THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST
VOLUME ONE
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Preface

Though *The Journey to the West* is one of the most popular works of fiction in China since its first publication in the late sixteenth century, and though it has been studied extensively in recent years by both Oriental and Western scholars (notably Hu Shih, Lu Hsün, Chêng Chên-to, Ogawa Tamaki, Ota Tatsuo, C. T. Hsia, Liu Ts’un-yen, Sawada Mizuho, and Glen Dudbridge), a fully translated text has never been available to Western readers, notwithstanding the appearance in 1959 of what is reputed to be a complete Russian edition.² Two early versions in English (Timothy Richard, *A Mission to Heaven*, 1913, and Helen M. Hayes, *The Buddhist Pilgrim’s Progress*, 1930) were no more than brief paraphrases and adaptations. The French brought out in 1957 a two-volume edition which presented a fairly comprehensive account of the prose passages, but it left much of the poetry virtually untouched.² It was, moreover, riddled with errors and mistranslations. In 1964, George Theiner translated into English a Czech edition which was also greatly abridged.³ This leaves us finally with the justly famous and widely read version of Arthur Waley, published in 1943 under the misleading title *Monkey, Folk Novel of China.*⁴ Waley’s work is vastly superior to the others in style

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The divine root being conceived, the origin emerges;
The moral nature once cultivated, the Great Tao is born.

The poem said:
Before Chaos divided, Heaven and Earth were confused;
Formless and void—such matter no man had seen.
But when P’an Ku the nebula dispersed,\(^1\)
Creation began, the impure parted from the pure.
The supreme goodness, benefic to every creature,
Enlightened all things to attain the good.
If you would know creation’s work through the spans of time,
You must read \textit{The Chronicle of Deliverance in the Westward Journey}.\(^2\)

We heard that, in the order of Heaven and Earth, a single period consisted of 129,600 years. Dividing this period into twelve epochs were the twelve stems of Tzū, Ch’ou, Yin, Mao, Ch’ên, Ssû, Wu, Wei, Shên. Yu, Hsû, and Hai, with each epoch having 10,800 years. Considered as the horary circle, the sequence would be thus: the first sign of dawn appears in the hour of Tzū, while at Ch’ou the cock crows; daybreak occurs at Yin, and the sun rises at Mao; Ch’ên comes after breakfast, and by Ssû everything is planned; at Wu the sun arrives at its meridian and declines westward by Wei; the evening meal comes during the hour of Shên, and the sun sinks completely at Yu; twilight sets in at Hsû, and people rest by the hour of Hai. This sequence may also be understood macrocosmically. At the end of the epoch of Hsû, Heaven and Earth were obscure and all things were indistinct. With the passing of 5,400 years, the beginning of Hai was the epoch of darkness. This moment was named Chaos, because there were neither human beings nor the two spheres. After another 5,400 years the Hai ended, and as the creative force began to work after great perseverance, the epoch of Tzū drew near and again brought gradual development. Shao K’ang-chieh\(^3\) said:
When winter moved to the middle of Tzû.
No change occurred in the mind of Heaven.
The male principle had barely stirred.  
And all things were as yet unborn.  
At this point, the firmament first acquired its foundation. With another 5,400 years came the Tzu epoch; the ethereal and the light rose up to form the four phenomena of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the heavenly bodies. Hence it is said, the Heaven was created at Tzu. This epoch came to its end in another 5,400 years, and the sky began to harden as the Ch’ou epoch approached. The I Ching said, “Great was the male principle: supreme, the female! They made all things, in obedience to Heaven.” At this point, the Earth became solidified. In another 5,400 years after the arrival of the Ch’ou epoch, the heavy and the turbid condensed below and formed the five elements of water, fire, mountain, stone, and earth. Hence it is said, the Earth was created at Ch’ou. With the passing of another 5,400 years, the Ch’ou epoch came to its end and all things began to grow at the beginning of the Yin epoch. The Book of Calendar said: “The heavenly aura descended; the earthly aura rose up. Heaven and Earth copulated, and all things were born.” At this point, Heaven and Earth were bright and fair; the yin had intercourse with the yang. In another 5,400 years, during the Yin epoch, humans, beasts, and fowls came into being, and thus the so-called three forces of Heaven, Earth, and Man were established. Hence it is said, man was born at Yin.

Following P’an Ku’s construction of the universe, the rule of the Three Kings, and the ordering of the relations by the Five Emperors, the world was divided into four great continents. They were: the East Purtvavidheha Continent, the West Aparagadaniya Continent, the South Jambudipya Continent, and the North Uttarakuru Continent. This book is solely concerned with the East Purtvavidheha Continent.

Beyond the ocean there was a country named Ao-lai. It was near a great ocean, in the midst of which was located the famous Flower-Fruit Mountain. This mountain, which constituted the chief range of the Ten Islets and formed the origin of the Three Islands, came into being after the creation of the world. As a testimonial to its magnificence, there is the following fu poem:

Its splendor rules the jasper sea
When snowlike billows send forth serpents from the deep.
Plateaus are tall on the southwest side;
Soaring peaks arise from the Sea of the East.
There are crimson ridges and portentous rocks.
Precipitous cliffs and prodigious peaks.
Atop the crimson ridges
Phoehixes sing in pairs;
Before precipitous cliffs
The unicorn singly rests.
At the summit is heard the cry of golden pheasants;
In and out of stony caves are seen the strides of dragons;
In the forest are long-lived deer and immortal foxes.
On the trees are divine fowls and black cranes.
Strange grass and flowers never wither;
Green pines and cypresses keep eternal their spring.
Immortal peaches are always fruit-bearing;
Lofty bamboos often detain the clouds.
Within a single gorge the creeping vines are dense;
The grass color of meadows all around is fresh.
This is indeed the pillar of Heaven, where a hundred rivers meet—
The Earth’s great axis, in ten thousand kalpas unchanged.

There was on top of that very mountain 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. Though it lacked the shade of trees on all sides, it was set off by epidendrums 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 Emperor of the Most Venerable Deva, 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 Heavenly 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 Ao-lai Country, which lies to the east of the East Pūrvavideha 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, “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 dragon flies;

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 finger nails;
- 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 tumbling 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,
- Appears 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.
His fortune arrives with the time;
Fated to live in this place,
He’s sent as king to his 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 lovely;
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 heavensent 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 snatchting dishes, clutching bowls, or fighting for stoves and beds—shoving and pushing things hither and thither. Becoming 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: “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 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:

When triple spring mated to produce all things,
A divine stone was quickened by the sun and moon:
The egg became a monkey and reached the Great Way.
A name he had and in elixir success.
His inward shape is concealed for it has no form.
But his outward form is by his action plainly known.
All mankind will be his subject in every age:
He’s called a king and a sage who rules over all.
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 collected taros and chestnuts to ward off time.
In the winter they searched for yellow-sperms\(^\text{10}\) 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 my vexation.” 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 his religious inclination. There are, among the five major divisions of all living creatures,\(^\text{11}\) 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 Jambhūdīpa, 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 clear of the Web of Transmigration, and to turn him into 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.
Fragrant peaches and soft almonds
Are sweet as the elixir of life:
Crisply 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.
Walnut and silver almonds fare well with tea.
Coconuts and grapes may be pressed into wine.
Hazelnuts, 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 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 Jambūdvīpa Continent. Here is the consequence of this journey:
The heaven-born monkey, strong in magic might,
He left the mount, he rode the raft and caught the fair wind;
He drifted across the sea in search of immortals’ way,
Determined in heart and mind to achieve great things.
It is his cause—and his portion—to quit all earthly zeal;
He’ll be enlightened without worries or cares.
He may be expected to meet some approving one
Who will reveal the origin and the dharma of all things.
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 Jambūdvīpa 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:
The quest for fame and fortune, when will it end?
This tyranny of early rising and retiring late!
Riding on mules they long for noble steeds.
Already prime ministers, they seek to be kings.
For food and raiment they suffer stress and strain.
Never fearful of Yama’s call to reckoning.
Searching for wealth and power to give to grandsons and sons.
No one is 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
Jambūdīvīpa 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 territory of the West Aparagodānīya 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.
For ten thousand years grow green in this blessed land.
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.¹²
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.¹³
I chop at wood, chêng-chêng the sound.
I walked 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,
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 bickering
Over a price so modest.
Plots and schemes I do not know;
Without vainglory or attaint
My life’s prolonged in simplicity.
Those I meet,
If not immortals, would be Taoists,
Seated quietly to expound the Yellow Court.¹⁴
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 freshely 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 Taoists, seated quietly to expound the Yellow Court.’ The Yellow Court contains the secret sayings of Taoism. What can you be but an immortal?” Laughing, the woodcutter said, “I can tell you much: the tune of that ts’u poem is ‘A Court Full of Blossoms,’ and it was taught to me by an immortal, a neighbor of mine. He said 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 Tao? 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, the woodcutter said, “This mountain is called The Mountain of Heart and Mind, 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. Going out of the 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 is what he saw:

- Mist and smoke in diffusive brilliance.
- 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 glen chartreuse.
- 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 bide.
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 approxi-
mately eight feet wide and over thirty feet tall. On it was written in
large letters: “The Mountain of Heart and Mind; 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 to 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.” Laughing, the immortal youth asked, “Are you a seeker of Tao?” “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, laughing,
“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 carved arches.

After walking through innumerable quiet chambers and empty
studios, they finally reached the base of the green jad platform.
Patriarch Subodh was seen seated solemnly on the platform, with
thirty lesser immortals standing below in rows. He was truly
An immortal of great perception and purest mien.
The Master Subodhi, whose wondrous form of the West
Had no end or birth—such, the work of Double Three.15
His whole appearance was with mercy suffused.
Vacuous, spontaneous, and freely changing,
His Buddha-nature could perform all things.
His majestic body and Heaven’s age were the same.
Fully tried and enlightened was this grand priest.

As soon as the Handsome Monkey King saw him, he prostrated him-
self 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 Ao-lai Country of the East Purvavideha 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 Purvavideha Continent? Separating that
place and mine are two great oceans and the entire region of the
South Jambūdīvīpa 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
hsing?”16 The Monkey King again replied, “I have no hsing. 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 attractive, you do resemble a monkey (hu-sun) 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, ku and yūeh. Ku means aged and yūeh 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 tzū and hsi. Tzū means a boy and hsi 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 (kuang), great (ta), wise (chih), intelligence (hui), true (chen), conforming (ju), nature (hsing), sea (hai), sharp (yin), wake-to (wu), complete (yuan), and awakening (chueh). Your rank falls precisely on the word 'wake-to' (wu). You will hence be given the religious name 'Wake-to-Vacuity' (wu-k'ung). All right?" "Splendid! Splendid!" said the Monkey King, laughing: "henceforth I shall be called Sun Wu-k'ung." So it was thus:

When the world was first created, there was no name:

To break the stubborn vacuity one needs to wake to vacuity. We do not know what sort of Taoist cultivation he succeeded in practicing afterward and must await the explanation in the next chapter.

Two

The true wondrous doctrine of Bodhi thoroughly comprehended:
The destruction of Māra1 and the return to origin unify the soul.

Now we were speaking of the Handsome Monkey King, who, having received his name, jumped about joyfully and went forward to give Subodhi his grateful salutation. The Patriarch then ordered the congregation to lead Sun Wu-k'ung outdoors and to teach him how to sprinkle water on the ground and dust, and how to speak and move with proper courtesy. The company of immortals obediently went outside with Wu-k'ung, who then bowed to his fellow students. They prepared thereafter a place in the corridor where he might sleep. Next morning he began to learn from his schoolmates the arts of language and etiquette. He discussed with them the scriptures and the doctrines; he practiced calligraphy and burned incense. Such was his daily routine. In more leisurely moments he would be sweeping the grounds or hoeing the garden, planting flowers or pruning trees, gathering firewood or lighting fires, fetching water or carrying drinks. He did not lack for whatever he needed, and thus he lived in the cave without realizing that six or seven years had slipped by. One day the Patriarch ascended the platform and took his high seat. Calling together all the immortals, he began to lecture on a great doctrine. He spoke

With words so florid and eloquent
That gold lotus sprang up from the ground.
The doctrine of three vehicles he subtly rehearsed,2
Including even the laws' minutest tittle.
The yak's-tail3 waved slowly and spouted elegance;
His thunderous voice moved e'en the Ninth Heaven.
For a while he lectured on Tao.
For a while he discoursed on Zen.
To harmonize the three schools4 was a natural thing.
One word's elucidation in conformity to truth
Would lead to a life birthless and knowledge most profound.
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As I bring this lengthy project to its completion, it is fitting for me to pay tribute to my late grandfather, who first introduced me to the wonders of this tale. It was he who, amidst the terrors of the Sino-Japanese war, gave himself unsparingly to teaching me Classical Chinese and English. By precept and example he sought to impart to a young boy his enduring love for literatures east and west. He did not labor in vain.
Let us not say anything more about how the four pilgrims departed by mounting the wind with the Vajra Guardians. We tell you instead about the multitude in the Life-Saving Monastery at the Ch'ên Village, who rose at dawn and went at once to offer fruits and other food to their benefactors. When they arrived at the space beneath the tower, however, they found that the T'ang monk had disappeared. Thereupon all of them hunted everywhere, but without success. They were so upset that they did not quite know what to do except to wail aloud. "We have allowed a Living Buddha to walk away!"

After a while, the entire household realized that they had no better alternative than to pile all the food and gifts on the altar up in the tower and offer them as sacrifices along with the burning of paper cash. Thereafter they made four great sacrifices and twenty-four smaller ones each year. Moreover, those who wanted to pray for healing, for safety on a journey, for the gift of a spouse, for wealth or children, and to make a vow appeared daily at every hour to present their offerings and incense. Truly.

The gold censer continued a thousand years’ fire;
The jade chalice brightened with an eternal lamp.
In that condition we shall leave them.

We tell you now instead about the Eight Vajra Guardians, who employed the second gust of fragrant wind to send the four pilgrims back to the Land of the East. In less than a day, the capital, Ch'ang-an, gradually came into view. That Emperor T'ai-tsung, you see, had escorted the T'ang monk out of the city three days before the full moon in the ninth month of the thirteenth year of the Chên-kuan reign period. By the sixteenth year, he had already asked the Bureau of Labor to erect a Scripture-Anticipation Tower outside the Hsi-an pass to receive the holy books. Each year T'ai-tsung would go personally to that place for a visit. It so happened that he had gone again to the tower that day when he caught sight of a skyful of auspicious mists drifting near from the West, and he noticed at the same time strong gusts of fragrant wind.

Halting in midair, the Vajra Guardians cried, "Sage monk, this is the city Ch'ang-an. It's not convenient for us to go down there, for the people of this region are quite intelligent, and our true identity may become known to them. Even the Great Sage Sun and his two companions needn’t go; you yourself can go, hand over the scriptures, and return at once. We’ll wait for you in the air so that we may all go back to report to Buddha.

"What the Honored Ones say may be most appropriate," said the Great Sage, "but how could my master tote all those scriptures? How could he lead the horse at the same time? We will have to escort him down there. May we trouble you to wait a while in the air? We dare not tarry."

"When the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin spoke to Tathāgata the other day," said the Vajra Guardians, "she assured him that the whole trip should take only eight days, so that the canonical number would be fulfilled. It’s already more than four days now. We fear that Pa-chieh might become so enamored of the riches down below that we will not be able to meet our appointed schedule."

"When Master attains Buddhahood," said Pa-chieh, chuckling, "I, too, will attain Buddhahood. How could I become enamored of riches down below? Stupid old ruffians! Wait for me here, all of you! As soon as we have handed over the scriptures, I’ll return with you and be canonized." Idiot took up the pole, Sha Monk led the horse, and Pilgrim supported the sage monk. Lowering their cloud, they dropped down beside the Scripture-Anticipation Tower.

When T'ai-tsung and his officials saw them, they all descended the tower to receive them. "Has the royal brother returned?" said the emperor. The T'ang monk immediately prostrated himself, but he was raised by the emperor’s own hands. "Who are these three persons?" asked the emperor once more.

"They are my disciples made during our journey," replied the T'ang monk. Highly pleased, T'ai-tsung at once ordered his attendants, "Saddle one of our chariot horses for our royal brother to ride. We’ll go back to the court together." The T'ang monk thanked him and mounted the horse, closely followed by the Great Sage wielding his golden-hooped rod and by Pa-chieh and Sha Monk toting the luggage.
and supporting the other horse. The entire entourage thus entered together the city of Ch’ang-an. Truly
A banquet of peace was held years ago.
When lords, civil and martial, made a grand show.
A priest preached the law in a great event:\footnote{1}
From Golden Chimes the king his subject sent.
Tripitaka was given a royal rescript.
For Five Phases matched the cause of holy script.
Through bitter smelting all demons were purged.
Merit done, they now on the court converged.
The T’ang monk and his three disciples followed the Throne into the court, and soon there was not a single person in the city of Ch’ang-an who had not learned of the scripture seekers’ return.

We tell you now about those priests, young and old, of the Temple of Great Blessing, which was also the old residence of the T’ang monk in Ch’ang-an. That day they suddenly discovered that the branches of a few pine trees within the temple gate were pointing eastward. Astonished, they cried, “Strange! Strange! There was no strong wind to speak of last night. Why are all the tops of these trees twisted in this manner?”

One of the former disciples of Tripitaka said, “Quickly, let’s get our proper clerical garb. The old master who went away to acquire scriptures must have returned.”

“How do you know that?” asked the other priests.

“At the time of his departure,” the old disciple said, “he made the remark that he might be away for two or three years, or for six or seven years. Whenever we noticed that these pine-tree tops were pointing to the east, it would mean that he has returned. Since my master spoke the holy words of a true Buddha, I know that the truth has been confirmed this day.”

They put on their clothing hurriedly and left; by the time they reached the street to the west, people were already saying that the scripture seeker had just arrived and been received into the city by His Majesty. When they heard the news, the various monks dashed forward and ran right into the imperial chariot. Not daring to approach the emperor, they followed the entourage instead to the gate of the court. The T’ang monk dismounted and entered the court with the emperor. The dragon horse, the scripture packs, Pilgrim, Pa-chieh, and Sha Monk were all placed beneath the steps of jade, while T’ai-tsung commanded the royal brother to ascend the hall and take a seat.

After thanking the emperor and taking his seat, the T’ang monk asked that the scripture scrolls be brought up. Pilgrim and his companions handed them over to the imperial attendants, who presented them in turn to the emperor for inspection. “How many scrolls of scriptures are there,” asked T’ai-tsung, “and how did you acquire them?”

“When your subject arrived at the Spirit Mountain and bowed to the Buddhist Patriarch,” replied Tripitaka, “he was kind enough to ask Ananda and Kasaya, the two Honored Ones, to lead us to the precious tower first for a meal. Then we were brought to the treasure loft, where the scriptures were bestowed on us. Those Honored Ones asked for a gift, but we were not prepared and did not give them any. They gave us some scriptures anyway, and after thanking the Buddhist Patriarch, we headed east, but a monstrous wind snatched away the scriptures. My humble disciple fortunately had a little magic power; he gave chase at once, and the scriptures were thrown and scattered all over. When we unrolled the scrolls, we saw that they were all wordless, blank texts. Your subjects in great fear went again to bow and plead before Buddha. The Buddhist Patriarch said, ‘When these scriptures were created, some Bhikṣu sage monks left the monastery and recited some scrolls for one Elder Chao in the Śrāvasti Kingdom. As a result, the living members of that family were granted safety and protection, while the deceased attained redemption. For such great service they only managed to ask the elder for three pecks and three pints of rice and a little gold. I told them that it was too cheap a sale, and that their descendants would have no money to spend.’ Since we learned that even the Buddhist Patriarch anticipated that the two Honored Ones would demand a gift, we had little choice but to offer them that alms bowl of purple gold which Your Majesty had bestowed on me. Only then did they willingly turn over the true scriptures with writing to us. There are thirty-five titles of these scriptures, and several scrolls were selected from each title. Altogether, there are now five thousand and forty-eight scrolls, the number of which makes up one canonical sum.”

More delighted than ever, T’ai-tsung gave this command: “Let the Court of Imperial Entertainments prepare a banquet in the East Hall so that we may thank our royal brother.” Then he happened to notice Tripitaka’s three disciples standing beneath the steps, all with extraordinary looks, and he therefore asked, “Are your noble disciples foreigners?”
Prostrating himself, the elder said, "My eldest disciple has the surname of Sun, and his religious name is Wu-k'ung. Your subject also addresses him as Pilgrim Sun. He comes from the Water Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain, located in the Ao-lai Kingdom in the East Pürvavideha Continent. Because he caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace, he was imprisoned in a stone box by the Buddhist Patriarch and pressed beneath the Mountain of Two Frontiers in the region of the Western barbarians. Thanks to the admonitions of the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin, he was converted to Buddhism and became my disciple when I freed him. Throughout my journey I relied heavily on his protection.

"My second disciple has the surname of Chu, and his religious name is Wu-nêng. Your subject also addresses him as Chu Pa-chien. He comes from the Cloudy Paths Cave of Fu-ling Mountain. He was playing the fiend at the Old Kao Village of Tibet when the admonitions of the Bodhisattva and the power of the Pilgrim caused him to become my disciple. He made his merit on our journey by toting the luggage and helping us to ford the waters.

"My third disciple has the surname of Sha, and his religious name is Wu-ching. Your subject also addresses him as Sha Monk. Originally he was a fiend at the Flowing-Sand River. Again the admonitions of the Bodhisattva persuaded him to take the vows of Buddhism. By the way, the horse is not the one my Lord bestowed on me."

T'ai-tsung said, "The color and the coat seem all the same. Why isn't it the same horse?"

"When your subject reached the Eagle Grief Stream in the Serpent Col Mountain and tried to cross it," replied Tripitaka, "the original horse was devoured by this horse. Pilgrim managed to learn from the Bodhisattva that this horse was originally the prince of the Dragon King of the Western Ocean. Convicted of a crime, he would have been executed had it not been for the intervention of the Bodhisattva, who ordered him to be the steed of your subject. It was then that he changed into a horse with exactly the same coat as that of my original mount. I am greatly indebted to him for taking me over mountains and summits and through the most treacherous passages. Whether it be carrying me on my way there or bearing the scriptures upon our return, we are much beholden to his strength."

On hearing these words, T'ai-tsung complimented him profusely before asking again, "This long trek to the Western Region, exactly how far is it?"

Tripitaka said, "I recall that the Bodhisattva told us that the distance was a hundred and eight thousand miles. I did not make a careful record on the way. All I know is that we have experienced fourteen seasons of heat and cold. We encountered mountains and ridges daily; the forests we came upon were not small, and the waters we met were wide and swift. We also went through many kingdoms, whose rulers had affixed their seals and signatures on our document." Then he called out: "Disciples, bring up the travel rescript and present it to our Lord."

It was handed over immediately. T'ai-tsung took a look and realized that the document had been issued on the third day before the full moon, in the ninth month of the thirteenth year during the Chên-kuan reign period. Smiling, T'ai-tsung said, "We have caused you the trouble of taking a long journey. This is now the twenty-seventh year of the Chên-kuan period!" The travel rescript bore the seals of the Precious Image Kingdom, the Black Rooster Kingdom, the Cart Slow Kingdom, the Kingdom of Women in Western Liang, the Sacrifice Kingdom, the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom, the Bhiksü Kingdom, the Dharma-Destroying Kingdom. There were also the seals of the Phoenix-Immortal Prefecture, the Jade-Flower County, and the Gold-Level Prefecture. After reading through the document, T'ai-tsung put it away.

Soon the officer in attendance to the Throne arrived to invite them to the banquet. As the emperor took the hand of Tripitaka and walked down the steps of the hall, he asked once more, "Are your noble disciples familiar with the etiquette of the court?"

"My humble disciples," replied Tripitaka, "all began their careers as monsters deep in the wilds or a mountain village, and they have never been instructed in the etiquette of China's sage court. I beg my Lord to pardon them."

Smiling, T'ai-tsung said, "We won't blame them! We won't blame them! Let's all go to the feast set up in the East Hall." Tripitaka thanked him once more before calling for his three disciples to join them. Upon their arrival at the hall, they saw that the opulence of the great nation of China was indeed different for all ordinary kingdoms. You see

The doorway o'erhung with brocade,
The floor adorned with red carpets,
The whirls of exotic incense,
And fresh victuals most rare.
The amber cups
And crystal goblets
Are gold-trimmed and jade-set;
The gold platters
And white-jade bowls
Are patterned and silver-rimmed.
The tubers thoroughly cooked.
The taros sugar-coated;
Sweet, lovely button mushrooms,
Unusual, pure seaweeds.
Bamboo shoots, ginger-spiced, are served a few times:
Malva leaves, honey-drenched, are mixed several ways.
Wheat-glutens fried with *hsiang-ch’un* leaves;
Wood-ears cooked with bean-cured skins.
Rock ferns and fairy plants;
*Chüeh* flour and dried Wei.
Radishes cooked with Szechwan peppercorns;
Melon strands stirred with mustard powder.
These few vegetarian dishes are so-so.
But the many rare fruits quite steal the show!
Walnuts and persimmons.
Lung-ans and lychees.
The chestnuts of I-chou and Shantung’s dates;
The South’s *ginko* fruits and hare-head pears.
Pine-seeds, lotus-seeds, and giant grapes;
*Fei* nuts, *melon seeds, and water chestnuts.
“Chinese olives” and wild apples;
*P’in-p’o* and sh*‘a-t’ang* pears;*
Ts‘ü-kus* and young lotus roots;
Crisp plums and “Chinese strawberries.”
Not one species is missing;
Not one kind is wanting.
There are, moreover, the steamed *mille-feuilles*, honeyed pastries,
and fine viands;
And there are also the lovely wines, fragrant teas, and strange
dainties.
An endless spread of a hundred flavors, true noble fare.
Western barbarians with great China can never compare!
Master and three disciples were grouped together with the officials,
both civil and military, on both sides of the emperor T’ai-tsung, who
took the seat in the middle. The dancing and the music proceeded in
an orderly and solemn manner, and in this way they enjoyed them-
selves thoroughly for one whole day. Truly
The royal banquet rivals the sage kings;
True scriptures acquired excess blessings bring.
Forever these will prosper and remain.
As Buddha’s light shines on the king’s domain.
When it became late, the officials thanked the emperor; while T’ai-
tsung withdrew into his palace, the various officials returned to their
residences. The T’ang monk and his disciples, however, went to the
Temple of Great Blessing, where they were met by the resident priests
kowtowing. As they entered the temple gate, the priests said, “Master,
the top of these trees were all suddenly pointing eastward this morn-
ing. We remembered your words and hurried out to the city to meet
you. Indeed, you did arrive!” The elder could not have been more
pleased as they were ushered into the abbot’s quarters. By then, Pa-
ch’ien was not clamoring at all for food or tea, nor did he indulge in
any mischief. Both Pilgrim and Sha Monk behaved most properly, for
they had become naturally quiet and reserved since the Tao in them
had come to fruition. They rested that night.
T’ai-tsung held court next morning and said the officials, “We did
not sleep the whole night when we reflected on how great and pro-
duced has been the merit of our brother, such that no compensation is
quite adequate. We finally composed in our head several homely
sentences as a mere token of our gratitude, but they have not yet been
written down.” Calling for one of the secretaries from the Central
Drafting Office, he said, “Come, let us recite our composition for you,
and you take it down sentence by sentence.” The composition was
as follows:
We have heard how the Two Primary Forces which manifest
themselves in Heaven and Earth in the production of life are
represented by images, whereas the invisible powers of the four
seasons bring about transformation of things through the
hidden action of heat and cold. By scanning Heaven and Earth,
even the most ignorant may perceive their rudimentary laws.
Even the thorough understanding of yin and yang, however, has
seldom enabled the worthy and wise to comprehend fully their
ultimate principle. It is easy to recognize that Heaven and Earth
do contain yin and yang because there are images. It is difficult
to comprehend fully how yin and yang pervade Heaven and Earth because the forces themselves are invisible. That is why we know that the evidence of manifest images does not perplex the foolish, whereas the invisibility of hidden forms confuses even the learned.

How much more difficult it is, therefore, to understand the way of Buddhism, which exalts the void, uses the dark, and exploits the silent in order to succor the myriad grades of living things and exercise control over the entire world. Its spiritual authority is the highest, and its divine potency has no equal. Its magnitude impregnates the entire cosmos; there is no space so tiny that it does not permeate it. Birthless and deathless, it does not age after a thousand kalpas; half-hidden and half-manifest, it brings a hundred blessings even now. A wondrous way most mysterious, those who follow it cannot know its limit. A law flowing silent and deep, those who draw on it cannot fathom its source. How, therefore, could those benighted ordinary mortals not be perplexed if they tried to plumb its depths?

Now, this great Teaching arose in the Land of the West. It soared to the court of the Han period in the form of a radiant dream, which flowed with its mercy to enlighten the Eastern territory. In antiquity, during the time when form and abstraction were clearly distinguished, the words of the Buddha, even before spreading, had already established their godly influence. In a generation when he was both frequently active in and withdrawn from the world, the people beheld his virtue and honored it. But when he returned to Nirvâna and generations passed by, the golden images concealed his true form and did not reflect the light of the universe. The beautiful paintings, though unfolding lovely portraits, vainly held up the figure of thirty-two marks. Nonetheless his subtle doctrines spread far and wide to save beings from the three unhappy paths, and his traditions were widely proclaimed to lead all creatures through the ten stages toward Buddhahood. Moreover, the Buddha made scriptures, which could be divided into the Great and the Small Vehicles. He also possessed the Law, which could be transmitted either in the correct or in the deviant method.

Our priest Hsüan-tsang, a Master of the Law, is a leader in Buddhism. Devoted and intelligent as a youth, he realized at an early age the merit of the three forms of immateriality. When grown he comprehended the principles of the spiritual, including first the practice of the four forms of patience. Neither the pine in the wind nor the moon mirrored in water can compare with his purity and radiance. Even the dew of Heaven and luminous gems cannot surpass the clarity and refinement of his person. His intelligence encompassed even those elements which seemingly had no relations, and his spirit could perceive that which had yet to take visible forms. Having transcended the lure of the six senses, he was such an outstanding figure that in all the past he had no rival. He concentrated his mind on the internal verities, mourning all the time the mutilation of the correct doctrines. Worrying over the mysteries, he lamented that even the most profound treatises had errors.

He thought of revising the teachings and reviving certain arguments, so as to disseminate what he had received to a wider audience. He would, moreover, strike out the erroneous and preserve the true to enlighten the students. For this reason he longed for the Pure Land and a pilgrimage to the Western Territories. Risking dangers he set out on a long journey, with only his staff for his companion on this solitary expedition. Snow drifts in the morning would blanket his roadway; sand storms at dusk would blot out the horizon. Over ten thousand miles of mountains and streams he proceeded, pushing aside mist and smoke. Through a thousand alternations of heat and cold he advanced amidst frost and rain. As his zeal was great, he considered his task a light one, for he was determined to succeed.

He toured throughout the Western World for fourteen years, going to all the foreign nations in quest of the proper doctrines. He led the life of an ascetic beneath the twin sâla trees and by the eight rivers of India. At the Deer Park and on the Vulture Peak he attained strange visions. He received ultimate truths from the senior sages and was taught the true doctrines by the highest worthies. Penetrating into the mysteries, he mastered the most profound lessons. The way of the Triyâna and Six Commandments he learned by heart; a hundred cases of scriptures forming the canon flowed like waves from his lips.

Though the countries he visited were innumerable, the
scripts he succeeded in acquiring had a definite number. Of those important texts of the Mahāyāna he received, there are thirty-five titles in altogether five thousand and forty-eight scrolls.\(^5\) When they are translated and spread through China, they will proclaim the surpassing merit of Buddhism, drawing the cloud of mercy from the Western extremity to shower the dharma-rain on the Eastern region. The Holy Teaching, once imperfect, is now returned to perfection. The multitudes, once full of sins, are now brought back to blessing. Like that which quenches the fire in a burning house, the power of Buddhism works to save humanity lost on its way to perdition. Like a golden beam shining on darkened waters,\(^6\) it leads the voyagers to climb the other shore safely.

Thus we know that wicked will fall because of their iniquities, but the virtuous will rise because of their affinities. The causes of such rise and fall are all self-made by man. Consider the cinnamon flourishing high on the mountain, its flowers nourished by cloud and mist, or the lotus growing atop the green waves, its leaves unsoiled by dust. This is not because the lotus is by nature clean or because the cinnamon itself is chaste, but because what the cinnamon depends on for its existence is lofty, and thus it will not be weighed down by trivia; and because what the lotus relies on is pure, and thus impurity cannot stain it. Since even the vegetable kingdom, which is itself without intelligence, knows that excellence comes from an environment of excellence, how can humans who understand the great relations not search for well-being by following well-being?

May these scriptures abide forever as the sun and moon and may the blessings they confer spread throughout the universe! After the secretary had finished writing this treatise, the sage monk was summoned. At the time, the elder was already waiting outside the gate of the court. When he heard the summons, he hurried inside and prostrated himself to pay homage to the emperor.

T’ai-tsong asked him to ascend the hall and handed him the document. When he had finished reading it, the priest went to his knees again to express his gratitude. “The style and rhetoric of my Lord,” said the priest, “are lofty and classical, while the reasoning in the treatise is both profound and subtle. I would like to know, however, whether a title has been chosen for this composition.”

“We composed it orally last night,” replied T’ai-tsong, “as a token of thanks to our royal brother. Will it be acceptable if I title this ‘Preface to the Holy Teaching?’” The elder kowtowed and thanked him profusely. Once more T’ai-tsong said,

Our talents pale before the imperial tablets.
And our words cannot match the bronze and stone inscriptions.
As for the esoteric texts,
Our ignorance is even greater.
Our treatise orally composed
Is actually quite unpolished—
Like mere spilled ink on slabs of gold,
Or broken tiles in a forest of pearls.
Writing it in self-interest,
We have quite ignored even embarrassment.
It is not worth your notice,
And you should not thank us.

All the officials present, however, congratulated the emperor and made arrangements immediately to promulgate the royal essay on Holy Teaching inside and outside the capital.

T’ai-tsong said, “We would like to ask the royal brother to recite the true scriptures for us. How about it?”

“My Lord,” said the elder, “if you want me to recite the true scriptures, we must find the proper religious site. The treasure palace is no place for recitation.” Exceedingly pleased, T’ai-tsong asked his attendants, “Among the monasteries of Ch’ang-an, which is the holiest one?”

From among the ranks stepped forth the Grand Secretary, Hsiao Yü, who said, “The Wild-Goose Pagoda Temple in the city is holiest of all.” At once T’ai-tsong gave this command to the various officials:

“Each of you take several scrolls of these true scriptures and go reverently with us to the Wild-Goose Pagoda Temple. We want to ask our royal brother to expound the scriptures to us.” Each of the officials indeed took up several scrolls and followed the emperor’s carriage to the temple. A lofty platform with proper appointments was then erected. As before, the elder told Pa-chieh and Sha Monk to hold the dragon horse and mind the luggage, while Pilgrim was to serve him by his side. Then he said to T’ai-tsong, “If my Lord would like to circulate the true scriptures throughout his empire, copies should be made before they are dispersed. We should treasure the originals and not handle them lightly.”

Smiling, T’ai-tsong said, “The words of our royal brother are most
appropriate! Most appropriate!" He thereupon ordered the officials in
the Han-lin Academy and the Central Drafting Office to make copies
of the true scriptures. For them he also erected another temple east of
the capital and named it the Temple for Imperial Transcription.

The elder had already taken several scrolls of scriptures and
mounted the platform. He was just about to recite them when he felt
a gust of fragrant wind. In midair the Eight Vajra Guardians revealed
themselves and cried, "Recitants, drop your scripture scrolls and
follow us back to the West." From below Pilgrim and his two com-
panions together with the white horse immediately rose into the air.
The elder, too, abandoned the scriptures and rose from the platform.
They all left soaring through the air. So startled were T'ai-tsung and
the many officials that they all bowed down toward the sky. Thus it
was that
Since scriptures were the sage monk’s ardent quest,
He went on fourteen years throughout the West
A bitter journey full of trials and woes.
With many streams and mountains as his foes.
Nine merits more were added to eight times nine;
His three thousand works did on the great world shine.
The wondrous texts brought back to the noble state
Would in the East until now circulate.

After T'ai-tsung and many officials had finished their worship, they
immediately set about the selection of high priests so that a Grand
Mass of Land and Water could be held right in that Wild-Goose Pagoda
Temple. Furthermore, they were to read and recite the true scriptures
from the Great Canon in order that the damned spirits would be
delivered from nether darkness and the celebration of good works be
multiplied. The copies of transcribed scriptures would also be promul-
gated throughout the empire, and of this we shall speak no more.

We must tell you now about those Eight Great Vajra Guardians,
who mounted the fragrant wind to lead the elder, his three disciples,
and the white horse back to Spirit Mountain. The round trip was made
precisely within a period of eight days. At that time the various
divinities of Spirit Mountain were all assembled before Buddha to listen
to his lecture. Ushering master and disciples before his presence, the
Eight Vajra Guardians said, "Your disciples by your golden decree
have escorted the sage monk and his companions back to the T'ang
nation. The scriptures have been handed over. We now return to sur-
rrender your decree." The T'ang monk and his disciples were then told
to approach the throne of Buddha to receive their appointments.

"Sage Monk," said Tathāgata, "in your previous incarnation you
were originally my second disciple named Master Gold Cicada. Because
you failed to listen to my exposition of the law and slighted my great
teaching, your true spirit was banished to find another incarnation in
the Land of the East. Happily you submitted and, by remaining faithful
to our teaching, succeeded in acquiring the true scriptures. For such
magnificent merit, you will receive a great promotion to become the
Buddha of Candana Merit.

"Sun Wu-k'ung, when you caused great disturbance at the Celestial
Palace, I had to exercise enormous dharma power to have you pressed
beneath the Mountain of Five Phases. Fortunately your Heaven-sent
calamity came to an end, and you embraced the teaching of Bud-
dhism. I am pleased even more by the fact that you were devoted to the
scourging of evil and the exaltation of good. Throughout your journey
you made great merit by smelting the demons and defeating the fiends.
For being faithful in the end as you were in the beginning, I hereby
give you the grand promotion and appoint you the Buddha Victorious
in Strife.

"Chu Wu-nèng, you were originally an aquatic deity of the Heavenly
River, the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds. For getting drunk during the
Festival of Immortal Peaches and insulting the divine maiden, you
were banished to an incarnation in the Region Below which would
give you the body of a beast. Fortunately you still cherished and loved
the human form, so that even when you sinned at the Cloudy Paths
Cave in Fu-ling Mountain, you eventually returned to our great teach-
ing and embraced our vows. While you protected the sage monk on
his way, you were still quite mischievous, for greed and lust were never
wholly extinguished in you. For the merit of toting the luggage, how-
ever, I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you Janitor of the
Altars."

"They have all become Buddhas!" shouted Pa-chieh. "Why am I
alone made Janitor of the Altars?"

"Because you are still talkative and lazy," replied Tathāgata, "and
you retain an enormous appetite. Within the four great continents of
the world, there are many people who observe our teachings. When-
ever there are Buddhist services, you will be asked to clear the altars.
That's an appointment which offers you plenty of enjoyment. How
could it be bad?

"Sha Wu-ching, you were originally the Great Curtain-Raising
Captain. Because you broke a crystal chalice during the Festival of Immortal Peaches, you were banished to the Region Below, where at the River of Flowing-Sand you sinned by devouring humans. Fortunately you submitted to our teaching and remained firm in your faith. As you escorted the sage monk, you made merit by leading his horse over all those mountains. I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you the Golden-Bodied Arhat."

Then he said to the white horse, "You were originally the prince of Dragon King Kuang-chin of the Western Ocean. Because you dis obeyed your father's command and committed the crime of unfiliality, you were to be executed. Fortunately you made submission to the Law and accepted our vows. Because you carried the sage monk daily on your back during his journey to the West and because you also took the holy scriptures back to the East, you too have made merit. I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you one of the dragons belonging to the Eight Classes of Supernatural Beings."24

The elder, his three disciples, and the horse all kowtowed to thank the Buddha, who ordered some of the guardians to take the horse to the Dragon-Transforming Pool at the back of the Spirit Mountain. After being pushed into the pool, the horse stretched himself, and in a little while he shed his coat, horns began to grow on his head, golden scales appeared all over his body, and silver whiskers emerged on his cheeks. His whole body shrouded in auspicious air and his four paws wrapped in hallowed clouds, he soared out of the pool and circled inside the monastery gate, on top of one of the Pillars that Support Heaven.

As the various Buddhas gave praise to the great dharma of Tathāgata, Pilgrim Sun said also to the T'ang monk, "Master, I've become a Buddha now. Just like you. It can't be that I still must wear a golden fillet! And you wouldn't want to clamp my head still by reciting that so-called Tight-Fillet Spell, would you? Recite the Loose-Fillet Spell quickly and get it off my head. I'm going to smash it to pieces, so that that so-called Bodhisattva can't use it anymore to play tricks on other people."

"Because you were difficult to control previously," said the T'ang monk, "this method had to be used to keep you in hand. Now that you have become a Buddha, naturally it will be gone. How could it be still on your head? Try touching your head and see." Pilgrim raised his hand and felt along his head, and indeed the fillet had vanished. So at that time, Buddha Candana, Buddha Victorious in Strife, Janitor of the Altars, and Golden-Bodied Arhat all assumed the position of their own rightful fruition. The Heavenly dragon-horse too returned to immortality, and we have a testimonial poem for them. The poem says:

One reality fallen to the dusty plain
Fuses with Four Signs and cultivates self again.
In Five Phases terms forms are but silent and void;
The hundred fiends' false names one should all avoid.
The great Bodhi's the right Candana fruition:
Appointments complete their rise from perdition.
When scriptures spread throughout the world the gracious light.
Henceforth five sages live within Advaya's heights.

At the time when these five sages assumed their positions, the various Buddhist Patriarchs, Bodhisattvas, sage priests, arhats, guardians, bhikṣus, upāsakas and upāsikās, the immortals of various mountains and caves, the grand divinities, the Gods of Darkness and Light, the Sentinels, the Guardians of Monasteries, and all the immortals and preceptors who had attained the Way all came to listen to the proclamation before retiring to their proper stations. Look now at

Colored mists crowding the Spirit Vulture Peak,
And hallowed clouds gathered in the world of bliss.
Gold dragons safely sleeping,
Jade tigers resting in peace;
Black hares scampering freely.
Snakes and turtles circling at will.
Phoenixes, red and blue, gambol pleasantly;
Black apes and white deer saunter happily.
Strange flowers of eight periods.
Divine fruits of four seasons.
Hoary pines and old junipers.
Jade cypresses and aged bamboos.
Five-colored plums often blossoming and bearing fruit;
Millennial peaches frequently ripening and fresh.
A thousand flowers and fruits vying for beauty:
A whole sky full of auspicious mists.

Pressing their palms together to indicate their devotion, the holy con gregation all chanted:
I submit to Dīpankara, the Buddha of Antiquity.
I submit to Bhaisajyā-vaiḍūrya-prabhāsa, the Physician and
Buddha of Crystal Lights.
I submit to the Buddha Śākyamuni. 
I submit to the Buddha of the Past, Present, and Future. 
I submit to the Buddha of Pure Joy. 
I submit to the Buddha Vairocana. 
I submit to the Buddha, King of the Precious Banner. 
I submit to the Maitreya, the Honored Buddha. 
I submit to the Buddha Amitābha. 
I submit to Sukhāvatīvyūha, the Buddha of Infinite Life. 
I submit to the Buddha who Receives and Leads to Immorality. 
I submit to the Buddha of Diamond Indestructibility. 
I submit to Sūrya, the Buddha of Precious Light. 
I submit to Mañjuśrī, the Buddha of the Race of Honorable 
Dragon Kings. 
I submit to the Buddha of Zealous Progress and Virtue. 
I submit to Candrarābha, the Buddha of Precious Moonlight. 
I submit to the Buddha of Presence without Ignorance. 
I submit to Varuna, the Buddha of Sky and Water. 
I submit to the Buddha Nārāyaṇa. 
I submit to the Buddha of Radiant Meritorious Works. 
I submit to the Buddha of Talented Meritorious Works. 
I submit to Śvāgata, the Buddha of the Well-Departed. 
I submit to the Buddha of Candana Light. 
I submit to the Buddha of Jeweled Banner. 
I submit to the Buddha of the Light of Wisdom Torch. 
I submit to the Buddha of the Light of Sea-Virtue. 
I submit to the Buddha of Great Mercy Light. 
I submit to the Buddha, King of Compassion-Power. 
I submit to the Buddha, Leader of the Sages. 
I submit to the Buddha of Vast Solemnity. 
I submit to the Buddha of Golden Radiance. 
I submit to the Buddha of Luminous Gifts. 
I submit to the Buddha Victorious in Wisdom. 
I submit to the Buddha Quiescent Light of the World. 
I submit to the Buddha, Light of the Sun and Moon. 
I submit to the Buddha, Light of the Sun-and-Moon Pearl. 
I submit to the Buddha, King of the Victorious Banner. 
I submit to the Buddha of Wondrous Tone and Sound. 
I submit to the Buddha, Banner of Permanent Light. 
I submit to the Buddha, Lamp that Scans the World. 
I submit to the Buddha, King of Surpassing Dharma.

I submit to the Buddha of Sumeru Light. 
I submit to the Buddha, King of Great Wisdom. 
I submit to the Buddha of Golden Sea Light. 
I submit to the Buddha of Great Perfect Light. 
I submit to the Buddha of the Gift of Light. 
I submit to the Buddha of Candana Merit. 
I submit to the Buddha Victorious in Strife. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva Kuan-shih-yin. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva, Great Power-Coming. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva Visvabhadra and other Bodhisattvas. 
I submit to the various Bodhisattvas of the Great Pure Ocean. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva, the Buddha of Lotus Pool and Ocean 
Assembly. 
I submit to the various Bodhisattvas in the Western Heaven of 
Ultimate Bliss. 
I submit to the Great Bodhisattvas, the Three Thousand 
Guardians. 
I submit to the Great Bodhisattvas, the Five Hundred Arhats. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva, Bhikṣu-Ikṣāṇī. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva of Boundless and Limitless Dharma. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva, Diamond Great Scholar-Sage. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva, Janitor of the Altars. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva, Golden-Bodied Arhat of Eight Jewels. 
I submit to the Bodhisattva of Vast Strength, the Heavenly 
Dragon of Eight Divisions of Supernatural Beings.

Such are these various Buddhas in all the worlds. 
I wish to use these merits 
To adorn Buddha’s pure land— 
To repay fourfold grace above 
And save those on three paths below. 
If there are those who see and hear, 
Their minds will find enlightenment. 
Their births with us in paradise 
Will be this body’s recompense. 
All the Buddhas of past, present, future in all the world, 
The various Honored Bodhisattvas and Mahāsattvas. 
Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā!

Here ends The Journey to the West.