

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

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### ABSTRACT

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

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### INTRODUCTION

Little people (*Homo Floresiensis*), commonly known as 'Hobbits', have been mentioned in written records and mythologies as well as literature over the centuries, not least in archeological findings of late. In the archaeological excavations between 2001 and 2004 at Liang Bua (cool) cave in island Flores of Indonesia archipelago conducted by a joint team of Indonesian and Australian archaeologists led by Peter Brown and Michael Morwood, a 1.06 meter 30-year-old adult female (*Homo floresiensis*) remains were unearthed together with several individuals. This discovery provides strong evidence for the existence of little people as reported on written documentations over the centuries in both occidental and oriental world, beside the unearth teeth and bones of the *Homo luzonensis* in Callao cave of the Philippines between 2007-2015 (Greshko & Maya, 2019), as well as the excavation of one-meter-tall *Elephas falconeri* or pygmy elephant (Sukumar, 2003; Hadjisterkoti, 2012) fossils and the like. This human-like hominin fossils which had small-bodied and small-brained were found together with stone tools and other extinct mammals and birds, including the elephant-like *Stegodon*. The scientific announcement of 'a new human' from these discoveries virtually shook the intellectual foundations of palaeoanthropology (Jungers & Baab, 2009, p. 160). As documented, the fossils of *Homo floresiensis* discovered were between

about 100,000 and 60,000 years ago, and tools made in stone by this species can be dated back to between 190,000 and 50,000 years old. *Homo floresiensis* individuals were approximately 3 feet 6 inches tall; they had shrugged-forward shoulders, no chins, tiny brains, large teeth, receding foreheads, and relatively large feet attributed to their short legs. Jungers and Baab (2009) further pointed out that "statistical analyses of skull shapes find modern humans in one grouping, microcephalic humans in another and the hobbit, together with ancient hominins, in a third. The almost complete skeletal remains reveal a body design decidedly unlike that of any modern human" (Jungers & Baab, 2009, p. 162). Since the differential medical diagnoses of various dwarfing syndromes and microcephaly reveal no resemblance to *Homo floresiensis*, thus dismissing the categorization of the hobbits as pathological people. It is evident that "there is no systemic human pathology that reduces a modern human to the size and shape of a hobbit and simultaneously transforms one into an ancient, ancestral phenotype. There are no known sick humans that look like *Homo floresiensis* because no known illness reverses the evolutionary changes of a species. The hobbits therefore cannot be a diseased sub-population of healthy humans" (Jungers & Baab, 2009, p. 163). Jungers and Baab (2009) subsequently raised two postulations suggesting that the remains found were island dwarfing of *Homo erectus* or migrants of a more ancient

and unknown species from Africa (Jungers and Baab, 2009, p. 164).

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

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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

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

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

writing about seafaring through the depiction of the life of island, humans and the human relationship to the sea’ (Duan Wuhan/段汉武, 2009).

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

## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

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

## FRAMEWORK OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

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

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

independent sources to triangulate the evidence is important (Kipping et al., 2014).

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

## RESEARCH METHOD

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

## LITTLE PEOPLE IN ENGLISH MYTHOLOGIES AND LITERARY CREATIONS

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

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

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

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

Pixies sometimes wrestle to celebrate through the night as in the medieval period.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Obviously, the height of the little people documented in English literature ranged from 10 cm to four feet (120 cm). In sequence, *Gulliver's Travel* evidently is the trailblazer of all the following novels on little people, namely, *The Hobbits*, *The Borrowers*, *The Lord of the Ring*, *The Nome Trilogy*, *The Spiderwick Chronicles* alike which owed tribute to the regional lore. In England, despite the circulating lore of two-feet tall knockers or short stature pixie besides other

mythical creatures, spirit or diminutive supernatural beings which can be traced as early as the Celts (600 BC), it was only late until 1726 then little people were mentioned in literary creation (*Gulliver's Travel*). In this vein, no authentic document—for instance, verbal recounts, photos and videos, etc.—is available for the presence of little people in English in the measurable past notwithstanding the available mythological and literary records, yet they cannot be the testifiable proof of the existence of little people in the United Kingdom or the US alike.

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

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

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

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

As can be seen from Table 3, the authentic documents or historical records of little people in China are of height between 1 *cun* (3.58 cm) to 3 *chi* (107.4 cm). These little guys had all the features of humans (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin*: Chapter Eight); some dressed in yellow, wearing yellow hat beside yellow hood and rode on tiny horse and enjoyed fast ride. If you called it by its name, it would ride a thousand *li* (500000 m) within a day to and fro (*Guan Zi*: Shui Di). They ducked when they were against the wind; they lied flat with face down when the wind came from behind (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin*: Chapter Eight). They lived either outdoor or in caves (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin*: Chapter Eight) and knew the importance of unity fighting against their natural enemies, for instance, cranes (*Shi Ji*: Da Wan Lie Zhuan). Table 4 further exhibits the scripts dwelled on little people in Chinese mythology and literary creations.

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

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

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

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

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

\*Authentic historical and revered documentation

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

**Table 3.** Selective scripts on little people in chinese historical records and authentic documentation

Authentic Documentation	Original Scripts
法苑珠林 卷八 引外国图 <i>Fa Yuan Zhu Lin</i> Chapter Eight, quoted from foreign picture	焦侥国人长尺六寸，迎风则偃，背风则伏，眉目具足，但野宿。一说，焦侥长三尺，其国草木夏死而冬生，去九疑三万里。 People in the country of Jiao Yao were 1 <i>chi</i> 6 <i>cun</i> tall (57.28 cm). They ducked when they were against the wind; they lied flat with face down when the wind came from behind. They had all the features of humans but lived outdoor. They could grow as tall as 3 <i>chi</i> (107.4 cm). In this country, plants and vegetation withered in summer but grew in winter, it was located thirty thousand <i>li</i> (15000000 m) from Mountain Jiu Yi of Hunan.
史记 大宛列传 括地志 六十三 <i>Shi Ji</i> 'Da Wan Lie Zhuan', Gua Di Zhi 63 (West Han)	小人国在大秦南，人才三尺，其耕稼之时，惧鹤所食，大秦卫助之，即焦侥国，其人穴居也。 The country of tiny people was located in the south of the country of Da Qin. They were 3 <i>chi</i> (107.4 cm) tall. Having the risk of being eaten by cranes when ploughing and sowing, guards from Da Qin protected them, that was, people from the country of Jiao Yao. These tiny people lived in caves.
列子 汤问第五 <i>Lie Zi</i> 'Tang Wen', Chapter Five (East Zhou)	从中州以东四十万里得焦侥国。人长一尺五寸。东北极有人名曰诤人，长九寸。 The country of Jiao Yao was located four hundred thousand <i>li</i> (400000 x 500 m) east of Zhong Zhou (Henan). The people there were one <i>chi</i> 5 <i>cun</i> tall (53.7 cm), while at the end of northeast there were 9 <i>cun</i> (32.22 cm) tall tiny people called Jing Ren.
管子 水地 <i>Guan Zi</i> 'Shui Di' ( <i>Chun Qiu Zhan Guo</i> )	庆忌者，其状若人，其长四寸，衣黄衣，冠黄冠，戴黄盖，乘小马，好疾驰，以其名呼之，可使千里外一日反报。 Qing Ji were like humans with a height of 4 <i>cun</i> (14.32 cm). They dressed in yellow and worn yellow hat beside yellow hood. They rode on tiny horse and enjoyed fast ride. If you called it by its name, you could make it ride a thousand <i>li</i> (500000 m) within a day to and fro. (Translated by author)

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

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

(Contd...)

Table 4. (Continued)

Mythology/Literary Creations	Original Scripts
述异记（东轩主人） <i>Su Yi Ji</i> (Dong Xuan Zhu Ren) (The Northern and Southern dynasties, 420-589)	康熙三十一年五月，外國貢小人一，其長二尺餘，面目肢體與人無異，似四十許人，四譯館為制小人衣冠，啟奏進上。此人手持小傘蹣跚而行，傘式與中華同，人故黠觸之，輒吱吱作響如猴，觀者塞路。 In May on the 31 <sup>st</sup> year of Kang Xi (Emperor title of <i>Qing</i> dynasty, 1654-1722), a 2 <i>chi</i> (71.6 cm) tall little man with all the features of a human was tributed to the emperor from abroad. The little man looked like a man in his forties. Si Yi Guan (Foreign Affairs Institution) had attires and hat made for the little man to present it to the emperor. On the day of tribute submission, the little man was holding a tiny umbrella and tottering along. The fashion of his umbrella was similar to that of Chinese; when people touched him deliberately, he would squeak like a monkey. For a time, people thronged the street to see the little man.
南村輟耕錄 卷十四 <i>Nan Cun Chuo Geng Lu</i> Chapter Fourteen (Yuan dynasty, 1271-1368)	至正乙巳春，平江金国宝、袖人腊出售。余获一观。其形长六寸许，口耳目鼻与人无异，亦有髭须，头发披至臀下，须发皆黄色，间有白发一根。偏身黄毛长二分许。脐下阴物，乃男子也，相传云：至元间，世皇受外国贡献，以赐国公阿阿哥者。无几何时即死，因剖开背后，剝去肠脏，实以他物，仍缝合烘干，故至今无恙。 In the 42 <sup>nd</sup> spring of Zhi Zheng (1341-1370), the last emperor title of <i>Yuan</i> dynasty, Bao and Xiu people from Aisin Gurun ( <i>Jin</i> dynasty) in Ping Jiang of Su province were selling human specimen. I managed to take a look of it. It was 6 <i>cun</i> (21.48 cm) tall and had mouth, ears and nose similar to that of human. It also had beards and worn long hair long until its buttock. Its beards and hair were all in blonde though a white hair was spotted. Moreover, it had 0.2 <i>cun</i> (0.716 cm) long blonde hair all over its sides, and the reproductive organ under its navel (belly button) showed it was a male. It was circulated that during <i>Yuan</i> dynasty, this human-like little man was given to Duke Argo by the emperor from the tributes received abroad. Unfortunately, it did not live long; when it died, they cut open its back and took out all its viscera (internal organs) and later stuffed it with other material. Finally, it was knitted and dried for preservation. That was why the corpse was still in good shape after all these years.
耳谈 卷一（王同轨） <i>Er Tan</i> Chapter One (Wang Tong Kui) (1368-1662, <i>Ming</i> dynasty)	萬曆己卯，嚴州建德縣有漁者獲一鱉，重八斤。一酒家買之，懸於室中，夜半常作人聲。明日剖烹之，腹有老人長六寸許，五官皆具，首戴皮帽，大異之。以聞令，令以聞郡首楊公廷誥。楊時入觀，命以木匣載之，攜之京師。諸貴人皆見，皮冠宛然逼真，無毫髮不類。 In 1579 of Wan Li (Emperor title of <i>Ming</i> dynasty, 1573-1620), a fisherman in Yan Zhou of Jian De province caught a softshell tortoise weighted 8 <i>Jin</i> (0.6 kg). A restaurant bought the tortoise and hanged it in the room. In the middle of the night, human voice was heard. The following day, when the tortoise was slaughtered for cooking, a some 6 <i>cun</i> (21.48 cm) tall old man was found in its stomach. The little man had all the features of a human and wore a skin hat, everybody was shocked to see it. When the county magistrate was told, he immediately informed the region head, his highness Yang Ting Gao. When Yang later had an audience with the emperor in the palace, he had the little man placed in a wooden box and brought it along. All the nobles in the palace witnessed the little man, it had skin like that of a human, let alone hair and beards and such like.
閱微草堂筆記 (紀昀/紀曉嵐) <i>Yueweicaotangbiji</i> (Ji Yun/Ji Xiao Lan) ( <i>Qing</i> dynasty, 1636-1912)	烏魯木齊深山中，牧馬者恆見小人高尺許，男女老幼，一一皆備。遇紅柳吐花時，輒折柳盤為小圈，著頂上，作隊躍舞，音呦呦如度曲。或至行帳竊食，為人所掩，則跪而泣。繫之，則不食而死；縱之，初不敢遽行，行數尺輒回顧。或追叱之，仍跪泣。去人稍遠，度不能追，始驀澗越山去。然其巢穴棲止處，終不可得。此物非木魅，亦非山獸，蓋僬僥之屬。不知其名，以形似小兒，而喜戴紅柳，因呼曰紅柳娃。 In the remote mountains of Urumqi (Xinjiang, China), horse wranglers always spotted one-foot-tall little men, young and old with human features. When the rose willows blossomed, they would make willow wreaths and wear it on their head and dance together uttering melody-like rhymes. Sometimes they would stealth the wranglers' tents ransacking for food. They would kneel and sob when caught. If you chained them, they would fast to death; you set them free, initially they would walk away slowly, looking back every few yards. If you chased after them ranting, they would kneel and sob. Only when they were far from reaching, they would cross brooks and disappear into the mountains. Yet their resting quarters could never be found. These living creatures are not trolls or wild animals and thus could be the little men told in mythology over the centuries. I do not know what they are called and since they look like children and enjoy wearing rose willow wreath, I would call them 'the rose willow toddler'.

(Contd...)

Table 4. (Continued)

Mythology/Literary Creations	Original Scripts
镜花缘 (李汝珍) Jinghuayuan (Li Ru Zhen) (Qing dynasty, 1636-1912)	唐敖等人走了几日，到了靖人国。唐敖道：“请教九公：小弟闻得靖人，古人谓之诤人，身长八九寸，大约就是小人国。不知国内是何风景？”多九公道：“此地风俗饶薄，人最寡情，所说之话，处处与人相反。即如此物，明是甜的，他偏说苦的；明是咸的，他偏说淡的：教你无从捉摸。此是小人国历来风气如此，也不足怪。” 二人于是登岸，到了城郭，城门甚矮，弯腰而进，里面街市极窄，竟难并行。走到城内，才见国人，都是身怪不满一尺；那些儿童，只得四寸之长。行路时，恐为大鸟所害，无论老少，都是三五成群，手执器械防身；满口说的都是相反的话，诡诈异常，唐敖道：“世间竟有如此小人，倒也少见。”游了片时，遇见林之洋卖货回来，一同回船。 After Tang Ao and others had sailed for some days, they reached the country of Jing. Tang Ao asked, “Jiu Gong, I have a question: I heard that Jing people were called Zheng previously and they are the so-called little people with a height of 8 to 9 <i>cun</i> (28.64-32.22 cm). How will the country be like?” Duo Jiu Gong replied, “In this country, the social custom is frivolous and people are heartless. The words they utter are just the opposite of the truth. For instance, for a sweet thing they will call it bitter; salty thing will be told as insipid, and thus making things unintelligible and intangible. This is in fact the way of life here and has become a norm over the years. And later the two men went ashore. Once they reached the city walls, they found the city entrance too short and had to bend to enter. In the city, the streets were extremely narrow and they could not walk two abreast. Only when they reached the center of the city, then they witnessed little people not more than 1 <i>chi</i> (35.8 cm) and the children were 4 <i>cun</i> (14.32 cm) tall. It was told that attributed to the threat of huge birds flying above, whether young or old would group themselves into three to five and hold weapon for self defence; they spoke in contrary way and were tremendously cunning and sly. Tang Ao said, “what a rare opportunity to witness these little people on earth.” After touring for some times, they met Lin Zhi Yang with all the goods readily bought and so they got on board together.
子不语 卷九 袁枚 Zi Bu Yu (Yuan Mei) Chapter Nine (Qing dynasty, 1788)	乾隆四年，山西蒲州修城，掘河灘土，得一棺，方扁如箱。啟之，中有九禍，一榻藏二人，各長尺許，老幼男婦如生，不知何怪。 On the fourth year of Qian Long (emperor title for Qing dynasty, 1711-1799), city renovation was undergone in Puzhou of Shanxi province. A rectangular wooden coffin was unearthed while the workers were digging the moat. When the coffin was opened, nine grids were found in it. Two one-foot-tall authentic corpses were placed in each grid and these unknown creatures were young and old in age and gender. (Translated by author)

on the street in Yuan dynasty. In the remote mountains of Urumqi (Xinjiang, China), according to *Yueweicaotangbiji*, horse wranglers always met one-foot little men, young and old with human features. The novel *Jinghuayuan* told of 8 to 9 *cun* (28.64-32.22 cm) tiny people with frivolous and heartless social norm and the words these little guys uttered were just the opposite of the truth. *Zi Bu Yu* related a nine-grid coffin unearthed in Qing dynasty with two one-foot-tall authentic corpses (young and old in age and gender) placed in each grid.

#### APPLICATION OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH APPROACH ONTO THE DATA

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

vindictive little guys (take for instance, leprechaun, brownie, pixie, etc.) and in *Gulliver's Travel*, they were narrow-minded and selfish.

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

On the other hand, the term 'little people' in China translates ordinary people (*Shu Jing*: Wuyi); inferior people with despicable personality (*Yi Jing*: Jicixia); and a humble self-address term (*Zuo Zhuan*: Yungongyuannian). Drawing the derogatory sense of little people in Chinese, viz., inferior people with despicable personality, it also reveals the satirical function of little people as a fictional creation in both Chinese and English society.

To delve deeper into *Jinghuayuan* and *Gulliver's Travel* in this connotation as nautical literature, be it *Gulliver's Travel* or *Jinghuayuan*, obviously little people are the fictional symbols for social ills, as well as vices like narrow-mindedness, selfishness and injustice alike finely presented in the topical allusions and witty strokes of satire.

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

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

## CONCLUSION

The 2003 Liang Bua cave discovery backs authentically the existence of little people on earth in between 100,000 and 60,000 years ago, and tools made in stone by this species excavated between 190,000 and 50,000 years old apart from the extant historical documentation in Chinese history

and Buddhist sutras. Though only unauthentic sources are available in English mythology and literature, it similarly suggests the possibility of the existence of little people or the postulation that humans have always had a curiosity for little people in their imaginative pursuits. Another possibility could be that our ancestors in time immemorial had genuinely witnessed little people and thus it was passed down verbally and later recorded, perhaps distorted over time, in the form of mythology.

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

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## GLOSSARY

- Aisin Gurun (Manchu language ᠠᡳᠰᡳᠨ ᠭᡠᡵᡠᠨ or ᠠᡳᠰᡳᠨ ᠭᡠᡵᡠᠨ)  
金国 (滿文)
- Bao Pu Zi 抱朴子
- Bo Wu Zhi 博物志
- Da Zang Jing 大藏经
- Dong Fang Su 东方朔
- Dong Xuan Zhu Ren 东軒主人
- Er Tan 耳谈
- Fa Yuan Zhu Lin 法苑珠林
- Guo Yi Gong 郭义恭
- Guang Zhi 广志
- Ji Yun 纪昀
- Jin Dynasty 金国
- Jinghuayuan 镜花缘
- Li Fang 李昉
- Li Ru Zhen 李汝珍
- Lie Zi 列子
- Nan Cun Chuo Geng Lu 南村辍耕录
- Ping Jiang 平江
- Shan Hai Jing 山海经
- Shen Yi Jing 神异经
- Shi Ji 史记
- Shu Jing: Wuyi 书经·無逸
- Sou Shen Ji 搜神记
- Su Yi Ji 述异记
- Taiping Guang Ji 太平广记
- Tang Ao 唐敖
- Tao Zong Yi 陶宗仪
- The Stories of Emperor Han Wu 汉武帝故事
- Wang Shi Zhen 王士禛
- Wang Tong Kui 王同轨
- Xiang Zu Bi Ji 香祖笔记
- Yi Jing: Jicixia 易经·系辞下
- Yuan Mei 袁枚
- Yueweicaotangbiji 阅微草堂笔记
- Zhang Hua 張华
- Zhi Zheng 至正
- Zibuyu 子不语
- Zuo Zhuan: Yungongyuannian 左传·隱公元年