

Wu Shih Ch'ang:

On The Red Chamber Dream—A Review

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I. Introduction

"*The Red Chamber Dream* 紅樓夢 is a nightmare in Chinese literature. The more research you do in it, the more bewildered you become."¹ said one of the experts on the novel who spent thirty years studying it. Up to 1958 900 books and articles had been written on that novel.² But most problems concerned with it have still not been satisfactorily solved. On the contrary, more and more theories concerned with it have been brought forward. Dr. Arthur Waley wrote in 1961, "I have been reading the *Hung Lou Meng* (i. e. *The Red Chamber Dream*) for about forty years, and in doing so have constantly wondered about the problems connected with its composition which Mr. Wu here treats in so thorough and systematic a fashion.....Mr. Wu's book has answered the questions that I have for many years wanted to see answered."³ Mr. Wu's book, therefore, at least in this eminent English sinologue's opinion, is one of the great synthesizations of earlier investigations of the novel.

Mr. Wu Shih Ch'ang 吳世昌 was a former professor of Chinese literature in the University of Oxford, England. His book *On the Red Chamber Dream* 紅樓夢探源 subtitled "A Critical Study of Two Annotated Manuscripts of the XVIIIth Century," having over three hundred pages, was published in Oxford at the Clarendon Press in 1961. It contains two plates, the portrait of Ts'ao Chan 曹霽,⁴ the author of the novel, as frontispiece and a sample leaf from V3 of an 18th century MS. transcription of the novel and two bibliographies of translations of and works on the novel in Western languages and Chinese books quoted or used in his own book with a general index at the end. The book is divided into five parts: on the manuscripts, on the commentators, on the author, on the novel and on Kao Ê's work.

II. Its Merits

Since 1954, under the Peiping regime, there has been a fierce controversy on the problems of *The Red Chamber Dream*. which has caught the notice of the public, especially the men of letters, so that various facts and conjectures about Ts'ao Chan and his friends were published and circulated. This had never happened before. Therefore a new sythesization, like *Researches into The Red Chamber Dream* by Yü P'ing-po 俞平伯紅樓夢研究⁵ and *New Studies on The Red Chamber Dream* by Chou Ju-ch'ang 周汝昌紅樓夢新證⁶ became necessary. Mr. Wu, with the assistance of friends in Peiping and other places in mainland China, was able to collect them. His book, therefore, included nearly all of the materials already published by that time.

Just before and during the Ch'ing dynasty, there prevailed an intellectual school known as "Investigatory Study 樸學." Its main work was philology, archaeology, studies of institutions and related subjects. Scholars of that school developed a rigorous and systematic technique for examining the authenticity of a text. This technique consisted in studying critically every sentence, even every character. Since their objects were mainly "Ching 經" or "Thirteen Classics", they rarely employed the technique on other branches of sinology, not to speak of "leisure books 閒書," their term for "novels". It was not until Hu Shih 胡適 who advocated the literary value of "Pai-hua Hsiao-shuo 白話小說" or "Chinese colloquial novels", that this fashion came out of oblivion. He himself wrote several articles on "Pai-hua Hsiao-shuo"; the most famous and influential one was *Studies on The Red Chamber Dream* 紅樓夢考證⁷. But the man who had been strictly trained in "Investigatory study" and successfully applied its technique to *The Red Chamber Dream* was Mr. Wu, who solved many new problems, drew many new conclusions and discovered many new theories.

(1) The Various Versions

V1⁸ and V3⁹, or "Chia Hsu Pen" and "Keng Ch'en Pen", as they are called by the experts, were erroneously dated by Hu Shih, which is a great hindrance to a further study of them. Since their dates cannot be rightly ascertained, the many problems concerned with *The Red Chamber Dream*, e.g., the identity of Chih-yen-chai 脂硯齋¹⁰, and the authorship of the last forty chapters, cannot then be reasonably solved.

V1 will be dealt with later. In this section our discussion is confined to V3 alone.

There is a photographic reproduction of V3 by the Classical Literature Press, Shanghai, so Mr. Wu could make a thorough investigation of it. He not only considered external evidences, such as other versions, but, above all, also the internal. For example, the style of calligraphy, preface attached to each chapter, the various types of comments (in double columns or on the upper margin or between columns), inscriptions on the title pages, etc. were all taken into account. Thus he found that V3 was a motley composition from four sources.

There is no commentary from chapters 1 to 11. The source copy of this part was one of the earliest versions, transcribed shortly after 1754, the year in which Chih-yen-chai commented on it for the second time. Chapters 12 to 40 came from another transcribed source, in which Chih-yen-chai's first two series of comments were interposed into the text in double columns of small characters. There were also comments or notes preceding or following the text of many chapters. This source was the common ancestor of other early manuscript copies. At the end of chapter 22 a signed note dated "summer, *Ting-hai* 丁亥 (1767)" says that the author died before the chapter was completed. So the date of this transcription cannot be earlier than 1767, possibly much later. Chapters 41 to 80 with 64 and 67 missing, had been copied from another source. All the four fascicles are inscribed on the title-pages with the date "1760". In a note by the commentator preceding chapter 75, there is the date "June 4, 1756", which is transcribed in black ink just like the text. Its source copy can thus be

dated some time after 1760. From chapters 12 to 28, there are red-ink comments written between the columns of the text, on the upper margins or at the ends of the chapters. Many of them are dated 1759, 1762, 1765, or 1767, and signed "Ch'i-hu 畸笏", "Ch'i-hu Lac-jên 畸笏老人", or "Ch'i-hu-sou 畸笏叟". These red-ink comments have been transcribed from another source copy to the well bound manuscript by a different scribe in good calligraphy.¹¹

In addition to the foregoing, I would like to cite an instance to demonstrate Mr. Wu's keen insight.

At the end of chapter 40 of V3, it is related that, after the jokes of the peasant woman, Liu Lao-lao 劉老老 had provoked thunderous laughter from her audience, "they suddenly heard confused shouting outside". Following that it runs, "If you want to know what happened later on, please read the next chapter." But the beginning of chapter 41 resumes Liu's jokes with no reference to the "confused shouting outside". This was so commonplace that it slipped the other experts' attention. Mr. Wu, however, made a demarcation line between the two chapters. His explanation for this is that the jokes of the older version in both chapters continued unbroken, but in a later version the author tried to introduce some side-story to break temporarily the monotony of continuous jokes; but since chapter 41 belonged to the older version, the "confused shouting outside" was never accounted for.¹²

(2) T'ang-ts'un's 棠村 Prefaces

Mr. Wu is very proud of his discovery of T'ang-ts'un's prefaces to the novel. The second one of the "Dedicatory Poems" printed on a facing page of Mr. Wu's book reads:

Recording a romantic and luxurious life,
The *Precious Mirror* was for warning lovers.
T'ang-ts'un's small prefaces are obviously there,
Yet no experts on the novel have ever found them."¹³

Here *Precious Mirror* must be explained. There are two places in V1 which relate to the title of that book. On the upper margin of the passage where it is said that K'ung Mei-hsi of East Shantung 東魯孔梅溪 named the novel *A Precious Mirror for Romantic Life* 風月寶鑑, Chih-yen-chai comments: "Hsüeh-ch'in 雪芹¹⁴ had formerly written a book entitled *A Precious Mirror for Romantic Life* prefaced by his younger brother T'ang-ts'un. Now that T'ang-ts'un has passed away, seeing the new makes me recall the old, I therefore still keep it (or them.)" From the foregoing we may derive the following two conclusions: (1) K'ung Mei-hsi of East Shantung was the pseudonym of Ts'ao Chan's younger brother T'ang-ts'un, and (2) T'ang-ts'un had written preface(s) preceding the older version of *The Red Chamber Dream, A Precious Mirror &c* as named by him, or each chapter of *A Precious Mirror &c*; for there are prefaces preceding each chapter in Chinese classics, like those of the *Book of History* and the *Book of Song*.

There are two introductions to chapter 1, V1. The first one following the four "General principles" starts, "Here is the first chapter opening this volume, etc."; and

the second one, after the chapter-title, starts, "Honorable Readers! Do you know how this book has come into being? etc." It is very odd, but nobody seems to have noticed its oddness before.

From the "tone" of the language, the first introduction cannot be considered as the author's. On the other hand, since it is written in the same size characters as the text, it cannot be considered as Chih-yen-chai's commentary either. Therefore, Mr. Wu concludes that it is nothing more than T'ang-ts'un's preface to *A Precious Mirror &c* which Chih-yen-chai still kept in the newer version for sentimental reasons.

With laborious and painstaking effort Mr. Wu found that there are prefaces still fragmentally preserved in chapters 1, 2, 6, 13—16, 25—28 in V1, chapters 12—14, 17, 23—32, 36—38, 41, 42, 46, 49, 54 in V3 and altered, excised or even interpolated in V5.¹⁵

(3) The Dates of Ts'ao Chan

There are two theories about the date of Ts'ao Chan's death, one stating it was in 1763 and the other in 1764. The 1763 theory was based on Chih-yen-chai's comment in 1774, "On the last day of the year *Jen-wu* (February 12, 1763) 壬午除夕, while the book had not yet been finished, [Hsüeh-] ch'in exhausted his tears and passed away." But there is a poem of Tun Min 敦敏, one of Ts'ao Chan's friends, about inviting Ts'ao to a small wine party "under the apricot blossoms" which took place three days before the Shang-szŭ Festival (April 12) 上巳節 in 1763. Another poem in the same work entitled "Written on a Wall in a Wine Party on the River Bank, also in Condolence on the Death of Hsüeh-ch'in" can be dated 1764. Besides, Tun Min's brother, Tun Ch'eng 敦誠, also a friend of Ts'ao Chan, had a poem in 1764 entitled "Condolence on Hsüeh-ch'in," of which the last line says,

"Hsü-chiu Sheng-ch'u Shang Chiu-chiung"

架酒生芻上舊垌

(With wine-soaked floss and newly-cut hay

I went to the old field beyond the wood.)

"Chiu-chiung" means "the field beyond the wood," according to the Han *Lexicon* 爾雅, not "old tomb or grave", as Hu Shih held. "Sheng-ch'u", an allusion from the "Biography of Hsü Chih 徐穉" in the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*, clearly implies condolence on a recent death. Chih-yen-chai's note was written in the 8th month 1774, over ten years after Ts'ao Chan's death. While "the last day of the year" could be easily remembered, and there seems to be no error about it, the counting of the cyclical 'stembranch' names for past years is less simple, and Chih-yen-chai apparently slipped over one year. Therefore, the date of Ts'ao Chan's death was determined as on the last day of the year *K'uei-wei* 癸未 (February 1, 1764).

Tun Ch'eng in the same poem says that Ts'ao Chan died "at the age of forty." But, according to Chou Ju-ch'ang's chronological table of the author's life,¹⁶ Ts'ao Chan would then have been deeply impressed at the age of three on hearing someone repeat a Buddhist saying, "When the tree falls, all the monkeys will be scattered," brewed

wine with albizzia at seven or eight, and started writing the novel at nineteen. Even a precocious boy would have been too young for all these.

Chang Yi-ch'ung, 張宜泉, another friend of Ts'ao Chan, under the title of "Lament Upasaka Ch'in-hsi 芹溪居士 (i.e. Ts'ao Chan)" in his poetic work¹⁷ says, "He died before the age of fifty." Since he was old enough to remember his luxurious and romantic life in the south, he must have lived till the age of forty-eight or forty-nine.¹⁸

In the spring of 1715, an Imperial Edict which decreed that Ts'ao Fu 曹頌, Ts'ao Chan's father, should succeed as a commissioner of the Imperial Textile Factories in Nanking, arrived at Ts'ao's family when the family was on the verge of bankruptcy. "Chan", meaning to soak or to be soaked, is always used in its symbolic sense: to grant great favour, to shower with Heavenly (i. e. Imperial) benevolence. It was appropriate to name a newly-born baby "Chan" in appreciation of the Emperor who saved his family from bankruptcy. So Ts'ao Chan was born in 1715 and died at the age of forty-nine.¹⁹

(4) The Site of Grand View Garden 大觀園

Nearly all the stories of *The Red Chamber Dream* take place in the Grand View Garden. But the site of the garden has puzzled all the experts on the novel.

Yüan Mei 袁枚 claimed in his *Sui-yüan Shih-hua* 隨園詩話 that the so-called Grand View Garden was the old site of his Sui Yüan. He did not see the novel himself. He just repeated what Ming I 明義 had said.

Ts'ao Fu's headquarters as Commissioner of the Imperial Textile Factories in Nanking were taken over by his successor Sui Ho-te 隋赫德 in 1728. The famous "west court" in the headquarters, built by Ts'ao Fu's father, Ts'ao Yin 曹寅, who was the leader of the men of letters in that time, was the model of the garden in the novel. The garden was referred to by the author as "at the back," insted of "to the west" of the house; and Chih-yen-chai in his comment explains that this was because the author was afraid that the mere mentioning of the word "west" might hurt "the Esquire's feeling". When the garden passed into the hand of Sui Ho-te, it was renamed "Sui Yüan 隨園" or "Garden of Sui", then next for someone surnamed Wu. Yüan Mei acquired it in 1748, and renamed it "Sui Yüan" 隋園 or "Garden of Indolence".

The author merely took the old site of Sui Yüan as the background of his "old dream".²⁰ He certainly did not copy it down exactly as it was in his novel. And, moreover, the background was colored by the wider scope of his actual life in Peiping. He sometimes telescoped events decades apart into one story as the novelists of all countries usually do.²¹

(5) The Reconstruction of the Stories of the Later Parts of the Novel

It is now well known that Ts'ao Chan did not complete his novel during his lifetime, and this "complete version", which was more or less different from the author's original plan, was first published in 1791 and revised in 1792 by Cheng Wei-yüan 程偉元, and Kao Ê 高鶚. Trememdous efforts to find out the author's original plan and then to

reconstruct the stories of the later part of the novel have been made by Hu Shih, Yü P'ing-po and others; yet not until Mr. Wu undertook it was this work thoroughly done.

Mr. Wu used Chih-yen-chai's commentary in V1 and V3, "Hao-liao Song 好了歌" and its "Interpretation" in chapter 1, the *Register Book* 卷冊 and "Twelve Songs of The Red Chamber Dream 紅樓夢十二支曲子" in chapter 5, the poetic riddles of the girls in chapter 22, the "Roster of Lovers 情榜" as he had found it and suggestions in the text, etc. He added less new material than his predecessors, yet reconstructed overall, more coherent stories of the later part.

I will now outline the stories of Mr. Wu's reconstruction showing the material and the evidence omitted, as follows.

The death of the heroine, Lin Tai-yü 林黛玉, and the marriage of Hsüeh Pao-ch'ai 薛寶釵 to the hero Pao-yü 寶玉 against his will had profoundly changed Pao-yü's attitude toward life. He was unhappy about his marriage. When Hsi-jên 襲人, his chief maid was going to be married to his friend Chiang Yü-han 蔣玉函, the actor, he set free all the bondmaids in his house, except Shê-yüeh 麝月, whom he kept on Hsi-jên's advice. After the calamity that befell the Chia House 賈府, he was among those imprisoned. The two maids, Hung-yü 紅玉 and Ch'ien-hsüeh 茜雪, who had left him earlier, now came to assist and console him and the others in prison. After being released, he was so poor that he had little food and few clothes in the winter. Chiang Yü-han and Hsi-jên now came to support and serve him and Pao-ch'ai. For a time he might have worked on a farm. Earlier his jade was "stolen by mistake", but it was later recovered by Wang Hsi-fêng 王熙鳳. The jade passed into the hands of Chên Pao-yü 甄寶玉, and at last it was returned to him by Chên. When the symbolic jade once more came into his possession, he could no longer bear the pains of his present miseries in contrast with his bygone comfortable life. In the end he quitted the mundane world.

The machinations of Wang Hsi-fêng turned into a boomerang against herself. Because of her crimes she was put in jail. Later she was released with the help of her maid Hung-yü and, possibly, the maid's husband Chia Yün 賈芸 and his friend Ni Erh, the Drunken Diamond 醉金剛倪二. The fall of the Chia House also caused Wang Hsi-fêng's henpecked husband, Chia Lien 賈璉, to take revenge on her. He first relegated her to the status of a concubine or a maidservant and made P'ing-erh 平兒 his wife. There must have been stormy quarrels between Wang Hsi-fêng and Chia Lien over such incidents as the lock of hair left by To-ku-niang 多姑娘, the suicide of Yu Erh-chieh 尤二姐, etc. In spite of her 'heroic stand', she was eventually divorced by her husband and sent back to Nanking where she soon died. Her daughter Ch'iao-chieh 巧姐, was later sold by the girl's uncle to a brothel. She was accidentally found by the grateful Liu Lao-lao, who rescued her and took her to the village where she was married to Liu's grandson, Pan-erh 板兒. Ch'iao-chieh was at last able to earn her own living by spinning and weaving on the farm.

Pao-yü's second cousin, Shih Hsiang-yün 史湘雲, was later married to Wei Jo-lan

衛若蘭。Unfortunately, possibly through an accident in the Archery Stadium, he was either incapacitated or died soon afterwards, and Hsiang-yün was unhappy for the rest of her life.²²

To put it briefly, the merits and achievements of Mr. Wu's book compared with others are too great to be discussed in detail. The above are, therefore, only samples. The position of the book in the history of "Redology 紅學" or "Hung Hsüeh", I believe, is comparable to that of Yen Jo-chü's *Shang-shu Ku-wen Shu-chêng (Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Book of History in Ancient Character* 閻若璩尚書古文疏證) in Ch'ing scholarship.

III. Items For Discussion

The book is convincing from many points of view, yet it leaves room for disagreement. To begin with, Mr. Wu did not see V1 itself at all. In his book he substituted for it some second-hand material, that of *A Collection of Chih-yen-chai's Commentaries on The Red Chamber Dream* 脂硯齋紅樓夢輯評 by Yü P'ing-po²³ which was in turn transcribed from someone else. Though Hu Shih obtained V1 in 1927, not until 1961, the same year as the publication of Mr. Wu's book, was the manuscript photographically reproduced in Taipei.²⁴

After Lin Yü-t'ang 林語堂 had carefully compared *Collection* with V1 itself, which he borrowed from Hu Shih, he said, "The material of V1 in the *Collection* is not authentic. Sometimes it makes something out of nothing. Sometimes it changes something into nothing. Sometimes it omits an entire passage. Sometimes passages of the *Chia-hsu* version (i. e. V1) are different from others, yet are regarded as the same. Sometimes the passage following the end of the preceding chapter is regarded as a general comment preceding the beginning of the following chapter. Many passages are absolutely different from the original, so the *Collection* is not suitable as a reference book for studying."²⁵ As the subtitle of Mr. Wu's book indicates, his main work was based on V1 and V3. Since the materials of V1 are erroneous, he would probably have committed certain errors or made certain omissions in his book.

Secondly, nearly all the experts on the novel, from Hu Shih onward, though different in degree, have taken for granted that the novel is an autobiography of its author. Yü P'ing-po, shortly after the publication of his *Hung-lou Meng Pien* 紅樓夢辨,²⁶ revised the autobiography theory and said, "I was confused about one thing in that book. It seemed that I did not distinguish autobiography from autobiographical literature. In other words, I did not make a distinction between history and historical fiction."²⁷ But "autobiographical literature" is an unnecessary term, for literary work contains some element of its author's experiences, although it is not common in historical fiction, nor in biography or autobiography. *The Red Chamber Dream* is fiction and is not necessarily anyone's autobiography. Nevertheless, the autobiography theory was still strongly maintained down to 1953 by Chou Ju-ch'ang. He made a tremendous effort to identify the life of the hero, Pao-yü, with that of its author,

Ts'ao Chan, but failed. Mr. Wu was evidently influenced by the controversy since 1954 in mainland China over *The Red Chamber Dream*, which refuted all of Yü's and Chou's points, certainly including their autobiography theory. Mr. Wu, however, did not discard the theory absolutely. He still made too close an identification of the hero with its author at certain points.

Thirdly, certain of Mr. Wu's explanations about the materials are not satisfactory. I will try to question them or to bring forward more satisfactory ones instead.

(1) **The Life of Ts'ao Chan**

Owing to limited materials concerning the author's life, Mr. Wu attempts to glean information about his life from Chih-yen-chai's commentary and other relevant materials plus the stories in the novel. But it is a dangerous method, since the stories in the novel are fictitious. If they preserve facts, these facts may have been transformed or telescoped, etc.

Mr. Wu was obviously more or less still under the influence of the autobiography theory. He said that Ts'ao Chan suffered from nervous breakdowns, because Pao-yü suffered from the same illness in the novel. This is less untenable. One poem of Tun Min in 1760 relates to Ts'ao Chan. The longish title says, "I have been parted from Mr. Ts'ao Ch'in-pu 曹芹圃 (i. e. Chan) for more than a year. Once incidently passing Mr. Ming Lin's house, the 'Yang-shih Hsüan', I heard someone talking loudly in the next court. Suspecting that it might be Mr. Ts'ao, I immediately made inquiries. To my great surprise, (he was there.) Wine was thereupon ordered and we talked about old things. I was moved to write these metres".²⁸ In 1762 Tun Ch'eng wrote a longish poem "The Song of Mortgaging a Wearing Sword for Wine". Its preface says, "On an early autumn morning I met Hsüeh-ch'in in the Elms Garden. It was drizzling and windy, the morning-cold pierced one's sleeves. At that time the host had not yet come out. Hsüeh-ch'in, however, was madly thirsting for wine. I thereupon untied my sword and mortgaged it for a drink. Hsüeh-ch'in was extremely pleased and wrote a long poem to thank me. Then I wrote this poem in reply to his."²⁹ From the two passages, it appears that Ts'ao Chan was an optimist, not a man always in distress, anxiety or melancholy, as the symptoms of this illness show. Even Ts'ao Chan's death at middle age was because of poverty and the death of his only son; for, according to what may be gleaned from his friends' poems, no one ever mentioned that he had nervous breakdown at all.

So far as Ts'ao Chan's love affair is concerned, Mr. Wu maintains that the tragedy of Pao-yü and Tai-yü had actually happened to the author himself.³⁰ However, he overlooked the description of K'e-ch'ing 可卿, Goddess Ching Huan's sister, in chapter 5.

"The Goddess Ching Huan then took him to a chamber where, to his astonishment, he found a girl who reminded him of Pao-chai in graciousness of manner and Tai-yü in beauty of features".

Chih-yen-chai comments on this passage, "It is unusual for a person to have these two

characteristics. Very marvellous!"³¹ Then, beside the passage where Goddess Ching Huan says that K'e-ch'ing's pet name is Ch'ien-mei 兼美, (literally, combining the best features of both,) Chih-yen-chai comments, "Marvellous! It refers to both Hsüeh (Pao-chai) and Lin (Tai-yü)".³²

The relations between Pao-yü and the Goddess K'e-ch'ing in the dream actually took place, though they were concealed, in the novel between Pao-yü and K'e-ch'ing, his nephew's wife. This has been confirmed in chapter 7. Once, Chiao Ta 焦大, the old servant in the Ning Mansion 寧府 became profane and cried in front of Chia Jung 賈蓉, Wang Hsi-fêng and Pao-yü, "Do you think that Chiao Ta is blind? He is not, I assure you. He knows who is carrying on with her younger uncle and who is crawling in ashes (meaning, adultery with one's daughter-in-law)". An anonymous black-ink commentary on the passage in VI suggests that "carrying on with her younger uncle" referred to K'e-ch'ing and Pao-yü.³³ It is obviously true.

A couplet at the end of chapter 5 of V3 in which the Goddess K'e-ch'ing gave Pao-yü the forbidden fruit, says,

"A mystic dream—with whom did he came hither?

She of all lovers from time immemorial—I alone know who she was."³⁴

Since she was praised by Ts'ao Chan as "of all lovers from time immemorial" and he "alone knew who she was", it seems that she was his unforgettable first love. On the upper margin of chapter 22, V3, a red-ink comment reads, "It is just the writer's idea to see Hsüeh (Pao-chai) and Lin (Tai-yü) as like Chên (Pao-yü) and Chia (Pao-yü)".³⁵ As we have already seen, Chên Pao-yü and Chia Pao-yü come from the same model, Hsüeh Pao-chai and Lin Tai-yü, both of whom were loved by Pao-yü would also come from the same model, i. e., Ch'in K'e-ch'ing 秦可卿, although the characters of the two girls are so different. If this be the case, then Lin Tai-yü is only partly like Ts'ao Chan's first love who had already married. She was not so passionate and pure as Lin Tai-yü when she was in love with Ts'ao Chan.

(2) The Identity of Chih-yen-chai

Chih-yen-chai, as Mr. Wu holds, was Ts'ao Hsüan's 曹宣 fourth son, whose courtesy name was Chu-chien 竹間. His name possibly was Shih 碩. He lived in the home of Ts'ao Yin, who was Ts'ao Hsüan's twin brother. One of Ts'ao Shih's brothers was Ts'ao Fu, the author's father. Ts'ao Yin looked after Ts'ao Shih and his brothers after the premature death of their father, Ts'ao Hsüan, in 1705. The two pieces of evidence are as follows:

A Manchu writer, Yu Jui 裕瑞 (1774—1834,) said in his *Tsao Chuang Hsien-pi* 棗窗閒筆: "I have seen a manuscript copy (of this novel) which contains on the upper margins of pages in every volume comments by his (the author's) father's younger brother 叔 Chih-yen-chai....."

Apart from that, it may be recalled that in the novel, on the occasion of Yüan-ch'un's 元春 visit home, she taught Pao-yü to read several books when he was still three or four years old. "Though they were nominally sister and brother, the situation was

rather like mother and son." Commenting on her teaching, Chih-yen-chai says, "The commentator had received this teaching; therefore when commenting on this sentence, he actually cried loudly: 'My late elder sister died too early! Otherwise how could I have become a good-for-nothing fellow!'" It has already been proved that the model of Yüan-ch'un was Ts'ao Yin's first daughter, married to Prince Nersu of the Border Red Banner. Therefore, after comparing with other sources, Mr. Wu holds, Chih-yen-chai could be no other than the author's uncle, Ts'ao Shih.³⁶

But we have two problems yet to be tackled.

Firstly, Ts'ao Shih was Ts'ao Yin's nephew, so Yin's daughter would be Shih's cousin, not his sister. According to the Chinese custom which gives precise attention to the names of family relationships, if one calls someone his late sister (Hsien-chieh 先姐), she is his real sister, and even though two people live and grow up together, one can not refer to the other as his late sister if she is really his cousin. Therefore, if Chih-yen-chai was Ts'ao Shih, then his late sister would be someone else, not Ts'ao Yin's daughter.

Secondly, on page 9, volume 10 of Chang Yün-chang's *Pu-ts'un Shih-chi* 張雲章樸村詩集, the last line of a poem, entitled "Hearing Ts'ao Li-hsien 曹荔軒 (i.e. Yin) has been presented with a grandson etc.", says,

"The traditional ink-slab will be passed among the guests to be appreciated".

In *Twelve Kinds of Lien-t'ing* 楨亭十二種 by Ts'ao Yin, it is recorded, "The red-fibre stone ink-slab was the first stone in the world. Its rough-fibre can sometimes make the ink shine." It says further that the ink-slab is more appropriate to red-ink.³⁷ Thus, we know that Ts'ao Yin had such an ink-slab as his treasure. Later on, it was handed down to the hand of Rouge Ink-slab Study (i.e. Chih-yen-chai). But who was the fortunate one who obtained the treasure? After Yin's only son, Ts'ao Yung 曹頤, died at the age of twenty-seven, the most probable one would be Ts'ao Fu, the heir to Yung and Yung's son, if had any.

In 1715, the year of Yung's death and Fu's appointment as the heir to Yung, Ts'ao Fu sent a memorial to the Throne in gratitude. It reads, "Your servant's elder brother's wife, maiden name Ma 馬氏, has now been with child for seven months.....If she is fortunate enough to bear a son, your servant's elder brother will thus have a successor." From 1709 to 1715, there was no record of the death of a grandson in Ts'ao Yin's family. So the child was alive.³⁸ If he was a boy, there is at least a possibility that he was Chih-yen-chai. All in all, the Ts'aos were a big family, and there were many boys who could qualify as Chih-yen-chai. Unless new evidences are brought forward, the identity of Chih-yen-chai cannot be absolutely ascertained.

(3) The Problems of the Last Forty Chapters of the Novel

Since Hu Shih, all the experts on the novel have believed that the last forty chapters were appended by Kao Ê. Although in 1958 Lin Yü-t'ang wrote a longish article to refute the assertion, he was not very successful. Mr. Wu said in the book

that almost all the forty chapters were written by Kao Ê; and even if he obtained any of Ts'ao Chan's fragmental manuscripts, these manuscripts can hardly be regarded as Ts'ao Chan's work any more than Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* can be regarded as Shakespeare's work.³⁹ They were entirely rewritten. For instance, in the early part of the novel, when Pao-yü visited Tai-yü's living quarters once in the spring-time, the beautiful quiet surroundings are described in a couplet: "The 'phenix tails' (bamboos) were tall and luxuriant, the 'dragon's singing' (breeze in bamboos) was faintly audible".⁴⁰ Commenting on the couplet, Chih-yen-chai says, "What a contrast with another couplet in the later part: 'The fallen leaves were rustling, the cold mist was far-stretching.'⁴¹ Heartbreaking! Alas!" The couplet quoted in this comment is certainly taken from the text of a later passage describing the surroundings in which Pao-yü paid a visit to the spot in morning for Tai-yü's death which had obviously taken place after chapter 80. But this couplet is not included in Kao's versions.⁴² Again, says Mr. Wu, Kao Ê actually obtained very few of Ts'ao's manuscripts.

The main reason for this belief is that the stories in the later part of the novel, as Mr. Wu had laboriously worked out, are very different from Kao's versions.

In the introductory part of chapter 1, it says, "(The Taoist) changed the title of *A Record on a Stone* 石頭記 to *Transcribed by a Passionate Monk* 情僧錄. Later, Wu Yü-fêng 吳玉峯 gave it the title *The Red Chamber Dream*, while K'ung Mei-hsi of East Shantung named the novel *A precious Mirror for Romantic Life*. Still later, Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in studied it for ten years and revised it five times. He divided it into chapters and then composed an analytical couplet for each. He gave it yet another title, *The Twelve Beauties of Ching-ling* 金陵十二釵". Therefore, we have five titles for the novel. Though they are 'fantastic words 荒唐言',⁴³ we can be sure that at least three of them have been actually used for its drafts. The first one is *The Red Chamber Dream*. Ming I in his *Lu-yen So-ch'uang Chi* 綠煙窗集⁴⁴ wrote twenty poems on the stories of the novel. A note under the title of these poems says: "Mr. Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in has shown me *The Red Chamber Dream* which he has written, recording in great detail a romantic and luxurious life, for his ancestor was Commissioner of the Imperial Textile Factories in Nanking. The so-called Grand View Garden was the old site of the present Sui Yüan. It is a pity that his book has not been circulated yet. What I have seen is a manuscript copy". The nineteenth poem reads,

"Do not ask whether the matrimonial affinity with "Gold"

(i. e. Pao-chai) or with "Jade" (i. e. Tai-yü) will remain.

When they were together it was like a spring dream; when they
dispersed it was like vanishing smoke.

Having lost its divine spirit the "stone" (i. e. Pao-yü) has returned
to the foot of the mountain,

And even if it should speak it would all be in vain."⁴⁵

The mountain no doubt refers to "the Blue Rock Peak 青埂峯", where, according to the mythological story in chapter 1, the "stone" roved about and talked to the Buddhist

and Taoist priests during its pre-incarnation existence. It betrays that in this early draft the "stone" was back to where it had been before it was sent down to the mundane world by the immortal priests. This ending is not found in the 80-chapter version annotated by Chih-yen-chai. Nor does Chih-yen-chai in his commentary ever mention the return of the "stone" to the celestial mountain. And the story referred to in the sixth poem definitely can not be identified in V3, nor in Kao's versions.⁴⁶ As for the other poems, the arrangement of the stories is slightly different from the present 120-chapter versions. Therefore, we can see that the draft of *The Red Chamber Dream* seen by Ming I was different, yet a complete one.

On the upper margin of "*A Precious Mirror for Romantic Life*" quoted above, Chih-yen-chai comments, "Hsüeh-ch'in had formerly written a book entitled *A Precious Mirror for Romantic Life* prefaced by his younger brother T'ang-ts'un", as quoted above also. Thus, *A Precious Mirror &c* was another and earlier name of a draft of the novel, but some time later than the one seen by Ming I. T'ang-ts'un's preface to chapter 42 of V3 says, "Now as this book has come to its thirty-eighth chapter, it is already more than one-third completed, therefore (the author) wrote this chapter in order to.....". Whereas chapter 38 in *A Precious Mirror &c* prefaced by T'ang-ts'un, is equal to chapter 42 in V3, *A Precious Mirror &c* is a shorter and therefore different version of the novel.

What was annotated by Chih-yen-chai are versions later than *A Precious Mirror &c*. But it can not be said to be any given version; for as Ts'ao Chan wrote the novel, Chih-yen-chai commented on it, and Ts'ao Chan was always changing the plan of the novel. This has been proved above since many of the plots of *The Red Chamber Dream* version seen by Ming I cannot be found either in V3 or in Kao's versions.

According to Mr. Wu, in the earlier plan of Ts'ao Chan, Ch'in K'e-ch'ing hanged herself because her adultery with her father-in-law, Chia Chen 賈珍, was discovered. Because the real story happened in Ts'ao's family, he removed it and had her die in bed. This led inevitably to a revision of his whole plan for the novel, and left some discrepancies and inconsistencies in it. The most obvious one is that Ts'ao Chan put the words said by Yüan-ch'un when she was dying to her mother in the mouth of K'e-ch'ing, while the last three lines of the "Songs of The Red Chamber Dream," meant for Yüan-ch'un's, "Sorrow for the Uncertainty of Life 恨無常", still reads,

"Hence she had to find and to tell her parents in a dream;
Your child life has now gone to the Yellow Spring.
You must find a retreat and retire there in good time".

And, in the *Register Book*, Ch'in K'e-ch'ing's picture also remains unchanged "a beautiful woman hangs herself in a high tower", which is incompatible with the other part of the story. It betrays the fact that Ts'ao Chan often changed his plan even during the period between pre-1754 and 1764, the date of his death, and had little or no regard for the inconsistencies in the clues to the stories of the novel. Could he not have changed his plan after he had shown it to Chih-yen-chai and made Pao-yü take

the Imperial Examination and inserted the recovery of Chia House, etc., even though Chih-yen-chai did not rewrite his commentary according to Ts'ao Chan's latest plan at the same time; for most of the clues of the stories in Kao's versions are self-consistent?

Cheng Wei-yüan, publisher of the 120-chapter versions, in his preface to the 1791 version says, "For many years, I had searched for them (i. e. the manuscripts of the lost later part of the novel) from collectors of books to waste-paper baskets, yet I was only able to assemble some twenty odd chapters. Then, quite accidentally, one day I obtained ten more chapters from a drum-beating vendor, and I paid a great sum for them. In perusing them with pleasure I found that the different stages of development of the stories in these chapters could on the whole be dovetailed into those chapters that I had previously collected; but the manuscripts were damaged beyond repair. With the help of a friend (i. e. Kao Ê), I have carefully rearranged the material and discarded part of it, by cutting off the long to make good the short (chapters) 細加釐剔, 截長補短; we now retranscribe the whole for printing, so that all lovers (of the novel) may enjoy reading it". Almost all of the experts, including Mr. Wu, have assumed that Cheng was lying because the versions annotated by Chih-yen-chai do not go beyond the eightieth chapter. Ts'ao Chan had written the ending of all stories in his earlier draft seen by Ming I. Besides the nineteenth poem quoted on page 145, the twentieth reads,

"Feeding gold and cooking jade did not last many springs.

The prince was so thin and emaciated that his bones were uncovered.

The younger girls with rouge-and-powder have gone to unknown destinations;

He should be ashamed (when compared with)the ancient Shih Chi-lun."⁴⁷

This indicates that after the ruin of the Jung Mansion, Pao-yü suffered extreme poverty. This story was also known by Chih-yen-chai who commented, "In the cold winter (Pao-yü) swallowed pickled vegetables. In the snowy night (he) had only a tattered rug to wrap himself in".⁴⁸

The stories from Ming I's poems are mostly contained in the first eighty chapters of the 120-chapter versions except for the sixth and the last two. But this does not necessarily imply that Ming I's poems included all of the stories of *The Red Chamber Dream* that he saw. Cheng obtained some fragments of this draft which certainly did not consist of all of the stories of the draft. For example, the story of the twentieth poem was lost in the meantime. Thus, with Kao Ê, he "carefully arranged the material and discarded part of it, by cutting off the long to make good the short (chapters)". This point was demonstrated in the nineteenth of Ming I's poems quoted on page 145, which reveals the tragic ending of Pao-yü's love affair with Tai-yü.

There are residues of chapters 27 and 29 of V3 that show Wang Hsi-fêng has two daughters, named Ta-chieh-erh 大姐兒 and Chiao-chieh. But Ts'ao Chan made the two daughters one, i. e., Chiao-chieh, in the later versions annotated by Chih-yen-chai. In

the last 40 chapters of the 120-chapter versions, Chiao-chieh's age "suddenly increases and suddenly decreases 暴長暴縮"⁴⁹. It is evident then the two daughters were turned into one by somebody. If Kao Ê was the writer of the later part of the novel, how is it possible that he did not even realize the character's age could not "suddenly increase and suddenly decrease"? Apart from that, the name of Ta-chieh-erh is found in chapter 101 of the 120-chapter versions. If Kao Ê was the writer of this part, he certainly based his story on Chih-yen-chai's versions; otherwise, how could he possibly know the name Ta-chieh-erh? One is therefore compelled to conclude that the later parts of the 120-chapter versions, at least the part mentioned above, were from the draft prior to those annotated by Chih-yen-chai.

Chao Kan 趙譚 in his "The Situations of Kao Ê's Interpolation in the Last Forty Chapters of *The Red Chamber Dream* 高鶚整理紅樓夢後四十回的情形"⁵⁰ carefully compared the 1791 version and the 1792 version both of which were published by Cheng and Kao and found out that Kao Ê made many mistakes that could not possibly happen to a writer any way. These fall into three groups, but only two of them are useful to us. Firstly, the contradictions and mistakes of the 1791 version still remain uncorrected in the 1792 version. For instance, in the later part of chapter 88, it relates that Chia Chen, the householder of the Ning Mansion, runs the daily affairs of the Jung Mansion 榮府. Because there is no beginning nor end to the passages, these passages originally were in chapter 95 and, according to Chao, were misplaced by Kao Ê. This mistake remained uncorrected in the 1792 version, which is impossible if he was the writer.

Secondly, the text of the 1791 version is obscure throughout, but it was changed mistakenly in the 1792 version. For instance, in chapter 101 of the 1791 version, after Wang Hsi-fêng saw the apparition of Ch'in K'e-ch'ing, it states, "(She) hurried home with her two maids. Chia Lien had already come back, and seeing her face was changed and not as usual, he wanted to ask her why. Yet, knowing her habit, he did not dare to ask immediately and therefore only went straight to his bed". Because there is only one word "T'a 他" for the third person in Chinese, and because Kao Ê failed to grasp the sentences, he mistook "he" for "she" and added "Wang Hsi-fêng" preceding "seeing him....." to make the sentence more clear in the 1792 version. Therefore it reads in the 1792 version, "(She) hurried home with her two maids. Chia Lien had already come back. When Wang Hsi-fêng saw his face was changed, and not as usual, she wanted to ask him why. Yet, knowing his habit, she did not dare to ask immediately and therefore only went straight to her bed". It is obvious that it was Wang Hsi-fêng's face that changed after she had seen the apparition of Ch'in K'e-ch'ing. Why should Chia Lien's face change without having seen any apparition at all? This also betrays the fact that Kao Ê is a reviser; a careless reviser, not the writer.

IV. Conclusion

"Redclogy," like Shakespearian scholarship in English speaking countries, is re-

search into the problems concerned with superior literary work. Shakespearian scholarship, however, has taken two distinct directions. One is investigation into Shakespeare the man. The other is study of the works of Shakespeare from the viewpoint of literary criticism. These two studies certainly have interconnections, but they can not be substituted for each other. Studying the versions, commentators, author, etc. of *The Red Chamber Dream*, as the term "Redology" is taken to mean by the public, is interesting to "Li-shih-p'i 歷史癖" men or those who "love historical study",⁵¹ and more or less helpful in understanding the superior literary work itself. Nevertheless, it is not literary criticism which is more important, for *The Red Chamber Dream* is, in essence, a literary work,

Mr. Wu's book has broken away a little from the bondage of "Redology," and entered into the sphere of literary criticism at certain points, e.g., the last chapter, "A Critique of the Supplement". But his main themes are still the old themes of "Redology," though he has discovered more concise and more satisfactory solutions. Now that we have such a sound book as a firm foundation, we hope that the publication of studies on *The Red Chamber Dream* from the literary criticism point of view will not be delayed too far into the future.

NOTES

1. Yü P'ing-po, *Researches into The Red Chamber Dream* (Tang-ti Press, Shanghai, 1952), p. 2.
2. Cf. I Su *The Bibliographical Notes on The Red Chamber Dream* 一粟紅樓夢書錄 (Classical Literature Press, Shanghai, 1958).
3. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *On The Red Chamber Dream* (Oxford University Press, England, 1961), Foreword, p. vii.
4. Hu Shih doubted its authenticity. Cf. "The Riddle of the So-called Little Portrait of Ts'ao Hsüeh-chin 所謂曹雪芹小象的謎", *New Age* 新時代, Vol. I, No. 4 (Taipei, 1961).
5. *Op. cit.*, Note 1.
6. Chou Ju-ch'ang, *New Studies on The Red Chamber Dream*, (Tang-ti Press, Shanghai, 1953).
7. Hu Shih, *Studies of The Red Chamber Dream* (1921) in the Ya-tung T'u-shu Kuan ed. of *The Red Chamber Dream*, pp. 1-94.
8. The transcribed copy of the Ch'ien-lung *chia-hsu* 乾隆甲戌 (1754) "Chih-yen-chai Twice Annotated Version" in sixteen chapters (chs. 1-8, 13-16, 25-28) in Hu Shih's collection. It together with V3, V5 should read "version one", "version three", "version five". These abbreviations will be used throughout this article. The date "*Chia-hsu*" was erroneously styled by Hu Shih. It is a version sometime after 1774. Cf. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 20-21.
9. The transcribed copy of Ch'ien-lung *Keng-ch'en* 乾隆庚辰 (1760) "Chih-yen-chai Four Times Read and Annotated" version in seventy-eight chapters (chs. 1-63, 65-66, 68-80) in the Peking University Library. The date "*Keng-ch'en*" was also erroneously styled by Hu Shih. Its right date will be discussed below. Cf.

- Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 23-33.
10. Chih-yen-chai is the commentator's pseudonym. Mr. Wu spells it as Chih-yen Chai, but this spelling can easily be mistaken as the commentator's real name—Chih-yen is his given name and Chai his surname, if according to western custom.
 11. Cf. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 22-30.
 12. *Ibid.* p. 30.
 13. 風月繁華記盛時，欲將寶鑑警頑痴，棠村小序分明在，紅學專家苦未知。
 14. That is, the author of the novel, Ts'ao Chan.
 15. Cf. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 63~72. V5 is the Ch'i Liao-sheng 戚寥生 (1732-92) preface version in eighty chapters reproduced by Yu-chen Book Co., Shanghai.
 16. Cf. Chou Ju-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 205~495.
 17. Chang Yi-ch'un, *Ch'un-liau T'ang Shih-kao* 春柳堂詩稿 (reproduced by the Classical Literature Press, Peiping, 1955).
 18. Cf. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 103~113.
 19. *Ibid.* pp. 117~118.
 20. A line of Tun Min's poem dedicated to Ts'ao Chan in 1761 says, "For in his old dream of Ch'in-huai he still remembers the glory and luxury there 秦淮舊夢憶繁華".
 21. Cf. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 137~44.
 22. *Ibid.* pp. 169~184, pp. 335~337.
 23. Yü P'ing-po, *A Collection of Chih-yen-chai's Commentaries on The Red Chamber Dream* (Wen-i Lien-ko Press, Shanghai, 1954).
 24. *Ch'ien-lung Chia-hsu Pen Chih-yen-chai Ch'ung-p'ing Shih-t'ou Chi* 乾隆甲戌本脂硯齋重評石頭記 (hereafter abbr. V1) (The Commercial Press, Ltd., Taipei, 1961).
 25. Lin Yü-t'ang "Re-opening the Question of Authorship of *Red Chamber Dream* 平心論高鶻", *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, Vol. XXIX 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊第二十九本 (Taipei, 1959), p. 322.
 26. Yü P'ing-po, *Hung-lou Men Pien* (The Author's Press, Peiping, 1955).
 27. "A Revision of *Hung-lou Meng Pien* 紅樓夢辨的修正", *The Modern Review* 現代評論, Vol. I, No. 9 (National Peking University, Peiping, 1925), p. 14.
 28. *Mao-chai Shih-ch'ao* 懋齋詩鈔, pp. 39~40, and Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* p. 128.
 29. *Szu-sung T'ang Chi* 四松堂集, p. 15a-b, and Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 128~129.
 30. Cf. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 120~121.
 31. VI, p. 78.
 32. *Ibid.* p. 79.
 33. *Ibid.* p. 111.
 34. 一場幽夢同誰近，千古情人獨我痴，Mr. Wu amended the last character 痴 by 知。
 35. 將薛林作甄玉賈玉看(書)則不失著書人本旨矣，The character 書 is superfluous.
 36. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 97~102.
 37. Cf. Chao Kan, "Chih-yen-chai and *The Red Chamber Dream* 脂硯齋與紅樓夢", *The Continent Magazine*, 大陸雜誌, vol. XX, No. 3 (Taipei, 1960), p. 25.

38. *Ibid.* p. 25.
39. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* p. 344.
40. 鳳尾森森，龍吟細細。
41. 落葉蕭蕭，寒烟漠漠。
42. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 170~171.
43. Ts'ao Chan composed a verse to introduce his novel in chapter 1. It reads,
 "Filling these pages are 'fantastic words'.
 (Written with) a handful of hot bitter tears.
 All (those who read them) could say, the writer is crazy.
 But who would understand the taste in them?"
44. Photo-lithographic Reproduction by Classical Literature Press, Peiping, 1955.
45. 莫問金姻與玉緣，衆如春夢散如烟，石歸山下無靈氣，總（縱）使能言也枉然。
46. Wu Shih-ch'ang, *op. cit.* pp. 222~224. The sixth poem runs, "晚歸薄醉帽顏欹，錯認猓兒喚玉狸，忽向內庭聞語笑，強來撥下一回嬉"。
47. 饌玉炊金未幾春，王孫瘦損骨嶙峋，青娥紅粉歸何處，慚愧當年石季倫。
48. 寒夜噓酸薑，雪夜圍破甌。
49. Yü P'ing-po, *op. cit.* Note 1, p.
50. *The Democratic Review* 民主評論, Vol. XI, No. 6 (Hong Kong, 1960), pp. 19~22.
51. For example, Hu Shih.

吳世昌著英文本紅樓夢探源介評

陳 文 華

紅樓夢探源，一九六一年英國出版。書分五部分：稿本探源，註者探源，作者探源，小說探源及高作探源。

一九五四年大陸上經紅樓夢討論之後，出版有關曹雪芹及紅樓夢的材料甚多，吳世昌收羅新舊材料，用嚴密的清學考證的方法加以整理，所獲甚多。吳書之優點，舉其要者計有：①脂甲本及脂丙本（即胡適所稱的甲戌本及庚辰本）之精細分析。②棠村序文的發現。③曹霑生卒年之確定。④大觀園所在地之考證。

但吳因始終沒有見到脂甲本原本，又沒有完全脫離自傳說的羈絆，材料之解釋也不免疏忽，故仍有可商討之餘地，如①曹霑之生平有兩點——即憂鬱症及婚事——不能與書中的寶玉相比附；②脂硯齋不必然是“曹碩”——曹頌四弟，曹霑之叔；③後四十回也未必然是高鶚的補作。

吳書大體看，可說是集考證紅樓夢之大成。但紅樓夢終究是文學作品，深盼有人繼起，進一步對紅樓夢作全盤地文學批評的工作。