

N1545, a Year of No Significance

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Part I

N(oodle calendar): 1300-1399 the Dark Age

The original entity of the Tang empire had been divided into several parts. The north part was under the rule of the Kingdom of Jin, and the southern territory was occupied by the Kingdom of Song. The Orthodoxy sect of Noodlarianism preserved the roots at the courts of both kingdoms. On the southwestern plateau, Tibet 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 (GPA), the Noodlarianism bureau of investigation on politics, military, and diplomacy, drafted several re-unification warfare plans. However, none of them proceed 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 unification 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 intelligence and material advancement. The aesthetic atmosphere and the public attention had gradually switched from martial arts to hedonism and consumerism. What made GPA 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 GPA, 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 incoming 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 that were used to spread the advanced noodlisation theories. 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.

To compromise the declined trend, many elite noodlarianists were seeking a new representation of the ideology. The mainstream opinion within GPA 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, they 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 GPA.

A big twist happened in N1374 when a GPA priest decided to reform the preaching channels in the northern agrarian regions. Through some simplified noodlisation theories, low-cost rituals, and standardised training, the priest was able to impose the opinion “being noodlised” amongst the grassroots. He converted hundreds of thousands of local representatives to noodlarianists in the following twenty years. With his endless passion and numerous efforts, the embryonic form of a new sect, Everyone’s Noodles, emerged.

The priest 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 various southern priests. One of them, 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. His 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 sect of Can 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 and got ready to welcome the bright moment.

N(oodle calendar): 1400-1545 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 and made him recognise the supreme power of Noodlarianism. With the GPA’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 passing through the representative members within the royal family. With the territorial expansion, some royal members residing in the West 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 (information deleted). Some royal members were seduced by the western exotic dietary forces in the first sights. Since these members have 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.

GPA decided to prop up a more suitable candidate as an emperor, with whom they could cut off the trend of these conversions. In N1473, Everyone’s Noodles and the Orthodoxy 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 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 gained complete trust from the new emperor: he 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, GPA never had full confidence in the nomadic rulers. Extremists in GPA firmly believed that an entire and perfect stir must rely on a faithful main stirrer who should have absolute worship of Noodlarianism: his body and soul must completely harmonise with noodles. Realists in GPA were against this criterion. They argued that the qualified candidate would never emerge in the current royal family, and they suggested to lower the bar for the pool full of meat-eating genes.

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

N(oodle calendar): 1545 - a Year of No Significance

At the beginning of N1545, a small episode happened in the empire. GPA 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 the fresh meat. However, the town could provide the most complete variety of the northern style’s 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 the time of 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 GPA 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. In this “chaotic” contest process, GPA organised a detailed investigation on his aesthetic preferences and assessment criteria. Some agents even dedicated themselves to test the homosexual 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 festival to welcome the new year.

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 two 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 finished his meal and left 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, one can have a splendid panorama of the town over there. The young man has been to the peak before. To him, neither the mountain nor the view is comparable to those in central Asia, where he spent his childhood. 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 the temperature is significantly warmer than that of the steppes.

It is very unlikely to have snow today. But the mountain is filled with mist. Fortunately, the young man can vaguely identify his planned route. It didn’t take him many detours. After a few hours’ climbing, the young man can see 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 didn’t take him a while before reaching the top of the mountain. Gazing into the distance, he finds the familiar landscape consisting of numerous limestones, steep cliffs, and karst valleys of various sizes and shapes. But today, the light illuminates a 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 was immersed in the delightful atmosphere of the *mise en scène*, an old voice came 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.

“You must be the master I am waiting for. What should I call you?” The young man asked the elder respectfully.

The old man nods and replies, “The name is only used on the stage so that the audience can remember the characters and distinguish their roles. As authors who create stage plays, we don’t need these symbols.”

Without waiting for the young man to 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. 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, 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.

“This juvenile battle easily erases the name of these people in the historical and official text. This is the best way to protect them.

“Where are these noodlarianists now? 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, this force is the Noodlarianism force from the ghost fleet.

“Do you agree with this guess?”

The old man doesn’t directly reply to the question. He says, “The path of history looks strange and complicated. Because people can’t see the forces behind the historical figures. When you identify those forces, you won’t be too surprised by the historical changes.”

The old man pauses for seconds, then continues, “Indeed, historical events do not always advance at our pace. 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 figures can proceed in their own paths and in their preferred way, 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.”

The old man finished his speech and turned to the young man.

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

The old man was very satisfied with this response. “That means you are ready to take my entrance exam.”

“I think I’m ready.” Although the young man said so, he looked 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 tone, “I’m studying the beef soup used by the Pilau party. I’ve found a good recipe. I will create a new type of noodles, the beef noodles. I will cook the beef in two ways. First, I will boil the beef to make a soup, like what the Pilau party did. But then, I will use the beef again. I will put it into the gravy to make the stewed beef. The beef soup will come with noodles and will be topped with stewed beef. So I’ll make use of the beef to generate two flavours. The beef noodles can definitely noodlise those meat-eaters in the West.”

The young man asks casually, “But go through two processes, shouldn’t the meat have less nutritional value than those in the pilau?”

Finding that the young man wasn’t impressed by his idea, the kid 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. A tasty non-nutritional dish will be more popular than a plain nutritional dish.” The kid’s dissatisfaction is already overwhelming.

The old man interrupts the conversation, “Although he is 4 years old, his understanding of Noodlarianism’s doctrine is better than yours.”

“That’s very true.”

“If I admit you as my apprentice, he 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 very 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. After quite a while, he raised his head again with confidence. He slowly responds, “Noodlisation refers to a metamorphosis. 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.”

He looks at the dark clouds in the distance, takes a deep breath, and 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, pushing 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 the undetectable control. 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,” the youth man reiterated his point.

Then he stretches his hands and 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, if a single goal can be represented by a dual form, then it is easier to divide all the class members with two different labels: the noodles and the gravy. They are serving two opposite purposes, and the antagonistic purposes lead to a grand game. However, the endless grand game is, in fact, the 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 conflict and opposition in all classes can be similar. Soldiers and workers are unhappy by inequality, merchants and politicians are upset with unequal trades. People are outrage 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 the repeating history will lock the participants in this endless grand game.”

The young man pauses and waits for the response. The old man motions 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 to reinforce the chain, hoping to diminish the friction. Ironically, such an action will only magnify—”

“Enough.” The old man interrupted.

“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 provides 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 interrupted the conversion.

The old man was shocked and unpleasant, but he held it back, pretending to be nothing. “Go ahead with your question,” he said.

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

This time, the old 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 young man seemed to ignore the anger of the old man. “The centralisation system is a pyramid. 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?”

“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 addicting 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 stated his opinion in a gentle tone, but his expression is firm. Upon seeing this, the old man also 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!

“I understand your idea of improving the structure. 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. 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 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?” The young man was not convinced.

Without waiting for the answer, he 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. The elements 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 learning 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 and says, “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. 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. By the filial piety law, this mistaken order can be passed by in generations 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.

“A people-oriented order must have a human-origin source. 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 years’ old ideology, ‘knows’ every detail, every vital point, everything. For noodlarianists, this structure gives them the complete loop, immortality! But in fact, noodlarianists just 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 stared at the young man fiercely. He was 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 firstly learn how to appreciate the beauty of their own bodies, the natural, and the living creatures, then they would learn how to appreciate the 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, not the stir for the physical bodies but the stir for the spiritual and mental faculties unite them.

“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 expressed his thoughts in one breath. He feels relieved.

The old man gave 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 minds and conservative thoughts only can afford an act of pure selfishness.”

“Indeed, the noodlised aristocracy is disappointed.” The young man also gave a sigh. “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? If all the members in the upper class are overwhelmed with maintaining their own position, then 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 and 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 sharing 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 a 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.”

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. 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. 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 game, 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 stood in stunned silence. But he quickly recovers and replies firmly, “I am afraid so.”

“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 and 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. 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 didn’t seem to have the patience to hear the young man’s narration. He interrupted the young man’s last attempt of drawing the alternative possibility. Then he stared blankly at the fading sun.

It was thought to be a harmonious and relaxing ceremony of apprenticeship, but it resulted in a severe debate on the fundamentals and existences. Now, when both sides crossed over the bottom line, any further discussion seems to be meaningless. To dodge the awkward atmosphere, the young man switches his position and 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 range of spectrum 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 grace and poise of the bird 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, "Indeed!"

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." 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 not be qualified, nor will he become a patron of noodlarianists. You will become the pillar of Noodlarianism. He and his entourages will eventually proceed in a completely different direction from yours."

After a pause, the old man says, "But perhaps we need him."

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