hovers between satire of petrified Confucian institutions—such as the civil service examination system—and the ideal vision of a true form of Confucianism. Cao Xueqin’s *The Story of the Stone* (1791), an epic family saga of glamour and decline, conveys an even more ambiguous picture of ideals and evils of Confucianism in the broader context of intellectual, artistic, and sexual aspirations in life.

The conflict between Confucianism as the dogma of a disingenuous ruling elite and its potential as a vision for a good life...in a just society resonated strongly in other East Asian countries, many of which had a Chinese-style ruling elite trained in the Confucian canon. Both Kiku, the heroine of *The Tale of Kiku*, by the Vietnamese writer Nguyễn Du (1765–1820), and Ch’ŏnhyang, the heroine of the Korean narrative *Samguk Sagi* (The Song of Ch’ŏn-hyang), are heroines whose social status or lifestyle offends official Confucian decorum, but who represent a true form of Confucianism, effectively teaching the hypocritical guardians of public morality what Confucianism could and should mean at its best.

Vernacular literature is an enthralling and varied body of literature that thrived alongside the classical tradition in early modern China and influenced many later writers. The intellect of the first half of the twentieth century, who called for a literary revolution that would abolish classical Chinese and the privileges that were associated with it, propelled this body of literature into the limelight and belligerently declared it to be the “true” tradition of Chinese literature: it spoke the language of the people; it decried hypocrisy, violence, and corruption through money and power; and it celebrated passion, truth, love, and heroic loyalty to oneself and one’s principles. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, when China’s revolutionary rhetoric has lost its earlier edge, we can recognize vernacular literature as a complementary, equal part to the classical tradition, from which it drew generously while also significantly expanding and enriching its literary themes and expressive power.

**Nothing is impossible in *The Journey to the West***. People and fantastic creatures are whisked through the universe, a magic monkey can create thousands of companions by blowing on a wisp of his hair, and virgin monkeys can become pregnant. The novel has won over generations of readers with its unusual blend of a fast-paced, suspenseful martial-arts narrative and religious allegory, as well as its vivid satirical portrait of the workings and failings of human and heavenly bureaucracies.

*The Journey to the West* was not the work of a single person. First published in 1592, the novel is a product of the cumulative retelling of the story, which circulated orally and was adapted and transformed through the centuries. The final form of these stories in this vast, sprawling compendium of one hundred chapters transformed the traditional material into a great work of literature.

Scholars are not entirely certain whether Wu Cheng’en did indeed give final shape to the story and was the author of the 1592 edition of *The Journey to the West*. But a local gazetteer of his home prefecture connects this title to his name. This piece of evidence is further supported by the fact that Wu had a reputation for being a versatile poet (there are over 1,700 poems in the novel), and for writing on mythical and supernatural subjects in a satirical style. Also, he was a native of a region in southeast China, whose dialect appears in the novel. We do not know much more about Wu than that he was a minor official serving under the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).

The core of the story had a historical basis in the journey of the monk Xuanzang, or Tripitaka (596–664), who traveled from Chi-ha to India in search of Buddhist scriptures during the reign of Emperor Taizong, one of the most splendid emperors of the Tang Dynasty (618–907). At the time, travel to the Western territories was forbidden and Tripitaka could have faced arrest and execution for his transgression. But when he returned seventeen years later with the coveted scriptures, he earned immediate imperial patronage and was allowed to settle down, translate the new scriptures, and propagate them.

He spent the last twenty years of his life in the Tang capital of Chiangan (modern-day Xi’an), translating hundreds of sutras and other Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese, more than any other person before him had ever done. He did write a brief record of his experience during his travels.

The account of the historical Xuanzang had virtually nothing to do with the much later novel, but it may have served as the early basis from which the story began to be retold. Pilgrimages to India were by no means unique among Chinese monks of this era, but Tripitaka’s journey somehow captured the popular imagination; it was retold in stories and plays, until it finally emerged as *The Journey to the West*.

As Xuanzang’s journey was retold, the most important addition was his acquisition of a wise and brave disciple named Sun Wukong, the Monkey Monarch or Vacuity. Though already made his appearance in a twelfth-century
version of the story and came to go
dominant in the full novel version
that the other major English translation
of the novel, published in 1943, was named
after this character: Monkey. An argu-
ment can be made, from a Buddhist
point of view, that Tripitaka, however
impeccable and timorous, is the novel’s true
hero. But for most readers the mon-
key’s spindly vitality and boundless
humor remain the center of interest.
Tripitaka is also accompanied by the
ever-hungry and lustful Bajie (altern-
ately called Pilgy), a Daoist immortal
who was banished to the human
world for flirting with a goddess and
who becomes increasingly unsympa-
thetic as the journey progresses. Tripi-
taka’s third disciple, and protector is
the gentle Sha monk (also called
“Sandy”), a former marshal of the hosts
of Heaven who was sent to the bottom
of a river to expiate the sin of having
broken the ceremonial cup of the Jade
Emperor, a powerful Daoist deity.

Throughout their journey, the four
travelers are watched over, and some-
times interact with, a number of other-
worldly beings: an assortment of benign
bodhisattvas (buddhas who linger in
this world to help others) and a Daoist
pantheon of unruly and sometimes
dangerous deities. On the earthly plane
the pilgrims move through a landscape
of strange kingdoms and monsters,
stepping sometimes to help those in
need or to protect themselves from
harm. Some of the earthly monsters
belong to the places where the pilgrims
find them, but many of the demons
and terrors that the travelers en-
counter are either exiles and escapees
from the heavenly realm or are sent
on purpose to test the pilgrims. Al-
though the story of the Buddhist monk
at times shows the traditional hostility
of Buddhism against Daoism, Xuan-
zang’s quest has a broader, conciliatory
message that sees Confucianism, Bud-
dhism, and Daoism as complementary
truths. As the Buddha says about the
scriptures before the monk and his
companions, “If India, they are
for the cultivation of immortality and
the gate to ultimate virtue.” Thus Bud-
dhist scriptures also serve the purpose
of fulfilling the Daoist desire for self-
preservation and immortality as well as
the Confucian quest for moral virtue.

Surrounded by three guardian, disci-
plars who are endowed with a more gen-
eral, allegorical meaning, Tripitaka is
the only truly human character in The
Journey to the West. He is easily fright-
ened, sometimes petulant, and never
knows what to do. He is not so much
driven on the pilgrimage by determina-
resolution to merely carry along by it.
Yet he alone is the character destined
for full Buddhahood at the end, and his
apparent lack of concern for the quest
and for his disciples has been inter-
preted as the true manifestation of
Buddhist detachment. Although “Pil-
gim,” the unsavory King, grows increas-
ingly devoted to his master through
the course of the novel, Tripitaka never
totally trusts him, however much he
depends on him. If there is a difficult
Buddhist lesson in the novel, it is to
grasp how Tripitaka, the ordinary man
as saint, can be the novel’s true hero.
He is the empty center of the group,
kept alive and carried forward by his
more powerful and active disciples,
both willing and unwilling. Yet he
remains the master, and without him
the pilgrimage would not exist.

Both Pilgrim and Bajie are creatures
of desire, though the nature of their
desires differs greatly. Pilgrim, who
had once lived an idyllic life with his
monkey subjects in Water Curtain
Cave at Flower-Fruit Mountain, is,
in the novel’s early chapters, driven by
a hunger for knowledge and immortality
which takes him around the earth and
the heavens. In the first stage of his
existence, Pilgrim’s curiosity is never
perfectly directed; it is a turbulence of
spirit that always leads to mischief and
an urge to create chaos. He acquires
skills and magic tools that make him
more powerful, but since he uses them
unwisely, they only lead him to ever
more outrageous escapades. After
weakening havoc in Heaven and being
subdued by the god Erlang, he is impris-
oned by the Buddha under a
mountain for five hundred years.

Finally, Monkey is given a chance to
redeem himself by guarding Tripitaka
on his pilgrimage to India as “Pilgrim.”

During the course of the pilgrimage,
the monkey becomes increasingly
bound both to his master and to the
quest itself, without ever losing his
energy and humor. Despite occasional
outbursts of his former mischief mak-
ing, the quest becomes for Pilgrim
a structured series of challenges by
which he can focus, discipline his ram-
fluent intellect. The journey is
driven forward by Pilgrim alone, with
Tripitaka ever willing to give up in
despair and Bajie always ready to be
seduced or return to his wife. Monkey
understands the world with a comic
detachment that is in some ways akin
to Buddhist detachment, and this de-
tachment makes him always more
resourceful and often wiser than Tripi-
taka. Yet in his fierce energy and sheer
joy in the use of his mind, Monkey falls
short of the Buddhist ideal of true tran-
quility, while remaining the hero for
unenlightened mortals.

Pilgrim is a complex character with
many contradictions, as is perhaps fit-
ing for a creature that may be seen in
some sense as an allegory of the human
mind. Bajie, on the other hand, is a
straightforward and predictable emble-
m of human sensual appetites. In his ini-
tial domestic setting, as the unwelcome
son-in-law on Mr. Gao’s farm, Bajie
was at leat reliable and hardworking.
But in the enforced celibacy of the pil-
grimage, he grows increasingly slothful
and undependable. Now and then on
the journey he is permitted to gorge
himself, but every time he finds a beau-
tiful woman, something prevents him
from satisfying his sexual appetite.
Never having freely chosen the quest,
Bajie is always distracted by his desire
to go home to his wife—or to take
another along the way. Yet his peculiar
relationship with food and sex often makes
him an engaging character.

The selections printed here treat the
monk’s birth and early apprenticeship,
and Tripitaka’s dispatch to India—
which is destined by the Buddha, over-
seen by the Bodhisattva Guanyin,
and endorsed by Emperor Taizong.
The next two sequences show the adven-
tures and challenges Tripitaka and his
companions encounter in two peculiar
countries: one, a Daoist kingdom that
suppresses Buddhists, where the Bud-
dhist pilgrims are treated with endless
interventions for the sake of their brothers in faith; and the
other, a kingdom of women in which
the monk is erroneously imprisoned
by the water of a stream crossing its
territory. While searching for a cure
they have to resist the attack of female
charms and a female scorpion monster.
Finally, in the last sections of our selec-
tion they reach their goal in India and
receive the scriptures. Whisked back
to China by divine winds, they are re-
warded in a solemn ceremony by the
emperor back home in the capital of
Chang’an, according to their merits.

Critics count The Journey to the West
among the greatest novels of traditional
China, along with Cao Xueqin’s The
Story of the Stone. In the modern
period it has inspired films, musicals,
television series, comic books, anime
adaptations, and computer games. They
all capture facets of The Journey to the
West’s sprawling imagination and
playful spirit make it unlike any other
book.
In the mountain there is no passing of time;
The cold recedes, but one knows not the year.

One very hot morning, he was playing with a group of monkeys under the shade of some pine trees to escape the heat. Look at them, each amusing himself in his own way by

Swinging from branch to branch;
Searching for flowers and fruits;
They played two games or three
With pebbles and with pellets;
They circled sandy pits;
They built rare pagodas;
They chased the dragonflies;
They ran down small lizards:
Bowing low to the sky,
They worshiped Bodhisattvas;
They pulled the creeping vines;
They plaited mats with grass;
They searched to catch the louse;
They bit or crushed with their nails;
They dressed their furry coats;
They scraped their fingernails;
Some jumped and leaped;
Some rubbed and rubbed;
Some pushed and pushed;
Some pressed and pressed;
Some pulled and pulled;
Some tugged and tugged.
Beneath the pine forest they played without a care,
Washing themselves in the green-water stream.

So, after the monkeys had frolicked for a while, they went to bathe in the mountain stream and saw that its current tumbled and splashed like rumbling melons. As the old saying goes,

Fowls have their fowl speech,
And beasts have their beast language.

The monkeys said to each other, "We don't know where this water comes from. Since we have nothing to do today, let us follow the stream up to its source to have some fun." With a shriek of joy, they dragged along males and females, calling out to brothers and sisters, and scrambled up the mountain alongside the stream. Reaching its source, they found a great waterfall. What they saw was

A column of rising white rainbows!
A thousand fathoms of dancing waves—
Which the sea wind buffets but cannot sever,
On which the river moon shines and repose.
Its cold breath divides the green ranges;
Its tributaries moisten the blue-green hill-sides.
This torrential body, its name a cascade,
Seems truly, like a hanging curtain.

All the monkeys clapped their hands in acclaim: "Marvelous water! Marvelous water! So this waterfall is distantly connected with the stream at the base of the mountain, and flows directly out, even to the great ocean." They said also, "If any of us had the ability to penetrate the curtain and find out where the water comes from without hurting himself, we would honor him as king." They gave the call three times, when suddenly the stone monkey leaped out from the crowd. He answered the challenge with a loud voice. "I'll go in! I'll go in!" What a monkey! For

Today his fame will spread wide.
His fortune arrives with the time;
He's fated to live in this place,
Sent by a king to this godly palace.

Look at him! He closed his eyes, crouched low, and with one leap he jumped straight through the waterfall. Opening his eyes at once and raising his head to look around, he saw that there was neither water nor waves inside, only a gleaming, shining bridge. He paused to collect himself and looked more carefully again: it was a bridge made of sheet iron. The water beneath it surged through a hole in the rock to reach the outside, filling in all the space under the arch. With bent body he climbed on the bridge, looking about as he walked, and discovered a beautiful place that seemed to be some kind of residence. Then he saw

Fresh mosses piling up indigo,
White clouds like jade afloat,
And luminous sheens of mist and smoke;
Empty windows, quiet rooms,
And carved flowers growing smoothly on benches;
Stalactites suspended in milky caves;
Rare blossoms voluminous over the ground.
Pans and stones near the wall show traces of fire;
Bottles and cups on the table contain leftovers.
The stone seats and beds were truly loveable;
The stone pots and bowls were more praiseworthy,
There were, furthermore, a stalk or two of tall bamboos,
And three or five sprigs of plum flowers.
With a few green pines always draped in rain,
This whole place indeed resembled a home.

After staring at the place for a long time, he jumped across the middle of the bridge and looked left and right. There in the middle was a stone tablet on which was inscribed in regular, large letters:

The Blessed Land of Flower-Fruit Mountain,
The Cave Heaven of Water-Curtain Cave.

Beside himself with delight, the stone monkey quickly turned around to go back out and, closing his eyes and crouching again, leaped out of the water. "A great stroke of luck," he exclaimed with two loud guttural, "a great stroke of luck." The other monkeys surrounded him and asked, "How is it inside? How deep is the water?" The stone monkey replied, "There isn't any water at all. There's a sheet iron bridge, and beyond it is a piece of Heaven-sent property. "What do you mean that there's property in there?" asked the monkeys.

Laughing, the stone monkey said, "This water splashes through a hole in the rock and fills the space under the bridge. Beside the bridge there is a stone mansion with trees and flowers. Inside are stone ovens and stoves, stone pots and pans, stone beds and benches. A stone tablet in the middle has the inscription,

"The Blessed Land of the Flower-Fruit Mountain,
The Cave Heaven of the Water-Curtain Cave.

This is truly the place for us to settle in. It is, moreover, very spacious inside and can hold thousands of the young and old. Let's all go live in there, and spare ourselves from being subject to the whims of Heaven. For we have in there

A retreat from the wind,
A shelter from the rain.
You fear no frost or snow;
You hear no thunderclap.
Mist and smoke are brightened,
Warmed by a holy light—
The pines are ever green:
Rare flowers, daily new."

When the monkeys heard that, they were delighted, saying, "You go in first and lead the way." The stone monkey closed his eyes again, crouched low, and jumped inside. "All of you," he cried, "Follow me in! Follow me in!" The bravest of the monkeys leaped in at once, but the more timid ones stuck out their heads and then drew them back, scratched their ears, rubbed their jaws, and chattered noisily. After milling around for some time, they too bounded inside. Jumping across the bridge, they were all soon sniffing dishes, clucking bowls, or fighting for stoves and beds—shoving and hustling things hither and thither. Befitting their stubbornly pranksish nature, the monkeys could not keep still for a moment and stopped only when they were utterly exhausted. The stone monkey then solemnly took a seat above and spoke to them: 'Gentlemen! If a man lacks trustworthiness, it is difficult to know what he can accomplish!' You yourselves promised just now that whoever could get in, he and leave again without hurting himself would be honored as king. Now that I have come in and gone out, gone out and come in, and have found for all of you this Heavenly grotto in which you may reside securely and enjoy the privilege of raising a family, why don't you honor me as your king?" When the monkeys heard this, they all folded their hands on their hearts and obediently prostrated themselves. Each one of them then lined up according to rank and

4. From the Confucian Analects.
three species that are not subject to Yama, King of the Underworld. The Monkey King said, "Do you know who they are? The monkey said, "They are the Buddha, the immortals, and the holy sages, these three alone can avoid the Wheel of Transmigration as well as the process of birth and destruction, and live as long as Heaven and Earth, the mountains and the stream! Where do they live?" asked the Monkey King. The monkey said, "They do not live beyond the world of the Jambudvipa for they dwell within ancient caves on immortal mountains." When the Monkey King heard this, he was filled with delight, saying, "Tomorrow I shall take leave of you all and go down the mountain. Even if I have to wander with the clouds to the corner of the sea or journey to the distant edges of Heaven, I intend to find these three kinds of people. I will learn from them how to be young forever and escape the calamity inflicted by King Yama." Lo, this utterance at once led him

To leap free of the Transmigration Net, And be the Great Sage Equal to Heaven.

All the monkeys clapped their hands in acclamation, saying, "Wonderful! Wonderful! Tomorrow we shall scale the mountain ranges to gather plenty of fruits, so that we may send the Great King off with a great banquet."

Next day the monkeys duly went to gather ethereal peaches, to pick rare fruits, to dig out mountain herbs, and to chop yellow-sperms. They brought in an orderly manner every variety of orchids and epiphyllums, exotic plants and strange flowers. They set out the stone chairs and stone tables, covering the tables with immortal wines and food. Look at the

Golden balls and pearly pellets,
Red ripeness and yellow plumpness,
Golden balls and pearly pellets are the cherries, Their colors truly luscious.
Red ripeness and yellow plumpness are the plums,
Tasted—4 fragrant tartness.
Fresh fungums
Of sweet pulps and thin skins.
Fiery lychees
Of small pits and red sacks.
Great fruits of the Typhon are presented by the branches?
The bunches yellow with burlap held up their leaves.
Pears like rabbit heads and dates like chicken hearts
Dripel your thirst, your sorrow, and the effects of wine.

Fragrant peaches and soft almonds
Are sweet as the whistle of life.
Crisply fresh plums and strawberries
Are sour, like cheese and buttermilk.
Red pulps and black seeds compose the fruit, water yellow.
Four clusters of yellow rind enfold the big persimmon.

When the pomegranates are split wide.
Cinnabar grains glisten like specks of ruby.
When the chestnuts are cracked open.
Their tough brauns are hard like cornelian.

5. Plant whose roots were used for medicinal purposes.
Walnut and silver almonds fare well with tea.
Coconuts and grapes may be pressed into wine.
Hazelnuts, yeas, and crabapples overfill the dishes.
Kumquats, sugarcanes, tangerines, and oranges crowd the tables.
Sweet yams are baked,
Yellow-sperms overboiled,
The tubers minced with seeds of waterlily,
And soup in stone pots simmers on a gentle fire.
Man kind may boast its delicious dainties,
But what can best the pleasure of mountain monkeys.

The monkeys honored the Monkey King with the seat at the head of the table, while they sat below according to their age and rank. They drank for a whole day, each of the monkeys taking a turn to go forward and present the Monkey King with wine, flowers, and fruits. Next day the Monkey King rose early and gave the instruction, "Little ones, cut me some pinewood and make me a raft. Then find me a bamboo for the pole, and gather some fruits and the like. I'm about to leave." When all was ready, he got onto the raft by himself. Pushing off with all his might, he drifted out toward the great ocean and, taking advantage of the wind, set sail for the border of South Jambudvīpa Continent. Here is the consequence of this journey:

The Heaven-born monkey, strong in magic might,
Leaves the mount and roves the raft to catch fair wind.
He drifted across the sea to seek immortals' land.
Determined in heart and mind to achieve great things.
It's his lot, his portion, to quit earthly realm.
Calm and carefree, he'll face a lofty sage.
He'll meet, I think, a true, discerning friend.

The source disclosed, all dharma will be known.

It was indeed his fortune that, after he had boarded the wooden raft, a strong southeast wind which lasted for days sent him to the northwestern coast, the border of the South Jambudvīpa Continent. He took the pole to test the water, and, finding it shallow one day, he abandoned the raft and jumped ashore. On the beach there were people fishing, hunting wild geese, digging clams, and draining salt. He approached them and, making a weird face and some strange antics, he scared them into dropping their baskets and nets and scattering in all directions. One of them could not run and was caught by the Monkey King, who stripped him of his clothes and put them on himself, aping the way humans wore them. With a swagger he walked through countries and prefectures, imitating human speech and human manners in the marketplaces. He rested by night and dined in the morning, but he was bent on finding the way of the Buddhas, immortals, and holy sages, on discovering the formula for eternal youth. He saw, however, that the people of the world were all seekers after profit and fame; there was not one who showed concern for his appointed end. This is their condition:

When will end this quest for fortune and fame,
This travail of rising and rising fate?

Riding on mules they long for noble steeds;
By now prime ministers, they hope to be kings.
For food and raiment they suffer stress and strain,
Never fearing Yama's call to reckoning.
Seeking wealth and power to give to sons of cons,
There's not one ever willing to turn back.

The Monkey King searched diligently for the way of immortality, but he had no chance of meeting it. Going through big cities and visiting small towns, he unwittingly spent eight or nine years on the South Jambudvīpa Continent before he suddenly came upon the Great Western Ocean. He thought that there would certainly be immortals living beyond the ocean; so, having built himself a raft like the previous one, he once again drifted across the Western Ocean until he reached the West Apasagandāya Continent. After landing, he searched for a long time, when all at once he came upon a tall and beautiful mountain with thick forests at its base. Since he was afraid neither of wolves and lizards nor of tigers and leopards, he went straight to the top to look around. It was indeed a magnificent mountain:

A thousand peaks stand like rows of spears,
Like ten thousand cabbis of screen widespread.
The sun's beams lightly enclose the azure mist;
In darkening rain, the mount's color turns cool and green.
Dry creepers entwine old trees;
Ancient fords edge secluded paths.
Rare flowers and luxuriant grass.
Tall bamboos and lofty pines.
Tall bamboos and lofty pines
For ten thousand years grow green in this blessed land.
Rare flowers and luxuriant grass
In all seasons bloom as in the Isles of the Blest.
The calls of birds hidden are near.
The sounds of streams rushing are clear.
Deep inside deep canyons the orchids intertwine.
On every ridge and crag sprout lichens and mosses.

As he was looking about, he suddenly heard the sound of a man speaking deep within the woods. Hurriedly he dashed into the forest and cocked his ear to listen. It was some poet singing, and the song went thus:

I watch chess games, my axe handle's whitened
I crop at wood, zhieng zhieng the kindling
I walk slowly by the cloud's fringe, at the valley's entrance
Selling my firewood to buy some wine
I am happy and laugh without restraint
When the path is frosted in autumn's height

6. One of the magnetic currents recognized by geomancers.
Laughing, the woodcutter said, "I can tell you this much: the tune of that lyric is named 'A Court Full of Blossoms,' and it was taught to me by an immortal, a neighbor of mine. He saw that I had to struggle to make a living and that my days were full of worries; so he told me to recite the poem whenever I was troubled. This, he said, would both comfort me and rid me of my difficulties. It happened that I was anxious about something just now; so I sang the song. It didn't occur to me that I would be overheard."

The Monkey King said, "If you are a neighbor of the immortal, why don't you follow him in the cultivation of the Way? Wouldn't it be nice to learn from him the formula for eternal youth?" The woodcutter said, "My lot has been a hard one all my life. When I was young, I was indebted to my parents' picture until I was eight or nine. As soon as I began to have some understanding of human affairs, my father unfortunately died, and my mother remained a widow. I had no brothers or sisters; so there was no alternative but for me alone to support and care for my mother. Now that my mother is growing old, all the more I dare not leave her. Moreover, my fields are rather barren and desolate, and we haven't enough food or clothing. I can't do more than chop two bundles of firewood to take to the market in exchange for a few pennies to buy a few pints of rice. I look after myself, serving it to my mother with the tea that I make. That's why I can't practice austerities."

The Monkey King said, "According to what you have said, you are indeed a gentleman of filial piety, and you will certainly be rewarded in the future. I hope, however, that you will show me the way to the immortal's abode, so that I may revereently call upon him." "It's not far. It's not far," the woodcutter said.

"This mountain is called the Mountain of Mind and Heart, and in it is the Cave of Slanting Moon and Three Stars. Inside the cave is an immortal by the name of Patriarch Saisho, who has already sent out innumerable disciples. Even now, there are thirty or forty persons who are practicing austerities with him. Follow this narrow path and travel south for about seven or eight miles, and you will come to his home." Grabbing at the woodcutter, the Monkey King said, "Honored brother, go with me. If I receive any benefit, I will not forget the favor of your guidance." "What a bony-headed fellow you are," the woodcutter said, "I have just finished telling you these things, and you still don't understand. Do you go with you, won't I be neglecting my livelihood? And who will take care of my mother? I must chop my firewood. You go on by yourself."

When the Monkey King heard this, he had to take his leave. Emerging from the deep forest, he found the path and went straight to the slope of a hill. After he had traveled seven or eight miles, a cave-dwelling indeed came into sight: He stood up straight to take a better look at this splendid place, and this was what he saw:

7. Also the title of the ancient Chinese Daoist classic, the Daojing (The Classic of the Way and Virtue).
Strange flowers spread brocades before the door.
Jade-like grass emits fragrance beside the bridge.
On ridges protruding grow moist green licorice.
On hanging cliffs cling the long blue mosses.
The cries of immortal cranes are often heard.
Once in a while a phoenix soars overhead.
When the cranes cry,
Their sounds reach through, the marsh to the distant sky.
When the phoenix soars up,
Its plumage with five bright colors embroders the clouds.
Black apes and white deer may come or hide.
Gold lions and jade elephants may leave or hide.
Look with care at this blessed, holy place.
It has the true semblance of Paradise.

He noticed that the door of the cave was tightly shut; all was quiet, and there was no sign of any human inhabitant. He turned around and suddenly perceived, at the top of the cliff, a stone slab approximately eight feet wide and over thirty feet tall. Oh, it was written in large letters:

The Mountain of Mind and Heart:
The Cave of Shining Moon and Three Stars.

Immensely pleased, the Handsome Monkey King said, "People here are truly honest. This mountain and this cave really do exist!" He stared at the place for a long time but did not knock. Instead, he jumped onto the branch of a pine tree, picked a few pink seeds and ate them, and began to play.

After a moment he heard the door of the cave open with a squeak, and an immortal youth walked out. His bearing was exceedingly graceful; his features were highly refined. This was certainly no ordinary young mortal, for he had

- His hair bound with two cords of silk,
- A wide robe with two sleeves of wind,
- His body and face seemed more distinct,
- His visage and mind were both detached,
- Long a stranger to all worldly things,
- He was the mountain's ageless boy,
- Untainted even with a speck of dust,
- He feared no havoc by the seasons wrought.

After coming through the door, the boy shouted, "Who is causing disturbance here?" With a bound the Monkey King leaped down from the tree, and went up to him bowing. "Immortal boy," he said, "I am a seeker of the way of immortality. I would never dare cause any disturbance." With a chuckle, the immortal youth asked, "Are you a seeker of the Way?" "I am indeed," answered the Monkey King. "My master at the house," the boy said, "has just left his couch to give a lecture on the platform. Before even announcing his theme, however, he told me to go out and open the door, saying, 'There is someone outside who wants to practice austerities. You may go and receive him.' It must be you, I suppose." The Monkey King said, smiling, "It is I, most assuredly!" "Follow me in then," said the boy. With solemnity the Monkey King set his clothes in order and followed the boy into the depths of the cave. They passed rows and rows of lofty towers and huge alcoves, of pearly chambers and caryed-arches. After walking through innumerable quiet chambers and empty studies, they finally reached the base of the green jade platform. Patriarch Sunbodhi was seen seated solemnly on the platform, with thirty lesser immortals standing below in rows. He was truly

An immortal of great ken and purest mien,
Master Sunbodhi, whose wondrous form of the West
Had no end or birth for the work of Double Three.
His whole spirit and breath were with merit filled.
Empty, spontaneous, it could change at will,
His Buddha-nature able to do all things.
The same age as Heaven had his majestic frame.
Fully tried and enlightened was this grand saint.

As soon as the Handsome Monkey King saw him, he prostrated himself and kowtowed times without number, saying, "Master! Master! I, your pupil, pay you my sincere homage." The Patriarch said, "Where do you come from? Let's hear you state clearly your name and country before you kowtow again." The Monkey King said, "Your pupil came from the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain, in the Asta Country of the East Paravideha Continent." "Chase him out of here," the Patriarch shouted. "He is nothing but a liar and a fabricator of falsehood. How can he possibly be interested in attaining enlightenment?" The Monkey King hastened to kowtow uncoursingly and to say, "Your pupil's word is an honest one, without any deceit." The Patriarch said, "If you are telling the truth, how is it that you mention the East Paravideha Continent? Separating this place and mine are two great oceans and the entire region of the South Jambudipa Continent. How could you possibly get here?" Again kowtowing, the Monkey King said, "Your pupil drifted across the oceans and trudged through many regions for more than ten years before finding this place." The Patriarch said, "If you have come on a long journey in many stages, I'll let that pass. What is your xing?" The Monkey King again replied, "I have no xing. If a man rebukes me, I am not offended; if he hits me, I am not angered. In fact, I simply repay him with a ceremonial greeting and that's all. My whole life's without ill temper. 'I'm not speaking of your temper,' the Patriarch said, 'I'm asking after the name of your parents.' "I have no parents either," said the Monkey King. The Patriarch said, "If you have no parents, you must have been born from a tree. 'Not from a tree,' said the Monkey King, 'but from a rock. I recall that there used to be an immortal stone on the Flower-Fruit Mountain. I was born the year the stone split open.'

When the Patriarch heard this, he was secretly pleased, and said, "Well, evidently you have been created by Heaven and Earth. Get up and show me how you walk." Snapping erect, the Monkey King scurried around a couple of times. The Patriarch laughed and said, "Though your features are not the most

8. A higher form of meditation, reflecting a doubling of the three standard practices.
9. A pun on xing, meaning both 'surname' and 'temper.'
The teaching of the Western Territory deny the relations of ruler and subject, of father and son. With the doctrines of the Three Ways and the Sutras, they urge the necessity of the Buddha and the simplicity. They emphasize the idea of the past in order to ensure the felicities of the future. By denying the past, they seek a way of escape. We admit, however, that both rulers and subjects of one's life are ordained by nature, but the conditions of public discharge or honor are determined by human volition. These phenomena are not, as some philosophers would maintain, ordained by Buddha. The teachings of Buddha did not exist in the time of the Three Kings and the Five Emperors, and yet those rulers were wise, their subjects loyal, and their reigns long-lasting. It was not until the period of Emperor Ling in the Han dynasty that the worship of foreign gods was established, but this meant only that priests of the Western Territory were permitted to propagate their faith. The event, in fact, represented a foreign intrusion in China, and the teachings are hardly worthy of belief.

When Taizong saw the memorial, he had it distributed among the various officials for discussion. At that time the prime minister Xiao Yu came forward and prostrated himself to address the throne, saying, "The teachings of Buddha, which have flourished in several previous dynasties, seek to teach the good and to restrain what is evil. In this way they are coeteris an aid to the nation, and there is no reason why they should be rejected. For Buddha after all is also a sage, and he who spurns a sage is himself lawless. I urge that the dissenter be severely punished."

Taking up the debate with Xiao Yu, Yu Yi contended that propriety had its foundation in society, and that religious tenets were not necessarily of benefit to all. Indeed, he believed that the Son of Heaven himself, just as he used an inherited body to rule, had no need of an inherited body. Xiao Yu, however, did not agree. Instead, he spoke in favor of the Buddha's precepts, and the debate continued. In the end, however, the emperor decided in favor of the Buddhist teachings, and a new era was born.

From Chapter 12

The Tang emperor, firm in sincerity, consoles the Grand Mass; Guan Yin, revealing herself, converts Gold Ciada.

The work was finished and reported to Taizong; he was exceedingly pleased. He then gathered a large number of officials together to issue a public notice be issued to invite monks for the celebration of the Grand Mass of Land and Water, so that those orphaned souls in the Region of Darkness might find salvation. The notice went throughout the empire, and officials of all regions were asked to recommend monks illustrious for their piety and piety, to go to Chang'an for the Mass. In less than a month's time, the various monks from the empire had arrived. The Tang emperor ordered the court historian, Fu Yi, to select an illustrious priest to take charge of the ceremonies. When Yu Yi received the order, however, he presented a memorial to the throne, which attempted to dispute the worth of Buddha. The memorial said:

1. Guan Yin is the Bodhisattva of Mercy. "Gold Ciada" refers to the monk Xuanzang who was considered the reincarnation of the Buddha's second disciple, named Gold Ciada. Because he failed to follow the master's teachings, he was banished and reborn in China. His acquisition of the scriptures and adherence to Buddhism allow him to enter the end to reach Buddhahood.

2. Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty, who ruled from 626 to 649 and dispatched Xuanzang to India.

3. "Buddhist derogates the principles of our Gom, the Emperor, for the sake of the people; and the Western region, which is the principle, is surrounded by the 'relatives of Buddha' as the reference of our Gom, and the ruler and subject, of father and son stands for the Chinese emperor."