The Changing Image of a Popular Hero: Hsüeh Jen-kuei in History and in Literature

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Hsüeh Jen-kuei 薛仁貴 is a familiar name in Chinese popular literature. He was a great general serving under the "true emperor" (chen-ming t'ien-tzu 眞命天子), T'ang T'ai-tsung 唐太宗 (r. 627-649). When he first appears, the heroes who helped to put Emperor Tai-tsung upon the throne—Ch'in Shu-pao 秦叔寶, Yü-ch'ih Ching-te 尉遲敬德, Ch'eng Yao-chin 程咬金, etc.—are all old;[1] the responsibility of guarding the royal family of the T'ang then falls upon his shoulders. He is a man distinguished for his prowess and bravery: he achieves great military successes during the eastern expedition against Korea. In battle he always dresses himself in white armor and is known as "the young warrior in white" (pai-p'ao hsiao-chiang 白袍小將). His legendary life has provided source material and inspiration for storytellers and writers of all literary genres ever since the Sung. But strangely enough, though Hsüeh Jen-kuei plays so important a role in popular literature, he has received little serious attention from scholars.[2] A full-scale treatment of the literary works about him has never been attempted before. The present study tries to make a start in this direction: it attempts to trace the gradual growth of the story of Hsüeh Jen-kuei as it evolves through various literary genres, with a view to examining how the image of a hero develops and changes in the hands of popular story writers. The discussion begins with Hsüeh's official biographies in history, and proceeds to deal with the versions of his story in narrative and dramatic forms. In so doing, we will be able to see the full progression of a historical personage being gradually molded into a popular hero who reflects certain values and preoccupations shared by the Chinese people.

I

Like many other heroes in Chinese popular literature, Hsüeh Jen-kuei is not entirely a fictitious character; he has his origin in history. The image of Hsüeh as manifested in history is certainly not the same as the ones featured in popular literature. Changes and rearrangements must have been made as popular story writers drew material from history for their purposes. Therefore, we must first examine history and take a look at the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei as shown there.

Hsüeh's official biography in the *Chiu T'ang-shu* 舊唐書, *Chüan* 83,[3] is the earliest document about him. At the beginning of the biography, Hsüeh's pre-military life is briefly introduced: he was a resident of Chiang-chou 絳州, born approximately in the late Sui;[4] he joined the vanguard under the command of Chang Shih-kuei 張士貴 and gained a small fame for his rescue of a general called Liu Chun-ang 劉君昂. This brief account is followed by a much longer description of his first meeting with Emperor T'ai-tsung:

> Jen-kuei was confident of his own bravery and desirous of gaining extraordinary military achievements. He therefore distinguished himself by being deliberately dressed in white. With the quiver on his waist and the bow ready for use, he held his two-pronged spear and rushed shouting to the enemy camp before anyone else. The enemy, unable to resist him, ran away. The army took the chance to follow him, and completely routed the enemy. Seeing him from a distance, T'ai-tsung sent a messenger to ask who the man of the vanguard in white was. He was introduced to the Emperor. . . . As the army retreated, T'ai-tsung said to Jen-kuei, "All my generals are old now; they are unable to take the responsibility of national defense. I am constantly thinking of selecting brave men to replace them, but I have never seen anyone as brave as you. I do not care to take Korea in my possession; I am delighted to have you."[5]

> 仁貴自恃驍勇，欲立奇功，乃異其服色，著白衣，握戟，腰鞬張弓，大呼先入，所向無前，賊壘披靡却走，大軍乘之，賊乃大潰，太宗遙望見之遣馳問先鋒白衣者爲誰，特引見……及軍還，太宗謂曰「朕舍將並老，不堪受閫外之寄，每欲抽擢驍雄，莫如卿者，朕不喜得遼東，喜得卿也。」

This passage is important in that it not only shows Hsüeh Jen-kuei's

remarkable performance in the battlefield but also reveals his enthusiasm for fame and status. His dress, his weapons, and his way of fighting are, to be sure, impressive. No wonder Emperor T'ai-tsung, regretting that all his generals were old and useless, displayed his unbounded delight when he saw such a young warrior. But what drives Hsüeh to act in so impressive a way is his strong desire to gain fame and status: he is a man "confident of his own bravery and desirous of extraordinary military achievements." He seems to know what he has and what he is aiming at. He tries his best to make use of the former to achieve the latter. This is why he joined the army, "distinguished himself by being deliberately dressed in white," and "rushed shouting to the enemy camp before anyone else." Only in this way can he make himself a conspicuous object which eventually catches the Emperor's eye—even from a distance.

Hsüeh's confidence in himself is on good grounds: he possesses outstanding physical strength and is skillful in archery. Emperor Kao-tsung 唐高宗 (r. 650-684) once conducted a test to see how good Hsüeh was at archery, and the result made "Kao-tsung greatly surprised" (高宗大驚).[6] Before such weapons as guns or cannons were invented, the feat Hsüeh demonstrated definitely played a decisive role on the battlefield. In a war with the tribes of T'u-chüeh 突厥 in T'ien-shan 天山, Hsüeh shot three arrows at the enemy and killed three warriors. The enemy were scared and "dismounted from their horses, begging to surrender themselves" (下馬請降).[7] Widespread among the army was a song celebrating this incident:

> Shooting three arrows, the general conquers the enemy
> in T'ien-shan;
> Singing songs along the way, the soldiers march back
> to their native land.[8]
> 將軍三箭定天山，戰士長歌入漢關。

Hsüeh's prowess and bravery can be counted upon not only in the battlefield but also in critical situations. Emperor Kao-tsung once resided at the Wan-nien Palace 萬年宮. During the night, floods rushed down from the adjacent mountains and endangered the Palace. All ministers and guards ran away to protect themselves except Hsüeh who risked his life to go to the gate of the Palace and shout at the top of his voice, warning the emperor of

the coming floods. Emperor Kao-tsung, who was eventually saved owing to Hsüeh's brave act, said to him in gratitude, "But for your shouting, I would have been drowned. Now I know that I really have a loyal minister" (賴得卿呼，方免淪溺，始知有忠臣也).[9]

There is also a biography of Hsüeh in the *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書, *Chüan* 111.[10] This seems to be a fuller biography because it includes two important pieces of information unrecorded in the *Chiu T'ang-shu.* First, Hsüeh's pre-military life is much more adequately rendered. He was poor when young, and had a wife with the maiden name Liu 柳. He worked hard as a farmer, longing to earn enough money to move the remains of his deceased parents from a shabby tomb to a decent burial place. His wife, however, urged him to leave this job behind and to join the army so that someday he might "return home with wealth and status" (衣錦還鄉).[11] This background material provides the retionale for Hsüeh's enthusiasm for fame and status, which we have pointed out before. His own, and especially his wife's, dissatisfactions with the poor and humble way of living make him venture on a pursuit for fame and status. Emperor T'ai-tsung's eastern expedition becomes his biggest chance; he would not lose it—not even for the sake of filial piety. Second, Hsüeh's shortcomings in character are revealed. During a war in T'ien-shan against the tribes of T'ieh-le 鐵勒, Hsüeh is recorded to have "grasped women from his subordinates as his concubines, and accepted plenty of bribes" (取所部爲妾，多納賕遺).[12] Hsüeh's misdeeds were reported by Yang Te-i 楊德裔, an official in charge of governmental discipline (Szu-hsien tai-fu 司憲大夫) to Emperor Kao-tsung who, in view of Hsüeh's great military achievements, did not punish him. Part of Yang's report is kept in Szu-ma Kuang's 司馬光 *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 資治通鑑 in which Hsüeh is described as a man "indulgent in greed and lechery" (貪淫自恣).[13]

The image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei in history, as demonstrated above, is clearly a composite one. He has merits and demerits. On the one hand, he is a warrior of prodigious prowess and bravery, perfectly desired by the emperor; on the other, he has flaws in character, and serious ones at that. We may say that though he is a hero, he is also a man. As a hero, he commands our admiration with his extraordinary performances in the battlefield; as a man, he errs as every human being does. In a word, he is a hero with human frailties.

Heroes like Hsüeh must abound in history—Su Ting-fang 蘇定方,

Hsüeh Wan-ch'e 薛萬徹, Liu Jen-kuei 劉仁軌,[14] to name only a few Hsüeh's contemporaries. What makes Hsüeh so special as to draw continuously the attentions of popular story writers while the others are ignored by them? Or why does he, instead of the others, stay so persistently in popular imagination? The answer to this question lies perhaps in certain qualities which Hsüeh possesses alone or in great amount.

From Hsüeh's official biographies, we can immediately detect in him two remarkable qualities: bravery and loyalty. Brave generals (yüng-chiang 勇將) and loyal ministers (chung-chien 忠臣) are two types of courtiers especially favored by the Chinese people. Emperor T'ai-tsung has expressed his admiration for Hsüeh's bravery, and Emperor Kao-tsung has praised him as a true loyal minister. The words from the two emperors adequately testify to Hsüeh's possession of the qualities highly cherished by the people. But it is primarily from Hsüeh's own deeds that one gets the impression that Hsüeh is qualified both as a brave general and as a loyal minister.

First, bravery. Hsüeh's performance in the battlefield really makes an impressive show. He always rides ahead of his fellow soldiers and combats with the enemy singlehanded. We have seen that in a campaign "he held his two-pronged spear and rushed shouting to the enemy camp before anyone else." Emperor T'ai-tsung was deeply impressed by this performance and heaped upon him titles and rewards. In later campaigns, he never failed to do the same again: "Riding on a horse, Jen-kuei entered first, and the enemy fell incessantly as he shot arrows" (仁貴匹馬先入，莫不應弦而倒); "Jen-kuei rode alone charging directly ahead" (仁貴單騎直往衝之), and "[Jen-kuei] went in the front of the army, and when an enemy host came to resist, he charged forward and routed them" (遂先鋒而行，賊衆來拒，逆擊大破之).[15] This manifest bravery must have cut a strong figure in popular imagination.

Second, loyalty. Though Hsüeh is brave, he is not infallible in the battlefield. If he had always won, Emperor T'ai-tsung's eastern expedition would not have ended in futility. He is infallible in that he is always loyal to the emperors and never fails to serve his country whenever he is needed. A great part of his lifetime is spent fighting against enemy from foreign countries or ethnic tribes in the border areas. In 681 when he was very old and in retirement, he was still ready to serve his country; Emperor Kao-tsung summoned him and said, "Now the western border is in disturbance, . . . how can you enjoy your rest in a village and not command the army for

me?" (今西邊不靜……卿豈可高枕鄉邑，不爲朕指揮耶?).[16] Hsüeh immediately led the army to the western border, and subdued the disturbance there. In this sense, Hsüeh is a national hero who brought peace and glory to his own country and for that matter would also be loved by his own people.

With these qualities, Hsüeh catches the attention of popular story writers. But with these qualities alone, Hsüeh might as well be made into a very dull character in popular literature—a powerful war machine operated at the service of the emperors. There must be something more about him which the popular story writers can elaborate in order to create an interesting and exciting story. Hsüeh definitely possesses something of this nature. We refer to his white armor, his superior skill in archery, and his abrupt rise from obscurity to distinction. It is apparent that fighters in the battlefields of T'ang times seldom wore white armor; thus Hsüeh "distinguished himself by being deliberately dressed in white." The unique and conspicuous white armor makes Hsüeh easy to be recognized and memorialized not only by Emperor T'ai-tsung but also by readers of his story. He is frequently referred to as "the young warrior in white," or "the general in white" (pai-p'ao chiang-chun 白袍將軍) in popular literature; and a Ming drama is entitled *The White Armor* (*Pai-p'ao chi* 白袍記).[17] What is more, Hsüeh's superior skill in archery is also something easy to recognize and remember. The skill has been well attested before the eyes of Emperor Kao-tsung and has displayed its full power in the campaign on T'ien-shan. It must appeal greatly to popular story writers who like to endow their characters with all kinds of magic-like equipment (fa-pao 法寶).[18] Of equal appeal to them is the contrast between Hsüeh's humble family background and his later great achievements in fame and status. Hsüeh in his early life was a very poor peasant, so much so that he was unable to decently bury his deceased parents and had to leave home to try his luck with the army. His fate changes completely for the better after he meets Emperor T'ai-tsung. Hsüeh's rise from obscurity to distinction is so abrupt and dramatic that any popular story writer will see in it a chance for elaboration.

With the above qualities and specifications, the historical Hsüeh Jen-kuei goes right into the realm of popular literature. But his composite image as shown in history, once in the hands of popular story writers, will be substantially transformed. In the following discussion, we are going to see the process of transformation as it goes through Chinese narrative and

dramatic traditions.

II

There is an account of Hsüeh's military feat in the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記,[19] a work famous for its large collection of tales and anecdotes of pre-Sung periods. The account is primarily about Hsüeh's first meeting with Emperor T'ai-tsung; it is brief and similar to what is recorded in history. Hsüeh's performance that leads to the meeting is so dramatic and impressive that it sums up Hsüeh's extraordinary prowess and bravery, and thus adequately defines him as a superb hero in battle. Little wonder that it attracts people's attention more than anything else in his career. The account is not important in itself: it does not add anything new to Hsüeh's story. It is only a literary account based on history, which shows that Hsüeh received some public recognition as early as in T'ang times.

A much fuller account of Hsüeh's career in fictional form can be found in a work entitled *Hsüeh Jen-kuei Cheng Liao shih-lüeh* 征遼事略(hereafter abbreviated as *Cheng-liao*).[20] This work of unknown authorship is written in the *p'ing-hua* 平話 genre, first published probably in the late Sung or the early Yüan.[21] It may be the earliest fictionalized treatment of Hsüeh's story that we have. The content of this book centers around the scene of Emperor T'ai-tsung's meeting with Hsüeh, supplemented by the incident of Hsüeh's conquest of T'ien-shan with three arrows. The description of the scene of meeting in history, which we have quoted above, is short and concise; to develop it into a fiction of more than forty thousand words means to add to it plenty of fictitious matter. The line of elaboration as manifested in *Cheng Liao* is clear: T'ai-tsung is a good emperor, and Hsüeh is a capable warrior; they should meet and depend upon each other; but their meeting, instead of being a lucky encounter, should be a conscious quest on both sides. As a result, the motif of quest becomes the backbone of the story in *Cheng Liao*. Three questions arise as the backbone is built up: first, why does Emperor T'ai-tsung want to search for Hsüeh? Second, why does Hsüeh want to search for Emperor T'ai-tsung? And third, what difficulties do they have to overcome in the process of their quests for each other? To answer these questions, the author of *Cheng Liao* incorporates into the story the following materials unrecorded in history:

First, Emperor T'ai-tsung has a dream in which he finds himself being chased by the fierce Korean general Ko Su-wen 葛蘇文.[22] At the most critical moment, a young warrior in white comes to his rescue. As Emperor T'ai-tsung asks the young warrior for his identity, a heavy rain suddenly falls and interrupts their conversation. Emperor T'ai-tsung falls from his horse and wakes up, hearing only the birth place of the young warrior: Hsiang-chou. This dream vision reveals, according to a dream interpreter, that the young warrior in white happens to be the Emperor's "mighty general to conquer Korea" (p'o Liao hu-chiang 破遼虎將). As Emperor T'ai-tsung has been bothered by the rebellion in Korea, he immediately sends Chang Shih-kuei to Hsiang-chou to search for the young warrior, and to recruit a vanguard for his Korean expedition.

Second, encouraged by his wife, Hsüeh Jen-kuei enlists in the vanguard, hoping to achieve fame and status. He is anxious to see Emperor T'ai-tsung—the bestower of what he aims at. Whenever he meets a person who has access to the emperor, he launches into a recital of his military exploits and asks to be introduced to the emperor. Let us listen to one of his recitals when he meets the emperor's uncle Li Tao-tsung 李道宗:

> I caught the bandit chief Tung Ta in Hsiang-chou, then I set up a tactical deployment of troops in Lo-yang, next I submitted an essay on the conquest of Korea, used tricks to cross the sea, took over the eastern coast, and seized the city of Yu-lin by first climbing up the scaling ladder—all these are my achievements. . . . I hope that your highness may recommend me to the Emperor; if I were thus favored with important works at his service, I would sacrifice my life for the sake of the country.[23]
>
> 絳州捉了混天大王董達，次洛陽擺行陣，後獻平遼論，用計過海，奪東岸，首登雲梯，攻取榆林城，皆小人之攻也……託皇叔特薦，倘或重用，某殺身報國。

Those who have heard Hsüeh's recitals of his military achievements are deeply impressed, and they promise to help him whenever they find the chance to talk to the Emperor. But they all fail to keep their promises until near the end of the story. As a result, Hsüeh feels frustrated almost throughout the whole story.

Third, Chang Shih-kuei, the commander of the vanguard, is the only obstacle that lies between Emperor T'ai-tsung and Hsüeh. He tries whatever he can, including lies and murders, to prevent the good Emperor from seeing the capable warrior. He is a mean and greedy man. First he rejects Hsüeh's

application to join the vanguard merely because of a name taboo—the word 貴 (kuei) in Hsüeh's given name is identical with one in his own. Later as he is forced by Ch'eng Yao-chin, who supervises the affair of recruiting the vanguard, to accept Hsüeh, he becomes jealous of Hsüeh's military genius and intends to claim as his own all the achievements made by Hsüeh in the battle. To such an extent does he carry out his intention that the Emperor and the commander-in-chief of the army, Yü-ch'ih Ching-te, are suspicious of Chang's ability. Yü-ch'ih undertakes the job to find the young warrior in white who, he believes, has been hidden somewhere by Chang in the vanguard. Yü-ch'ih and Chang are thus engaged in a game of hide-and-seek, in which the suspension of the story lies. Chang's wickedness is of course discovered in the long run; he is exiled by the Emperor to a far-off island.

Fourth, Hsüeh has great physical strength which may have something to do with the observation that at one meal he can eat as much as ten ordinary men. His unusual prowess supplied by food, along with his outstanding skill in archery, makes him indispensable to Emperor T'ai-tsung's eastern expedition. No one in the Emperor's army, except him, is able to shoot down the "flying daggers" (*fei-tao* 飛刀) used by the Korean general Ko Su-wen. At last, Hsüeh meets Emperor T'ai-tsung, with three arrows conquers the troop from T'ien-shan borrowed by Ko Su-wen, and forces the Korean king to ask for armistice. Ko Su-wen is arrested by Hsüeh and put to death by the Emperor. The T'ang army, with the mighty warrior Hsüeh Jen-kuei on its side, wins a complete victory in their eastern expedition.

The matters above, as we can see, are not historical facts; furthermore, some of them have even distorted historical facts. The characterization of Chang Shih-kuei is a case in point. Chang served as a retainer of Emperor T'ai-tsung as early as when the latter was still a young prince. He was involved, along with Ch'in Shu-pao, Yü-ch'ih Ching-te, and many others, in the conspiracy of killing Chien-ch'en 建成 and Yüan-chi 元吉, two of the young prince's brothers and rivals for the throne, at the Gate of Hsüan-wu 玄武門.[24] After the killing, the young prince was firmly established as the heir apparent to the throne. In consequence of this special service, Chang enjoyed a prosperous career in the court of Emperor T'ai-tsung and in that of Emperor Kao-tsung. His official biographies in both *Chiu T'ang-shu* and *Hsin T'ang-shu* show that he himself was a capable general with a praise-worthy record.[25] Nowhere can we find the trace of meanness and greediness

attributed to him by the author of *Cheng Liao*. He lived to the age of seventy; and when he died he was honored with the title of Duke of Kuo (Kuo-kuo kung 虢國公). He has certainly not been exiled by Emperor T'ai-tsung to some far-off island for his shameful persecution of Hsüeh Jen-kuei as *Cheng Liao* indicates. Chang is vilified perhaps for the simple reason that he is the commander-in-chief of the vanguard in which Hsüeh enlists; the popular story writers find him a handy instrument which can be placed between Hsüeh and the Emperor as an obstacle in their quest for each other.

The T'ien-shan incident and the outcome of Emperor T'ai-tsung's eastern expedition have also been twisted. The anachronism of the T'ien-shan incident shown in *Cheng Liao* is clear: it happened in 662 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Kao-tsung in a western expedition against the tribes of T'u-chüeh,[26] not in the reign of Emperor T'ai-tsung in his eastern expedition against Korea. Moreover, Emperor T'ai-tsung's eastern expedition, according to history, was a futile military operation. It began in February of 645 A.D. and ended in September of the same year with the retreat of the T'ang army owing to the failure to grasp the Korean city An-shih 安市.[27] The city's perseverance in resisting invasion and its strong defense totally destroyed the morale of the Emperor and his army. In *Cheng Liao*, however, the expedition is rendered as a complete military victory: Hsüeh Jen-kuei has crushed all the Korean resistance and the Korean king finally surrenders to the T'ang army.

It seems that *Cheng Liao* is merely a fabrication of purely fictitious or pseudo-historical events, with characters bearing the names of historical personages. Not quite so. In the characterization of Hsüeh Jen-kuei, *Cheng Liao* closely follows history in at least two points. First, *Cheng Liao* presents clearly Hsüeh Jen-kuei's enthusiasm for fame and status, an aspect of Hsüeh clearly revealed in his official biographies. Everything that Hsüeh says or does is concerned with his hunt for fame and status; and all the other characters function, as it were, only to delay or accelerate the completion of his pursuit. Second, *Cheng Liao* demonstrates vividly Hsüeh's heroism rendered so impressively in history. Nothing is clearer than this point as we see Hsüeh in *Cheng Liao* charging ahead of his fellow soldiers and fighting with the enemy singlehanded—exactly the thing that the historical Hsüeh Jen-kuei would like to do. The historical distortions discussed above, in effect, seem to be designed to strengthen these two points. Set against Chang Shih-kuei's greediness to claim as his own all the military achievements

Hsüeh has made, Hsüeh's enthusiasm for fame and status is heightened almost to a frantic level. The anachronism of the T'ien-shan incident and the distorted outcome of eastern expedition can be viewed as effective and intense ways to help bring out Hsüeh's heroism.

Now we can see in a better light the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei featured in the total framework of *Cheng Liao.* The framework is built on the quest of Emperor T'ai-tsung and Hsüeh Jen-kuei for each other, complicated by the intervention of Chang Shih-kuei. Hsüeh is Emperor T'ai-tsung's indispensable warrior in his eastern expedition, and Emperor T'ai-tsung is Hsüeh's "ring-giver"—this mutual dependence constitutes the motive of the quest. And the success of the quest becomes the denouement of the story. In this framework of quest, the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei as we have seen in history is simplified: only two of his aspects —his enthusiasm for fame and status, and his heroism—have been rendered clearly. He is also purified: the individuality of a man "indulgent in greed and lechery" disappears completely from him. In *Cheng Liao* he is merely shown to be a powerful hero in the battlefield and a fervent fame-and-status seeker.

The importance of *Cheng Liao* for the development of Hsüeh's story in popular literature is beyond doubt. As the earliest extant version of the story in fictionalized form, it marks for us the beginning of Hsüeh's story in popular tradition. And more importantly, it has exerted great influence on some later versions of the story. This influence can be seen clearly in a work which appeared in the Ming dynasty: *Hsin-k'an ch'uan-hsiang T'ang Hsüeh Jen-kuei k'ua-hai Cheng Liao ku-shih* 新刊全相唐薛仁貴跨海征遼故事.[28] The work is written in the form of *shuo-ch'ang ts'u-hua* 說唱詞話, a form characterized by the mixture of prose with verse for chanting or singing. The author of the work apparently had *Cheng Liao* in mind when he compiled his own work for his own purpose. Traces of influence from *Cheng Liao* can be found throughout the whole work. The story proceeds through alternating passages of prose and passages of verse in seven-syllable or ten-syllable rhythm. The passages of prose in the beginning part of the story are taken almost verbatim from *Cheng Liao,* and the incidents that constitute the story also come mostly from *Cheng Liao.* Hsüeh Jen-kuei is represented in the work, again as he is in *Cheng Liao,* as a powerful hero who tries to seek fame and status in the battlefield. This work may have importance in its own right,[29] but as far as showing the changing image of a hero is concerned, it is relatively insignificant: it offers nothing more than what we have already

seen in *Cheng Liao.* For this reason, we will not go any further to disscuss it. We give it a passing mention here only to show the influence of *Cheng Liao* on later versions of the Hsüeh story.

III

The story of Hsüeh Jen-kuei has received expressions in the *tsa-chü* genre. There are three extant plays about Hsüeh, and all of them show marked difference either in substance or in emphasis from *Cheng Liao.* Except for what has already been recorded in history, *Cheng-liao* tells us little about Hsüeh's family. But the focus of the three *tsa-chü* plays lies precisely in Hsüeh's family life. For this purpose, historical distortions have been carried to the extent that Hsüeh's parents are made to come alive on the stage. In these plays, we can still find incidents like Emperor T'ai-tsung's dream vision, Chang Shih-kuei's wickedness, and Hsüeh's conquest of T'ien-shan with three arrows, but all these have been relegated to secondary importance. What matters here is Hsüeh's relationship with his family. The emotional attachment between Hsüeh and his parents and wife shown in these plays is definitely something we have not seen in *Cheng Liao.*

The first play is *Hsüeh Jen-kuei i-chin huan-hsiang*衣錦還鄉, written by a musician called Chang Kuo-pin 張國賓 in the early Yüan.[30] The play we have now is a Yüan edition, one of the thirty oldest texts directly handed down from Yüan times. Those who are familiar with the *tsa-chü* tradition know that these thirty plays consist of nothing more than arias and a few stage cues. Most of the prose dialogues or monologues have been left out. It becomes difficult for modern readers to make out what is actually going on in the plays. Fortunately, in our case, an equivalent Ming edition under the title of *Hsüeh Jen-kuei jung-kuei ku-li* 榮歸故里 collected in Tsang Mao-hsün's 臧懋循 *Yüan-ch'ü hsüan* 元曲選,[31] gives us great help. Though Tsang has made, according to the taste of his own age, great revisions on the Yüan prints,[32] he has also provided all that is missing there. Guided by Tsang's work, we are able to understand the Yüan play to be discussed below without much difficulty.

Our first impression of the play *Hsüeh Jen-kuei i-chin huan-hsiang* is that it is charged with intense emotion aroused from Hsüeh's leaving home to join the army. In the Prologues or Wedge (*hsieh-tzu* 楔子), Hsüeh

Jen-kuei's father, Hsüeh Ta-po 薛大伯, clearly shows his loving care for his son:

> My son, you have made up your mind to go and will not stay at home. Then you may go as you like; but you have to return home early and never mind whether you secure office or not.[33]
>
> 孩子你心去意難留，你去子去，你休問得官不得官，子早回家些兒者

Hsüeh goes to the army, and for more than ten years he has lost contact with his family. After he has proved to Tu Ju-hui 杜如晦, the judge sent by the Emperor to settle the argument between Hsüeh and Chang Shih-kuei, that Chang is an imposter by winning the archery contest between them, he feels relieved and falls asleep. He dreams that he returns home and finds his parents living in poverty and, worse still, in profound sorrow for his absence from home. In an aria, his father demonstrates this profound sorrow:

> It must be that I owed you debt in my previous life;
> Every day, thinking of you, we, your parents,
> suffer great pain.[34]
>
> 也是我前世前緣，少欠你寃家債
> 逐日逐朝，思量得您爺娘害

The playwright Chang Kuo-pin is obviously more concerned with Hsüeh Ta-po's emotional reaction to his son's absence from home than with Hsüeh Jen-kuei's military achievements. The latter is briefly dealt with in Act I, while the former dominates Acts II and IV, in which Hsüeh Ta-po plays the single singing role.[35] Thus Hsüeh Ta-po's intense feeling for his son permeates these two acts through the arias he sings. Even in Act III which deals with Hsüeh's encounters on his way home, this feeling can be still palpably felt. Hsüeh comes upon a childhood playmate who tells him something about his parents:

> Crying from dusk till morning,
> And then from morning till night,
> They miss terribly Hsüeh Jen-kuei who roams away
> from home;
> Your old father and mother

Long eagerly for your return.[36]

從黃昏哭到早晨
早晨又哭到晚西
作念殺離鄉背景薛仁貴
你那一隻老爺娘
兀的正盼望殺你

But all this sorrow comes to an end as Hsüeh arrives home with high honors. When Hsüeh Ta-po sees his son again, he forgets all that he went through in the past. And the play ends with the happy reunion of the family.

The emotional attachment between Hsüeh and his family can be also found in our second play about Hsüeh: *Mo-li-chi fei-tao tui chien* 摩利支飛刀對箭.[37] The author of this play is unknown. Since Hsüeh plays the single singing role throughout the play, his feeling for his family becomes the center of interest. At first, he is not satisfied with the life of a farmer which his father has provided for him. He longs to go away from home to try his luck in the battlefield and, by so doing, to show his loyalty to the country. His parents, however, will not let him go. Hsüeh is thus in manifest conflict with his parents. Hsüeh tells his parents:

Don't keep me, your bad child, around you;
If so, you will impede my chance for fame and status.
As a man with illimitable ambition,
How can I be willing to stay in poverty at this
secluded village for life.[38]

休將你這歹孩兒留戀者
枉把我這功名來耽誤了
憑俺我這四海五湖量
我怎肯深村裡窮到老

His parents try to appeal to his sense of filial piety: his father asks him, "If you go, who will support us?" (你去了呵，可着誰人養活俺也); and his mother tells him, "When parents are still alive, you should not roam far away from them" (父母在堂，不可遠遊也).[39] It seems that here a very familiar, if not conventional, question is raised: between familial duty and loyalty to the country, how does a hero make his choice?

From this we cannot, however, jump to the conclusion that Hsüeh is

now a torn man, suffering from an inner conflict which we see so often in the tragic heroes of western drama. "On the Yüan stage," as Shih Chung-wen has aptly pointed out, "inner conflict is not a necessary or an anticipated ingredient of tragedy."[40] Reasons for this lack of inner conflict are many;[41] Ch'ien Chung-shu 錢鍾書 attributes it to the "peculiar arrangement of virtues in a hierachy" manifested in traditional Chinese society:

> Every moral value is assigned its proper place on the scale, and all substances and claims are arranged according to a strict "order of merit." Hence the conflict between two incompatible substances loses much of its sharpness, because as one of them is of higher moral value than the other, the one of lower value fights all along a losing battle.[42]

In other words, the "order of merit" enables people in traditional Chinese society to know how to behave in any given situation. Conflicts between two moral values can always be readily solved by choosing the higher one according to the hierachical "order of merit." As a result, conflicts are always perfunctory and external; they never enter the inner world of people to cause great disturbance. That is why Hsüeh is quick to make up his mind without showing any sign of inner conflict. He tells his parents. "Your son chooses to devote himself to the country, and thus will not be able to do his filial duty" (您孩子盡忠，不能盡孝也).[43] After Hsüeh has successfully conquered Korea, the Emperor offers him a high office in the court. Hsüeh makes another choice at this time also without any hesitation: he refuses to accept it, the reason being that he intends to fulfil his duty as a filial son. He informs the Emperor, "Back at home Hsüeh Jen-kuei has parents who are old and waiting for me to attend on and support; therefore I cannot accept this office" (薛仁貴家中有一雙父母，年紀高大，無人侍養，因此上不敢受這官職).[44]

Both of Hsüeh's choices, in accordance with the "order of merit," are justifiable. In the former case, he faces the situation that his country is being troubled by disturbances at the border, and his family is living in obscurity. To serve the country in crisis and to bring honor to the family, he has to, as a Chinese saying goes, "transfer filial duty to loyalty to the country" (移孝作忠). For in that particular situation the latter is a higher value than the former. But later as he has attained his goals–his country is at peace and his family is renowned for what he has done–he cannot enjoy

himself in fame and status alone, forgetting totally his filial duty; now filial duty is of higher value than self-enjoyment. For his right choices, Hsüeh is celebrated by the court of the Emperor as a man "both loyal to his country and filial to his parents" (忠孝雙全). The story ends, as in the former play, with a happy reunion of the family.

Hsüeh's wife is relatively insignificant in the former two plays; but in our third play *Hsien-ta-fu lung men yin-hsiu* 賢達婦龍門隱秀,[45] she is the most important character, played by the "female lead" (*cheng-tan* 正旦) who sings throughout the play. This play of unknown authorship begins with a fascinating romance. In the Prologue, Liu Yin-ch'un 柳迎春, the daughter of a wealthy family, relates to us a strange encounter of hers. One night when she was walking alone in the garden, she saw a white tiger lying in the house that stores hay. Looking more carefully, she found, to her great surprise, that the animal disappeared and Hsüeh Jen-kuei, a worker of her household, was lying on the place where the tiger lay. Seeing that Hsüeh slept in the cold air, she put her mantle over him. Her doing this, as she tells us, was not purely out of a sense of pity; Hsüeh's physiognomy convinced her that he was not an ordinary worker but a man with a promising future. In Act I, we find that Liu is in great trouble. Her father regards her behavior of giving things to a man of lower status as a disgrace to the family. He orders her daughter to marry Hsüeh Jen-kuei, and then drives the couple out of the household.

The romance is of course a fictitious invention; we have no idea whether it is invented by the author of this play or adopted from some sources which we do not know. Whatever its origin may be, it adds something new to the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei. Here Hsüeh is presented as a lover, though a passive and unromantic one, and is implicitly alluded to as the incarnation of the "star of white tiger" (pai-hu hsing 白虎星). These two aspects of Hsüeh will be amply elaborated in some later versions of his story; we will discuss them more fully when we come to these versions. Here we only want to call attention to the beginning of the mystification of Hsüeh's early life. Love and supernatural allusion, though rare in history and in *Cheng Liao,* are favorite subjects in popular literature. Their appearance in this play indicates that the image of the historical Hsüeh Jen-kuei gradually fades away, while a new one, more congenial to popular taste, becomes clearer and clearer.

The next three acts of the play deal with the virtuousness and perse-

verance of Hsüeh's wife Liu who encourages her husband to join the army and takes upon herself the responsibility of supporting Hsüeh's parents. She bravely proclaims, "As your wife I would work and support the family; as a man you should be loyal to the emperor and devoted to the country" (爲妻的治業成家，做男子的忠君報本).[46] She keeps her promise after her husband leaves home, and her performance wins acclaim even from the persons she supports. In a conversation with his wife, Hsüeh Ta-po says:

> Ever since our son went to join the vanguard, we have been fortunate to have the daughter-in-law wait upon us. She is really a filial daughter-in-law who gets up early in the morning and goes to bed late at night, working very hard for our livelihood in pricking mulberry leaves for feeding silk-worms and combing hemp for weaving cloth.[47]
>
> 自從孩兒投義軍去了，多虧媳婦兒，好生的孝順，採桑養蠶，緝麻織布，早起晚眠多多的辛苦

But however hard she works, she is unable to rid the family of the threat of hunger. Nothing for her is more humiliating than going back to her own home and begging for help from those who have driven her out. Yet she goes there, with the humble hope that she can borrow some rice to feed her hungry parents-in-law. What she receives are only insults cast bitterly upon her by her own brother and his wife. In a word, she works hard and suffers; but she perseveres till her husband returns with high honors. Her virtuousness is finally rewarded, and the play ends, like the former two, with a happy reunion of the fmaily.

Liu's virtuousness and perseverance testify again to the emotional attachment between Hsüeh and his family. It is even carried one step further: in the former two plays familial duty has to be temporarily suspended during the time when Hsüeh is absent from home; now this regret is made up by Liu who takes the place of Hsüeh and fulfils the familial duty for him. In this way, Hsüeh is able to serve his country without neglect of the duty for his family. He is now really a man both loyal to the country and filial to his parents.

The above three plays present a hero's family life from three different angles: the first from Hsüeh's father, the second from Hsüeh himself, and the third from his wife. All these presentations, to be sure, are innovations of the playwrights because we find nothing of this sort in history or even in

Cheng Liao. History tells us that Hsüeh's parents died before he joined the army, but it tells us little about Hsüeh's wife except that she urged him to join the army for fame and status. *Cheng Liao* closely follows history in this respect. What is more, Hsüeh's extraordinary prowess and bravery so prominently rendered in history and *Cheng Liao* are deliberately played down here in favor of the emotional attachment between Hsüeh and his family. All the three plays belong to what Henry W. Wells calls the "favorite practices" of the Chinese playwrights: tragicomedy.[48] They deal with the separation and reunion of a family. As Wells has observed: "In separation lies the deepest and most tragic pain; in reunion, the purest and most exalted joy of which human beings are capable. ... Such plays are marked throughout with a rare sincerity and emotional warmth."[49] Consequently the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei, looming up through the "rare sincerity and emotional warmth," appears different from the ones which we have seen before: he becomes now an ideal filial son who brings honors to his family through his service to the country.

IV

Hsüeh's story has also attracted the attention of the *ch'uan-ch'i* 傳奇 playwrights. But unfortunately, few of the *ch'uan-ch'i* plays about Hsüeh have survived to the present day. All we have now is one play preserved in its entirety. There are synopses of two other plays about Hsüeh included in *Ch'ü-hai tsung-mu t'i-yao* 曲海總目提要,[50] but the original versions of these two plays have been lost. Since the synopses, being bare outlines of the plays, are not good enough to suit our present purpose of showing the changing image of a popular hero in a clear light, we will leave them untouched and concentrate our discussion on the only extant play.

The play, entitled *Hsin-k'e ch'u-hsiang Hsüeh Jen-kuei k'ua-hai cheng Tung pai-p'ao chi* 新刻出像薛仁貴跨海征東白袍記 (hereafter *Pai-p'ao chi*), is a Ming edition,[51] its author unknown. The play consists of two *chüans*, which are further divided into forty-six acts (*che* 折).[52] The longer acts have plenty of arias and dialogues or monologues, while the shorter ones comprise only two or three arias. Hsüeh's story is unfolded in these acts of uneven length, beginning with Hsüeh's leaving home to join the vanguard and ending in his successful achievement of fame and status.

If we compare the three *tsa-chü* plays discussed above with *Pai-p'ao chi,* we will be amazed to find that the difference between the two can be so great. The sustained expression of intense emotion so strongly felt in the *tsa-chü* medium is totally absent in the *ch'uan-ch'i* play. Manifest in the latter is something different from what we have seen in the former– a story with a different kind of effect and a hero with a different face. This difference may be attributed to some formal discrepancies between the two dramatic genres. The *ch'uan-ch'i* play, for example, is much longer than the *tsa-chü* play, and its arias, instead of being restricted to one single role, can be shared by all characters in a given act. With greater length and more freedom, the *ch'uan-ch'i* play will present things unlike those demonstrated in the *tsa-chü* plays.

Cyril Birch suggests that the effect of the *ch'uan-ch'i* form, aside from being judged from the prospect of drama, can be properly explained in terms of fiction.[53] This is especially true in the case of *Pai-p'ao chi.* Taken separately as an independent unit, each act in *Pai-p'ao chi,* or several acts together, may achieve a concentrated dramatic effect centering around the tension within a character or among two or three characters. Taken as a whole, however, the play is not much more than a combination of many closely or loosely related episodes; the purpose is to present a panorama of human relationships characteristic of fiction. In fact, as far as its content is concerned, *Pai-p'ao chi* derives little from the three *tsa-chü* plays about Hsüeh; rather, it includes almost all that we have found in the fictional *Cheng Liao.* Moreover, it even elaborates some incidents only slightly touched upon in *Cheng Liao,* such as the quarrel between Ch'in Shu-pao and Yü-ch'in Ching-te (Acts 6 and 14), Ch'eng Yao-chin's recommending Hsüeh to Chang Shih-kuei (Acts 11-12), and Ch'in Huai-yü's 秦懷玉 leaving home for the battlefield after his father Ch'in Shu-pao has died (Acts 21 and 26). Concentrated dramatic effect like the one' shown in the *tsa-chü* plays is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain with so many episodes and characters involved.

Though *Pai-p'ao chi* is similar to *Cheng Liao* in its episodic treatment of Hsüeh's story, the image of the hero in the former does not amount to anything resembling that in the latter. Marked differences still exist between the two. Hsüeh is represented in *Cheng Liao* as a powerful and brave hero striving fervently for fame and status in the battlefield; he is changed, however, in *Pai-p'ao chi.* Before we probe into the reasons that account for the change, we had better first take a look at what Hsüeh is really like in

Pai-p'ao chi.

At the beginning of the play, we find that Hsüeh, rather than being a poor peasant or worker, lives comfortably in his beautiful and wealthy wife's home. We encounter him first on a fine spring day taking a walk in the garden. He sends for his wife to join him for an appreciation of the blooming spring flowers. Then the couple, "each with a cup of wine in hand, go to get a good look at the flowers, without letting the beautiful view and the good time slip away unnoticed" (向花前持杯翫賞，休交負却美景良辰).[54] Hsüeh seems to be able to enjoy life in the company of his wife, and forgets totally the world of fame and status. This oblivion to the outside world, however, is only temporary. Soon we hear him sigh before the blooming flowers, "Now without an opportunity for fame and status, I sigh and regret that my high ambitions get me nowhere" (功名未遇時，交人自嘆息，枉自有陵云志).[55]

The above episode exemplifies a new dimension of Hsüeh's image clearly rendered in *Pai-p'ao chi:* sensitivity to things around him. Here we find that natural scenes affect him and cause him to reflect upon his own situation. Later we will also see that he is easily impressed by incidents he encounters. It seems that external circumstances always move him to self-reflection. And since the play deals only with the span of time prior to his successful achievement of his long-desired fame and status, his internal self-reflections are always couched in sorrowful terms.

When Hsüeh tries to join the vanguard and is refused by Chang Shih-kuei, he sighs over his unhappy fate: "Evil time and bad luck always make one sigh day and night; I look homeward, trying to find someone I know, but I see no one" (時乖運蹇，謾交人旦夕嗟嘆，空勞回首望家鄉，故人不見).[56] Later even as he succeeds in enlisting himself in the vanguard, he does not show any sign of happiness, because Chang Shih-kuei appears as a tremendous obstacle between him and his "ring-giver." As a result, we frequently encounter him in sighs and even in tears:

> I sigh over the fact that I have suffered from all kinds
> of hardships of life ever since I left my hometown;
> All this is merely for the sake of status and fame.
> As I ponder over the favor of the emperor for which
> I have been striving.
> Tears fall down incessantly and wet completely my armor.[57]

嘆當時離了家鄉，到如今受盡風霜，也只爲身頭名賜。
君義難忘，暗思量，泪滴千行，濕透在征袍上。

The yellow chrysanthemums at the eastern gate have
already bloomed;
I suddenly recall Yüan-ming who in the days bygone
Enjoyed his leisure life among the five willows
Of which the green foliage formed vast shade.
How happy and pleasant his life was!
Thinking of this, I bemoan my own unhappy fate.[58]

東籬黃菊已垂金，頓思昔日淵明，閑居五柳
綠成陰未是無邊，多遣興，頓起好傷情。

I recall the day when I left my native home;
I put all my happiness aside in hope of gaining status.
But who knows that I have encountered bad luck and
wicked persons.
My fate is not unlike the full moon covered by cloud
or the blooming flowers suffering from rain.[59]

思量那日離鄉井，撇却歡娛望進身
誰知道時乖運蹇遭奸佞
月圓又被雲遮掩，花正開時遭雨侵。

As Hsüeh continues to sigh out his griefs at every possible occasion, we are left with the impression that he is not a fierce war hero with extraordinary prowess and bravery, but a sensitive scholar who feels frustrated in his attempt to secure position through official examinations. In fact, throughout the play, Hsüeh's prowess and bravery in the battlefield have never been explicitly demonstrated. We have never seen him shouting and charging single-handed to the enemy, though we are told at several points in the play that he has achieved great military feats. The author of the play takes pains to give the portrait of a sentimental soul who frequently loses himself in sorrowful self-reflection. His main concern, in other words, is the hero's intimate and frustrated feeling rather than his performances in the battlefield. In consequence, the toughness or fierceness of the hero is almost completely gone, and what we see is a sensitive scholar who constantly

breathes sighs over his unhappy fate.

Why do we then find no trace of this dimension of the hero in the earlier versions of Hsüeh's story? We understand that historical records and the *p'ing-hua* version will not include it because both deal mainly with external rather than internal activities of characters. But why do the three *tsa-chü* plays, in which inner life can be adequately revealed through arias, show also no sign of it? The answer to this question lies not so much in the innovation of the author of *Pai-p'ao chi* as in the conventions of the *ch'uan-ch'i* genre. For one thing, the frequent resort of the *ch'uan-ch'i* playwright to the subject matter of the love affair between a talented young scholar (*ts'ai-tzu* 才子) and a beautiful lady (*chia-jen* 佳人)[60] may have a significant bearing on the change of Hsüeh's image. This convention demands that the male leading character be a young scholar well-prepared for the official examinations, the most important chances for him to secure fame and position. To pass the examinations, he is supposed to have extensive knowledge gathered from books; physical strength and martial skill are not considered his proper assets.

Hsüeh is represented in *Pai-p'ao chi* unmistakably as a young scholar of this nature. At the outset of the play, that is, in the opening scene (*k'ai-ch'ang* 開場) which is designed to give a summary of the whole story,[61] we encounter such a statement: "In bygone days, there was a man called Jen-kuei who read extensively books old and new" (昔日仁貴博覽古今書).[62] Again in the garden scene when Hsüeh sighs over his frustrated desire for fame and status before the beautiful flowers, his wife says to him: "You have thousands of books well kept in your mind; so don't be so sad and worried. Once the court holds an examination, you will then pass it and find your name on the golden board of success" (你腹中萬卷書，何必恁憂慮，一朝開選場，那時金榜題名也).[63] But Hsüeh is not patient enough to wait for the examination; he goes instead to join the vanguard. The play has not indicated that he is equipped with anything more than "ten thousand books." One wonders how these books work in the battlefield.

Thus Hsüeh acts like a young scholar—even in the battlefield. The convention of the *ch'uan-ch'i* drama makes him so. But we must say that this convention has undoubtedly damaged the integrity of Hsüeh Jen-kuei as a powerful and brave war hero. The author of *Pai-p'ao chi* seems to be caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, he cannot overlook the historical

fact that Hsüeh is a great hero in the battlefield; on the other, he is unable to neglect the *ch'uan-ch'i* convention of presenting the male leading character as a scholar type. What he actually produces is one of the most incredible characters in literature: a sensitive scholar who is mistakenly placed in the battlefield, but who miraculously fares extraordinarily well there.

V

The Ming and the Ch'ing dynasties saw the rapid growth of long narrative works which we usually call novels.[64] The story of Hsüeh Jen-kuei would of course receive treatment in this form. Of all the novels which involve Hsüeh as a character, the most important are *Hsüeh Jen-kuei cheng Tung* 征東 (hereafter *Cheng Tung*), and its sequel *Hsüeh Ting-shan cheng Hsi* 薛丁山征西 (hereafter *Cheng Hsi*).[65] Before we discuss these two works, we have to spend a few moments on some other works in which Hsüeh plays only a minor role, and take a glimpse at Hsüeh's image as revealed there.

T'ang-shu chih-chuan t'ung-su yen-i 唐書志傳通俗演義,[66] compiled by Tsiung Ta-mu 熊大木 (fl. 1561), is a historical novel dealing with the events that occurred between the late Sui and the early T'ang. The work is divided into eight *chüans* and ninety chapters. Hsüeh Jen-kuei makes his first appearance in Chapter 77 of *Chüan* 7, serving as a warrior for Emperor T'ai-tsung's Korean expedition. Since the work relies heavily on *Hsin T'ang-shu* for material,[67] we find that in the treatment of Hsüeh's story no fictitious inventions like those which we have seen in the earlier versions of Hsüeh's story. Hsüeh is primarily presented in the work as a brave war hero whose performance in the battlefield makes a favorable impression on the Emperor. To strengthen this aspect of Hsüeh, the author has included in his work a marked historical distortion: the anachronism of the T'ien-shan incident which we have discussed before. Since the whole story ends with the retreat of the T'ang army from Korea, the T'ien-shan incident would have to be left out if the author adhered too closely to historical facts. For the purpose of emphasizing the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei as a brave war hero, the author makes the incident happen earlier than it is supposed to happen. *Sui T'ang liang-ch'ao chih-chuan* 隋唐兩朝志傳 is also a novel concerning the historical events in the Sui and the T'ang dynasties. I have not been

able to gain access to this work, but from Sun K'ai-ti's 孫楷弟 comments on the work, we know that Hsüeh Jen-kuei may be also presented as a brave war hero there.[68] This image of Hsüeh is nowhere clearer than in *Sui T'ang yen-i* 隋唐演義, a historical novel compiled by Ch'u Jen-huo 褚人獲 (1630?-1705?).[69] Hsüeh Jen-kuei appears only temporarily in the work. In Chapter 71, when Emperor Kao-tsung hears that Hsüeh has conquered T'ien-shan with three arrows, he says, "Thousands of soldiers in my army could not amount to the power demonstrated by Jen-kuei's three arrows" (幾萬雄獅，不如仁貴之三箭耳).[70] These words clearly define Hsüeh as a hero in the battlefield.

The image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei displayed in the three Ming novels above is certainly not new: we have seen it in history and in *Cheng Liao.* Since Hsüeh takes only a minor role in all the three works, his function there will certainly be limited. Now let us turn to *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi,* two works usually considered as being written in Ch'ing times. *Cheng Tung* is concerned mainly with Hsüeh Jen-kuei's military career, adopting completely the framework of quest which we have found in *Cheng Liao. Cheng Hsi* tells the story not primarily about Hsüeh but about his son and grandsons; nevertheless it provides a denouement for his own story. Features and incidents that do not appear in the earlier versions of Hsüeh's story which we have discussed so far can be, of course, amply found in these two long narratives. For the limited purpose of this study, we merely single out a few of them that will eventually give new dimensions to the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei.

First, Hsüeh's supreme prowess is attributed to supernatural endowment. In *Cheng Liao,* supernatural elements appear as Hsüeh is in danger of being burned in a valley without exit: a sudden shower of rain saves him; and in the *tsa-chü* play *Hsien-tu-fu lung men yin-hsiu,* he is alluded to as a human transformation of "the star of the white tiger." Now in *Cheng Tung,* Hsüeh has even a closer contact with the supernatural: once he found himself in a celestial land (hsien-chieh 仙界) where he ate some strange food which provided him with amazing strength equivalent to that of one dragon, nine oxen, and two tigers, and where he met the goddess Chiu-t'ien hsüan-nü 九天玄女 who gave him five presents which would guarantee his success in battle. One of the presents is a "heavenly book without words" (wu-tzu t'ien-shu 無字天書), in which solutions to all kinds of problems may show up if the owner consults it with sincerity. Hsüeh does consult the book whenever he finds himself in trouble, and the book never fails him.

Second, Hsüeh's career is tinged with friendship. In the earlier versions of his story, we do not find that he has any friends; but he has plenty in *Cheng Tung,* and most of them become his lifelong sworn brothers. His first sworn brother is a poor but honest man called Wang Mao-sheng 王茂生, who saved his life when he was regarded as a prodigal son at an early age and thus turned down by all his relatives. Later as he returned home with high honors, he received Wang with open arms and treasured this poor friend's gifts—two jars of water. When Hsüeh discovered that what the jars contained was water instead of wine, he said cheerfully, "Is it water not wine? Give me a big bowl; I will drink three bowls of it at once. As it is said that, with the warmth of friendship, one will feel delightfully cool at heart even when one drinks water" (是水不是酒，取大碗來，本藩立飲三杯，叫做人生情義暖，吃水也心涼).[71] Hsüeh has also eight sworn brothers during his service in the army. They serve as cook-soldiers (huo-t'ou chün 火頭軍) together, fight in battle together, and share suffering and happiness together.

Third, Hsüeh's relationship with his wife and his son has been rendered at length. *Hsin T'ang-shu* records that Hsüeh has a wife who urges him to join the army for fame and status. *Cheng Liao* and *Pai-p'ao chi* follow suit in this respect. In these works, Hsüeh's wife appears briefly and then disappears from his life. *Hsien-ta-fu lung-men yin-hsiu* has treated the relationship between Hsüeh and his wife in a fascinating manner. This treatment is adopted by *Cheng Tung,* but not without modifications. *Cheng Tung* presents the virtue and perseverance of Hsüeh's wife not through her brave act of taking on herself the responsibility to fulfil the filial duty for Hsüeh, but through her patient and excellent way of raising their son. Hsüeh Jen-kuei really had a son called Hsüeh Na 薛納, whose official biography can be found in *Hsin T'ang-shu,*[72] But Hsüeh Na does not show up in *Cheng Liao,* in the three *tsa-chü* plays, and in *Pai-p'ao chi;* nor does he bear any resemblance to Hsüeh Ting-shan, the son of Hsüeh Jen-kuei in *Cheng-tung* and *Cheng Hsi.* It is clear that Hsüeh Ting-shan is purely a fictitious innovation; so is his relationship with his father. He appears briefly in *Cheng Tung* as a youth skilled in archery. He is mistakenly injured by his father, but saved through supernatural intervention. The father-son relationship in *Cheng Hsi* is much more complicated. The son frequently violates the order of his father, and the father frequently threatens to kill his son. But ironically enough, the father is mistakenly killed by his son, which puts an end

to the story of Hsüeh Jen-kuei.

Most of the features or incidents above, viewed from the perspective of Chinese narrative tradition, are not unique in *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi.* Something similar can be found in earlier works. For example, the incident in which Hsüeh receives "a heavenly book without words" from the goddess Chiu-t'ien hsüan-nü resembles strikingly what happens to Sung Chiang 宋江 in Chapter 42 of *Shui-hu chuan* 水滸傳, and the sworn brotherhood among friends is a common motif in Chinese military romances. But however unoriginal these features or incidents may seem, they help to put the image of Hsüeh Jeh-kuei in a new light.

We have seen that in history Hsüeh is a hero with a composite character: he has both positive and negative sides; in *Cheng Liao* he is purified and simplified: he emerges as a perfect hero in the battlefield, engaged in a game of quest for fame and status, in the three *tsa-chü* plays, he becomes an ideal filial son who brings honors to his family through his service to the country; and in *Pai-p'ao chi,* he is represented as a sensitive scholar. As he re-appears in *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi,* we find that he is put into a wider human context, and his image becomes relatively complicated. His career is now closely related not only to the emperor, but also to supernatural beings, to his wife and son, and to his friends. The functional roles he plays in these relationships virtually define his image. To illustrate this point, we have to take a closer look at these relationships.

First, Hsüeh's relationship with the emperor is the only one that has received full treatment in the *p'ing-hua* version. *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi* take up this treatment with only minor embellishments.[73] The basis of this relationship, as has been indicated before, is mutual dependence. Hsüeh is Emperor T'ai-tsung's warrior in the dream or, in Freudian terms, his wish fulfillment. At the beginning of the story, Emperor T'ai-tsung is in fact greatly troubled by the disturbances in Korea as well as by his own predicament—all his generals are too old to be of any use in battle. The dream reveals his inner yearning for a young and powerful hero who can rescue him from his trouble, just as Hsüeh does in his dream. Hsüeh thus plays the functional role of an ideal or idealized hero for the Emperor. This role is further confirmed by their later relationship: Hsüeh is always ready to serve the Emperor, and Emperor T'ai-tsung, in his own role as the "true emperor," bestows on Hsüeh the fame and status that Hsüeh strives for and deserves. Their relationship is therefore also idealized.

Second, in his early military career, Hsüeh temporarily leaves the human world and enters the celestial land where the goddess Chiu-t'ien hsüan-nü lives. When he returns, he is a man with superhuman power and supernatural equipment. This process of initiation is analogous to the sequence of the "rites of passage" which Joseph Campbell has briefly described as follows:

> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men.[74]

This sequence of "a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return"[75] is exactly what Hsüeh has gone through in his adventure in the celestial land. Though he wins no "decisive victory" there, he is nevertheless able to secure the supernatural prowess and the supernatural gifts from the goddess. Usually after the return, the initiated man will assume a role different from his former one. The role Hsüeh plays after the initiation is that of a hero chosen by gods or goddesses to render some special service to human beings. Hsüeh thus becomes an instrument of the divine will, and his adventure into the celestial land can be viewed as a rite of his being admitted to take such a functional role. The power and equipment he receives from the adventure enable him to implement successfully the divine will, which is to help the "true emperor" surpress the revolt in Korea, and bring peace again to the world.

Third, the Oedipal implication in Hsüeh's relationship with his son and his wife has been aptly pointed out by scholars.[76] The problem that lies in such an interpretation is that it illuminates the general pattern of the relationship but leaves the motivations of the characters untouched. The antagonism between the father and the son is certainly not due to a feeling of jealousy aroused by the love for the same woman. The father shoots at his son because he wants to protect him from an approaching beast; the son shoots at his father because he wants to protect himself from an approaching beast. There is no conscious or unconcious hatred for each other in the father-son relationship in these two shooting incidents. In *Cheng Hsi,* the father constantly threatens to kill his son and the son constantly violates his father's orders; this apparent antagonism results purely from their

different attitudes towards marriage, especially towards marrying a girl like Fan Li-hua 樊梨花 who has ruined her own family and betrayed her own country because of her love for Hsüeh Ting-shan. Jealousy or hatred plays no part in this father-son antagonism. As a matter of fact, in his relationship with his son, Hsüeh plays the functional role of a stern father: he wants his son to act in what he believes is the decent way, and demands absolute obedience. In his relationship with his wife, he plays the role of a devoted husband: he listens to his wife's advice by going on a search for fame and status, and never forgets her after he gets them. The latter fact stands in sharp contrast to his attitude towards Fan Hsiu-hua 樊繡花, a girl whom he has rescued from the hands of bandits and whom, urged by the girl's father, he has promised to marry.[77] He forgets the girl entirely after he leaves her. Even when he returns home with honors and the girl's father escorts her to his residence, he still does not remember her. When he finally remembers, he immediately tells the story to his wife, who receives the girl with open-mindedness. The image of a devoted husband can be discerned more or less in this incident.

Fourth, the sworn brotherhood among friends is a motif so common in Chinese narrative tradition that it is charged with ritualistic implications. On the occasion of swearing, there is always a formal ceremony, with solemn pledges of mutual devotion to one another among the men involved. After the ritual, friends or even strangers turn into brothers and form a tight and intimate group to face the outside world. Nothing, not even death, can break their pledge. Hsüeh's relationships with Wang Mao-sheng and the other eight friends who serve with him as cook soldiers in the army are formed in such a manner. The role Hsüeh plays as a qualified sworn brother is apparent: he helps Wang as Wang has helped him before; he stands closely with his eight soldier friends in bliss and in woe. There is no indication of any fraud or violations of pledge in the relationship between Hsüeh and his sworn brothers. It is an ideal or idealized relationship, and Hsüeh is an ideal sworn brother; so are Wang and the eight cook soldiers.

The relationships between the emperor and his warrior, between god and man, between father and son, between husband and wife, and among friends are important ones in human society. All these relationships, as demonstrated above, have received more than passing treatment in *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi*. Moreover, they have been rendered in more or less ideal or idealized forms, and the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei, as clearly defined

by the functional roles he plays in these relationships, is also idealized. As a perfect warrior, a god-chosen man, a stern father, a devoted husband, and a qualified sworn brother, Hsüeh has in fact displayed some of the human qualities cherished by Chinese people. C.T. Hsia is right when he labels *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi* as romances rather than as novels.[78] "The romance," as Northrop Frye has observed, "is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream.... In every age the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of romance, where the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendance."[79] If "the ruling social or intellectual class" can be extended to include the general public, the above statement perfectly shows how significant the image of Hsüeh Jen-kuei is to Chinese people. The historical hero with human frailties has been reborn, with *Cheng Liao,* the *tsa-chü* plays, and *Pai-p'ao chi* as transitions, in *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi* as a popular hero who manifests in himself some of the ideals of the whole race. In this sense, the white robe Hsüeh always wears is tinctured with symbolic meaning: it becomes a symbol of his being idealized.

The story of Hsüeh Jen-kuei reaches its cumulative point of development in popular literature with the appearance of *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi.* These two works have been so popular among Chinese people ever since they were written that any further attempt to revise them for better catering to popular taste seems unnecessary. Some readers or audiences may get acquainted with the Hsüeh story through Peking opera, but the plays about Hsüeh in that genre are merely dramatizations of certain incidents taken directly from *Cheng Tung* or *Cheng Hsi.*[80] Except for a few minor details, these plays add little to the story of Hsüeh Jen-kuei in general and to the image of him in particular. But prior to *Cheng Tung* and *Cheng Hsi,* the image of Hsüeh, as has been indicated in the foregoing discussion, was in a state of fluid change: new dimensions were added to it in one given version of the Hsüeh story and removed or changed in another. The writers of various literary genres have featured Hsüeh in their works as they thought fit for their purposes. In so doing, they have in fact reflected certain shared ideals of the Chinese people in the images of the hero they have created. The study above is definitely not exhaustive; other aspects of the works about Hsüeh equally merit careful scrutiny. The preliminary effort we have made here, it is hoped, may facilitate further studies.

Notes

1. The story of these heroes constitutes the major part of several Chinese historical novels, notable among which are *Sui T'ang yen-i* 隋唐演義 and *Shuo T'ang ch'ien-chuan* 說唐前傳. For bibliographical data about these two novels, see Sun K'ai-ti 孫楷弟, *Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu* 中國通俗小說書目 (revised ed. 1957; rpt. Taipei: Feng-huang ch'u-pan-she, 1974), pp. 43-45.
2. C.T. Hsia has made some comments on the story of Hsüeh Jen-kuei in "The Military Romance: a Genre of Chinese Fiction," in *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres,* ed. Cyril Birch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 339-390. Yen Yüan-shu 顏元叔 has discussed the Oedipal implications in Hsüeh's relationships with his wife and son; see "Hsüeh Jen-kuei and Hsüeh Ting-shan: a Chinese Oedipal Conflict," *Tamkang Review,* 1:1 (April, 1970), 223-232. Except for these two studies of limited scope, we find no other scholarly treatments of the works about Hsüeh.
3. *Chiu T'ang-shu,* punctuated edition (Taipei: Ting-wen shu-chü, n.d.), pp. 2780-3.
4. Hsüeh's biography in *chüan* 83 of *Chiu T'ang shu* has not recorded the date of his birth, but has specified that he lived to the age of seventy and died in 681; however, in *chüan* 5, p. 110, he is said to have died in 683. *Hsin T'ang-shu* 新唐書 has no such contradiction and indicates definitely that he died in 683. No matter which date is correct, it is safe to say that Hsüeh was born approximately between 611-and 613, only several years before the fall of the Sui dynasty (617).
5. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, p. 2780.
6. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, p. 2781.
7. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, p. 2781.
8. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, p. 2781.
9. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, p. 2781. Emperor Kao-tsung has good reason to thank Hsüeh: during the flood, guards of the Palace and civilians nearby, totaling more than three thousand, were drowned (*chüan* 4, p. 73); he would have been one among them if Hsüeh had not come to save him in time.
10. *Hsin T'ang-shu,* punctuated edition (Taipei: Ting-wen shu-chü, n.d.), pp. 4139-43.
11. *Hsin T'ang-shu, chüan* 111, p. 4139.
12. *Hsin T'ang-shu, chüan* 111, p. 4141.
13. *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien,* po-na edition (Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, n.d.), *chüan* 200, p. 21a.
14. Compared with Hsüeh Jen-kuei, all the three are greater heroes as far as military achievement is concerned. For their official biographies, see *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, pp. 2777-8 (Su Ting-fang); *chüan* 19, pp. 2517-9 (Hsüeh Wan-ch'e); and *chüan* 84, pp. 2789-97 (Liu Jen-kuei).
15. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, pp. 2781-2.
16. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, p. 2783.

17. The play will be discussed in Section IV below.
18. This predilection of the Chinese popular story writers is fully demonstrated in works such as *Feng-shen yen-i* 封神演義, *Hsi yu chi* 西遊記, and some other less well-known narratives.
19. *T'ai-p'ing Kuang-chi* (Taipei: Hsin hsing shu-chü, 1973), *chüan* 191, p. 56. This account, as indicated in *T'ai-ping kuang-chi*, comes from *T'an-ping lu* 譚賓錄, a book written in the T'ang but now lost. Cf. Wang kuo-liang 王國良, *T'ang-tai hsiao-shuo hsü-lu* 唐代小說敍錄 (Taipei: Chia Hsin Foundation, 1979), pp. 46-47.
20. This work had been lost for a long time, and was re-discovered by Chao Wan-li 趙萬里 from the *Yung-lo ta-tien* 永樂大典 in the library of Oxford University. The text used here is the punctuated edition by Chao Wan-li (Shanghai 1957; rpt. Taipei: Ho-lo t'u-shu ch'u-pan-she, 1977).
21. Chao Wan-li has provided substantial evidence to support this dating of *Cheng Liao*, see his postscript to *Cheng Liao*, pp. 75-76.
22. According to history, it is Kai Su-wen 蓋蘇文, instead of Ko Su-wen, who tried to rid Korea of the influence from the T'ang empire (*(Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 3, p. 54). The character 葛 here, therefore, may be a corrupted form of 蓋; since the two are similar in shape and in sound, mistaking the one for the other might have happened. 蓋 is used in most of the later versions of Hsüeh's story.
23. *Cheng Liao*, p. 27.
24. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 2, p. 29.
25. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, p. 2786, and *Hsin T'ang-shu, chüan* 92, p. 3803.
26. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 83, p. 2781.
27. *Chiu T'ang-shu, chüan* 3, p. 58.
28. This work is included in *Ming Ch'eng-hua shuo-ch'ang ts'u-hua ts'ung-k'an* 明成化說唱詞話叢刊, ed. Yang Chia-lo 楊家駱 (Taipei: Ting-wen shu-chü, 1979), pp. 150-208.
29. Cf. Tseng Yung-i 曾永義, "Ming Ch'eng-hua shuo-ch'ang ts'u-hua shih-liu chung" 明成化說唱詞話十六種, *Chung-wai Literary Monthly* 8:5 (Oct. 1979), pp. 46-51.
30. This play is collected in *Chiao-ting Yüan k'an tsa-chü san-shih chung* 校訂元刊雜劇三十種, ed. Cheng Ch'ien 鄭騫 (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1962), pp. 211-225. For the author Chang Kuo-pin's biographical data, see Chung Szu-ch'eng 鍾嗣成, *Lu kuei pu* 錄鬼簿 (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1960) p. 94; or Fu Hsi-hua 傅惜華, *Yüan-tai tsa-chü tso-chia chuan-lüeh* 元代雜劇作家傳略 (rpt. Taipei: Wen-ch'uan ko ch'u-pan-she 1972), p. 76.
31. *Yüan-ch'ü hsüan* (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1936), pp. 175-180.
32. Cf. Cheng Ch'ien, "Tsang Mao-hsün kai-ting Yüan *tsa-chü* p'ing-i" 臧懋循改訂元雜劇評議, in *Ching-wu ts'ung pien* 景午叢編 (Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1972), I. 408-421.
33. *Chiao-ting Yüan k'an tsa-chü san-shih chung*, p. 211.
34. *Chiao-ting Yüan k'an tsa-chü san-shih chung*, p. 214.
35. The convention of giving the singing to only one actor in a given act is well

observed in the play. The "male lead," (*cheng-mo* 正末) who plays in turn the roles of Tu Lu-hui (Act I), Hsüeh Ta-po (Acts II, and IV), and a childhood friend of Hsüeh Jen-kuei (Act III), sings throughout the play.

36. *Chiao-ting Yüan k'an tsa-chü san-shih chung,* p. 219.
37. This play is included in *Yüan-ch'ü hsüan wai-pien* 元曲選外編 , ed. Sui Shu-sen 隋樹森 (Peking, 1959; rpt. Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1967), pp. 867-882.
38. *Yüan-ch'ü hsüan wai-pien,* p. 869.
39. *Yüan-ch'ü hsüan wai-pien,* pp. 869-70.
40. Shih Chung-wen, *The Golden Age of Chinese Drama: Yüan Tsa-chü* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 41.
41. Cf. Shih Chung-wen, pp. 41-42.
42. See Ch'ien Chung-shu, "Tragedy in Old Chinese Drama." This article appeared first in *T'ien Hsia Monthly,* I (1935), 37-46, and was reprinted in *Renditions,* IX (Spring 1978), 85-91. The quotation is from the latter, on p. 90.
43. *Yüan-ch'ü hsüan wai-pien,* p. 870.
44. *Yüan-ch'ü hsüan wai-pien,* p. 881.
45. This play is collected in *Ku-pen Yüan Ming tsa-chü* 孤本元明雜劇 (rpt. Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1977), Vol. VII.
46. *Hsien-ta-fu lung men yin-hsiu,* Act II, p. 6b.
47. *Hsien-ta-fu lung men yin-hsiu,* Act III, p. 8a.
48. Henry W. Wells, *The Classical Drama of the Orient* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 71.
49. Wells, p. 83.
50. The two plays are *Chin-tiao chi* 金貂記 and *Ting T'ien-shan* 定天山 ; see *chüan* 36 of *Ch'ü-hai tsung-mu t'i-yao* (rpt. Taipei: Chen-kuang shu-chü, 1969), pp. 1699-1703.
51. The play was printed and published by Fu-ch'un t'ang 富春堂 in the Ming dynasty, and reproduced in facsmile by the Library of Peking University.
52. Chou I-pai 周貽白 observes that the division of the early *Ch'uan-ch'i* plays is marked by *che* 折 , while the division of the later ones is by *ch'u* 齣 . Viewed from this perspective, the play under discussion might have been written in the early Ming or even earlier. See Chou I-pai, *Chung-kuo hsi-chü* shih 中國戲劇史 (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1953), p. 331.
53. Cyril Birch, "Some Concerns and Methods of the Ming *Ch'uan-ch'i* Drama," in *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres* ed. Cyril Birch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 225.
54. *Pai-p'ao chi, chüan* 1, p. 2b.
55. *Pai-p'ao chi, chüan* 1, p. 3a.
56. *Pai-p'ao chi, chüan* 1, p. 14b.
57. *Pai-p'ao chi, chüan* 2, p. 7a.
58. *Pai-p'ao chi, chüan* 2, p. 10b. Yüan-ming refers to the poet t'ao Chien 陶潛 (styled Yüan-ming 372-427) who preferred a life in seclusion to a career in officialdom.

59. *Pai-p'ao chi, chüan* 2, p. 13a.
60. Chou I-pai has discussed briefly the subject matter of the *ch'uan-ch'i* drama and noted that the *ch'uan-ch'i* playwrights especially favor the love affairs (pp. 222-3). Kojiro Yoshikawa, in making a comparison between a *tsa-chü* play and a *ch'uan-ch'i* play, points out explicitly the convention of presenting the male protagonist as a scholar and the female protagonist as a graceful lady in the *ch'uan-ch'i* tradition; see *Yüan tsa-chü yen-chiu* 元雜劇研究 , trans. Cheng Ch'ing-mao 鄭清茂 (Taipei: I-wen Book Co., 1960), pp. 228-230.
61. Cf. Chou I-pai, pp. 359-361.
62. *Pai-p'ao chi, chüan* 1, p. 1a.
63. *Pai-p'ao chi, chüan* 1, p. 3a.
64. The term "novel" is used here only for the sake of convenience; the implications associated with the term will not be conjured up in the following discussion.
65. The original title of *Cheng Tung* is *Hsüeh-chia fu chuan* 薛家府傳 , and that of *Cheng Hsi* is *Shuo T'ang cheng Hsi san-chuan* 說唐征西三傳 . *Cheng Tung* is the sequel of *Shuo T'ang hsiao-ying-hsiung chuan* 說唐小英雄傳 (better known as *Lo T'ung sao Pei* 羅通掃北); these two works constitute the title *Shuo T'ang hou-chuan* 說唐後傳 . For details, see Sun K'ai-ti, *Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu,* pp. 45-46; and Liu Ts'un-yan, *Chinese Popular Fiction in Two London Libraries* (Hong Kong, 1967; rpt. Taipei: Feng-huang ch'u-pan-she, 1974), pp. 18-19; pp. 262-264. The three works—*Lo T'ung sao Pei, Cheng Tung, and Cheng Hsi*—have been reprinted together under the title of *Cheng Tung, cheng Hsi, sao Pei* 征東、征西、掃北 (Taipei: Ta-chung-kuo t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1974).
66. The title of this work varies in different editions; see Sun k'ai-ti, *Chung-kuo tung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu,* pp. 42-43; and *Jih-pen Tung-ching so-chien Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shu-mu* 日本東京所見中國小說書目 (2nd. ed. Peking 1958; rpt. Taipei: Feng-huang ch'u-pan-she, 1974). pp. 32-38.
67. Two evidences indicate that the work is based on *Hsin T'ang-shu* rather than *Ch'iu T'ang-shu:* first, the description of Hsüeh's pre-military life is taken almost verbatim from *Hsin T'ang-shu;* and second, the general which Hsüeh has saved in his early military career is called Liu Chün-ang 劉君昂 in *Chiu T'ang-shu,* but Liu Chün-mao 劉君卯 in *Hsin T'ang-shu;* the latter name is used in the work.
68. See Sun k'ai-ti, *Jih-pen Tung-ching so-chien Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shu-mu,* pp. 38-41.
69. See Note 1. Robert G. Hegel has discussed the dating, sources, and structure of *Sui T'ang yen-i* in his *"Sui T'ang yen-i* and the Aesthetics of the Seventeenth-century Suchou Elite," in *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays,* ed. Andrew H. Plaks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 124-159.
70. *Sui T'ang yen-i* (Taipei: Wen-hua t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1978), p. 558.
71. *Cheng Tung, cheng Hsi, sao Pei,* p. 112.
72. *Hsin T'ang-shu, chüan* 111, pp. 4143-4.
73. These embellishments appear mostly in *Cheng Hsi;* for instance, misguided by Li Tao-tsung, Emperor T'ai-tsung once tried to kill Hsüeh. But for Yü-ch'i Ching-te,

who sacrificed his life to save Hsüeh's by remonstrating against the emperor, Hsüeh would have been put to death. However, the basic relationship of mutual dependence between Hsüeh and the Emperor is still discernible in *Cheng Hsi.*

74. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (N.Y.: Pantheon Book Inc., 1949), p. 30.
75. Campbell, p. 35.
76. Cf. C. T. Hsia, p. 371, and Yen Yüan-shu.
77. This incident constitutes Chapters 8 and 9 of *Cheng Tung;* see *Cheng Tung, cheng Hsi, sao Pei,* pp. 20-24.
78. C. T. Hsia regards those historical novels that "make no pretensions to be serious history" as "military romances," and discusses the themes and conventions of the genre in terms of concrete examples selected from Chinese narrative tradition; see his work previously quoted in Note 2.
79. *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 186.
80. Most of the Peking operas that deal mainly with the story of Hsüeh Jen-kuei are included in *Kuo-chü ta-ch'eng* 國劇大成 ed. Chang Po-chin 張伯謹 (Taipei: kuo-fang-pu cheng-chi tso-chan-pu, 1970), VI, 103-139. The titles of the plays are *Feng-huang shan* 鳳凰山 , *Tu-mu kuan* 獨木關 , *Mo-t'ien ling* 摩天嶺 , and *Fen-ho wan* 汾河灣 .