

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 the 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 Kiêu, the heroine of *The Tale of Kiêu*, by the Vietnamese writer Nguyễn Du (1765–1820), and Ch'unhyang, the heroine of the Korean narrative *p'ansori* drama *The Song of Ch'un-hyang*, are heroines whose social status or lifestyle offends official Confucian decorum, but who represent a truer 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 intellectuals 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.

WU CHENG'EN

ca. 1500–1582

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 monks 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 China 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 Chang'an (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 wondrous disciple named Sun Wukong, "Monkey Aware of Vacuity." Monkey had already made his appearance in a twelfth-century

version of the story and came to so dominate the full novel version that the first major English translation of the novel, published in 1943, was named after this character: *Monkey*. An argument can be made, from a Buddhist point of view, that Tripitaka, however inept and timorous, is the novel's true hero. But for most readers the monkey's splendid vitality and boundless humor remain the center of interest. Tripitaka is also accompanied by the ever-hungry and lustful Bajie, (alternately called "Pigsy"), a Daoist immortal who was banned to the human world for flirting with a goddess and who becomes increasingly unsympathetic as the journey progresses. Tripitaka'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 crystal cup of the Jade Emperor, a powerful Daoist deity.

Throughout their journey, the four travelers are watched over, and sometimes interact with, a number of otherworldly 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, stopping 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 temptresses that the travelers encounter are either exiles and escapees from the heavenly realm or are sent on purpose to test the pilgrims. Although the story of the Buddhist monk at times shows the traditional hostility of Buddhism against Daoism, Xuanzang's quest has a broader, conciliatory message that sees Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism as complementary

truths. As the Buddha says about the scriptures before the monk and his companions set out to India, they "are for the cultivation of immortality and the gate to ultimate virtue." Thus Buddhist 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 disciples who are endowed with a more general, allegorical meaning, Tripitaka is the only truly human character in *The Journey to the West*. He is easily frightened, sometimes petulant, and never knows what to do. He is not so much driven on the pilgrimage by determined resolve as merely carried 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 interpreted as the true manifestation of Buddhist detachment. Although "Pilgrim," the monkey king, grows increasingly devoted to his master through the course of the novel, Tripitaka never fully 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 wreaking havoc in Heaven and being subdued by the god Erlang, he is imprisoned 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 making, the quest becomes for Pilgrim a structured series of challenges by which he can focus and discipline his rambunctious 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 detachment makes him always more resourceful and often wiser than Tripitaka. Yet in his fierce energy and sheer joy in the use of his mind, Monkey falls short of the Buddhist ideal of true tranquility, while remaining the hero for unenlightened mortals.

Pilgrim is a complex character with many contradictions, as is perhaps fitting 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 emblem of human sensual appetites. In his initial domestic setting, as the unwelcome son-in-law on Mr. Gao's farm, Bajie was at least reliable and hardworking. But in the enforced celibacy of the pilgrimage, he grows increasingly slothful

and undependable. Now and then on the journey he is permitted to gorge himself, but every time he finds a beautiful 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 preoccupation with food and sex often makes him an endearing character.

The selections printed here treat the monkey's birth and early apprenticeship, and Tripitaka's dispatch to India, which is destined by the Buddha, overseen by the Bodhisattva Guanyin, and endorsed by Emperor Taizong. The next two sequences show the adventures and challenges Tripitaka and his companions encounter in two peculiar countries: one, a Daoist kingdom that suppresses Buddhists, where the Buddhist pilgrims straighten out the record with hilarious interventions for the sake of their brothers in faith; and the other, a kingdom of women, in which the monk is erroneously impregnated 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 selection they reach their goal in India and receive the scriptures. Whisked back to China by divine winds, they are rewarded 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*, whose sprawling imagination and playful esprit make it unlike any other book.

From *The Journey to the West*¹

From Chapter 1

*The divine root being conceived, the origin appears;
The moral nature cultivated, the Great Dao is born.*

There was on top of that very mountain², an immortal stone, which measured thirty-six feet and five inches in height and twenty-four feet in circumference. The height of thirty-six feet and five inches corresponded to the three hundred and sixty-five cyclical degrees, while the circumference of twenty-four feet corresponded to the twenty-four solar terms of the calendar. On the stone were also nine perforations and eight holes, which corresponded to the Palaces of the Nine Constellations and the Eight Trigrams. Thought it lacked the shade of trees on all sides, it was set off by epidendrams on the left and right. Since the creation of the world, it had been nourished for a long period by the seeds of Heaven and Earth and by the essences of the sun and the moon. Until quickened by divine inspiration, it became pregnant with a divine embryo. One day, it split open, giving birth to a stone egg about the size of a playing ball. Exposed to the wind, it was transformed into a stone monkey endowed with fully developed features and limbs. Having learned at once to climb and run, this monkey also bowed to the four quarters, while two beams of golden light flashed from his eyes to reach even the Palace of the Polestar. The light disturbed the Great Benevolent Sage of Heaven, the Celestial Jade Emperor³ of the Most Venerable Deity, who, attended by his divine ministers, was sitting in the Cloud Palace of the Golden Arches, in the Treasure Hall of the Divine Mists. Upon seeing the glimmer of the golden beams, he ordered Thousand-Mile Eye and Fair-Wind Ear to open the South Heaven Gate and to look out. At this command the two captains went out to the gate, and, having looked intently and listened clearly, they returned presently to report: "Your subjects, obeying your command to locate the beams, discovered that they came from the Flower-Fruit Mountain at the border of the small Aolai Country, which lies to the east of the East Pürvavideha Continent. On this mountain is an immortal stone which has given birth to an egg. Exposed to the wind, it has been transformed into a monkey, who, when bowing to the four quarters, has flashed from his eyes those golden beams that reached the Palace of the Polestar. Now that he is taking some food and drink, the light is about to grow dim." With compassionate mercy the Jade Emperor declared: "These creatures from the world below are born of the essences of Heaven and Earth, and they need not surprise us."

That monkey in the mountain was able to walk, run, and leap about; he fed on grass and shrubs, drank from the brooks and streams, gathered mountain flowers, and searched out fruits from trees. He made his companions the tiger and the lizard, the wolf and the leopard; he befriended the civet and the deer, and he called the gibbon and the baboon his kin. At night he slept beneath stony ridges, and in the morning he sauntered about the caves and the peaks. Truly,

1. Translated by Anthony Yu.
2. Flower-Fruit-Mountain.

3. The chief deity in the Daoist pantheon.

*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 branches to branches,
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 leaned and leaned,
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 currents bounced 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 reposes.*

*Its cold breath divides the green ranges;
Its tributaries moisten the blue-green hillsides.
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 stoves near the wall show traces of fire;
Bottles and cups on the table contain leftovers.
The stone seats and beds were truly lovable;
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 guffaws, "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 braver 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 snatching dishes, clutching bowls, or fighting for stoves and beds—shoving and pushing things hither and thither. Befitting their stubbornly prankish 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: "Gen² tlemen! If a man lacks trustworthiness, it is difficult to know what he can accomplish!" You yourselves promised just now that whoever could get in here 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 breasts and obediently prostrated themselves. Each one of them then lined up according to rank and

age, and, bowing reverently, they intoned, "Long live our great king!" From that moment, the stone monkey ascended the throne of kingship. He did away with the word "stone" in his name and assumed the title, Handsome Monkey King. There is a testimonial poem which says:

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When triple spring mated to produce all things,
A divine stone was quickened by the sun and moon:
The egg changed to a monkey, perfecting the Great Way.
He took a name, matching elixir's success:
Formless, his inward shape is thus concealed:
His outer frame by action is plainly known.
In every age all persons will yield to him;
Named a king, a sage, he is free to roam.

The Handsome Monkey King thus led a flock of gibbons and baboons, some of whom were appointed by him as his officers and ministers. They toured the Flower-Fruit Mountain in the morning, and they lived in the Water-Curtain Cave by night. Living in concord and sympathy, they did not mingle with bird or beast but enjoyed their independence in perfect happiness. For such were their activities:

In the spring they gathered flowers for food and drink,
In the summer they went in quest of fruits for sustenance.
In the autumn they amassed tinos and chestnuts, to ward off time.
In the winter they searched for yellow-sperms⁵ to live out the year.

The Handsome Monkey King had enjoyed this insouciant existence for three or four hundred years when one day, while feasting with the rest of the monkeys, he suddenly grew sad and shed a few tears. Alarmed, the monkeys surrounded him, bowed down, and asked, "What is disturbing the Great King?" The Monkey King replied, "Though I am very happy at the moment, I am a little concerned about the future. Hence I'm distressed." The monkeys all laughed and said, "The Great King indeed does not know contentment! Here we daily have a banquet on an immortal mountain in a blessed land in an ancient cave on a divine continent. We are not subject to the unicorn or the phoenix, nor are we governed by the rulers of mankind. Such independence and comfort are immeasurable blessings. Why, then, does he worry about the future?" The Monkey King said, "Though we are not subject to the laws of man today, nor need we be threatened by the rule of any bird or beast, old age and physical decay in the future will disclose the secret sovereignty of Yama, King of the Underworld. If we die, shall we not have lived in vain, not being able to rank forever among the Heavenly beings?"

When the monkeys heard this, they all covered their faces and wept mournfully, each one troubled by his own impermanence. But look! From among the ranks a bareback monkey suddenly leaped forth and cried aloud, "If the Great King is so farsighted, it may well indicate the sprouting of this religious inclination. There are, among the five major divisions of all living creatures, only

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 Buddhas, 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 streams." "Where do they live?" asked the Monkey King. The monkey said, "They do not live beyond the world of the Jambūdvīpa 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 corners 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 scour 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 immortal 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 epidendrums, 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,
Their taste a fragrant tartness.
Fresh lungans
Of sweet pulps and thin skins.
Fleety lychees
Of small pits and red sacks.
Green fruits of the Pyrus are presented by the branches.
The loquats yellow with buds are held with their leaves.
Pearls like rabbit heads and dates like chicken hearts
Dispel your thirst, your sorrow, and the effects of wine.
Fragrant peaches and soft almonds
Are sweet as the elixir of life.
Crispy fresh plums and strawberries
Are sour like cheese and buttermilk.
Red pulps and black seeds compose the ripe watermelons.
Four cloves of yellow rind enfold the big persimmons.
When the pomegranates are split wide,
Cinnabar grains glisten like specks of ruby.
When the chestnuts are cracked open,
Their tough brawns 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.
Häzelnuts, yews, 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.
Mankind 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 pipewood 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 Jambüdvipa Continent. Here is the consequence of this journey:

*The Heaven-born monkey, strong in magic might,
He left the mount and rode the raft to catch fair wind:
He drifted across the sea to seek immortals' way,
Determined in heart and mind to achieve great things.
It's his lot, his portion, to quit earthly zeals:
Calm and carefree, he'll face a lofty sage.
He'd 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 Jambüdvipa 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 counties 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 tyrant of early rising and retiring late?*

*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 sons,
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 Jambüdvipa 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 Aparagodāniya 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 cubits 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 interweave.
On every ridge and crag sprout lichens and mosses.
Rising and falling, the ranges show a fine dragon's pulse.
Here in reclusion must an eminent man reside!*

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 someone singing, and the song went thus:

*I watch chess games, my ax handle's rotted,
I crop at wood; zhēng zhēng the sound.
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.

*I face the moon, my pillow the pine root.
Sleeping till dawn
I find my familiar woods...
I climb the plateaus and scale the peaks
To cut dry creepers with my ax.*

*When I gather enough to make a load,
I stroll singing through the marketplace
And trade it for three pints of rice,
With nary the slightest pickering
Over a price so modest,
Plots and schemes I do not know;
Without vainglory or attainment
My life's prolonged in simplicity:
Those I meet,
If not immortals, would be Daoists,
Seated quietly to expound the Yellow Court.*

When the Handsome Monkey King heard this, he was filled with delight, saying, "So the immortals are hiding in this place." He leaped at once into the forest. Looking again carefully, he found a woodcutter chopping firewood with his ax. The man he saw was very strangely attired.

*On his head he wore a wide splint hat
Of seed-leaves freshly cast from new bamboos.
On his body he wore a cloth garment
Of gauze woven from the native cotton.
Around his waist he tied a winding sash
Of silk spun from an old silkworm.
On his feet he had a pair of straw sandals,
With laces rolled from withered sedge.
In his hands he held a fine steel ax;
A sturdy rope coiled round and round his load.
In breaking pines or chopping trees
Where's the man to equal him?*

The Monkey King drew near and called out: "Reverend immortal! Your disciple raises his hands." The woodcutter was so flustered that he dropped his ax as he turned to return the salutation. "Blasphemy! Blasphemy!" he said, "I, a foolish fellow with hardly enough clothes or food! How can I bear the title of immortal?" The Monkey King said, "If you are not an immortal, how is it that you speak his language?" The woodcutter said, "What did I say that sounded like the language of an immortal?" The Monkey King said, "When I came just now to the forest's edge, I heard you singing, 'Those I meet, if not immortals, would be Daoists, seated quietly to expound the Yellow Court.' The Yellow Court contains the perfected words of the Way and Virtue.⁷ What can you be but an immortal?"

7. Also the title of the ancient Chinese Daoist classic, the *Daodejing* (*The Classic of the Way and Virtue*).

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' nurture 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 cook that 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 reverently 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 the Patriarch Subodhi, 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 boneheaded fellow you are!" the woodcutter said, "I have just finished telling you these things, and you still don't understand. If I 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 past 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:

*Mist and smoke in diffusive brilliancè,
Flashing lights from the sun and moon;
A thousand stalks of old cypress,
Ten thousand stems of tall bamboo.
A thousand stalks of old cypress
Draped in rain half fill the air with tender green;
Ten thousand stems of tall bamboo
Held in smoke will paint the green chartrouse.*

Strange flowers spread brocades before the door,
 Jadelike grass emits fragrance beside the bridge.
 On ridges protruding grow moist green lichens;
 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 plume with five bright colors embroiders 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. On it was written in large letters:

*The Mountain of Mind and Heart;
 The Cave of Slanting 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 dared not knock. Instead, he jumped onto the branch of a pine tree, picked a few pine 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 most distinct,
 For 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 towers and rows of lofty towers and huge alcoves, of pearly chambers and carved arches. After walking through innumerable quiet chambers and empty studios, they finally reached the base of the green jade platform. Patriarch Subodhi 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 Subodhi, whose wondrous form of the West
 Had no end or birth for the work of Double Three.⁸
 His whole spirit and breath were with mercy 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 priest.*

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 Aolai Country of the East Pūrvavideha 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 unceasingly 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 Pūrvavideha Continent? Separating that place and mine are two great oceans and the entire region of the South Jambūdvīpa 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*.⁹ 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."

attractive, you do resemble a monkey (*husun*) that feeds on pine seeds. This gives me the idea of deriving your surname from your appearance. I intended to call you by the name *Hu*. Now, when the accompanying animal radical is dropped from this word, what's left is a compound made up of the two characters, *gu* and *ye*. *Gu* means aged, and *ye* means female, but an aged female cannot reproduce. Therefore it is better to give you the surname of *Sun*. When the accompanying animal radical is dropped from this word, we have the compound of *zi* and *xi*. *Zi* means a boy and *xi* means a baby, so that the name exactly accords with the Doctrine of the Baby! So your surname will be *Sun*."

When the Monkey King heard this, he was filled with delight. "Splendid! Splendid!" he cried, kowtowing, "At last I know my surname. May the master be even more gracious! Since I have received the surname, let me be given also a personal name, so that it may facilitate your calling and commanding me." The Patriarch said, "Within my tradition are twelve characters which have been used to name the pupils according to their divisions. You are one who belongs to the tenth generation." "Which twelve characters are they?" asked the Monkey King. The Patriarch said, "They are: wide (*guang*), great (*da*), wise (*zhi*), intelligence (*hui*), true (*zhen*), conforming (*ru*), nature (*xing*), sea (*hai*), sharp (*ying*), wake-to (*wu*), complete (*quan*), and awakening (*jue*). Your rank falls precisely on the word "wake-to" (*wu*). You will hence be given the religious name *Wake-to Vacuity* (*wukong*). All right?" "Splendid! Splendid!" said the Monkey King, laughing, "henceforth I shall be called *Sun Wukong*." So it was thus:

At nebula's first clearing there was no name;
Smashing stubborn vacuity requires wake-to vacuity.

We do not know what fruit of Daoist cultivation he succeeded in attaining afterward; let's listen to the explanation in the next chapter.

From Chapter 12

The Tang emperor, firm in sincerity, convenes the Grand Mass;
Guanyin, revealing herself, converts Gold Cicada.¹

* * *

The work was finished and reported; Taizong² was exceedingly pleased. He then gathered many officials together in order that 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 holiness 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 illus-

1. Guanyin is the Bodhisattva of Mercy. "Gold Cicada" refers to the monk Xuanzang who was considered the reincarnation of the Buddha's second disciple, named Master Gold Cicada. 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 in the end to reach Buddhahood.

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

trious priest to take charge of the ceremonies. When Fu Yi received the order, however, he presented a memorial to the Throne which attempted to dispute the worth of Buddha. The memorial said:

The teachings of the Western Territory deny the relations of ruler and subject, of father and son.³ With the doctrines of the Three Ways and the Sixfold Path, they beguile and seduce the foolish and the simpleminded. They emphasize the sins of the past in order to ensure the felicities of the future. By chanting in Sanskrit, they seek a way of escape. We submit, however, that birth, death, and the length of one's life are ordered by nature; but the conditions of public disgrace or honor are determined by human volition. These phenomena are not, as some philistines would now maintain, ordained by Buddha. The teachings of Buddha did not exist in the time of the Three Kings and the Five Emperors,⁴ and yet those rulers were wise, their subjects loyal, and their reigns long-lasting. It was not until the period of Emperor Ming 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 to be believed.

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 exalt the good and to restrain what is evil. In this way they are covertly 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, Fu Yi contended that propriety had its foundation in service to one's parents and ruler. Yet Buddha forsook his parents and left his family; indeed, he defied the Son of Heaven⁵ all by himself, just as he used an inherited body to rebel against his parents. Xiao Yu, Fu Yi went on to say, was not born in the wilds, but by his adherence to this doctrine of parental denial, he confirmed the saying that an unfilial son had in fact no parents. Xiao Yu, however, folded his hands in front of him and declared, "Hell was established precisely for people of this kind." Taizong thereupon called on the Lord High Chamberlain, Zhang Daoyuan, and the President of the Grand Secretariat, Zhang Shiheng, and asked how efficacious the Buddhist exercises were in the procurement of blessings. The two officials replied, "The emphasis of Buddha is on purity, benevolence, compassion, the proper fruits, and the unreality of things. It was Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou dynasty who set the Three Religions in order. The Chan Master, Da Hui, also had extolled those concepts of the dark and the distant. Generations of people revered such saints as the Fifth Patriarch, who became man, or the Bodhidharma, who appeared in his sacred form; none of them proved to be inconspicuous in grace and power. Moreover, it has been held since antiquity that the Three Religions are most honorable, not to be destroyed or abolished. We beseech, therefore, Your Majesty to exercise your clear and sagacious judgment." Highly pleased,

3. "Buddhism denies the principles of our Confucianism." The "teachings of the Western Territory" refer to Buddhism and the "relations of ruler and subject, of father and son" stands for the Confucian emphasis on social hierarchies.
4. Sage rulers of High Antiquity, long before Buddhism reached China from India.
5. The Chinese emperor.