

ANTHONY C. YU

The Formation of Fiction in *The Journey to the West*

... palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs,
Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie...
Charles Baudelaire, "Le cygne," *Les fleurs du mal*

To honor the person and work of Nathan Sivin, it is mandatory for me to begin with a personal word concerning my indebtedness to this scholarly mentor and generous friend throughout my career. Nearly four decades ago, when in the proverbial action of "the fool [rushing] in where angels fear to tread" I began translating into English the entire novel, *Xiyouji* 西游記, or *The Journey to the West*, I had no idea what stupendous demand the text would make on someone daring enough to attempt this undertaking. Language and content, once enchanting the simplistic sight of a child, now appeared more and more as an impenetrable veil. It was in the midst of this *selva oscura* of my own inexperience and ignorance that I nonetheless had the great good fortune of meeting Professor Sivin, who almost at once made available to me the wealth of his scholarship. Throughout my long translation pilgrimage of fourteen years, he was my steady tutor and enlightening guide in acquiring rudimentary knowledge of Daoism, alchemy, traditional Chinese medicine, and the history of Chinese science and technology – without all of which much of the novelistic text would remain opaque and nonsensical. Those were, of course, the days before the computer and the search engines in different languages now taken for granted in the academy. His education of me was carried out as a protracted "correspondence course." No question I sent him through the mail was too trivial or complicated; every query received his attentive reflection and, when necessary, careful research before the answer returned, the message neatly typed with – where needed – Chinese or Japanese script added by hand. Occasionally, as I had later acknowledged in my published notes, he himself undertook the actual translation of particularly difficult passages. For the present gesture of appreciation and

gratitude, therefore, it is apposite that I should attempt some additional comments on a masterpiece of Chinese literature the study of which has served as such a significant token of our friendship.

Since those days of my initial effort of translation, there has been a munificent harvest of scholarly labor directly or indirectly related to the late-Ming novel. Not only have two English versions of the full-length work been completed and a French edition appeared in quick succession,¹ but there is a huge amount of new publications that focus on the work itself or provide noteworthy and even indispensable knowledge for contextual elucidation.² Such a trend has clarified the novel's contribution not merely to literary history but also to Chinese religious syncretism flourishing in the late-imperial period and its impact on the creation of additional fiction and texts of popular religions. The scholarship relative to the novel's contemporary status and understanding is literally global in scope, linking savants working in Europe, America, Japan, East and South Asia, and finally in China proper, but it could have taken place only because of three plus decades of unprecedented surge of Daoist studies led by European colleagues and increasingly

¹ E.g., Anthony C. Yu, trans. and ed., *The Journey to the West*, 4 vols. (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1977–83; hereafter, *JW*); Wu Cheng'en, *Journey to the West*, trans. W. J. F. Jenner, 3 vols. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1982–86); idem, *La Pérégrination vers l'Ouest*, trans. André Lévy, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1991). In the following footnotes, the abbreviation *XW* cites the Chinese text of the novel printed in Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩, *Xiyouji* 西游記 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1981).

² The entries here cannot aspire to a comprehensive bibliography, but I cite some of the most important works of the last two decades for my readers' reference. For a useful checklist of 20th-c. Japanese scholarship (with some Chinese references) on the novel up to 1990, see Isobe Akira 磯部彰, "Saiyūki kenkyū sencho ronbun mokuroku" 西游記研究專著論文目錄, in *Toyama daigaku ginbun gakubu kiyō* 富山大學人文學部紀要 16 (1990), pp. 53–87. Isobe's extensive bibliographical labor led directly to his thorough treatment – albeit, highly speculative in parts – of most possible antecedents and sources (excepting those of Daoism) for the hundred-chapter novel, with particularly striking coverage of iconographic and art materials. See his *Saiyūki keiseishi no kenkyū* 西游記形成史の研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1993). For more recent discussions of textual history and relations, source materials, and the novel's indebtedness to Daoism, the writings of Liu Ts'un-yan [Cunren] 柳存仁 remain indispensable. See his "Pishamen tianwang fuzi yu Zhongguo xiaoshuo zhi guanxi" 毘沙門天王父子與中國小說之關係, in *Hefengtang wenji* 和風堂文集 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1991) 2, pp. 1045–94; "Lun Ming-Qing Zhongguo tongxu xiaoshuo zhi banben" 論明清中國通俗小說之版本, in *ibid.* 2, pp. 1095–1166; "Siyouji di Ming keben" 四游記的明刻本, in *ibid.* 3, pp. 1260–1318; "Quanzhen jiao yu xiaoshuo Xiyouji" 全真教與小說西游記, in *ibid.* 3, pp. 1319–91; and "Lu Xisheng Wu Cheng'en shizhi bukao" 陸西星吳承恩事跡補考, in *ibid.* 3, pp. 1392–1417. See also Andrew H. Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1987); David Rolston, ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1987); idem, *Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary: Reading and Writing Between the Lines* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1997); and Qiancheng Li, *Fictions of Enlightenment: Journey to the West, Tower of Myriad Mirrors, and Dream of the Red Chamber* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 2004). An informative and up-to-date survey of the major critical issues relative to the novel, including textual history, sources, themes, authorship, publication and translation histories will be found in Zheng Mingli 鄭明俐, *Xiyouji tanyuan* 西游記探源 (Taipei: Liren, 2003).

supplemented by recent Chinese efforts.³ Despite such abundance, however, certain novelistic elements merit further consideration, and my modest effort here will concentrate on examining three interrelated features that contribute crucially to the process of making fiction in the hundred-chapter novel. They are: the character of the human scripture-seeker, the meaning of Monkey, and the relationship between religious allegory and fiction.

THE CHARACTER OF THE HUMAN SCRIPTURE-SEEKER

In complete contrast to the historical character's attested birthplace (Tang-era Chenliu county 陳留, Luozhou 洛州, now Goushi county 緱氏縣, Henan 河南), family background, and youthful experience (including early entrance into the Saṅgha, ordination, and devoted studies at the Western Tang capital of Chang'an 長安 and throughout adjacent regions in what would be the modern Sichuan province), the account of the legendary Xuanzang evolving through dramatic, novelistic, and possibly religious texts (for example, the various *baojuan* 寶卷 and *shanshu* 善書 appearing in the Ming) tells of a paternal lineage originating from Haizhou 海州, in Hongnong county 弘農縣, that denotes a relocation all the way to modern Jiangsu 江蘇 province. Moreover, the first eighteen years of this Xuanzang's life and its vicissitudes were unmistakably tied to the coastal region of southeastern China. Abandoned at birth by a widowed mother abducted and raped by a pirate, the infant was rescued and reared by a Buddhist abbot of Gold Mountain 金山,⁴ and, upon reaching adulthood, succeeded in avenging a father's murder and a mother's disgrace. As told already in the uniquely lengthy twenty-four act *zaju* 雜劇 also titled *Xiyouji* and attributed to the fourteenth-century

³ See, e.g., Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 2004); the special issue of *Journal of Chinese Religions* 29 (2001) focusing on Quanzhen Daoism; Stephen Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters* (Albany, NY: State U. New York P., 2004); Fabrizio Pregadio, *Great Clarity and Alchemy in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2006); Liu Ts'un-yan 柳存仁, *Daojiao shi tanyuan* 道教史探源 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000); Qing Xitai 卿希泰, ed., *Zhongguo Daojiao shi* 中國道教史 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1996); Gong Pengcheng 龔鵬程, *Daojiao xinlun* 道教新論 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1991); Wu Yakui 吳亞魁, *Jiangnan Quanzhen Daojiao* 江南全真道教 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 2005).

⁴ There are quite a few mountains in China by this name, but the one in the *XYJ* complex of stories clearly point to the one located northwest of Zhenjiang county 鎮江縣, Jiangsu, famously paired with another mountain, Jiaoshan 焦山. This identification stems from the fact that both are mentioned in different literary versions of the Xuanzang story. To this day, Gold Mountain Monastery 金山寺 is still standing and operational near Nanjing.

playwright and official 楊景言[賢],⁵ Buddhist “providence” personified in the goddess Guanyin 觀音 assumes a crucial role in so shaping events that they would lead eventually to the Tang emperor’s selection of Xuanzang as the scripture-seeker. In this further rewriting of history found in all versions of the hundred-chapter *Xiyouji*, the intensely personal zeal of a plebian priest will be displaced by different motivations undergirding such an enormous enterprise:⁶ Buddha’s compassionate wisdom in offering scriptures as a salvific gift to unenlightened, sinful Chinese in the Land of the East counterpoints the fictive pilgrim’s religious devotion and political loyalism to imperial recognition and mandate.⁷ Whereas the historical journey began as a secret, transgressive act of a pious zealot, the fictive pilgrimage was foreordained by Buddha, superintended throughout by Guanyin (the most popular Goddess of Mercy in Chinese religions), and enthusiastically commissioned by the Tang emperor.

As most students of the novel know, the relationship of the Tripitaka legend to the hundred-chapter novel is complicated by the fact that the Shidetang 世德堂 edition (dating to 1592) does not contain the crucial “Chapter Nine” that, however, is printed in most modern and contemporary editions. The extensive materials devoted to narrating the ordeals experienced by Xuanzang’s parents (father Chen Guangrui 陳光蕊 and mother Yin Wenjiao 殷溫嬌) and paternal grandmother are found only in two historical versions of *Xiyouji: juan 4* in the abridged version “compiled or edited 輯” by one Zhu Dingchen 朱鼎臣 of Yangcheng

⁵ A convenient modern edition of the play will be found in “Xiyouji zaju” 西游記雜劇, in Sui Shusen 隋樹森, ed., *Yuanqu xuan waibian* 元曲選外編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) 2, pp. 633–94.

⁶ For a recent treatment, see my “The Real Tripitaka Revisited: International Religion and National Politics,” in *ASIANetwork Exchange* 8.2 (Winter 2000), pp. 9–12.

⁷ In developing the significant theme of transcendent motivation for seeking scripture, the play also differs from the full-length novel. Throughout the *zaju*, the Buddha himself is never seen, though his presence is presumed. Concerning the scripture enterprise, Guanyin’s spoken soliloquy that opens the play ascribes the desire to impart scriptures to the Land of the East to the assembled disciples beneath Buddha’s throne. Their discussion 諸佛議論, in fact, results in their selection of the human priest and gives his preincarnate identity as Vairocana Buddha (reading 毘盧伽尊者 as 毘盧舍耶). See “Xiyouji zaju,” p. 623. The identity is noteworthy to the extent that it affirms the venerable association of the human priest with the Chan or Zen tradition of Buddhism in the popular imagination, because Vairocana is the leader of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas, patrons of the Dhyāna sect or Chanzong 禪宗 founded upon the core emphasis of Dhyāna, meditation or *chanding* 禪定. Perhaps building on this speech of Guanyin, but with marked modifications, chapter 8 of the novel has Buddha directly announcing to the assembled disciples before him his desire and purpose to impart scripture to the Land of the East before soliciting from them a volunteer to seek a seeker from that region. In an episode comparable to the prophet’s commission in Isaiah 6 of the Tanakh, Guanyin answers the call.

(Canton) 羊城, the date of which remains disputed in contemporary scholarship,⁸ and as the fully sketched-out, discrete Chapter Nine in the hundred-chapter version of *西游證道書* co-edited by Huang Taihong 黃太鴻 and Wang Xiangxu 汪象旭, and dated to 1662. Since I have already discussed in print long ago the problem of Chapter Nine,⁹ I have no desire to rehearse again the enigmas of the novel's textual stemma. What I want to highlight, rather, is how the popular story of the human scripture-seeker (even apart from the controversial and possibly spurious Chapter Nine) as a whole impinges upon the depiction of the fictive Xuanzang as we have it in the hundred-chapter novel.

The incidents constitutive of the Xuanzang legend, as both a biographical poem and the prose narration disclosed in chapter 12 of the full-length novel, include the following stable ingredients: the pilgrim's prenatal identity as the Buddha's disciple, the Elder Gold Cicada 金蟬長老, his exile to the human world for inattentiveness during a Buddha's lecture, his ordeal at birth on a river leading to his nickname, Child River Float 江流兒, his father's murder after winning the degree of *zhuangyuan* 狀元 and his mother's hand from an imperium's high-ranked minister Yin Kaishan 殷開山, his rescue by the abbot of Gold Mountain Monastery, his reunion with his mother and paternal grandmother, his success in avenging his father, the revivification of Chen Guangrui, and the eventual selection by the emperor of Xuanzang as the scripture-pilgrim. Taken as a whole, they form the consistent elements of a story complex that integrates certain features of the Jātaka tales (闍多伽: for example, stories on prior and present incarnations of Buddhas and bodhisattvas) and morality books (for example, Xuanzang's act of restoring his grandmother's eyesight by saliva and tongue-licking, an act that exemplifies "moving Heaven by filial piety 孝感動天"). In this regard, whether the problematic Chapter Nine is authentic or not in an "original" edition of the novel is in a sense a moot question, because all the full-length editions known to us, whether they contain the chapter or not, nonetheless refer in different parts of the novel to most of these details in

⁸ In his 1931 essay "Ba *Siyouji* ben di *Xiyouji* zhuan" 跋四游記本的西游記傳 (in *Hu Shi wencun* 胡適文存 [Hong Kong: Yuandong tushu, 1962] 4, pp. 408–11), Hu Shi has argued for the priority of the abridged versions collected in the combined edition of the *Siyouji* 四游記, of which the copy in his collection dates to 1811. But Liu Cunren ("Ming ke ben," in *Hefengtang wenji*, vol. 3, pp. 1266–86) counters with detailed observation that Zhu's text, which dates from the Wanli era of the Ming, has language in the "Crow/Bird Nest Zen Master 烏/鳥巢禪師" episode that seems identical to the 1811 text. On this and other evidences, Liu argues for the priority of an earlier and shorter text like the Zhu version for the development of the 1592 full-length version.

⁹ See my "Narrative Structure and the Problem of Chapter Nine in The 'Hsi-yu Chi'," in *JAS* 34.2 (February 1975), pp. 295–311.

the fictionalized Xuanzang story and regard them as germane to the pilgrim's person and experience.¹⁰

The question that we must raise at this juncture is *why*: why must the novel make central use of such a popular Xuanzang story that, at one basic level, seems so crassly at odds with known history? If for millennia historiography ruled as “the supreme narrative model in [premodern] China” to which all other literary genres must owe their subservience and emulation,¹¹ why does the full-length *Xiyouji* choose to fashion its human protagonist in a manner that would surely try – as it has, indeed, down to the present day – its literate readers' patience? Questions such as these two, I should add, cannot be fully answered by the exercise of *Quellenforschung*, by simply rehearsing more details – real or conjectured – from the funded tradition of historical sources or antecedents. The phenomenon of selecting this or that detail, of altering or suppressing known details, or even of adding and incorporating completely novel details must be accounted for, at least in equal part, by the attempted construal of meaning and structure of a particular text under investigation, and by considering as well the possible social and personal forces that might have affected therein characterization and emplotment. My own answer to the questions posed at this paragraph's beginning is that whatever readerly appeal the details of the miracle story may generate – Xuanzang's preincarnate identity, his natal annunciation by either the South Pole Star God or the Bodhisattva Guanyin, his lucky rescue when abandoned on the river, and the series of coincidences and auspicious omens accompanying his undertaking to avenge his parents – in themselves they cannot fully explain the necessity of the legend's appropriation and further exploitation.

¹⁰ Wang Xiangxu (Danyizi 憺漪子) makes an important point in his prefatory commentary to the problematic Chapter Nine included in his edited *Xiyou zhengdao shu* 西游證道書 dated to 1662 or later, when he heaps high praise for the chapter for supplying the pedigree and family history of the Tang monk 唐僧家世履歷 and clarifying the pilgrim's first four ordeals of prenatal banishment, human birth, abandonment on a river, and avenging his parents 遭貶出胎, 拋江報冤. Without the chapter, Guanyin and her attendant's crucial tally of the monk's preordained sufferings, featured in chapter 99 of all editions of the hundred-chapter novel, would become more or less gratuitous details of emplotment – duly alluded to in a long, biographical *pailü* poem (chapter 12) characteristically designed in the novel to narrate lineage and antecedent history of all the pilgrims except the dragon-horse, but not entirely intelligible. Whether Wang's verdict that his text including the controversial Chapter Nine was an “old text (*guben* 古本)” while those that did not represented actually a “popular text (*suben* 俗本)” cannot be our concern here. See “Guben *Xiyouji* di jiu hui” 古本西游記第九回, p. 1b, in *Juanxiang guben xiyou zhengdao shu* 鐫像古本西游證道書, duplication of microfilmed facsimile of the copy collected at the Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo of Kyoto University.

¹¹ See Henry Y. H. Zhao, “Historiography and Fiction in Chinese Culture,” in Franco Moretti, ed., *The Novel, Volume 1: History, Geography, and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2006), pp. 69–93.

The one element of cardinal – indeed unique – importance deriving from the fiction that has hitherto received comparatively scant critical attention (except perhaps denigration, if not immediate dismissal) is that the story complex establishes the unavoidable linkage between the human pilgrim and the Tang emperor and his court. As it is apparent from a long biographical poem included in every unabridged hundred-chapter version of the novel,¹² the association in fact extends from a time prior to the famous pilgrimage all the way to the imperial selection of the candidate.

That linkage derives, of course, from the fact that Chen Guangrui was a *zhuangyuan* and that his achievement also garnered for him the marriage to the daughter of the court's high minister. The pilgrim's father and his marital family, as the novelistic adaptation of the legend makes clear, had been known well to Tang Taizong even *before* disaster struck, and appropriately, the attempt to avenge parental death and wrong by the grown-up Xuanzang eighteen years later received ready assistance from the emperor. Ostensibly a device for elevating the social status of the pilgrim, such thematic details are even more plausibly enlisted as markers of karmic affinity 前因後果. Intent on keeping his promise to hold a Grand Mass of Land and Water after his death and tour of the Underworld, the emperor Taizong, when presented with Xuanzang's suggested candidacy, "thought silently for a long time and said, 'Can Xuanzang be the son of Grand Secretary Chen Guangrui?' 沉思良久道: '可是學士陳光蕊之兒玄奘否?'"¹³ The ruler's mnemonic recognition and Guanyin's epiphany immediately following thus provide the unshakable foundation evident throughout the long novel: that this momentous enterprise of seeking scriptures could not have been an initiative of merely the piety of a little known individual, let alone the rebellious and even treasonous zeal of that person. Although it has no less a transcendent origin than the mind of the Buddhist Patriarch himself, the immense journey also requires the equal partnership of a supreme human ruler on earth, a figure familiar to any historical Chinese writer. The execution of this emphasis, I'd argue, has rendered it

¹² *JW* 1, p. 263; *XYJ* 1, pp. 146-47.

¹³ *JW* 1, p. 264; *XYJ* 1, p. 147. This brief description of the emperor's musing and verbal tentativeness may be used to validate further Wang Xiangxu's stricture on the full-length novel's text that does not contain the "specious" Chapter Nine, because the emperor's manner of posing the query to his interlocutor would suggest possible prior contact with the recommended candidate's father. In the beginning of the disputed Chapter Nine, unlike other literary antecedents of the Chen story, the emperor himself signed the certificate that bestowed the title of *zhuangyuan* to Guangrui and also gave the latter his first appointment.

impossible – and perhaps even irrelevant – to reconcile known historical chronology of Xuanzang with the legend’s chronotope, the fictive time scheme required by the Chen Guangrui story.¹⁴

However that kind of textual contradiction is to be resolved, what no reader of the full-length novel can fail to notice is how deeply in Xuanzang’s consciousness is imprinted the magnitude of the imperial favor and charge bestowed on him. The historical pilgrim’s dedication to visit the Western region was motivated by the quest for doctrinal clarification (*Fashizhuan* 法師傳 1: “The Master of the Law . . . thus vowed to tour the region of the West so as to inquire about the perplexities [of his faith] 法師. . . 乃誓遊西方以問所惑”),¹⁵ and this commitment would make him risk even death for defying “the laws of the state 國法” (*Xingzhuang* 行狀).¹⁶ In sharp contrast, the fictive priest, when promoted to be the emperor’s bond-brother for the willingness to serve as the scripture-seeker, said to his ruler: “Your Majesty, what ability and what virtue does your poor monk possess that he should merit such affection from your Heavenly Grace? I shall not spare myself in this journey, but I shall proceed with all diligence until I reach the Western Heaven. If I did not attain my goal, or the true scriptures, I would not dare return to our land even if I were to die. May I fall into eternal perdition in Hell. 陛下，貧僧有何德何能，敢蒙天恩眷顧如此？我這一去，定要捐軀努力，直至西天；如不到西天，不得真經，即死也不敢回國，永墮沉淪地獄。”¹⁷

Whereas the historical pilgrim, upon his successful return to China with scriptures, felt compelled to seek imperial pardon for “braving to

¹⁴ The historical Xuanzang’s own words on when and how he left China are as follows: “in the fourth month of the third year of the Zhenguan 貞觀 reign period (630 ad), braving the transgression of the articles of law, I departed for India on my own authority” (“Da Tang da Ci’ensi Sanzang fashizhuan” 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳, j. 5, in Master Guangzhong 光中法師, ed., *Tang Xuanzang Sanzang zhuan shi huibian* 唐玄奘三藏傳史彙編 [Taipei: Dongda, 1988; hereafter, *TXZSZZ*], p. 126). Perhaps applying in confusion this year to the legend, the *zaju* version of the Chen Guangrui story announces that Xuanzang was born on the fifteenth of the tenth mo. of Zhenguan 3 (“*Zaju Xiyouji*,” 639), but this would mean that Xuanzang’s selection as the scripture pilgrim at age eighteen or older would have to take place in Zhenguan 21 or later. Historically, most scholars agreed that by Zhenguan 19 (645) Xuanzang had already returned to Tang territory. With respect to the novel, the Chapter Nine paragraph opening common to both the spurious and the Shidetang versions, however, dates the pilgrim’s selection to year 13, and this is reconfirmed in chapter 100 of all full-length versions, when the emperor’s own words record his date of reunion with his commissioned priest as Zhenguan 27 (*XYJ* 3, p. 1255). The impossible chronology of the spurious Chapter Nine would have made the pilgrim’s selection in the same year that his father was appointed *zhuangyuan* prior to his conception.

¹⁵ See “Fashizhuan” 1 in *TXZSZZ*, p. 7.

¹⁶ See Mingxiang 冥祥, “Da Tang gu Sanzang Xuanzang fashi xingzhuang” 大唐故三藏玄奘法師行狀, in *TXZSZZ*, p. 289.

¹⁷ Chap. 12, *JW* 1, p. 279; *XYJ* 1, p. 158.

transgress the authoritative statutes and departing for India on one's own authority 冒越憲章私往天竺” through both written memorial and direct oral petition (*Fashizhuan* 6), the fictive priest would be welcomed by a faithful and expectant ruler who had even built a Scripture-Anticipation Tower 望經樓 to wait anxiously for his envoy for eleven more years (chapter 100). This portrait of the pilgrimage's imperial sponsorship, intervention (most notably in the travel rescript bearing the imperial seal administered by the emperor himself),¹⁸ and reception helps explain why the fictive priest would consider his religious mission to be, in fact, his obligated service to his lord and state, and that the mission's success must enact not merely the fulfilment of a vow to Buddha but equally one to a human emperor. As the lead-in poem that inaugurates the priest's formal journey at the beginning of chapter 13 puts it: “The rich Tang ruler issued a decree/Deputing Xuanzang to seek the source of Zen 大有唐王降敕封/欽差玄奘問禪宗.”¹⁹

The fact that the fictive pilgrim was sent on his way by the highest human authority with tokens of imperial favor thus also changes fundamentally Xuanzang's identity and its mode of disclosure. In sharp contrast to the historical figure who, deciding to defy the court's proscription to travel in the western regions, “dared not show himself in public but rested during the day and journeyed only at night 不敢公出,乃晝伏夜行” (*Fashizhuan* 1),²⁰ the novelistic Xuanzang had no difficulty or hesitation in telling the first stranger he met that he was an imperial envoy sent by the Tang emperor to seek scriptures from Buddha in the Western Heaven.²¹ The words, uttered by both master and disciples, would become a formulaic announcement throughout the priest's journey to every conceivable audience – whether divine, demonic or human – much as the imperial travel rescript authorizing his undertaking would be signed and stamped with royal seals of all the states and kingdoms the pilgrims visited, and from where they had gained permitted passage (chapter 100). The “Shengjiao xu 聖教序 (Preface to the Holy Religion)” bestowed by the historical Taizong on the repatriated Xuanzang, transcribed nearly verbatim in chapter 100 of the novel, had declared unambiguously that the journey was the monk's solitary expedition 承危遠邁,策杖孤征. In this *ex post facto* encomium bequeathed to a cleric newly pardoned for a seventeen-year-old

¹⁸ Chapter 12: 取經文牒, ... 通行寶印. In subsequent chapters, the rescript is always referred to as the 通牒關文 that, in the overall emplotment of the novel, has immense political and religious significance yet to be studied.

¹⁹ *JW* 1, p. 282; *XJ* 1, p. 160.

²⁰ *TXZSZZ*, p. 9.

²¹ *JW* 1, p. 289; *XJ* 1, p. 165.

crime against the state,²² not even the emperor could claim credit for authorizing or assisting the project in any manner. On the other hand, the invented rescript, in poignant irony, would not allow the readers to forget for one minute that imperial charge and enablement were as needed as the assistance of the gods.

Throughout the novel's lengthy course, therefore, there are quite a few examples in which Xuanzang frets about his inability to fulfill the decreed wish of his human lord 旨意 as much as the dreaded failure to reach and see Buddha. Fearing contracted illness might prove fatal during the episode of the Sea-Pacifying Monastery in chapter 81, a tearful Tripitaka would write a poem that he wants Monkey to take back to the Tang court, to inform his Sage Lord 聖君 of his precarious health and request another pilgrim be sent instead. Captured by a leopard monster in chapter 85, Tripitaka explains to a fellow prisoner that "If I lose my life here, would that not have dashed the expectation of the emperor and the high hopes of his ministers? 今若喪命, 可不盼殺那君王, 辜負那臣子?" When told by his interlocutor, a stereotypical wood-cutter who is the sole supporter of an old widowed mother (compare with the one who spoke to Monkey in chapter 1), the priest breaks into loud wailing, crying:

How pitiful! How pitiful! 可憐 可憐
 If even a rustic has longings for his kin,
 Has not this poor priest chanted sūtras in vain?
 To serve the ruler or to serve one's parents follows the same
 principle. You live by the kindness of your parents, and I
 live by the kindness of my ruler. 山人尙有思親意, 空教貧
 僧會念經. 事君事親, 皆同一理. 你爲親恩, 我爲君恩.²³

Tripitaka's emotional outburst not only places his sentiments squarely within the most familiar discourse of historical Confucian teachings, but also echoes his parting address to his monastic community at the Temple of Great Blessings 洪福寺 on the eve of his journey: "I have already made a great vow and a profound promise, that if I do not acquire the true scriptures, I shall fall into eternal perdition in

²² For what might well have been regard for harmonizing numerical symbolism in the text, this particular instance having to do with Buddhism, the novel reduces the length of the pilgrimage to fourteen years, making the number of days on the journey 5,040 days (i.e., 360 x 14). At the story's very end, the Buddha added 8 more days (see the Patriarch's words at the end of chapter 98) for the pilgrims' return from India to Chang'an and then back again to India under divine escorts, making the grand total of 5,048 days to correspond exactly to the canonical number of "scrolls, *juan*" first identified with the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 compiled by Zhisheng 智昇 in 730 AD.

²³ *JW* 4, p. 173; *XY* 3, p. 1090.

Hell. Since I have received such grace and favor from the king, I have no alternative but to requite my country to the limit of loyalty. 我已發了弘誓大願，不取真經，永墮沉淪地獄。大底是受王恩寵，不得不盡忠以報國耳。”²⁴ That remark, in turn, even more pointedly repeats a similar confession spoken by the Xuanzang of the twenty-four-act *zaju*: “Honored viewers, attend to the single statement by this lowly monk: a subject must reach the limit of loyalty, much as son must reach the limit of filial piety. There is no other means of requital than the perfection of both loyalty and filial piety. 眾官，聽小僧一句言語：爲臣盡忠，爲子盡孝，忠孝兩全，餘無所報。”²⁵ Words such as these may seem hackneyed and platitudinous to modern ears, to say the least, but this portrait of the novelistic Xuanzang cannot be ignored. Built consistently on the tradition of antecedent legend, but with important innovative additions apparently supplied by the Shidetang author, his characterization seems to fit precisely the mold of a stereotype – the traditional Confucian scholar-official.

If the full-length novel seems to indicate a presumption of the Three-Religions-in-One ideology 三教歸一 (or, 三教合一) for both its content and context, who among the five fictive pilgrims is more appropriate than the human monk to live to the limits of political loyalism and filial piety, especially when all four of the other disciples have only such tenuous relations to human culture and lineage? The historical Xuanzang was unquestionably a hero of religion, aptly turning his back on family and court in his youth to face appalling dangers with nary a regret, and without doubt a master of literary Sinitic and of scriptural styles shaped by difficult encounters with Indic languages. His biography, compiled by two disciples and touched with hagiography, duly recorded serial visitations to various states of Central Asia and India beset by encounters with gods and demons, physical perils and privations, triumphal religious proselytism, and royal hospitality in many locales. Nonetheless, could a faithful replica of this character who began his famed journey as a treasonous subject be expected to amuse and entertain in the popular imagination? The novelistic figure, by contrast, is timid, ethically fastidious, occasionally dogmatic and heedful of slander, and prone to partiality – mundane traits not uncommon to other male leads typed in Ming drama or vernacular fiction. Most interestingly, although this pilgrim, consistent with his vocational vow of celibacy, may display intractable resistance to sexual temptations

²⁴ Chapter 12 in *JW* 1, p. 280; *XYJ* 1, pp. 158–59.

²⁵ Act 5, in *Zaju Xiyouji* 2, p. 648.

in all circumstances (chapters 24, 54–55, 82–83), he is also so fond of poetry that he would discuss poetics with tree monsters (chapter 64) and compose quatrains in a region near India (chapter 94). Perhaps in parody of filial piety blended with the religious notion of reverting to the source and origin 反本還原 extolled in both Daoism and Buddhism, the narrative shows him to be so attached to his mother (when he is not thinking about the emperor) that an ordeal is almost conveniently structured right in his path nearing its goal that would reenact the fated marriage of his parents – the chance selection of the father by the mother’s thrown embroidered ball (chapters 93–95). In this episode on the Kingdom of India, where to the Tang Monk’s chauvinistic eyes the clothing, utensils, manner of speech, and behavior of the people completely resemble those of the Great Tang,²⁶ the pilgrim’s persistent invocation of maternal experience also justly invites Monkey’s teasing about his master’s “longing for the past 慕古之意.”²⁷ Is not such a person, dwelling in the religiously syncretic world of the full-length novel, a fit representative of Confucianism, at least as known and imagined by the vast populace?

THE MEANING OF MONKEY

The second distinctive feature in the fictionalization of the *Xiyouji* story necessarily concerns the priest taking for a disciple a monkey figure, an animal guardian-attendant endowed with enormous intelligence and magical powers. Though this figure’s association with the pilgrim could already be found in snippets of verse as early as the twelfth century and in further development thereafter in narrative and dramatic form, it remains for the hundred-chapter novel of late Ming to endow this simian character with its grandest and most compelling delineation. The importance assigned to Xuanzang’s chief disciple may be seen in the fact that fully seven chapters at the beginning are devoted to relating Sun Wukong’s birth and development, his training and attainment in esoteric Daoist self-cultivation, his daring exploits throughout Heaven and Hell that climax in his wreaking horrific havoc at the Celestial Palace – episodes that not only read like those of an independent tale by itself but also have been adapted in fact as such in Beijing opera and other dramatic media. Once converted to Buddhism after having been subdued and imprisoned by Buddha himself, as we all know, Sun eventually became Xuanzang’s most able and devoted disciple.

²⁶ *JW* 4, p. 304; *XI* 3, p. 1179.

²⁷ *JW* 4:315; *XI* 3, p. 1185.

The monkey's restless intelligence, martial and magical prowess, and almost limitless resourcefulness have reminded many a modern Chinese and foreign reader by the early-twentieth century of another simian hero across cultures: Hanumat of the great Indian epic *Rāmāyana* attributed to the poet Vālmiki. Scholarship of the previous decades has hesitated to aver direct linkage of the two stories because of the lack of decisive information on textual or historical influence. More recent research, however, has firmly uncovered even possible references to various aspects of the Rama story in certain Indian Buddhist texts that had been translated into Chinese and possibly also in another major work of sixteenth-century fiction like *Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義. Moreover, scholars writing in both Chinese and English have steadily unveiled astonishing parallels in descriptive and emplotment details in various episodes of the Indian epic and of *Xiyouji*, beyond mere similarity of characterization of the two monkeys (courage and prowess in battle, ability to fly, the tendency to attack their enemies through their bellies).²⁸

In addition to the possible connection between Monkey Sun and his Indian literary counterpart, recent scholarship has also offered interesting textual and geographical details from other sources for the convergence of Chinese and Indian motifs “in a body of monkey lore” that surrounds the Hangzhou monastery Lingyin Si 靈隱寺 and tells of resident monks who at one time raised monkeys. The stories not only perpetuate the theme of pious simians listening to scriptural exposition 猿聽經 favored and celebrated by Chinese literati and painters on account of the white gibbon's “monogamous family life, his solitary habits,” and mournful cries that evoke and provoke weeping, but they also specifically associate the Lingyin Mountain with the attributed abode of Buddha in India, the Spirit Garuda Peak 靈鷲峰 (Sk. Gṛdhra-kūṭa).²⁹

²⁸ On the controversial issue of Monkey's possible Indian roots, decisive clarification has been provided by Ji Xianlin 季羨林, who translated into Chinese the great epic *Rāmāyana*. See his *Lomoyan'na* 羅摩衍那 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue, 1980–84); and *Lomoyan'na chutan* 羅摩衍那初探 (Beijing: Waiguo wenzue, 1979). Another important study charting the possible Tibetan transmission of the Indian story to China is found in Liu Ts'un-yan 柳存仁, “Zangben *Lomoyan'na* benshi sijian” 藏本羅摩衍那本事私箋, in *Daojia yu Daoshu, Hefengtang wenji xubian* 道家與道術, 和風堂文集續編 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1999), pp. 154–93. For persuasive and thorough studies of extended parallels between the Indian poem and the Chinese novel, see Victor Mair, “Sun Wu-kung=Hanumat? The Progress of a Scholarly Debate,” in *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Sinology*, Academia Sinica, Taiwan (June, 1989), pp. 659–752; and Rammath Subbaraman, “Beyond the Question of the Monkey Imposter: Indian Influence on the Chinese Novel, *The Journey to the West*,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 114 (March 2002), pp. 1–35. The most recent discussion from the perspective of an Indologist supportive of influence will be found in Philip Lutgendorf, *Hanuman's Tale: The Messages of a Divine Monkey* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2007), pp. 354–57.

²⁹ Monkeys raised in the Lingyin Monastery are said to have the surname Sun, exactly the

However accurately these sources may serve to illumine Monkey's origin, they cannot account for his character's multifaceted richness as developed and displayed in the hundred-chapter novel. As every reader of the novel would agree, no monkey figure of any documentable antecedent – whether it be the white ape in dramatic literature that tends to abduct and seduce women from good families, the powerful but renegade Yuan Hong 袁洪 in *Fengshen yanyi* that fought with Erlang through a combative contest of magical transformations (closely paralleling the more expansive account in *Xiyouji* and both possibly paralleling similar contests in *Rāmāyana* 20), the various macaques and gibbons in anecdotes and paintings kneeling before a monk in attentive listening, or even the Great Sage 大聖 who appears in the Song poetic tale 詩話 version of the story as a white-robed scholar 白衣秀才 – can possibly rival the novelistic figure who seems to be so completely human on the one hand and at the same time so boundlessly resourceful and intelligent on the other. At the thick of his exciting contest of magic with the three Great Immortals of the Cart-Slow Kingdom (chapter 46), Monkey's spontaneous versatility seems to have so impressed even his own authorial creator that the narrator is moved to exclaim: “Marvelous Great Sage! What readiness of mind! Truly such agility is rare in the world!/Such cleverness is uncommon indeed!”

The following section will refer again to this episode, but what I want to attempt here is an answer to another question of why the novel's scripture-seeker requires an animal companion-guardian of such complexity and magnitude in personality and character. The simplified and partial explanation surfacing already in the Flowing-Sand River episode (chapter 22) is that the human pilgrim, who must experience in person the ordeal of traversing “all these strange territories” for the scriptures, is in need of his disciples as “his protective companions, guarding his body and life,” but this necessity cannot fully account for the peculiar characterization of Xuanzang, his four disciples, and their intricate relationships mapped out in the narrative. In this regard, I think it may be useful to remember that, oddly, this scripture-seeking story actually begins with another story of an ostensibly different quest:

same as that given to the eldest disciple of the novelistic Xuanzang, while monkeys reared in the India's Spirit-Vulture Mountain are said to have memorized and been able to recite the *Trīṣaṛaṇa* 三歸依 formula of taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. See the interesting and informative essay by Meir Shahar, “The Lingyin Si Monkey Disciples and the Origins of Sun Wukong,” *HJAS* 52 (June 1992), pp. 193–224. For pictorial accounts as ancient as the latter Han that depicted the female abduction by an ape and the animal fighting warriors, see Wu Hung, “The Earliest Pictorial Representations of Ape Tales: An Inter-disciplinary Study of Early Chinese Narrative Art,” *TP* 73.1–3 (1987), pp. 86–112.

“the sprouting of [Monkey’s] religious inclination 道心開發” in chapter 1 that leads to his search for the Way 訪道 and its eventual acquisition 得道. When he succeeds in the first stage of learning the secret of realized immortality from the Patriarch Subhodi, the narration’s emphasis (chapter 2) at first seems to accentuate his superhuman powers and physical transformation: “I left weighed down by bones of mortal stock./The Dao attained makes light both body and frame.”³⁰ At the height of his battle in Heaven, however, the commentarial verse in chapter 7 refines and deepens the polysemia of the Monkey figure by a regulated poem’s opening lines: “A monkey’s changed body weds the human mind./Mind is a monkey – this, the sense profound 猿猴道體配人心/心即猴意思深.”³¹ Because the Monkey of the Mind (*xinyuan* 心猿) was a stock idiom common to Buddhist and Daoist usage long before the novel’s formation and appearance, most readers past and present may not have been inclined to heed the punning assertion of the poem’s second line and explore further how vastly meaningful this seemingly trite appellation can become in the entire work.³²

The narrative context of this cited poem locates it at the moment when Monkey will soon face the comic but disastrous wager with Buddha himself, who addresses his insolent opponent as “only a monkey who happens to become a spirit, . . . merely a beast who has just attained human form in this incarnation,”³³ amply justifying the epithet of bogus immortal 妖仙 tagging him in another context. In the religio-magico cosmos presumed by the full-length novel, the attainment of magical or transcendent powers (*de Dao*) is clearly a privilege open to both humans and such non-humans as plants, animals, and even inorganic materials like rocks and mountains, or artifacts like swords and lutes. But the process also entails a form of hierarchy more consonant with Confucian culture: for non-humans, the goal of their first stage must be the acquisition of human speech, manners, and other symbols of human culture. That was what Monkey learned in chapter 1,

³⁰ *JW* 1, p. 93; *XYJ* 1, p. 24.

³¹ *JW* 1, p. 168; *XYJ* 1, p. 79.

³² The characters *xin* 心 and *shen* 深, by premodern prosody, both belong to the lower level tone’s twelfth rhyme scheme identified by the word *qin* 下平聲, 十二侵韻. See the *Suoyinben Peiwen yunfu* 索引本佩文韻府 (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1976, rpt. of 1937 edn.) 2, p. 1393. In certain southern (Wu) dialects, including Cantonese and Minnan, the two graphs are virtual homophones. These two lines thus make use of such rhetorical features, denominated in Western prosody, as *anadiplosis* (repetition of the last word or phoneme of one line or clause to start the next, a technique also named “The Thimble 頂針” in *XYJ* chapter 64) and *epanadiplosis* (repetition of a word or phoneme at the end of the line with the same word or phoneme with which it begins).

³³ *JW* 1, p. 172; *XYJ* 1, pp. 81–82.

whereas the giant white turtle of chapter 49 had acquired speech but not the human form (by shedding his shell), and the giant python monster of chapter 67 could not even speak. Thus one legitimate question we may be led to ask is whether the Monkey of the first seven chapters has truly been united with the human heart-and-mind (in spite of the fact that he acquired the Dao at a place the name of which – The Mountain of Heart and Mind, the Cave of Slanting Moon and Three Stars 靈台方寸山, 斜月三星洞 – amounts to no more than a repetitious anagram of the Chinese graph, *xin* 心) or whether that kind of union begins only with his submission to Tripitaka, an event receiving the titular summary as “The Monkey of the Mind Returns to the Right 心猿歸正” (chapter 14).

To understand the initial relationship between Xuanzang and his simian disciple is already to follow the insight of readers from the Ming to contemporary scholars that one principal subject of the novel irrefutably focuses on the cultivation of heart-and-mind (*xiuxin* 修心), a subject that has occupied copiously the discourse of philosophical elites like the neo-Confucians from Song to Ming to the slogans and jargon of pedestrian morality advocates and even popular entertainers. We should remember, however, that the pithiness of this abstract term of cultivation may prevent us from seeing the multiplicity of its meaning that finds such ingenious deployment in the novel. Although the pre-pilgrimage Xuanzang (chapter 13) can already assert that “when the mind is active, all kinds of *māra* come into existence; when the mind is extinguished, all kinds of *māra* will be extinguished 心生, 種種魔生; 心滅, 種種魔滅,”³⁴ his experience throughout the journey reveals that such a declaration for him at the time seems no more than a rote paraphrase of similar ideas in many Buddhist writings (for example, “心生即種種法生, 心滅即種種法滅”), especially those associated with the Chan sect.³⁵ For him – and the readers as well – to learn the full implications of such a doctrine, it will take the lengthy journey’s eighty-one ordeals no less than Tripitaka’s union with another form of his mind, the *xinyuan* that will serve, paradoxically, as both the pilgrim’s teacher and disciple.

This central paradox, as it finds narrative exposition and enactment in the novel, thus perforce departs from the kind of syncretic idealism of a neo-Confucian Wang Shouren 王守仁 (Yangming 陽明, 1472–1529).

³⁴ *JW* 1, p. 283; *XY* 1, p. 160.

³⁵ The two parallel sentences are found verbatim in the following: “大乘起信論廣釋,” in *T* 2814, vol. 85, p. 1136c; “六祖大師法寶壇經,” in *T* 2008, vol. 85, p. 32A; “景德傳燈錄,” in *T* 2076, vol. 51, p. 236B; “鎮州臨濟慧照禪師語錄” in *T* 1985, vol. 47, p. 502B; “大明高僧傳,” in *T* 2062, vol. 50, p. 920A.

Although that Ming philosopher admits that “the lessons of Chan and of the Sages are all about cultivating to the limit of one’s heart-and-mind 禪之學與聖人之學，皆求其盡其心也，” and that Confucianism differs from Chan Buddhism only by a hair’s breadth (“相去毫厘矣”), Wang’s patently Mencian diction nevertheless clings to a traditional critique of Buddhism for “ignoring canonical human relations, abandoning affairs and things [of the world], and fostering selfishness and self-benefit 外人倫，遺事物... 起於自私自利。”³⁶ By contrast, the novel’s unapologetic religious orientation now seeks to unite Buddhist and Confucian precepts in a markedly different manner. The fictive Xuanzang is first presented as someone with impeccable credentials of a loyal subject and filial son, but even though he has not ignored human relations, he must still learn the lesson adumbrated in the lead-in poem of chapter 14 – “The Mind Is the Buddha and the Buddha Is Mind 佛即心兮心即佛”³⁷ – a chapter ending dramatically on Monkey’s thunderous clamor that his Master has arrived at last to set him free. Throughout the novel, that lesson is repeatedly emphasized. The poem recited by Monkey in chapter 85 that “Mount Spirit lives only in your mind 靈山只在汝心頭” is already anticipated in the instruction of his master in chapter 24 (“What’s required is that you will resolutely see the Buddha-nature in all things, so that every thought returns you to the very source of your memory: that will be the Spirit Mountain 只要你見性志誠，念念回首處，即是靈山”), because the fictive Xuanzang needs to be reminded constantly not to forget the doctrines of the loftiest idealism or mentalism enshrined in the *Heart Sūtra* (chapters 32, 85). Even more painfully, he – and the readers – must realize, through the somewhat violent but repeated episodes of eliminating the Six Robbers (chapters 14 and 56), that what the monk cherishes as inviolable Law of his professed faith (the Buddhist commandment not to take life) may be contradictory in itself, in the sense that this imperative as such is also fundamentally

³⁶ See Wang Shouren, “Chongxiu Shanyin xian xueji” 重修山陰縣學記, in *Wang Wengcheng Gong quanshu* 王文成公全書, ed. Wu Guang 吳光 et al. (Shanghai: Guji, 1992) 1, p. 257.

³⁷ Although the entire poem seems a celebration of the Buddhist theme of mental enlightenment, it is actually a composition authored by the famous Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (984–1082), noted Daoist of the Northern Song known as Ziyang zhenren 紫陽真人. He was regarded as a foremost “theoretician” of the golden elixir division of physiological alchemy, and among his several pieces of writings eventually collected in the Daoist Canon, the best known was the *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇. A couple of poems from this collection were either alluded to or cited verbatim by the Shidetang 射堂 text. The poem prefacing chapter 14 is named “Xinfo song” 心佛頌 (Ode to the Mind-and-Heart Buddha), and printed as part of an interlinear commentary of the *Heart Sūtra*; see Zhu Di 朱棣, annot., *Jingang boruo Boluomi jing jizhu* 金剛般若波羅蜜經集注 (Shanghai: Guji, 1984), pp. 172–73. I am deeply grateful to Professor Qiancheng Li in a recent letter for identifying the poem for me.

empty and thus requires noetic transcendence in the very process of self-cultivation.³⁸

The Mind/Heart that must be consulted and utilized thus dialectically needs also to be controlled or harnessed 管制, as every reader who encounters the Tight-Fillet episodes would realize. Moreover, Monkey's own experience as the Tang Monk's disciple mirrors his master's experience, one constituted by a series of imprisonment and release, harmonious integration and disastrous dissolution, epitomized in the idiom, "to subdue or release the Monkey of the Mind 收放心猿"³⁹ and frequently emphasized by both Buddhism and Quanzhen 全真 Daoism, the sect named Perfected Authenticity. Most importantly, physical pain and mental anguish persistently accompany the human pilgrim no less than his devoted disciple on this journey. When the internal contradiction of the Mind/Heart's cultivation seems to reach

³⁸ It should be obvious that such a notion may seem nonsensical to the three major theistic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, affirming as they do on the linguistic and textual transmissions of divine commandments as permanent law.

³⁹ Cf. the Preface attributed to Yu Ji 虞集 (1272–1348), a major scholar of the Southern Song, gathered in the 1662 *Xiyou zhengdaoshu* ("Yu Preface" 虞序, pp. 3b–4b). Deserving of our careful pondering, Yu makes the assertion that the novel's principal message 大要 may be summarized by a single statement: "It's all about subduing or releasing the mind. For the way we act as a demon or become a buddha are all because of this mind. When this mind is released, it becomes a reckless mind 妄心; once this reckless mind is aroused, there is nothing that its unrestrained transformations cannot reach. Examples of this are the Mind Monkey (NB: *xinyuan* 心猿 may well be a pun on *xinyuan* 心願, mental wish) calling himself King and Sage and greatly disturbing the Celestial Palace. When this mind is subdued, it becomes the true mind. Once this true mind manifests itself, it can then extinguish demons (*māra*), and similarly there is nothing that its unrestrained transformations cannot reach. Examples of this are how the Mind Monkey vanquishes monsters and binds fiends to proclaim the Buddhist fruit." That both Yu Ji and the later editor Wang Danyi were ardent followers of Quanzhen Daoism should be apparent to all students of the tradition, in which the familiar metaphors of "the Monkey of the Mind and the Horse of the Will" pervaded all the writings of the masters. For a few examples, one need but consult the collected compositions of the acknowledged founding patriarch Wang Zhe 王喆, or Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1113–1169), *Chongyang quanzhen ji* 重陽全真集, in *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1924–26; facs. edn. of Ming edn. preserved in Beijing, Baiyuan Temple; hereafter, *DZ*) 1153, *j.* 1, p. 12a: "心猿緊縛無邪染/意馬牢擒不夜巡"; *j.* 3, p. 17a: "修身爭似修心"; *j.* 4, p. 11a: "猿馬住/性命自然知"; *j.* 9, p. 15a: "不得意馬外遊/不得心猿內動." (I use the numbering of Louis Komjathy, *Title Index to Daoist Collections* [Cambridge, Mass.: Three Pines Press, 2002]).

Whether the Yu "Preface" was authentic and thus antedated the Preface by one Chen Yuanzhi 陳元之 in the 1592 Shidetang edition or whether it actually came after Chen's piece is of little import here. What we need to notice is the concurrence of critical judgment on the message and medium of the story text: "For demons are the hindrances (障, *māra*) caused by the mouth, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, the will, the fears and the illusions of the imagination 幻想. Therefore, as demons are born of the mind, they will also be pacified 攝 by the mind. That is why we must pacify the mind in order to pacify the demons; we must pacify the demons in order to return to truth; we must return to truth in order to reach the primal beginning where there will be nothing more to be pacified by the mind. That is what is meant by the perfection of the Dao, and this is also the real allegory of the book 此書真寓言也." See *Xinke chuxiang guanban dazi Xiyouji* 新刻出像官板大字西游記, *j.* 1, pp. 2b–3a. Duplication of microfilmed facsimile of the edition collected at the Naikaku Bunko.

an insoluble aporia, because mindlessness and mindfulness are both necessary and dispensable, the faculty of Mind/Heart can literally split into two identical entities of two minds or double-mindedness 二心 that, according to the brilliant allegory of chapters 56–58, only Buddha’s transcendent wisdom can overcome.⁴⁰ The swift and violent slaying of the Six-Eared Macaque as Monkey’s double in the episode thus enacts literally two lines of a commentarial poem in chapter 58:⁴¹ “If one has two minds, disasters he’ll breed/... The Gate of Chan must learn the No Mind Spell 人有二心生禍災/... 禪門須學無心訣.”⁴² The truth of this formula, so engagingly dramatized in this and other episodes, is not only that a Bodhisattva Guanyin and a monster are in reality the transformed progenies of one and the same thought (chapter 17, 一念), but also that so powerful and presumed “real” a figure as the Bull Monster King narratively exists (like the macaque of Monkey’s double) only as another Monkey Sun’s imagined, and possibly repressed, other. Unexpectedly this startling, striking equation comes from the Pig’s poetic declamation (chapter 61): “Bull King was in fact from Mind Monkey changed./ Now’s the best time for us to reach the source 牛王本是猿猴變, 今番正好會源流.”⁴³ If Buddhism could assert that the enlightened mind would render as undifferentiable and thus unreal all phenomena (*zhongzhong fa* 種種法, the Dharma as myriad things that have entity and bear their own attributes), could it not be argued as well that conversely, the linguistic proliferation of such vivid and vivacious unreality as realistic phenomena may verily define this novel’s incomparable achievement in fiction?

RELIGIOUS ALLEGORY AND FICTION

Modern Chinese criticism of our novel must begin with Hu Shi’s essay of 1923, according to which the novel

⁴⁰ For a penetrating examination of the problem of mind-and-heart cultivation and its ironic allegorization in the novel, see Lam Ling Hon, “Cannibalizing the Heart: The Politics of Allegory and *The Journey to the West*,” in Eric Ziolkowski, ed., *Literature, Religion, and East/West Comparison* (Newark: U. Delaware P., 2004), pp. 162–180.

⁴¹ *JW* 3, p. 128; *XJ* 2, p. 749.

⁴² The irony here is that the doctrine of no mind or the avoidance of two minds as a metaphor for mental discrimination is only too familiar to Chan Buddhism. In the *Lañkāvatāra Sūtra*, another foundational text of the sect of which there were four known translations into Chinese, this teaching was also pervasive. See *juan 4* of the translation by Bodhiruci, *Dasheng ru lengqie jing* 大乘入楞伽經, *T* 16, 672, p. 614B: “凡愚見有二/不了唯心現/故起二分別/若知但是心/分別則不生.” One can also see why so many Chan followers found Zhuangzi’s thought to be so genial.

⁴³ *JW* 3, p. 174; *XJ* 2, p. 783.

Xiyouji for these several centuries has been ruined by countless Daoists, monks, and Confucians. The Daoists said, this book is a volume of the wondrous formulas for the golden elixir. The monks said, this book is about the method of mind cultivation in the Gate of Chan. The Confucians said, this book is one on the principles of rectifying the mind and rendering sincere the will. These interpretations are the great adversaries of *Xiyouji*. 西游記被這三四百年來的無數道士和尚秀才弄壞了。道士說，這部書是一部金丹妙訣。和尚說，這部書是禪門心法。秀才說，這部書是一部正心誠意的理學書。這些解說都是西游記的大仇敵。

Shortly thereafter, Lu Xun's brief study that eventually appeared as a part of two chapters in his *A Brief History of the Chinese Novel* remarked similarly:

Though its author was a Confucian scholar, this book actually arose from playfulness and not from discussion of the Way. That is why only platitudes like the mutual birth and conquest cycles of the Five Phases are seen occasionally in the entire book, which is especially not learned in Buddhism 作者雖儒生，此書實出于遊戲，亦非語道，故全書僅偶見五行生克之常談，尤未學佛。⁴⁴

It should be pointed out at once that Hu's old study at the time of its publication was more than groundbreaking, and it contributed greatly to our modern understanding of other important topics such as the novel's textual history and possible authorship. But his critique of the interpretive agents allegedly ruining the novel also begets eventually its own irony, because one can argue today that a great deal of scholarship spanning Japan, the U.S., Europe, and finally again in East Asia in both China and diaspora communities, may be summarized as a serial refutation of Hu's – and Lu Xun's as well – observations. If there is problem in the novel's understanding, so the scholarly consensus seems to indicate, the “adversaries” do not lie in the “interpretations” but, in fact, in the novelistic text itself. The primary discourse of fiction, in other words, has already been unalterably infected with the languages of monks, Daoists, and Confucian academics, and it is a wonder that so astute a person as Hu Shi or Lu Xun had failed to recognize them.

Hu Shi did not refer to the Three Religions (*sanjiao*), though his description of the commentarial emphasis he discerns and dislikes clearly points to a recognition of this term that, along with the alter-

⁴⁴ See Hu Shi 胡適, “*Xiyouji kaozheng*” 西游記考證, in *Hu Shi wencun* 2, p. 390; Lu Xun 魯迅, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* 中國小說史略 (Hong Kong: Xinyi chubanshe, 1967), p. 174.

nate *sandao* 三道, has been the common name for the three major religious traditions in historical China since the fourth century AD, and possibly much earlier.⁴⁵ Debates on the merit and priority of the three traditions received even repeated imperial sponsorships in different dynasties from the early-medieval centuries down to the Qing. Very possibly, the social tension and conflict induced by the three religions, not to mention violent persecutions of one or the other tradition by the imperium in various periods, might have led to the counter intellectual (and later, religious) movement of attempts to synthesize – to blend syncretically – the faiths, an attempt undeniably also colored by the earlier myths of cultural chauvinism that Buddhist barbarians were actually converts of Daoism.

That this movement, after several centuries of flourishing development from the Song onward, has something to do also with the formation of fiction in our novel has been recognized more and more in recent scholarship. We should remember that as Xuanzang embarked on his pilgrimage in the novel, his circle was then enlarged to encompass four additional disciples: the monkey, a half-human and half-pig comic (actually a Daoist god exiled from Heaven), a reformed cannibal (another Daoist pariah), and a delinquent dragon-horse as the priest's transportation. This sharp contrast again between the full-length novel and known history also marks the third distinctive development in the journey's fictionalization. Whereas history is constituted by the dedicated efforts of a lone human zealot, the fiction represents the combined exertion of a community of invented figures that, in turn, may be construed variously in the story – as different aspects of a single personality, as different constitutive elements of a process (an interior journey in quest of moral self-cultivation, spiritual enlightenment, or physical longevity through alchemy), or as different kinds of individuals in a society. The world of this community, moreover, spans the entire cosmos, natural and supernatural, generated by the multicultural religious imaginaire of premodern China.

Structured throughout the long tale, the ubiquitous but unobtrusive voice of the narrator in fact provides a running, reflexive commentary – usually through interpolated verse of many varieties and the brief prose introductions to new episodes – and gently reminds the reader

⁴⁵ “Lihuo lun 理惑論,” by Mou Rong 牟融 (Later Han), could arguably be considered as one of China's earliest treatise on comparative religion and it already examined in great detail, with ingenious arguments, the perceived similarities and differences of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. A little later, polemicists like Wei Yuansong 衛元嵩 of the Northern Zhou, the early-Tang monk Daoan 道安, and the official Sun Simiao 孫思邈 all authored essays explicitly titled 三教論.

of allegory's possible presence even within the fun-filled and lively depictions of cosmic battles, fantastic beings, bizarre experiences, and extraordinary feats of mental and physical bravura. To craft a story radically different from a synopsis of secular canonical or Buddhist history, the author has apparently made extensive and virtually interchangeable use of the idioms and terminologies stemming from selected writings collected in both the Buddhist and the Daoist canons. This technique of constructing an intricate story with multiple lines of signification and at the same time providing its own commentary so pervasively practiced by the *Xiyouji* author manifestly reflects the discursive predilection of an amorphous movement commonly known as "Three Religions as One" that, by the time of the late Ming, had gained widespread adherence among official elites, merchants, clerics of different regions, and the general populace.⁴⁶ As articulated frequently and perhaps most pointedly in fiction and fiction commentaries of the Ming-Qing periods, the movement's syncretic discourse was verily a hermeneutics of fusion, wherein the widely disparate concepts and categories of traditional Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism were deliberately harmonized and unified as mutually interpretive terms. That this discourse was intimately known to our novel's author could be seen already in lines of poetry describing a lecture by Subhodi (chapter 2), the master who first transmitted to the Monkey King the secrets of immortality and other magic powers. The content and method of his lecture are revealing: "The doctrines of three vehicles he subtly rehearsed/... For a while he lectured on Dao;/ For a while he spoke on Chan - / To harmonize the Three Schools was a natural thing 妙演三乘教, ... /說一會道, 講一會禪, 三家配合本汝然."⁴⁷

The Three Schools (*sanjia*, literally Three Lineages) are usually taken to be another standard name of the three religious traditions, but in the novel's context, even such a seemingly innocuous nomenclature may take on added significance. In *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨, a text dated by Joseph Needham to be in the same century as that of the 1592 *Xiyouji*, there is an illustration of a seated adept cultivating physiological alchemy (*neidan*) with the label, "Diagram of the Three

⁴⁶ See Liu Ts'un-yan, "Lin Chao-ên (1517-1598), the Master of the Three Teachings," in *Selected Papers from the Hall of Harmonious Wind* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 149-74; Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1980); Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1981); and Timothy Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism: The Unity of the Three Teachings and Their Joint Worship in Late-Imperial China," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 21 (Fall 1993), pp. 14-44.

⁴⁷ *JW* 1, p. 183; *XYJ* 1, p. 15.

jia meeting each other 三家相見圖,” and bearing on the upper left corner an inscription reading, “Spermal essence, pneumatic vitality, and spirit are fused by me into one entity 精氣神由我合成一個.” A triangle of three circles is drawn across the center of his abdomen bearing the labels of the three mentioned somatic elements.⁴⁸ Given that in the novel, chapter 2 is the very spot when Monkey acquires his first lessons in the spagyric arts, and that the initial poetic formula Subhodi communicated to him aloud contains the line “All power resides in the semen, the breath, and the spirit (*jing, qi, shen*),” the specifically and doctrinally syncretic implications of the term describing Subhodi’s lecture must also be entertained.

Yet another and even more decisive indication of such syncretism may be found in Buddha’s own mouth, when he proclaims at the novel’s beginning (chapter 8) that in his possession were “the scriptures for the cultivation of immortality, the gate to ultimate virtue 修真之經, 正善之門.” Repeated at the end (chapter 98) and in more expansive form, the scriptures became, by Buddha’s own declaration, “not only . . . the numinous mirror of our faith, but actually the source of the Three Religions 雖為我門之龜鑑, 實乃三教之源流.” Such a line of affirmation would surely astonish real Buddhists, both historical and contemporary, but for the serious student of the novel, what is even more astonishing is not just this asserted unity of the three religions vis-à-vis the Buddhist canon. It is the syncretic appropriation of diverse source materials for the ingenious making of fiction that stamp the novel’s literary originality. The chapters of the Cart Slow Kingdom (44–46) may serve as a convenient and final example.

For most readers, the most memorable detail of this episode on Monkey and three Daoist fiends engaging in a series of contests to determine which party has more authentic – and thus, greater – power to produce rain for drought relief is probably the hilarious account of how Monkey made the Daoists drink his and Bajie’s urine as holy water. For the reader more politically minded, the Daoists’ slander that led to the ruler’s bitter persecution of the Buddhists may well recall some such episodes in the actual history of China.⁴⁹ After he had exterminated the animal spirits and enlightened the king and his sub-

⁴⁸ Illustration is found in “Xingming guizhi,” *juan yuan* 元, 26a, in Ding Fubao 丁福保, ed., *Daozang jinghua lu baizhong* 道藏精華錄百種 (Shanghai: Yixue shuju, 1922?). It is reproduced in Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1983; hereafter, *SCC*) 5.5, p. 49, and dating is at p. 229.

⁴⁹ For the Buddhists’ rehearsal of their sufferings and persecutions in the hands of the Daoists that included beatings, forced migrations, hard labor as slaves, exposure, confinement, and pictured warrants for escapees that led to mass suicide, see *JW* 2, pp. 306–7; *XJ* 570–71.

jects, Monkey's parting admonition to the ruler (chapter 47) is that he should never "believe in false doctrines" which, in the context of the episode, decidedly means the sole belief in Daoism to the exclusion of the other two religions. "I hope," says Monkey pointedly, "you will honor the unity of the Three Religions: revere the monks, revere also the Daoists, and take care to nurture the talented. Your kingdom, I assure you, will be secure forever."⁵⁰ There is here no more perfect slogan for the peaceful coexistence of religions as the best policy for state permanence. But that form of coexistence, we readers only now begin to realize belatedly, is already taking shape right in this pilgrim community of scripture-seekers.

At its most basic level of a miracle tale, moreover, the Cart Slow episode also reveals an obvious affinity with similar stories of agon in magic found in religious texts like the Tanakh. Consider the parallel with Moses' duel with ancient Egypt's magicians and sorcerers in the Exodus story (*Exodus* 7-10) or the Hebrew prophet Elijah's contest with the priests and prophets of Ba'al (*I Kings*, 18). As I have pointed out in a previous essay,⁵¹ however, the *Xiyouji* story may have first developed also from Buddhist hagiographic sources: the life and activities of the Indian monk Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空) reputed to have helped introduce Tibetan Buddhism to the Tang court during the reigns of Xuanzong (712-56), Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756-63), and Daizong 代宗 (r. 763-79). Highly honored during his long career under these emperors, during which time he also engaged in magic contests with a Daoist named Luo Gongyuan 羅公遠, he was made at his life's end a *guoshi* 國師 (Master of the State), a title that is also the specific appointment of the three Daoist monsters in *Xiyouji*. In Bukong's biography preserved in *Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳,⁵² both emperor Xuanzong and Daizong had requested the monk to pray for rain to relieve severe drought.

The three Daoist priests in the novel, we recall, are actually a tiger, a white deer, and a mountain goat, but their names and original natures, interestingly enough, may have come directly from the writings on physiological alchemy found in the Daoist canon. A large number of texts devoted to various and variant discussions of the physiological alchemist's quest for longevity has presented a fairly consistent description of how he must reverse the downward bodily flow of spermal

⁵⁰ *JW* 2, p. 354; *XYJ* 2, p. 605.

⁵¹ See my "Religion and Literature in China: The 'Obscure Way' in *The Journey to the West*," in Ching-I Tu, ed., *Tradition and Creativity: Essays on East Asian Civilization* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987), pp. 122-24.

⁵² *T* 2061, vol. 50, pp. 712-14.

essence, pneumatic vitality, and spirit and force these primary vitalities up again along a path in the spinal region to reach the top of one's head. These elements so galvanized in the cultivation process often called "returning the essence to replenish the brain, *huanjing bunao* 還精補腦,"⁵³ are to be visualized as the cargo transported by an ox cart 牛車, a deer cart 鹿車, and a goat cart 羊車, quite often also referred to as Three River-Carts 三河車.⁵⁴ The process that points to the action of *neidan* thus circulating the three elements within the body is first named Little Celestial Cycle 小周天, which is correlated with the diurnal cycle of twelve (Chinese) hours. It then leads to a complementary, second-stage process named Great Celestial Cycle 大周天 that is correlated with the annual cycle of 365 days, conducted along the *du* 督 and *ren* 任,

⁵³ How this phrase should be translated in different periods of Chinese medical and religious history requires brief discussion. The phrase is found in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–343) *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, *neipian* 8, p. 2b (SBBY edn.). But much earlier than Ge, it was used in a line of a classical poem by the famed Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232) titled "Feilong pian" 飛龍篇 ("The Dragon in Flight"). It is preserved in one version of a poem of a first-person narrator's journey to Mount Tai that resulted in encounters with immortals. He was bestowed divine drugs that would grant such effect of "restoring my essence, augmenting my brain." The translation here by Stephen Owen in *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 261 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asia Center and Harvard U.P., 2006), p. 142, shows exemplary caution by separating the drug's efficacy into two separate participial phrases without any necessary connection: i.e., the drug would do X and it would do Y with the recipient's body. Because the poet's era was one in which the *Scripture of Great Clarity* (*Taiqing jing* 太清經) and related texts were in circulation to promote external alchemy (*waidan*), Owen's translation would comport with the understanding that our phrase might point to the physical or chemical "ingredients of the elixir [being] transmuted, or 'reverted' (*huan*) into their 'essence' (*jing*), which coagulates itself under the upper part of the crucible." The *jing* in coagulation thus gathered from the physical instrument might then be construed as a drug possessive of restorative efficacy when ingested; see Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, p. 10. By the time of the novel's formative period in the Ming or even earlier, however, the discourse of external alchemy had long been displaced by that of internal or physiological alchemy, wherein "the adept nourishes himself and his gods not through the ingestion of external substances, but through components of his own inner body; he finds the vital ingredients within himself, and their ingestion takes place internally" (*ibid.*, p. 209). The episode in the full-length novel, in other words, would provide a context in which the phrase would require the presumption of causality: the "essence" must be reverted up to the brain's region (perhaps in analogy with the crucible's top) *so that* that bodily part may be nourished and replenished.

⁵⁴ For the meaning of River-Carts and illustrations, see *SCC* 5.5, pp. 254–55. According to Li Shuhuan 李叔選, in *Daojiao da cidian* 道教大詞典 (Taipei: Juliu, 1979), p. 405, the cart can refer to the "vehicle" or the cargo therein transported. For the specific references to the three named carts, see, for example "Sanji zhiming quanti" 三極致命筌蹄, *DZ* 275, the different texts gathered under the general title of "Xiuzhen shishu" 修真十書, *DZ* 263, and the "Chongyang Zhenren jinguan yusuo jue" 重陽真人金關玉鎖訣, *DZ* 1156. For discussion, see Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, *Procédés secrets du Joyau magique* (Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1984), pp. 171–83; Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, "Alchemy and *Journey to the West*: The Cart Slow Kingdom Episode," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 26 (1998), pp. 51–66; and Liu, "Quanzhen jiao he xiaoshuo Xiyouji," pp. 1270–72. It should be noted that the ox cart of the Daoist treatises has been transformed into the Tiger Strength Immortal in the novel. Drawings of the carts are abundant in the Daoist canon, and for convenient reproductions, see the picture titled "Les trois chariots" in Baldrian-Hussein, *Procédés secrets*, p. 173, and in *SCC* 5.5, p. 177.

two main pulse conduits or tracts.⁵⁵ According to two modern scholars, both processes may underlie the series of episodic allegory that form chapters 32–66, and chapters 67–83 respectively.⁵⁶

If the names of the carts give clue to two out of the three Great Immortals in the novel (Deer-Strength and Goat-Strength), how should we understand the name of the fictive kingdom Chechi (Cart Slow)? The last word *chi* 遲 apparently has the common sense of slowness or tardiness 遲慢, and the whole name may well refer to the pace in the alchemist's arduous effort of cultivation 煉功, an effort described by Wang Chongyang as "using the three carts to transport [the cargo] up to the Kunlun Peak [i.e., the cranial crown] 用三車搬運上昆侖頂." Or as another authority has described the action: "Drawing out the lead and adding mercury, one ferries the great drug beyond the passes. All the way it is like a cart in a river's water, going upstream against the currents, until [it] is sent back to the Yellow Court 抽鉛添汞, 運大藥過關, 一路如河中車水, 逆流而上, 然後送歸黃庭也."⁵⁷ If we puzzle on the topographic metaphor of *guan*, we need only Wang's explanation: "When the three carts move, . . . they pass the Celestial Pass to go past the lower Double Pass of *Shen* and *Yu*, two anastomotic loci. The Double Pass is the spine ridge 三車行時, . . . 過天關, 過下雙關腎俞二穴, . . . 雙關, 夾脊是也."⁵⁸

With those key depictions, the narration of *Xiyouji's* chapter 44 suddenly takes on meaning beyond matter-of-fact realism: "Pilgrim lowered his cloud gradually to take a closer look. Aha! The cart was loaded with bricks, tiles, . . . and the like. The ridge was exceedingly tall, and leading up to it was a small narrow path flanked by two perpendicular passes, with walls like two giant cliffs. How could the cart be dragged up there 行者漸漸按下雲頭來看處, 呀! 那車子裝的都是磚瓦... 之類。灘頭上坡阪最高; 又有一道夾脊小路, 兩座大關, 關下路都是直立壁陡之崖, 那車兒怎麼曳得上去?"⁵⁹ After Monkey had slain the two Daoists who were party to the persecution of the monks, he walked up to the sandy beach and, "exerting his magic power, tossed the cart through the two passes and

⁵⁵ A diagram of these two pulse conduits may be found in *SCC* 5.5, p. 256.

⁵⁶ See Wang Guoguang 王國光, *Xiyouji bielun* 西遊記別論 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1990); Wang Gang 王崗, "Xiyouji, Yige wanzheng di Daojiao neidan xiulian guocheng" 西遊記一個完整的道教內丹修煉過程, *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 NS 25 (1995), pp. 51–86.

⁵⁷ See Dai Yuanchang 戴源長, *Xianxue cidian* 仙學詞典 (Taipei: Zhenshanmei chubanshe, 1962), p. 35.

⁵⁸ "Jinguan yusuo jue," pp. 7b–8a; translation of *xue* 穴 follows *SCC* 6.1 (2000), p. 61.

⁵⁹ *JW* 2, p. 301; *XYJ* 2, p. 566. For convenient illustrations of the Double Pass or *shuang guan* 雙關, see *Shangyangzi jindan dayao tu* 上陽子金丹大要圖, *DZ* 1068, 2b, reproduced in *SCC* 5.5, p. 105; Schipper and Verellen, *Taoist Canon* 2, p. 717.

up the steep ridge before picking it up and smashing it to pieces 使個神通,將車兒曳過雙關,穿過夾脊,提起來摔得粉碎。” Apart from the socio-political theme that is prominently discernible in this entire episode, it is impossible not to acknowledge the intimation of allegory when we consider both the novelistic narrative and the Daoist texts echoed.

There is, moreover, one final twist on this emergence of allegorical language detailed in Daoist texts that has escaped much critical discussion, and that is the sophisticated awareness the Daoist themselves display when resorting to the figures of topography and laboratory for depicting the materials and methods of cultivation, whether physical or physiological. With admirable succinctness, the twelfth-century text *Jindan zhizhi* 金丹直指 by Zhou Wusuo 周無所 declares that “the furnace and the reaction-vessel will be likened to a human body 爐鼎以身譬者, and the drugs will be indicated by the precious substances of bodily organs 藥物以心中之寶喻之.”⁶⁰ On the drawing of the human body cavity as topography found in Schipper’s and Verellen’s *Taoist Canon* (referred to in note 59 of this essay), the label “analogous or parabolic illustration, *piyu* 譬喻” has been prominently stamped. The crucial term in this context is, of course, the word *pi*, meaning to inform (*gao* 告), to liken, to compare, to illustrate, or to suppose, and it is often used to convey the sense of a simile, a metaphor, or an analogy in both pre-modern and modern writings. Historically, the word has played a sustained and hugely important role in Chinese linguistics and language philosophy, ranging from being one of the six foundational principles of the Chinese graph (*qubi* 取譬) formulated by the ancient lexicologist Xu Shen, through interaction with medieval Buddhism to assume the translated name of analogy or *Avadāna* – the eighth of the twelve divisions of the Mahāyāna canon – to appearing in numerous titles on rhetoric by Chinese authors secular or religious, and finally, to even theological treatises on analogy by early-modern Jesuit missionaries in China.⁶¹ One unnoticed example of this word’s munificent suggestiveness across the centuries may be located at the very beginning of the 1754 (*jiayu*) version of *The Story of the Stone*: “*Story of the Stone* is a matter of likening oneself to incidents recorded by the Stone 石頭記是自譬

⁶⁰ *DZ* 1072, 6b–7a. My translation follows Needham’s suggestion in *SCC* 5.5, p. 220. For his informative report on the use of figurative language in alchemical writings, see *ibid.*, pp. 219–26, 240–43.

⁶¹ The most comprehensive study I know of on the use of *pi* as part of religious rhetoric is Li Sher-shiueh [Shixue] 李爽學, “*Zhushu duo geyan: Lun Gao Yizhi Pixue ji qi yu Zhongxi xiucixue chuantong di guanxi*” 著書多格言論高一志譬學及其與中西修辭學傳統的關係, *Renwen Zhongguo xuebao* 人文中國學報/*Sino-Humanities* 13 (2007), pp. 55–116.

石頭所記之事也。” The intriguing implications of so pithy an assertion of metaphorical representation have yet to be fathomed.

Finally, we are prepared to see how religion and literature converge in the making of the journey's fiction, all without a trace of didacticism or proselytism. The fiction of *Xiyouji*, let it be bluntly stated, is built upon a fundamental irony: the story of what is purely and incontestably a Buddhist cleric's ineradicable acts of devotion to his faith is not only changed radically, but its meaning has been also transformed by means of linguistic signs massively appropriated from other religious traditions.⁶² This act of fiction-making can read as if Islamic concepts and terminologies have been scoured from the Koran to rewrite Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Dante's *Commedia*! The wonder is that the Chinese novel has succeeded in stitching so seamlessly a fabric of three religions that have been, and remained, in tension (and occasionally, in serious conflicts) with each other down through the historical culture to the present. The company of five pilgrims, on the other hand, does not merely grow into a harmonious community at the end; throughout the narrative, they are also progressively fashioned into different aspects of a single person in his development toward some form of psycho-physiological integration. As well, they and their experience enact the imagistic embodiment – and synthesis – of philosophical and religious abstractions that exist as mutual glosses. We may now see that not only might the *Xiyouji* author be a Confucian scholar, as Lu Xun has observed, but that the principal human protagonist in Tripitaka must also be even more of one who is at the same time on his way to becoming a Daoist adept and an enlightened Buddhist priest, much as the Monkey of the Mind will progressively become Tripitaka's own true mind even when the disciple figure at the end will be transformed into a realized immortal (*zhenxian*), acquiring simultaneously the title, Buddha Victorious in Strife.

In the productive process of the hundred-chapter novel, the hermeneutics of deliberate fusion has sparked and sustained authorial cre-

⁶² This irony is described thus by Professor Liu Ts'un-yan in *Hefengtang wenji* 3, pp. 1350–51: “Look at the name and thinking about its meaning, a story that describes Xuanzang's story of scripture-seeking fundamentally should be one devoted to promote Buddhist doctrine and spirit.” However, he and many other contemporary scholars have pointed out how the rhetoric and diction of canonical and non-canonical Daoism have pervaded the novel's text. Moreover, Liu has also indicated in section 2 of this same essay how powerfully traditional Confucianism has impacted the portrait of the human priest himself. For another view of the language of politics and irony in the novel, see Qiu Jiahui 邱加輝, “Houhua Xiyou/houhua Xiyou” 候話西遊/後話西游, in Song Geng 宋耕, ed., *Chongdu chuantong, kua wenhua yuedu xin shiye* 重讀傳統, 跨文化閱讀新視野 (Beijing: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu chubanshe, 2005), pp. 236–60.

ativity to imagine, in the most ingenious and unprecedented ways, the malleable fluidity of linguistic meaning. This is the sign of the greatest allegorical literature. The late Paul de Man of Yale, an immigrant literary comparatist, has written on the “allegorical dimension” as constituting “the real depth of literary insight” in “the work of all genuine writers” by citing the famous lines by the French modernist poet, Charles Baudelaire, that serves as the present essay’s epigraph:⁶³

... new palaces and scaffoldings, new blocks,
Old suburbs, all become for me an allegory.

Such lines expressive of the “poetic state of mind” in Western writings, however, may bear a strange but perhaps even truer semblance to “the inner landscape” described and celebrated in Daoist writings. According to Kristofer Schipper, the eminent authority of Daoism, “‘the body is a country’ ... with mountains and rivers, ponds, forests, paths and barriers, a whole landscape laid out with dwellings, palaces, towers, walls, and gates sheltering a vast population.”⁶⁴ Schipper’s words, of course, are based on the striking series of similes drawn by the great alchemist Ge Hong of early-medieval times:

Thus the body of a person is the image of a state: the locales of chest and abdomen are like palaces and halls; the order of the four limbs are like the settings of suburbs; the separation into bones and joints are like the hundred officials. Spirit is similar to a ruler, blood is similar to subjects, and the pneumatic vitality is similar to the people. Therefore, if one knows how to govern the body, one will know how to govern a state.⁶⁵

In view of this predilection for analogy found in Daoist discourse, the novel’s tendency may well lie in its eagerness to surpass its religious sources on the multiplication of metaphors: for if the Daoist visualization (*neiguan* 內觀) of the human body’s interior can come to expression only in allegorical language as the Kunlun Peak 崑崙頂, the Mount of Jade Capital 玉京山, the Mansion of Blue Tenuity 青虛府, the City of Purple Gold 紫金城, and so forth,⁶⁶ the *Xiyouji*’s art is to make sport of such

⁶³ See his *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, rev. 2d edn. (Minneapolis: U. Minnesota P., 1983), p. 35. Original French lines may be found in *The Flowers of Evil & Paris Spleen: Poems by Charles Baudelaire*, trans. William H. Crosby (Brookport, N.Y.: BOA Editions, Ltd., 1991), p. 164.

⁶⁴ *The Taoist Body*, trans. Karen C. Duval (Berkeley: U. California P., 1993), pp. 100–1.

⁶⁵ *Baopuzi, neipian* 18, p. 3a.

⁶⁶ See Stephen Little, ed., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago in Association with University of California Press, 2000), and its reproductions of the “Diagram of Reverted Illumination” 反照圖 and “The Diagram of Comprehensive Illumination” 普照圖, p. 348.

allegory by making more allegory. According to the modern German thinker Walter Benjamin, such figurative descriptions in metaphor and allegory indicate “precisely the non-being of what [they] represent,”⁶⁷ and Benjamin’s judgment is validated by our Chinese novel’s persistent and pervasive practice that allegorizes further its own selected language and diction to produce plots, characters, events, experiences, and reflexive commentaries of literary fiction. Thus the *shuangguan* and *jiayi* envisaged in the Daoist spinal column would generate an intricate and entertaining story of bitter contest between Buddhists and Daoists, itself also figurative of the strenuous difficulties and the perils of error in both method and material confronting the self-cultivating alchemist. The chain of signs in the series of association and correlation can be quite long – likely as lengthy and magnificent as a story of pilgrimage from China to India to fetch scriptures.

For more than a couple of generation of Chinese critics, Lu Xun’s classification of the *Xiyouji* as the *chef-d’oeuvre* among the novels of gods and demons (*shenmo xiaoshuo*) had served as a normative designation, but it is an irony that Lu Xun, the brilliant ironist, had little clue to the profundity of his own taxonomy.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DZ	<i>Zhengtong Daozang</i> 正統道藏
JW	Anthony C. Yu, trans. and ed., <i>The Journey to the West</i>
SCC	Needham et al., <i>Science and Civilisation in China</i>
TXZSZZ	<i>Tang Xuanzang Sanzang zhuan shi huibian</i> 唐玄奘三藏傳史彙編
XYJ	Wu Cheng’en 吳承恩, <i>Xiyouji</i> 西游記

⁶⁷ Cited by de Man, *Blindness and Insight*. For the German original of Benjamin’s observation, see his *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972–89) 1, p. 406: “Min Weinen streuten wir den Samen in den Brachen/und gingen traurig aus.’ Leer also geht die Allegorie. Das schlechthin Böse, das als bleibende Tiefe sir hegte, existiert nur in ihr, ist *einzig und allein Allegorie, bedeutet etwas anderes als es ist. Und zwar bedeutet es genau das Nichtsein dessen, was es vorstellt.*” I am grateful to Professor Haun Saussy of Yale University’s Department of Comparative Literature for tracking down the German passage for me. English translation is found in Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: NLB, 1977), p. 233: “Weeping we scattered the seed on the fallow ground/and sadly we went away’ Allegory goes away empty-handed. Evil as such, which it cherished as enduring profundity, *exists only in allegory, is nothing other than allegory, and means something different from what it is. It means precisely the non-existence of what it presents*” (emphasis mine).