

# Abridged Versions of Mao Dun's *Ziye* (Midnight)

Chen Siguang 陳思廣

*Skrátené verzie Mao Dunovho diela Ziye (Šerosvit)*

*Resumé* Od júna roku 1934, na príkaz cenzúry, muselo nakladateľstvo Kaiming shudian skrátit' celkom štyri vydania Mao Dunovho románu *Ziye* (Šerosvit). Boli to edície štyri až sedem (september 1936). Medzi nimi, štvrté vydanie obsahuje ešte dost' veľkú časť pôvodnej originálnej verzie, zatiaľ čo piate až siedme vydanie muselo vynechať celé kapitoly 4 a 15. Vo februári 1939 bola opäť vydaná plná verzia románu (označená ako »7. vydanie«). Tento článok skúma podrobnejšie tieto vydania.

*Abstract* From June 1934 onwards and under the orders of censorship legislation, the publishing house Kaiming shudian put out a total of four abridged version of *Ziye* (Midnight) by Mao Dun, namely the 4th to 7th editions (Sep 1936). Among them, the 4th edition keeps a bit more from the original full edition, while 5th–7th editions delete the full chapters 4 and 15, until in February 1939 (denoted »7th edition«) the full version was restored. These versions are examined in detail in the present article.

*Keywords* China, Literature (20th c.), Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896–1981), *Ziye* 子夜 (1933) · Publishing Houses, Kaiming shudian 開明書店 (1926–53), Xu Diaofu 徐調孚 (1901–1981) · Tang Tao 唐弢 (1913–1992) · *banben yanjiu* 版本研究

How do the abridged versions of Mao Dun's novel *Ziye* 子夜 (Midnight; 1933) actually look like? This issue has been an unresolved case among experts of editorial history in modern Chinese literature. The first who raised this issue was Xu Jiaofu who actually participated in the editorial work on *Midnight* in the Kaiming shudian 開明書店 publishing house. On 19 July 1949 he published an

article in the Shanghai paper *Xinminbao* 新民報 commenting on the abridged version of *Midnight*. He writes:

As far as I know, 22 editions of *Ziye* have been published so far. Among the abridged versions, it seems that there are only the 5th editions and a portion from the 4th edition before it was fully sold out. Compared to copies of the full version, the number of abridged copies is very small.<sup>1</sup>

This means that not all copies from the 4th edition are abridged versions, because after the publishing had received the permission to sell the abridged version,

they interrupted further distribution of the copies left from the 4th edition, yet did not wait until February 1935 when the 5th edition was printed where the two chapters [4 and 15] were deleted, but just printed '[chapter] four (deleted)' on page 95 and, skipped pages 96–125. Page 483 was also omitted, so that there was no continuation.

This caused anger among readers who said if the publishing house is compelled to 'delete and modify' [*shān'gǎi* 刪改], it should just 'delete', but not 'modify'.<sup>2</sup>

As for when a complete edition was published again, Xu Diaofu says that »it was most likely the 6th edition«. Evidently, he did not have the actual copies at hand, Xu Diaofu bases his hypotheses on vague memories, the formula »most likely...« in his conclusions leaves some ground open.

Zhu Jinshun has also devoted much attention to the question and published an article *Inquiry on the Editorial History of »Midnight«* in which he expresses his belief that »the abridged version still remains to be located«, while providing the material he has so far collected. He says:

Tang Tao in his *Hu'an shubua* 晦庵書話 (Talking about Books from the Gloomy Temple; 1962) has presented this abridged version. Yet the person who has given a detailed description is Qu Guangxi 瞿光熙 who in his article *The Wounds of »Midnight«* [»Ziye" de luohen« 《子夜》的烙痕] writes: »In the end only chapter 4 describing the peasants' rebellion and chapter 11 describing the workers' strike were

Research for this article was made possible thanks to the support by the Humanities and Social Sciences Fund of the Ministry of Education [of the People's Republic of China] for the project »Studies on the Divulcation and Reception of Modern Chinese Novels« (12YJA751003).—An earlier shorter version of this article was first published in Chinese under the title »"Ziye" de shanjiaben« 《子夜》的刪節本, in *Xiandai Zhongguo wenhua yu wenxue* 現代中國文化與文學 no 13 (Mar 2014), 226–229.

1 Xu Diaofu 徐調孚, »Guanyu "Ziye"« 關於《子夜》 [On »Midnight«, *Xinminbao · wankan* 新民報 · 晚刊 (Shanghai, 19 Jul 1949).

2 Ibid.

fully deleted. In the new edition of *Midnight*, in stead of the two chapters there was just the character *shan* 刪 ('deleted') as a note, without adapting the page numbering, so that more than 60 pages were missing. Bookshops still feared trouble when selling the book, and therefore applied the illegitimate municipal [Guomindang] Party Department's stamp *pida* 批答 ('cleared') at the end of the copyright page. After that, there were changes again, and the two chapters were included again, while on the copyright page, the line "Examination no 3534 in the Register of Publication Permissions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs" was inserted.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, neither Tang Tao nor Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白 [(1899–1935)] tell us which edition from which year it was. Qu Qiubai only says that after deletion of the two chapters the chapters were reinserted again. But again: in which edition and in which year? I consulted several libraries in Beijing and Shanghai, but did not find any copy of the 'mutilated' edition with the deletions. In the catalogue of the Modern Chinese Literature Archives, there is an edition of September 1935, yet the catalogue does not mention which edition it is, and the book itself could not be located. Finally, I found the following sentence in Hiromi Matsui's 松井博光 [1930–2012] *Hakumei no bungaku: Chūgoku no riarizumu sakka Bō Jun* 薄明の文学：中国のリアリズム作家・茅盾 (Literature of Dawn: The Chinese Realist Writer Mao Dun; 1979): »In the 4th edition that came out in June 1934, there are some parts deleted.«<sup>4</sup> The 3rd edition dates from June 1933 and then was censored and underwent deletions. If the 4th edition from June 1934 was the version with deletions, this would perfectly fit with the time. However, I have not seen that edition, so that I may not confirm it with certainty, and just put these notes down for references.

In sum, to establish whether there has been an abridged edition of *Midnight*, the respective edition still remains to be located, so that at this point the situation of the various editions is not yet clarified.<sup>5</sup>

Though Zhu Jinshun did not find a copy of the edition in question, his article still contains a wealth of important information. Yet because he recorded impressionist or second-hand reports, rigorous Zhu Jinshun did not dare to come to a final conclusion. Kong Haizhu has had the luck of an autopsy of the abridged edition of *Midnight* and put down the following observations:

- 3 Tang Tao 唐弢, »Hui'an shuhua« 晦暗書話, in *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue shi zhaji* 中國現代文學史札記 (Shanghai: Wenyi chubanshe, 1984), 61.
- 4 Quoted from the Chinese version *Liming de wenxue* 黎明的文學, tr. by Gao Peng 高鵬 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1982), 171.
- 5 Zhu Jinshun 朱金順, »"Ziye" banben tanhui« 《子夜》版本探微, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan* 中國現代文學研究叢刊 3/2003, 260–261.

The copy I saw is the 6th edition from September 1935, with a green cover carrying the two characters [for the title *Ziye*] in seal-script horizontally, as in the preceding editions. At first glance, there is no difference to other editions from Kaiming shudian publishers; it has the size of 32 *kai* 開 [1/16 of a sheet] uses paper for newspapers and has 577 pages. In fact, however, chapters 4 and 15 are removed, while the page-numbering leaves a gap, and the numerals have not been adapted.<sup>6</sup>

Of course it is a pleasure that finally somebody has enjoyed an autopsy of a copy of the abridged version of *Midnight*, yet what it in turn deplorable is that Kong Haizhu explicitly declares that »I do not have this volume in my possession, and may only speak on the basis of my impressions and my notes«, so that the »eye-witness report« of these »very deep impressions« turns out be »impressionist«. After many years of vain search, the present writer has succeeded in acquiring two copies of abridged *Midnight* version published by Kaiming shudian, one of the 4th edition from June 1934, the other of the 7th edition from September 1936, while he had the chance to see a copy of the 6th edition (Sep 1935) in the Provincial Library of Jilin. This is why it is possible known to give a detailed description of the 4th, 6th and 7th editions on the basis of evidence, and reveal the 'genuine face of Mt Lushan'.

A first edition of *Midnight* acquired by the present writer has the size of 32 *kai* and is bound as paperback, carrying the two characters for *Ziye* in seal-script from the hand of Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶 (1894–1988), it measures 14 × 20 cm and is 2.8 cm thick. Du Haisheng 杜海生 (1876–1955) is indicated as responsible editor, the printer is Meicheng yinshua gongsi 美成印刷公司 (Dongxihuade lu 東熙華德路 [East Seward Road; since 1943 Dong Changzhi lu 東長治路] Yuqingli 餘慶里, Shanghai), and the book has a total of 577 pages. The 4th abridged edition presently at hand has also a size of 32 *kai* and the cover is unchanged, yet it measures 13.5 × 19.5 cm and is 2.6 cm thick, responsible editor is Zhang Xichen 章錫琛 (1889–1969), and it is printed by the same company which, however, has moved to 390 Wuzhou lu 梧州路, Shanghai. Though nominally the book has 577 pages, in fact it has just a total of 531 pages, i.e. half of chapter 4 (pp. 97–110) and the whole chapter 15 (pp. 450–482) are missing, altogether 46 pages. It is interesting to note that in this case the deletions are by no means corresponding to what the Guomindang Censorship Committee (國民黨圖書審查委員會) had actually banned—»[*Ziye*] is a novel of 200,000 characters, describing how imperialists use a huge amount of capital to disturb the stock market of our country.

6 Kong Haizhu 孔海珠, »“Ziye” banben tan« 《子夜》版本談 [Chatting About the Various Editions of »Midnight«], *Xin wenxue shiliao* 新聞學史料 1/2007, 199.

Pages 98 to 124 ridicule our Party and have to be deleted, chapter 15 describes a factory and has to be deleted.« Yet the performed deletions actually kept parts of chapter 4, i.e. on page 95 after the end of chapter 3 we find the character ‘four’ as chapter number printed and ‘deleted’ (*shan* 刪) in lieu of the full text, but when turning over the page, though the chapter number is given as ‘five’, in actual fact, except for the first page, the text is part of chapter 4 beginning on page 111, while chapter 5 starts on page 127. Therefore, though the page-head gives ‘chapter 4’, and the page numbers jump from 96 to 110, deleting 14 pages in-between without adjusting the page-numbering and thus displaying overtly the lacunes.

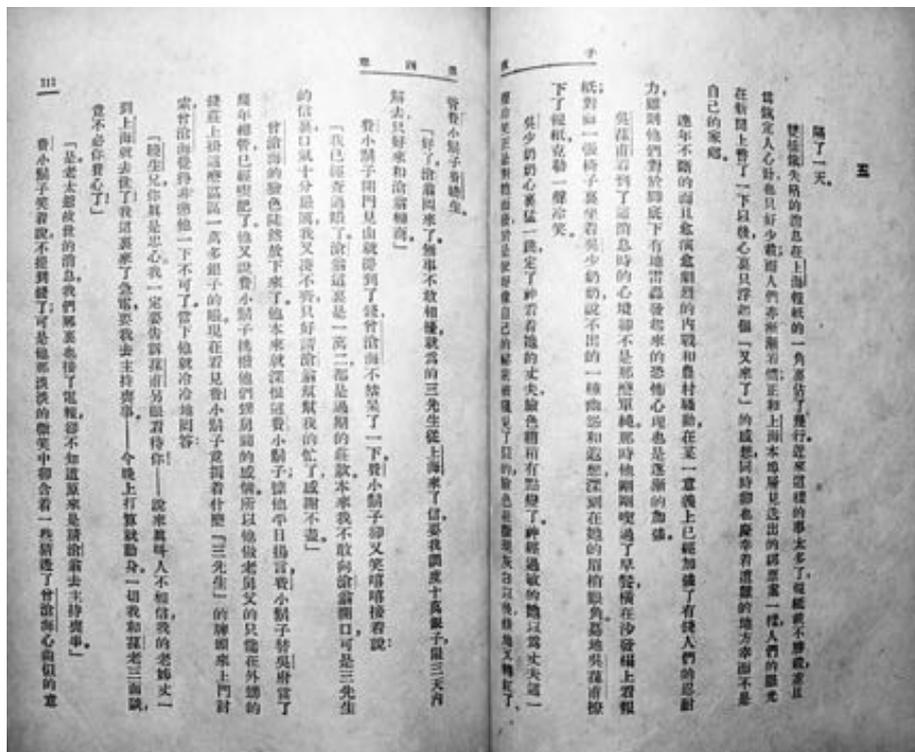


Plate 1  
*Beginning of Chapter 5 Following Page with Deletion of Parts from Chapter Four in Fourth Edition (June 1934).*

This means that the two lines of the last paragraph on the first page of ch. 5 with Mrs. Wu Sun-fu's heart missed a beat. She nerved herself to look at her husband, though her face had paled slightly. Sensitive as she was, she thought he was sneering at her. He must have found out her secret! Her pallor suddenly turned to a flush of shame.<sup>7</sup>

are immediately following page 111 from ch. 4 with »[...] he recognized him as Fei Hsiao-sheng, better known as Fei Little Beard, Wu Sun-fu's agent in the town.«<sup>8</sup> and therefore have no connection whatever with the preceding text. If the flaw was displayed to clearly, I think it is because the publishing house intended to show it had been compelled to do so. Chapter 15 is removed altogether, that is on page 450 just the chapter number 'fifteen' is printed, along with '(deleted)' replacing the full text, and when turning the page, number 483 follows instead of 451, so that the pages were not numbered anew is applied coherently.

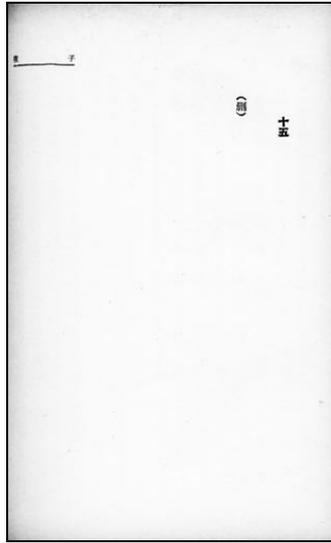


Plate 2

*Place of Beginning for Chapter Fifteen With Indication 'Deleted'  
in Fourth Edition (June 1934).*

- 7 Quoted from Mao Tun, *Midnight*, tr. by Hsu Meng-hsiung (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1957; repr. Hong Kong: C & W Publishing, 1976), 113. Indications of page, paragraph and line numbers in the running text of course to the respective Chinese edition—*Translator's note*.
- 8 Quoted from Mao Tun, *Midnight*, 101—*Translator's note*.

At the bottom of the left-hand side of the copyright page, there are two lines in small script saying: »In accordance with the Authors' Copyright Law, registration of this book has been applied for, while deletions have been done in compliance with the ordinance of the Central Propaganda Committee.« On the verso of the copyright page, there is a seal »Cleared by the Executive Committee of the Chinese Guomindang in the Special Municipality of Shanghai: Examination of Kaiming shudian.«<sup>9</sup> The price was 1.40 Yuan.



Plate 3

*Copyright Page of the Fourth Edition (June 1934).*

- 9 The whole text of this material is recorded in the Postface to *Qijieting zaxwen erji* 且介亭二雞 [Second Collection from the Pavilion of the Semi-Concession; ], in *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 [Complete Works of Lu Xun], 18 vols. (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 2005), 6: 463-481, and thereby known to interested scholar, so that there is no need to quote it here in full.

The copy of the 6th (abridged) edition of *Midnight* the present author saw in the Provincial Library of Jilin is also in the 32 *kai* size for unknown reasons has a pink, not a green cover, while the book-title in seal-script is unchanged. It has the same measures as the 4th edition, but is only 2.5 cm thick. Again it has nominally 577 pages, but in fact there are just 511 pages, because chapters 4 (pages 96–125) and 15 (450–482) are missing, i.e. a total of 66 pages. With pages 98–124, basically the whole chapter 4 is missing (it runs over pages 96–125), which probably happened because the publishing house wanted to protect its business. Therefore, the chapter number ‘four’ appears at the end of chapter 3 and the text is again substituted by ‘(deleted)’, while turning over the page leads to 126 instead of 96. Also chapter 15 is fully deleted and only ‘fifteen’ along with ‘(deleted)’ is printed, and turning over the page shows 483, not 451. Again not numbering the pages anew is done consistently. This was strictly following the ban ordered by the Guomindang, and nothing more. The text in small types on the copyright page, however, differs from the 4th edition: »Ministry of Internal Affairs Registration Permission Number 3534«, again with the seal on the verso »Examination Result Pronounced by the Executive Committee of the Chinese Guomindang in the Special City Shanghai: Examination of Kaiming shudian«, yet with the 12 characters printed for »This book is handled in compliance with paragraph 4 of the respective regulations.«, which was necessary to confirm that it may be publicly sold. Paragraph 4 reads as follows: »As soon as inappropriate wording or inappropriate chapter or paragraphs are modified or removed, this side grants permission for distribution and sale.« The 7th edition is completely identical with the 6th and sold for 1.20 Yuan.



Plate 4

Facsimile of Clearing No 1592 for Sixth Edition (September 1935).

From the above it becomes clear that after *Midnight* went through censorship the publisher by no means immediately removed the two incriminated chapters, but that he only made partial adjustments to chapter 4 while removing the whole chapter 15. Only under pressure chapter 4 was fully removed afterwards. I do not dare speculating on whether the full chapter 4 was removed from the 5th edition onwards, as I have not seen it, and may just safely say that it was deleted in the 6th edition. Beyond these two text portions, the two distinct abridged editions are absolutely identical in their text, the page numbering and also the font of Song-style characters in size no 5 [no 1 is biggest] used, and so we may also determine that the size of the paper used was also identical. Seen this, what Qu Qiubai and Kong Haizhu said about the abridged editions is not accurate, or maybe what they saw was not the 4th but another edition. Moreover they did not mention the two important supporting texts »In accordance with the Authors' Copyright Law, registration of this book has been applied for, while deletions have been done in compliance with the ordinance of the Central Propaganda Committee.« and »This book is handled in compliance with paragraph 4 of the respective regulations.« and the detailed analysis provided in the present article.

We may now establish that from June 1934 onwards Kaiming shudian had four different abridged versions of *Midnight* printed and not just one, namely the 4th edition (Jun 1934), the 5th (Feb 1935), the 6th (Sep 1935), and the 7th (Sep 1936). Among them, the 4th is slightly different, while the 5th to 7th are identical. If Xu Diaofu believed that the 6th edition was complete Kong Haizhu presumed that »only the sixth edition was an abridged version and the original version was restored hereafter, remains unclear«, this may now be denied, as the present writer has seen a copy the 7th edition.

When then were the two deleted section of *Midnight* inserted into the book making it complete again? According to the material I have at hand, it should be no later than February 1939. Yet there remains some doubt, as the February 1939 complete version of *Midnight* carries the indication »7th edition«. After that, Kaiming shudian also published an 8th and a 9th edition (in June and Sep 1939, respectively). Why were there two 7th editions then? Were there other editions between September 1936 and February 1939? How did they depend on each other? These remain open questions that still require further research.

*Sichuan University, College of Literature and Journalism, Chengdu*

*Translated from Chinese  
by Raoul David Findeisen*