Chapter 1

The Divine Root Conceives and the Spring Breaks Forth

As the Heart's Nature Is Cultivated, the Great Way Arises

Before Chaos was divided,Heaven and Earth were one; All was a shapeless blur,and no men had appeared. Once Pan Gu destroyed the Enormous Vagueness The separation of clear and impure began.

Living things have always tended towards humanity; From their creation all beings improve.

If you want to know about Creation and Time,

Read Difficulties Resolved on the Journey to the West.

In the arithmetic of the universe,129,600 years make one cycle.Each cycle can be divided into twelve phases:I,IⅡ,II,IV,V,VI,VI, V,IX,X,XI and XI, the twelve branches. Each phase lasts 10,800 years.

Now within a single day,the positive begins at the time I;at IⅡ the cock crows;at IIl it is not quite light;at IV the sun rises;V is after breakfast;and at VI one does business.Vl is when the sun reaches noon; at VI it is slipping towards the west;IX is late afternoon;the sun sets at X;XI is dusk;and at Xl people settle down for the night.

If you compare this with the big numbers,then at the end of Phase XI Heaven and Earth were still one,and no beings had appeared. 5,400 years later came the beginning of Phase XIl,when all was darkness and there were still no people or other creatures;for this reason it was called Chaos.Another 5,400 years later Phase XIl was drawing to a close and a new cycle was about to begin.As Phase I of the new era approached, gradually there was light. As Shao Yong said,

“When winter reaches the mid-point of Phase I

The heart of Heaven does not move.

Where the Positive first appears Nothing has yet come to life.”

At this time, Heaven first had a foundation.5,400 years later,in the middle of Phase I,the light and pure rose upwards, and sun, moon,stars,and constellations were created.These were called the Four Images.Hence the saying that heaven began in I.

Another 5,400 years later, when Phase I was nearing its end and Phase IⅡ was imminent,things gradually solidified. As the Book of Changes says,“Great is the Positive;far-reaching is the Negative! All things are endowed and born in accordance with Heaven.” This was when the earth began to congeal.After 5,400 more years came the height of Phase IⅡ,when the heavy and impure solidified,and water,fire,moun- tains,stone,and Earth came into being.These five were called the Five Movers.Therefore it is said that the Earth was created in Phase IⅡ.

After a further 5,400 years,at the end of Phase IⅡ and the beginning of the Phase II,living beings were created.In the words of the Book of the Calendar:“The essence of the sky came down and the essence of earth went up.Heaven and Earth intermingled,and all creatures were born.”Then Heaven was bright and Earth was fresh,and the Positive intermingled with the Negative.5,400 years later,when Phase Ⅲ was at its height,men,birds and beasts were created.Thus the Three Powers— Heaven,Earth and Man—now had their set places.Therefore it is said that man was created in Phase II.

Moved by Pan Gu's creation,the Three Emperors put the world in order and the Five Rulers laid down the moral code.The world was then divided into four great continents:The Eastern Continent of Superior Body, the Western Continent of Cattle-gift,the Southern Continent of Jambu and the Northern Continent of Kuru.This book deals only with the Eastern Continent of Superior Body.Beyond the seas there is a country called Aolai.This country is next to an ocean,and in the middle of the ocean is a famous island called the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.This mountain is the ancestral artery of the Ten Continents,the origin of the Three Islands;it was formed when the clear and impure were separated and the Enormous Vagueness was divided.It is a really splendid mountain and there are some verses to prove it:

It stills the ocean with its might, It awes the jade sea into calm.

It stills the ocean with its might:

Tides wash its silver slopes and fish swim into its caves.

It awes the jade sea into calm:

Amid the snowy breakers the sea-serpent rises from the deep.

It rises high in the corner of the world where Fire and Wood meet;

Its summit towers above the Eastern Sea. Red cliffs and strange rocks;

Beetling crags and jagged peaks.

On the red cliffs phoenixes sing in pairs;

Lone unicorns lie before the beetling crags.

The cry of pheasants is heard upon the peaks; In caves the dragons come and go.

There are deer of long life and magic foxes in the woods; Miraculous birds and black cranes in the trees.

There are flowers of jade and strange plants that wither not;

Green pine and bluish cypress ever in leaf, Magic peaches always in fruit.

Clouds gather round the tall bamboo.

The wisteria grows thick around the mountain brook

And the banks around are newly-coloured with flowers.

It is the Heaven-supporting pillar where all the rivers meet, The Earth's root,unchanged through a myriad aeons.

There was once a magic stone on the top of this mountain which was thirty-six feet five inches high and twenty-four feet round.It was thirty- six feet five inches high to correspond with the 365 degrees of the heavens,and twenty-four feet round to match the twenty-four divisions of the solar calendar.On top of it were nine apertures and eight holes,for the Nine Palaces and the Eight Trigrams.There were no trees around it to give shade,but magic fungus and orchids clung to its sides.Ever since Creation began it had been receiving the truth of Heaven,the beauty of Earth,the essence of the Sun and the splendour of the Moon;and as it had been influenced by them for so long it had miraculous powers.It developed a magic womb,which burst open one day to produce a stone egg about the size of a ball.

When the wind blew on this egg it turned into a stone monkey,complete with the five senses and four limbs.When the stone monkey had learnt to crawl and walk,he bowed to each of the four quarters.As his

eyes moved,two beams of golden light shot towards the Pole Star palace and startled the Supreme Heavenly Sage,the Greatly Compassionate Jade Emperor of the Azure Vault of Heaven,who was sitting surrounded by his immortal ministers on his throne in the Hall of Miraculous Mist in the Golden-gated Cloud Palace.When he saw the dazzling golden light he ordered Thousand-mile Eye and Wind-accompanying Ear to open the Southern Gate of Heaven and take a look.The two officers went out through the gate in obedience to the imperial command,and while one observed what was going on the other listened carefully.Soon after- wards they reported back:

“In obedience to the Imperial Mandate your subjects observed and listened to the source of the golden light.We found that at the edge of the country of Aolai,which is east of the ocean belonging to the Eastern Continent of Superior Body,there is an island called the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.A magic stone on the top of this mountain produced a magic egg,and when the wind blew on this egg it turned into a stone monkey which bowed to each of the four quarters.When he moved his eyes,golden light shot towards the Pole Star Palace;but now that he is eating and drinking,the golden light is gradually dying.”

In his benevolence and mercy the Jade Emperor said,“Creatures down below are born of the essence of heaven and earth:there is nothing remarkable about him.”

On his mountain the monkey was soon able to run and jump,feed from plants and trees,drink from brooks and springs,pick mountain flow- ers and look for fruit.He made friends with the wolves,went around with the tigers and leopards,was on good terms with the deer,and had the other monkeys and apes for relations.At night he slept under the rock faces,and he roamed around the peaks and caves by day.As the saying so rightly goes,"There is no calendar in the mountains,and when winter's over you don't know the time of year.”On hot mornings he and all the other monkeys would play under the shade of some pines to avoid the heat.Just look at them all:

Climbing trees,picking flowers,looking for fruit;

Throwing pellets,playing knuckle bones;

Running round sandy hollows,building stone pagodas; Chasing dragonflies and catching locusts;

Worshipping the sky and visiting Bodhisattvas; Tearing off creepers and weaving straw hats;

Catching fleas then popping them with their teeth and fingers; Grooming their coats and sharpening their nails;

Beating,scratching,pushing,squashing,tearing and tugging;

Playing all over the place under the pine trees; Washing themselves beside the green stream.

After playing,the monkeys would go and bathe in the stream,a mountain torrent that tumbled along like rolling melons.There is an old saying, “Birds have bird language and,animals have animal talk.”All the monkeys said to each other,“I wonder where that water comes from.We've got nothing else to do today,so wouldn't it be fun to go upstream and find its source?”With a shout they all ran off,leading their children and calling to their brothers.They climbed up the mountain beside the stream until they reached its source,where a waterfall cascaded from a spring. They saw

One white rainbow arching,

A thousand strands of flying snow,

Unbroken by the sea winds, Still there under the moon.

Cold air divides the greeny crags,

Splashes moisten the mountainside; A noble waterfall cascades,

Hanging suspended like a curtain.

The monkeys clapped their hands and explained with delight,“What lovely water.It must go all the way to the bottom of the mountain and join the waves of the sea.”

Then one monkey made a suggestion:“If anyone is clever enough to go through the fall,find the source,and come out in one piece,let's make him our king.”When this challenge had been shouted three times,the stone monkey leapt out from the crowd and answered at the top of his voice,“I'll go,I'll go.”Splendid monkey!Indeed.

Today he will make his name;

Tomorrow his destiny shall triumph. He is fated to live here;

As a King he will enter the Immortals' palace.

Watch him as he shuts his eyes,crouches,and springs,leaping straight into the waterfall.When he opened his eyes and raised his head to look round,he saw neither water nor waves.A bridge stood in front of him,as large as life.He stopped,calmed himself, took a closer look,and saw that the bridge was made of iron.The water that rushed under it poured out through a fissure in the rocks,screening the gateway to the bridge.He started walking towards the bridge,and as he looked he made out what seemed to be a house.It was a really good place.He saw:

Emerald moss piled up in heaps of blue, White clouds like drifting jade,

While the light flickered among wisps of coloured mist.

A quiet house with peaceful windows, Flowers growing on the smooth bench; Dragon pearls hanging in niches,

Exotic blooms all around.

Traces of fire beside the stove,

Scraps of food in the vessels by the table.

Adorable stone chairs and beds,

Even better stone plates and bowls. One or two tall bamboos,

Three or four sprigs of plum blossom, A few pines that always attract rain, All just like a real home.

He took a good,long look and then scampered to the middle of the bridge,from where he noticed a stone tablet.On the tablet had been carved in big square letters:HAPPY LAND OF THE MOUNTAIN OF FLOWERS AND FRUIT,CAVE HEAVEN OF THE WATER CUR- TAIN.The stone monkey was beside himself with glee.He rushed away, shut his eyes,crouched,and leapt back through the waterfall.“We're in luck,we're in luck,”he said with a chuckle.All the other monkeys crowded round him asking.“What's it like in there?How deep is the water?”“There's no water,none at all,”replied the stone monkey. “There's an iron bridge,and on the other side of the bridge there's a house that must have been made by Heaven and Earth.”“How ever could you see a house there?"the other monkeys asked.The stone monkey chuckled again.“The water here comes under the bridge and through the rocks,and it hides the gateway to the bridge from view.There are flowers and trees by the bridge,and a stone house too.Inside the house are stone rooms,a stone stove,stone bowls,stone plates,stone beds,and even stone benches.In the middle of it all is a tablet which says 'Happy Land of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit,Cave Heaven of the Water Curtain’.It's just the place for us to settle down in—there's room there for thousands.Let's all move in,then we won't have to put up with any

more nonsense from heaven.In there

We can hide there from the wind,

And shelter from the rain,

With nothing to fear from frost and snow,

And never a rumble of thunder. The coloured mists glow bright And the place smells lucky.

The pine and bamboo will always be beautiful, And rare flowers blossom every day.”

The other monkeys were all so delighted to hear this that they said, “You go first and take us with you.”The stone monkey shut his eyes, crouched,and leapt in again,shouting,“Follow me in,follow me in.”The braver monkeys all jumped through.The more timid ones peered for- ward,shrank back,rubbed their ears,scratched their cheeks,shouted, and yelled at the top of their voices,before going in,all clinging to each other.After rushing across the bridge they all grabbed plates and snatched bowls,bagged stoves and fought over beds,and moved everything around. Monkeys are born naughty and they could not keep quiet for a single moment until they had worn themselves out moving things around.

The stone monkey sat himself in the main seat and said,“Gentlemen, ‘A man who breaks his word is worthless.’Just now you said that if anyone was clever enough to come in here and get out again in one piece, you'd make him king.Well,then.I've come in and gone out,and gone out and come in.I've found you gentlemen a cave heaven where you can sleep in peace and all settle down to live in bliss.Why haven't you made me king?”On hearing this all the monkeys bowed and prostrated themselves,not daring to disobey.They lined up in groups in order of age and paid their homage as at court,all acclaiming him as the“Great King of a Thousand Years”.The stone monkey then took the throne,made the word“stone”taboo,and called himself Handsome Monkey King.

There is a poem to prove it that goes:

All things are born from the Three positives;

The magic stone was quick with the essence of sun and moon. An egg was turned into a monkey to complete the Great Way; He was lent a name so that the elixir would be complete.

Looking inside he perceives nothing because it has no form, Outside he uses his intelligence to create visible things

Men have always been like this:

Those who are called kings and sages do just as they wish.

Taking control of his host of monkeys,apes,gibbons and others,the Handsome Monkey King divided them into rulers and subjects,assistants and officers.In the morning they roamed the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit and in the evening they settled down for the night in the Water Curtain Cave.They made a compact that they would not join the ranks of the birds or go with the running beasts.They had their own king,and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

In spring they picked flowers for food and drink, In summer they lived off fruit.

In autumn they gathered taros and chestnuts,

They got through the winter on Solomon's-seal.

The Handsome Monkey King's innocent high spirits could not,of course,last three or four hundred years.One day he suddenly felt depressed during a banquet with his monkey host,and he started to weep. The startled monkeys crowded round,bowed to him and asked,“What's the matter,Your Majesty?”“Although I'm happy now,”the Monkey King replied,“I'm worried about the future.That's what's getting me down.”The other monkeys laughed and said,“Your Majesty is being greedy.We have parties every day;we live in a mountain paradise,in an ancient cave in a divine continent.We are spared the rule of unicorns,the

domination of phoenixes,and the restraints of human kings.We are free to do just as we like—we are infinitely lucky.Why make yourself miser- able worrying about the future?”To this the Monkey King replied,“Yes, we don't have to submit to the laws and regulations of human kings,and we don't live in terror of the power of birds and beasts.But the time will come when we are old and weak,and the underworld is controlled by the King of Hell.When the time comes for us to die,we won't be able to go on living among the Blessed,and our lives will have been in vain.”All the monkeys covered their faces and wept as everyone of them thought about death.

Suddenly a gibbon jumped out from their ranks and shrieked in a piercing voice,“If Your Majesty is thinking so far ahead,this is the beginning of enlightenment.Now of the Five Creatures,there are only three that do not come under the jurisdiction of the King of Hell.”“Do you know which they are?”asked the Monkey King.“Yes,"the ape replied.“They are the Buddhas,the Immortals and the Sages.They are free from the Wheel of Reincarnation.They are not born and they do not die.They are as eternal as Heaven and Earth,as the mountains and the rivers.”“Where do they live?”the Monkey King asked.“Only in the human world,”the ape replied,“in ancient caves on magic mountains.”The Monkey King was delighted to heart his.“I shall leave you all tomorrow,"he said,“and go down the mountain.If I have to,I'll roam the corners of the oceans and go to the edge of the sky to find these three kinds of beings and discover the secret of eternal youth that will keep us out of the clutches of the King of Hell for ever.”Goodness!Because of these words he was

to learn how to be free from the Wheel of Reincarnation and become the Great Sage Equalling Heaven.All the monkeys clapped with approval and said,“Great!Great!Tomorrow we'll climb all over the mountain and get lots of fruit to give Your Majesty a really big banquet to send you off.”

The next day the monkeys set out to pick magic peaches,gather rare fruits,dig out yams,and cut Solomon's-seal.Magic fungus and fragrant orchid were collected,and everything was set on the stone benches and the stone tables,with fairy wine and dishes.You could see Golden pills and pearl pellets,

Bursting red and plump yellow.

The golden pills and pearl pellets were winter cherries,beautiful and sweet;

The bursting red and plump yellow were ripe plums,tasty and sharp.

Fresh,sweet-fleshed longans with thin skins. Fiery lichees with tiny stones in a red sack.

Branch after branch of crab-apples,

Yellow-skinned loquats with their leaves on.

Rabbit-head pears and chicken-heart jujubes

To quench your thirst,remove your cares,and sober you up

Fragrant peaches and tender apricots, As sweet and luscious as jade wine.

Crisp plums and arbutus,

As sharp as glistening yoghurt.

Ripe melons with red coats and black seeds,

Big,four-sectioned persimmons with yellow skins. Bursting pomegranates:

Cinnabar pips shining like fire-crystal pearls. Opened water-chestnuts

With firm round flesh like golden agate.

Walnuts and gingko fruits to eat with tea; Coconuts and grapes to make into wine.

Dishes loaded with pine cones,yew-nuts,filberts,and crab-apples;

Tangerines,sugar-cane and oranges covering the table Hot roast yams,

Tender boiled Solomon's-seal.

Pounded china-root and Job's tears. Simmered in soup in a stone-pot.

Although we humans have rare delicacies to eat,

We are no happier than those monkeys in the mountains.

The host of monkeys ushered the Handsome Monkey King to the seat of honour and sat down below him according to age.Each of them took it in turns to bring him wine,flowers,and fruit,and they drank hard for a whole day.The next morning the Handsome Monkey King got up early and ordered,“Children,tear down some old pines and make me a raft.Find a bamboo pole to punt with and load it up with fruit.I'm going.”He went aboard the raft all by himself,pushed off with all his might, and floated off towards the waves of the ocean.He intended to sail with the wind and cross over to the Southern Jambu Continent.

The heaven-born monkey,whose conduct was so noble,

Left his island to drift with heaven's winds.

He sailed oceans and seas to find the Way of Immortality,

Deeply determined to do a great deed.

The predestined one should not have vulgar longings

He can attain the primal truth without care or worry. He is bound to find a kindred spirit,

To explain the origins and the laws of nature.

He had chosen just the right time for his journey.After he boarded his raft the southeasterly wind blew hard for days on end and bore him to the northwestern shore of the Southern Continent.Testing the depth of the water with his pole he found that it was shallow,so he abandoned the raft and jumped ashore.He saw humans by the coast,fishing,hunting geese, gathering clams,and extracting salt.He went up to them,leaping around and making faces,which so scared them that they dropped their baskets and nets and fled in all directions as fast as they could.The Monkey King grabbed one of them who was a poor runner,stripped him of his clothes, and dressed himself in them like a human.He swaggered through the provinces and prefectures,learning human behaviour and human speech in the market places.Whether he was eating his breakfast or going to bed at nigh he was always asking about Buddhas,Immortals and Sages,

and seeking the secret of eternal youth.He observed that the people of the world were too concerned with fame and fortune to be interested in their fates.

When will the struggle for fame and fortune end?

Toiling from morning till night,never pleasing yourself. Those who ride donkeys long for stallions,

The Prime Minister always wants to be a prince.

They only worry about having to stop work to eat or dress; They never fear that the King of Hell will come to get them.

When trying to ensure their sons and grandsons inherit their wealth and power, They have no time to stop and think.

Although he asked about the way of the Immortals,the Monkey King was unable to meet one.He spent eight or nine years in the Southern Jambu Continent,going through its great walls and visiting its little coun- ties.When he found that he had reached the Great Western Ocean he thought that there must be Sages and Immortals on the other side of it,so he made himself another raft like the last one,and floated across the Western Ocean until he came to the Western Continent of Cattle-gift.He went ashore and made extensive and lengthy enquiries until one day he came upon a high and beautiful mountain,thickly forested on its lower slopes.Not fearing wolves,and undaunted by tigers or leopards,he climbed to the summit to see the view.It was indeed a fine mountain:

A thousand peaks brandishing halberds, Screens ten thousand measures tall.

In the sunlight the mountain haze is lightly touched with blue; After the rain the black rocks look coldly green.

Withered creepers coil round ancient trees,

And the old ford marks the bounds of the mysterious. Strange flowers and precious plants,

Fourishing in all four seasons, rivalling fairyland.

The nearby cry of a hidden bird, The clear running of a spring.

Valley upon valley of mushroom and orchid, Lichen grows all over the cliffs.

The range rises and dips in dragon-like majesty. Surely there mush be lofty hermits here.

As he was looking at the view the Monkey King heard a human voice coming from the depths of the forest.He rushed into the trees,and when he cocked his ear to listen he heard a song:

“Watching the chess game I cut through the rotten, Felling trees,ding,ding,

Strolling at the edge of the cloud and the mouth of the valley,

I sell firewood to buy wine,

Cackling with laughter and perfectly happy.

I pillow myself on a pine root,looking up at the moon. When I wake up it is light.

Recognizing the old forest

I scale cliffs and cross ridges,

Cutting down withered creepers with my axe.

When I've gathered a basketful

I walk down to the market with a song And trade it for three pints of rice.

Nobody else competes with me, So prices are stable.

I don't speculate or try sharp practice,

Couldn't care less what people think of me, Calmly lengthening my days.

The people I meet

Are Taoists and Immortals,

Sitting quietly and expounding the Yellow Court.”

The Monkey King was overjoyed to hear this,and he said with glee, “So this is where the Immortals have been hiding.”He bounded deeper into the woods for a closer look and saw that the singer was a woodcutter cutting firewood.He was wearing the most unusual clothes:

On his head he wore a hat

Woven from the first skin shed by new bamboo shoots. The clothes on his body

Were made of yarn from the wild cotton-tree

The belt round his waist

Was of silk from an old silkworm. The straw sandals under his feet

Had straps torn from rotten sago trees.

In his hand he held a steel axe

On his back he carried a hempen rope

At climbing pines and felling dead trees,

Who was a match for this woodcutter?

The Monkey King went closer and called to him.“Old Immortal,your disciple greets you.”The woodcutter dropped his axe in astonishment and turned round to say,“No,no.I don't even have enough to eat or drink, so how can I possibly let you call me an Immortal?”“If you're not an Immortal,”the Monkey King said,“why do you talk like one?”“I don't talk like an Immortal.”the woodcutter said.“At the edge of the wood just now,”the Monkey King replied,“I heard you say,‘The people I meet are Taoists and Immortals,sitting quietly and expounding the

Mantingfang ².’The Mantingfang contains the truth about the Way,so

if you're not an Immortal,what are you?”The woodcutter laughed. “It's quite true that the song is called ‘The Fragrance of the Mantingfang', and an Immortal who lives near my hut taught me it.He said he saw how hard I had to work and how I was always worried,so he made me sing this song when things were getting me down.It lightens my cares and makes me forget my weariness.I was singing it just now because I had some problems on my mind,and I never imagined that you would be listening.”“If you've got an Immortal for a neighbour,you ought to learn from him how to cultivate your conduct and get him to teach you a recipe for eternal youth.”“I've had a hard life,”the wood- cutter replied.“My mother and father brought me up till I was about eight,and just when I was beginning to know about life my father died. My mother remained a widow,and I had no brothers or sisters.As I was the only child I had to look after my mother morning and night.Now she is old that I can't possibly leave her.Our land is so overgrown that I can't grow enough to feed and clothe both of us,so I have to cut a couple of bundles of firewood to sell in the market for a handful of coppers to buy the few pints of rice that I cook for myself and for my mother. That's why I can't cultivate my conduct.”

“From what you say,"the Monkey King replied,“you're a filial son and a gentleman—you're bound to be rewarded for it one day.But I'd be grateful if you could show me where that Immortal lives,so that I can go and pay him my respects.”The woodcutter said,“It's not far from here. This mountain is the Spirit Tower Heart Mountain,and in it there is the Cave of the Setting Moon and the Three Stars.In that cave lives an Immortal called the Patriarch Subhuti.I don't know how many disciples he has trained—there are thirty or forty of them cultivating their conduct with him at the moment.If you take that path south for two or three miles you'll reach his home.”The Monkey King tugged at the woodcutter and said,“Take me there,Elder Brother.If I get anything out of this,I won't forget your kindness.”“You idiot,”the woodcutter replied,“didn't you understand what I told you just now?If I went with you I wouldn't be able to earn my living,and who would look after my poor old mother then?I've got to get on with my woodcutting.Go by yourself.”

After hearing this the Monkey King had to take his leave.He came out of the forest and found the path,which led up a mountain slope for two or three miles,when he saw the cave.He pulled himself up to his full height to take a look,and it was a really magnificent place:

Misty clouds scattered colours,

Sun and moon shimmered bright.

A thousand ancient cypresses,

Ten thousand lofty bamboos.

A thousand ancient cypresses,

A soft green drawing the rain from the sky.

Ten thousand lofty bamboos,

And a misty valley is azure blue.

Outside the gate rare flowers spread brocade;

Beside the bridge wafts the scent of jade flowers. Rocky crags jut,glossy with green moss;

On overhanging cliffs blue lichen grows. Sometimes the call of the crane is heard

And often you see the phoenix soar.

The call of the crane

Echoes beyond the Ninth Heaven and the Milky Way.

When the phoenix soars,

The brilliance of its wings colours the clouds.

Black apes and white deer can be just made out;

Golden lions and jade elephants prefer to keep hidden.

If you look closely at this happy land, You will see that it rivals paradise.

He saw that the doors of the cave were shut fast,and that everything was still,with no signs of any people.He turned round and noticed that there was a stone tablet about thirty feet high and eight feet wide at the top of the cliff.On it was carved in enormous letters:SPIRIT-TOWER HEART MOUNTAIN,CAVE OF THE SETTING MO0N AND THE THREE STARS.The Monkey King exclaimed with delight,“The people here really are honest.The mountain and the cave do exist.”He took a good long look,but did not dare to knock on the door.He climbed to the end of a pine branch and ate some pine seeds to amuse himself.

Before long the doors of the cave opened with a creak,and an immortal boy came out.In the nobility of his bearing and the exceptional purity of his features he was completely different from an ordinary boy.

His hair was bound with a pair of silken bands, His flowing gown had two capacious sleeves.

His face and body were naturally distinguished; His mind and appearance were both empty.

For many years a guest beyond the world of things,

An eternal child amid the mountains, Untouched by any speck of dust,

He let the years go tumbling by.

When this boy had come out he shouted,“Who's making that row out here?”The Monkey King scampered down the tree,went up to him,and said with a bow,“Immortal child,I am a disciple who has come to ask about the Way and study under the Immortal.The last thing I'd do would be to make a row here?”The boy laughed.“So you've come to ask about the Way,have you?”“Yes,”the Monkey King replied.“Our mas- ter has just got up,”the boy said,“and has now mounted the dais to expound the Way.Before he had started to explain about origins he told me to open the door.He said,‘There is someone outside who wants to cultivate his conduct.Go and welcome him.'I suppose he must have meant you.”“Yes,he meant me,”the Monkey King said with a smile. “Come with me,”the boy said.

The Monkey King straightened his clothes and followed the boy deep into the depths of the cave.He saw majestic pavilions and towers of red jade,pearl palaces and gateways of cowrie,and countless rooms of silence and secluded cells leading all the way to a jasper dais.He saw the

Patriarch Subhuti sitting on the dais and thirty-six minor Immortals standing below it.

A golden Immortal of great enlightenment,free from filth,

Subhuti,the marvel of the Western World.

Neither dying norborn,he practises the triple meditation

His spirit and soul entirely benevolent.

In empty detachment he follows the changes;

Having found his true nature he lets it run free. As eternal as Heaven,and majestic in body,

The great teacher of the Law is enlightened through aeons.

As soon as the Handsome Monkey King saw him he bowed low and knocked his head on the ground before him many times,saying,“Master, master,your disciple pays his deepest respects.”“Where are you from?” the Patriarch asked.“You must tell me your name and address before you can become my pupil.”“I come from the Water Curtain Cave in the Flowers and Fruit Mountain in the land of Aolai in the Eastern Continent of Superior Body,”replied the Monkey King.“Throw him out,”the Patriarch roared.“He's a liar and a cheat,and even if he tried cultivating his conduct he would get nowhere.”The Monkey King desperately kept hitting his head on the ground and said,“Your disciple spoke the truth.I

promise I wasn't lying.”The Patriarch asked,“If you were speaking the truth,,why did you say that you came from the Eastern Continent of Superior Body?Between here and the Eastern Continent there are two seas and the Southern Jambu Continent,so how could you possibly have come here from there?”The Monkey King, still kowtowing,replied,“I sailed across seas and oceans,crossed frontiers and wandered through many countries for over ten years before I arrived here.”

“So you came here by stages,”the Patriarch remarked.“What is your surname?”“I'm not surly,"the Monkey King replied.“If people call me names it doesn't bother me,and if they hit me I don't get angry. I'm just polite to them and that's that.“I've never been surly.”“I didn't ask if you were surly.I wanted to know the surname you inherited from your parents.”“I didn't have any parents,”the Monkey King replied “If you had no parents,did you grow on a tree?”“I grew not on a tree but in a stone,”the Monkey King replied.“All I remember is that there was a magic stone on the top of the Flower and Fruit Mountain,and that one year the stone split open and I was born.”Consealing his delight at hearing this,the Patriarch remarked,“In other words,you were born of

Heaven and Earth.Walk around for a moment and let me have a look at you.”The Monkey King leapt to his feet and shambled round a couple of times.The Patriarch smiled and said,“Though you have rather a base sort of body,you look like one of the rhesus monkeys that eat pine seeds, and I ought to give you a surname that fits your appearance and call you Hu('Macaque').The elements that make up the character Hu are ‘ani- mal','old'and‘moon’.What is old is ancient,and the moon embodies the Negative principle,and what is ancient and Negative cannot be trans- formed.But I think I would do much better to call you Sun('Monkey'). Apart from the 'animal' element,the character Sun has one part implying male and one part suggesting a baby,which fits in with my basic theories about children.Your surname will be Sun.”

When the Monkey King heard this he kowtowed with delight and said,“Great!Great!Now I have a surname.I am eternally grateful to you for your mercy and compassion,master.I beg you to give me a personal name to go with my new surname,then it will be much easier to address me.”“There are twelve words within my sect,”said the Patriarch,“which I give as names.You belong to the tenth generation of my disciples.”“What are these twelve words?”asked the Monkey King. “Broad,great,wisdom,intelligence,true,likeness,nature,sea,bright,

awakened,complete and enlightenment.If we work out the generations of disciples,then you should have a name with Wu('Awakened')in it. So we can give you the Dharma-name Sun Wukong, which means 'Mon- key Awakened to Emptiness'.Will that do?”“Marvellous,marvellous,” said the smiling Monkey King.“From now on my name will be Sun Wukong.”Indeed,

When the Great Vagueness was separated there were no surnames; To smash foolish emptiness he had to be awakened to emptiness.

If you want to know what success he had in cultivating his conduct, you must listen to the explanation in the next instalment.

Chapter 7

The Great Sage Escapes from the Eight Trigrams Furnace

The Mind-Ape Is Fixed Beneath Five Elements Mountain

Wealth and honour,glory and fame, Are predetermined by fate:

No one should act against conscience to covet any of them.

Far-goingand deep

Are the good results of true enlightenment and loyalty.

Heaven punishes all wild and wicked deeds If not at once then later on.

Ask the Lord of the East the reason why Disasters now strike him.

It is because his ambition was high,his plans far-reaching, He did not respect authority,and he smashed convention.

The story goes on to tell how the Great Sage Equalling Heaven was escorted by the hosts of heavenly soldiers to the Demon-beheading Tower and tied to the Demon-subduing Pillar.They hacked at him with sabres, sliced at him with axes,lunged at him with spears and cut at him with swords,but they were unable to inflict a single wound on him.The Southern Dipper angrily ordered all the gods of the Department of Fire to set him alight and burn him up,but he would not ignite.He told the gods of the Department of Thunder to nail splinters of thunder into him,but how- ever hard they tried they could not harm a hair of his body.The Strong arm Demon King and the rest of them then reported this to the throne.“Your Majesty,”they said,“”this Great Sage has learnt somewhere or other how to protect himself by magic.Although your subjects have hacked at him with sabres, sliced at him with axes,struck at him with thunder and tried to burn him with fire,we have not been able to harm a hair of his body.What are we to do?”“How can we deal with a wretch like this?” the Jade Emperor asked,and the Lord Lao Zi replied to this in a memorial:“That monkey has eaten the peaches of immortality,drunk the imperial liquor,and stolen the pills of elixir.He swallowed those five gourds of pills of mine,fresh ones and mature ones alike.Now we have used the fire of samadhi on him,which has tempered his body and made it a diamond one that cannot be harmed.The best course would be to let me take him and put him in my Eight Trigrams Furnace,where I can refine out my elixir with the civil and martial fire and reduce him to ashes at the same time.The Jade Emperor then ordered the Six Dings and the Six Jias to untie him and hand him over to the Lord Lao Zi,who took him away in obedience to the imperial decree.At the same time the Jade

Emperor summoned the illustrious Sage Erlang to his presence and re- warded him with a hundred golden flowers,a hundred jars of imperial liquor,a hundred pills of elixir,rare jewels,lustrous pearls,brocade,embroidery,and other gifts to share with his sworn brothers.The True Lord Erlang thanked him for his bounty and returned to Guanjiangkou.

When he reached the Tushita Palace,Lord Lao Zi had the Great Sage untied,took the hook from his collar-bone,pushed him into the Eight Trigrams Furnace,and ordered the priests in charge of it and the fire- boys to fan the fire up to refine him.Now this furnace was made up of the Eight Trigrams— Qian,Kan,Gen,Zhen,Sun,Li,Kun,and Dui— so he squeezed himself into the“Palace of Sun”,as Sun was the wind,and where there was wind there could be no fire.All that happened was that the wind stirred up the smoke,which made both his eyes red and left him somewhat blind with the illness called “fire eyes with golden pupils.”

Time soon passed,and without him realizing it the seven times seven, or forty-nine,days had passed,and Lord Lao Zi's fire had reached the required temperature and burned for long enough.One day the furnace was opened for the elixir to be taken out.The Great Sage,who was shielding his eyes with both hands and wiping away his tears,heard a noise at the top of the furnace.He looked hard and saw daylight;and, unable to stand being in there a moment longer,leapt out of the furnace, kicked it over with a crash,and was off.In the ensuing chaos the fire- boys,the keepers of the furnace,the Dings and the Jias all tried to grab him,but he knocked them all down.He was like a white-browed tiger gone berserk,a single-hormed dragon raving mad. Lord Lao Zi rushed up to seize him,but was thrown head over heels as the Great Sage freed himself.He took the as-you-will cudgel from his ear,and shook it in the wind till it was thick as a bowl,and once more created total chaos in the Palace of Heaven,not caring in the least what he did.He laid about him to such effect that the Nine Bright Shiners shut their windows and doors, and not a sign was to be seen of the Four Heavenly Kings.Marvellous monkey spirit!As the poem has it,

His primordial body matches an earlier heaven,

Completely natural throughout ten thousand ages; Vast and passive,blended with the Great Monad; Always immobile,known as the Prime Mystery.

After so much refining in the furnace he is not lead or mercury; Having lived long outside the ordinary he is a natural Immortal. His changes are inexhaustible,and still he has more,

So say nothing about the Three Refuges or Five Abstentions.

Another poem says;

A single point of magic light can fill the whole of space; Likewise that staff of his:

Longer or shorter,depending on his needs,

Upright or horizontal,it can shrink or grow. Yet another poem runs:

To the ape's immortal body is matched a human mind: That the mind is an ape is deeply meaningful.

It was quite true that the Great Sage equalled Heaven:

The appointment as Protector of the Horse showed no discernment. Horse and ape together make mind and thought;

Bind them tightly together,and do not seek elsewhere.

When all phenomena are reduced to truth they follow a single pattern; Like the Tathagatha reaching nirvana under the two trees.

This time the Monkey King made no distinctions between high and humble as he laid about him to east and west with his iron club.Not a single god opposed him.He fought his way into the Hall of Universal Brightness outside the Hall of Miraculous Mist,where the Kingly Spirit Officer,the lieutenant of the Helpful Sage and True Lord,fortunately was on duty.When he saw the Great Sage charging around he took up his golden mace and went forward to resist him.“Where are you going, damned monkey?”he asked.“If you go wild you'll have me to deal with.”The Great Sage was not in a position to argue with him,so he raised his cudgel to strike him.The Spirit Officer lifted his mace and advanced to meet him.It was a fine fight:

Great was the fame of the brave and loyal officer, Evil the name of the rebel who bullied Heaven.

The low one and the good one were well matched; Valiant heroes fighting each other.

Vicious the iron cudgel, Quick the golden mace.

Both were straight,merciless,and terrible.

One of them is a deity formed from the Great Monad's thunder; The other is the monkey spirit,the Great Sage Equalling Heaven.

With golden mace or iron cudgel each is a master; Both are weapons from the palaces of the gods.

Today they show their might in the Hall of Miraculous Mist, A wonderful display of courage and skill.

One in his folly wanting to capture the Palace of the Dipper and the Bull, The other exerting all his strength to support the world of the gods.

The fight is too hard to allow the use of magic, As mace and cudgel struggle without result.

As they fought together without either of them emerging as victor,the True Lord sent an officer with a message to the Thunder Palace ordering the thirty-six thunder generals to surround the Great Sage.Although they all fought with the utmost ferocity,the Great Sage was not in the least frightened,and parried and blocked to left and right with his as-you-will cudgel,resisting his opponents in front and behind.Before long he found that the pressure was too great from the sabres, spears,swords,halberds, clubs,maces,claws-and-ropes,hammer,pole-axes,battle-axes,grabs,

pennoned hooks, and moon-shaped bills of the thunder generals;so he shook himself and grew three heads and six arms.Then he shook his as- you-will cudgel and changed it into three cudgels,and wielding the three cudgels in his six hands he flew round and round inside the encirclement like a spinning wheel.None of the thunder generals could get anywhere near him.Indeed, Perfectly round, Gleaming bright,

How can men learn to live for ever?

He can enter fire without being burned, And go in the water but not be drowned.

He is as bright as a Mani pearl,

Swords and spears cannot harm him. He is capable of good,

And capable of evil:

When faced with the choice between good and evil he might do either.

If he is good he becomes a Buddha or an Immortal, If bad,he grows fur and horns.

With his boundless transformations he wrecked the Heavenly palace, Nor can thunder generals and divine troops take him.

Although the gods had the Great Sage cornered,they were unable to get near him.The noise of the shouting and the fighting had already alarmed the Jade Emperor,who ordered the Miracle Official Youyi to go to the West with the Helpful Sage and True Lord and ask the Buddha to subdue him.

When these two sages received the order they went to the wonderful land of the Miraculous Mountain,where they offered their greetings to the Four Vajrapanis and Eight Bodhisattvas before the Thunder Monastery and asked them to pass on their massage.The gods went to the foot of the lotus seat to inform the Tathagata,who invited the two sages to his presence.When the sages had performed the threefold obeisance to the Buddha they stood in attendance below the throne.“Why has the Jade Emperor troubled you two sages to come here?”asked the Buddha.“A monkey,”they reported,“who was born on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit,has used his magic powers to unite all the monkeys and throw the world into confusion.The Jade Emperor sent down an edict of amnesty and appointed him Protector of the Horses,but this was not good enough for him,so he left Heaven again.When heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha were unsuccessful in their attempt to capture him the Jade Emperor sent down another amnesty with his appointment as a 'Great Sage Equalling Heaven’. At first this appointment was purely nominal,but later he was told to look after the Peach Orchard.But he stole the peaches and then went to the Jade Pool where he stole the delicacies and the liquor and wrecked the banquet.In his drunkenness he staggered into the Tushita Palace,stole Lord Lao Zi's pills of immortality,and left Heaven again.The Jade Emperor sent a hundred thousand heavenly troops,but they were still unable to subdue him.Then Guanyin recommended the True Lord Erlang and his sworn brothers to go after the monkey,and he used many a transformation until he was finally able to capture the monkey after the Lord Lao Zi hit him with his Diamond Jade.The monkey was then taken to the imperial presence,and the order for his execution was given.But although he was hacked at with sabres,chopped at with axes,burned with fire,and struck with thunder,none of this did him any damage;so Lord Lao Zi requested permission to take him away and refine him with fire.But when the cauldron was opened after forty-nine days he jumped out of the Eight Trigrams Furnace,routed the heavenly troops,and went straight to the Hall of Universal Brightness in front of the Hall of Miraculous Mist.Here he has been stopped and engaged in fierce combat by the Kingly Spirit Officer,the lieutenant of the Helpful Sage and True Lord Erlang,thunder generals have been sent there to encircle him;but no one has been able to get close to him.In this crisis the Jade Emperor makes a special appeal to you,the Tathagata, to save his throne.”On hearing this the Tathagata said to the assembled

Bodhisattvas,“You stay here quietly in this dharma hall and behave your- selves in your seats of meditation while I go to deal with the demon and save the throne.”

Telling the Venerable Ananda and the Venerable Kasyapa to accompany him,the Tathagata left the Thunder Monastery and went straight to the gate of the Hall of Miraculous Mist,where his ears were shaken by the sound of shouting as the thirty-six thunder generals surrounded the Great Sage.The Buddha issued a decree that ran:“Tell the thunder generals to stop fighting,open up their camp,and call on that Great Sage to come out,so that I may ask him what divine powers he has.”The generals then withdrew,whereupon the Great Sage put away his magic appearance and came forward in his own body.He was in a raging temper as he asked,“Where are you from?You are a good man.You've got a nerve,stopping the fighting and questioning me!”“I am the Venerable Sakyamuni from the Western Land of Perfect Bliss,”replied the Buddha with a smile.“I have heard of your wild and boorish behaviour,and of your repeated rebellions against Heaven,and I would like to know where you were born,when you found the Way,and why you have been so ferocious.”“I am,”the Great Sage said,

“A miracle-working Immortal born of Heaven and Earth,

An old ape from the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit

My home is in the Water Curtain Cave,

I sought friends and teachers,and became aware of the Great Mystery. “T have practised many a method for obtaining eternal life,

Infinite are the transformations I have learned.

That is why I found the mortal world too cramped, And decided to live in the Jade Heaven.

“None can reign for ever in the Hall of Miraculous Mist;

Kings throughout history have had to pass on their power.

The strong should be honoured—he should give way to me: This is the only reason I wage my heroic fight.”

The Buddha laughed mockingly.“You wretch!You are only a monkey spirit and you have the effrontery to want to grab the throne of the Jade Emperor.He has trained himself since childhood,and suffered hard- ship for one thousand,seven hundred and fifty kalpas.

Each kalpa is 129,600 years,so you can work out for yourself how long it has taken him to be able to enjoy this great and infinite Way.But you are a beast who has only just become a man for the first time.How dare you talk so big? You're not human,not even human!I'll shorten your life-span.Accept my teaching at once and stop talking such nonsense!Otherwise you'll be in for trouble and your life will very shortly be over;and that will be so much the worse for your original form too.”“Although he has trained himself for a long time,ever since he was a child,he still has so right to occupy this place for ever,”the Great Sage said.“As the saying goes, ‘Emperors are made by turn;next year it may be me.'If he can be persuaded to move out and make Heaven over to me,that'll be fine.But if he doesn't abdicate in my favour I'll most certainly make things hot for him,and he'll never know peace and quiet again.”“What have you got,besides immortality and the ability to transform yourself,that gives you the nerve to try to seize the Heavenly Palace?”the Buddha asked. “I can do many tricks indeed,”the Great Sage replied.“I can perform seventy-two transformations,and I can preserve my youth for ten thou- sand kalpas.I can ride a somersault cloud that takes me thirty-six thou- sand miles at a single jump.So why shouldn't I sit on the throne of Heaven?”“I'll have a wager with you then,”said the Buddha.“If you're clever enough to get out of my right hand with a single somersault,you will be the winner,and there will be no more need for weapons or fighting:I shall invite the Jade Emperor to come and live in the west and abdicate the Heavenly Palace to you.But if you can't get out of the palm of my hand you will have to go down to the world below as a devil and train yourself for several more kalpas before coming to argue about it again.”

When he heard this offer the Great Sage smiled to himself and thought, “This Buddha is a complete idiot.I can cover thirty-six thousand miles with a somersault,so how could I fail to jump out of the palm of his hand, which is less than a foot across?”With this in his mind he asked eagerly, “Do you guarantee that yourself?”“Yes,yes,”the Buddha replied,and he stretched out his right hand,which seemed to be about the size of a lotus leaf.Putting away his as-you-will cudgel,the Great Sage summoned up all his divine powers,jumped into the palm of the Buddha's hand,and said,“I'm off.”Watch him as he goes like a streak of light and disappears completely.The Buddha,who was watching him with his wise eyes,saw the Monkey King whirling forward like a windmill and not stopping until he saw five flesh-pink pillar stopped by dark vapours.“This is the end of the road,”he said,“so now Pll go back.The Buddha will be witness,and the Hall of Miraculous Mist will be mine.”Then he thought again,“Wait a moment.I'll leave my mark here to prove my case when I talk to the Buddha.”He pulled out a hair,breathed on it with his magic breath,and shouted“Change”.It turned into a writing brush dipped in

ink,and with it he wrote THE GREAT SAGE EQUALLING HEAVEN WAS HERE in big letters on the middle pillar.When that was done he put the hair back on,and,not standing on his dignity,made a pool of monkey piss at the foot of the pillar.Then he turned his somersault round and went back to where he had started from.“I went,and now I'm back. Tell the Jade Emperor to hand the Heavenly Palace over to me,”he said, standing in the Buddha's palm.

“I've got you,you piss-spirit of a monkey,”roared the Buddha at him.“You never left the palm of my hand.”“You're wrong there,”the Great Sage replied.“I went to the farthest point of Heaven,where I saw five flesh-pink pillars topped by dark vapours.I left my mark there:do you dare come and see it with me?”“There's no need to go.Just look down.”The Great Sage looked down with his fire eyes with golden pupils to see the words“The Great Sage Equalling Heaven Was Here” written on the middle finger of the Buddha's right hand.The stink of monkey-piss rose from the fold at the bottom of the finger.“What a thing to happen,”exclaimed the Great Sage in astonishment.“I wrote this on one of the pillars supporting the sky,so how can it be o his finger now? He must have used divination to know what I was going to do.I don't believe it.I refuse to believe it!I'll go there and come back again.”

The dear Great Sage hurriedly braced himself to jump,but the Buddha turned his hand over and pushed the Monkey King out through the Western Gate of Heaven.He turned his five fingers into a mountain chain belonging to the elements Metal,Wood,Water,Fire,and Earth, renamed them the Five Elements Mountain,and gently held him down. All the thunder gods and the disciples Ananda and Kasyapa put their hands together to praise the Buddha:“Wonderful,wonderful,

An egg learnt to be a man,

Cultivated his conduct,and achieved the Way.

Heaven had been undisturbed for the thousand kalpas, Until one day the spirits and gods were scattered.

“The rebel against Heaven,wanting high position,

Insulted Immortals,stole the pills,and destroyed morality. Today his terrible sins are being punished,

Who knows when he will be able to rise again?”

When he had eliminated the monkey fiend the Buddha told Ananda and Kasyapa to return with him to the western paradise.At that moment Tian Peng and Tian You hurried out of the Hall of Miraculous Mist to say, “We beg the Tathagata to wait a moment as the Jade Emperor's chariot is coming.”The Buddha turned round and looked up,and an instant later he saw an eight-splendour imperial chariot and a nine-shining jewelled canopy appear to the sound of strange and exquisite music,and the chanting

of countless sacred verses.Precious flowers were scattered and incense was burned.The Jade Emperor went straight up to the Buddha and said, “We are deeply indebted to the great Buddha's powers for wiping out the demon,and we hope that the Tathagata will spend a day here so that we may invite all the Immortals to a feast of thanksgiving.”The Buddha did not dare refuse,so putting his hands together he replied,“This old monk only came here in obedience to Your Celestial Majesty's command.What magic powers can I pretend to?This was all due to the wonderful good fortune of Your Celestial Majesty and the other gods. How could I possibly allow you to thank me?”The Jade Emperor then ordered all the gods of the Department of Thunder to split up and invite the Three Pure Ones,the Four Emperors,the Five Ancients,the Six Superintendents,the Seven Main Stars,the Eight Points of the Compass, the Nine Bright Shiners,the Ten Chiefs,the Thousand Immortals,and the Ten Thousand Sages to a banquet to thank the Buddha for his mercy. Then he ordered the Four Great Heavenly Teachers and the Nine Heavenly Maidens to open the golden gates of the jade capital,and Palace of the Great Mystery,and the TongYang Jade Palace,invite the Tathagata to take his seat on the Throne of the Seven Precious Things,arrange the places for all the different groups of guests,and set out the dragon liver, phoenix bone-marrow,jade liquor,and magic peaches.

Before long the Original Celestial Jade Pure One,the High Celestial Precious Pure One,the Heavenly Celestial Pure One of the Way,the True Lords of the Five Humours,the Star Lords of the Five Constellations,the Three Officers,the Four Sages,the Left Assistant,the Right Support,the Heavenly Kings,Nezha,and the whole of space responded to the invitations that had been sent out magically.Their standards and canopies came two by two as they brought shining pearls,rare jewels, fruit of longevity,and exotic flowers,and presented them to the Buddha with bows.“We thank the Tathagata for subduing the monkey fiend with his infinite powers.His Celestial Majesty has asked us all to come to his banquet to express our thanks.We beg the Tathagata to give this banquet a title.”The Buddha accepted this commission and said,“Since you want a name for it,we could call it the‘Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven'.”“Splendid,'Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven’,splendid,"exclaimed all the Immortals with one voice,and then they all sat down in their places,put flowers in their hair,and played the lyre.It was indeed a splendid banquet,and here are some verses to prove it:

The Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven far surpasses The Banquet of Peaches that the monkey wrecked.

Radiance shines from dragon flags and imperial chariots;

Auspicious vapours float above streamers and symbols of office. Melodious the fairy music and mysterious songs;

Loud sound the tones of phoenix flute and pipe of jade

The rarest of perfumes waft around the Immortals,assembled calm in the sky.

To congratulate the court on Pacifying the Universe.

When the Immortals were all enjoying the feast the Queen Mother and a group of fairies,immortal beauties,and houris,floated through the air as they danced towards the Buddha,and after paying her respects the Queen Mother said,“My Peach Banquet was ruined by that monkey fiend,and this Banquet to Celebrate Peace in Heaven is being given because the Tathagata has used his great powers to chain down the evil monkey.Having nothing else with which to express my gratitude,I have picked a number of peaches of immortality with my own pure hands as an offering.”They were

Halfred,half green,sweet-smelling beauties

Growing every ten thousand years from immortal roots. The peaches of Wulingyuan seem laughable:

How can they compare with those of Heaven? Purple-veined and tender,rare even in the sky,

Yellow-stoned,and matchless on earth for their sweetness.

They are able to adapt the body and make it live for ever; Those lucky enough to eat them are no ordinary beings.

The Buddha put his hands together to thank the Queen Mother,who instructed the fairies and houris to sing and dance again,and their performance met with the praises of the whole assembly.Indeed,

Misty heavenly incense filled the room;

A chaos of heavenly petals and flowers.

Great is the splendour of the jade city and golden gates, Priceless the strange treasures and rare jewels.

Two by two,coeval with Heaven,

Pair by pair,outliving ten thousand kalpas: Even if land and sea changed places

They would not be astonished or alarmed.

Soon after the Queen Mother had ordered the fairies and houris to sing and dance,and when wine cups and chopsticks were weaving to and fro,suddenly

A strange scent reached their noses

Startling the stars and constellations in the hall Immortals and the Buddha put down their cups, Each of them raising their heads to look.

An old man appeared in the middle of the Milky Way Holding a sacred mushroom.

His gourd contains ten-thousand-year elixir.

On the sacred rolls his name is written Eternal Life

In his cave Heaven and Earth are free.

In his bottle Sun and Moon were created.

As he wanders around the Four Seas in pure idleness

Taking his ease in the Ten Continents,enjoying the bustle. When he went to Peach Banquets he often got drunk

But when he came round,the moon was as bright as ever. A long head,big ears and a short body,

Known as Longevity from the Southern Pole.

The Star of Longevity had arrived.When he had made his greetings to the Jade Emperor and the Buddha he made a speech of thanks.“When I heard that the monkey fiend had been taken by the Lord Lao Zi to his Tushita palace to be refined I thought that this was bound to restore peace,”he said,“and I never expected he would rebel again.Happily the demon was quelled by the Tathagata,and so when I heard that this feast was being given to thank him I came at once.As I have nothing else to offer I have brought with me purple magic mushrooms,jasper herbs, greenish jade lotus-root,and golden pills of immortality:these I humbly present.”The poem says

Offering the jade louts-root and golden pills to Sakyamuni,

To give him as many years as the grains of sand of the Ganges. Peace and eternal joy decorate the Three Vehicles;

Prosperity and eternal life make the nine grades of immortals glorious Within the gate of No-Phenomena the true Law rules;

Above the Heaven of Nothingness is his immortal home.

Heaven and Earth both call him their ancestor,

His golden body provides blessings and long life.

The Buddha happily accepted his thanks,and after the Star of Longevity had taken his place the wine-cups started to circulate once more. Then the Bare-foot Immortal appeared,kowtowed to the Jade Emperor, and thanked the Buddha.“I am deeply grateful to you for subduing the monkey fiend with your divine powers.As I have nothing else with which to express my respect,I offer you two magic pears and a number of fire- dates.”

Sweet are the Bare-foot Immortal's pears and dates,

And long will be the life of the Buddha to whom they are offered. The lotus seat of the seven treasures is as firm as a mountain,

His thousand-golden-flower throne is as gorgeous as brocade. Coeval with Heaven and Earth—this is no lie;

It is true that his blessings are greater than a flood. His Western Paradise of leisure and bliss

Truly provides all the long life and blessings one could hope.

The Buddha thanked him too,and telling Ananda and kasyapa to collect together all the offerings he went over to the Jade Emperor to thank him for the banquet.When all the guests were thoroughly drunk the Mi raculous Patrolling Officer reported that the Great Sage had poked his head out.“It doesn't matter,”the Buddha said,producing from his sleeve a strip of paper on which were written the golden words Om mani padme hum.He gave this piece of paper to Ananda and told him to stick it on the summit of the mountains.The Venerable Ananda took it through the gates of Heaven and pasted it firmly to a square boulder on the top of the Five Elements Mountain.When this was done the mountain sank roots and joined up all its seams.The Monkey King was still able to breathe and he could still stick his hands out and move them.Ananda went back to Heaven and reported that he had pasted the paper in place.

The Buddha then took his leave of the Jade Emperor and all the other deities.When he and his two disciples had gone out through the gates of Heaven his merciful heart moved him to chant a spell ordering a local tutelary god and the Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions to live on the mountain and keep guard over him.When he was hungry they were to feed him iron pellets,and when he was thirsty they were to give him molten copper to drink.When the time of his punishment was over,some- one would come and rescue him.Indeed,

The monkey fiend was bold enough to rebel against Heaven, But was subdued by the Tathagata's hand.

He endures the months and years,drinking molten copper for his thirst, And blunts his hunger on iron pellets,serving his time.

Suffering the blows of Heaven,he undergoes torment, Yet even in the bleakest time a happy fate awaits.

If some hero is ready to struggle for him,

One year he will go to the West in the service of the Buddha.

Another poem goes:

His great power grew as he humbled the mighty,

He used his wicked talents to subdue tigers and dragons.

He stole the peaches and wine as he wandered round Heaven, Was graciously given office in the Jade Capital.

When his wickedness went too far his body suffered,

But his roots of goodness were not severed,and his breath still rose.

He will escape from the hand of the Buddha,

And wait till the Tang produces a saintly monk.

It you don't know in what month of what year his sufferings ended,listen to the explanation in the next instalment.

Chapter 15

On the Coiled Snake Mountain the Gods Give Secret Help

In the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge the Thought-Horse Is Reined in

Monkey looked after the Tang Priest as they headed west.They had been travelling for several days in the twelfth month of the year,with its freezing north winds and biting cold.Their path wound along overhanging precipices and steep cliffs,and they crossed range after range of dangerous mountains.One day Sanzang heard the sound of water as he rode along,and he turned around to shout,“Monkey,where's that sound of water coming from?”“As I remember,this place is called Eagle's Sorrow Gorge in the Coiled Snake Mountain.It must be the water in the gorge.”Before he had finished speaking,the horse reached the edge of the gorge.Sanzang reined in and looked.He saw:

A thin cold stream piercing the clouds,

Deep,clear waves shining red in the sun.

The sound shakes the night rain and is heard in the quiet valley, Its colour throws up a morning haze that obscures the sky.

A thousand fathoms of flying waves spit jade; The torrent's roar howls in the fresh wind.

The current leads to the misty waves of the sea;

The egret and the cormorant never meet by a fisherman.

As master and disciple watched they heard a noise in the gorge as a dragon emerged from the waves,leapt up the cliff,and grabbed at Sansang. In his alarm Monkey dropped the luggage,lifted Sanzang off his horse, turned,and fled.The dragon,unable to catch him up,swallowed the white horse,saddle and all,at a single gulp,then disappeared once more be- neath the surface of the water.Monkey made his master sit down on a high peak and went back to fetch the horse and the luggage.When he found that the horse had gone and only the luggage was left,he carried the luggage up to his master and put it down before him.“Master,”he said,“that damned dragon has disappeared without a trace.It gave our horse such a fright that it ran away.”“However are we going to find the horse,disciple?”“Don't worry,don't worry,wait here while I go and look for it.”

He leapt into the sky,whistling.Putting up his hand to shade his fiery eyes with their golden pupils,he looked all around below him,but saw no sign of the horse.He put his cloud away and reported,“Master,that horse of ours must have been eaten by the dragon—I can't see it any- where.”“Disciple,”Sanzang protested,"how could that wretched creature have a mouth big enough to swallow a horse that size,saddle and all? I think the horse must have slipped its bridle in a panic and run into that valley.Go and have a more careful look.”“You don't know about my powers,”Monkey replied.“These eyes of mine can see what's happening three hundred miles away,and within that range I can even spot a dragonfly spreading its wings.There's no way I could miss a big horse like that.”“But we'll never get across those thousands of mountains and rivers.”As he spoke,his tears fell like rain.The sight of him crying was too much for Brother Monkey,who flared up and shouted,“Stop being such an imbecile,master.Sit there and wait while I find that wretch and make him give us back our horse.”“You mustn't go,”said Sanzang, grabbing hold of him.“I'm frightened that he'll come creeping out again and kill me this time.Then I'll be dead as well as the horse,and that would be terrible.”This made Monkey angrier than ever,and he roared with a shout like thunder,“You're hopeless,absolutely hopeless.You want a horse to ride but you won't let me go.This way you'll be sitting there looking at the luggage for the rest of your life.”

As he was yelling ferociously in a flaming temper,a voice was heard in the sky that said,“Don't be angry,Great Sage;stop crying,younger brother of the Tang Emperor.We are gods sent by the Bodhisattva Guanyin to give hidden protection to the pilgrim who is fetching the scriptures.”At these words Sanzang immediately bowed,but Monkey said,“Tell me your names,you lot.”“We are the Six Dings,the Six Jias,the Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions,the Four Duty Gods,and the Eighteen Protectors of the Faith;we shall take it in turns to be in attendance every day.”“Who starts today?”“The Dings and Jias,the Four Duty Gods, and the Protectors of the Faith will take turns.Of the Revealers of the Five Regions,the Gold-headed Revealer will always be with you by day and by night.”“Very well then,”said Monkey,“all those of you who are not on duty may withdraw.The Six Ding Heavenly Generals,the Duty God of the Day,and the Revealers of the Truth will stay here to protect my master,while I shall go to find that evil dragon in the gorge and make him give our horse back.”The gods all did as they were told,and Sanzang, now greatly relieved,sat on the cliff and gave Monkey detailed instructions.“There's no need for you to worry,”said the splendid Monkey King as he tightened the belt round his brocade tunic,folded up his tiger- skin kilt,grasped his cudgel,went to the edge of the gorge,and stood amid clouds and mist above the water.“Give us back our horse,mud loach, give us back our horse,”he shouted.

Now when the dragon had eaten Sanzang's white horse it lay low in the stream,hiding its miraculous powers and nourishing its vital nature. When it heard someone shouting and cursing it and demanding the horse back,it was unable to hold back its temper.Leaping up through the waves it asked,“How dare you make so free with your insults?”The moment he saw it,Monkey roared,“Don't go!Give us back our horse!”and swung his cudgel at the dragon's head.Baring its fangs and waving its claws,the dragon went for him.It was a noble battle that the pair of them fought beside the ravine.

The dragon stretched its sharp claws,

The monkey raised his gold-banded cudgel.

The beard of one hung in threads of white jade, The other's eyes flashed like golden lamps.

The pearls in the dragon's beard gave off a coloured mist, The iron club in the other's hands danced like a whirlwind. One was a wicked son who had wronged his parents;

The other,the evil spirit who had worsted heavenly generals. Both had been through trouble and suffering,

And now they were to use their abilities to win merit.

Coming and going,fighting and resting,wheeling and turning,they battled on for a very long time until the dragon's strength was exhausted and his muscles numb.Unable to resist any longer,it turned around,dived into the water,and lay low at the bottom of the stream.It pretended to be deaf as the Monkey King cursed and railed at it,and did not emerge

again.

Monkey could do nothing,so he had to report to Sanzang,“Master,I swore at that ogre till it came out,and after fighting me for ages it fled in terror.It's now in the water and won't come out again.”“Are you sure that it really ate our horse?”Sanzang asked.“What a thing to say,”said Monkey,“If it hadn't eaten the horse,it wouldn't have dared to say a word or fight against me.”“When you killed that tiger the other day you said you had ways of making dragons and tigers submit to you,so how comes it that you couldn't beat this one today?”Monkey had never been able to stand provocation,so when Sanzang mocked him this he showed something of his divine might.“Say no more,say no more.I'll have another go at it and then we'll see who comes out on top.”

The Monkey King leapt to the edge of the ravine,and used a magical way of throwing rivers and seas into turmoil to make the clear waters at the bottom of the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge as turbulent as the waves of the Yellow River in spate.The evil dragon's peace was disturbed as he lurked in the depths of the waters,and he thought,"How true it is that blessings never come in pairs and troubles never come singly.Although I've been accepting my fate here for less than a year since I escaped the death penalty for breaking the laws of Heaven,I would have to run into this murderous devil.”The more he thought about it,the angrier he felt,and unable to bear the humiliation a moment longer he jumped out of the stream cursing,“Where are you from,you bloody devil,coming here to push me around?”“Never you mind where I'm from,”Monkey replied. “I'll only spare your life if you give back that horse.”“That horse of yours is in my stomach,and I can't sick it up again,can I?I'm not giving it back,so what about it?”“If you won't give it back,then take this!I'm only killing you to make you pay for the horse's life.”The two of them began another bitter struggle under the mountain,and before many rounds were up the little dragon could hold out no longer.With a shake of his body he turned himself into a water-snake and slithered into the under- growth.

The Monkey King chased it with his cudgel in his hands,but when he pushed the grass aside to find the snake the three gods inside his body exploded,and smoke poured from his seven orifices.He uttered the magic word om,thus calling out the local tutelary god and the god of the mountain,who both knelt before him and reported their arrival.“Put out your ankles,”Monkey said,“while I give you five strokes each of my cudgel to work off my temper.”The two gods kowtowed and pleaded pitifully, “We beg the Great Sage to allow us petty gods to report.”“What have you got to say?”Monkey asked.“We didn't know when you emerged after your long sufferings,Great Sage,”they said,“which is why we didn't come to meet you.We beg to be forgiven.”“In that case,”Mon- key said,“I won't beat you,but I'll ask you this instead:where does that devil dragon in the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge come from,and why did he grab my master's white horse and eat it?”“Great Sage,you never had a master,”said the two gods,“and you were a supreme Immortal with an undisturbed essence who would not submit to Heaven or Earth,so how does this master's horse come in?”“You two don't know that either,” Monkey replied.“Because of that business of offending against Heaven, I had to suffer for five hundred years.Now I've been converted by the Bodhisattva Guanyin,and she's sent a priest who's come from the Tang Empire to rescue me.She told me to become his disciple and go to the Western Heaven to visit the Buddha and ask for the scriptures.As we were passing this way we lost my master's white horse.”“Ah,so that's what's happening,”the gods said.“There never used to be any evil creatures in the stream,which ran wide and deep with water so pure that crows and magpies never dared to fly across it.This was because they

would mistake their own reflections in it for other birds of their own kind and often go plummeting into the water.That's why it's called Eagle's Sorrow Gorge.Last year,when the Bodhisattva Guanyin was on her way to find a man to fetch the scriptures,she rescued a jade dragon and sent it to wait here for the pilgrim without getting up to any trouble.But when it's hungry it comes up on the bank to catch a few birds or a roedeer to eat.We can't imagine how it could be so ignorant as to clash with the Great Sage.”“The first time he and I crossed swords we whirled around for a few rounds,”Brother Monkey replied.“The second time I swore at him but he wouldn't come out,so I stirred up his stream with a spell to throw rivers and seas into turmoil,after which he came out and wanted to have another go at me.He didn't realize how heavy my cud- gel was,and he couldn't parry it,so he changed himself into a water snake and slithered into the undergrowth.I chased him and searched for him,but he's vanished without a trace.”“Great Sage,you may not be aware that there are thousands of interconnected tunnels in this ravine, which is why the waters here run so deep.There is also a tunnel en- trance round here that he could have slipped into.There's no need for you to be angry,Great Sage,or to search for it.If you want to catch the creature,all you have to do is to ask Guanyin to come here,and it will naturally submit.”

On receiving this suggestion Monkey told the local deity and the mountain god to come with him to see Sanzang and tell him all about what had happened previously.“If you go to ask the Bodhisattva to come here, when will you ever be back?”he asked,adding,"I'm terribly cold and hungry.”Before the words were out of his mouth they heard the voice of the Gold-headed Revealer shouting from the sky,“Great Sage,there's no need for you to move.I'll go and ask the Bodhisattva to come here.” Monkey,who was delighted,replied,“This putting you to great trouble, but please be as quick as you can.”The Revealer then shot off on his cloud to the Southern Sea.Monkey told the mountain god and the local deity to protect his master,and sent the Duty God of the Day to find some vegetarian food,while he himself patrolled the edge of the ravine.

The moment the Gold-headed Revealer mounted his cloud he reached the Southern Sea.Putting away his propitious glow,he went straight to the Purple Bamboo Grove on the island of Potaraka,where he asked the Golden Armour Devas and Moksa (or Huian) to get him an audience with the Bodhisattva.“What have you come for?”the Bodhisattva asked. “The Tang Priest,”the Revealer replied,“has lost his horse in the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge,and the Great Sage Sun Wukong is desperate,because they can neither go forward nor back.When the Great Sage asked the local deity he was told that the evil dragon you sent to the ravine, Bodhisattva,had swallowed it,so he has sent me to ask you to subdue this dragon and make it give back the horse.”“That wretched creature was the son of Ao Run,the Dragon King of the Western Sea,whom his father reported for disobedience when he burned the palace jewels.The

heavenly court condemned him to death for it,but I went myself to see the Jade Emperor and asked him to send the dragon down to serve the Tang Priest as a beast of burden.Whatever made it actually eat the Tang Priest's horse?I'd better go and look into it.”The Bodhisattva descended from her lotus throne,left her magic cave,and crossed the Southern Sea, travelling on propitious light with the Revealer.There is a poem about it that goes:

Honey is in the Buddha's words that fill Three Stores of scripture, The Bodhisattva's goodness is longer than the Great Wall.

The wonderful words of the Mahayana fill Heaven and Earth, The truth of the prajna rescues ghosts and souls.

It even made the Golden Cicada shed his cocoon once more,

And ordered Xuanzang to continue cultivating his conduct.

Because the road was difficult at the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge,

The dragon's son returned to the truth and changed into a horse.

The Bodhisattva and the Revealer reached the Coiled Snake Mountain before long,and stopping their cloud in mid-air they looked down and saw Brother Monkey cursing and shouting at the edge of the ravine. When the Bodhisattva told him to call Monkey over,the Revealer brought his cloud to land at the edge of the ravine.Instead of going to see Sanzang first,he said to Monkey,“The Bodhisattva's here.”Monkey leapt straight into the air on his cloud and shouted at her at the top of his voice,“Teacher of the Seven Buddhas,merciful head of our religion,why did you think up this way of hurting me?”“I'll get you,you outrageous baboon,you red- bottomed ape,”she replied.“I was at my wit's end two or three times over to fetch that pilgrim,and I told him to save your life.But so far from coming to thank me for saving you,you now have the effrontery to bawl at me.”“You've been very good to me,I must say,”retorted Monkey. “If you'd let me out to roam around enjoying myself as I pleased,that would have been fine.I was all right when you met me above the sea the other day,spoke a few unkind words,and told me to do all I could to help the Tang Priest.But why did you give him that hat he tricked me into wearing to torture me with?Why did you make this band grow into my head?Why did you teach him that Band-tightening Spell?Why did you make that old monk recite it over and over again so that my head ached and ached?You must be wanting to do me in.”The Bodhisattva smiled. “You monkey.You don't obey the commands of the faith,and you won't accept the true reward,so if you weren't under control like this you might rebel against Heaven again or get up to any kind of evil.If you got yourself into trouble as you did before,who would look after you?With- out this monstrous head,you'd never be willing to enter our Yogacarin faith.”“Very well then,”Monkey replied,“let's call this object my monstrous head.But why did you send that criminal and evil dragon to be- come a monster here and eat my master's horse?Letting evil creatures out to run a muck like that is a bad deed.”“I personally asked the Jade Emperor to put the dragon here as a mount for the pilgrim,”said the Bodhisattva.“Do you think an ordinary horse would be able to cross the

thousands of mountains and rivers to reach the Buddha-land on the Vulture Peak?Only a dragon horse will be able to do it.”“But he's so afraid of me that he's skulking down there and won't come out,so what's to be done?”Monkey asked.The Bodhisattva told the Revealer to go to the edge of the ravine and shout,“Come out,Prince Jade Dragon,son of the

Dragon King Ao Run,to see the Bodhisattva of the Southern Sea,”on which he would emerge.The Revealer went to the edge of the gorge and shouted this twice,on which the young dragon leapt up through the waves, took human form,stepped on a cloud,and greeted the Bodhisattva in mid-air.“In my gratitude to you,Bodhisattva,for saving my life,I have been waiting here for a long time,but I have had no news yet of the pilgrim who is going to fetch the scriptures.”The Bodhisattva pointed to Brother Monkey and said,“Isn't he the pilgrim's great disciple?”“He's my enemy,”the young dragon replied when he looked at him.“I ate his horse yesterday because I was starving,so he used some powers of his to fight me till I returned exhausted and terrified,then swore at me so that I had to shut myself in,too frightened to come out.He never said a word about anyone fetching scriptures.”“You never asked me my name,so how could I have told you?”Monkey retorted.“I asked you' Where are you from,you bloody devil?'and you yelled,'Never mind where I'm from,and give me back that horse.'You never so much as breathed the word ‘Tang.”“You monkey,you are so proud of your own strength that you never have a good word for anyone else,”said the Bodhisattva. “There will be others who join you later on your journey,and when they ask you any questions,the first thing you must mention is fetching the scriptures.If you do that,you'll have their help without any trouble at all.”

Monkey was happy to accept instruction from her.The Bodhisattva then went forward,broke off some of the pearls from the dragon's head, soaked the end of her willow twig in the sweet dew in her bottle,sprinkled it on the dragon's body,and breathed on it with magic breath,shouted, and the dragon turned into the exact likeness of the original horse.“You must concentrate on wiping out your past sins,”she told him,“and when you have succeeded,you will rise above ordinary dragons and be given back your golden body as a reward.”The young dragon took the bit between his teeth,and her words to heart.The Bodhisattva told Sun Wukong to take him to see Sanzang as she was returning to the Southern Sea.Monkey clung to her,refusing to let her go.“I'm not going,”he said,“I'm not going.If the journey to the West is as tough as this,I can't possibly keep this mortal priest safe,and if there are many such more trials and tribulations,I'll have enough trouble keeping alive myself.How can I ever achieve any reward?I'm not going,I'm not going.”“In the old days,before you had learnt to be a human being,”the Bodhisattva replied,“you were prepared to work for your awakening with all your power.But now that you have been delivered from a Heaven-sent calamity,you have grown lazy.What's the matter with you?In our faith,to achieve nirvana you must believe in good rewards.If you meet with injury or suffering in future,you have only to call on Heaven and Earth for them to respond;and if you get into a really hopeless situation I shall come to rescue you myself.Come over here as I have another power to give you.”The Bodhisattva plucked three leaves from her willow twig, put them on the back of Brother Monkey's head,and shouted“Change”, on which they turned into three life-saving hairs.“When the time comes when nobody else will help you,”she said,“they will turn into whatever is needed to save you from disaster.”

After hearing all these fine words,Monkey finally took his leave of the All-merciful Bodhisattva,who went back to Potaraka amidst scented breezes and coloured mists. Monkey brought his cloud down to land,and led the dragon horse by the mane to see Sanzang.“Master,”he said,“we've got our horse.” Sanzang cheered up the moment he saw it.“Why is it sturdier than it was before?”he asked.“Where did you find it?”“Master,you must have been dreaming.The Golden-headed Revealer asked the Bodhisattva to come here,and she turned the dragon in the gorge into our white horse. The colouring is the same,but it hasn't got a saddle or a bridle,which is why I had to drag it here.”Sanzang was astounded.“Where's the Bodhisattva?I must go and worship her,”he said.“She's back in the Southern Sea by now,so don't bother,”Monkey replied.Sanzang took a pinch of earth as if he were burning incense,knelt down,and bowed to the south.When he had finished he got up and helped Monkey put their things together for the journey.Monkey dismissed the mountain god and the local deity,gave orders to the Revealer and the Duty Gods,and in- vited his master to mount the horse.“I couldn't possibly ride it—it's got no saddle or bridle,”his master replied,“but we can sort this out when we've found a boat to ferry us across the stream.”“Master,you seem to have no common sense at all.Where will a boat be found in these wild mountains?This horse has lived here for a long time and is bound to know about the currents,so you can ride him and use him as your boat.” Sanzang had no choice but to do as Monkey suggested and ride the horse bareback to the edge of the stream while Monkey carried the luggage.

An aged fisherman appeared upstream,punting a raft along with the current.As soon as he saw him,Monkey waved his hand and shouted, “Come here,fisherman,come here.We're from the East,and we're going to fetch the scriptures.My master is having some trouble crossing the river,so come and ferry him over.”The fisherman punted towards them with all speed,while Monkey asked Sanzang to dismount and helped him on board the raft.Then he led the horse on and loaded the luggage, after which the fisherman pushed off and started punting with the speed of an arrow.Before they realized it they had crossed the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge and were on the western bank.When Sanzang told Brother Mon- key to open the bundle and find a few Great Tang coins and notes to give the fisherman,the old man pushed his raft off from the shore with the words,“I don't want your money,I don't want your money,”and drifted off into mid-stream.Sanzang was most upset,but could do nothing except put his hands together and thank him.“There's no need to thank him,master,”Monkey said.“Can't you see who he is?He's the water god of this stream,and I should be giving him a beating for not coming to welcome me.He should consider himself lucky to get off the beating— how could he possibly expect money too?”His master,who was only half-convinced,mounted the saddleless horse once more and followed Monkey to join the main path,and then they hurried on towards the West. Indeed,

The great truth landed on the opposite bank,

The sincere heart and complete nature climbed Vulture Peak.

As disciple and master went forward together,the sun slipped down in the west and evening drew in.

Pale and ragged clouds,

The moon dim over the mountains, As the cold frost fills the heavens,

And the wind's howl cuts through the body.

With the lone bird gone,the grey island seems vast;

Where the sunset glows,the distant mountains are low.

In the sparse forests a thousand trees moan, On the deserted peak a lonely ape screams. The path is long,and bears no footprints,

As the boat sails thousands of miles into the night.

As Sanzang was gazing into the distance from the back of his horse, he noticed a farm-house beside the path.“Monkey,"he said,“let's spend the night in the house ahead of us and go on in the morning.”Monkey looked up and replied,“Master,it's not a farm-house.”“Why not?”“A farm-house wouldn't have all those decorative fishes and animals on the roof.It must be a temple or a nunnery.”

As they were talking they reached the gate,and when Sanzang dis- mounted he saw the words TEMPLE OF THE WARD ALTAR written large above the gate and went inside.Here an old man with a rosary of pearls hanging round his neck came out to meet them with his hands held together and the words,“Please sit down,master.”Sanzang quickly re- turned his courtesies and entered the main building to pay his respects to the divine image.The old man told a servant to bring tea,and when that had been drunk Sanzang asked the old man why the temple was dedicated to the ward altar.“This place is in the territory of the western land of Hami,”the old man replied,“and behind the temple lives the devout farm family which built it. 'Ward' means the ward of a village,and the altar is the altar of the local tutelary deity.At the time of the spring ploughing, the summer weeding,the autumn harvest,and the storing away in winter they all bring meat,flowers,and fruit to sacrifice to the altar.They do this to ensure good fortune throughout the four seasons,a rich crop of the five grains,and good health for the six kinds of livestock.”On hearing this Sanzang nodded and said in approval,“How true it is that 'Go three miles from home,and you're in another land.' We have nothing as good as this in our country.”The old man then asked him where his home was.

“I come from the land of the Great Tang in the East,”Sanzang replied, “and I have imperial orders to go to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and ask for the scriptures.As our journey brought us this way and it is almost night,we have come to this holy temple to ask for a night's lodging.We shall set off at dawn.”The old man,who was very pleased to heart his,apologized profusely for having failed in his hospital- ity and told the servant to prepare a meal.When Sanzang had eaten he thanked the old man.

Monkey's sharp eyes had noticed a clothes-line under the eaves of the building.He went over,tore it down,and hobbled the horse with it. “Where did you steal that horse from?”the old man asked with a smile. “You don't know what you're talking about,”Monkey replied.“We're holy monks going to visit the Buddha,so how could we possibly steal a horse.”“If you didn't steal it,”the old man continued,the smile still on his lips,"then why do you have to break my clothes-line because it's got no saddle,bridle or reins?”Sanzang apologized for Monkey and said to him,“You're too impatient,you naughty monkey.You could have asked the old gentleman for a piece of rope to tether the horse with.There was no need to snap his clothes-line.Please don't be suspicious,sir,"Sanzang went on,addressing the old man.“This horse isn't stolen,I can assure you.When we reached the Eagle's Sorrow Gorge yesterday I was riding a white horse complete with saddle and bridle.We did not know that there was an evil dragon in the stream who had become a spirit,and this dragon swallowed my horse saddle,bridle and all,in a single gulp.Luckily this disciple of mine has certain powers,and he brought the Bodhisattva Guanyin to the side of the gorge,where she caught the dragon and changed it into a white horse,exactly like the original one,to carry me to the Western Heaven to visit the Buddha.It's been less than a day from when we crossed that stream to when we reached your holy shrine,sir, and we haven't yet saddle or bridle for it.”“Please don't be angry, Father.I was only joking,”the old man replied.“I never thought your respected disciple would take it seriously.When I was young I had a bit of money,and I was fond of riding a good horse,but many years of troubles and bereavement have taken the fire out of me,and I've come to this miserable end as a sacristan looking after the incense.Luckily the benefactor who owns the farm behind here provides me with the necessities of life. A sit happens,I still have a saddle and bridle—I was so fond of them in the old days that I have never been able to bring myself to sell them,poor as I am.Now that I have heard,venerable master,how the Bodhisattva saved the divine dragon and changed it into a horse to carry you,I feel that I must help too,so I shall bring that saddle and bridle out tomorrow for you to ride on.I beg you to be gracious enough to accept them.”Sanzang thanked him effusively.The servant boy had by now produced the evening meal,and when it was over they spread out their bedding,lamp in hand,and all went to sleep.

When Monkey got up the next morning he said,“Master,that old sacristan promised us the saddle and bridle last night.You must insist and not let him off.”Before the words were out of his mouth,the old man appeared with the saddle and bridle in his hands,as well as saddle-cloth, saddle-pad,reins,muzzle and all the other trappings for a horse.Nothing was missing.As he put it all down in front of the verandah he said,“Master,I humbly offer this saddle and bridle.”When Sanzang saw them he accepted them with delight.Then he told Monkey to put them on the horse to see if they fitted him.Monkey went over and picked them up to look at them one by one:they were all fine pieces.There are some verses to prove it that go

The well-carved saddle shines with silver stars

The jewelled stirrups gleam with golden light.

Several layers of saddle-pads are made from wool, The lead-rope is plaited from purple silk.

Thereins are inlaid with flashing flowers,

The blinkers have dancing animals outlined in gold. The bit is made of tempered steel,

And woollen tassels hang from either end.

Monkey,who was secretly very pleased,put the saddle and bridle on the horse and found that they fitted as if they had been made to measure. Sanzang knelt and bowed to the old man in thanks,at which the old man rushed forward and said,“No,no,how could I allow you to thank me?” The old man did not try to keep them a moment longer,and bade Sanzang mount the horse.When he was out of the gate Sanzang climbed into the saddle,while Monkey carried the luggage.The old man then produced a whip from his sleeve and offered it to Sanzang as he stood beside the road.Its handle was of rattan bound with leather,and its thong of tiger sinew bound at the end with silk.“Holy monk,”he said,“I would also like to give you this as you leave.”As Sanzang took it sitting on horse- back,he thanked the old man for his generosity.

As Sanzang was on the point of clasping his hands together to take his leave of him,the old man disappeared,and on turning round to look at the temple,the monk could see nothing but a stretch of empty land.He heard a voice saying in the sky,“Holy monk,we have been very abrupt with you.We are the mountain god and the local deity of Potaraka Island,and we were sent by the Bodhisattva Guanyin to give you the saddle and bridle.You two are now to make for the west as fast as you can,and not to slacken your pace for a moment.”Sanzang tumbled out of the saddle in a panic,and worshipped the heavens,saying,“My eyes of flesh and my mortal body prevented me from recognizing you,noble gods;forgive me, I beg you.Please convey my gratitude to the Bodhisattva for her mercy.”Look at him,kowtowing to the sky more often than you could count.The Great Sage Sun Wukong, the Handsome Monkey King,was standing by the path overcome with laughter and beside himself with amusement.He went over and tugged at the Tang Priest.“Master,”he said,“get up.They're already much too far away to hear your prayers or see your kowtows,so why ever are you doing that?”“Disciple,” Sanzang replied,“what do you mean by standing beside the path sneering at me and not even making a single bow while I've done all those kowtows?”“You don't know anything,”Monkey retorted.“A deceitful pair like that deserve a thrashing.I let them off out of respect for the Bodhisattva.That's quite enough:they couldn't expect me to bow to them too,could they?I've been a tough guy since I was a kid,and I don't bow to anyone.Even when I meet the Jade Emperor or the Supreme Lord Lao Zi I just chant a ‘na-a-aw' and that's all.”“You inhuman beast,”said Sanzang,“stop talking such nonsense.Get moving,and don't hold us up a moment longer.”With that Sanzang rose to his feet and they set off to the west.

The next two months' journey was peaceful,and they only met Luoluos, Huihuis,wolves,monsters,tigers,and leopards.The time passed quickly,and it was now early spring.They saw mountains and forests clad in emerald brocade as plants and trees put out shoots of green;and when all the plum blossom had fallen,the willows started coming into leaf.Master and disciple travelled along enjoying the beauties of spring, and they saw that the sun was setting in the west. Sanzang reined in his horse to look into the distance,and in the fold of a mountain he dimly discerned towers and halls.“Wukong,”he said,“can you see if there's anywhere we can go there?”Monkey looked and said,“It must be a temple or a monastery.Let's get there quickly and spend the night there.” Sanzang willingly agreed,and giving his dragon horse a free rein he gal- loped towards it.If you don't know what sort of place it was that they were going to,listen to the explanation in the next instalment.

Chapter 27

The Corpse Fiend Thrice Tricks Tang Sanzang

The Holy Monk Angrily Dismisses the Handsome Monkey King

At dawn the next day Sanzang and his three disciples packed their things before setting off.Now that Master Zhen Yuan had made Monkey his sworn brother and was finding him so congenial,he did not want to let him go,so he entertained him for another five or six days. Sanzang had really become a new man,and was livelier and healthier now that he had eaten the Grass-returning Cinnabar.His determination to fetch the scriptures was too strong to let him waste any more time,so there was nothing for it but to be on their way.

Soon after they had set out again,master and disciples saw a high mountain in front of them.“I'm afraid that the mountain ahead may be too steep for the horse,”Sanzang said,“so we must think this over care- fully.”“Don't worry,master,”said Monkey,“we know how to cope.” He went ahead of the horse with his cudgel over his shoulder and cleared a path up to the top of the cliff.He saw no end of

Row upon row of craggy peaks, Twisting beds of torrents.

Tigers and wolves were running in packs, Deer and muntjac moving in herds.

Countless river-deer darted around.

And the mountains was covered with fox and hare.

Thousand-food pythons,

Ten-thousand-fathom snakes;

The great pythons puffed out murky clouds,

The enormous snakes breathed monstrous winds. Brambles and thorns spread beside the paths,

Pines and cedars stood elegant on the ridge.

There were wild fig-trees wherever the eye could see,

And sweet-scented flowers as far as the horizon.

The mountain's shadow fell north of the ocean,

The clouds parted south of the handle of the Dipper.

The towering cliffs were as ancient as the primal Essence, The majestic crags cold in the sunlight.

Sanzang was immediately terrified,so Monkey resorted to some of his tricks.He whirled his iron cudgel and roared,at which all the wolves, snakes,tigers and leopards fled.They then started up the mountain,and as they were crossing a high ridge Sanzang said to Monkey,“Monkey, I've been hungry all day,so would you please go and beg some food for us somewhere.”“You aren't very bright,master,”Monkey replied with a grin.“We're on a mountain with no village or inn for many miles around. Even if we had money there would be nowhere to buy food,so where am I to go and beg for it?”Sanzang felt cross,so he laid into Monkey.“You ape,"”he said,“don't you remember how you were crushed by the Buddha in a stone cell under the Double Boundary Mountain,where you could talk but not walk?It was I who saved your life,administered the monastic vows to you,and made you my disciple.How dare you be such a slacker?Why aren't you prepared to make an effort?”“I always make an effort,”said Monkey.“I'm never lazy.”“If you're such a hard worker,go and beg some food for us.I can't manage on an empty stomach.Besides,with the noxious vapours on this mountain we'll never reach the Thunder Monastery,”“Please don't be angry,master,and stop talking.I know your obstinate character —if I'm too disobedient you'll say that spell,You'd better dismount and sit here while I find somebody and beg for some food.”

Monkey leapt up into the clouds with a single jump,and shading his eyes with his hand he looked around.Unfortunately he could see nothing in any direction except emptiness.There was no village or house or any other sign of human habitation among the countless trees.After looking for a long time he made out a high mountain away to the south.On its southern slopes was a bright red patch.Monkey brought his cloud down and said,“Master,there's something to eat.”Sanzang asked him what it was.“There's no house around here where we could ask for food,” Monkey replied,“but there's a patch of red on a mountain to the south that I'm sure must be ripe wild peaches.I'll go and pick some—they'll fill you up.”“A monk who has peaches to eat is a lucky man,”said Sanzang. Monkey picked up his bowl and leapt off on a beam of light. Just watch as he flashes off in a somersault,a whistling gust of cold air. Within a moment he was picking peaches on the southern mountain.

There is a saying that goes,“If the mountain is high it's bound to have fiends;if the ridge is steep spirits will live there.”This mountain did in- deed have an evil spirit who was startled by Monkey's appearance.It strode through the clouds on a negative wind,and on seeing the venerable Sanzang on the ground below thought happily,“What luck,what luck.At home they've been talking for years about a Tang Monk from the East who's going to fetch the 'Great Vehicle';he's a reincarnation of Golden Cicada,and has an Original Body that has been purified through ten lives.Anyone who eats a piece of his flesh will live for ever.And today,at last,he's here.”The evil spirit went forward to seize him,but the sight of the two great generals to Sanzang's left and right made it frightened to close in on him.Who,it wondered,were they?They were in fact Pig and Friar Sand,and for all that their powers were nothing extraordinary,Pig was really Marshal Tian Peng while Friar Sand was the Great Curtain-lifting General.It was because their former awe-inspiring qualities had not yet been dissipated that the fiend did not close in. “I'll try a trick on them and see what happens,”the spirit said to itself.

The splendid evil spirit stopped its negative wind in a hollow and changed itself into a girl with a face as round as the moon and as pretty as a flower.Her brow was clear and her eyes beautiful;her teeth were white and her lips red.In her left hand she held a blue earthenware pot and in her right a green porcelain jar.She headed east towards the Tang Priest.

The holy monk rested his horse on the mountain, And suddenly noticed a pretty girl approaching.

The green sleeves over her jade finger slightly billowed;

Golden lotus feet peeped under her trailing skirt.

The beads of sweat on her powdered face were dew on a flower,

Her dusty brow was a willow in a mist. Carefully and closely he watched her As she came right up to him. “Pig,Friar Sand,”said Sanzang when he saw her,“don't you see somebody coming although Monkey said that this was a desolate and uninhabited place?”“You and Friar Sand stay sitting here while I go and take a look.”The blockhead laid down his rake,straightened his tunic, put on the airs of a gentleman,and stared at the girl as he greeted her. Although he had not been sure from a distance,he could now see clearly that the girl had

Bones of jade under skin as pure as ice,

A creamy bosom revealed by her neckline.

Her willow eyebrows were black and glossy, And silver stars shone from her almond eyes.

She was as graceful as the moon As pure as the heavens.

Her body was like a swallow in a willow-tree,

Her voice like an oriole singing in the wood.

She was wild apple-blossom enmeshing the sun, An opening peony full of the spring.

When the idiot Pig saw how beautiful she was his earthly desires were aroused,and he could not hold back the reckless words that came to his lips.“Where are you going,Bodhisattva,”he said,“and what's that you're holding?”Although she was obviously an evil fiend he could not realize it.“Venerable sir,”the girl replied at once,“this blue pot is full of tasty rice,and the green jar contains fried wheat-balls.I've come here specially to fulfil a vow to feed monks.”Pig was thoroughly delighted to hear this.He came tumbling back at breakneck speed and said to Sanzang,“Master,'Heaven rewards the good'.When you sent my elder brother off begging because you felt hungry,that ape went fooling around somewhere picking peaches.Besides,too many peaches turn your stomach and give you the runs.Don't you see that this girl is coming to feed us monks?”“You stupid idiot,”replied Sanzang,who was not convinced,“we haven't met a single decent person in this direction,so where could anyone come from to feed monks?”“What's she then, master?”said Pig.

When Sanzang saw her he sprang to his feet,put his hands together in front of his chest,and said,“Bodhisattva,where is your home?Who are you?What vow brings you here to feed monks?”Although she was obviously an evil spirit,the venerable Sanzang could not see it either.On being asked about her background by Sanzang,the evil spirit immediately produced a fine-sounding story with which to fool him.“This mountain, which snakes and wild animals won't go near,is called White Tiger Ridge,” she said.“Our home lies due west from here at the foot of it.My mother and father live there,and they are devout people who read the scriptures and feed monks from far and near.As they had no son,they asked Heaven to bless them.When I was born they wanted to marry me off to a good family,but then they decided to find me a husband who would live in our home to look after them in their old age and see them properly buried.” “Bodhisattva,what you say can't be right,”replied Sanzang.“The Analects say,'When father and mother are alive,do not go on long journeys;if you have to go out,have a definite aim.’As your parents are at home and have found you a husband,you should let him fulfil your vow for you.Why ever are you walking in the mountains all by yourself,with- out even a servant?This is no way for a lady to behave.”The girl smiled and produced a smooth reply at once:“My husband is hoeing with some of our retainers in a hollow in the north of the mountain,reverend sir,and I am taking them this food I've cooked.As it's July and all the crops are ripening nobody can be spared to run errands,and my parents are old,so I'm taking it there myself.Now that I have met you three monks from so far away,I would like to give you this food as my parents are so pious.I hope you won't refuse our paltry offering.”“It's very good of you,” said Sanzang,“but one of my disciples has gone to pick some fruit and will be back soon,so we couldn't eat any of your food.Besides,if we ate your food your husband might be angry with you when he found out,and we would get into trouble too.”As the Tang Priest was refusing to eat the food,the girl put on her most charming expression and said,“My parents' charity to monks is nothing compared to my husband's,master. He is a religious man whose lifelong pleasure has been repairing bridges, mending roads,looking after the aged,and helping the poor.When he hears that I have given you this food,he'll love me more warmly than ever.”Sanzang still declined to eat it.Pig was beside himself.Twisting his lips into a pout,he muttered indignantly,“Of all the monks on earth there can't be another as soft in the head as our master.He won't eat ready-cooked food when there are only three of us to share it between. He's waiting for that ape to come back,and then we'll have to split it four ways.”Without allowing any more discussion he tipped the pot to- wards his mouth and was just about to eat.

Adjust this moment Brother Monkey was somersaulting back with his bowl full of the peaches he had picked on the southern mountain.When he saw with the golden pupils in his fiery eyes that the girl was an evil spirit,he put the bowl down,lifted his cudgel,and was going to hit her on the head when the horrified Sanzang held him back and said,“Who do you think you're going to hit?”“That girl in front of you is no good,”he replied.“She's an evil spirit trying to make a fool of you.”“In the old days you had a very sharp eye,you ape,”Sanzang said,“but this is nonsense.This veritable Bodhisattva is feeding us with the best of motives,so how can you call her an evil spirit?”“You wouldn't be able to tell,master,”said Monkey with a grin.“When I was an evil monster in the Water Curtain Cave I used to do that if I wanted a meal of human flesh.I would turn myself into gold and silver,or a country mansion,or liquor,or a pretty girl.Whoever was fool enough to be besotted with one of these would fall in love with me,and I would lure them into the cave, where I did what I wanted with them.Sometimes I ate them steamed and sometimes boiled,and what I couldn't finish I used to dry in the sun against a rainy day.If I'd been slower getting here,master,you'd have fallen into her snare and she'd have finished you off.”The Tang Priest refused to believe him and maintained that she was a good person.“I know you,master,”said Monkey.“Her pretty face must have made you feel randy.If that's the way you feel,tell Pig to fell a few trees and send Friar Sand look off to for some grass.I'll be the carpenter,and we'll build you a hut here that you and the girl can use as your bridal chamber. We can all go our own ways.Wouldn't marriage be a worthwhile way of living?Why bother plodding on to fetch some scriptures or other?” Sanzang,who had always been such a soft and virtuous man,was unable to take this.He was so embarrassed that he blushed from his shaven pate to his ears.

While Sanzang was feeling so embarrassed,Monkey flared up again and struck at the evil spirit's face.The fiend,who knew a trick or two, used a magic way of abandoning its body:when it saw Monkey's cudgel coming it braced itself and fled,leaving a false corpse lying dead on the ground.Sanzang shook with terror and said to himself,“That monkey is utterly outrageous.Despite all my good advice he will kill people for no reason at all.”“Don't be angry,master,”said Monkey.“Come and see what's in her pot.”Friar Sand helped Sanzang over to look,and he saw that so far from containing tasty rice it was full of centipedes with long tails.The jar had held not wheat-balls but frogs and toads,which were now jumping around on the ground.Sanzang was now beginning to believe Monkey.This was not enough,however,to prevent a furious Pig from deliberately making trouble by saying,“Master,that girl was a local countrywoman who happened to meet us while she was taking some food to the fields.There's no reason to think that she was an evil spirit. My elder brother was trying his club out on her,and he killed her by mistake.He's deliberately trying to trick us by magicking the food into those things because he's afraid you'll recite the Band-tightening spell. He's fooled you into not saying it.”

This brought the blindness back on Sanzang, who believed these trouble-making remarks and made the magic with his hand as he recited the spell.“My head's aching,my head's aching,”Monkey said.“Stop, please stop.Tell me off if you like.”“I've nothing to say to you,”replied Sanzang.“A man of religion should always help others,and his thoughts should always be virtuous.When sweeping the floor you must be careful not to kill any ants,and to spare the moth you should put gauze round your lamp.Why do you keep murdering people?If you are going to kill innocent people like that there is no point in your going to fetch the scriptures. Go back!”“Where am I to go back to?”Monkey asked.“I won't have you as my disciple any longer,”said Sanzang.“If you won't have me as your disciple,”Monkey said,“I'm afraid you may never reach the Western Heaven.”“My destiny is in Heaven's hands,”replied Sanzang.“If some evil spirit is fated to cook me,he will;and there's no way of getting out of it.But if I'm not to be eaten,will you be able to extend my life?Be off with you at once.”“I'll go if I must,”said Monkey,"but I'll never have repaid your kindness to me.”“What kindness have I ever done you?”Sanzang asked.Monkey knelt down and kowtowed.“When I wrecked the Heavenly Palace,”he said,“I put myself in a very danger- ous position,and the Buddha crushed me under the Double Boundary Mountain.Luckily the Bodhisattva Guanyin administered the vows to me,and you,master,released me,so ifI don't go with you to the Western Heaven I'll look like a‘scoundrel who doesn't return a kindness, with a name that will be cursed for ever'.”As Sanzang was a compassionate and holy monk this desperate plea from Monkey persuaded him to relent.“In view of what you say I'll let you off this time,but don't behave so disgracefully again.If you are ever as wicked as that again I shall recite that spell twenty times over.”“Make it thirty if you like,” replied Monkey.“I shan't hit anyone else.”With that he helped Sanzang mount the horse and offered him some of the peaches he had picked. After eating a few the Tang Priest felt less hungry for the time being.

The evil spirit rose up into the air when it had saved itself from being killed by Monkey's cudgel.Gnashing its teeth in the clouds,it thought of Monkey with silent hatred:“Now I know that those magical powers of his that I've been hearing about for years are real.The Tang Priest didn't realize who I was and would have eaten the food.If he'd so much as leant forward to smell it I could have seized him,and he would have been mine.But that Monkey turned up,wrecked my plan,and almost killed me with his club.If I spare that monk now I'll have gone to all that trouble for nothing,so I'll have another go at tricking him.”

The splendid evil spirit landed its negative cloud,shook itself,and changed into an old woman in her eighties who was weeping as she hobbled along leaning on a bamboo stick with a crooked handle."This is terrible,master,”exclaimed Pig with horror at the sight of her.“Her mother's come to look for her.”“For whom?”asked the Tang Priest. “It must be her daughter that my elder brother killed,”said Pig.“This must be the girl's mother looking for her.”“Don't talk nonsense,”said Monkey.“That girl was eighteen and this old woman is eighty.How could she possibly have had a child when she was over sixty?She must be a fake.Let me go and take a look.”The splendid Monkey hurried over to examine her and saw that the monster had Turned into an old woman

With temples as white as frozen snow.

Slowly she stumbled along the road,

Making her way in fear and trembling.

Her body was weak and emaciated,

Her face like a withered leaf of cabbage. Her cheekbone was twisted upwards,

While the ends of her lips went down.

How can old age compare with youth?

Her face was as creased as a pleated bag.

Realizing that she was an evil spirit,Monkey did not wait to argue about it,but raised his cudgel and struck at her head.Seeing the blow coming,the spirit braced itself again and extracted its true essence once more.The false corpse sprawled dead beside the path. Sanzang was so horrified that he fell off the horse and lay beside the path,reciting the Band-tightening Spell twenty times over.Poor Monkey's head was squeezed so hard that it looked like a narrow-waisted gourd.The pain was unbearable,and he rolled over towards his master to plead,“Stop, master.Say whatever you like.”“I have nothing to say,”Sanzang re- plied.“If a monk does good he will not fall into hell.Despite all my preach- ing you still commit murder.How can you?No sooner have you killed one person than you kill another.It's an outrage.”“She was an evil spirit,”Monkey replied.“Nonsense,you ape,”said the Tang Priest,“as if there could be so many monsters!You haven't the least intention of reforming,and you are a deliberate murderer.Be off with you.”“Are you sending me away again,master?”Monkey asked.“I'll go if I must, but there's one thing I won't agree to.”“What,”Sanzang asked,“would that be?”“Master,”Pig put in,“he wants the baggage divided between you and him.He's been a monk with you for several years,and hasn't succeeded in winning a good reward.You can't let him go away empty- handed.Better give him a worn-out tunic and a tattered hat from the bundle.”

This made Monkey jump with fury.“I'll get you,you long-snouted moron,"he said.“I've been a true Buddhist with no trace of covetousness or greed.I certainly don't want a share of the baggage.”“If you're neither covetous nor greedy,”said Sanzang,“why won't you go away?” “To be quite honest with you,master,”he replied,“when I lived in the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit and knew all the great heroes,I won the submission of seventy-two other demon kings and had forty-seven thousand minor demons under me.I used to wear a crown ofpurple gold and a yellow robe with a belt of the finest jade.I had cloud-treading shoes on my feet and held an as-you-will gold-banded cudgel in my hands.I really was somebody then.But when I attained enlightenment and repented,I shaved my head and took to the Buddhist faith as your disciple.I couldn't face my old friends if I went back with

this golden band round my head.So if you don't want me any longer, master,please say the band-loosening spell and I'll take it off and give it back to you.I'll gladly agree to you putting it round someone else' head. As I've been your disciple for so long,surely you can show me this kindness.”Sanzang was deeply shocked.“Monkey,"he said,“the Bodhisattva secretly taught me the Band-tightening Spell,but not a band- loosening one.”“In that case you'll have to let me come with you,” Monkey replied.“Get up then,”said Sanzang, feeling that he had no option,“I'll let you off again just this once.But you must never commit another murder.”“I never will,”said Monkey,“never again.”He helped his master mount the horse and led the way forward.

The evil spirit,who had not been killed the second time Monkey hit it either,was full of admiration as it floated in mid-air.“What a splendid Monkey King,”it thought,“and what sharp eyes.He saw who I was through both my transformations.Those monks are travelling fast,and once they're over the mountain and fifteen miles to the west they'll be out of my territory.And other fiends and monsters who catch them will be laughing till their mouths split,and I'll be heartbroken with sorrow.I'll have to have another go at tricking them.”The excellent evil spirit brought its negative wind down to the mountainside and with one shake turned itself into and old man.

His hair was as white as Ancient Peng's,

His temples as hoary as the Star of Longevity. Jade rang in his ears,

And his eyes swam with golden stars. He leant on a dragon-headed stick,

And wore a cloak of crane feathers.

In his hands he fingered prayer-beads While reciting Buddhist sutras

When Sanzang saw him from the back of his horse he said with great delight,“Amitabha Buddha!The West is indeed a blessed land.That old man is forcing himself to recite scriptures although he can hardly walk.” “Master,”said Pig,“don't be so nice about him.He's going to give us trouble.”“What do you mean?”Sanzang asked.“My elder brother has killed the daughter and the old woman,and this is the old man coming to look for them.If we fall into his hands you'll have to pay with your life. It'll be the death penalty for you,and I'll get a long sentence for being your accomplice.Friar Sand will be exiled for giving the orders.That elder brother will disappear by magic,and we three will have to carry the

can.”“Don't talk such nonsense,you moron,”said Monkey.“You're terrifying the master.Wait while I go and have another look.”Hiding the cudgel about his person he went up to the monster and said,“Where are you going,venerable sir?And why are you reciting scriptures as you walk along?”The monster,failing to recognize the key man,thought that the Great Sage Monkey was merely a passer-by and said,“Holy sir,my family has lived here for generations,and all my life I have done good deeds,fed monks,read the scriptures,and repeated the Buddha's name. As fate has it I have no son,only a daughter,and she lives at home with her husband.She went off to the fields with food early this morning,and I'm afraid she may have been eaten by a tiger.My wife went out to look for her,and she hasn't come back either.I've no idea what's happened to them,so I've come to search for them.If they have died,I shall just have to gather their bones and take them back for a decent burial.”“I'm a master of disguise,”replied Monkey with a grin,“so don't try to pull the wool over my eyes.You can't fool me.I know that you're an evil spirit.”The monster was speechless with fright.Monkey brandished his cudgel and thought,“If I don't kill him he'll make a getaway;but if I do, my master will say that spell.”“Yet if I don't kill him,”he went on to reflect,“I'll take a lot of thought and effort to rescue the master when this monster seizes some other chance to carry him off.The best thing is to kill him.If Ikill him with the cudgel the master will say the spell,but then 'even a vicious tiger doesn't eat her own cubs'.I'll be able to get round my master with my smooth tongue and some well chosen words.” The splendid Great Sage uttered a spell and called out to the local deities and the gods of the mountains,“This evil spirit has tried to trick my master three times,and I'm now going to kill it.I want you to be witnesses in the air around me.Don't leave!”Hearing this command,the gods all had to obey and watch from the clouds.The Great Sage raised his cudgel and struck down the monster.Now,at last,it was dead.

The Tang Priest was shaking with terror on the back of his horse, unable to speak.Pig stood beside him and said with a laugh,“That Monkey's marvellous,isn't he!He's gone mad.He's killed three people in a few hours' journey.”The Tang Priest was just going to say the spell when Monkey threw himself in front of his horse and called out,“Don't say it,master,don't say it.Come and have a look at it.”It was now just a pile of dusty bones.“He's only just been killed,Wukong,” Sanzang said in astonishment,“so why has he turned into a skeleton?”“It was a demon corpse with magic powers that used to deceive people and destroy them.Now that I've killed it,it's reverted to its original form.The writing on her backbone says that she's called 'Lady White Bone'.” Sanzang was convinced,but Pig had to make trouble again.“Master,”he said,“he's afraid that you'll say those words because he killed him with a vicious blow from his cudgel,and so he's made him look like this to fool you.”The Tang Priest,who really was gullible,now believed Pig,and he started to recite the spell.Monkey,unable to stop the pain,knelt beside the path and cried,“Stop,stop.Say whatever it is you have to say,” “Baboon,”said Sanzang,"I have nothing more to say to you.If a monk acts rightly he will grow daily but invisibly,like grass in a garden during the spring,whereas an evildoer will be imperceptibly worn away day by day like a stone.You have killed three people,one after the other,in this wild and desolate place,and there is nobody here to find you out or bring a case against you.But if you go to a city or some other crowded place and start laying about you with that murderous cudgel,we'll be in big trouble and there will be no escape for us.Go back!”“You're wrong to hold it against me,master,”Monkey replied,“as that wretch was obviously an evil monster set on murdering you.But so far from being grateful that I've saved you by killing it,you would have to believe that idiot's tittle-tattle and keep sending me away.As the saying goes,you should never have to do anything more that three times.I'd be a low and shame- less creature if I didn't go now.I'll go,I'll go all right,but who will you have left to look after you?”“Damned ape,"Sanzang replied,“you get ruder and ruder.You seem to think that you're the only one.What about Pig and Friar Sand?Aren't they people?”

On hearing him say that Pig and Friar Sand were suitable people too, Monkey was very hurt.“That's a terrible thing to hear,master,”he said. “When you left Chang'an Liu Boqin helped you on your way,and when you reached the Double Boundary Mountain you saved me and I took you as my master.I've gone into ancient caves and deep forests capturing monsters and demons.I won Pig and Friar Sand over,and I've had a very hard time of it.But today you've turned stupid and you're sending me back.'When the birds have all been shot the bow is put away,and when the rabbits are all killed the hounds are stewed.'Oh well!If only you hadn't got that Band-tightening Spell.”“I won't recite it again,” said Sanzang. “You shouldn't say that,”replied Monkey.“If you're ever beset by evil monsters from whom you can't escape,and if Pig and Friar Sand can't save you,then think of me.If it's unbearable,say the spell.My head will ache even if I'm many tens of thousands of miles away. But if I do come back to you,never say it again.”The Tang Priest grew angrier and angrier as Monkey talked on,and tumbling off his horse he told Friar Sand to take paper and brush from the pack.Then he fetched some water from a stream,rubbed the ink stick on a stone,wrote out a letter of dismissal,and handed it to Monkey."Here it is in writing,”he said.“I don't want you as my disciple a moment longer.If I ever see you again may I fall into the Avichi Hell.”Monkey quickly took the document and said,“There's no need to swear an oath, master.I'm off.”He folded the paper up and put it in his sleeve,then tried once more to mollify Sanzang.“Master,”he said,“I've spent some time with you,and I've also been taught by the Bodhisattva.Now I'm being fired in the middle of the journey,when I've achieved nothing.

Please sit down and accept my homage,then I won't feel so bad about going.”The Tang Priest turned away and would not look at him,muttering,“I am a good monk,and I won't accept the respects of bad people like you.”Seeing that Sanzang was refusing to face him,the Great Sage used magic to give himself extra bodies.He blew a magic breath on three hairs plucked from the back of his head and shouted,“Change!”They turned into three more Monkeys,making a total of four with the real one, and surrounding the master on all four sides they kowtowed to him.Unable to avoid them by dodging to left or right, Sanzang had to accept their respects.

The Great Sage jumped up,shook himself,put the hairs back,and gave Friar Sand these instructions:“You are a good man,my brother,so mind you stop Pig from talking nonsense and be very careful on the journey.If at any time evil spirits capture our master,you tell them that I'm his senior disciple.The hairy devils of the West have heard of my powers and won't dare to harm him.”“I am a good monk,"said the Tang Priest, “and I'd never mention the name of a person as bad as you.Go back.” As his master refused over and over again to change his mind Monkey had nothing for it but to go.Look at him:

Holding back his tears he bowed good-bye to his master,

Then sadly but with care he gave instructions to Friar Sand.

His head pushed the hillside grass apart, His feet kicked the creepers up in the air.

Heaven and earth spun round like a wheel;

At flying over mountains and seas none could beat him. Within an instant no sign of him could be seen;

He retraced his whole journey in a flash

Holding back his anger,Monkey left his master and went straight back to the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit on his somersault cloud.He was feeling lonely and miserable when he heard the sound of water.When he looked around from where he was in mid-

air,he realized that it was the waves of the Eastern Sea.The sight of it reminded him of the Tang Priest,and he could not stop the tears from rolling down his cheeks.He stopped his cloud and stayed there a long time before going.If you don't know what happened when he went,

listen to the explanation in the next instalment.

Chapter 47

The Holy Monk Is Stopped by the River of Heaven at Night

Metal and Wood in Their Mercy Rescue a Child

The king collapsed on his throne in tears and cried till nightfall.Then Monkey stepped forward and called out,“Don't be so silly.Look at those Taoists' bodies.One was a tiger and the other was a deer.Ante- lope Power was an antelope.If you don't believe me,have his bones fished out and take a look at them.Is that a human skeleton?They were all mountain beasts who became spirits and came here to destroy you. The only reason they had not struck yet was because your life force is still strong;but in another couple of years when your life force was weaker they would have murdered you and your whole kingdom would have been theirs.You are very lucky that we came here in time to destroy their evil and save your life.What are you crying for?Give us our passport at once and let us go.”This finally brought the king to his senses,and then the civil and military officials reported together,“The first two who died were indeed a white deer and a yellow tiger;and the cauldron contains the bones of an antelope.The holy monk must be believed.”“If that is the case I must thank the holy monk,”said the king,who then said to his tutor,“it is late now,so please take the holy monks to the Deep Wisdom Monastery.Tomorrow morning the eastern hall of the palace shall be

opened up and the royal kitchens shall lay on a vegetarian banquet as a mark of our thanks.”They were then taken to the monastery,where they slept that night.

Shortly before dawn the next morning the king held an audience at which he ordered the officials to issue a notice to be posted at the four gates of the city and on every road recalling Buddhist monks.While the banquet was being set out the king went in his carriage to the gates of the Deep Wisdom Monastery to invite the Tang Priest and his disciples to the banquet in the eastern hall of the palace. When the Buddhist monks who had escaped learned of the notice they all returned in delight to the city to find the Great Sage Monkey, return his hairs,and thank him.When the banquet was over the king returned Sanzang the passport and escorted him out through the gates of the palace with his queen,consorts and concubines and the civil and military officials,The Buddhist monks could be seen kneeling beside the road and calling out,“Great Sage Equalling Heaven,we are the monks your lordship saved on the sandbank.Now that we have heard that you lordship has destroyed those evil beings and saved us,and His Majesty has issued a notice recalling us monks,we have come to return your hairs and kowtow in gratitude.”“How many of you are there here?”Monkey asked.“All five hundred:we are not one short.”Monkey then shook himself and took the hairs back before saying to king,subjects,monks and lay people alike,“It was I who released these monks,it was I who took the cart through the two gates and along the ridge before smashing it,and it was I who killed those evil Taoists.Now that the evil has been destroyed you will realize that there is a Way in the Buddha's faith.From now on you must have no more foolish beliefs.I hope that you will combine the three teachings by honouring both the Buddhist clergy and the Way of Taoism,and by also educating men of talent in the Confucian tradition.I can guarantee that this will make you kingdom secure for ever.”The king accepted this advice and expressed his gratitude at great length as he accompanied the Tang Priest out of the city.

Because they were seriously seeking the scriptures, They strove to maintain their brightness of spirit.

Setting out at dawn and not stopping till nightfall,they drank when thirsty and ate when hungry.Before they realized it spring and summer were over and it was autumn again.Late one day the Tang Priest reined in his horse and asked,“Where shall we spend the night,disciples?”“Master,”said Monkey,“a man of religion shouldn't talk like a layman.”“What is the difference in the way they talk?”Sanzang asked.“At a time like this,”said Monkey,“a layman would be fast asleep in a warm bed wrapped up in a quilt with his child in his arms and a wife to keep his feet warm. We monks can't expect anything like that.We have only the moon and the stars to cover us with.We dine on the wind and sleep in the dew.We travel when we can find a way and only stop when there's no way forward.”“Brother,”said Pig,“you only know half of the story.The trail is very steep now and I can barely manage my heavy load.We've got to find somewhere where I can get a good night's sleep and build myself up to carry my load tomorrow.Otherwise I'm going to collapse from exhaustion.”“Let's go a little further in the moonlight,”said Monkey. “When we reach a house we can stay there.”Master and disciples had no choice but to carry on with Monkey.

They had not been going for long when they heard the sound of waves. “That's done it,”said Pig.“We've come to the end of the road.” “There's a river in our way,”said Friar Sand.“How are we going to get across?”asked the Tang Priest.“Let me test it for depth,”said Pig. “Don't talk nonsense,Wuneng,”said Sanzang.“How could you test the water for depth?”“Find a pebble the size of a goose egg and throw it in,” Pig replied.“If it makes a big splash the water's shallow;and if it goes down with bubbles the water's deep.”“Test it then,”said Monkey.The idiot then picked up a stone and threw it into the water;they heard the bubbles rising as the stone sunk.“It's deep,too deep,”he said,“we'll never get across.”“You have tested for depth,”said the Tang Priest, “but we don't know how wide it is.”“I can't tell that,”said Pig.“Let me have a look,”said Monkey.The splendid Great Sage sprang up into mid-air on his cloud and took a good look.What he saw was:

The light of the moon immersed in the vastness, The floating reflection of the limitless sky.

The magical stream has swallowed Mount Hua;

Hundreds of rivers flow into its waters.

Waves in their thousands rise and then fall, Towering breakers crash without number.

No fisherman burns his fire by the shore; The herons are all now asleep on the sand. It is as turbid and huge as the ocean,

And there is no end to its water in sight.

Monkey brought his cloud quickly down,put it away,and reported,“It's wide,Master,very wide.We'll never get across it.My fiery eyes with their golden pupils can see there hundred miles by day and distinguish good from evil too.By night they can see a hundred to a hundred and fifty miles.If even I can't see the other bank goodness only knows how wide it is.”

Sanzang was speechless with shock,then he sobbed,“What are we to do,disciples?”“Don't cry,Master,”said Friar Sand.“There's some- one standing by the river over there.”“I expect it's a fisherman working his nets,”said Monkey.“I'll go and ask him.”Monkey took his iron cudgel in his hand and was before the man in two or three bounds,only to discover that it was in fact a stone tablet on which was inscribed in an ancient script three words in large letters and nine words in two rows of little ones underneath.The three words written large were RIVER OF HEAVEN,and the words in small writing were“250 miles across; few travellers have ever been here.”“Master,”called Monkey,“come and take a look.”When Sanzang read this he said through his tears,“Disciple,when I left Chang'an all those years ago I thought that the Western Heaven would be easy to get to.I never knew that so many evil monsters would block my way,or that there would be such enormous mountains and rivers to cross.”

“Listen,Master,”said Pig.“Where is that sound of drums and cymbals coming from?It must be people holding a religious feast.Let's go and get some of the food to eat and find out where there is a boat that will ferry us across tomorrow.”When Sanzang listened as he sat on the horse he could hear that it really was the sound of drums and cymbals.“Those aren't Taoist instruments,"he said.“It must be some Buddhist monks performing a ceremony.Let's go there.”Monkey led the horse as they headed towards the music.There was no track to follow as they climbed and then lost height again and crossed sand banks until a village of some four or five hundred households came into sight.It was a fine settlement:

Protected by hills,beside the main road,

On the bank of the river,and watered by a stream. All the wicket gates were shut;

Every household's bamboo fence was closed.

Clear were the dreams of the egrets on the strand, Silent the song of the birds by the willows.

No sound came from the flute, Nothing was heard of the chopping-board's rhythm. The moon was rocked in stalks of knot weed;

The leaves of the rushes trembled in the wind.

Beside the fields the dogs barked through the fence; The fisherman slept in his boat moored by the ford.

Few were the lights amid the stillness,

And the moon hung like a mirror in the sky, A smell of duckweed wafted over

Carried by the wind from the western bank.

When Sanzang dismounted he saw a house at the end of the road outside of which hung a silken banner.Inside it was bright with candles and lanterns,and there were clouds of incense.“Wukong,”said Sanzang, “this is much better than a mountain hollow or the bank of a stream. Under the eaves we will be able to relax and sleep soundly,protected from the chilly dew.You all keep out of the way while I go to the gates of the believer's house that is giving the religious feast to ask for shelter.If they invite me in I shall call you over.But don't start playing up if they don't invite me in.If you show your ugly faces you might give them a terrible fright and cause trouble,and then we would have nowhere to stay.”“You're right,”said Monkey.“You go ahead,Master,while we wait here.”

The venerable elder then took off his rain hat,straightened his habit, took his monastic staff in his hand and went bareheaded to the gates, which were ajar.Not venturing to walk in uninvited,Sanzang stood there for a while until a very old man with prayer-beads round his neck who was repeating the name of Amitabha Buddha came out to shut the gate. Sanzang at once put his hands together before his chest and said,“I salute you,benefactor.”The old man returned his greeting then said, “You're too late,monk.”“What do you mean?”Sanzang asked.“You're too late to get anything,”the old man said.“If you had been here earlier we were giving each monk a good meal,three pints of polished rice,a piece of white cloth,and ten copper cash.Why have you only come now?”“Benefactor,”Sanzang replied,“I am not here to collect offerings.”“If you're not here for offerings,what are you here for then?” the old man asked.“I have been sent by the Emperor of the Great Tang in the east to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven,”Sanzang replied.“It was already late when I reached this village,and I have come here to beg for a night's shelter because I heard the drums and cymbals. I will be on my way at dawn.”The old man shook his hand at him as he replied,“Monk,men of religion should not tell lies.Great Tang in the east is 18,000 miles from here.How could you have come from there by yourself?”“You are quite right,benefactor,”said Sanzang.“I have only been able to reach here because I have three disciples who protect me. They clear paths across mountains and build bridges across rivers.”“If you have these disciples,”the old man said,“why aren't they with you? But do come in.We have room for you to stay here.”Sanzang then looked back and called,“Come here,disciples.”

As Monkey was impatient by nature,Pig coarse,and Friar Sand impetuous,the moment they heard their master calling they grabbed the horse's bridle and the luggage and ran there hell for leather.The sight of them gave the old man such a shock that he collapsed,muttering,“Demons,demons.”“Please don't be afraid,benefactor,”said Sanzang. “They're not demons,they are my disciples.”“But how could so hand- some a master have such hideous disciples?”asked the old man,still shivering and shaking.“They may not be much to look at,”said Sanzang, “but they certainly know how to subdue dragons and tigers and capture monsters and demons.”The old man was not entirely convinced as he helped the Tang Priest inside.

The three ferocious disciples rushed to the main hall,tied the horse up outside and put the baggage down.Several monks were reciting sutras inside.Covering his long snout with his hands,Pig shouted,“What's that sutra you're reciting,monks?”The monks looked up when they heard his question. They looked at the stranger and saw a long snout, As well as a pair of big ears that stuck out.

His body was rough and his shoulders were broad; When he opened his muzzle,like thunder he roared. But as for our Monkey and good Friar Sand,

Their faces were more than a person could stand. The monks saying their sutras within the main hall Were terribly frightened and scared one and all. The teacher continued the text to recite,

Until the head monk said they should stop for the night. They paid no more heed to the chimes and the bell,

And the Buddha's own images from their hands fell.

They all blew at once to put out every light, And tried in their terror to scatter in flight.

They crawl on the ground as they stumble and fall, And all of them trip getting out of that hall.

One old monk's head with another one clashes Just like the collapse of piled-up calabashes

What once was a pure and a most holy rite Was all now reduced to a comical sight

The sight of the monks stumbling and crawling about made the three disciples clap their hands and laugh aloud,at which the monks were more terrified than ever.Colliding with each other's heads they all fled for their lives and disappeared.By the time Sanzang helped the old man into the hall the lights had all been put out and the three of them were still chuckling away.

“Damned creatures,"said Sanzang,“you are all thoroughly evil,de- spite my daily teaching and advice.As the ancients said,

Only the saintly can become good without instruction; Only the worthy can become good after instruction;

Only idiots will not become good even with instruction.

The disgraceful scene you've just made is one of the lowest and most stupid things I could possibly imagine.You charge in through the gates without any respect,make our elderly benefactor collapse in fright,send all the monks fleeing for their lives,and completely ruin their service.I shall have to take the blame for all of this.”None of them could find a word to say in their defence.Only then did the old man believe that they really were Sanzang's disciples,turn back,and say,“It's nothing,sir, nothing.The lamps have just been put out and the flowers scattered as the service is ending anyhow.”“If it's over,”said Pig,“bring out the food and wine for the completion feast.We need a meal before we go to bed.”The old man called for oil lamps to be lit.The servants could not understand why.“There are lots of incense sticks and candles where they're saying sutras in the main hall,so why does he want oil lamps lit?” When some servants came out to look they found everything in darkness, so they lit torches and lanterns and rushed in together.When they looked inside and suddenly saw Pig and Friar Sand they dropped their torches in terror and fled,shutting the doors behind them,and fleeing to the inner part of the house with shout of“Demons,demons!”

Monkey picked up a torch,lit some lamps and candles,and pulled up an armchair for the Tang Priest to sit in while the disciples sat on either side of him.As they were sitting there talking they heard a door leading from the inner part of the house being opened.Another old man came in leaning on a stick and asking,“What evil spirits are you,coming to this pious household in the middle of the night?”The first old man,who was sitting in front of them,rose and went to meet him behind the screen saying,“Stop shouting,elder brother.These aren't demons.This is an arhat sent from Great Tang in the east to fetch the scriptures.His disciples may look evil but really they are very good.”Only then did the old man put his stick down and bow in greeting to the four of them,after which he too sat down in front of them and called for tea and vegetarian food.He shouted several times,but the servants were still quaking with terror and too frightened to come in.

This was more than Pig could put up with.“Old man,”he said,“you have an awful lot of servants.What have they all gone off to do?”“I have sent them to fetch food to offer to you gentlemen,”the old man replied.“How many of them will be serving the food?”asked Pig.“Eight,”

said the old man.“Who will they be waiting on?”asked Pig.“You four gentlemen,”the old man replied.“Our master,the one with the white face,only needs one person to wait on him,”said Pig.“The one with hair cheeks whose mouth looks like a thunder god only needs two.That vicious-looking creature needs eight,and I must have twenty.”“From what you say must be rather a big eater,”the old man remarked.“You're about right,”said Pig.“We have enough servants,”the old man said,and by bringing together servants of all ages he produced thirty of forty of them.

As the monks talked to the old men the servants lost their fear and set a table in front of the Tang Priest,inviting him to take the place of honour. They then put three more tables on both sides of him,at which they asked the three disciples to sit,and another in front of these for the two old men. On the tables were neatly arranged some fruit,vegetables,pasta,rice, refreshments and pea-noodle soup. Sanzang raised his chopsticks and started to say a grace over the food,but the idiot,who was impatient and hungry to boot,did not wait for him to finish before grabbing a red lacquered wooden bowl of white rice that he scooped up and gulped down in a single mouthful.“Sir,”said the servant standing beside him,“you didn't think very carefully.If you are going to keep food in your sleeves shouldn't you take steamed bread instead of rice that will get your clothes dirty?” “I didn't put it in my sleeve,”chuckled Pig,“I ate it.”“But you didn't even open your mouth,”they said,“so how could you have eaten it?” “Who is lying then?”said Pig.“I definitely ate it.If you don't believe me I'll eat another to show you.”The servants carried the rice over,filled a bowlful,and passed it to Pig,who had it down his throat in a flash.“Sir,” said the astonished servants,“you must have a throat built of whetstones, it's so smooth and slippery.”Pig had downed five or six bowls before the master could finish the short grace;only then did he pick up his chop- sticks and start eating with them.The idiot grabbed whatever he could and bolted it,not caring whether it was rice or pasta,fruit or refreshments.“More food,more food,”he shouted,until it gradually began to run out.“Brother,”said Monkey,“don't eat so much.Make do with being half full.Anyhow,it's better than starving in a mountain hollow.” “What a horrible face you're making,"said Pig.“As the saying goes,

The monk at a banquet who can't eat his fill Would rather be buried alive on the hill.”

“Clear the things away and pay no more attention to him,”said Monkey. “We will be frank with you,reverend sirs,”said the two old men with bows.“We would have no problem in feeding a hundred or more reverend gentlemen with big bellies like him in the daytime,but it is late now and the remains of the maigre feast have been put away.We only cooked a bushel of noodles,five bushels of rice and a few tables of vegetarian food to feed our neighbours and the clergy at the end of the service.We never imagined that you reverend gentlemen would turn up and put the monks to flight.We have not even been able to offer any food to our relations and neighbours as we have given it all to you.If you are still hungry we can have some more cooked.”“Yes,”said Pig,“cook some more.”

After this exchange the tables and other things used for the banquet were tidied away.Sanzang bowed to his hosts to thank them for the meal, then asked them their surname.“We ate called Chen,”they replied.“Then you are kinsmen of mine,”said Sanzang,putting his hands together in front of his chest.“Is your surmame Chen as Well?”the old men asked. “Yes,”Sanzang replied,“Chen was my surname before I became a monk.May I ask why you were holding that religious feast just now?” “Why brother to ask,Master?”said Pig with a laugh.“Anyone could tell you that it's bound to have been a feast for the new crops,or for safety, or for the end of funeral ceremonies.”“No,it was not,”the old men said. “Then what was it for?”Sanzang asked.“It was a feast to prepare for death,”the old men replied.“You don't know who you're talking to,” said Pig,falling about with laughter.“We could build a bridge out of lies. We're kings of deception.Don't try to fool us.As monks we know all about maigre-feasts.There are only preparatory maigre-feasts for transferring money to the underworld and for fulfilling vows.Nobody's died here,so why have a funeral feast?”

“This idiot's learning a bit of sense,”chuckled Monkey to himself. “Old man,”he said aloud,“what you said must be wrong.How can you have a feast to prepare for death?”At this the two old men bowed and replied,“And if you were going to fetch the scriptures why did you come here instead of taking the main route?”“We were on the main route,” replied Monkey,“but a river was in our way and we weren't able to

cross it.We came to your distinguished residence to ask for a night's shelter because we heard the drums and cymbals.”“What did you see by the side of the river?”one of the old men asked.“Nothing but a stone tablet on which was written‘River of Heaven' above and‘250 miles across;few travellers have ever been here 'underneath,”Monkey re- plied.“Less than half a mile along the bank from the stone tablet is the Temple of the Great King of Miraculous Response,”the old man said. “Did you not see it?”“No,”Monkey replied.“Would you old gentlemen tell me why he's called ‘Miraculous Response'?”The two old men burst into tears as they replied,“My lord,as for the Great King, Because he responded a temple we built;

His miracles greatly the common folk helped. He sends timely rain to the farms all about;

His clouds give their moisture to keep us from drought.”

“But if he sends timely rain and clouds he's being kind to you,”said Brother Monkey,“so why are you so upset and miserable?”At this the old man stamped on the ground,beat his chest and wailed,“Master,

Great is our gratitude,greater our anger: Although he is kind he is also a danger.

He is not one of the gods true and right— To eat boys and girls is his evil delight.”

“He likes eating boys and girls?”Brother Monkey exclaimed.“Yes,” replied the old man.“I suppose it's your family's turn now,”said Mon- key.“Yes,this year it is our turn,”the old man said.“There are a hundred households living here.This place is called Chen Village,and it is in Yuanhui County of the Kingdom of Tarry cart.There is a sacrifice to the Great King every year at which a boy,a girl,pigs,sheep,oxen and wine have to be offered.If he gets his meal he gives us wind and rain at the right time;but if there is no sacrifice he sends disaster.”“How many sons are there in your household?”Monkey asked.The old man beat his breast and said,“Alas,alas,we die of shame when you speak of sons. This is my brother,Chen Qing,who is fifty-seven.I am Chen Cheng and am sixty-two.We have both found great difficulty in having children.As I had no son my friends and relations persuaded me to take a concubine when I was nearly fifty.I had no option but to find one and we had a daughter.She is just seven this year,and we call her Pan of Gold.”“That's a very grand name,”said Pig.“But why Pan of Gold?”“Because we were childless we built bridges,repaired roads,contributed to putting up monasteries and pagodas,gave donations and fed monks.We kept an

account of all this,and what with three ounces spent here and five spent there it added up to thirty pounds of gold by the time the girl was born. Thirty pounds is a pan of gold,and hence the name.”

“What about sons?”Monkey asked.“My brother has a son who was also by a concubine.He is six this year,and we call him Chen Guan-given.”“Why did you call him that?”Monkey asked.“In our family we worship Lord Guan Yu,and we called him Guan-given as it was from the statue of Lord Guan that we begged and obtained this son.My brother and I are 120 between us if you add our ages together,and these are our only two offspring.We never imagined that it would fall to us to provide the sacrificial offerings this year,and this is a duty we cannot escape.It is because as fathers we cannot bear to part from our children that we held this service to bring about rebirth,this maigre-feast to prepare for death.”

This brought the tears pouring down Sanzang's cheeks as he replied, “This is what the ancients mean when they said,

Long before the ripe ones the green plums always fall;

The harshness of heaven hits the childless worst of all.”

Monkey smiled at this and said,“Let me ask some more questions.Tell me,sir,how much property does your family have?”“Quite a lot,”the younger old man replied.“About seven hundred acres of paddy fields,a thousand acres of dry fields,eighty or ninety fields of hay,two or three hundred water-buffalo and oxen,twenty or thirty donkeys and horses, and goodness only knows how many pigs,sheep,chickens and geese. We have more old grain piled up at home than we can eat,and more clothes than we can wear.That is the extent of our family's property.” “It's a pity you're so stingy with all your wealth,”said Monkey.“How can you accuse us of being stingy?”the old man asked.“If you're so rich,"said Monkey,“why give your own children to be sacrificed?You could buy a boy for fifty ounces and a girl for a hundred.With all the other expenses together it shouldn't cost you more than two hundred ounces of silver to keep your own children.Wouldn't that be better?”To

this the younger old man replied through his tears,“My lord,you don't realize that the Great King is miraculously responsive,and that he often calls on this household.”“If he comes here have you seen what he looks

like and how tall he is?”asked Brother Monkey.“We don't see him,” the younger old man replied,“we just know that the Great King is coming when we smell a fragrant wind.Then we burn huge amounts of incense and all of us,young and old alike,prostrate ourselves in the direction of the wind.He knows every trifling detail about our household—even about our spoons and the bowls we use—and remembers all our dates of birth. He will only accept our own son and daughter.Never mind two or three hundred ounces of silver:we could not buy identical-looking children of exactly the same age for tens of thousands of ounces.”

“So it's like that,”said Monkey.“Very well then,bring your son out for me to take a look at him.”Chen Qing hurried to the inner part of the house,brought Guan-given back with him into the hall,and set the boy down in front of the lamp.Not realizing the mortal danger he was in the little boy leapt about,filled his sleeves with fruit,ate and played around. Monkey looked at him,said a spell silently,shook himself,and made him- self look just like Guan-given.Then the two boys started to jump and dance in front of the lamp,giving the two old men such a shock that they fell to their knees.“That was a terrible thing for him to do,venerable sirs,”said Sanzang.“But the gentleman was talking to us a moment ago,”said the old man.“How can he have turned into the exact likeness of my son?When you call them they respond and move together.This shock has shortened our lives.Please return to your normal appearance!” Monkey rubbed his face and was himself once more.“What powers you have,my lord,”said the old man,still on his knees.“Was I like your son?”Monkey asked.“Yes,just like him,”the old man replied.“Same face,same voice,same clothes,same height.”“You didn't look care- fully enough,”said Monkey.“Get some scales and weigh me to see if I'm the same weight as him.”“Yes,yes,the same weight,”the old man said.“Would I do for the sacrifice like that?”asked Monkey.“Perfect,” said the old man,“just perfect.You would be accepted.”

“I shall take the child's place and keep him alive for your family to have descendants to burn incense to you,”said Monkey.“I shall be offered to the Great King instead.”At this Chen Qing kowtowed as he knelt there,saying,“My lord,if in your mercy you were to take his place I will give His Reverence the Tang Priest a thousand ounces of silver towards the cost of his journey to the Western Heaven.”“Aren't you going to reward me?”asked Monkey.“But if you are sacrificed in the boy's place it will be the end of you,”said the old man.“What do you mean?”Monkey asked.“The Great King will eat you,”the old man replied.“He'd dare to eat me?”said Monkey.“The only reason he might not eat you would be if he thought you would taste too high,”the old man said.“Let Heaven do as it will,”said Monkey.“If I'm eaten up it'll be because I'm fated to have a short life;and if I'm not eaten it'll be because I'm lucky.Take me to the sacrifice.”

While Chen Qing kowtowed,expressed his thanks,and presented them with five hundred ounces of silver Chen Cheng neither kowtowed nor thanked Monkey,but leant against the doorway sobbing.As soon as Brother Monkey noticed this he went up to him,took hold of his clothes, and said,“Old man,is it because you can't bear to lose your daughter that you're not giving me anything or thanking me?”Only then did Chen Cheng fall to his knees and reply,“Yes,I cannot bear to lose her.It is enough that in your great kindness you are saving my nephew by taking his place.But I have no son.She is my only child and she would weep for me bitterly after my death.I cannot bear to lose her.”“Then you'd better go along at once and cook five bushels of rice and some good vegetarian dishes for that long-snouted venerable gentleman to eat.Then I'll make him turn into the likeness of your daughter and the two of us will be able to take part in the sacrifice.We'll see if we can do a meritorious deed and save your children's lives.”

These words came as a great shock to Pig,who said,“Brother,if you turn yourself into a spirit and leave me to die you'll be dragging me into disaster.”“Brother,”said Monkey,“as the saying goes,a chicken doesn't eat what it doesn't earn.We came in here and were given an ample meal,but you had to complain that you were still hungry.Why aren't you willing to help them in their crisis?”“But,brother,”protested Pig,“I can't do transformations.”“You can do thirty-six transformations,” said Monkey.“How can you possibly deny that?”“Wuneng,” Sanzang said to Pig,“what your brother says is absolutely correct,and he has made the right decision.As the saying goes,to save a human life is better than building a seven-storeyed pagoda.If you do this you will be thanking our hosts for their generous hospitality and accumulating good karma for yourself.Besides,it will be fun for you and your brother on this cool night when you have nothing else to do.”“What are you saying,Master?”said Pig.“I can only change into a hill,a tree,a rock,a scabby elephant,a water-buffalo or a big,fat man.It'd be pretty hard for me to turn into a little girl.”“Pay no attention to him,” said Monkey to Chen Cheng,“but bring your daughter out for me to see.”

Chen Cheng then hurried inside and came back into the hall with Pan of Gold in his arms;and everyone in the household,young and old,wives and concubines,members of the family and other relations,all came in to kowtow and beg Monkey to save the child's life.Round her hair the little girl was wearing a patterned turquoise headband from which hung ornaments representing the eight precious things.Her jacket was of red and yellow shot ramie,and over is she wore a cape in green imperial satin with a checked collar.Her skirt was of scarlet flowered silk,her shoes were of pink ramie and shaped like frogs' heads,and her trousers were of raw silk with gold thread.She was holding a piece of fruit in her hand and eating it.

“There's the girl,”said Monkey.“Make yourself like her at once. We're off to the sacrifice.”“But she's much too small and delicate for me to turn into,brother,”said Pig.“Hurry up if you don't want me to hit you,”said Monkey.“Don't hit me,” pleaded Pig in desperation.“I'll see if I can make the change.”

The idiot then said the words of a spell,shook his head several times, called “Change!”and really did make his head look like the little girl's. The only troubles was that his belly was still much too fat and disproportionately big.“Change some more,”said Monkey with a laugh.“Hit me then,”said Pig.“I can't change any more,and that's that.”“But you can't have a little girl's head on a monk's body,”said Monkey.“You won't do at all like that—you're neither a man nor a girl.Do the Dipper star-steps.”Monkey then blew on him with magic breath and in fact did change his body to make it look like the little girl's.“Will you two old gentlemen please take the young master and the young lady inside and make no mistake about who they are,”said Monkey.“My brother and I will be trying to dodge the monster and fooling around,and we may come in here,so that it will be hard to tell us from the real children.Have some fruit ready for them to eat and don't let them cry,in case the Great King notices and our secret gets out.Now we're off to see if we can fool him.”

The splendid Great Sage then told Friar Sand to look after the Tang Priest while Pig and he changed into Chen Guan-given and Pan of Gold. When the two of them were ready Monkey asked,"How are the victims presented?Tied up in a bundle,or with their hands roped together?Are they steamed or chopped up into little bits?”“Brother,”pleaded Pig, “don't do me down.I haven't got those magic powers.”“We would never dare to,”said the old men.“We would just like you two gentlemen each to sit in a red lacquer dish that would be put on a table.You would then be carried into the temple on the tables by a pair of youngsters.” “Fine,fine,”said Monkey.“Bring the dishes in here for us to try out.” The old men sent for the two red dishes,in which Monkey and Pig sat while four young men carried them for a few steps in the courtyard be- fore setting them down again in the hall.“Pig,”said Monkey with delight, “being carried around on dishes like this makes us like abbots sitting in the seats of honour.”“I wouldn't be at all scared of being carried in and out of here till dawn,”said Pig,“but being carried into the temple to be eaten is no joke.”“Just watch me,”said Brother Monkey,“and run away then he eats me.”“How do you know who he'll eat first?”said

Pig.“If he eats the boy first I'll be able to get away;but what shall I do if he eats the girl first?”At this one of the old men said,“During the sacrifices in other years some of the bolder of us have slipped into the back of the temple or hidden under the tables on which the offerings were made.They have seen that he eats the boy first and the girl after- wards.”“Thank goodness,”said Pig,“thank goodness.”

While the two brother-disciples were talking they heard a mighty noise of gongs and drums and a blaze of lights outside as the villagers opened the front gates and poured in,shouting,“Bring out the boy and the girl.” The four young men then carried Monkey and Pig out to the sobs and wails of the old men.If you do not know whether they lost their lives or not,listen to the explanation in the next instalment.

Chapter 68

In the Land of Purpuria the Tang Priest Discusses History

Sun the Pilgrim in His Charity Offers to Be a Doctor

When good is right all causes disappear;

Its fame is spread through all four continents.

In the light of wisdom they climb the other shore;

Soughing dark clouds are blown from the edge of the sky. All the Buddhas give them help,

Sitting for ever on their thrones of jade. Smash the illusions of the human world, Cease!

Cleanse the dirt;provoke no misery.

The story tells how Sanzang and his disciples cleaned the lane of its filth and pressed far ahead along the road.Time passed quickly and the weather was scorching again.

Indeed,

The begonias spread their globes of brocade;

Lotus leaves split their own green dishes.

Fledgling swallows hide in the roadside willows;

Travellers wave their silken fans for relief from the heat.

As they carried on their way a walled and moated city appeared be- fore them.Reining in his horse, Sanzang,said, "Disciples,can you see where this is?”“You can't read,Master,”Monkey exclaimed.“How ever did you get the Tang Emperor to send you on this mission?”“I have been a monk since I was a boy and read classics and scriptures by the thousand,”Sanzang replied.“How could you say I can't read?”“Well,” Monkey replied,“if you can,why ask where we are instead of reading the big clear writing on the apricot-yellow flag over the city wall?” “Wretched ape,” Sanzang shouted,“you're talking nonsense.The flag is flapping much too hard in the wind for anyone to read what,if anything, is on it.”“Then how could I read it?”Monkey asked.“Don't rise to his bait,Master,”Pig and Friar Sand said.“From this distance we can't even see the walls and moat clearly,never mind words in a banner.” “But doesn't it say Purpuria?”Monkey asked. “Purpuria must be a western kingdom,”Sanzang said.“We shall have to present our pass- port.”“Goes without saying,”Monkey observed.

They were soon outside the city gates,where the master dismounted, crossed the bridge,and went in through the triple gates.It was indeed a splendid metropolis.This is what could be seen.

Lofty gate-towers,

Regular battlements,

Living waters flowing around,

Mountains facing to north and south.

Many are the goods in the streets and markets, And all the citizens do thriving business.

This is a city fit for a monarch. A capital endowed by heaven.

To this distant realm come travellers by land and water;

Jade and silk abound in this remoteness.

It is more beautiful than the distant ranges; The palace rises to the purity of space.

Closely barred are the passes leading here,

When peace and prosperity have lasted for ever.

As master and disciples walked along the highways and through the markets they saw that the people were tall,neatly dressed and well spoken. Indeed,they were not inferior to those of the Great Tang.When the traders who stood on either side of the road saw how ugly Pig was,how tall and dark-featured Friar Sand was,and how hairy and wide-browed Monkey was they all dropped their business and came over to see them. “Don't provoke trouble,” Sanzang called to them.“Hold your heads down.”Pig obediently tucked his snout into his chest and Friar Sand did not dare look up.Monkey,however,stared all around him as he kept close to the Tang Priest.The more sensible people went away again after taking a look,but the idlers,the curious and the naughty children among the spectators jeered,threw bricks and tiles at the strangers,and mocked Pig.“Whatever you do,don't get into a row,”Sanzang said again in great anxiety.The idiot kept his head down.

Before long they turned a corner and saw a gate in a wall over which was written HOSTEL OF MEETING in large letters.“We are going into this government office,”Sanzang said.“Why?”Monkey asked.“The Hostel of Meeting is a place where people from all over the world are received,so we can go and disturb them,”said Sanzang.“Let's rest there.When I have seen the king and presented our passport we can leave the city and be on our way again.”When Pig heard this he brought his snout out,so terrifying the people following behind that dozens of them collapsed.“The master's right,”said Pig,stepping forward.“Let's shelter inside there and get away from these damned mockers.”They went inside,after which the people began to disperse.

There were two commissioners in the hostel,a senior one and his assistant,and they were in the hall checking over their personnel before going to receive an official when,to their great consternation,the Tang Priest suddenly appeared.“Who are you?”they asked together.“Who are you?Where are you going?”“I have been sent by His Majesty the Tang Emperor to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven,”the Tang Priest replied,putting his hands together in front of his chest.“Having reached your illustrious country I did not dare to try to sneak through. I would like to submit my passport for inspection so that we may be allowed to continue our way.Meanwhile we would like to rest in your splendid hostel.”

When the two commissioners heard this they dismissed their subordinates,put on their full official dress and went down from the main hall to greet the visitors.They instructed that the guest rooms be tidied up for them to sleep in and ordered vegetarian provisions for them. Sanzang thanked them,and the two officials led their staff out of the hall.Some of their attendants invited the visitors to sleep in the guest rooms. Sanzang went with them,but Monkey complained bitterly,“Damned cheek.Why won't they let me stay in the main hall?”“The people here don't come under the jurisdiction of our Great Tang and they have no connections with our country either.Besides,their superiors often come to stay.It is difficult for them to entertain us.”“In that case.”Monkey replied,“I insist on them entertaining us properly.”

As they were talking the manager brought their provisions:a dish each of white rice and wheat flour,two cabbages,four pieces of bean curd, two pieces of wheat gluten,a dish of dried bamboo shoots and a dish of “tree-ear”fungus. Sanzang told his disciples to receive the provisions and thanked the manager.“There's a clean cooking-stove in the west- ern room,”the manager said,“and it's easy to light the firewood in it. Would you please cook your own food?”

“May I ask you if the king is in the palace?”Sanzang asked.“His Majesty has not attended court for a long time,”the manager replied. “But today is an auspicious one,and he is discussing the issue of a notice with his civil and military officials.You'd better hurry if you want to get there in time to submit your passport to him.Tomorrow will be too late to do it,and goodness knows how long you'll have to wait.”“Wukong,”

said Sanzang,“you three prepare the meal while I hurry there to have our passport inspected.After we have eaten we can be on our way.”Pig quickly unpacked the cassock and passport for Sanzang,who dressed himself and set out for the palace,instructing his disciples not to leave the hostel or make trouble.

Before long the Tang Priest was outside the Tower of Five Phoenixes at the outer palace gate.The towering majesty of the halls and the splendour of the tall buildings and terraces beggared description.When he reached the main southern gate he requested the reporting officer to announce to the court his wish to have his passport inspected.The eunuch officer at the gate went to the steps of the throne,where he submit- ted the following memorial:“There is a monk at the palace gate sent by the Great Tang in the east to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures at the Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven.He wishes to submit his passport for approval.I await Your Majesty's command.”When the king heard this he replied happily,“For a long time we have been too ill to sit on our throne.Today we are in the throne room to issue a notice sending for doctors,and now a distinguished monk has arrived in our country.”He ordered that the monk be summoned to the steps of the throne.Sanzang abased himself in reverence.The king then summoned him into the throne room,invited him to sit down,and ordered the department of foreign relations to arrange a vegetarian meal.Sanzang thanked the king for his kindness and presented his passport. When he had read it through the king said with great delight,“Master of the Law,how many dynasties have ruled in your land of Great Tang? How many generations of wise ministers have there been?After what illness did the Tang emperor come back to life,so that he sent you on this long and difficult journey to fetch the scriptures?”On being asked all these questions the venerable elder bowed,put his hands together and said,"In my country,

The Three Emperors ruled,

The Five Rulers established morality. Yao and Shun took the throne,

Yu and Tang gave the people peace.

Many were the offspring of Chengzhou

Who each established their own states,

Bullying the weak with their own strength,

Dividing the realm and proclaiming themselves rulers.

Eighteen such lords of local states

Divided the territory up to the borders. Later they became a dozen,

Bringing peace to the cosmic order.

But those who had no chariots of war Were swallowed up by others

When the seven great states contended Six of them had to surrender to Qin.!

Heaven gave birth to Liu Bang and Xiang Yu,

Each of whom cherished wicked ideas. The empire then belonged to Han

According to the stipulations agreed between the two.

Power passed from Han to the Sima clan, Till Jin in its turn fell into chaos.

Twelve states ruled in north and south,

Among them Song,Qi,Liang and Chen.

Emperors ruled in succession to each other Till the Great Sui restored the true unity.

Then it indulged in evil and wickedness.

Inflicting misery on the common people.? Our present rulers,the House of Li,

Have given the name of Tang to the state.

Since the High Ancestor passed on the throne The reigning monarch has been Li Shimin.

The rivers have run clear and the seas been calm Thanks to his great virtue and his benevolence.

North of the city of Chang'an Lived a wicked river dragon

Who gave the timely rain in short measure, For which he deserved to pay with his death. One night he came in a dream to the emperor, Asking the monarch to spare his life

The emperor promised to grant a pardon

And sent for his wise minister early next day.

He kept him there inside the palace,

Filling his time with a long game of chess. But at high noon the minister

Slept,and in a dream cut off the dragon's head.”

On hearing this the king groaned and asked,“Master of the Law, which country did that wise minister come from?”“He was our emperor's prime minister Wei Zheng,astrologer,geographer,master of the Yin and Yang,and one of the great founders and stabilizers of our state,”Sanzang explained.“Because he beheaded the Dragon King of the Jing River in his dream,the dragon brought a case in the Underworld against our emperor for having him decapitated after granting a pardon. The emperor became very ill and his condition was critical.Wei Zhang wrote him a letter to take to the Underworld and give to Cui Jue,the judge of Fengdu. Soon after that the emperor died,only to come back to life on the third day.It was thanks to Wei Zheng that Judge Cui was persuaded to alter a document and give His Majesty an extra twenty years of life.He held a great Land and Water Mass and despatched me on this long jourmey to visit many lands,worship the Buddha and fetch the Three Stores of Mahayana scriptures that will raise all the sufferers from evil up to Heaven.”

At this the king groaned and sighed again.“Yours is indeed a heavenly dynasty and a great nation,”he said,“with a just ruler and wise ministers.We have long been ill,but not one minister do we have who will save us.”On hearing this the venerable elder stole a glance at the king and saw that his face was sallow and emaciated;his appearance was going to pieces and his spirits were very low.The venerable elder was going to ask him some questions when an official of the department of Foreign relations came to invite the Tang Priest to eat.The king ordered that his food should be set out with Sanzang's in the Hall of Fragrance so that he could eat with the Master of the Law.Thanking the king for his kindness Sanzang took his meal with him.

Meanwhile,back in the Hostel of Meeting,Brother Monkey told Friar Sand to prepare the tea,the grain and the vegetarian dishes.“There's no problem about the tea and the rice,”Friar Sand said,“but the vegetable dishes will be difficult.”“Why?”Monkey asked.“There's no oil,salt, soya sauce or vinegar,”Friar Sand replied.“I've got a few coins here,” Monkey said,“so we can send Pig out to buy them.”“I wouldn't dare,” said the idiot,who was feeling too lazy to go.“My ugly mug could cause trouble,and then the master would blame me.”“If you buy the stuff at a fair price and don't try to get it by asking for alms or theft there couldn't possibly by any trouble,"said Brother Monkey.“Didn't you see the com- motion just now?”asked Pig.“I only showed my snout outside the gate and about a dozen of them collapsed with fright.Goodness only knows how many I'd scare to death in a busy shopping street.”“Well,”said Monkey,“as you know so much about the busy shopping streets did you notice what was being sold in them?”“No,”said Pig.“The master told me to keep my head down and cause no trouble.Honest,I didn't see anything.”

“I won't need to tell you about the bars,grain merchants,mills,silk shops and grocers,”said Monkey.“But there are marvellous teahouses and noodle shops selling big sesame buns and steamed bread.You can buy terrific soup,rice,spices and vegetables in the restaurants.Then there are all the exotic cakes, yoghurts,snacks,rolls,fries,and honey sweets.Any number of goodies.Shall I go out and buy you some?”

This description had the idiot drooling;the saliva gurgled in his throat. “Brother,”he said,jumping to his feet,“I'll let you pay this time.Next time I'm in the money I'll treat you.”“Friar Sand,”said Monkey,hiding his amusement,“cook the rice while I go out to buy some other ingredients.”Realizing that Monkey was only fooling the idiot,Friar Sand agreed. “Off you go,”he said.“Buy plenty and have a good feed.”Grabbing a bowl and a dish the idiot went out with Monkey.

“Where are you reverend gentlemen going?”two officials asked him. “To buy some groceries,”Monkey replied.“Go west along this street, turn at the drum tower,and you'll be at Zheng's grocery,”they said. “You can buy as much oil,salt,soya sauce,vinegar,ginger,pepper and tea as you like there:they've got them all.”

The two of them headed west along the road hand in hand.Monkey went past several teahouses and restaurants but did not buy any of the things on sale or eat any of the food.“Brother,”called Pig,“why don't we make do with what we can buy here?”This was the last thing that Monkey,who had only been fooling him,intended to do.“My dear brother,” he said,“you don't know how to get a good bargain.If we go a little further you can choose bigger ones.”As the two of them were talking a lot of people followed jostling behind them.Before long they reached the drum tower,where a huge and noisy crowd was pushing and shoving and filling the whole road.“I'm not going any further,brother,”said Pig when he saw this.“From the way they're shouting they sound as though they're out to catch monks.And we're suspicious-looking strangers. What'll we do if they arrest us?”“Stop talking such nonsense,”said Monkey. “We monks haven't broken the law,so monk-catchers would have no reason to arrest us.Let's carry on and buy the ingredients we need at Zheng's”“No,”said Pig,“never.I'm not going to ask for trouble.If I try to squeeze through that crowd and my ears get pulled out to their full length they'll collapse with fright.Several of them might get trampled to death,and it would cost me my life.”“Very well then,”said Monkey. “You stand at the foot of this wall while Igo and buy the things.I'll bring you back some wheaten cakes.”The idiot handed the bowl and dish to Monkey then stood with his back to the crowd and his snout against the foot of the wall.He would not have moved for anything in the world.

When Monkey reached the drum tower he found that the crowds really were very dense.As he squeezed his way through them he heard people saying that a royal proclamation had been posted at the tower:this was what all the people were struggling to see.Monkey pushed forward till he was close to it,then opened wide his fiery eyes with golden pupils to read it carefully.This is what was written:

We,the King of Purpuria in the Western Continent of Cattle-gift,from the beginning of our reign gave peace to the four quarters and tranquility to the people.Recently the state's misfortunes have confined us to our bed with a chronic illness that has continued for a very long time.Recovery has proved impossible,and the many excellent prescriptions of our country's Royal College of Medicine have not yet effected a cure.We hereby issue an invitation to all experts in medicine and pharmacy among the wise men of the world,whether from the north or the east,from China or from foreign countries,to ascend to the throne hall and heal our sickness.In the event of a recovery we will give half our kingdom.This is no empty promise.All those who can offer cures should come to this notice.

When Monkey had read this he exclaimed with delight,“As they used to say in the old days,'Make a move and your fortune's one third made.' I was wrong to stay put in the hostel.There's no need to buy groceries, and fetching the scriptures can wait for a day while I go and have a bit of fun as a doctor.”The splendid Great Sage bent low,got rid of the bowl and dish,took a pinch of dust,threw it into the air,said the words of a spell and made himself invisible.He then went up to the notice,quietly took it down,and blew towards the southeast with a magic breath.

Immediately a whirlwind arose that scattered all the people there. Monkey then went straight back to where Pig was standing,his nose propped against the foot of the wall as if he were fast asleep.Brother Monkey folded the notice up,slipped it inside the lapel of Pig's tunic without disturbing him,turned and went back to the hostel.

As soon as the whirlwind started blowing all the people in the crowd at the foot of the drum tower covered their heads and shut their eyes, never imagining that when the wind fell the royal proclamation would have disappeared.They were horror struck.That morning twelve palace eunuchs and twelve guards officers had come out to post it,and now it had been blown away after less than six hours.In fear and trembling the people searched all around for it until a piece of paper was spotted sticking out of Pig's lapel.“So you took the proclamation down,did you?” they asked,going up to him. Looking up with a start the idiot thrust his nose up at them,making the guards officers stagger about and collapse with terror.He turned to flee, only to be grabbed by several bold spirits who blocked his way.“You've taken down the royal proclamation inviting doctors,so you're coming to the palace to cure His Majesty,”they said.“Where else d 'you think you're going?”“I'm your son if I tore the poster down,”said Pig in panic.“I'd be your grandson if I could cure disease.”“What's that sticking out of your tunic?”one of the officers asked.

Only then did the idiot look down and see that there really was a piece of paper there.Opening it he ground his teeth and swore,“That macaque is trying to get me killed!”He gave an angry roar and was just about to tear it up when they all stopped him.“You're a dead man,”they said. “That's a proclamation His Majesty issued today.How dare you tear it up?As you've put it in your tunic you're no doubt a brilliant doctor. Come with us at once!”“You don't understand,"shouted Pig.“It wasn't me that took it down.It was my fellow disciple Sun Wukong. He sneaked it into my tunic then abandoned me.We'll all have to go and find him to get to the bottom of this.”“Nonsense,”they said.“We've got a bell here —we're not going off to play one that's still being cast.You can say what you like.Drag him off to see His Majesty.”Not bothering to get to the truth of the matter they pushed and pulled the idiot,who stood his ground as firmly as if he had taken root there.Over ten of them tried to

move him without any success.“You've got no respect,”said Pig.“If you go on pulling at me and make me lose my temper I'll go berserk,and don't blame me then.”

It had not taken long for this commotion to stir up the whole neighbourhood,and Pig was now surrounded.Two elderly palace eunuchs in the crowd said,“You look very odd and you sound wrong too. Where are you from,you ruffian?”“We're pilgrims sent from the east to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven,”Pig replied.“My master is the younger brother of the Tang emperor and a Master of the Law. He's just gone to the palace to hand his passport over for inspection.I came here with my brother disciple to buy some groceries,but there were so many people by the tower that I was scared to go any further. He told me to wait here.When he saw the proclamation he made a whirlwind,took it down,sneaked it into my tunic and went away.”“We did see a monk with a plump white face going in through the palace gates,”one of the eunuchs said.“Perhaps that was your master.”“Yes, yes,”said Pig.“Where did your fellow disciple go?”the eunuch asked. “There are four of us altogether,”said Pig.“When the master went to present his passport the other three of us stayed with our luggage and our horse in the Hostel of Meeting.My brother's played a trick on me and gone back there ahead of me.”“Let go of him.officers,”the eunuch said.“We'll all go to the hostel together and find out what's really happening.”

“You two ladies are very sensible,”said Pig.“Monk,you don't know about anything,”said the officers.“How can you address gentlemen as ladies?”“You're shameless,”laughed Pig.“You've made them change sex.Fancy calling these two old females gentlemen instead of women or ladies!”“That's enough of your insolence,”they all said.“Find your fellow disciple at once.”

The noisy crowd in the street,which was not to be numbered in mere hundreds,carried him to the hostel gates.“Don't come any further,gentle- men,”Pig said.“My brother won't let you make a fool of him the way I do.He's a ferocious and serious character.When you meet him you'll have to bow deeply to him and call him 'Lord Sun',then he'll look after you.If you don't he'll turn nasty and this business will fail.”To this the eunuchs and officers replied,“If your brother really has the power to cure our king he'll be given half the country and we will all bow to him.” The idlers were still making a commotion outside the hostel gates as Pig led the eunuchs and officers straight inside,where Monkey could be heard laughing with pleasure as he told Friar Sand about how he had taken the proclamation down.Pig went up to him,grabbed him and yelled, “Why won't you act like a man?You said you'd buy me noodles,buns, and steamed bread to lure me out,but it was only an empty promise. Then you made a whirlwind,took down the royal proclamation,and sneakily put it in my tunic.You made a real idiot of me.What kind of brother are you?”“Idiot,”laughed Monkey,“you must have got lost and gone the wrong way.I couldn't find you when I rushed back from buying the groceries the other side of the drum tower,so I came back ahead.Where did I tear any royal proclamations down?”“The officials who were guard- ing it are here,”said Pig.

Before he had finished speaking the eunuchs and officers came up, bowed low and said,“Lord Sun,His Majesty is very fortunate today as Heaven has sent you down to us.We are sure that you will display your great skill and give him the benefit of your outstanding medical knowledge.If you cure our king you will receive half the country and half the state.”On hearing this Monkey composed his face,took the proclamation from Pig and said,"I suppose you are the officials who were guarding the notice.”“We slaves are eunuchs in the Bureau of Ritual,”said the eunuchs,kowtowing,“and these gentlemen are officers in the royal guard.”“I did take the royal proclamation down,”Monkey said,“and I used my younger brother to bring you here.So your lord is ill.As the saying goes,'Don't sell medicine carelessly,and don't send for any old doctor when you're ill.’Tell your king to come here and ask me himself to help him.I can get rid of his illness at a touch.”This shocked all the eunuchs.“That is very big talk,so you must be a man of great breadth of spirit,”the officers said.“Half of us will remain here to press the invitation in silence while the other half go back to the palace to report.”

Four of the eunuchs and six of the guards officers went straight into the palace without waiting to be summoned and said at the steps of the throne room,“Congratulations,Your Majesty.”When the king,who was in the middle of a cultivated conversation with Sanzang after their meal together,heard this he asked,“What on?”“When we,your slaves,took out Your Majesty's proclamation sending for doctors this morning and posted it at the foot of the drum tower,a holy monk from Great Tang in the east took it down,”they replied.“He is now in the Hostel of Meeting and wants Your Majesty to go in person to ask his help.He can get rid of illness at a touch.That is why we have come to submit this report.”

This news delighted the king.“How many distinguished disciples do you have,Master of the Law?”he asked.Putting his hands together in front of his chest Sanzang replied,"I have three stupid followers.”“Which of them is a medical expert?”the king asked.“To be frank with Your Majesty,”Sanzang replied,“they are all country bumpkins fit only for carrying baggage,leading the horse,finding their way along streams,or leading me over mountains and rivers.In dangerous places they can defeat monsters,capture demons,and subdue tigers and dragons.None of them knows anything about medicines.”“Aren't you being too hard on them?”the king asked.“It was very fortunate that you came to court when we entered the throne hall this morning:this was surely destined by Heaven.If your disciple knows nothing about medicine why would he have taken down our proclamation and demanded that we go to greet him in person?He must surely be a great physician.”He then called,

“Civilian and military officers,we are much too weak to ride in our carriage.You must all leave the palace and go on our behalf to invite the Venerable Sun to treat our disease.When you meet him you must on no account show him any disrespect.You must address him as 'Holy monk, Venerable Sun’ and treat him with the deference due to your own sovereign.”

Having received these orders the officials went straight to the Hostel of Meeting with the eunuchs and guards officers responsible for the proclamation.There they arranged themselves in their companies to kowtow to Monkey.Pig was so frightened that he hid in the wing,while Friar Sand slipped behind the wall.Just look at the Great Sage sitting solemnly and unmoving in the middle of the room.“That macaque is really asking to have his head cut off,”Pig thought resentfully.“All those officials bowing to him,and he's not bowing back or standing up either.”Soon afterwards,when the rituals had been performed,the officials addressed Monkey as if he were their monarch:“We report to the holy monk,the Venerable Sun,that we officials of the Kingdom of Purpuria have come at the command of our king to do respectful homage to the holy monk and invite him to the palace to treat our sick king.”Only then did Brother Monkey stand up and reply,“Why hasn't your king come?”“His Majesty is too weak to ride in his carriage,”the officials all replied,“which is why he ordered us to pay homage to you,holy monk,as if you were our sovereign,kowtow to you and invite you to come.”“In that case,”said Monkey,“will you gentlemen please lead the way.I'll follow you.”The

officials then formed themselves into a column in accordance with their ranks and set out.Monkey tidied his clothes and got to his feet.“Brother,” said Pig,“whatever you do,don't drag us in.”“I won't,”Monkey replied,“provided you two accept the medicine for me.”“What medicine?”Friar Sand asked.“You must accept all the medicine people send me,”Monkey replied.“I'll collect it when I come back.”The two of them undertook this commission.

Monkey was soon at the palace with the officials,who went in first to inform the king.He raised high the curtains of pearls,flashed his dragon and phoenix eyes,opened his golden mouth and spoke majestically,“Which gentleman is the holy monk,the Venerable Sun?”Taking a step forward, Monkey shouted at the top of his voice,“I am.”The voice was so ugly and the face so hideous that the king fell back on his dragon throne.In their alarm the female officials and the palace eunuchs helped him to the inner quarters.“He's terrified His Majesty to death,”they said.“Monk,” all the officials said angrily to Monkey,“how could you be so rough and crude?How dared you take the proclamation down?”

When Brother Monkey heard this he replied with a smile,“You shouldn't be angry with me.If you're going to be so rude to me your king won't get better in a thousand years.”“But how long does human life last?”the officials asked.“How is it that he won't get better even in a thousand years?”“He's a sick ruler now,”said Monkey.“When he dies he'll be a sick ghost,and whenever he's reincarnated he'll be a sick man again.That's why he won't get better even in a thousand years.”“You've got no sense of respect at all,”the infuriated officials replied.“How dare you talk such nonsense!”“It's not nonsense,”Mon- key laughed.“Listen and I'll explain:

“Mysterious indeed are the principles of medicine; Flexibility of mind is a quality required.

Use eyes and ears,ask questions,take the pulses:

Omit but one and the examination's incomplete.

First look for outward signs of the patient's vital energy. Dried?Smooth?Fat?Thin?Active?Does he sleep well?

Secondly,listen to whether the voice is clear or harsh: Determine if the words he speaks are true or crazed.

Third,you must ask how long the disease has lasted, And how the patient eats,drinks and relieves himself. Fourth,feel the pulses and be clear about the veins:

Are they deep,shallow,external or inside?

Should I not look and listen,ask questions,and take the pulses, Never in all his days will the king be well again.”

In the ranks of the civil and military officials there were some fellows of the Royal College of Medicine who when they heard these words praised Monkey publicly:“The monk is right.Even a god or an immortal would have to look,listen,ask questions and take the pulses before treating a patient successfully with his divine gifts.”All the officials agreed with these remarks,then went up to the king and submitted:“The reverend gentleman wishes to look,listen,ask questions and take the pulses before he can prescribe properly.”“Send him away,”the king said over and over again as he lay on his dragon bed.“We cannot bear to see any strangers.”His attendants then came out from the inner quarters and announced,“Monk,His Majesty commands that you go away.He can- not bear to see a stranger.”“If he won't see a stranger,”Monkey re- plied,“I know the art of taking the pulses with hanging threads.”“That is something of which we have only heard,”exclaimed all the officials, concealing their delight.“but that we have never seen with our own eyes.Please go back in and submit another report.”The personal attendants then went back into the inner quarters and reported,“Your Majesty, the Venerable Sun can take your pulses with hanging threads:he does not need to see Your Majesty's face.”At this the king reflected, “In the three years we have been ill we have never tried this technique. Send him in.”At once the courtiers in attendance announced,“His Majesty has consented to pulse-taking by the hanging threads.Send the Venerable Sun to the inner quarters at once to make his diagnosis.”

Monkey then entered the throne hall,where the Tang Priest met him with abuse:“Wretched ape!You will be the death of me!”“My good master,”Monkey replied with a smile,“I'm bringing you credit.How can you say I'll be the death of you?”“In all the years you've been with me,”Sanzang shouted,“I have never seen you cure a single person.You know nothing about the nature of drugs,and you have never studied medical books.How can you be so reckless and bring this disaster on us?” “You don't realize,Master,”said Monkey with a smile,“that I do know the odd herbal remedy and can treat serious illnesses.I guarantee I can cure him.Even if the treatment kills him I'll only be guilty of manslaughter through medical incompetence.That's not a capital offence.What are you afraid of?There's nothing to worry about,nothing.You sit here and see what my pulse diagnosis is like.”“How can you talk all this rubbish,”Sanzang asked,“when you have never read the Plain Questions,the Classic of Difficulties, the Pharmacopoeia and the Mysteries of the Pulses,or studied the commentaries to them?How could you possibly diagnose his pulses by hanging threads?”“I've got golden threads on me that you've never seen,”Monkey replied,putting out his hand to pull three hairs from his tail,hold them in a bunch,call,“Change!”and turn them into three golden threads each twenty-four feet long to match the twenty-four periods of the solar year.Holding these in his hand he said to the Tang Priest,“These are golden threads,aren't they?”“Stop talking,reverend gentleman,”said the eunuchs in attendance on the king. “Please come inside and make your diagnosis.”Taking his leave of the Tang Priest,Monkey followed the attendants into the inner quarters to see his patient.Indeed. The heart has a secret prescription that will save a country; The hidden and wonderful spell gives eternal life. If you do not know what illness was diagnosed or what medicines were used and wish to learn the truth listen to the explanation in the next installment.