THE PROTOTYPES OF MONKEY (HSI YU CHI)

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In this discussion the first problem I want to raise is about the possible existence of a Ming edition of the novel ‘Four Pilgrimages’. Then, I wish to challenge the late Dr. Hu Shih’s verdict, which can be found in his article \textit{Pa Ssū Yu Chi Pên Ti Hsi Yu Chi Chuan} (‘A Colophon to the Pilgrimage to the West in the Four Pilgrimages’) \textsuperscript{1).}

The Chinese title of the ‘Four Pilgrimages’ is \textit{Ssū Yu Chi 四遊記}, which I rendered elsewhere as ‘The Four Travels’ \textsuperscript{2) and Mr. and Mrs. Yang Hsien-yi have translated in \textit{A Brief History of Chinese Fiction} \textsuperscript{3) as ‘The Four Romances of Wandering Saints’. The book consists of four super-natural stories. The first, \textit{Tung Yu Chi 東遊記}, tells of the Eight Saints; the second, \textit{Nan Yu Chi 南遊記}, of Prince Hua-kuang 華光; the third, \textit{Pei Yu Chi 北遊記}, of the Dark God Chên-wu 真武; and the fourth, \textit{Hsi Yu Chi 西遊記} is similar in plot to Wu Ch'eng-ên's 吳承恩 novel of the same Chinese title to which Mr. Arthur Waley has given the English name ‘Monkey’. These four stories are not long, and rather like modern novelettes. They are nevertheless each divided into either chapters 章 or ‘items’ 則. I think that they were all early story-tellers’ prompt-books which have probably been in circulation ever since the early Ming.

\textsuperscript{1) This colophon was written in 1931. It appeared first in \textit{Hu Shih Lun Hsüeh Chin Chu} 胡適論學近著. It is reprinted in ‘The Collected Works of Hu Shih’ 胡適文存, re-edited and published in Taipei, 1953.


Among these four novels, 'The Eight Saints' exists in a Ming edition which was printed by the Yu family of Chien-yang and is now preserved in the Japanese Cabinet Library, as recorded in Professor Sun K'ai-ti's Jih Pên Tung Ching So Chien Chung Kuo Hsiao Shuo Shu Mu 日本東京所見中國小說書目, p. 114 1). Thirty years ago when he visited Japan he had, of course, no knowledge of the fact that Ming editions of 'Prince Hua-kuang' and 'The Dark God Chên-wu' also existed in far-off London. It is only in recent years that Miss Liu Hsiu-yeh 劉修業 discovered them 2). Now, I have also found (in the British Museum) a fragmentary Ming edition of 'The Eight Saints' 3). Thus the Ming editions of three of the four novels have been accounted for, while no Ming edition of 'The Pilgrimage to the West' of the 'Four Pilgrimages' has yet been found.

Professor Sun K'ai-ti thought that the last novel is an abridged version of Wu Ch'êng-ên's 100-chapter 'Monkey'. He also regarded the 'T'ang Tripitaka Master's Pilgrimage to the West 唐三藏西遊釋厄傳, printed during the Wan-li reign of the Ming (1573-1619), and inscribed as being compiled by Chu Ting-ch'en 朱鼎臣, as a book so abridged (Chung Kuo T'ung Su Hsiao Shuo Shu Mu 中國通俗小說書目, p. 166 and 'Tokyo', p. 144); but he did not go deeply into these problems.

In his 'Colophon to the Pilgrimage to the West of the Four Pilgrimages', Hu Shih branded 'The Four Pilgrimages' merely as books which some book traders in the early nineteenth century made up and sold for profit, because he had only seen the 1811

1) Shanghai, 1933. Hereafter abbreviated as 'Tokyo'.
2) In her Ku Tien Hsiao Shuo Hsi Ch'üi Ts'ung K'ao 古典小說戲曲叢考, pp. 87-88, Peking, 1938. I saw these two books in the British Museum in 1957, but Miss Liu had discovered them, I believe, long before me.