever the sun enters the wheat sign, all the other celestial bodies have previously been to the bean signs. We can establish a wheat-sun-and-bean-others relationship. Next time, by observing the bean signs of other celestial bodies, we are able to predict the future sign of the sun. The prediction of the object relies on the available signs of its related objects."

The boy thinks for a while, then asks, "But what if the realistic relationship is too complicated for modelling?"

"Your Majesty, this is the whole point of your existence."

"Me?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. Inadequacy is always an issue in any centralisation system. The computational power of a centralised system is limited. So the system can only stereotype the reality as some feasible models. Those complicated relationships beyond the computational capacity of the system are attributed to the limit of the system. That's something in Pizzarianism is called the unknown or the supreme being. Noodlarianism prefers to personify heaven as "the people." On the basis of personification, the limit of the human beings, namely the son of heaven, is you, Your Majesty."

Adam continues, "The son of heaven is a symbol to present the supreme force, also an ideological way of management. Through this personification, noodlarianists reduce all unknown and unexplained causes and effects to one object, an object entitled all the worship."

"Also, all the blame," the boy whispers, dissatisfied.

"The coin has two sides, Your Majesty."

"Anyway, Adam, please continue. Can I understand that the prediction is about some signs of the current objects pointing us to the future sign of the object of interest?"

"An excellent summary, Your Majesty. This is the rough idea of prediction. In fact, this is also the key idea of a centralised system. In order to predict the sign of one object, we need the information of other objects. When one could predict all the essential objects in the system, one would control the system."

8

The emperor wants to know more details. He asks, "But how do we find out the related objects. In your example, we can get so many objects related to the sun's movement, such as the moon and the zodiac planets. Are you going to use all these objects?"

"It turns out that the movement often directly depends on a few related objects. In the analysis, we remove those unessential or unwanted relationships. Just like in a centralised government, the functions are only implemented by a few departments," Adam explains.

"I see."

Adam continues his explanation. "However, there is a way to simplify the analysis. The imperial servants are extremely welcome this kind of simplification. Here is the trick. When the inter-dependences among the objects are wiped out, when we are able to integrate all the objects into one, in this extreme case, we can just focus on the unique object's own historical information. In other words, by unifying all small objects in the system as one big object, we are able to ignore all the influences from the independent smaller ones inside the big object."

"Only self-information of the unified object?" The boy asks.

"Yes, Your Majesty. Suppose the unified object moves in a cyclic manner. In that case, we can easily predict its future sign by observing its own cyclic pattern."

"Why would this cyclic prediction be useful? It sounds like predicting the sunrise and the sunset."

"Your Majesty, that's because when a predictable object causes the system to change, these changes become controllable. For example, noodlarianists attach the signs of five grains to each dynasty. Because they simply want the changes of the dynasties to coincide with the observable cyclic pattern from the heavens. Now since the cause of the change is

predictable, the prophecy of the system exists. The power of prophecy could easily accumulate the majority support, as the people admire the force that could waive their fears and worries about the uncertainty. The majority support endows the authority."

The boy immediately follows the speech, "And the authority makes the society under control. I see, Adam. As the heavens are predictable, the dynastic succession is controllable. Now, I understand that maintaining the five grains structure is equivalent to safeguarding the controllable centralisation system. This is a marvellous idea, isn't it, Adam?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. The five grains structure gives an appealing simplified description for the heavens."

"And your falling five grains theory gives the precise relationships of all celestial bodies in such a structure. Bravo, Adam!"

"I appreciate Your Majesty's kind words. But personally, I am still uncertain of the rightness of my work."

"Uncertainty of those relationships?"

"Uncertainty of its predictability, in reality, Your Majesty."

"Adam, you have invented this advanced theory. It explains the celestial movements. It completes the insufficiency of the five grains structure on celestial prediction. There is no need to worry about its predictability. Those noodlarianists who contribute to building social cycles based on the five grains structure will sooner or later become your followers. I am proud of being the student of the creator of such a theory, and I will devote myself to defending your theory, like all your other students. We are going to create the social cycles and the waves that will make the public witness the great falling five grains theory. You can reckon on me," the boy comforts the old man.

"In fact, it worries me."

"Why?" The boy asks in confusion.

"Your Majesty, how much do you know about simulation?"

"Simulation is to mimic some real things."

"Precisely. Simulation is an attempt to build up a virtually real environment. The ideological entity relies on this process to observe how the selected characteristics perform in some simulated events. The simulator generates these simulated events. The five grains theory is a simulator of Noodlarianism. It gives the key parameters for simulating the political changes, the social changes, the physical changes, and so on."

Adam continues, "Your Majesty, the predictability in your mind is about the simulator's prediction. For the dynasty changes, the process of this simulation is in the grasp of Noodlarianism. The predictability of the simulation simply reflects how good the Noodlarianism gauges the whole simulation. If the Agency couldn't predict some simulated changes, then the 'noodles' and the 'gravy' would lose the confidence when they perform in the forthcoming dynastic events, in the simulated reality. To prevent losing the authority, the Agency has to use the most delicate simulator that can generate almost true as well as perfectly predictable images of the changes, such as organisational reshuffle, palace coups, etc.

"For this aspect, I am glad that my theory was approved to enhance the five grains' simulator because it allows the five grains structure to record more precise measurements on the celestial movements and whatsoever the representations of these movements.

"But the completeness, as Your Majesty refers to, is all about the completion of this simulation. My theory provides almost no additional merit in explaining reality. Meanwhile, there are many competing theories, or, say, simulators. They all attempt to generate their own visions of the world. I am afraid that some of them may provide better approximations to reality than mine." The old man finishes painting a gloomy prospect of his theory.

"How? Give me an example, Adam." The boy seems unable to accept Adam's explanation.

"For example, there is an eccentric idea in Pizzarianism called the heliocentric theory. It claims that heaven above us may be modelled by concentric circles where the sun should be placed in the centre."

"How ridiculous!"

"I totally agree, Your Majesty. We all know that the earth is centre of the universe, and the centre of the earth is the terrain belonging to the son of heaven. But in Pizzarianism, most pizzamen are forbidden to enter this sacred land; they imagine this land as an unknown realm. For an unknown object, people can easily develop or construct anomalous visions. Here we confront this bizarre argument."

"Poor Pizzarianism. Your ideology should restrict the freedom of expression on unknown objects and stop training those pizzamen with vibrant imaginations. Lacking formalism would bring in various dangers."

"Yes, Your Majesty. The unknown comes with creation and destruction. Imagination provides the soil for these transformations. They are hard to be controlled and to be centralised. In fact, the heliocentric theory has another dangerous proposal. Instead of using discrete signs, the eccentric theory uses numerical values to describe the planets' relative position, including the earth's. In other words, it gives continuous expressions for describing the relationships among the objects."

"Numerical values?!" The emperor is shocked. "Why not use commercial prices? Then your lay brothers and sisters could predict the world events based on the commodity exchanges rather than the heaven movements. The decimal numbers would tarnish the conciseness of the divine expression. My rhetoric teacher taught me that all the numbers with decimals are the evil messages."

"Assuredly, Your Majesty, any merchant charging a price with decimal digits is selling the evil product. The reason I heard of this theory is that its real-world prediction of the solar eclipse maybe not so different from the five grains' one."

"Really?" The boy is very surprised.

"It was said that the error is about fifteen minutes."

"An error of fifteen minutes... Now I understand your worries, Adam. Such an absurd and crazy idea only has a tiny small gap with the well-established five grains theory on prediction. What a savage threat to civilisation! This idea may cause potential damage to our five grains' ideological construction," the emperor says worriedly. "Adam, you must

know that the five grains also represent the five pillars in Noodlarianism politics. Do you know the exact representations of the pillars?" The emperor asks.

"I think they stand for 'noodles', 'gravy', 'noodlised objects', 'gravified objects' ... I cannot imagine the last one," the old man answers with a shake of his head.

The boy tells the old man, "Noodlarianists call them the good, the bad, the devils hidden in the good, the angels fallen in the bad, and heaven of which I am the representative. I was taught that each pillar is indispensable in the centralised political structure."

"Ah! Now, I understand!" The old man seems suddenly to be enlightened.

"Yes, Your Majesty!" The old man says, "The cycles created by the binary signs are too modest. The masses could easily detect the regular rhythm of the changes. Any chaotic cycle needs a simulator of at least three signs. With five signs, noodlarianists are able to simulate enough disorder to cover the deterministic recurrent themes. When the signs increase beyond five, the complexity caused by the interactions of these signs may become intolerable for the centralised computational agency. It is necessary to keep the number of the signs at the minimum necessary level. Thus, five is indeed the vital number for the current system."

"... What are you talking about, Adam? It sounds like a mess...." The boy seems lost in the conversation. He ignores the old man's mumblings, "Anyhow, now you know that we need five grains structure to represent the changes. Only five, no more, no less! This continuous scheme seems to allow any number of signs."

"Yes, Your Majesty, the changes described in a continuous manner are formed by infinitesimal entities."

"Infinitesimal?"

"Tiny small changes, they are hardly detected in the original scale of measurements but can be modelled in a smaller scale, a characterisation from a deeper structure."

"It sounds insane! It seems to call for dividing a centralised body using shadow entities hidden in the integrated structure."

"Your Majesty gave a remarkable metaphor for the scheme."

"No kidding, Adam. Pizzarianism is right. This treacherous idea should be banned."

"Absolutely," the old man says solemnly, "but rumour says that the ignorant masses cannot resist the slick idea. The infinitesimal change evokes the inhabitants in Pizzarianism territory to examine the individual essence. Perhaps, in the future, this heliocentric theory would provide a simulator to the Pizzarianism."

"That would be a disaster for Pizzarianism. What is your opinion on this trend, Adam?"

"Your Majesty, I would suggest some selected intelligent servants start touching this theory, learning the details, figuring out the deficiency, then drafting a precautionary plan to prepare any ideological invasion...."

"Sounds reasonable but not efficient enough."

"I beg for Your Majesty's guideline."

"Close the door. Cut off the diffusion paths of this infectious nonsense. A quarantine, Adam, quarantine can be applied to the ideological battles too. Suppose that we filter out all falsifications that do not conform to the five grains' structure. Will the structure then be complete?"

"It seems so, Your Majesty."

"Then I could simulate such an ideal society in the future. It will cover up all the voices contrary to the five grains' structure, all the voices contrary to your falling five grains theory."

The old man humbly replies, "This is not my theory anymore, Your Majesty. It belongs to 'Western noodles!'"

The lecture ended early because the student's intestines were suffering the attacks of the fresh capsaicin he had just consumed. The little emperor said goodbye to Adam

before his gastrointestinal system completely collapsed. Although Adam didn't follow his original plan, he was satisfied with the content of the last lecture. He has had the emperor's attitude towards the new *raw materials*.

Adam confirms to himself that supporting the current emperor is his best option. Because he realises that the emperor's position, the noodlarianists' attitude towards the unknown, provides a piece of self-consistent code written in their simulation program; because he realises that the falling five grains theory, his deplorable achievement, can possibly metamorphose into a bug in this self-consistent program. The logical violation and the bug make the current emperor be the key to locking and corrupting Noodlarianism.

Adam conceals his excitement, carefully reviews his reasoning.

The principle of social simulation is to isolate the experimental world from the real world. The objects in such a simulation should be ignorant of the purposes and operations of the simulation. The ideological entity constructs the laws for the simulation, awards the good performances, punishes the bad ones. The simulation operations do not intervene in the simulating process, leaving the objects and subjects alone. The laws, reflected by the public sensation of happiness and fear, motivate the simulated objects and subjects to move forward. The visual reality's aesthetic and undesirable outcomes inspire the ideological entity to modify the laws and improve their functioning. The cycles and the control of the simulation endow the ideological entity with the power of rebooting the simulation process. So the entity can try to implement different setups and parameters in a reboot.

The operator who is in charge of the simulation should be distant from the simulated world. Involving the operator in the simulation constitutes the most forbidding menace to the principle, as the role can easily intervene in the simulation, violating the principle. If the main body of the operation obsesses with the simulated mirage, there would be no incentive for modification, no encouragement for new simulation plans, no morale-boosting to guide the simulated subjects and objects depart from the old world. If that is the case, all elements in the simulation, including the operator, would be locked in a self-consistent loop.

When the emperor showed his *noodlariotic* fervour on five grains structure, his insistence on maintaining the decipherable cycles, Adam knew that the emperor

unconsciously stuck himself with the simulated dynastic history, a world weaved by the Agency. On the other hand, the Noodlarianism doctrine forces the Agency to empower the emperor to administrate the simulation. A zealous player with numerous advantages of the current edition becomes the administrator of the game. Adam feels that the little player has no incentive to leave the current version of the game.

Perhaps, locking the emperor in the game is the real intention of noodlarianists. But the current situation is different from the past. Adam's falling five grains theory solidifies the ideological structure of Noodlarianism so that the Agency is harder to witness the ideological incompleteness. The emperor is going to use this advanced fallacy to make up the deficient logical structures of Noodlarianism. The misconception of the five grains inferential power would make the Agency difficult to abandon or even modify any existing broken logical chains in Noodlarianism. In the future, this grand fallacy would reproduce hundreds of thousands of interesting delusions, thanks to the noodle scholars who have to sustain their lives with masses of myopic publications. Adam can surely infer the jeopardised consequences.

As long as the ideological dynamics of Pizzarianism are on the right track, sooner or later, Adam's fallacy would start corrupting Noodlarianism, creating the civilised gap between these two ideologies. The gap, the unbalanced structure like the height difference between the cliff-top and the bottom, would generate the potentials of a wealth flow, a financial, material, and gnostic flow heading to the civilisation and to the order. By then, the less ordering side would have to spend more effort to prevent the national wealth loss. However, the flowing force is unstoppable; just like in a gravity field, all the objects are intended to fall. The whole *noodle* empire would irresistibly become the *taxpayer* to the destination of this wealth flow, the most divine state with the best *dough*.

At that point, the mission of Noodlutopia should be almost fulfilled. While finishing the reasoning, Adam doesn't seem to be completely satisfied with his result. On the contrary, he somehow gets bored with this planned vista. He is looking for something, something new and irregular, something that can stimulate the deterministic skeleton of these ripen ideologies, adding some spice to historical dynamics, like an engine of uncertainty, like a stirrer.

His sight slowly moves to the chillies in front of him. The thousand-year-old "gravity" advocates the five grains structure, decorating "noodles" and "gravity" as permanent forces in the stir, as irreplaceable ideas in maintaining the centralisation. However, this advocacy

distorts the fact that “noodles” and “gravy” are just temporary consumer goods of the stir. Adam says to himself, “Perhaps I can create a new force, a force casting off the yoke of Noodlarianism or even Pizzarianism.”

Part III

In the emperor's dining hall, a group of maids and eunuchs prepare the table and arrange the dinnerware. It is not dinner time yet. Why are these people gathering here? You may expect that the emperor has a high bar for his dining environment, so he needs a lot of labour to spend a long time taking care of the place. Nevertheless, this reasonable inference is completely irrelevant to the truth.

This group is, in fact, full of elite agents. The tidy-up gathering in the imperial dining hall simply provides these elite agents a sufficient time interval and a dignified location to exchange daily information ahead of dinner, the most critical moment of the day.

As a servant in the dining hall, the position offers the most comfortable working environment and the minimum workload in the court. There is no political danger. Dining time is one of the best moments for the emperor. He should frequently be in a good mood. Even if the emperor is unhappy and looks for a scapegoat, most likely, he would end up with the cook who makes the terrible dish of the day.

Furthermore, many political movements were initiated from this dinner table. Each servant has collected some pieces of important information. He or she would save these treasures for the next stir.

Another (un)official welfare of the position is the right to taste the daily royal cuisine. Some servants have to taste the dishes in front of the emperor, as this is a part of their duties. The other gastronomists can examine the materials in the corridor or the backyard. Of course, these actions are of goodwill. They are hoping to share the emperor's stomach and kidney pressure.

In order to highlight the importance and necessity of this position, from time to time, some tasters had to *die* of the *poisoned* food. Most of the death scenes are directed by the Great Peace Agency. The *corpses* would later be promoted by the organisation, and would *revive* somewhere else. However, the real tragedies did happen due to the inefficient management inside the Agency. Still, the odds are too small to be taken seriously. After all, the Great Peace Agency is a responsible and trustworthy employer.

"Do you know that old Adam passed away yesterday night? I guess that the emperor must be busy with his funeral for the whole day." A sophisticated lady talks to the others while moving the dinner table about ten centimetres to the right. She considered the new position to be more harmonised with this room's layout.

"Finally, we get rid of that bloody old fart!" A middle-aged man cynically says. His expression is full of frivolousness.

"Be peaceful, Agent Monkey! Even though you are in charge of the thousand-year-old 'gravy' company, you should not let yourself behave as one of them," says the sophisticated woman.

"Thank you for your reminding, Madam Serpent!"

A masculine, handsome man politely says, "Madam Snake is right. Agent Monkey, you should be careful with your etiquette, conceal your overt expression." Then he asks the sophisticated lady, "Madam Snake, did the first minister Adam pass away in prison?"

"No, Agent Ox. The emperor's mother and grandmother asked the emperor to grant Adam a special pardon. The old man died in his restaurant," Madam Snake replies.

"I hope there won't be any disturbance," a young lady talks in her hysterical voice. "You remember that last year when the court sentenced Adam and his Pizzarianism fellows to death, the whole city suffered several unusual quakes and storms. Although the 'noodles' in the research department couldn't detect the clue of the cause, my instinct tells that the reason must come from those cannons. Last time, when those monsters launched shells, I felt the earthquake and saw the cloud. Unfortunately, my diligent scholars cannot replicate those cannons. It is too dangerous to let these uncontrollable giant monsters sit close to us. We should find a way to ban these monsters."

Agent Ox slowly adjusted the table night centimetres to the left, then he talks to the young lady, "Lady Rabbit, let's wait for a couple of years. Our southern brothers are in the rebellion force. This time, they will persuade their leader to align with the Dairy Association. They insist on stealing the latest blueprints of the cheese cannons. Personally, I don't think this is going to work as the same trick failed when they tried their luck to win the trust of pizzamen. But let's assume that their plan successes, then we would have new military techniques and our own artillerymen. Even if they eventually fail, we could easily

find a moral excuse to ban this uncontrollable weapon. Remember that a cannon killed the founding emperor of the dynasty.”

“The moral charge is a good idea. I will support it.” Lady Rabbit claps her hands, “Don’t put your hope on the southern branch. They achieved nothing except making and washing money, cooking, and civil poisoning. Their double-faced agents can only fool themselves. Their techniques, regardless of the stolen ones or the invented ones, were always full of tricks, no systematic thought, no scarce influence. The so-called ‘innovative’ techniques always vanish in a few generations.” While talking to Agent Ox, Lady Rabbit unconsciously pushes the table eight centimetres to the right.

“Those quakes and storms let the old women have a superstition on that old fart’s psychic power,” Agent Monkey slaps the table angrily, “thanks to them, all my efforts were in vain!”

Finding that his complaints did not arouse any response, Agent Monkey starts to list his efforts. “First, I sent all my gravy brothers to dig out the problems of that bloody falling theory. Then I had to square those nerds in the astronomy department to do serious research, to formalise the accusation. Next, Agent Doggy and I settled all the servants around the old fart. We even invented a daughter for him! Finally, we collected the evidence that he caused the former emperor’s death! But the superstitious women just lifted the old fart out of the trap. The investigation and bribery cost almost all of my research funds. Now they are useless!”

“That was not psychic power. My girls made the old ladies suffer from insomnia.” A young girl says casually, looking away from the angry middle-aged man. “The two were afraid of losing their sleeping patronage from Adam, so they asked the emperor to have mercy on Adam.”

“What?! Why did you do that, Lady Big Cat? I thought we formed a holy alliance on persecution. I feel betrayed!” Says the furious middle-aged man.

“Since when you propose to me such a holy partnership? If there was any betrayer between us, your big mouth must be the first. Besides, that was the order from the Agency.” The girl stares at the table in front of her amusingly, still ignoring the man’s angry.

"We appreciate your efforts, Agent Monkey." Madam Shake intends to explain, "But the Agency was worried of your indiscreet behaviour. In fact, the Agency wanted us to squeeze the valuable information out of Adam rather than execute him. But we need you to hang the curtain for us."

"Am I the only one in the dark? Agent Doggy, did you know this hilarious order?" Agent Monkey turns angrily to a young man.

Madam Shake continues explaining, "Agent Dog was only ordered to assist you to construct Adam's news of illicit love and the misconduct of treating five grains. With that evidence, we could send Adam to prison and have an inquisition into the future agenda of Pizzarianism."

"You are all betrayers! That's why you all ignore my informative output!" Agent Monkey can't calm his anger.

"The informative output?" Madam Snake contemptuously asks, "Do you mean Adam's persuasion to the precedent emperor on stopping taking gravy food? Isn't gravy the real cause of the death?"

Agent Monkey finds that his anger cannot generate any emotional return. So he simply gives up the pretence. "You are right," he says casually, "but the old fart shouldn't let the emperor be aware of the truth. Because of the old fart, the emperor commenced investigating his food, and we had to end his career ahead of schedule! I was fond of that cutie."

"I fell in love with him too." Madam Snake says sadly, "He had such an adorable face. But the current emperor is a devout Noodlarianism. He is going to be a great emperor."

"That's for sure," says Agent Monkey, "eventually, we manage to find a pure soul from this barbarian meat-eating farm."

"Didn't Adam suggest the previous emperor make the selection?"

Facing the rhetorical question from Madam Shake, Agent Monkey picked up his mask of anger again. "That was the only right thing he did in his entire life," he says.

Agent Ox expresses his dissent, "I think that Adam's falling five grains theory helps us a lot on integrating different minds from the non-Noodlarianism forces. Also, the 'western noodles' could be of great use in the future."

Agent Dog adds, "Adam's restaurant set up a new criterion on how to sniff around the political trend. The integration of noodlised western education and cuisine inspired me to re-organise several activities designed for the gravy scout. These materials may be helpful to train the new generations." Then he moves the table seven centimetres to the left.

"Agent Ox and Agent Dog, I don't agree with you." Suddenly, Agent Monkey switches to a serious mode. "I think now it is time to wipe out those 'western noodles' and the rubbishy western culture."

"My girls are keeping eyes on those 'western noodles,'" The girl who previously ignored Agent Monkey finally put her eyes on him, "their reports said that those are some decent fellows."

"Decent?" Agent Monkey sticks out his tongue, "Lady Big Cat, are you sure your kitties are competent to read the mind of men? Those men are just 'noodles' disguised by some obscure western languages and skeptical symbols. I don't think their stuff is that different from gravy's witchcraft."

"You'd better treat my girls and me with more respect." The girl seems to lose her temper on Agent Monkey.

"Lady Tiger, you should ignore this fool." Madam Shake mediates the two. She asks a myopic girl, "Lady Pig, you are in charge of the spirit noodlisation construction. What is your opinion on this theory?"

"To be honest, I don't know." Lady Pig replies, "The colleagues in all ideological departments are confused. The theory only slightly improves the precision of the computation but completely reshapes the nonlinear relationships amongst five grains. This kind of dual improvement seems rare. In the past thousand years, many methods enhanced our levels of computation, and in fact, some of them did much better than Adam's. But those methods seldom resonated with the ideological development. The departmental opinion on those methods is that they are unilateral dedications."

"Like Lady Rabbit said," Lady Pig continues, "from the research aspect, unilateral dedications have very limited purposes. They are applicable in only a few fields. When the fields evolved, most of these methods lost their importance and might disappear in development. But the methods derived from Adam's theory seem to have stronger vitality, as they could be applied to many different fields.

"On the one hand, we felt Adam and his western noodles' spread their influences onto so many unrecognised fields. On the other hand, the improvement of precision is so marginal that we doubt the theory could have much technical significance. I have the feeling that the genre of Adam's theory is a scrap of a jigsaw puzzle. The puzzle may be composed of numerous pieces. But Adam's piece was so complete that based on that piece, we couldn't sense where the other pieces were and the relationships of those missing ones. Sometimes, I even felt that Adam showed us that piece out of a practical joke! The purpose is to let the 'noodles' focus on this joke and ignore the whole story." After finishing her long statement, Lady Pig squints at the table and then moves it six centimetres to the right.

Madam Shake thinks a while, then turns to a seemingly sportive girl, "Lady Horse, you audited Adam's military class. Do you think Adam was hiding some essential pieces in the class?"

"I don't think he would do this on purpose," Lady Horse answers, "but his teaching style was rather unstable. His lectures were improvisations; the contents might change at the very last minute. And he was fond of ambiguous, silly, obsolete analogies. Perhaps I missed something. But I doubt I would miss the essence. Adam stopped teaching the theory a long time ago. The current version of the theory is collected and modified by 'western noodles' through some of Adam's conversations and teaching materials. Perhaps something was missed during the collective process. But then, it couldn't explain why the whole setting was so consistent in theory while producing so many absurd conclusions in practice."

"I should say I share the same feeling with Lady Pig," Lady Horse continues, "When I studied the western noodles' models, they all looked proper and elegant. But every time we model the real military phenomena, we find out so many inconsistencies. The chaps in the military department demonstrated the inconsistencies to the 'western noodles.' Some of those 'noodles' wanted to fool around with us. Some others felt embarrassed about the results and pondered over the issues, but they didn't propose any convincing conclusion."

Lady Horse kicks the table five centimetres to the left with her foot. Then she concludes, "I am not sure whether Adam realised these inconsistencies. Perhaps he did, which explains why he stopped teaching the theory."

"If he found out the problem, why didn't he point it out?" Agent Monkey wants to correct Lady Horse's conclusion, "He was probably just fulfilling his duty to teach the nonsenses. Then, once he thought he had created enough irreparable ideological damages to the Noodlarianism, he stopped."

Madam Shake says impatiently, "We are talking about serious business. Could you please stop contaminating the conversion, Agent Monkey?"

"As you wish."

Lady pig seems to remember something. "I heard that when the court charged the 'western noodles' and the pizzamen for their ill-behaviour on treating the five grains, Adam didn't defend himself or any of his fellows. Adam didn't even speak a word for justifying his theory. Is that true?" She asks.

"Agent Rat, did you follow the trials of the lawsuit against Adam and the western 'noodles'?" Madam Snake asked a man hiding in the corner.

"Yes, Madam Snake. I was there all the time. I had to carry so many lunch boxes to those prisoners. Those days were nightmares," the man answers glibly.

"Agent Rat, could you please describe a bit what Adam did in those trials? None of us except you attended the trials. Also, all the law and justice staffs go into your administration. Did anyone report you Adam's unusual behaviour or talks in jail?"

"Eh... the only unusual thing was ..." Agent Rat seems to recall something, he quickly changes the words, "No, in the court, Adam never spoke. His students and fellows leapt to his defence. They were arguing on very abstract concepts. I have no idea what they were talking about. But Adam looked quite indifferent towards to outcomes of all trials."

"Regarding his daily life in jail," Agent Rat continues, "the report said that in two years, Adam followed a very regular schedule. He usually fell asleep around 3 am, woke up

around 11 am, had two meals per day, did some physical exercises and labour. He spent the rest of his time writing. Most of his work was written in strange symbols, like in cipher. He often destroyed the papers before the guard arrived." Agent Rat secretly moves the table four centimetres to the right.

He continues, "The only readable manuscript we got was submitted to the Agency. I remember the title is 'Ruby Tablet.' The booklet is about how to grow chillies and make chilli sauce. It is quite funny. The man was totally obsessed with chillies. He seemed to know all the chilli merchants around the empire. I suspect that his hidden role was a chilli dealer. He told the guard that his Society shipped all those chillies from the other side of the world just to seek the proper soil to improve the quality. Who believes it! He and his Society must have grasped a lot of profits from the chilli business. In fact, they also have a monopoly on the cheese industry over here. I have to confess that their cheese is rather tasty. I doubt any dairymaid in our Agency can make a cheese of that quality."

"Agent Rat, could you please recall some related episodes?" Madam Shake stops Agent Rat giving a full count of his cheese infatuation. It probably makes her sick to think of cheese. She asks Agent Rat, "Did he say anything about his theory?"

"Oh, his theory...." Agent Rat tries to recall something. "Right... in one trial, I remember that one guy from the astronomy department, not sure he is ours or from the Pilau. The guy charged that Adam's theory was inaccurate. As the astronomy department predicted that a solar eclipse was going to happen in two days, the guy requested the court to arrange a forecasting competition. The most precise forecast must reflect the righteousness."

"That's right," Lady Rabbit says excitedly, "I remember last year, before the earthquakes and the storms, there was a solar eclipse. Eh... It happened before the judgment, and Adam was sentenced to death, so Adam failed in the competition."

"Actually... Adam won," says Agent Rat, "There are three predictions, one made by the group from the Pilau, one made by the Noodlarianism group whose sponsor I guess was Agent Monkey, and the last one made by the group of pizzamen and 'western noodles.' Agent Monkey's group made the worst prediction. It was one hour ahead. The Pilau's one was half an hour ahead. The prediction based on Adam's theory was on time...."

"Then why ..." Lady Rabbit is confused.

"Eh, Agent Monkey insisted...."

"That was just an opportunity to test the old fart's theory," before Agent Rat finishes, Agent Monkey answers first. "If it was good, then the theory could be widely applied. Otherwise, we would abolish it immediately. Winning the competition just showed that it is useful to encompass the old fart's theory in the five grains' structure. But we should prevent the old fart, and those pizzamen and 'western noodles,' from continuing to establish metaphysical constraints on the five grains' structure. They would attempt to guide the development of our ideology!"

"So you lost the game but denied the result. How disgusting!" With a disdainful look, Lady Tiger turns her back toward Agent Monkey.

"This is all for the good of Noodlarianism!" Agent Monkey explains, "The current ideology of Noodlarianism is weak and chaos, like a man having eaten too much junk food. This man couldn't even finish a self-completing metabolism! We have to force him to consume the deteriorative barbecue, stimulate his gut, treat his constipation, eliminate the stubborn metabolic wastes... let off his faeces! This ideology needs a regression, regressing back to the pure state with only the clean 'noodles' and 'gravy.' The ideology could absorb the external nutrition but should eliminate the influences of those foreign junk food suppliers. This policy should last until the ideology is strong enough to complete the metabolic by itself."

"If your 'gravy' gang knew how to filter out the trash and keep the civilisation, a regression back to the pure state doesn't sound like a completely bizarre idea. But it seemed every time the gang did the opposite," says Madam Shake.

"That's because the 'noodles' always developed the civilisation to the bizarre directions! Their dedicated directions were always dead ends," Agent Monkey continues to explain.

"Nonsense," Lady Rabbit interrupts, "how can you foresee the ends of the directions? Your gravy guys have no patience with any series. Your guys just saw some intervals of the developments but cannot wait to conclude the trends."

"Nonsense," Agent Monkey defends, "my company has the best people of the whole empire. That's no doubt, we all agree. If the crème de la crème cannot foresee the trends, then neither can your noodle scholars!"

"We only agree that your highly-paid employees are all good at grasping the meanings of underlying orders," Lady Tiger helps Lady Rabbit responding to the defence. "But they are also rather weak at perceiving the existing orders. Otherwise, they would pass the exams and could become 'noodles.' Gravy is not the crème de la crème."

"The current existing orders are full of inferior pieces," Agent Monkey patiently explains, "These pieces were firstly designed by some mediocre scholars and then reinforced by their second-rate students. These 'noodles' fought to include the inferiority in the exam and hoped to engrave their sloppy materials on this ideology. We all observe that the standardised exam only manages to select mediocre people. It filters the worst but also the best! The intelligent 'gravy' knows how to make a detour of the artificial knowledge."

"In the past thousand years, did your intelligent company establish any new and acceptable orders?" asks Lady Horse.

"The company's members were ineligible to participate in ordering! Because the privilege of ordering is only granted to the 'noodles!'" Answers Agent Monkey.

"That's because your guys don't know how to complement the existential structure!" While saying, Lady Tiger shifted the table three centimetres to the left.

"That's because the existential structure systematically excludes the crème noire de la crème noire!" While saying, Agent Monkey shifted the table two centimetres back to the right.

"Please, stop this endless debate. If you continue, you are going to criticise the centralised examination system," says Madam Snake.

"Perhaps juvenile Dragon could provide us some news on what are the other sects' opinions on Adam's theory." Lady Horse says and looks around, "Apart from BBQ, I am curious how Can Sect, Rice Noodles, and Barley Sect respond to the new calculation. I didn't see the little one after lunch, neither Agent Goat nor Agent Rooster. So where is the sly trinity?"

"With a high probability, they are in the kitchen, tasting the dishes of tonight," says Agent Dog.

"Well, then we shouldn't count on them. Apart from the sly trinity, do you have other thoughts of Adam's theory?" Madam Snake asks.

Lady Rabbit seems to recall something. She asks, "Regarding Adam's prediction method, did we obtain the details of the western noodles' prediction? That would be useful for developing Noodlarianism pedagogy."

"Don't worry," Agent Monkey replies. He seems to have completely forgotten the previous dispute with this lady. "Every step of the derivation was recorded. Everyone in the astronomy department nowadays has to learn that prediction method. I am a very principled person. Improving Noodlarianism is my principle."

"Agent Monkey is a master of fortifying contradicted facts. I feel that he will become an old fart like Adam." Agent Ox says firmly.

"How dare you!" Agent Monkey snaps.

"So can we say that Adam's theory works slightly better than our available ones?" While saying, Madam Shake looks at every attendant. "Perhaps Adam withdrew some secret knowledge from the current version, but by the consequences of the current setting, all look fine to me. What do you think?" Asks Madam Shake.

"Perhaps I am too anxious," says Lady Pig, "the story from Agent Rat cannot dispel my worries about the completeness of Adam's theory. But this may be just a groundless fear."

"I don't like the old fart's stuff," says Agent Monkey, "but if it works better, why not just copy it. In the future, we could erase the trace of the old fart, present the theory in a perfect Noodlarianism setting, no pizza, no pasta, no 'western noodles,' only five grains."

Others don't seem to have more opinions on Adam and his theory. At this time, a middle-aged man shuffles into the hall, haggard and disheveled.

"Agent Rooster, where were you? You look terrible. You haven't shaved your beard. What happened?" Asks Agent Monkey.

Worrying about his disguise, Agent Rooster quickly touches his chin. He finds that it was a malicious joke. He stares at Agent Monkey, angrily says, "A catastrophe is coming."

Madam Snake feels that it is also a joke. She asks Agent Rooster with a charming smile, "What catastrophe, Agent Rooster? We were talking about Adam. Do you know he was dead? We were looking for your opinion."

"My opinions won't be different from your folks'," says Agent Rooster. He stares at the position of the table, then moves it six centimetres to the left. The others seem to have no objection to the new position. The table is finally set.

When the agents leave the table, Agent Rooster adds, "The catastrophe is exactly caused by Adam."

Everyone is concerned as soon as they hear the word of Adam.

"A storm or a quake?" Lady Rabbit asks in a worry.

Agent Rooster put his hand over his belly, slowly says, "The little one, Agent Goat and I were in the kitchen. We were looking for the dishes of tonight. A rumour said that the emperor came up with an original idea in memory of Adam. He asked the cooks to prepare a dish mixing gravy, noodles, beef, and some Adam's spices.

"The cooks seemed to experiment an idea. We saw them roll-cutting chillies and beef, chopping garlic and ginger. Then the chef heated the oil in a big saucepan. He added garlic and ginger first, then beef and chilli sauce. He stir-fried until the beef pieces lost their pinkness and wrapped in chilli sauce. Then he added hot water, gravy sauce, and some wine. I don't know which brand of the wine, but it tasted sweet. He also put star anise and some sugar. He let the water boil but turned the heat to the minimum. The whole simmering process lasted until the beef softened. It was about one hour. Then he added chillies, adjusted the heat to the medium, and simmered until the soup became dense. At that time, an exquisite fragrance wafted around the kitchen. Finally, the chef cooked a bowl of noodles and poured beef, chillies, and the red soup onto the noodles. The chef named the dish red-cooked beef noodle. It was so tasty that three of us quickly emptied the whole bowl."

After listening to the description, Agent Dog asked in confusion, "So your sly trinity finished the emperor's delicious dish of the experiment. Why is this a catastrophe?"

Agent Rooster snaps, "Because for pleasing the emperor, the stupid cooks used Adam's premium chillies!".

Everyone turns pale while hearing this. Obviously, they recall the emperor in those days, a whole week of fantastic diarrhoea, a whole week of flourishes, just because of one raw chilli from Adam's garden.

"The chef was making a huge one for tonight. I am sure that every attendant in the room will not miss this dish!" While saying, Agent Rooster has a blank expression on his face as if his desire has all vanished.

"Agent Rooster. Your two companions are now" asks Lady Horse.

Agent Rooster nods, "They are sticking around in the toilet."

Silence reigns. Everyone immerses in the sadness for the misfortune of the fearless pioneers. Meanwhile, everyone is calculating the chance of dodging the catastrophe.

The sound of footsteps breaks the silence. The emperor is coming.

The emperor is already a teenager. His childish face has become heroism. His step is vigorous and dignified. From his facial expression and his actions, one can easily identify that this young man is with guts and his guts are ready to take up something extraordinary. In three years, the emperor is going to take up the regency from his mother and his grandmother. He is looking forward to breaking the constraints surrounding him.

The young emperor stops in front of the dining hall, sniffs hard with his nose. The delicious aroma of the meal has already diffused to the corridor. The emperor is fond of the smell. He talks to his entourage excitedly, "You are going to enjoy something extraordinary tonight! I invented a dish as a memorial to Adam. Although Adam is gone, his spices are going to stay with us. The dish is a mixture of beef, gravy, noodles, and Adam's spices. I've ordered the cooks to prepare it as a full serving dish. So you all have the opportunity to taste it."

The crowd shouts together, "Thank Lord!" The voice is mixed of heartfelt gratitude from those who are unaware of the underlying truth and the tragic helplessness from those who peacefully wait for their destiny.

A big bowl finally arrives. The red soup, a mélange of gravy and chilli sauce, is redder than expected. The noodles float faintly in the soup. They fully absorb the chilli sauce, and their colour turns into salmon. On top of the soup, chillies and pieces of beef are scattered around.

The dish is now passed to the prime taster, Agent Monkey.

Agent Monkey gazes at the redness, and he feels that the redness is also gazing at him. Suddenly, an idea comes into his mind. He steadily picks one piece of beef, a piece with almost no red sauce attached, a piece uncontaminated. He put that piece in his mouth with surprising equanimity. He knows that people are anxiously waiting for his evaluation. He chews that piece as if he was enchanted with it, seemingly enjoying the fascinating taste.

After finishing the piece, Agent Monkey concludes his adventurous experience, "This is an unexpected, thrilling dish, full of excitement and stimulation. The grassland's beef is saturated with thousand-year-old gravy. The starch from the longevity noodles harmonise the spicy from Adam's chilli sauce. All these ingredients perfectly push the taste to an extreme."

The news that the dish uses Adam's chilli sauce causes a commotion in the hall. Apparently, except the imperial kitchen, Adam had established his chillies' reputation everywhere else. For a moment, the emperor looks flustered. But the young man quickly calms down. He comforts his guests, "Don't worry, the capsaicin in the chilli sauce is diluted. It is all fine." Then he insists on the previous order, passing the dish to everyone.

The followers decide to learn from Agent Monkey. The first few tasters go directly to the beef. After a while, the beef on top of the soup has been picked out. The guests have to seek the less contaminated pieces inside the red soup. To take the pick less awkward, some pretend to pick the chilli but *unintendedly* drop it, and then pick the beef. Some even increase the pick-drop-chillies iteration to multiple times. Gradually, the leftover chillies accumulate in the bowl, forming a small mountain. These loyal servants decide to leave the chilli mountain and the diarrhoea fortune to their beloved emperor.

Eventually, the bowl is presented to the emperor. The emperor frowns at the chilli mountain. But he immediately positions a piece of beef hidden underneath the mountain. He calmly picks it up and then returns the bowl.

"Mother and grandmother are good friends of Adam," the emperor says, "this dish and these chillies would mean a lot to them. So we should share this delicious gourmet with the old ladies." After saying this, the emperor sends the dish away.

Everyone is impressed by the emperor's wise decision. The emperor is worthy of being the most loyal supporter and executor of the fundamental Noodlarianism doctrine: filial piety.

The dinner continues. The emperor doesn't let the diarrhoea threat disturb his interest. Looking at the presented officers, he finds several "western noodles" from the astronomy department. The emperor doesn't like pizzamen that much, but he feels an affinity with "western noodles," as they have studied the same Adam's materials and are part of the "noodle" family. Suddenly, the emperor has an idea.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the emperor says, "you probably don't know the last highlight in Adam's life."

Everyone stops talking and listens to the emperor's speech. The emperor continues, "Our old Adam successfully predicted a total solar eclipse a year ago." A burst of admiration emerges from the crowd.

"In fact, amongst of you, some assisted Adam to finish that computation," the emperor says.

The guests can't help looking around, and the "western noodles" stand proudly.

"Today, we get together to commemorate Adam. So why don't we invite these *prophets* to demonstrate that calculation again, making this activity more meaningful?" The emperor says animatedly.

People loudly applaud the idea. The "western noodle" researchers are also eager to show their craftsmanship. Writing materials and data-sheets are quickly presented. Then,

the researchers begin to calculate in front of the host and the guests. This is an efficient and united group. In a few minutes, they finish the computation.

The result is presented to the emperor. The emperor is delighted. Not only because he is proud of the efficient group, but also because he notices a small computational error. Pointing out the error would demonstrate that the emperor is well up in this intelligent activity.

The emperor kindly reminded his servants, "Your guys probably missed a term. The result is fifteen minutes earlier."

People are impressed by the fact that the emperor can discover the minutest detail. The researchers feel embarrassed. They immediately re-calculate everything. The next computation is quickly done.

However, the result remains the same. The emperor is conscious of something peculiar. He approaches the workspace, checks the calculation. He feels nothing unusual in the procedure: One just needs plug-in data. Everything looks fine, but the third result still has the same error.

The emperor becomes impatient with the repeating mistakes. Also, the guests get bored. Unfortunately, the fourth result does not vary. The emperor starts to review every step of the computation. Those are textbook steps, nothing novel. They should be all right; otherwise, the final result cannot be so approximating to the truth. But nobody can figure out where the error comes from.

Time passes little by little. The emperor cannot compromise on this small error because he had witnessed the correct calculation. On the other hand, the guests cannot leave the table because it will disgrace the emperor. It's like everyone is locked in this hall, in a dilemma.

At this time, a person breaks the deadlock.

"Your Majesty, please forgive me! The error might be due to my negligence." The voice comes from Agent Rat. He is trembling on his knees.

The emperor glares at Agent Rat and asks, "What did you do?"

Agent Rat answers tremblingly, "When I brought the lunch to the first minister, he asked me to add fifteen minutes to the final result. He said he had miscalculated one infinitesimal thing. I thought it wouldn't have any serious impact, so I helped him to modify the final result. I really didn't mean to disturb the –"

"Infinitesimal?!" The emperor barks, interrupting Agent Rat's description. As soon as the emperor finds all those present watching him, he realises that he shouldn't raise the interest in that infinitesimal thing, so he changes his tone. "Now I recall that Adam often warned me to add a small term at the end of the calculation. Yes, missing that term will cause a fifteen-minute measurement error," the emperor calmly says, "Adam probably should warn himself to include that term in his teaching."

The emperor's blame for Adam relieves everyone. People start to cite all kinds of absurd and ridiculous deeds of Adam. The atmosphere of dinner revives again.

The emperor didn't seem to completely get out of the shadow of the *infinitesimal* episode. He secretly ordered an investigation into Adam's recent writings. A few days later, he got a letter. It was said that the letter was a copy of the last letter Adam sent to his family in the West. The short letter reads as follows.

To my loved ones,

This chilli variety is spicy and has many seeds. It has strong vitality, can be planted on plains, dry plateaux, or wet basins. It adds strong fragrance to dishes, but I am afraid its taste is not quite suitable for our people with light tastes.

Please don't be upset with its incompatibility. Please cultivate this variety with great care, improve its quality and enhance its texture. One day, someone will relocate it back to the East. I am confident that by then, its flavour will dominate eastern cuisine.

With great gratitude,

A