

THE TEXT OF THE CHIN P'ING MEI

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The problems presented by the text of the *Chin P'ing Mei* 金瓶梅, although not as important as those of the *Shui-hu chuan* 水滸傳 or the *Hung-lou mêng* 紅樓夢, are still by no means insignificant. To take merely one example, the authenticity of parts of the work remains in doubt up to the present day. It is obviously desirable that this question, and others like it, should be settled before any detailed critical appraisal of the novel is undertaken.

This article¹ is concerned with two main subjects. The first is the authenticity of the *Chin P'ing Mei*; the attempt is made to find out how much we have of the original work. The second is the early history of the text; new light is thrown on the date of composition as well as on the varieties and provenance of the early manuscripts.²

1. The Principal texts and their relationship

The first printed edition of which there is record was published either in 1610 or 1611. It no longer exists. The earliest edition now in existence was published at some time after 1616. Between that date and the end of the seventeenth century, there are at least fourteen extant editions, one of them surviving only in a manuscript copy. Yet this number by no means represents the total of those published during that period. There are other editions, now lost, which are mentioned in contemporary writings. And there are still other lost editions, the nature of which can be inferred from a comparison of surviving ones.

¹ It is based on the first portion of the writer's thesis; see Patrick D. Hanan, *A Study of the composition and the sources of the Chin P'ing Mei*, University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1960.

² No manuscripts survive which antedate the earliest printed editions, but there are several references to lost manuscripts before the date of the first printing.

Among the extant editions, three systems can easily be distinguished. Differing designations have been given them by Sun K'ai-ti 孫楷第³ and Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也.⁴ As there will be frequent occasion in the following pages to refer to these systems, it is most convenient to name them simply A, B, and C.

The grounds for the division into systems are primarily textual. There are major textual differences between the A and B systems in some half-dozen chapters, and countless minor ones throughout the novel. The distinction between the B and C systems, on the other hand, is dependent mainly on such things as prefaces, illustrations and notes.

In no case is the earliest edition of any of the systems extant. This fact, together with the obviously high mortality-rate among the editions of the novel, makes it difficult to determine the precise relationship of one edition to another. The descriptions that follow are intended to show in broad outline how each edition differs from the others in its system. The features listed may often seem arbitrary; their sole recommendation is that they help to differentiate one kind of edition from another.⁵

The A editions

(Designated by Sun K'ai-ti as "*Chin P'ing Mei tz'ü-hua* 金瓶梅詞話", and by Nagasawa Kikuya as the "*Tz'ü-hua* editions 詞話本".)

There are three of these editions. In what is their probable order of publication, they are:—

A.1 A blockprint edition. (All the editions described below are blockprint, unless otherwise stated.)

Location. This edition belonged to the Rare Book Collection of the Peking National Library. It was removed to the United States together with other works of that collection.

This copy, a virtually complete one, was discovered in Shansi in 1932 and was bought by the Peking National Library. In 1933 a

³ See Sun K'ai-ti, *Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu* 中國通俗小說書目, revised edition, Peking, 1957, pp. 116-7.

⁴ See Nagasawa Kikuya, "*Kimpeibai no hampon* 金瓶梅の版本", contained in a leaflet inserted in vol. 3 of *Kimpeibai* (the Japanese translation of the novel by Ono Shinobu 小野忍 and Senda Kyūichi 千田九一 which has recently been re-issued in complete and revised form), Tōhō Shokyoku 東方書局, Tokyo, 1948.

⁵ Locating the various surviving editions of the seventeenth century presents considerable difficulty. Of the fourteen editions referred to, only two or three are generally accessible in modern reprints. Of the other twelve, eight are in China, and four in Japan. A third of these have not been described before, and the others only in inadequate detail. Although I have had the good fortune to be able to examine most of these editions, and am extremely grateful to the libraries and individuals in China and Japan who made them—and other rare books—available to me during a year's study leave in 1957-8, there are still two which I have not yet seen; in their case I have had to depend on accounts given by other people.

photolithographic reprint was issued to subscribers in 100 copies.⁶ Later other reprints were made, the most recent of which was by the *Wên-hsüeh ku-chi ch'u-p'an-shê* 文學古籍出版社 in 1957.

The original had no illustrations, but in the 1933 and subsequent photolithographic reprints, the illustrations of editions B.1 or B.2 (see below) have been reproduced.⁷

The original also lacked two leaves, Ch. 52, pp. 7a-8b. In photolithographic reprints after the 1933 one, these leaves have been supplemented from the corresponding text in edition B.2 (see below).

It has been reprinted, with expurgations, in a number of modern editions.⁸

Extent. Complete, except for Ch. 52, pp. 7a-8b.

Prefaces. There are three:

(1) Entitled *Chin P'ing Mei hsü* 金瓶梅序 and signed Hsin-hsin Tz'ü 欣欣子.⁹

(2) Entitled merely *pa* 跋 "colophon", and signed Nien Kung 廿公.

(3) Entitled *Chin P'ing Mei hsü* and signed Nung-chu K'ê 弄珠客 of Tung Wu 東吳 (i.e. Soochow).¹⁰ Dated 1617.

Prefatory poems. There are eight *tz'ü* 詞, entitled *Hsin-k'ê Chin P'ing Mei tz'ü-hua* 新刻金瓶梅詞話, which are prefaced to the novel as a whole. The first four concern the pleasures of the recluse's life. The second four have the title *Ssü-t'an tz'ü* 四貪詞, "*Tz'ü* on the Four Sins of Greed".

Table of contents. Entitled *Hsin-k'ê Chin P'ing Mei tz'ü-hua mu-lu*.

Division. Into 10 *chüan*, and concurrently into 100 chapters.

⁶ *Hsin-k'ê Chin P'ing Mei tz'ü-hua*, published by the *Ku-i hsiao-shuo k'an-hsing-hui* 古佚小說刊行會, Peking, 1933.

⁷ The 1933 photolithographic reprint used the illustrations of the fragmentary edition in the possession of Wang Hsiao-tz'ü 王孝慈 (edition B.1), and these were copied by subsequent editions. The foreword of the 1957 edition refers, however, to an edition in which the illustrations are interspersed throughout the text, two before each chapter. This must presumably mean the edition formerly in Ma Lien's 馬廉 possession, which is now in the Peking University Library.

⁸ For the fullest available lists of editions of the novel, including those of the last three centuries, see "*Kimpeibai hamponkō* 金瓶梅版本考" by Torii Hisayasu 鳥居久晴, *Tenri Daigaku gakuho* 天理大學學報 7.2 (Oct., 1955), 335-366, as well as *Kimpeibai shomoku-kō* 金瓶梅書目稿, by Sawada Mizuho 澤田瑞穗, Tenri, 1959.

⁹ This preface attributes the authorship of the novel to a pseudonymous Hsiao-hsiao Shêng 笑笑生 of Lan-ling 蘭陵. As one of the districts once known as Lan-ling was in Shantung (I-hsien 嶧縣), and as the novel is often held to contain expressions characteristic of Shantung dialect, a good deal of weight has been given to this attribution. No progress has, however, been made in identifying Hsiao-hsiao Shêng.

¹⁰ Neither Nien Kung nor Nung-chu K'ê can be identified. It has been suggested that Nien Kung was the writer Yüan Hung-tao 袁宏道, literary name Shih Kung 石公, and that Nung-chu K'ê was another of the pseudonyms of Fêng Mêng-lung 馮夢龍. There is no evidence whatever in either case. It is extremely unlikely, furthermore, that Yüan Hung-tao could have been Nien Kung, for he died as early as 1610.

Lineation. 11 columns, 24 characters.

Comment. This edition is described by Chêng Chên-to 鄭振鐸 as an edition from the north of China.¹¹ Its date he takes to be the end of the Wan-li 萬曆 period (1573-1619). This would mean that while 1617 would still be the earliest date one could assign to it, the preface by Nung-chu K'e of Soochow could not have been originally written for this edition, although it could have belonged to its exemplar. There are other scholars, however, who have accepted it, on the basis of the third preface, as a Soochow edition of 1617.

A.2 *Location.* Kyoto University Library.¹²

Extent. Twenty-three chapters survive, in whole or in part. Seven are complete (11, 12, 43, 45, 85, 91, 92); ten are nearly complete, lacking less than two leaves (44, 46, 47, 84, 86-9, 93, 94); two are half-complete (42, 90); and of the remaining four only a page or two remains in each case (13, 15, 40, 41).¹³

Division. As A.1.

Lineation. As A.1.

Comment. This fragment appears to be an extremely close copy of edition A.1.

A.3 *Location.* The Jigendō 慈眼堂 temple at Nikkō. I have not seen this edition; the following description is based on accounts given of it by Nagasawa Kikuya¹⁴ and Toyoda Minoru 豊田稷.¹⁵

Prefaces. It contains prefaces (1) and (3).¹⁶ No mention is made of the colophon (2); presumably it does not exist in this edition.

Division. 100 chapters. Division into *chüan* is not mentioned.

Lineation. 11 columns, 26 characters.

Comment. This edition is given the title of *Chin P'ing Mei t'ü-hua* by Toyoda; presumably the words *hsin-k'ê* do not appear.¹⁷

From the form of the characters, Nagasawa considers this to be

¹¹ See Chêng Chên-to, "T'an *Chin P'ing Mei ts'ü-hua* 談金瓶梅詞話", *Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh yen-chiu* 中國文學研究, Peking, 1957, p. 257.

¹² This edition was discovered in Kyoto in 1917. It had been used as lining-paper for another work, the *P'u-t'o-fo shan chih* 普陀山志. (This information is supplied on a handwritten flyleaf inserted in the edition itself.)

¹³ For a detailed description of this edition, see "Kyōto Daigaku-zō *Kimpeibai-shiwa* zampon ni tsuite 京都大學藏金瓶梅詞話殘本について" by Torii Hisayasu, *Chūgoku gogaku* 中國語學 37 (April, 1955).

¹⁴ See "Kimpeibai no hampon."

¹⁵ See Toyoda Minoru, "Bōzan hōko kanshoroku 某山法障觀書錄", *Shoshi-gaku* 書誌學, 16.6 (July, 1941).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Preface (3) is described as *Tung Wu Chu K'e hsi* 東吳珠客序, that is to say, without the *Nung* 弄. Apparently it is dated 1617.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

an edition of the Ch'ung-chên 崇禎 period (1628-43), that is to say, a later copy of A.1.¹⁸

The above three texts are the only A editions which have to be considered. It seems that no editions based on them were published during the whole of the Ch'ing dynasty. If we assume A.3 to be a Ch'ung-chên edition, then the next A text is the photolithographic reprint of 1933, some 300 years later.

One other edition has sometimes been thought to belong to this system. That is edition B.9, described below. Presumably because of its title, which includes the words *ts'ü-hua*, it has been wrongly assigned. It is in fact an early Ch'ing edition which belongs to the B system.

Of the three A editions, A.1 is clearly the earliest. A.2 is a reprint of it, virtually identical in the fragment which remains. According to Nagasawa, A.3 is also a reprint of A.1. A.1 is therefore the only choice as a representative of the A editions.

The B editions

(Designated by Sun K'ai-ti as "*Chin P'ing Mei*", and by Nagasawa as the "Ming novel editions 明代小說本".)

There are nine editions and one manuscript, the copy of a printed edition. The following order is not necessarily that in which they were published.

B.1 *Location.* Unknown.¹⁹

Extent. Only two *ts'ê* 冊 remain. Apparently these contain merely the illustrations.

Illustrations. 200 single-page illustrations.

Comment. I have not seen this edition. The illustrations, however, are those included in the 1933 photolithographic reprint of A.1. Some of them bear the signatures of the engravers; hence it is possible to give an approximate date to the edition. Some of the same engravers

¹⁸ "*Kimpeibai* no hampon."

¹⁹ This fragment has not been described before, and as I have not examined it myself, I include it here with some diffidence. It is common knowledge, however, that it was this fragment, and not edition B.2, which provided the illustrations for the 1933 photolithographic reprint. (See "*Chin P'ing Mei* pan-pên chih i-t'ung 金瓶梅版本之異同", *P'ing-wai chih-yen* 瓶外卮言, ed. Yao Ling-hsi 姚蘊厚, Tientsin, 1942 p. 62.) The description given here is based on the recollections of people who have seen the edition. It is said to have slightly finer illustrations than those in edition B.2, and this would probably mean that the latter were a copy. Although I have compared the reproduced illustrations with those of edition B.2, I cannot vouch for this as a fact; hardly any definite differences were discernible. I do not know the present whereabouts of the fragment, but it is said to have been in the possession of Wang Hsiao-tz'ü 王孝慈. (See above, *loc. cit.*)

were also responsible for the edition of *Shui-hu chuan* 水滸傳 which has a preface by Ta-ti yü-jên 大滸餘人.²⁰ The same signatures are also found in the songbook *Wu-sao ho-pien* 吳騷合編, which has a Ch'ung-chên (1628-43) preface.²¹ It seems reasonable, therefore, to take this as a Ch'ung-chên edition.

B.2 *Location.* Peking University Library, Ma Lien 馬廉 Collection. One of the most widely-known of the editions of the novel, it is usually referred to as the "Ch'ung-chên edition 崇禎本".

The first 33 chapters have been collated with the A.1 edition in the *Shih-chieh wên-k'u* 世界文庫, ed. Chêng Chên-to, Shanghai, 1935-6.

Prefaces. The Nung-chu K'ê preface (see A.1 above). It bears no date.

Table of contents. Entitled *Hsin-k'ê hsiu-hsiang p'i-p'ing Ch'in P'ing Mei mu-lu* 新刻繡像批評金瓶梅目錄.

Division. 20 *chüan*, 100 chapters.

Illustrations. 200 single-page illustrations, i.e. 100 leaves. They are not prefaced to the text as a whole, as is the case with the other illustrated editions; one leaf, with two single-page illustrations, appears before each chapter.

The illustrations have a close resemblance to those of B.1, and some of them also bear the signatures of the same engravers. A slight simplification is said to be discernible, however, and they would therefore appear to be a very close copy of those of B.1.

Lineation. 10 columns, 22 characters.

Notes. Both upper-marginal and interlinear notes.

Initial verse (the poems which stand at the head of each chapter).

These poems are usually preceded by the phrase *ts'ü yüeh* 詞曰 "the *ts'ü* runs . . .", and followed by the pattern of the *ts'ü* in the formula *yu tiao* 右調 "the preceding poem is to the pattern of . . .".

Pagination. Each chapter is separately numbered.

Chüan titles. The full title of the novel appears before each *chüan*.

Generally, it is the same as the title which precedes the table of contents. In the case of the following, the title differs:—

Chüan 6 has *hsin-chüan* 新鐫 for *hsin-k'ê*.

Chüan 8 has *p'ing-tien* 評點 for *p'i-p'ing*.

²⁰ See Sun K'ai-ti, *op. cit.*, p. 183. One of the engravers who also helped to carve the blocks for the *Chin P'ing Mei* illustrations was Liu Ch'i-hsien 劉啓先. See also Chêng Chên-to, *op. cit.*, p. 259, where it is suggested that these engravers, some of whom describe themselves as coming from Hsianan 新安, were actually in the employ of Hangchow publishing houses.

²¹ See Chêng Chên-to, *op. cit.*, p. 257. This particular edition of the *Wu-sao ho-pien* was in Chêng Chên-to's own possession. See his *Ch'a-t'u-pên Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh shih* 插圖本中國文學史, Peking, 1957, p. 809 n. 12.

Chüan 14 and *15* have *p'i-tien* 批點 for *p'i-p'ing*.

Chüan 9 as above. It also has *ts'ü-hua* 詞話 at the end of the title.

B.3 *Location.* Tenri Central Library.²²

Prefaces, table of contents, division, lineation and initial verse are as in B.2.

Illustrations. 200 single-page illustrations (100 leaves).

Notes. Both upper-marginal and interlinear notes, many of which are the same as those in B.2.

Chüan titles. *Chüan 6* and *14* are as in B.2. *Chüan 7* is entitled *Hsin-k'ê Chin P'ing Mei ts'ü-hua* 新刻金瓶梅詞話, which is the title of A.1. *Chüan 8* has *p'i-tien* for *p'i-p'ing*.

B.4 *Location.* Two copies exist of this edition. One is held by the Naikaku Bunko, the other by the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo. The latter, which was formerly in the possession of Professor Nagasawa Kikuya, lacks the first *ts'ê* containing title-page, prefaces and illustrations.

I have not myself seen the first *ts'ê* of the Naikaku edition, and am dependent on Sun K'ai-ti's description.²³

Title-page. Entitled *Hsin-k'ê hsiu-hsiang p'i-p'ing yüan-pên Chin P'ing Mei* 新刻繡像批評原本金瓶梅.

Prefaces. Prefaces (2) and (3), see A.1.

Table of contents and division are as in B.2.

Illustrations. 200 single-page illustrations (100 leaves).

Lineation. 11 columns, 28 characters.

Notes. Both upper-marginal and interlinear notes, many of which are the same as those in B.2.

Initial verse. The poems are preceded by the name of the *ts'ü* pattern only.

Pagination. Each *chüan* (5 chapters) is separately numbered.

Chüan titles. *Chüan 8, 9* and *13* have *p'ing-tien* 評點 for *p'i-p'ing*.

Chüan 14 and *15* are as in B.2.

B.5 *Location.* The Metropolitan Library 首都圖書館 (formerly the Peking Municipal Library).²⁴

Extent. Complete except for one *ts'ê* containing Chapters 51-55. The first few leaves of the edition, containing the title-page and part of the table of contents, are also missing.

²² This edition was the one formerly in the possession of Shionoya On 鹽谷瀧. For a detailed description of it, see "Kimpeibai hamponkō".

²³ *Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu*, p. 116.

²⁴ This is the edition that was formerly in the possession of the K'ung Tê School 孔德學校 in Peking.

Division. 20 *chüan*, 100 chapters.

Illustrations. 101 single-page illustrations. Although modelled on those of the other editions, they are far inferior. None of the engravers' signatures are reproduced. From the illustration for Ch. 81 on, the work is much cruder; evidently a less skilled hand was responsible.

Only the first of the two illustrations referring to each chapter is reproduced here. (There are two for Ch. 100.) This reduction by half of the original illustrations has led the engraver to re-dispose some of them. It is normal to place items of interest towards the outside, away from the centre of the book. Now, because of the reduction in number, many of the illustrations open on the opposite side to where they had been before. Accordingly, in the illustrations for Chapters 34, 56, 64 and 78, the human figures which are the centre of interest, have been transposed, mirror-fashion, from one side of the picture to the other.

Lineation. 11 columns, 28 characters.

Notes. None.

Initial verse and pagination are as in B.4.

Chüan titles. *Chüan* 8, 9 and 13 are as B.4. *Chüan* 14 is as B.2 (and B.4).

Comment. This is an inferior edition, and contains many mistakes. Some of the illustrations are in the wrong order, and have the wrong chapter headings attached to them.

B.6 *Location.* As B.2.

Extent. Four *ts'ê* remain, containing Chapters 26-30, 36-50. Ch. 46 lacks the first three leaves.

Division. 20 *chüan*, 100 chapters.

Lineation, initial verse, pagination are as in B.4.

Notes. None.

Chüan titles. Only three remain, *chüan* 6, 8 and 9. *Chüan* 8 and 9 have *p'ing-tien* for *p'i-p'ing*.

Comment. This edition is very close to B.5. A few characters are different in form; that constitutes most of the difference between the two.

B.7 *Location.* Peking Library.

Extent. Only two *ts'ê* remain, containing part of the preface, the table of contents and the illustrations.

Prefaces. As B.2.

Table of contents. As B.2.

Division. 20 *chüan*, 100 chapters.

Illustrations. 184 single-page illustrations (92 leaves). There are no illustrations for Chapters 29, 34, 50, 73, 76, 78, 83 and 93. They have clearly been copied from those of some other edition. A good deal of simplification has taken place, and most of the illustrations which in edition B.1 bear the engraver's name are without it here.

B.8 *Manuscript.*

Location. As B.2.

Prefaces. As B.2. The first part of the preface is missing.

Table of contents. No title.

Division. 20 *chüan*, 100 chapters.

There are no notes. Pages are not numbered.

B.9 *Location.* In the possession of Professor Fu Hsi-hua 傅惜華 of Peking.

Extent. Five *ts'ê* remain, containing the preface, table of contents and Chapters 1, 2, 11-15, 31-35 and 65-68.

Title-page. Entitled *Hsiu-k'ê ku-pên pa ts'ai-tzü ts'ü-hua* 繡刻古本八才子詞話. Below appear the words *pên-ya ts'ang-pan* 本衙藏板.

Preface. The preface differs from those in any of the above editions. The writer is not named, but the date is given as 1645.

Table of contents. As title-page.

Division. 10 *chüan*, 100 chapters.

Illustrations. Despite the title, there are no illustrations.

B.10 *Location.* As B.9.

Division. 20 *chüan*, 100 chapters.

Illustrations. None.

Comment. This edition is apparently an early Ch'ing edition, with a fairly close resemblance to B.2.

This is certainly not the total of all the B editions in existence. One writer has mentioned that such an edition was in his possession, but with so little detail as to make it useless to include it here.²⁵ The same writer has said that although the book was always a rarity, it was still occasionally possible in the 1930's to buy one on the Shanghai book market.²⁶

²⁵ See "P'ing shuo 類說" by Chou Yüeh-jan 周越然, *Shu shu shu* 書書書, Shanghai, 1944, pp. 121-8. The title of the edition is given as *Hsin-k'ê hsiu-hsiang p'i-p'ing Chin P'ing Mei*. It is divided into 20 *chüan* and 100 chapters. It has upper-marginal notes, and contains the Nung-chu K'ê preface, as well as 200 single-page illustrations.

²⁶ "Yü chih kou-shu ching-yea 余之購書經驗", *op. cit.*, pp. 1-9.

Among the first six B editions listed above, two groups can be discerned, differentiated by the following criteria:—lineation, pagination, *chüan* titles, and the way of setting out the initial verse. The first group consists of B.2 and B.3, and the second group of B.4, B.5 and B.6. Too little remains of B.1 to say which group it belongs to. In the first group, it is not possible to establish the relationship between the two editions. B.2 has the finer illustrations, and presumably derives from B.1 or some lost edition close to it, but since its illustrations are not themselves the original ones, this does not necessarily place it before B.3 in point of time. In the second group, it is reasonable to assume that both B.5 and B.6 are cheap reprints—minus notes and half the illustrations—of B.4 or some lost edition close to B.4.

The relationship between B.2, B.3, and B.4 is difficult to determine. From the similarity of their illustrations and notes, it is clear that they are derived from a common antecedent, and we know from the identity of the engravers that this common antecedent must have been published in the Ch'ung-chên period. Between this edition and those that survive some textual changes evidently took place, for there are a number of discrepancies between the chapter headings as found in the table of contents and alongside the illustrations, and the chapter headings as found in the text. Probably the former were the earlier ones, for in the C texts they have been adapted to accord with the others.

Too little remains of the fragment B.1 to know whether it could be the antecedent of B.2, B.3, and B.4; if it is not that edition, it must be a very close copy of it.

The textual differences between the extant B editions, however, are fairly slight. Most of them amount to no more than mistakes by one edition or another over single characters. Any one of them could be taken as a representative of the B system.

The C editions

(Designated by Sun K'ai-ti as *Chang Chu-p'o p'ing Chin P'ing Mei* 張竹坡評金瓶梅, and by Nagasawa Kikuya as the "Chang Chu-p'o editions 張竹坡本".)

There are many slightly different varieties. The features which are common to most of the early editions are as follows:—

Title-page. Entitled *Kao-hé-t'ang p'i-p'ing ti-i ch'i-shu* 皐鶴堂批評第一奇書.

Prefaces. There is a preface dated 1695 by Hsieh I 謝頤 (Kao-hé-t'ang is apparently his studio-name). There are also some twelve introductions, disquisitions and lists by Chang Chu-p'o.

Table of contents. Title as above, with *Chin P'ing Mei* added.

Division. 100 chapters. There is no division into *chüan*.

Illustrations. 200 single-page illustrations.

Notes. Both upper-marginal and interlinear. Some editions also have commentaries at the beginning and end of the chapter.

Initial verse. As B.2.

Almost all subsequent Ch'ing editions are derived from the 1695 one. Textually it differs hardly at all from the B editions. Some slight adaptations have been made; one instance—the matching of the chapter headings in the table of contents with those in the text—has been described above.

2. A Comparison of the A and B editions

Henceforth A.1 will be taken as representing the A editions, and B.4 as representing the B editions. Most of the points made in this and succeeding sections are, however, general enough to apply to all the editions in each system.

The manner in which the two editions vary differs radically from one part of the novel to another. For our present purpose the novel must therefore be divided up, into the following four parts:—

The whole of the novel except Chapters 1 (the first part), 53, 54 and 55. Broadly speaking, in this portion of the *Chin P'ing Mei*, the editions can be said to vary throughout in a uniform manner. The main difference is that B is considerably shorter than A. On almost every page there is text which is contained in A but not in B. In length, this text varies from single characters up to whole episodes, the most notable of which is that involving Sung Chiang 宋江 and the outlaws at the end of Ch. 84, which is about 5 pages long in the A.1 edition. There are two kinds of material in which the difference between the editions is most striking—songs and poems. Where A has the whole of a song, B has often merely the tune; where A has a sequence of songs, B has often only the first of them. There are also many poems occurring in the course of, and at the end of, chapters, which appear in A but not in B. Nevertheless, even in this portion of the novel, it is not true that A is invariably fuller than B. Besides trivial differences, there are several passages in which the B edition is richer in detail, for example, the seduction of P'an Chin-lien 潘金蓮 at the beginning of Ch. 4 and the murder of Li Wai-ch'uan 李外傳 at the end of Ch. 9. In addition to these passages, and much more important than they are, are two short pieces of text which are contained in Chapters 56 and 81 of the B edition only. These add conspicuously to the narrative as contained in A; they are dealt with separately below.

The first part of Ch. 1 (the first 8 leaves of A.1, the first 15 of B.4). The text of the two editions differs completely, in both wording and content.

Chapters 53 and 54. The text of the two editions differs almost

completely so far as wording is concerned, but the content of certain parts is similar, even as regards details of the narrative.

Chapter 55. In this chapter the editions differ as in the bulk of the novel in that there is a good deal of text which appears in A but not in B, except that here there is also a lengthy passage (about 5 pages in edition B.4) which appears in B but not in A.

There are also two points of difference which are found throughout the novel. The chapter headings are often different, and the initial verse usually differs in kind as well as in content, that in A being mostly *shih* 詩, and that in B mostly *tz'ü* 詞.

Some of the differences described above can be simply explained. It will be shown later that the extra passages in the B version of Chapters 55, 56 and 81 are in fact the additions of an editor anxious to cover gaps in the narrative.

The almost complete divergence of the editions in Chapters 53 and 54 accords significantly with a well-known statement by the Ming writer Shên Tê-fu 沈德符 (1578-1642) on the subject of the first printed edition of the *Chin P'ing Mei*:

However, the original text was short of Chapters 53 to 57; a search was made for them everywhere, but they could not be found. Some ignoramus supplied them, so that the work could be printed.²⁷

So far as I know, there is no accepted view as to which, if either, of these versions of Chapters 53 and 54 is authentic. Nor do I know of any evidence offered as to whether Chapters 55-7 are authentic or not. Accordingly, this question—the authenticity of Chapters 53 to 57—will be considered in the next section.

So far as the first part of Ch. 1 is concerned, the general view, without doubt the correct one, is that the A version is authentic. This question will be briefly discussed below.

For the rest of the novel, the commonsense conclusion is that B is an abridgement—except for the additions to Ch. 81—of an earlier text represented by A. It has long been assumed by scholars that A was the earlier text, and the success of their researches—on songs, drama and historical references—confirms the truth of the assumption. However, unless it can be shown that in all cases of divergence A is the more reliable text, detailed criticism may well be impeded.

Fortunately there are ways of showing that in so far as B differs from A, it is not nearer to, but further from, the original novel. One proof of this is provided by the other works from which the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* copied so freely. In most cases more of the original source is found in A, while nothing substantial is ever found in B which is not also found in A.

²⁷ *Wan-li yeh-huo-pien* 萬歷野獲編, Peking, 1959, p. 652.

The slight differences between the A and B versions of copied sources such as the *Shui-hu chuan* are, where they are not due to abridgement on the part of B, almost certainly mistakes, or corrections of mistakes, made by scribe or editor. The fact that, in a number of trivial cases, the B version tallies with the original source while the A version does not, proves that the earliest B edition did not derive directly from the A.1 edition.²⁸ These trivial discrepancies, we must suppose, were the work of scribes and editors of A editions after the date of the common antecedent from which the editions of both systems are derived. (See the next section.)

Some of the other differences between the A and B editions can be seen as illustrating the contemporary developments in the Chinese novel. Thus whereas the pairs of chapter headings in A are often ill-balanced, and occasionally even of different length, those of B, as with seventeenth-century novels, are polished and well-balanced.²⁹ Similarly, the regular use of *tz'ü* in place of *shih* for the initial verse is found for the first time among early seventeenth-century novels.³⁰

B is thus an abridged text. It has undergone the characteristic kind of abridgement—"sub-editing" might be a more apt word—which most of the early Chinese novels suffered. Compared with some, however, it is not an unduly severe abridgement; it is by no means as drastic as the first abridgement of the *Shui-hu chuan*,³¹ or the abridgements to which the C editions were subjected during the Ch'ing dynasty.³²

²⁸ The best source with which to check this point is the *Shui-hu chuan*, if only because so much of it was copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei* that even the rare mistakes of a careful scribe are likely to be discernible. In Ch. 5, for example, which is almost entirely derived from the *Shui-hu chuan*, there are 28 places in which B.2 parallels the *Shui-hu chuan*, while A.1 does not. (B.2 was chosen for the comparison because it has already been collated with A.1 in the *Shih-chieh wên-k'u* up to Ch. 33.) Needless to say, these 28 places are insignificant when compared with the places in which A.1 is close to the *Shui-hu chuan* and B.2 diverges from it; most of them are single characters, and the longest is only four characters. After allowing for obvious slips which a later scribe would correct, there remain enough to make it unlikely that the first B edition could have been directly based on A.1. (The edition of the *Shui-hu chuan* that was used was the variorum edition of the unabridged texts, the *Shui-hu ch'üan-chuan* 水滸全傳, Peking, 1954.)

²⁹ The nature of the disparity between the chapter headings was pointed out in Chêng Chên-to's "T'an *Chin P'ing Mei tz'ü-hua*", p. 259. A theory of the development of chapter headings from simple titles to polished couplets is elaborated in Fêng Yüan-chün's 馮沅君 "*Chin P'ing Mei tz'ü-hua-chung ti wên-hsüeh shüeh-liao* 金瓶梅詞話中的文學史料". *Ku-chü shuo-hui* 古劇說薈, Peking, 1956, pp. 185-6.

³⁰ Among the earliest novels, as distinct from short story collections, which make use of *tz'ü* for the initial verse are the *Chao-yang ch'ü-shih* 昭陽縣志 and the *Chu-lin yeh-shih* 朱林野史. The earliest in existence is perhaps Yang Erh-ts'eng's 楊爾曾 *Han Hsiang-tzu* 韓湘子, of which there is a 1623 edition. (See Sun K'ai-ti, *op. cit.*, p. 173.)

³¹ See R. G. Irwin, *The Evolution of a Chinese novel: Shui-hu-chuan*, 1953, pp. 66-7.

³² There are nineteenth-century editions which are only a fraction of the original. See also Torii Hisayasu, "*Kimpeibai hamponkô*".

The obvious motive for abridgement is economy; the shorter the novel, the more cheaply it can be produced. In the case of the *Chin P'ing Mei*, as we have seen, an additional motive was probably at work; some of the excisions may have been designed to make the novel more acceptable to the contemporary reader. Many of the short poems scattered throughout the text of A have only a tenuous link with their context; a number of them have been removed in B. The songs, which were the genuine popular songs of the sixteenth century, may no longer have been popular in the seventeenth; many of them too have been excised. Ting Yao-k'ang 丁耀亢, author of the *Hsü Chin P'ing Mei* 續金瓶梅 (the sequel to the *Chin P'ing Mei*), wrote in his introduction in 1660 that "the previous work was called *ts'ü-hua* and contained many old songs", and declared his intention of replacing them with current ones.

Showing that B is an abridgement of A does not constitute a proof that all of A, even in this part of the novel (all except Chapters 1, 53-7), belonged to the original work. To indicate that, it would be necessary to show that a high degree of consistency, in regard to language and narrative, existed throughout it. That a fairly high degree of consistency does in fact exist will emerge incidentally from the examination which follows of Chapters 53 to 57.

3. The Supplied text—Chapters 53 to 57

Shen Tê-fu's note on the first printed edition continues as follows:

Leaving out of consideration their utter triviality and vulgarity, as well as their occasional use of Soochow words, the chapters he supplied do not even fit in with the novel's sequence. One can tell at a glance that they are a forgery.

The fact that no one has been able to point to breaks in continuity or use of Soochow dialect, let alone "tell at a glance that the chapters are a forgery", need not necessarily mean that either text we have is authentic; the supplied chapters may have been revised in editions after the first, and Shên Tê-fu may, in any case, have exaggerated their weaknesses.

The two points he makes must, however, form the criteria for any examination of this question. The most obvious way of testing the authenticity of these chapters is to see if there are any glaring inconsistencies in the narration. And another way is to examine their language, not indeed in the remote hope of discovering traces of Soochow dialect, but in order to see how their use of one or two common words compares with that of the rest of the novel.

To take first the matter of inconsistencies. It will depend on the nature of the novel in question whether mistakes made in a supplied text can be distinguished from the mistakes likely to be made by an author or copyist. Fortunately the *Chin P'ing Mei* is a work from which one expects a reasonable degree of consistency. It is not a picaresque novel; most of the

action takes place in and around Hsi-mên Ch'ing's household. Moreover, for such a long work, it contains a relatively small number of important characters. Furthermore, although the novel describes a fictional period of about ten years, the greater part of it, up to Ch. 80, describes a period of not more than three or four years. As a result, in this section of the novel, the affairs of Hsi-mên's household are narrated in such detail that little room is left for serious inconsistency.

The simplest step is to trace certain relevant threads of the story up to Ch. 52, and then pick them up again in Ch. 58, in order to see what should have occurred in the meantime. These conclusions can then be compared with the actual A and B versions. This procedure will be followed in these six cases:—

Miao Ch'ing 苗青; the singing-boys (the two threads join together, as will be shown later).

Hsi-mên's visit to the capital

The Yung-fu temple

The *Dhāraṇī*

Hsi-mên's visit to the eunuchs

Li III and Huang IV

Textual references are to A.1. Passages without any quotation marks have been summarized from the events recorded in the novel; they are not a translation.

Miao Ch'ing

Ch. 47 1a-10a. The story is told of Miao T'ien-hsiu 苗天秀—also referred to as Miao Yüan-wai 苗員外—that he ignored the warning of an itinerant priest not to leave his home in Yangchow, and accepted an invitation to visit the Eastern Capital. He took with him his servant Miao Ch'ing 苗青, whose jealous hatred he had previously incurred, and a page-boy, An-t'ung 安童. Miao Ch'ing joined with the two boatmen of the ship on which they sailed to murder his master and divide his property. An-t'ung, clubbed and left for drowned, survived to identify the boatmen. These two confessed to the crime, also implicating Miao Ch'ing. He, however, arranged to bribe Hsi-mên Ch'ing and the other magistrate. Having handed over 1000 taels to Hsi-mên, he hastened back to Yangchow with the rest of the stolen property.

The magistrates declared that the boatmen had fabricated their testimony against Miao Ch'ing. The Prefect, a friend of Hsi-mên's, accepted this construction of the affair and sentenced the two men to death.³³

³³ This story is an adapted form of a tale which is found in the *Lung-t'u kung-an* 龍圖公案 (also known as the *Pao kung an* 包公案), the famous collection of crime-case stories in which the Sung dynasty official Pao Ch'êng 包拯 figures as the judge. See *A Study of the composition and sources of the Chin P'ing Mei*, pp. 150-4.

Ch. 48 1a-3b. Baulked of justice, An-t'ung appealed to the provincial Censor, who discovered the truth of the case. He sent to Yangchow to arrest Miao Ch'ing, and submitted a memorial impeaching the two magistrates. (They promptly sent bribes to Ts'ai Ching 蔡京, who caused the censor to be removed from his office, and later exiled.)

Ch. 49 11b. Hsi-mên, taking leave of the Salt Inspector Ts'ai Yün 蔡蘊, a protégé of Ts'ai Ching, mentioned the case of Miao Ch'ing.

"He is a friend of mine who was falsely accused in a case heard by the last censor, Censor Tsêng. A warrant for his arrest was sent to Yangchow, and the case adjourned pending his capture. Since the case is now closed, if you should meet His Honour Sung (the new censor), I should be most grateful if you could mention the matter to him."

"Of course I will," said Censor Ts'ai. "When I see Sung, I shall tell him that if by any chance this man should be brought to trial, all he need do is to release him."

(Later on, he was as good as his word.)

Ch. 51 14b-15a. Han Tao-kuo 韓道國 and Ts'ui Pên 崔本 were about to leave on a buying expedition to the south. Hsi-mên handed them two letters.

"One is to go to Wang Po-ju's shop in Yangchow docks, while this one is for Miao Ch'ing. Go into Yangchow town, find him and ask him his news. Then come straight back and report to me. If there is not enough money, I shall send some more later by Lai Pao 來保."

They left on the 20th of the fourth month (see Ch. 51, 8a).

That is all the material before Ch. 53 which is relevant to this thread of the story.

Ch. 58 12b. Ts'ui Pên is mentioned as present in the house.

Ch. 59 1ab. Han Tao-kuo returned alone. Ts'ui Pên came out to help unload.

Ch. 67 15b. "On the twenty-fourth, Hsi-mên burned paper offerings, and sent off Han Tao-kuo, Ts'ui Pên, Lai Pao and the two boys Jung Hai 榮海 and Hu Hsiu 胡秀 on their journey to the south. He had written a letter which he gave them to take to Miao Hsiao-hu 苗小湖, to thank him for his valuable presents."

Neither Miao Hsiao-hu nor the presents have been referred to before.

Ch. 77 17a-18a. Ts'ui Pên returned with 2000 taels' worth of goods. Leaving Jung Hai at Lin-ch'ing to look after them, he reported to Hsi-mên:

"We set out on the first of the twelfth month, and parted from the others at Yangchow. They went on to Hangchow while Jung Hai and I stayed a few days at Miao's. By the way, Miao Ch'ing has spent ten taels buying a girl for you from the household of a captain in the Yangchow Guard. She is fifteen years old and her name is Ch'u-yün 楚雲. . . She knows by heart three thousand short songs and eight hundred long ones. . . Miao Ch'ing is looking after her at present, while he assembles her trousseau. Han Tao-kuo and Lai Pao will bring her on their boat in the early spring. . ."

Ch. 81 1a-2b. Han Tao-kuo and Lai Pao reached Yangchow.

"They sought out Miao Ch'ing's house and went there to stay. Miao Ch'ing read Hsi-mên Ch'ing's letter, and remembering that he owed his life to him, put himself out to entertain them."

At a farewell party, Hu Hsiu got drunk and quarrelled with Han Tao-kuo.

"Next day Han Tao-kuo wanted to thrash Hu Hsiu, but the boy said, 'I know nothing at all'. Han Tao-kuo was eventually persuaded to desist by Lai Pao and Miao Hsiao-hu. To cut a long story short, before long they had completed their purchases, packed and loaded their goods. Miao Ch'ing prepared some presents, wrote a letter, and saw them off on their journey."

That is all the relevant material from the A edition. But the two additional passages contained in Ch. 81 of the B editions (see Section 2 above) concern this topic.

B.4 Ch. 81 1a. "He (Miao Ch'ing) had also bought a girl called Ch'u-yün and was keeping her in his household to send to Hsi-mên Ch'ing in gratitude for the favour done to him."

B.4 Ch. 81 3a. "Unfortunately the girl Ch'u-yün whom Miao Ch'ing had bought to send to Hsi-mên Ch'ing suddenly fell ill and could not travel.

"I will send someone with her as soon as she gets better," said Miao Ch'ing."

There is thus a simple explanation for these extra passages contained in the B editions. They have evidently been inserted by some editor who has noticed an oversight on the part of the author, namely, that the girl Ch'u-yün, promised to Hsi-mên in Ch. 77, is not mentioned again. The editor has disposed of her simply but effectively, for the reader assumes that by

the time she is well again the news of Hsi-mên's death will have reached Miao Ch'ing.

It is possible to deduce from the above quotations one or two things which should have been recounted in Chapters 53 to 57. Ts'ui Pên should have returned with news of Miao Ch'ing—it is clear that Miao Ch'ing and Miao Hsiao-hu are one and the same person—and have brought presents from him, since we are told in Ch. 67 that Hsi-mên Ch'ing has received valuable presents. But before one can say more about the presents, it is necessary to consider another thread of the story.

The Singing-boys

Ch. 58 11b. "Hsi-mên . . . asked Ch'un-hung 春鴻 to come up and sing a southern song."

Ch'un-hung has not been mentioned before, but from this point on he is often described as singing southern-style songs, a rare accomplishment in Hsi-mên's northern household.

Ch. 74 9ab. Hsi-mên, hearing Censor Sung's praise of Ch'un-hung, remarked:

"He's a servant-boy. He comes from Yangchow."

Ch. 87 1a-3b. Ying Po-chüeh 應伯爵 tried to tempt Ch'un-hung away from Hsi-mên's household by playing on his desire to return to his native south.

It is clear from these passages that somewhere in Chapters 53 to 57 an account of Ch'un-hung's introduction into the household ought to have been given. He must have been sent to Hsi-mên Ch'ing from Yangchow. Furthermore, it is likely that he was sent by Miao Ch'ing. Miao Ch'ing lived in Yangchow, and Hsi-mên had received unidentified "valuable presents" from him. Moreover, later on Miao Ch'ing proposed sending him a Yangchow singing-girl.

Let us now compare these conclusions with the A and B versions. References are to the A.1 edition unless otherwise stated.

Ch. 55 4b. Hsi-mên Ch'ing, while in the Eastern Capital to offer the Grand Tutor congratulations on his birthday, happened to meet an old friend, Miao Yüan-wai 苗員外 of Yangchow, who had come to the capital for the same purpose.

The term *yüan-wai* is merely the designation of a man of property who has no official rank. The man's personal name is not given.

Ch. 55 7b. Hsi-mên paid a call on Miao while they were both still in the capital.

"In addition to all this (the sumptuous provision of food and wine), there were two handsome singing-boys who sang several groups of songs. Hsi-mên Ch'ing pointed to Tai-an, Ch'in-t'ung, Shu-t'ung and Hua-t'ung, and looking at Miao, said:

"Those dolts think of nothing but their food and drink. They can't compare with your two boys."

Miao laughed.

"I'm afraid they won't know how to serve you properly," he said, "but if you would like them, I should be only too pleased to give them to you."

Ch. 55 8a. Overwhelmed by a sudden desire to return home, Hsi-mên departed without taking leave of Miao.

Ch. 55 10a-12b. Miao regretfully decided that he was still in honour bound to give the singing-boys to Hsi-mên Ch'ing. After tearful scenes, he despatched them to Shantung in the care of two servants. There follows an account of their journey which is not found in the B version.

Ch. 55 13b-15b. Having arrived in Hsi-mên's household, they sang a number of songs. (The text of the songs is given in the A version; the B version merely gives the tune, and the first line of the first song.) From this point on, the A and B versions differ widely.

A.1 Ch. 55 15b. P'an Chin-lien 潘金蓮 noticed how handsome the two boys were, and marked them down for her own.

A.1 Ch. 56 1ab. "Hsi-mên Ch'ing eventually found that he did not need the boys, and sent them to the Grand Tutor."

B.4 Ch. 55 57a.³⁴ Hsi-mên named one of the boys Ch'un-hung 春鴻 and the other Ch'un-yen 春燕.

B.4 Ch. 56 1a. "Before long Ch'un-yen died, leaving only Ch'un-hung."

Both the A and B versions prove unsatisfactory when compared with the conclusions arrived at earlier. The B version does not mention the return of Ts'ui Pên or the presents sent by Miao Ch'ing. Furthermore it contains a figure—the Miao whom Hsi-mên met in the capital—who is not

³⁴ This is at a point near the end of the chapter. In edition B.4, it is the *chüan* (5 chapters) and not the individual chapter which is separately numbered.

mentioned anywhere else in the novel. The A version has the same defects as B, and in addition, it fails to account for the presence in the household of Ch'un-hung.

We must therefore conclude that in this part of the novel neither kind of edition is authentic. But if neither is authentic, how have these unsatisfactory versions been arrived at? For both versions come much too close to the truth for it to be a mere matter of coincidence. There are in fact three things which both versions have in common with the reconstruction which was made earlier:

Singing-boys are sent to Hsi-mên Ch'ing.

They are sent by a man named Miao.

He lives in Yangchow.

Moreover, in A all of these three points, and in B the last two, serve no purpose in the novel whatsoever.

The explanation undoubtedly lies in the chapter headings. The headings of Ch. 55 in the A editions are:—

西門慶東京慶壽旦
苗員外揚州送歌童

"Hsi-mên Ch'ing offers birthday congratulations in the Eastern Capital.

Miao Yüan-wai sends a singing-boy (or some singing-boys) from Yangchow."

Now the second heading tallies with the reconstruction, and also provides the three points which the A and B versions have in common with it. Therefore the explanation of the paradox whereby both versions are extremely close to the truth while remaining ultimately pointless, is that the person who wrote the earlier of them (or their common antecedent) had in his possession the chapter headings of the original novel.

Let us assume for the moment that the first heading is also from the original novel. A writer asked to supply a missing part of it, might, if he had only these chapter headings to work on, produce something like the A version. There is only one objection; the singing-boys are sent, in the A version, not from *Yangchow*, but from the Eastern Capital. The likely explanation is that the writer, confronted with the two chapter headings, tended—not unnaturally, perhaps—to combine the two events and cause Hsi-mên to meet a hitherto unmentioned man named Miao while in the capital to congratulate the Grand Tutor.

The fact that the second heading tallies with the reconstruction while not quite agreeing with the A version itself, indicates that the chapter headings in the A editions have been left exactly as they were in the original work.

It is also possible to establish something about the relationship of the

B version to the A version. The chapter headings of Ch. 55 in the B editions are as follows:—

西門慶兩番慶壽旦
苗員外一諾送歌童

"Hsi-mên Ch'ing offers birthday congratulations on two occasions. Miao Yüan-wai sends a singing-boy (or some singing-boys) after a single promise."

The offending reference to Yangchow has been removed. Similarly, the passages at the end of Ch. 55 and at the beginning of Ch. 56 in the B version which explain the presence of Ch'un-hung later in the novel, and account for the death of the other singing-boy, must also be corrections added at a later date. These improvements are analogous to the ones made in Ch. 81 of the B editions, with the difference that there the mistakes were those of the author himself.

Apart from these passages, the text of B bears the same signs of abridgement as compared with A as it does in the bulk of the novel. Presumably it has undergone the same process.

Hsi-mên's visit to the Eastern Capital

Ch. 10. Through the good offices of his son-in-law's relative Yang Chien 楊戩, Hsi-mên approached the Grand Tutor Ts'ai Ching to ensure that nothing would come of his arraignment for murder; thereafter, by means of rich presents, he cultivated relations with Ts'ai Ching and with the comptroller of his household Chai Ch'ien 翟謙.

Ch. 27 1ab. Lai Pao returned from the capital. He had been successful in securing the release from prison of some salt merchants who had bribed Hsi-mên to help them. Lai Pao also brought a message from Chai Ch'ien inviting Hsi-mên to go to the capital for the Grand Tutor's birthday, the 15th of the sixth month.

Ch. 27 2ab. Hsi-mên did not go himself, but sent servants with gifts. They left on the 28th of the fifth month.

Ch. 49 7b. Censor Ts'ai Yün visited Hsi-mên on his way to Yangchow, where he was to administer the new laws relating to the salt trade. It was arranged that if Lai Pao called on him at Yangchow, he would receive preferential treatment.

Ch. 51 5b-6a. Hsi-mên was told that Sun T'ien-hua 孫天化和 Chu Jih-nien 祝日念, fellow-members of the "Brotherhood of

Ten", had been arrested on a charge of leading into debauchery the young nephew of a powerful man. The singing-girl Li Kuei-chieh 李桂姐, who was accused of the same offence, had so far evaded arrest.

Ch. 5 6b-7a. Li Kuei-chieh asked Hsi-mên to use his influence on her behalf.

Ch. 51 7b-8a. Hsi-mên decided to send Lai Pao to the capital to intercede for her. (Lai Pao was to have gone to Yangchow with Han Tao-kuo and Ts'ui Pên.) Meanwhile Li Kuei-chieh remained in Hsi-mên's household.

Ch. 51 10a. Lai Pao left for the capital.

Ch. 51 14b-15a. Hsi-mên saw Han and Ts'ui off on their journey to the south.

"Is there a letter for Censor Ts'ai as well?" asked Ts'ui Pên.

"I haven't written it yet," said Hsi-mên Ch'ing. "I shall send it later by Lai Pao."

They left on the 20th of the fourth month.

That is all the relevant material before Ch. 53.

Ch. 58 6a. Li Kuei-chieh to newly-arrived singing-girls:

"We (she and Wu Yin-chieh 吳銀姐) have not been home for two days."

They were in the household to celebrate Hsi-mên's birthday, the 28th of the seventh month.

Ch. 58 13b. "Wu Yüeh-niang packed boxes for Kuei-chieh and Yin-chieh to take home."

Ch. 60 2ab. Lai Pao arrived with a load of goods from Nanking.

Ch. 66 5b. A letter from Chai Ch'ien mentions meeting Hsi-mên in the capital.

Ch. 67 4b. Hsi-mên's reply ran:

"Half a year has flown by since we met . . . in the capital."

The letter was written about the middle of the tenth month.

Ch. 70 4a. Hsi-mên set out for the capital.

Ch. 72 7a. "Hsi-mên Ch'ing recalled that the last time he had returned from the Eastern Capital, Li P'ing-êrh 李瓶兒 was still alive."

It is clear that the following events should have occurred in Chapters 53 to 57:

Lai Pao returned, and was at once sent to Yangchow with a letter for Ts'ai Yün.

While in the capital, he secured a pardon for Li Kuei-chieh, and perhaps for Chu and Sun as well.

Li Kuei-chieh returned home.

Lai Pao also brought an invitation for Hsi-mên to go to the capital for Ts'ai Ching's birthday.

Hsi-mên accepted, and visited the capital.

Let us now see what actually occurs in the A and B versions.

A.1 Ch. 53 1a. Li Kuei-chieh is mentioned among the ladies of the household.

A.1 Ch. 54 6ab. When the affair of Chu and Sun was mentioned, Hsi-mên said they had themselves to blame for the trouble they were in.

A.1 Ch. 55 1b. "Hsi-mên Ch'ing recalled that it was now not long before the Grand Tutor's birthday."

Tai-an had already been sent to Hangchow to buy presents.

A.1 Ch. 55 2b. Hsi-mên set off for the capital.

B.4 Ch. 55 47b-49b.⁵⁵ Ying Po-chüeh asked whether Li Kuei-chieh was still in the house, and whether the messenger had returned from the capital. Hsi-mên replied that he was expecting Lai Pao at any time, and that he wanted him to go to Yangchow when he returned.

Lai Pao reported to Hsi-mên that no charge would be brought against Kuei-chieh, and that Chu and Sun would probably be lightly punished and then released. He also conveyed to Hsi-mên an invitation from Chai Ch'ien to visit the capital for the Grand Tutor's birthday.

Lai Pao was told to rest, as he would soon be required to go to Yangchow.

Kuei-chieh was told the news, and returned home.

Hsi-mên told Yüeh-niang of the invitation, and proceeded to get presents ready. He gave Lai Pao a letter for Ts'ai Yün, and told him to leave for Yangchow the next day.

Hsi-mên set off for the capital.

⁵⁵ This is near the beginning of the chapter. See above.

Thus while B contains all the points of the reconstruction, A contains only one of them, namely, Hsi-mên's visit to the capital. The A version is clearly not authentic; as well as failing to mention most of the necessary events, it also contains gratuitous absurdities, such as Tai-an's being sent to Hangchow. But if the A version is not authentic, then the B version cannot be authentic either, for the text of the two versions in Ch. 55, except for the few passages mentioned above, is approximately the same. We must therefore regard the B version as the result of the correction and improvement of a text like A. The fact that the improvements contained in B are all interrelated together at the same point in Ch. 55 only serves to corroborate this.

The chapter heading of A is presumably that of the original novel; from it the writer of the A version has derived his sole correct and relevant fact.

The relationship of the two versions differs between Ch. 55 on the one hand, and Ch. 53 and Ch. 54 on the other. In Ch. 55, B is the abridged, but also the corrected and improved, form of A. In Ch. 53 and Ch. 54, however, A is the superior version, as can be seen from its accurate references to this thread of the story.

The Yung-fu temple

Ch. 49 12ab. Hsi-mên took his leave of Censor Ts'ai at the Yung-fu temple 永福寺, and then stayed to talk to the abbot.

"May I ask how old you are?" he asked.

"I am seventy-five," replied the abbot.

"How well you look for a man of your age. May I ask your name in religion?"

"My name in religion is Tao-chien 道堅" . . .

"This temple of yours," said Hsi-mên Ch'ing, "is indeed very large, but it is badly in need of repair."

"As a matter of fact," said the abbot, "this temple was built by Chou Hsiu 周秀, but it has no revenues which can be used for repairs, and hence it has been sadly neglected."

"Ah, so it is Captain Chou's chapel! I noticed his family estates were not far off. In that case there's no problem at all. If you ask his permission to make out a subscription list, and go about soliciting donations, I shall certainly contribute something when you come to me."

That is all the relevant material before Ch. 53.

Ch. 65 4a. "The thrice-seven days had passed since the death of Li P'ing-êrh, and the abbot Tao-chien from the Yung-fu temple outside the town came with sixteen priests to chant sutras."

Ch. 88 6a-7a. Ch'un-mei 春梅, now the wife of Chou Hsiu, had her former mistress P'an Chin-lien buried in the temple.

Ch. 89 6ab. Wu Yüeh-niang, her brother and their company, were returning from a visit to Hsi-mên's tomb when they decided to stop at the temple.

"What is the name of this temple?" asked Yüeh-niang.

"It's the chapel of His Honour Chou Hsiu," said her brother, "and it's known as the Yung-fu temple. When your husband was alive, he donated several score taels toward its repair."

The above passages show clearly enough that the temple was built by Chou Hsiu, and that somewhere in Chapters 53 to 57, the abbot Tao-chien, after receiving permission from Chou Hsiu, must have received a donation from Hsi-mên Ch'ing.

Let us now see what occurs in the A and B versions. They are much the same in this regard; quotations are therefore drawn from A.1 only.

Ch. 57 1a-2a. A lengthy description—actually derived from a story which is found in the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記³⁶—is given of the founding of the temple in the year 521. After the death of the founder, a priest of superhuman powers, the temple fell into the hands of libidinous and unscrupulous men; the treasures of the temple were sold, even its bricks and tiles were torn down, and eventually it became a ruin.

Ch. 57 3a. "Now in that temple lived an Abbot Tao who had originally come from the land of India" . . .

Ch. 57 3b. "Now," he said to himself, "I remember Hsi-mên Ch'ing . . . holding a farewell party here not long ago when seeing off Censor Sung Hsi-lien 宋西廉.³⁷ When he saw how dilapidated the temple was, he spoke of contributing to its repair."

Ch. 57 6a-8a. The abbot took a petition to Hsi-mên Ch'ing, and eventually received 500 taels.

Clearly this cannot be authentic, for not only is the account of the temple's origin quite different, but Chou Hsiu is not even mentioned.

The chapter heading probably explains the form in which the abbot's name appears in the two versions. It is abbreviated to *Tao*, perhaps in order to form an acceptable parallel to the other heading, and this is what is found in both the A and B versions. In the rest of the novel, however, his name is always given as *Tao-chien*.

³⁶ *Chüan* 92, Wan-hui, 萬回.

³⁷ It should, of course, have been Censor Ts'ai Yün. The mistake has been corrected in the B editions.

The Dhāraṇī

No relevant material is to be found before Ch. 53.

Ch. 58 15b-16a. "The two nuns, Hsüeh and Wang, were returning home that day so she (Li P'ing-êrh) came to say to Yüeh-niang:

'I have taken a pair of silver lions . . . and given them to Nun Hsüeh so that she can have the *Fo-ting-hsin dhāraṇī* 佛頂心陀羅經³⁸ printed and distributed free in the Mountain temple on the 15th of the eighth month.'

Nun Hsüeh was about to take them and go, when she was stopped by Mêng Yü-lou 孟玉樓.

'Wait a moment,' she said. 'First Lady, you ought to send someone for Pên IV 賈四, and get him to weigh them. He ought to go with her to the scripture shop, too, and arrange how many copies are to be printed, at how much a copy, how much we are to donate, and when they will be ready. Nun Hsüeh will never be able to manage on her own.'

Pên weighed the silver lions and found that they were equal to 41 taels and 5 *ch'ien*.

Ch. 58 18a. The money had been paid to the printing-office. Pên reported to Yüeh-niang and Li P'ing-êrh:

"I have arranged to have 500 copies of the *dhāraṇī* printed in a damask cover, at 5 *fên* a copy, and 1,000 copies in a cheap silk cover, at 3 *fên* a copy. The total comes to 55 taels. Less the 41 taels 5 *ch'ien* already paid, we still owe 13 taels 5 *ch'ien* . . ."

From the abruptness with which this subject is introduced in Ch. 58, one would imagine it must have been broached before.

There is one reference in the A and B versions.

Ch. 57 13a. Nun Hsüeh asked Hsi-mên Ch'ing to donate money for the printing of the *dhāraṇī*. He gave her 30 taels and ordered 5,000 copies, promising to settle the account when they had been printed.

Obviously this cannot be authentic, for there is no later development of this event, just as there is no preparation for the event described in Ch. 58. As before, the explanation lies in the chapter headings:

"The abbot Tao solicits donations for the repair of the Yung-fu temple.

Nun Hsüeh exhorts (someone) to give money for the printing of the *dhāraṇī*."

³⁸ The earliest text of similar name that I have noticed is the *Fo-ting-hsin t'o-lo-ni-ching yen-wên* 佛頂心陀羅尼經譯文, in 1 *chüan*, which exists in a 1541 edition in the Ueno Library in Tokyo. See the *Bussho-kaisetsu-daijiten* 佛書解說大辭典, vol. 9, p. 321. It seems to have been a text commonly used for the purpose described in the *Chin Ping Mei*; copies of the Ch'ing dynasty, printed by private subscription, are still to be seen in bookshops in Peking.

Evidently the person who supplied this chapter supposed that the object of both the abbot's and the nun's solicitations were one and the same person, Hsi-mên Ch'ing, whereas as we have seen it must have been Li P'ing-êrh whom Nun Hsüeh approached. The case of Ch. 55, in which the two subjects reflected in the chapter headings—the singing-boys and Hsi-mên's visit to the capital—were also run together, is exactly parallel to this.

In any case, there are a number of absurdities in the A and B versions. It is not possible, for example, that Nun Hsüeh could have approached Hsi-mên Ch'ing, let alone have received money from him, for as can be seen in Ch. 51, he detested her so much as to forbid her the house.

Hsi-mên's visit to the eunuchs

Ch. 52 16a. Hsi-mên explained to Ying Po-chüeh that he was going next day, the 22nd of the fourth month, to a banquet on Eunuch Liu's estate. (The invitation to the banquet had been described earlier.)

"Next day, Hsi-mên Ch'ing rose early, and did not go to the tribunal, but when he had finished his breakfast put on his official clothes, and with a golden fan in his hand, and his servants in attendance, rode thirty *li* south of town to the banquet on Eunuch Liu's estate. He took Tai-an and Shu-t'ung with him."

The banquet has thus been held, and on the correct date. However both the A and B versions contain quite detailed—though textually different—accounts of the banquet in Ch. 53, just as if it had not occurred before. These parts of Ch. 53, of course, cannot be authentic. In that case, though, the mistake cannot have arisen through misinterpretation of the chapter heading; one can only assume that the writer of the supplied text simply did not notice the passage from Ch. 52 quoted above.

This is a good indication of the relationship of the A and B versions in Chapters 53 and 54. They are textually different, but occasional details of plot are so similar as to make it inconceivable that they were independently created.

Li III and Huang IV

The story of a loan which Hsi-mên made to the contracting merchants Li and Huang also spans Ch. 53-7.

Ch. 38 1ab. Ying Po-chüeh approached Hsi-mên about a loan for Li and Huang, who had received the annual contract to supply various commodities to the authorities. Hsi-mên made them a loan of 1500 taels.

Ch. 43 1b. 1000 taels were paid off.

Ch. 43 3b. Hsi-mên was persuaded to lend another 500 taels, leaving 1000 owing.

Ch. 51 6ab. Hsi-mên was asked for another 500 taels to tide the merchants over a sudden emergency. He replied that his own money was all laid out on a buying expedition to the south, but that he would call in a debt owed by Hsü IV.

Ch. 52 16a. Hsi-mên said that the next day he had to go to a banquet at Eunuch Liu's.

"'About Li and Huang,' said Ying Po-chüeh, 'I'll bring them the day after tomorrow then.'

Hsi-mên Ch'ing nodded.

"Tell them to come in the afternoon. They must not come early.'"

(This was the 21st of the fourth month. Li and Huang were therefore to be paid on the 23rd.)

The next day, the 22nd, Hsi-mên went to Liu's.

Ch. 52 17a. 250 taels—the debt owed by Hsü—were paid back to Hsi-mên Ch'ing.

(The chapter ends on the 22nd.)

That is all the relevant material before Ch. 53.

Ch. 60 7b-8a. Li and Huang came to pay some of the money they owed.

It is evident that Hsi-mên should have paid 500 taels to the contractors somewhere in Ch. 53.

The A and B versions differ considerably over this matter, and it is necessary to take them separately.

A.1 Ch. 53 8b-9b. After some prevarication, Hsi-mên paid the 500 taels, 250 of his own, and 250 from Hsü. This took place the day after he went to Liu's, which would make it the correct date if one were to accept his going there in Ch. 53 as correct. (See above.)

A.1 Ch. 56 3b. Ying Po-chüeh brought up the matter of paying Li and Huang. (Evidently they have not been paid.)

B.4 Ch. 55 47b. Ying Po-chüeh came with Li and Huang, and they were paid 500 taels, 250 from Hsi-mên's funds, and 250 recalled from Hsü.

B.4 Ch. 56 2b (a corresponding place to the second passage taken from the A version.) Hsi-mên remarked that Li and Huang had said they would not be able to repay him until the following month.

Thus while the first passage taken from the A version is correct enough, it is still impossible, because of its position beside other passages

in which gross mistakes are contained, to consider it authentic. The B version is obviously not authentic, for the incident takes place much later than it should.

The relationship between the versions is here of a more complicated nature. First, there is an obvious clash between the two passages quoted from A, from Chapters 53 and 56 respectively; while the passage from Ch. 53 is correct, the one from Ch. 56 is hopelessly wrong. This accords with the disparity between these two parts of the A version which was pointed out under "Hsi-mên's visit to the capital". Second, if we compare the A and B versions in Chapters 55 and 56 only, we again notice the superiority of the B version. The two passages taken from B serve to fill a gap in the narrative and to correct a mistake made in A. The first of them, from Ch. 55, contains a correct account of the loan. It forms part of that long passage near the beginning of Ch. 55 in the B version in which a number of corrections and improvements have been interpolated together. The second passage is of little or no usefulness; it merely serves to obliterate the mistake made in A.

In short, therefore, a substantially correct account is contained in A 53, an account which is belied by A 56. An equally correct account is contained in B 55, while the offending passage in Ch. 56 has been altered. Whether there is any connection between the correct accounts of A 53 and B 55 it is extremely hard to say. Certain details are similar, for example Hsi-mên's prevarication, and Ying Po-chüeh's anxiety to get away and receive his commission for negotiating the loan. There are also certain textual similarities. But in neither case is the evidence decisive that one was written in knowledge of the other; the details and the textual similarities can all be paralleled earlier in the novel. It remains, however, a likely supposition that there is such a relationship.

We have dealt so far merely with the inconsistencies in the narrative. Although this provides ample proof that Chapters 53 to 57 have been supplied, it is also helpful to use certain kinds of linguistic criteria, not only to check the conclusions arrived at, but also to show more clearly the relationship between the different supplied versions. Only one or two elements of common occurrence, which differentiate the work of the different writers concerned, need to be considered. Needless to say, no claim is made that they represent a writer's "dialect", although some of them are regarded as belonging to different regional dialects; all we are concerned with is a writer's *usage*.

The most suitable example in the case of the *Chin P'ing Mei* is the first person pronoun, singular and plural.³⁹

³⁹ An historical account of these terms is given in Lü Shu-hsiang's 呂叔湘 "Shuo mên 說們", *Han-yü yü-fa lun-wên-chi* 漢語語法論文集, Peking, 1955, 145-68.

For the singular pronoun in the greater part of the novel—the A.1 edition, excluding Chapters 53 to 57—two words are in common use, *wo* 我 and *an* 俺. Of these two, *wo* is much the more common; *an* is most frequently to be found in a qualifying position, e.g. *an niang* 俺娘 “my mistress”. Other words are also used, but only in special contexts, for example in formal conversation with a superior; they can be disregarded.

For the plural pronoun in the greater part of the novel—the A.1 edition, excluding Chapters 1 to 6, 53 to 57—the familiar distinction is made between “inclusive” and “exclusive”. The inclusive form is *tsan* 咱, or *tsa-mên* 咱們, or *tsa-mei* 咱每. (In the *Chin P'ing Mei* the suffixes *mên* and *mei* are used indiscriminately; the difference would appear to be merely graphic.) The exclusive form is *an* or *an-mên* (*an-mei*), or on a few occasions, *wo-mên* (*wo-mei*).

The distinction, as usually formulated, between “inclusive” and “exclusive” is not quite adequate for the *Chin P'ing Mei*. There is a minority of cases in which the speaker does refer to himself, together with the person or persons he is addressing, as *an-mên* (*an-mei*). These cases possess in common a feature which may be described like this: the speaker is referring to himself, together with the person or persons addressed, in *opposition* to some other person not present. For example, in Ch. 31 10b., Yü-lou told Chin-lien that Hsi-mên had gone to her room, and Chin-lien expressed her disbelief:

“But as he says himself, it's so much more interesting where there is a child. In our (*an-mei*) rooms, where there is no child, it's too dull for him.”

The other person in this case is, of course, Li P'ing-êrh.

Terms for “I, me”

As we have seen, *wo* and *an* are in general use throughout the novel. *Tsan* 咱 is also found, but its use is practically restricted to chapters which are *a priori* suspect. (*Tsan* is the usual word for “we/us inclusive” in the greater part of the work; it is rarely, if ever, found with the meaning of the singular pronoun.) Instances in which *tsan* is used for the first person singular are as follows:—

B.4	Ch. 1	:	9	<i>tsan</i> (all from the first part).
A.1	Ch. 53	:	1	„
B.4	Ch. 53	:	1	„
A.1/B.4	Ch. 55	:	3	„
A.1/B.4	Ch. 57	:	18	„

Terms for “we/us inclusive”

Taking the whole of what may be called the authentic part of the novel, and excluding those chapters (1 to 6) which reproduce the usage of

the *Shui-hu chuan* 水滸傳, one finds over 200 *tsan* (*tsa-mên*, *tsa-mei*), and only one clear case of *wo-mên*. (This one is in Ch. 13, which also contains 4 *tsan*.) The distribution of *wo-mên* (*wo-mei*) in the other chapters (B 1, A/B 53-7) is as follows:—

A.1	Ch. 53	:	2	<i>wo-mên</i> (<i>wo-mei</i>)
A.1	Ch. 54	:	8	<i>wo-mên</i> (<i>wo-mei</i>)
A.1/B.4	Ch. 55	:	1	„

In fact only in B.4 Ch. 1, which has at least two cases of *tsan*, is anything but *wo-mên* (*wo-mei*) used.

Terms for “we/us exclusive”

Taking the whole of the authentic part of the novel, and again excluding Chapters 1 to 6, one finds several hundred *an* (*an-mên*, *an-mei*) as well as a dozen or two *wo-mên* (*wo-mei*). In the suspect chapters, *an-mên* is rarely used, there is a far more pronounced use of *wo-mên*, and in addition an occasional use of *tsa-mên* (*tsa-mei*), a thing which is never found in the rest of the novel. The incidence of the various words for “we/us exclusive” in these chapters is as follows:—

B.4	Ch. 1	:	3	<i>tsa-mên</i>	2	<i>wo-mên</i>	
A.1	Ch. 53	:			1	<i>wo-mên</i>	
B.4	Ch. 53	:	1	<i>tsa-mên</i>			
A.1	Ch. 54	:			5	<i>wo-mên</i>	
B.4	Ch. 54	:	1	<i>tsa-mên</i>		1	<i>an-mên</i>
A.1/B.4	Ch. 55	:			2	<i>wo-mên</i> ⁴⁰	
A.1/B.4	Ch. 57	:	1	<i>tsa-mên</i>	1	<i>wo-mên</i>	

The three tables give a further indication that Chapters 53 (both versions), 55 and 57 are not authentic, and they give a first indication that B 1 and Ch. 54 (both versions) are not authentic. So far as the supplied chapters are concerned, the tables confirm that A 53 and A 54—in their use of *wo-mên* for both inclusive and exclusive—stand apart from the others. They also show, for what it is worth, that B 1, B 53 and B 54, as well as A/B 55 and A/B 57, have elements in common (either *tsan* “I, me” or *tsa-mên* “we/us exclusive”).

It is now possible, on the grounds of inconsistencies in the narrative confirmed by inconsistencies of language, to come to these conclusions about the authenticity of Chapters 53 to 57:—

In neither kind of edition did the text of Chapters 53 to 57 form part of the original novel.

The chapter headings of the A editions for Chapters 53 to 57 did belong to the original novel. (This has been shown to be true of four of the ten headings, and can be proved true of most of the remainder.)

⁴⁰ There is 1 *an-mên* in the additional passages contained in the B editions only.

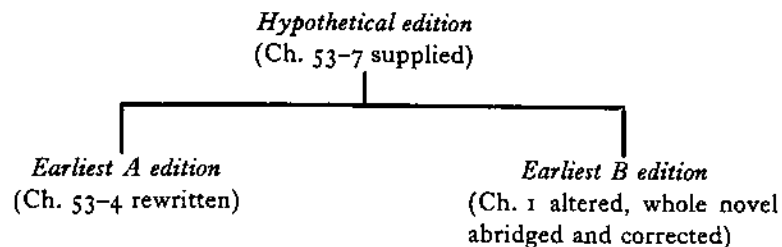
It is also possible to unravel the tangled relationship of the various supplied versions.

First, A 53 and 54, and A 55 to 57, are by two different hands. We have already noted indications of this; under "Hsi-mên's visit to the capital", where A 53 was superior to B 53; under "Li III and Huang IV", where A 53 and A 56 flatly contradict each other, A 53 being the correct version; and in the study of the words for the personal pronoun, where A 53 and 54 were seen to stand apart from the other supplied chapters. But the best indication is provided by the lack of continuity between A 54 and A 55. By the end of A 54, Doctor Jên 任 has made his examination of Li P'ing-êrh, and departed; yet at the beginning of Ch. 55, he proceeds to give his diagnosis, for all the world as if he had not already done so. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that A 53 and A 54 are by a different hand from that which wrote A 55 to 57. Neither section, of course, is authentic; both have been supplied, but supplied by different editors, and, one may assume, added to the novel at different times. Of the two, A 53-4 is clearly the later addition. In a number of instances it has been shown to be superior to the other. Moreover, while one can imagine an editor setting out to revise the supplied text, and then leaving his work unfinished after two chapters, it is hard to believe that anyone could have begun his revision with a break in continuity as glaring as that which exists between A 54 and A 55.

These conclusions mean that no direct line of derivation can be drawn between the earliest edition of the A system and the earliest edition of the B system. Obviously the earliest A edition could not have been derived from any B edition, for the B editions represent the abridgement of a text which was substantially like that of A. On the other hand, the earliest B edition could not have been derived from any A edition, since it is inconceivable that any editor would have substituted B 53-4 for the manifestly superior A 53-4. This is confirmed, as was shown under "A Comparison of the A and B editions", by the minority of cases in which the B version of a copied source-work is closer to the original than the A version is.

Thus the relationship between the A and B systems can only be explained by postulating the existence of an edition, or editions, unlike any which survive. The simplest explanation requires the postulation of only one such edition, one from which both A and B could have been separately derived. It must have had the text of A, except in Chapters 53 and 54. It could not have contained A 53-4, for reasons given above. It must have contained B 53-4, or rather, an earlier, unabridged form of those chapters, bearing the same relation to them as the rest of the A text bears to the rest of the B text.

With the aid of this hypothesis, the derivation of the two systems would appear as follows:—



It is necessary to reiterate that this is merely the simplest conceivable relationship which takes account of the facts; the actual relationship, while it must have been *of this kind*, may have been much more complex.

One is tempted to identify the "hypothetical edition" with the earliest printed edition, described by Shên Tê-fu. He mentions two features of the supplied text of that edition: it made occasional use of Soochow dialect, and it contained mistakes so gross as to impair the continuity of the novel. So far no verifiable Soochow dialect has been discovered in A 55-7 or in B 53-7, or at least none which would set these chapters apart from the rest of the work. On the other hand, the mistakes made in the supplied chapters are gross enough to fit Shên Tê-fu's description. Apart from the mistakes, however, the text of these chapters is not all as puerile as that described by Shên Tê-fu. One scene in particular, between the shifty Ch'ang Shih-chieh 常時節 and his grasping, shrewish wife, is extremely lively, so much so that it became a favourite subject for the balladmongers of the Ch'ing dynasty.⁴¹ Therefore, while it seems likely that the "hypothetical edition" either was the very edition described by Shên, or else was directly derived from it, there is no proof that it was so.

4. The Altered text—Chapter 1

It was pointed out above that the first 8 leaves of A.1 Ch. 1 and the first 20 leaves of B.4 Ch. 1 differ completely in both wording and content.

Despite the brevity of the A version, it is possible to show that it is authentic. Passages from the *Shui-hu chuan*, which form a large part of this opening, are drawn from an edition similar to that used in the rest of the novel.⁴² Since this edition was an early one, and probably by the time the *Chin P'ing Mei* came to be edited, an extremely rare one, it can safely be assumed that the A version was the original opening.

It is therefore unnecessary to show that the B version is an editor's adaptation. In any case, because of its mistakes in narrative and description, as well as the divergence of word-usage noticed above, that would not be a

⁴¹ There is, for example, a *ku-tz'ü* 鼓詞 called *Tê-ch'ao ao-ch'i* 得鈔傲妻 by Han Hsiao-ch'uang 韓小窗. It is reprinted in *Ku-tz'ü hsün* 鼓詞選 ed. Chao Ching-shên 趙景深, Shanghai, 1957, 125-9.

⁴² See *A Study of the composition and the sources of the Chin P'ing Mei*, 119-23.

difficult matter to prove. What is much more difficult is to determine the stage at which the opening of the novel was altered. It appears in all the extant B editions, but whether it was the work of the earliest B edition, or of some lost edition before that, it is impossible to say. It may seem significant that, like Chapters 55-7 in the A editions, it has *tsan* for "I, me" and even *tsa-mên* for "we/us exclusive". But that is really far too little to identify it.⁴³

Readers of translations of the *Chin P'ing Mei* will be familiar with the B opening, for all the translations so far made, except for one recent one into Japanese, have been based on editions which incorporate it. After some moralizing remarks, comes a description of Hsi-mên's antecedents, his household and his friends. There follows a discussion between Hsi-mên and Yüeh-niang about the "brotherhood", the news of the death of one of the brethren, his replacement by the neighbour Hua Tzū-hsü 花子虛, the swearing of an oath of brotherhood, and so on. Wu Sung's fight with the tiger, and his reception in the town as a hero, are merely items of news in the course of conversation.

In the opening of the A editions, Wu Sung's adventures are, of course, narrated as in the *Shui-hu chuan*, and none of the other events appear in Ch. 1 at all. Yet they are not all of an editor's invention; much of the description and incident has been removed from Chapters 10 and 11, and placed in Ch. 1. One might say that the editor chose to alter the novel so that it began at a different point, a point which in the original work was reached only in Ch. 10. Among passages drawn from Chapters 10 and 11 are the description of Hsi-mên's friends (contained twice, with slight variations, in A), the death of one of the brethren and his replacement by Hua Tzū-hsü. Naturally this kind of alteration has necessitated other changes in the novel up to Ch. 11—a character who has been introduced to the reader in Ch. 1 must not be reintroduced six chapters later—and these changes have in fact been made.

There are a number of ways of explaining the alteration of the opening. To the person accustomed to the European novel, the change will seem an obvious attempt to improve the structure. The long account of the adventures of Wu Sung, who is not one of the principal characters, but more of a *deus ex machina*, is circumlocutory; the altered version, with its description

⁴³ This point does, of course, suggest the possibility that Ch. 1 was altered by the same person who supplied the missing chapters 53 to 57. If this were so, and if, furthermore, he adapted Ch. 1 at the same time as he supplied the other chapters, it would mean that the earliest A edition could not have been derived exclusively from the "hypothetical edition". In that case, the simplest explanation would be that, while mainly dependent on the "hypothetical edition", it must have restored the original opening by copying from some earlier edition or from a manuscript. However, there is no real evidence for either supposition, and the possibility is accordingly ignored both here and in section 7 below.

of Hsi-mên Ch'ing and his circle, will appear a great improvement. It is easy, however, to put too much faith in such an explanation. There were, after all, very few novels which preceded the *Chin P'ing Mei*, and those few were all of a more loosely-constructed kind. It has been suggested that the alteration was influenced by another form of literature altogether; that Hsi-mên was introduced to the reader before Chin-lien, just as in the Southern drama, the *shêng* 生, or principal male actor, is introduced before the *tan* 旦.⁴⁴ It is even possible that the publisher felt that the original opening did not indicate clearly enough the subject of the book to the prospective buyer, and so commissioned a change to be made. Another motive, although it cannot by itself explain the alteration, was certainly present in the editor's mind: the need to disarm criticism by claiming for the book a moral purpose. This is a theme which is stressed in the altered opening, whereas in the original opening it is conspicuously absent.

Whatever the explanation, the editor has chosen, in Chapters 10 and 11, one of the few points where a certain clumsiness of technique is apparent. If one can assume that the text of the original novel at this point was as we now have it in the A.1 edition, then the author has introduced Hua Tzū-hsü before mentioning the "Brotherhood of Ten". As a result, he has been compelled, with the description of Hua, to add an account of the brotherhood, of which Hua has recently become a member. Later, because the account has not been prominent enough, he has had to repeat it before the first meeting of the brethren which he describes. Thus there are two accounts of the brotherhood and its members, one in Ch. 10 and one in Ch. 11. The differences between these accounts may indicate that this was a slip that the author's eye missed. This circumstance, while it cannot have influenced the decision to alter the opening of the novel, may at least have recommended Ch. 10 as the starting-point for the new opening.

5. The Contents of the missing chapters

The reconstructions made in the third section accounted for four of the ten chapter headings of the lost part of the novel. By taking the other six headings of the A editions, and examining them one by one, it is possible both to check their genuineness and to fill in the main events.

A.1 Ch. 53 first heading

"Wu Yüeh-niang, receiving her husband's love, seeks to have a son."
This event has been prepared for earlier in the novel.

Ch. 40 1a-2a. Nun Wang told Yüeh-niang of a sure method of conceiving a child. Her friend, Nun Hsüeh, had a medicine made

⁴⁴ See Cheng Chên-to, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

with the ashes of the placenta of a first-born baby. If Yüeh-niang took this upon a *jên-tzū* 壬子 day, she would be bound to conceive. Ch. 50 11ab. Nun Hsüeh gave Yüeh-niang the medicine.

Ch. 52 8b. "Yüeh-niang told Chin-lien:

'Just look at the calendar and see when it will be a *jên-tzū* day.'
Chin-lien did so.

'The twenty-third is a *jên-tzū* day,' she said."

Ch. 52 ends on the twenty-second. It is clear from the later chapters of the novel that a child must have been conceived at this time. The conception must be placed near the beginning of Ch. 53, just after the payment of 500 taels, which was to have been made on the afternoon of the twenty-third.

A.1 Ch. 53 second heading

"Li P'ing-êrh gives thanks for the protection of her son's life."

An echo of this event is found later in the novel.

Ch. 63 2b-3a. The artist who has been summoned to paint a portrait of the dead Li P'ing-êrh, asked Hsi-mên:

"May I be so bold as to ask, Sir, whether this is the lady whom I saw at the Mountain temple on the first of the fifth month, as she was burning incense?"

"Yes, she is," said Hsi-mên Ch'ing. "She was still well then."

Evidently then, since the date given would tally—the conception of Yüeh-niang's child took place on the twenty-third of the previous month—Li P'ing-êrh fulfilled a vow taken with the object of safeguarding her son's life by going to the Mountain temple.

A.1 Ch. 54 first heading

"Ying Po-chüeh meets his friends in a garden outside the town."

There is no reference in the authentic part of the novel to this meeting, and it is not easy to guess the circumstances which brought it about. It was, however, the custom for members of the brotherhood to take turns in entertaining the rest; earlier in the novel we read that one of them was unable to do so because his house was too small. This may therefore simply have been a meeting of the brotherhood, with Ying Po-chüeh as host. On the other hand, two of them were, or had recently been, in prison, and it does not seem likely that a meeting would be held at this time. It is more probable that Ying Po-chüeh was celebrating the loan of 500 taels, and the receipt of his own commission.

A.1 Ch. 54 second heading

"Doctor Jên makes an examination of the symptoms in a great man's household."

Doctor Jên appears at Hsi-mên's birthday party in Ch. 58. His presence is not explained, and he has not been mentioned before. As he left the party, Hsi-mên asked him to come before long to see Li P'ing-êrh, and thanked him for his medicine (8a-9a). We can conclude that Li P'ing-êrh fell ill and was attended by Doctor Jên, and that an account of this should appear in Ch. 54.

A.1 Ch. 56 first heading

"Hsi-mên Ch'ing gives help to Ch'ang Shih-chieh."

The details of this event can be inferred from later references.

In Ch. 60 3a, when Ch'ang arrives at a party given by Hsi-mên, he is described as follows:—

"Now as it happens, Hsi-mên Ch'ing had recently given him 50 taels, of which he had spent 35 as deposit on a house, and 15 as capital to set up a general store in his home."

Later in the same chapter the scene is described in which the money is given; there is thus an obvious mistake in the order in which this scene and the description occur. One must assume the mistake to be the author's; both passages are retained in A, but only the second of them in B.

Evidently Ch'ang, whose house was too small to entertain his friends in, has in Ch. 56 pleaded his poverty and asked for Hsi-mên's help. Judging from this heading, Hsi-mên must have given him some immediate help, with the promise of more to come.

A.1 Ch. 56 second heading

"Ying Po-chüeh recommends the graduate Shui."

In Ch. 80, after the death of Hsi-mên, the members of the brotherhood contributed money for a funeral ode to be written. Ying Po-chüeh entrusted this to "Shui *hsiu-ts'ai* 水秀才 from outside the town gate." This is the only other mention of him in the course of the whole novel, but it indicates that the heading must be taken as genuine.

It must have been as a secretary that Ying recommended Shui, for in Ch. 58 Hsi-mên did appoint someone to such a position, and for this event the reader has not been adequately prepared. Evidently then, Shui was unsuccessfully recommended for the post, and Hsi-mên therefore asked someone else to bring along the man who, in Ch. 58, proved to be the successful applicant.

There is at least one other event that should have taken place in the missing chapters: Wang Ching 王經, the younger brother of Wang Liu-êrh 王六兒 (Han Tao-kuo's wife and Hsi-mên's mistress), was taken into the household as a page. He appears in that capacity throughout the rest of the novel, but has not done so before Ch. 53. It is not possible to say, however, exactly at what stage he was introduced into the household.

It may be useful to summarize the main events of the missing chapters. (An asterisk denotes that the order is tentative.)

Chapter 53

On the 23rd of the fourth month, Hsi-mên made a loan of 500 taels (250 recalled from Hsü IV) to the contracting merchants Li and Huang.

That night, having taken a special preparation made for her by Nun Hsüeh, Wu Yüeh-niang slept with her husband and conceived a child.

On the 1st of the fifth month, Li P'ing-êrh, in fulfilment of a vow taken in order to safeguard her son's life, made a visit to the Mountain temple.

Chapter 54

To celebrate the commission he has received for negotiating the loan, Ying Po-chüeh gave a party on an estate outside the town. (This is tentative—see above.)

Li P'ing-êrh fell ill and Doctor Jên was called to examine her.

Chapter 55

* Lai Pao returned from the capital with a pardon for Li Kuei-chieh, and perhaps for Chu and Sun as well. He also conveyed an invitation to Hsi-mên to visit the capital for the Grand Tutor's birthday, the 15th of the sixth month.

Lai Pao was sent to Yangchow, with a letter for Ts'ai Yün.

Li Kuei-chieh was able to return home.

Accepting the invitation, Hsi-mên visited the capital.

Ts'ai Pên returned from Yangchow, bringing with him a singing-boy, Ch'un-hung, as a present from Miao Ch'ing.

Chapter 56

* Wang Ching was taken into the household.

Ch'ang Shih-chieh approached Hsi-mên for money. He received some, with the promise of more later on.

Ying Po-chüeh recommended his friend Shui for the post of Hsi-mên's secretary. Hsi-mên did not accept him, but asked his acquaintance Ni 倪 to introduce another man to him instead.

Chapter 57

The abbot Tao-chien of the Yung-fu temple, having received his patron Chou Hsiu's permission to solicit donations for the repair of the temple, was given a contribution by Hsi-mên Ch'ing.

Nun Hsüeh persuaded Li P'ing-êrh to subscribe money for the printing of a *dhāraṇī*.

The singing-girls Li Kuei-chieh and Wu Yin-chieh were invited to stay in Hsi-mên's household, in anticipation of his birthday on the 28th.

The chapter closes on the 27th of the seventh month.

6. The Manuscripts

In order to come to any conclusions, it has so far been necessary to concentrate on the text itself. The extant editions were taken as the starting-point, and the evidence offered was all concerned with the internal consistency of the novel. Thus the many references to the *Chin P'ing Mei* which are contained in other works have been largely ignored. It is now possible, however, to combine these references, as well as the conclusions already reached, into a brief history of the early text.⁴⁵

There are a number of references to manuscripts of the novel before the date of the first printed edition. It has not been realized that they refer to two different kinds of manuscript. They are dealt with separately below.

The Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 董其昌 manuscript

The earliest reference to the novel was made by the writer Yüan Hung-tao 袁宏道, not as is often supposed, in his *Shang chêng 觴政*, but in a letter to Tung Ssü-pai 董思白. Ssü-pai is the *hao* of the famous painter and calligrapher Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 董其昌 (1555-1636). The text of the letter is as follows:

A month ago, Shih-k'uei 石簣 came to visit me, and we spent five

⁴⁵ A history of the text ought to begin with the date of composition. In the case of the *Chin P'ing Mei*, since we know nothing of the author, dating the novel means fixing the narrowest possible limits for its composition. The earlier limit will depend on internal evidence; the later limit will be the first external reference. It is the later limit only which is dealt with here. The most precise piece of internal evidence is the reference to the Emperor's squandering of the funds accumulated by the T'ai-p'u 太僕寺 from the sale of brood mares (Ch. 7, the A editions only). See Wu Han 吳晗, "*Chin P'ing Mei ti chu-tso shih-tai chi ch'i shé-hui pei-ching 金瓶梅的著作時代及其社會背景*", reprinted in *Tu-shih cha-chi 讀史劄記*, Peking, 1956, pp. 1-38. The decision to sell half the brood mares was taken in 1568, after the establishment of horse markets on the western frontier, and it was only after this date that the T'ai-p'u had any appreciable funds. The Lung-ch'ing emperor several times appropriated money from the T'ai-p'u, over-riding the protests of the President of the Board of Works, Chu Hêng 朱橫. The decision to sell the remaining horses was not taken until the ninth month of 1581. (See Chu Tung-jun 朱東潤, *Chang Chü-chêng ta-chuan 張居正大傳*, Wuhan, 1957, p. 358.) During the first years of the Wan-li period, from 1573 up to his death in the sixth month of 1582, the spending of the imperial household was restricted by the authority which Chang Chü-chêng 張居正 had over the Emperor. (See Wu Han, *op. cit.*, p. 22.) Only after his death was the policy reversed. There are several references to heavy appropriations from 1582 on. There are thus two periods during which the reference in the A editions of the *Chin P'ing Mei* would have been relevant; one is 1568-72, and the other 1582 and after. Unfortunately, the other kinds of evidence which have so far been culled from the novel—such as song-tunes and styles of drama—are too imprecise to help us decide between these dates. The balance of probability, however, seems to lie with the latter.

days in delightful talk. After that, we set off by boat to tour the Five Lakes and to see the outstandingly beautiful places among the Seventy-two Peaks. When we had completed the tour, we returned to my studio in the official residence. Our discussion ranged over every conceivable topic, both trivial and important. My illness had receded a little because of his visit, and my only regret was that you were not there with us. Where did you get the *Chin P'ing Mei* from? I glance at it from time to time, while lying in bed, and find this full of interest, and far superior to Mei Shêng's *Ch'i fa* 七發.⁴⁶ Where is the latter part? Please let me know where I can return it to you, once it has been copied, and exchange it for the other part.⁴⁷

The Shih-k'uei referred to is the poet T'ao Wang-ling 陶望齡, a close friend of both Yüan Hung-tao and Tung Ch'i-ch'ang. The Five Lakes refer to the T'ai-hu 太湖 near Soochow. This letter must therefore have been written during Yüan Hung-tao's tenure of office in Soochow.⁴⁸ Fortunately, T'ao Wang-ling has left a detailed record of this very visit; the introductory note to his eight essays entitled *Yu Tung-t'ing shan chi* 遊洞庭山記 "A description of my visit to Mount Tung-t'ing" is as follows:

In 1595, returning home after resigning my position, I passed through Soochow, where my friend Yüan Chung-lang 袁中郎 was magistrate. As we drank, our talk turned to the subject of when we would meet again. At the time, we had just been eating oranges, so I said "I must come back when the oranges are ripe again, and

⁴⁶ The *Ch'i fa* by the Han poet Mei Shêng 枚乘 is a *fu* 賦 contained in the *Wên hsüan* 文選, which tells how a visitor from Wu tried seven different ways of inducing the Crown Prince to throw off his illness. That is presumably the point of Hung-tao's reference.

⁴⁷ *Yüan Chung-lang ch'ih-tu ch'üan-kao* 袁中郎尺牘全稿 (abbreviated henceforth to *Letters*), Shanghai, 1934, p. 46. This letter, which is the most important evidence for fixing the later limit of the date of composition, has been reprinted in only one of the works devoted to collecting early references to the Chinese novel. See K'ung Ling-ching 孔另境, *Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shih-liao* 中國小說史料, Shanghai, 1957, p. 82. This work contains only the latter half of the letter, from the reference to the *Chin P'ing Mei* on. It has consequently been impossible to date. (The letter is also, perhaps through a printer's mistake, wrongly attributed to Hung-tao's younger brother, Yüan Chung-tao 袁中道.) The letter was first used, in order to give an approximate date to the novel, by Ch'ên Ssu-hsiang 陳思相 in his *Chin P'ing Mei hou-pa* 金瓶梅後跋, of which the author's preface is dated 1684. (For details of this work, which has not previously been described, see the next section.) Ono Shinobu 小野忍, joint-translator of the *Chin P'ing Mei* into Japanese, saw the significance of the letter, and also quoted the latter half. (*Kimpeibai*, Tokyo, 1959, vol. 1, p. 308.) He rightly states that the letter was written during Hung-tao's tenure of office in Soochow, although he does not attempt to date it precisely. The punctuation of the letter as given in the *Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shih-liao* and as given in *Letters* differs somewhat, and affects the sense. The former would make the second-to-last sentence mean "Where has the copying of the latter part been completed?" which makes less satisfactory sense, as will appear below.

⁴⁸ 1595-7. For details see below.

visit the Tung-t'ing". The following year, in mid-autumn, he wrote to me again, reminding me of my promise, and saying that the oranges in his garden were turning greeny-yellow. Accordingly, on the fifteenth day of the ninth month, we set out from Shan-yin 山陰. My younger brother . . . all came. On the twenty-fourth we arrived in Soochow and put up at the K'ai-yüan temple 開元寺. Chung-lang, who had recently been ill, had just recovered. I spent three days in conversation with him beside his couch. Not until the twenty-ninth did we make the crossing at Hsü-k'ou 胥口 . . .⁴⁹

The note is dated the beginning of the tenth month, 1596.

Although there is a discrepancy between the two accounts—Yüan Hung-tao says they spent five days in conversation, while T'ao Wang-ling says three—there can be no doubt that both men are referring to the same event.⁵⁰ Yüan Hung-tao's life is particularly well-documented at this stage, both in his own works, and in those of his brother Chung-tao 中道.⁵¹

He was a *chin-shih* of 1592, but preferring not to take up a post, returned home to Kung-an 公安 in Hupeh. On his father's insistence, he went again to Peking in 1594 to seek a position. In the twelfth month of that year he was appointed magistrate in Soochow.⁵² On the sixth day of the second month of 1595, he said goodbye to his brothers and to T'ao Wang-ling and Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, and travelling in the company of the playwright T'ang Hsien-tsu 湯顯祖, set out for Soochow.⁵³ During 1595 his friends T'ao Wang-ling and Chiang Ying-k'è 江盈科 visited him there,⁵⁴ as well as his younger brother Chung-tao.⁵⁵ He soon found the duties of his post far too onerous, and his letters during 1596 are filled with complaints. In the early part of 1596, his grandmother fell ill; he asked for leave to visit her, but it was refused. In the eighth month he suffered a severe attack of malaria—this is the illness of which both he and T'ao Wang-ling write. He had recovered somewhat by the time of T'ao's visit at the end of the ninth month. He wrote several petitions asking to be relieved of his post;

⁴⁹ It is contained in his collected works, *Hsieh-an chi* 歇庵集, *chüan* 9, of which there is a copy in Peking University Library. A modern reprint is found in *Wan-Ming hsiao-p'in wên-k'u* 晚明小品文庫 ed. A Ying 阿英, Shanghai, 1936, vol. 1.

⁵⁰ Even by T'ao Wang-ling's account it was 5 days from the time of his arrival (24th) to the time they set out (29th).

⁵¹ For a brief account of his life, see Jên Wei-k'un 任維焜, "Yüan Chung-lang p'ing chuan 袁中郎評傳", *Shih-Ta yüeh-k'an* 師大月刊 1.2 (Jan., 1933).

⁵² See *Letters*, pp. 179-184.

⁵³ See Hsü Shuo-fang 徐朔方, *T'ang Hsien-tsu nien-p'u* 湯顯祖年譜, Shanghai, 1958, p. 120.

⁵⁴ See *Yüan Chung-lang shih-chi* 袁中郎詩集, p. 132 (part of *Yüan Chung-lang ch'üan-chi* 袁中郎全集, Shanghai, 1935).

⁵⁵ See Yüan Chung-tao, *K'ê-hsüeh-chai chi (wên-chi)* 珂雪齋集, 文集, Shanghai, 1936, p. 94. Chung-tao arrived in the tenth month of 1595.

permission was eventually granted, and he finally left Soochow in the early months of 1597.⁵⁶

Yüan Hung-tao had made the acquaintance of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang during his visits to the capital in 1591-2 and 1594-5. Both Tung and T'ao were graduates of the same year, 1589, and both had served in the Hanlin Academy since then. T'ao left, as he describes above, during 1595. Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, with the exception of one period of leave,⁵⁷ remained in his post until 1596, when he was appointed to a position in Changsha. His *Hua-ch'an-shih sui-pi* 畫禪室隨筆 contains this passage:

I received orders to take up a post in Changsha in the autumn of 1596. When I reached the Tung-lin temple 東林寺 (at Lu-shan 廬山, not far from Chiu-chiang), the white lotus was in full bloom. The local people say it was planted by the priest Hui-yüan 慧遠 of the Chin dynasty.⁵⁸

It is probable that he had paid a visit to his home at Sung-chiang before going on to Changsha. There is a letter to him from Yüan Hung-tao, which must have been written about this time, and which seems to show that he had passed through Soochow.

The black ox passed through Han-ku 函谷, and the warden of the pass happened to be ill. Although it was my ill-luck not to meet you, I have at least spared you the trouble of giving me five thousand words of exposition. I have been ill for two months, without (hope of) recovery. I am forthwith therefore applying to be relieved of my post . . .⁵⁹

The "black ox passing through Han-ku" refers, of course, to the famous story of Lao Tzū, who, riding on a black ox, went through the Han-ku Pass, and favoured the warden of the pass with five thousand words of instruction, that is to say, the *Tao-tê ching*.

It was on the fourteenth of the eighth month, according to his application, that Yüan Hung-tao's attack of malaria began. Tung Ch'i-ch'ang must therefore have passed through Soochow after this date, and according to the letter, at least two months after it. The application runs:

On the fourteenth day of the month before last, my illness took a serious turn. For a period of ten days or so, I vomited several pints of blood, felt dizzy, had aches in my bones . . .⁶⁰

This application must therefore have been written during the ninth month (there was an intercalary eighth month in that year). In any case, his next

⁵⁶ See Yüan Chung-tao, *Yu-chü shih-lu* 遊居柿錄 (*Yüan Hsiao-hsiu jih-chi* 袁小修日記), Shanghai, 1935, p. 68.

⁵⁷ Tung Ch'i-ch'ang returned to the capital after this leave. See his biography in *Ming shih* 明史, *chüan* 288. (Ssü-pu pei-yao ed., p. 2003).

⁵⁸ This passage is quoted from *chüan* 3.

⁵⁹ See *Letters*, p. 37.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

application takes up the narrative of his illness from the beginning of the tenth month.⁶¹ His letter to Tung (the second letter quoted) must have been written before T'ao's arrival, since otherwise he would surely have referred to it. Since, however, he speaks of having been ill for two months, his letter to Tung cannot have been written long before T'ao's arrival on the twenty-fourth. If, for example, it had been written about the middle of the ninth month, that would indeed have been two months after the onset of the illness. This shows that up to a short while, hardly more than a few days, before T'ao's arrival, Yüan Hung-tao had not yet received the manuscript of the *Chin P'ing Mei*. It seems most likely, therefore, that he received it from the hand of T'ao Wang-ling, perhaps with instructions to return it after copying. This conclusion is supported by the drift of the letter itself, which invites one to assume that T'ao's coming explains the arrival of the manuscript.

Thus this letter of Yüan Hung-tao's, besides containing the earliest reference to the novel, also supplies a few clues to its previous history. The letter itself (the first letter quoted) was written about the end of the tenth month of 1596, and it indicates that Yüan Hung-tao probably received the manuscript of the first part of the *Chin P'ing Mei* from the hand of T'ao Wang-ling on the twenty-fourth of the ninth month of the same year. T'ao, in turn, had received it from Tung Ch'i-ch'ang during his visit to Sung-chiang. Since Tung's visit to Sung-chiang is not likely to have been a long one, it is improbable, supposing he had obtained the manuscript at that time, that he would have been prepared to part with it so quickly. Probably, therefore, he brought it south with him from Peking.

If this assumption is right, then the manuscript must have come into Tung's possession after Hung-tao's departure from Peking in the second month of 1595, and probably after T'ao's departure in the middle of 1595, but on the other hand, before his own departure in the middle of 1596. Therefore it seems possible to say that the first person who to our knowledge had possession of part of the manuscript was the artist and calligrapher Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, and that he first obtained it in Peking between the middle of 1595 and the middle of 1596.

There is one other reference to the manuscript which belongs to this early period. It is contained in Yüan Chung-tao's diary for the eighth month of 1614. After describing a visit to Li Chih 李贄 in 1592, at a time when the latter was editing the *Shui-hu chuan*, he remarks:

I went to see Tung Ssü-pai, and we discussed which was the best of the novels. Ssü-pai said: "Quite recently there has been a novel called *Chin P'ing Mei* which is extremely fine". I had heard of it myself; later I got half of the work from Chung-lang (*i.e.* Yüan Hung-tao)

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

while he was at Chên-chou 眞州. Broadly speaking, it is a detailed description of love-making. It develops the story of P'an Chin-lien from the *Shui-hu chuan*. The "Chin" of the title is for Chin-lien; the "P'ing" is for Li P'ing-êrh; and the "Mei" is for Ch'un-mei the maid. Long ago there was a Captain Hsi-mên in the capital, who engaged an old scholar from Shaohsing to serve in his household. The scholar had little to occupy his time, and so day by day recorded the erotic and licentious things that went on there. In the figure of (Hsi-)mên Ch'ing, he portrayed his master, and in the other figures, his master's various concubines . . .⁶²

It is not possible to give a certain date to this meeting. It must have been before the end of 1597, which was the date of Chung-tao's arrival in Chên-chou.⁶³ The most likely date is the end of 1596 or the beginning of 1597, while Tung Ch'i-ch'ang was at Changsha, for from the time Chung-tao left Soochow in 1595 after visiting his brother, he was travelling through Kiangsu, Chekiang, and Anhui. He did not return to Kung-an until the third month of 1596.⁶⁴ There is scarcely any mention of his movements during the rest of that year either in his own works or the works of his two brothers, but in 1597 he journeyed to Wuchang to take the examinations,⁶⁵ and later in the same year joined his brother in Chên-chou. It is most likely therefore that the two men met at some time after Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's arrival in Changsha in the late autumn of 1596, but before Chung-tao's departure for Chên-chou a year later.

It is also possible, though less likely, that the meeting took place before the date in 1596 at which the manuscript came into Hung-tao's possession. If this is so, it must have been while both men were in Peking. However, Chung-tao did not stay in Peking very long after his brother left. He spent at least some of the time staying at Ta-t'ung in Shansi, and he must finally have left Peking in the sixth or seventh month, for he seems to have made a fairly leisurely journey through Shantung and Kiangsu before arriving in Soochow in the tenth month.⁶⁶ Moreover, if Tung Ch'i-ch'ang had had the manuscript at this time, news of it would surely have reached Hung-tao either through his brother or T'ao Wang-ling; he would thus have been better informed about the novel than his letter indicates.

Beyond the point at which Tung Ch'i-ch'ang came into possession of the manuscript of half the novel, it is impossible with the available evidence to go. But the very fact that at his stage only half the novel was in circulation,

⁶² See *Yu-chü shih-lu*, p. 245.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 70. Chên-chou was near the present-day I-chêng 儀徵. Chung-tao stayed there from the first month of 1598 until the seventh month of the same year. On p. 69, he says he went to Chên-chou after failing the provincial examination in 1597.

⁶⁴ See *Letters*, p. 36.

⁶⁵ See *Yu-chü shih-lu*, p. 35.

⁶⁶ For an account of his travels, see *Letters*, pp. 14-6, 36.

prompts one to wonder whether, like the author of the *Shih-t'ou chi* 石頭記, the author of this novel, having finished part of it, may not have circulated it among his friends.⁶⁷ This would not necessarily mean that in 1595 the novel was still in the process of being written (though nothing definitely precludes that possibility), for a part of the novel might be copied and re-copied, and so come to lead an existence of its own.

The fact that a novel should receive consideration from literary figures like Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, T'ao Wang-ling and the Yüan brothers, indicates the change of attitude to the vernacular literature which began in the Chia-ching period and became more pronounced during Wan-li. This change was most marked with regard to the popular song and the novel. The songbooks *Ts'ü-lin chai-yen* 詞林摘艷 and *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu* 雍熙樂府 are the products of the earlier period; by the time of Wan-li a number of writers had begun to imitate popular songs, and even to include the imitations among their published works. The first notable editions of the *Shui-hu chuan* are those of the Chia-ching period; there followed others during Wan-li by Wang Tao-k'un 汪道昆 and Li Chih, while from 1600 on, accepted literary figures like Fêng Mêng-lung 馮夢龍 and Chung Hsing 鍾惺 both created new novels and revised old ones. Altogether it may be said that from the early sixteenth century the two literatures of the Ming dynasty, the vernacular and the recognized, had ceased to run entirely separate courses.

Yüan Hung-tao himself had reacted strongly against the prevailing school of writers, notably Wang Shih-chên 王世貞 and Li P'an-lung 李攀龍, with their principle of taking classical models.⁶⁸ The two men whom he regarded as his masters were Li Chih and Hsü Wei 徐渭. He had studied under Li Chih, and was his close friend; and although he never met Hsü Wei, it is clear from the biography he wrote and the references to him in his letters, that he regarded himself as a protagonist for Hsü Wei's ideas.⁶⁹ Both Li Chih and Hsü Wei were noted for the esteem in which they held the vernacular literature. Li Chih edited old novels;⁷⁰ Hsü Wei imitated the current tunes of the popular song.⁷¹ It is not surprising therefore that Yüan Hung-tao valued the *Chin P'ing Mei* so highly.

There are several references to the history of this manuscript. From Chung-tao's note, we know that he first read it in Chên-chou, presumably

⁶⁷ See Wu Shih-ch'ang, *On the Red Chamber Dream*, 1961, pp. 80-5. This is not to say, of course, that Tung Ch'i-ch'ang was one of the author's circle of friends.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Yüan Chung-tao, *Yu-chü shih-lu*, p. 247, for an account of his brother's attitude.

⁶⁹ See, for example, *Letters*, p. 92.

⁷⁰ There is a poem of Hung-tao's which describes Li Chih expounding the *Shui-hu chuan* (*Yüan Chung-lang shih-chi*, p. 26).

⁷¹ See the *Ch'ü lü* 曲律 of Wang Chi-tê 王驥德. None of the songs survive.

towards the end of 1597. Also staying at Chên-chou at this time was the writer Hsieh Chao-chê 謝肇淪,⁷² who later borrowed Hung-tao's manuscript to copy.

During 1598 all three Yüan brothers were in Peking.⁷³ With Tung Ch'í-ch'ang, Hsieh Chao-chê and other friends, they formed the *P'u-t'ao shé* 葡萄社 "the Society of the Grape", which met to drink wine, to compose impromptu verses, and so forth.⁷⁴ This circumstance means that Tung Ch'í-ch'ang probably never possessed more than half of the manuscript, for if he had, he would surely have lent it to Hung-tao at this time, and as we shall see later, Hung-tao never managed to see the second half.

Hung-tao's reference to the *Chin P'ing Mei* in his *Shang chêng* 觴政 "Rules of drinking" is widely quoted. It was this reference which prompted Shên Tê-fu to ask Hung-tao about the novel. The "Rules", which is a *jeu d'esprit*, has a postscript dated the summer of 1607.⁷⁵ It could not have been composed at that time, however, for apart from Shên Tê-fu's reference—he implies he read it before meeting Hung-tao in Peking in 1606—it is mentioned in two letters written by Hung-tao before he went to the capital in that year. One of these letters is certainly later than 1604.⁷⁶ The "Rules" was therefore probably written during 1605 or the early part of 1606.

Apart from making the existence of the *Chin P'ing Mei* fairly widely known, the reference in the "Rules" is not of much importance; it merely lists the novel, along with the *Shui-hu chuan* and other works, as "unofficial classics" of the art of drinking.

In 1606, Shên Tê-fu, who had been living most of his life in the capital, met Hung-tao there and discussed the novel with him. The meeting must have been towards the end of the year, for we know that Hung-tao did not arrive until the autumn.⁷⁷ Shên Tê-fu's account is contained in his *Yeh-huo pien* 野獲編.⁷⁸ As it provides the main evidence for the history of the other manuscript and the first printed edition, the whole of it is translated here, for reference when those matters are dealt with later. The account is as follows:

Yüan Chung-lang's *Shang chêng* named the *Chin P'ing Mei* and the

⁷² See *Yu-chü shih-lu*, p. 69.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 72.

⁷⁴ A description of the society is contained in the introduction to one of Hung-tao's poems (*Yüan Chung-lang shih-chi*, p. 145).

⁷⁵ Chang Hung-hsün 張鴻勳, "Shih-t'ian *Chin P'ing Mei* ti tso-chê, shih-tai, ch'ü-ts'ai 試談金瓶梅的作者時代取材" (*Wên-hsüeh i-ch'an tsêng-k'an* 文學遺產增刊, no. 6, 1958, pp. 281-291) refers to a preface of 1606, but does not name the edition he is using. The available edition (*Yüan Chung-lang ch'üan-chi*) has no such preface.

⁷⁶ See *Letters*, p. 162.

⁷⁷ See *Yüan Chung-lang shih-chi*, p. 143.

⁷⁸ *Wan-li yeh-huo-pien*, p. 652.

Shui-hu chuan as unofficial classics. I very much regretted not having been able to see it. In 1606 I met Chung-lang in the capital, and asked him whether he had ever had the complete work.⁷⁹ "I have read only a few *chüan*," he told me, "but they were both extraordinary and delightful."⁸⁰ By now, the only person who possesses the complete work is Liu Ch'êng-hsi 劉承禧, style 延白,⁸¹ of Ma-ch'êng 麻城. No doubt it was copied for him from the manuscript of Hsü Wên-chên 徐文貞, to whose family his wife belongs."

Three years later, when Hsiao-hsiu 小修 (*i.e.* Yüan Chung-tao) came to the capital to take the examinations, he had the book with him. I borrowed it from him to copy, and brought it back with me. My friend from Soochow, Fêng Yu-lung 馮猶龍 (*i.e.* Fêng Mêng-lung) was both surprised and delighted when he saw it. At that time Ma Chung-liang 馬仲良 (*i.e.* the writer Ma Chih-chün 馬之駿) had been appointed to the Customs in Soochow, and he too urged me to accede to the publisher's request, and thereby satisfy my needs. But I told him that although eventually someone was bound to publish the book, once published it would circulate from person to person and from household to household, corrupting men's minds. And if one day Yama were to tax me with setting off this catastrophe, what excuse should I be able to offer? How could I possibly risk all the torments of Niraya for the hope of a paltry profit? Ma Chung-liang entirely agreed with me, and so I locked the novel securely away. Yet in no time at all it was on sale all over Soochow. However, the original text was short of Chapters 53 to 57; a search was made for them everywhere, but they could not be found. Some ignoramus supplied them, so that the work could be printed. Leaving out of consideration their utter triviality and vulgarity, as well as their occasional use of Soochow words, the chapters he supplied do not even fit in with the novel's sequence. One can tell at a glance that they are a forgery.

I have been told that the novel is the masterpiece of a famous writer of the Chia-ching 嘉靖 period,⁸² and that he wrote it as an attack on the conditions of his time. Ts'ai Ching and his sons, for example, represent Fên-i 分宜 (*i.e.* Yen Sung 嚴嵩 and his son Yen Shih-fan 嚴世蕃), Lin Ling-su 林靈素 represents T'ao

⁷⁹ Presumably Shên knew that half the work was in existence, and so put the question in this form.

⁸⁰ Another edition of this text has the variant *kuai* 怪 for *k'uai* 快. (See *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'êng* 中國古典戲曲論著集成, Peking, 1959, vol. 4, p. 228.) This has the effect of removing the word "delightful" from the translation.

⁸¹ The text has *pai* 白. It can be seen from the *Ma-ch'êng hsien-chih* 麻城縣志, 1882 ed. *chüan* 15, that it should have been *po* 伯.

⁸² 1522-66.

Chung-wên 陶仲文, Chu Mien 朱勛 represents Lu Ping 陸炳, and so on, with each character in the novel standing for someone.⁸³

"There is another novel named *Yü Chiao Li* 玉嬌李," Chung-lang also told me, "which also comes from the hand of this famous writer. It allots to each character in the earlier novel his or her appropriate fate, according to *karma*, in the next reincarnation. Wu Ta 武大 in his next life becomes an adulterer, and commits incest with his father's concubines as well as with his son's. P'an Chin-lien becomes a notorious wanton, and eventually suffers punishment of the most severe degree. Hsi-mên Ch'ing turns into an idiot, and sits listlessly by while his wives and concubines cuckold him. This shows how accurately the doctrine of *karma* is applied." Chung-lang had only heard tell of it; he had not seen it. Last year I went to the capital, and while there managed to get a glimpse of this novel from Ch'iu Chih-ch'ung 邱志充, style Liu-ch'ü 六區, of the Board of Works. It was only the first *chüan*. It was unspeakably obscene and unethical, so that I could scarcely bring myself to read it. The Emperor in it is called Wan-yen Ta-ting 完顏大定,⁸⁴ and the feud between Kuei-ch'i 貴溪 (*i.e.* Hsia Yen 夏言) and Fên-i is obliquely described there. An even more surprising thing is that up to the year 1541 the names of the lesser officials are given directly. I put the book aside and did not open it again. Nevertheless its style is both free and intoxicating, and even seems superior to that of the *Chin P'ing Mei*. I do not know what became of the book after Ch'iu left the capital to take up office elsewhere.

Evidently, therefore, Yüan Hung-tao never saw more than the half of the novel which he obtained in 1596.

In a letter to Hsieh Chao-chê, Yüan Hung-tao wrote:

I imagine that by now you must know the *Chin P'ing Mei* by heart. Why has it not been returned to me ages ago?⁸⁵

From a reference which it contains to the lapse of eight years since the Society of the Grape flourished (*i.e.* 1598-9), it seems that this letter must have been written during Hung-tao's stay in the capital in 1607. It is natural that, having arrived in the capital, he should recall in his letter to Hsieh the last time they were there together. It is not certain when Hsieh

⁸³ This is the earliest expression of the view that the *Chin P'ing Mei* had direct political implications. It was later debased into the interpretation that the novel as a whole is a political allegory. Coupled with fanciful theories as to the authorship, the latter notion became current in the Ch'ing dynasty. For an effective exposure of its fatuity, see Wu Han, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-19.

⁸⁴ Wan-yen was the surname of the Chin emperors. Ta-ting was the title of the reign of the emperor Shih-tsung 世宗 which lasted from 1161 to 1189. By comparison, the *Hsi Chin P'ing Mei* of Ting Yao-k'ang is set a good deal earlier, beginning in the T'ien-hui 天會 period (1123-35).

⁸⁵ See *Letters*, p. 160.

borrowed the manuscript, but he did visit Hung-tao at least once during those eight years.

There is at least one other reference to the Tung manuscript. It is contained in the *Shan-lin ching-chi-chi* 山林經濟籍 compiled by T'u Pên-chün 屠本峻.⁸⁶

Note: Very few copies of the *Chin P'ing Mei* are extant. The book is closely connected with the *Shui-hu chuan*. Apparently in Chia-ching time, someone was slandered in a memorial to the throne by Lu Ping. As a result, the Court confiscated the property of the accused. Brooding on this injustice, the victim gave vent to his feelings in the *Chin P'ing Mei* . . . (Wang Shih-chên 王世貞) possessed the complete work, but now it is lost. Once in the past when I was passing through Chin-t'an . . . Wang Yü-t'ai 王宇泰 (*i.e.* Wang K'ên-t'ang 王肯堂⁸⁷) showed me this work and told me that he had bought two cases of the manuscript at an exorbitant price. Reading it, I felt that the style was much like that of Lo Kuan-chung 羅貫中. Later from the household of . . . Wang Pai-ku 王百穀 (*i.e.* Wang Chih-têng 王穉登), I again saw two cases of the manuscript, and much regretted I had not been able to see the complete work . . .

This note must have been written before the date of the first printed edition in 1610. By this time more copies of the Tung manuscript had evidently been made, and it had begun to change hands for money. The copy in the possession of Wang Chih-têng may well have been obtained from Hung-tao; they had been close friends at least since Hung-tao's days in Soochow.⁸⁸

The nucleus of the legend about the authorship can be seen forming in these quotations. In the opinions he expressed to Shên Tê-fu, Hung-tao for the first time gave it shape; in the comment by T'u Pên-chün it has become more specific, and the name of Wang Shih-chên has become associated with it.

That is all the material so far available about the Tung manuscript. No copies have survived, and to the best of my knowledge, no editions have ever been based on it.

The Liu Ch'êng-hsi 劉承禧 manuscript

This is the only other kind of manuscript known to have existed. According to Shên Tê-fu, Yüan Chung-tao had this book with him when he came to Peking to take the examinations in 1610. Liu Ch'êng-hsi is mentioned once in Chung-tao's works; there is an entry in his diary which runs:

⁸⁶ This passage is quoted from K'ung Ling-ching, *op. cit.*, p. 82. Yüan Hung-tao's *Shang chêng* is one of the works contained in the *Shan-lin ching-chi-chi* (see the *Naikaku bunko kanseki bunrui mokuroku* 內閣文庫漢籍分類目錄, 1956, pp. 534-6). Presumably T'u Pên-chün's note was an editor's comment on its reference to the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

⁸⁷ He was a *chin-shih* of 1589, and thus a contemporary of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang.

⁸⁸ See *Letters*, p. 18.

Chanced to meet Liu Yen-po 劉延伯 in Li Yu-ch'ing's 李酉卿⁸⁸ boat. He showed me Chou Fang's 周昉 painting "Kuei-fei leaving her bath". She is standing upright. Around her shoulders a light silk gauze has been cast which covers her skin like a film of snow. The effect is breath-taking . . .⁹⁰

From its position in the diary, this entry can be shown to belong to the seventh month of 1609. Chung-tao was making a leisurely progress to the capital to rejoin his brother and to take the examinations. The encounter with Liu Ch'êng-hsi took place shortly before he reached Tan-yang. On the whole, this seems likely to have been the time at which Chung-tao borrowed the manuscript. However, it is quite possible he obtained it at some other time, for it appears from his work⁹¹ that the Liu family of Ma-ch'êng were related to his close friend Mei Kuo-chên 梅國禎, and it may well be that the work was obtained through him.

It is suggested in Shên Tê-fu's note that Liu may have obtained his copy of the manuscript from Hsü Wên-chên, to whom his wife was related. This was no doubt an inference on the part of Yüan Hung-tao, based on the belief that Wang Shih-chên or some other opponent of Yen Sung was the author of the novel. "Wên-chên" is the posthumously-conferred name of the Chia-ching and Lung-ch'ing statesman Hsü Chieh 徐階, who was also an opponent of Yen Sung. But Hsü Chieh died in 1583, and it is most unlikely on that ground alone that he could have had any connection with the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

About Liu Ch'êng-hsi himself, not very much is known. He is mentioned in Tsang Mao-hsün's 臧懋循 preface to the *Yüan-ch'ü hsüan* 元曲選.

I possessed many rare editions of *tsa-chü* plays, but a short time ago, I was passing through Huang-chou 黃州 and borrowed two hundred from Liu Yen-po . . . which were different from the editions on the market.

Evidently, therefore, Liu was a notable collector; in each of the three quotations which concern him, he has been described as in the possession of some rarity—T'ang paintings, Yüan plays, or the manuscript of the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

According to the local history,⁹² he was a military *chin-shih* of 1580, and served as an officer in the Chin-i wei 錦衣衛. The following account of him is also quoted from the *Ma-ch'êng hsien chih* 麻城縣志:

He occupied a military post, but what he most esteemed were literary and artistic pursuits. Writers enjoyed his company; he appreciated

antiquities, calligraphy, painting. He made a collection of rare books and strange objects, which he never tired of fondling.⁹³

As to the way in which he may have come to possess the almost complete manuscript, nothing is known.

With this manuscript, then, Yüan Chung-tao arrived in Peking. According to his diary, he arrived in the eleventh month of 1609, and left again, having failed the examination, early in 1610. Shên Tê-fu took this manuscript, or his copy of it, with him to Soochow, and then, according to his own account, locked it away. He gives us to understand that someone else's copy of the Liu manuscript served as the exemplar of the first printed edition.

There is one other reference to the copy of the Liu manuscript in Shên Tê-fu's possession. Li Jih-hua's 李日華 diary *Wei-shui-hsüan jih-chi* 味水軒日記 runs:

On the fifth day of the eleventh month of 1617, Po-yüan 伯遠 (*i.e.* Shên Ch'ien 沈倩) brought along the copy of the novel *Chin P'ing Mei* in the possession of Ching-ch'ien 景倩 (*i.e.* Shên Tê-fu).⁹⁴

Neither Shên's copy, however, nor any of the other copies has survived. Nor is there any other description of this manuscript, to the best of our knowledge. Fortunately for us, however, it survived long enough to be printed; all the editions of the *Chin P'ing Mei* which we have are based ultimately upon it.

The Yü Chiao Li 玉嬌李

This novel, the sequel to the *Chin P'ing Mei* and supposedly by the same author, is mentioned in detail only in Shên Tê-fu's note. Despite the paucity of evidence, it is quite likely that such a novel did exist, for in Ch. 100 of the *Chin P'ing Mei*—which Hung-tao had not even read—there

⁸⁸ This passage is quoted from a note on Liu Ch'êng-hsi by Tai Wang-shu 戴望舒 (*Hsiao-shuo hsi-ch'ü lun-chi* 小說戲曲論集), Peking, 1958, pp. 91-2. As regards Liu Ch'êng-hsi's dates, however, Tai Wang-shu would seem to have misquoted, or else not to have noticed a slip by, the edition of the local history he was using. He gives the date of Liu's graduation as 1610, but with the cyclical characters for 1580. It should clearly be the latter.

⁹⁴ This passage is quoted from Têng Chih-ch'êng 鄧之誠, *Ku-tung so-chi* 骨董瑣記, 1933, *chüan* 8, p. 20b. It is doubtful whether the date 1617 can be correct. Liu Ch'êng-kan's 劉承幹 colophon to the *Wei-shui-hsüan jih-chi* 味水軒日記 as reprinted in the *Chia-yeh-t'ang ts'ung-shu* 嘉業堂叢書 series (1923) states that the original diary ran for eight years, from 1609 to 1616. Of the eight *chüan* of the original work, only four are preserved in the *Chia-yeh-t'ang ts'ung-shu* edition (2-4, 8), covering the years 1610-12, 1616. Ono Shinobu, *op. cit.*, p. 309, takes the correct date to be 1615. He also raises the natural question as to why, if there were printed editions as early as 1610 or 1611, Li Jih-hua should receive his first impression of the *Chin P'ing Mei* from Shên Tê-fu's manuscript in 1615. This seems to throw some doubt on Shên's account of the date of the first edition. Yet if it is correct that his note on the *Chin P'ing Mei* was written in 1619 (see below), his memory can hardly have been at fault to any great degree.

⁸⁹ *i.e.*, Li Chang-kêng 李長庚, a close friend of the Yüan brothers.

⁹⁰ *Yu-chü shih-lu*, p. 57.

⁹¹ See *K'o-hsüeh-chai chi (wên-chi)*, *chüan* 8, pp. 260-7.

⁹² *Ma-ch'êng hsien-chih*, 1882 ed., *chüan* 15.

is described the reincarnation of the principal characters. This description is so specific, giving names and places, that one can well believe that the author had every intention of carrying his story into the next lives of his characters, in order to allot the appropriate rewards and punishments, precisely as is done in the earliest surviving sequel. It must be admitted, however, that there is no detail in Ch. 100 which shows that the *Yü Chiao Li* of Hung-tao's description was necessarily by the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

As to Shên Tê-fu's claim that the *Yü Chiao Li* was a direct satire on the political history of the Chia-ching period, like the similar interpretation put on the *Chin P'ing Mei*, it probably exemplifies a tendency of the time to see novels as *romans à clef*. There are, of course, plays like the anonymous *Ming-fêng chi* 鳴鳳記 (often attributed to Wang Shih-chên), and stories like the *Shên Hsiao-hsia hsiang-hui ch'u-shih-piao* 沈小霞相會出師表,⁹⁵ which do describe explicitly crimes committed by Yen Sung and Yen Shih-fan during their period of power. These works may have prompted critics sometimes to see satire, in the specific sense, where none existed. The same sort of interpretation has been placed on a number of sixteenth-century plays, so far as can be discovered, without justification.⁹⁶

It is possible, I think, to identify the Ch'iu Chih-ch'ung 邱志充 from whom Shên Tê-fu obtained the first part of the novel as an official from Chu-ch'êng 諸城 in Shantung. He was a *chin-shih* of 1610, and also, having failed the Palace examination, of 1613.⁹⁷ The provincial histories for Hunan and Hupeh,⁹⁸ where he served, give his name as Ch'iu Chih-k'ê 邱志克, but there is little doubt, from the accompanying detail, that it is Chih-ch'ung to whom they refer. His style is given in the 1764 *Chu-ch'êng hsien-chih* 諸城縣志⁹⁹ as Tso-ch'ên 左臣, which differs from the Liu-ch'ü 六區 of Shên Tê-fu's description. However, the same work gives the style of Ch'iu Chih-chuang 邱志壯, who was either his brother or his first cousin, as Shih-ch'ü 士區.¹⁰⁰ Since it is common enough for brothers and even cousins to have similar styles as well as similar personal names, it is likely that the name Liu-ch'ü did belong to Ch'iu Chih-ch'ung. As for Tso-ch'ên, it was either a second style, or since the two names are graphically very close to each other, it may even have been a mistake.

⁹⁵ *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* 古今小說, *chüan* 40.

⁹⁶ See the *Chü shuo* 劇說 of Chiao Hsün 焦循 (Shanghai, 1957, p. 57). It contains references to a number of plays which were given just this kind of interpretation by Ming critics.

⁹⁷ *Chu-ch'êng hsien-chih* 諸城縣志, 1764 ed., *chüan* 21.

⁹⁸ *Hunan t'ung-chih* 湖南通志, Commercial Press, pp. 2329, 2496. *Hupeh t'ung-chih* 湖北通志, Commercial Press, p. 2740.

⁹⁹ *Chüan* 21.

¹⁰⁰ *Chu-ch'êng hsien-chih*, *loc. cit.* (Entry under Ch'iu Shun 邱樞.) There was also another cousin, Ch'iu Chih-kuang 邱志廣, whose style was Hung-ch'ü 洪區.

It is likely that Shên Tê-fu obtained the *Yü Chiao Li* in 1618. His second preface to the augmented *Yeh-huo pien* is dated 1619, and he remarks of his meeting with Ch'iu that it took place "last year, in the capital". It is certain that Shên Tê-fu was in Peking in 1618, taking the *chü-jên* examination.¹⁰¹

Ch'iu Chih-ch'ung himself does not seem to have been noted either as writer or as collector, unlike his sons, Yü-ch'ang 玉常 and Shih-ch'ang 石常, who both made reputations as poets.¹⁰² Little significance can be seen in his having possession of the novel except for the strange fact that he came from the very same district of Shantung as Ting Yao-k'ang, the author of the earliest surviving sequel to the *Chin P'ing Mei*. Both the Ch'iu and the Ting families were among the half-dozen most notable ones—judging from examination successes—in Chu-ch'êng-hsien.

There is no obvious explanation of this fact, and it may, after all, be only a coincidence. Some of the questions it raises, however, can be disposed of at once. It was certainly not an early draft of Ting Yao-k'ang's novel which Ch'iu Chih-ch'ung showed to Shên Tê-fu, for although the exact date of Ting Yao-k'ang's birth cannot be ascertained, at that time he could have been no more than a boy.¹⁰³ Nor was it an earlier work by some local writer which Ting Yao-k'ang later refurbished. If Shên's account of the *Yü Chiao Li* is accurate, the two sequels were conceived on different lines. The *Hsü Chin P'ing Mei* is concerned with the early stages of conquest and occupation; its author almost certainly depicted therein the sufferings of the Chinese at the hands of the Manchus. The *Yü Chiao Li* on the other hand, is apparently placed in the Ta-ting 大定 period (1161–89), some forty years after the invasion.¹⁰⁴

It seems scarcely possible that Ting Yao-k'ang could have failed to hear of the *Yü Chiao Li*, either in Chu-ch'êng, or from conversation with Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, whom he visited as a young man.¹⁰⁵ However that may be, his preface to the *Hsü Chin P'ing Mei* does not mention it.

Apart from Shên Tê-fu's note, there is only one other probable reference to the *Yü Chiao Li*. Chang Wu-chiu's 張無咎 preface to the *Hsin p'ing-yao chuan* 新平妖傳, the first edition of which is dated 1620, couples the *Chin P'ing Mei* with the *Yü Chiao Li* 玉嬌麗 (*sic*) in comparing them with the *Shui-hu chuan*.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ See Ch'ien Fang's 錢枋 preface to the *Yeh-huo-pien*.

¹⁰² *Chu-ch'êng hsien-chih*, *chüan* 35.

¹⁰³ See the biography of his mother (*ibid.*, *chüan* 45). She was 31 *sui* old at the time of the death of her husband, Ting Wei-ning 丁惟寧. From facts contained in the latter's biography (*chüan* 31), this can be seen to have occurred about 1616.

¹⁰⁴ See the note on this passage in Shên Tê-fu's account.

¹⁰⁵ See Ting Yao-k'ang's own biography, *Chu-ch'êng hsien-chih*, *chüan* 36.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted by Sun K'ai-ti, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

7. The Lost editions

From external references, as well as from the conclusions reached in Sections 3 and 4, it is possible to deduce a little of what the lost editions were like. And these deductions can be used to re-assess the position of the most important of the extant editions.

The First printed edition, Soochow, 1610 or 1611

The only evidence for this edition is provided by Shên Tê-fu. He says it was published not long after he had shown his copy of the Liu manuscript to his friends Fêng Mêng-lung and Ma Chih-chün. The latter was a *chin-shih* graduate of 1610, and had been newly appointed to a post in Soochow. This puts the date of the edition at 1610 or 1611.

This edition was based on the Liu manuscript, which lacked Chapters 53 to 57, and so these chapters had to be supplied. It was either the "hypothetical edition" of Section 3, or more likely, a direct antecedent of it.

The 1617 Soochow edition

The only evidence for this edition is provided by the Nung-chu K'ê preface. It is often assumed that this edition is in fact A.1; yet it is really far from certain. Other editions have the Nung-chu K'ê preface, and the colophon too, yet as was shown above, they do not derive textually from A.1. On the other hand, the important Hsin-hsin Tzū preface, as well as the prefatory *ts'ü*, are found only in the A editions. It seems more likely that the 1617 edition was the common antecedent of both the earliest A edition and the earliest B edition, each of which incorporated its prefaces, and that, in its turn, it was derived directly from the 1610 (1611) edition. In that case, the text of the 1617 edition must have been the same as that of A.1, except for Chapters 53 and 54.

The A.1 edition

On the above evidence, this extant edition is based on the 1617 Soochow edition. Chêng Chên-to indeed doubted whether it was a southern edition at all. It has the following features distinct from the B editions, which also derive from the 1617 edition:

The Hsin-hsin Tzū preface

The prefatory *ts'ü*

The rewritten Chapters 53 and 54.

Apart from these features, A.1 represents an earlier state of the text than do the B editions, which are the result of abridgement.

It is not possible to say whether the above three features were present for the first time in A.1, or whether there were other intermediary editions between the 1617 one and this.

The First B edition

The main features of the development from the 1617 Soochow edition to the first B edition are as follows:

The rewriting of Ch. 1 (first part), and the consequent adaptation of the text elsewhere.

The correction of the text (as in Ch. 81).

The abridgement of the text.

The remodelling of the chapter headings.

The rewriting of the initial verse.

The addition of illustrations.

The addition of notes.

It is not possible to say whether all of these features appeared for the first time in a single edition, or whether the development was a gradual one.

The First C edition

The first C edition was, by definition, that edited by Chang Chu-p'o. The earliest surviving editions, apart from Chang's introductions, all have Hsieh I's preface of 1695. That the Hsieh I edition was not the first C edition is proved by a passage in the *Chin P'ing Mei hou-pa* 金瓶梅後跋¹⁰⁷ of Ch'ên Ssü-hsiang 陳思相, a virtually unknown work, of which the preface is dated 1684. Ch'ên Ssü-hsiang remarks that the *Chin P'ing Mei* had been neglected and misunderstood for over a hundred years until it came to be edited by Chang Chu-p'o. His references to Chang's theory of the authorship, as well as his mention of the novel as *Ti-i ch'i-shu* 第一奇書, make it clear that it was the first C edition he was speaking about. Chang's edition was therefore published at some time before 1684.

It is obvious from his introductions that Chang Chu-p'o was a disciple of Chin Shêng-t'an 金聖歎, the seventeenth-century editor of the *Shui-hu chuan*. The *Tsai-yüan tsa-chih* 在園雜誌 of Liu T'ing-chi 劉廷璣 confirms this, remarking that his editing of the *Chin P'ing Mei* confers on him the mantle of Chin Shêng-t'an.¹⁰⁸ What little is known of him adds to this impression; he was apparently a friend of Chang Ch'ao 張潮, among whose compilations there are works which show features of Chin Shêng-t'an's method.¹⁰⁹ It is strange to think that Shêng-t'an's

¹⁰⁷ The only known copy of this work is in the possession of Professor Fu Hsi-hua 傅惜華 of Peking. It has not, to the best of my knowledge, been described before. I am greatly indebted to him for bringing the work to my notice, and for allowing me to use it.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted from *Yüan-Ming-CH'ing san-tai chin-hui hsiao-shuo hsi-ch'ü shih-liao* 元明清三代禁毀小說戲曲史料, compiled by Wang Hsiao-ch'uan 王曉蓀, Peking, 1958, p. 262.

¹⁰⁹ He edited the *Chao-tai ts'ung-shu* 昭代叢書. Chang Chu-p'o was one of the circle of friends who wrote comments on Chang Ch'ao's dicta in *Yu meng ying* 幽夢影, which is found in the *Chao-tai ts'ung-shu*.

edition of the *Shui-hu chuan*, together with the Chang Chu-p'o edition of the *Chin P'ing Mei* and the Mao Tsung-kang 毛宗崗 edition of the *San-kuo yen-i* 三國演義, both of which were produced under his influence, remained the standard editions of the three novels during the whole of the Ch'ing dynasty. Unlike Chin Shêng-t'an however, who did not scruple to falsify the text of the *Shui-hu chuan* to suit his preconceptions, Chang Chu-p'o contented himself with writing notes and introductions, and made only trivial alterations in the B edition which served him as exemplar.

Ch'en Ssü-hsiang's edition

The *Chin P'ing Mei hou-pa* contains the following passage:

When Miao Ch'ing visits the capital as a *san-kuan* 散官, the good (or rare) edition (*shan-pên* 善本) has the phrase "riding in a black sedan-chair". The excellence of this lies in the indirect contrast it presents with Hsi-mên Ch'ing's riding a white horse when first being appointed a *t'i-hsing* 提刑. It is a superb piece of writing.¹¹⁰

In Ch. 55 4b., the A.1 edition describes Miao Yüan-wai as "riding in a sedan-chair". Edition B.4 is identical at this point. The difference is not so much in the word "black", for *ch'êng ch'ing chiao* 乘青轎 would be a simple enough mistake on the printer's part for *ch'êng-chih chiao* 乘着轎, as in the identification of Miao Yüan-wai with Miao Ch'ing. As was shown in Section 3 above, the outstanding mistake of the supplied chapters is the failure to recognize that the Miao Yüan-wai of the chapter heading is indeed the Miao Ch'ing of the rest of the novel. We must therefore assume that the *shan-pên* referred to by Ch'en Ssü-hsiang was different from any extant edition. Yet it still cannot have had the original text in Ch. 55, because, as was shown in Section 3, Miao Ch'ing should have been in Yangchow, not in the capital. If there really was such an edition as Ch'en Ssü-hsiang's remark indicates, then it must have been one in which this mistake in the supplied chapters has been partially corrected.

Ting Yao-k'ang's edition

The *Hsü Chin P'ing Mei*, of which the author's preface is dated 1660, also identifies Miao Yüan-wai with Miao Ch'ing. Although this is not the

¹¹⁰ This is a typical sample of Ch'en Ssü-hsiang's over-subtle approach. It is only fair to add, however, that his remarks on the question of the authorship are singularly perceptive. He rejects the legend of Wang Shih-chên's authorship for two reasons. The first is that it is the work of someone from Shantung, not someone from T'ai-ts'ang 太倉 (Wang Shih-chên's birthplace). This is the earliest statement that the novel contains Shantung idiom (compare Yüan Chung-tao's story that it was written by someone from Shao-hsing), and although it was made a hundred years after the work was written, it may still perhaps carry some weight. (It is nowadays the common, though unproved, assumption that the novel does contain Shantung idiom.) His second reason is that the *Chin P'ing Mei* is the work of no eminent official, but of a *pai-to kung-tzu* 敗落公子, "someone who has come down in the world."

only correction it makes, it would probably be too dangerous to try to deduce in detail the kind of edition the author used. Ting Yao-k'ang himself warns the reader to expect mistakes in chronology. When he wrote the novel, he

was away from home, and had not the former work with me, and as I was pressed for time, I may have made occasional mistakes, which I hope the reader will disregard.

However, it was certainly not a B edition that he used; the names of the characters are exactly as they are in the A editions. It is also clear that the title of the edition used was *Chin P'ing Mei tz'ü-hua*, for the introduction remarks:

The former work was called *tz'ü-hua*, and contained many old songs.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ This supplies the most natural explanation of the words *tz'ü-hua* in the title of the A editions, which contain well over 100 songs and song-sequences. However, *tz'ü-hua* had a very wide application indeed, and by the time the *Chin P'ing Mei* came to be written, need have meant little more than "colloquial fiction". For example, the narrator of the story entitled *Chiang Hsing-ho ch'ung-hui chên-chu-shan* 蔣興哥重會珍珠衫 (*Ku-chin hsiao-shuo*, *chüan* 1), describes his tale, which contains no more verse than is to be expected in Chinese prose fiction, as "this *tz'ü-hua* 遺套詞話". See *Sung-Yüan-Ming chiang-ch'ang wên-hsüeh* 宋元明講唱文學 by Yeh Tê-chün 葉德均, 1957, p. 60.