

WHALEN LAI

University of California, Davis

From Protean Ape to Handsome Saint: The Monkey King

Abstract

The novel *Monkey* or *Journey to the West* tells of a simian's revolt against Heaven, of its defeat by the Buddha, and of its later being recruited as a pilgrim to protect the monk Tripitaka on his quest for scriptures in India. This essay traces Monkey's background to a) a mythic battle between a land deity and a water deity; b) a myth about an aboriginal in a medieval forest who is converted by Buddhist missionaries and becomes a saint who protects his new faith, just as St. Christopher, originally a subhuman Dog-man in the forest, became the patron saint of travelers; c) a folk Zen parody of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng (who was called a "southern barbarian monkey"); d) an ancient tradition about the Chinese Titans—the demigods of Xia—striking back at the Zhou god of Heaven that displaced them. The appendix goes into the folklore of the Frog, a chthonic deity kept alive among southern non-Chinese aboriginals.

Key words: Monkey — water deity — missiology — Zen — Titan

As Christianity spread west, into the wilds of the European continent, the desert wilderness came to be replaced by the forest primeval. . . . In this new context, the location of a sacred utopia, the place where one prepares for the end of time, became the edge of the forest. . . . Opposed to the world, to inhabited areas where human culture and society thrived, was the vast uninhabited fastness of the forest. This polarity replaced the ancient *urbs/rus* (city/country) opposition in the European Middle Ages. In this context, savagery (Latin *silvatica* from *silva*, forest) was not wholly inhuman, but was located at the absolute limit of human activity. Nevertheless, many crossed this fundamental boundary in the Middle Ages. Besides the monastic hermit, there were kings for whom the forest was a hunting reserve, errant forest-dwellers who eked out a foraging existence, social marginals, the criminals, and the insane. In courtly literature, the forest became a place of adventure, where heroes encountered wild men and savage beasts—and where the distinction between the two was quite blurred. The uninhabited forest, the medieval wilderness, is at once a place of exile, evangelistic mission, adventure, penance, and asylum; a place of terrible fascination to all those who lived hemmed in by its dark presence. It was here, moreover, that most mythic accounts of monstrous persons or races were set. . . .

(WHITE 1991, 11)

EVERY Chinese knows the *Xiyouji* 西遊記, the story of the Monkey King. It has been recited, staged, illustrated for magazines, and animated for movies and television. It has been honored with two English translations, an abbreviated one by Arthur WALEY (1943) and a complete, annotated one by Anthony C. YU (1977). The latter is by far the better of the two; even its title—*The Journey to the West*—is a more fitting rendition of the original Chinese than is Waley's *Monkey*.¹

The story of the Monkey King is made up of two originally independent parts. The first tells of the Monkey King creating havoc in Heaven. This part ends with the Buddha trapping Monkey under the Buddha's cosmic palm. The second half has Monkey, many years later,

released from captivity so that he might serve the monk Xuan-zang 玄奘 (Tripitaka) on the latter's journey to the West (i.e., India) in a quest for Buddhist scriptures. The full story as we now have it clearly evolved over time. Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 is generally regarded as the final author and compiler. The finished work is counted as one of China's four major novels.

Although the two parts of Monkey's career are now presented as one, we can still enjoy part one without going on to part two. The story of the exploits of the simian trickster defying Heaven can well stand on its own. Here is Monkey upsetting the cosmic order (*dike* to the Greeks) and, for that act of hubris, suffering a fall. Albert Camus might have preferred the story of this simian Sisyphus to end here: better to have this Chinese Prometheus chained under a rocky mountain than to have him turned into a pious pilgrim to serve a new master. But the tale of the Monkey King as we have it now precludes this type of selective reading à la Camus. It is the destiny of Monkey, Sun Wukong 孫悟空 (Monkey Awakened to Emptiness), to change from rebel to pilgrim. The taming of this shrewd ape by the Buddha at the end of the first part leads naturally to his joining the other four pilgrims—Tripitaka, Pigsy, Sandy, and the White Horse—to find Buddhahood in the West. Space precludes an analysis of this "Journey to the West" in the present study, which will only examine Monkey's career up to his capture by the Buddha.

Much scholarship, especially in Chinese, has been devoted to the study of this novel, and we cannot hope to survey all of it here. Instead, I would like to focus on a particular area where more work needs to be done. As Anthony YU noted in the introduction to his translation:

The question why "a popular religious folk hero should acquire bizarre animal attendants" and why a monkey figure should enjoy such preeminence cannot be settled until further knowledge in Chinese folklore is gained. (1977, 3)

I will attempt to clarify this question by examining how this Ape-Man and enemy of civilized order came in the end to be the St. Christopher of the Buddhist mission in medieval China.

PART 1: WHEN GODS HAVE TWO FACES

The story of *Monkey* (our shorthand for the first part of the novel; *Journey* will henceforth denote the second part) may be grouped under four themes: Monkey's birth, his awakening, his outrages, and his defeat. These four topics, identifiable with chapters in the book, may be

aligned with the mythic motifs that inspire them as follows:

TABLE 1

Chapter	Topic	Mythic motifs
1	Birth	An autochthonic birth of a stone monkey
2	Awakening	Prodigious child like Huineng in the Zen Buddhist <i>Platform Sutra</i>
3-5	Outrage against heaven	The chthonic (earth-born) Titan's revolt
6-7	Defeat	A monster like Wuzhiqi 無支祈; defeat of Monkey by Erlang 二郎

Scholarly attention has focused to date on the first and the last connections, i.e., on prefigurations of the Monkey King and on his final defeat at the hand of a protagonist. I will review and amend that scholarship in parts 1 and 2 of this paper, and will investigate the other two, less studied, topics in parts 3 and 4.

In English, the groundwork on Monkey's origin and end was done by DUDBRIDGE (1970), who lists three major antecedents to Monkey: 1) the White Ape 白猿佞 as a seducer of women; 2) the monkey subdued by the god Erlang; and 3) the water monster Wuzhiqi subdued by Sage-King Yu. His findings and views can be summarized as follows.

1) The White Ape is a Monkey King known for his abduction of women. According to a variant of this tale in EBERHARD (1965), he kidnapped a girl and kept her in his treasure cove. The girl's mother found her way to his distant kingdom, where she managed to fool the small monkeys that kept guard and free her daughter. Mother and child escaped with additional loot from the Monkey King's treasure cove.²

2) Erlang is a river god known for battling river dragons and other monsters. He once shackled the Monkey King, who claimed to be the Sage Equal to Heaven. Their battle is now preserved in *Monkey*.

3) Wuzhiqi is a water monkey who was subdued by the sage-king Yu 禹, the hero of the Flood in ancient China. He imprisoned the water monster under a mountain. Wuzhiqi is a "spineless" Hydra; Monkey shared his fate in being similarly entrapped under a mountain.

Dudbridge's findings are enlightening, but fail to deal with the apparent inconsistencies: Monkey never seduced or kidnapped women as the White Ape did, and was more imp than monster.

Tripitaka's disciple (Monkey) commits crimes which are mischievous and irreverent, but the white ape is from first to last a

monstrous creature which has to be eliminated. The two acquire superficial points of similarity when popular treatment of the respective traditions, in each case of Ming date, coincides in certain details of nomenclature. (DUDBRIDGE 1970, 128)³

For a precursor to this disciple of Tripitaka, Dudbridge looked to stories about pious monkeys who listen to sūtras and to the animal apostles of Mulian in the drama of Mulian's attempt to save his mother from the Buddhist hell.⁴

Finally, unlike Wuzhiqi, Monkey is not known to have been a water spirit. In fact, there are times in the novel when Monkey is said to be impotent in water. There is also a separate Water Monkey, a monster who appears later in *Journey*, that seeks to harm the pilgrims.⁵ Logic would therefore suggest that the connection between Monkey, the White Ape, and Wuzhiqi is tenuous.

But logic seldom has the last word in myths. In myths, opposites may meet in classic *coincidentia oppositorum*, and as a part of medieval drama sinners might turn into saints and monsters end up as converts and defenders of the faith. In other words, the very inconsistencies may well provide clues for penetrating the ancient myths and their evolution.⁶ And as long as we are dealing in lunar and aquatic myths, we should be prepared for the lunacy of moons and the slipperiness⁷ of water.⁸

When Good and Evil Were One

When Arthur WALEY translated the *Daodejing* 道德經, he chose to render the title *The Way and Its Power* (1934) instead of *The Way and Its Virtue*, justifying this by noting that *de* connotes *mana*, and that like *mana* it was once a premoral concept.⁹ In the premoral stage of man's religious development, power encompasses both good and evil. Nietzsche, in his "genealogy of morals," comes to much the same conclusion. That ambivalence may help us appreciate the two faces of certain ancient gods that lurk behind the story of Monkey and Erlang.

Erlang is, as we have noted, a Chinese god of the waters. His cult rose and flourished in Xichuan. As Li Erlang 李二郎, his cult merged with that of Li Bing 李冰, a historical figure from the Warring States period. A governor of Chengtu 成都, Li Bing was known for his waterworks; he created a canal system that is still in use today. By controlling the Yangtze's flow, Li tamed the river and benefited the people. He was the counterpart of the Sage Yu, who stemmed the Great Flood. The only difference is that Yu stopped the flooding of the Yellow River

downstream while Li Bing diverted the waters of the Yangtze upstream. Both were lionized by the people, and their lives are shrouded in legend.¹⁰

The myth of Li's feat tells us this: When Li entered the water to tame the river, people reportedly saw, from a distance, a fierce battle between two bulls or rhinoceroses on the bank. One eventually subdued the other. When the myth is translated into more prosaic discourse, it is saying that Li was one bull or rhino and the raging river was the other. The bull or rhino that subdued the river was the one who won the fight.

This story might sound odd at first, but it is a variant of a more familiar tale: the myth of two dragons locked in mortal combat. Throughout China's history, sightings of two combatting dragons "outside the village" (i.e., beyond the limit of order), "at a river," or "in the desert" (i.e., in chaos itself) are common. The fight usually takes place "at night" and is almost always witnessed "from a (safe) distance." No respectable travelogue about foreign lands could do without such an episode. Xuan-zang's historical *Xiyouji* 西遊記 reported one such elemental battle he witnessed en route to India, said to have occurred in the Gobi Desert outside China proper. It is a classic myth of chaos—or of order (cosmos) battling chaos.

Regardless of whether chaos, or nature "at war with itself," is seen as a pair of rhinos or as a pair of dragons, the point of the story is the same: there are two sides or faces to nature. In the case of a battle by a river (or on its banks), the story is pointing out that the river can be both good and evil. When the water flows in an orderly fashion, it is good; when the same water floods, it is evil. When the two forces are pictured as draconic, we have a battle of dragons. The auspicious river dragon is called *long* 龍, while the malicious one is called *gao* 蛟 (corresponding to a kraken). Sometimes the two can be compounded as one, in which case we have the classic *gao-long*, a dragon that *gao* or "interlocks" with itself. That "mix" can be depicted as a dragon and a kraken with tails interlocking, or else as simply one dragon shown as a snake (dragon) biting its own tail. This image, the symbol of the eternal return, is the image of Time swallowing its own sons, i.e., old Kronos in Greek mythology. The same interlocking design surfaces in China's depiction of its primeval couple, Fuxi 伏羲 and Nugua 女媧, who, half-human and half-snake, served as the ancestors of man. Their intertwining tails tell a tale later systematized into Chinese metaphysics, which says that there was One Great Unity or Ultimate before the division into male and female, yang and yin.

The story of Li Bing battling the river, rhino locking horns with

rhino, is a variant of the same cosmic drama. The river and its god are one: the same river with two faces that can nurture as well as kill. In the story the good side wins, but fundamentally good and evil are not moral opposites: they could just as well be the river in its two moods. In Japan, Shintoism knew this as the two sides of the kami: a god can be gentle and good (*nigitama*) but can suddenly become rough and destructive (*aratama*). This ambiguity attends a number of Chinese flood heroes: Gong-gong 共工, the earliest; Gun 鯀, the father of Yu; Sage-King Yu himself; Fuxi and Nugua, the divine couple; Yiyi 伊尹, born of an empty gourd; Ximen Bao 西門豹, an official and water engineer at Ye; Li Bing in Xichuan; and Erlang alias Yang Jian [Li Bing] in *The Investiture of the Gods*. Some of these heroes double as villains. Gong-gong, for example, was accused of causing a flood; Gun of making it worse.

The choice of animals—a sea creature like the dragon or a land animal like the bull—for representing these forces of nature is in part due to the geographic locations involved. Here is a simple table of the animals involved in three classical Chinese stories of a conflict involving floods:

TABLE 2

	1	2	3	
WEST	Li Bing: rhino vs. rhino	Ximen Bao: leopard vs. dragon	Sage Yu: dragon vs. dragon	EAST

In the case of Li Bing, the battle was in the west and upland, so it is depicted as rhino versus rhino (on land or on the bank). In the case of Sage-King Yu it was in the east and downstream, so it is depicted as dragon versus dragon. Yu as the dragon of order was fighting the kraken of chaos. Since the east is the home of the Green Dragon of the waters and the west is the home of the White Tiger of the land—so goes the later Han schematic iconography—it is only fitting that dragons should battle in the waters to the east while rhinos (bulls, water buffaloes) should fight it out on the banks in the west.

In between, we find the story of Ximen Bao, a mix of the two. We are told that Bao was an official appointed to the ancient capital of Ye. Told of a yearly sacrifice of a young maiden to Ho Bo 河伯, the river god, Bao threw the female shamans who headed the cult into the river instead and thereby put an end to the nonsense. The name Ximen Bao means, literally, "Leopard at the Western Portal." The human official Bao is a personification of what, in a Western context, would be the dog

(guarding the gate) of Hades. A persona of the White Tiger of the West (both “white” and “west” describe Death), Bao was the land animal battling the river dragon that was Ho Bo. This was a battle of land versus water and, by correlative extension, of west and east, fall and spring, yin and yang, death and life.

Understanding how the same god can have two faces and how it can do battle against its own alter ego better enables us to understand how Monkey and Erlang could well be friends as well as foes; or how Monkey as a beast of the forest could also double as a water monster.

Conflict between Protean Siblings

In the story of Ximen Bao, Bao the leopard defeated Ho Bo the river dragon, representing a triumph of land over water. At first glance, Erlang the river god outwitting the land animal Monkey appears to be the reverse of this. The reversal would not be unexpected: in the cycle of seasons, sometimes yang is on the ascent and sometimes yin is; both the dragon of water and the tiger of land—each a combination of yin and yang—have their day of victory, i.e., in spring and in fall. But this is not the issue. The issue is that, upon more careful examination, the line of demarcation between land and water may not always be that clear. Monkey could just as well be of the water, and Erlang could just as well be of the land.

To begin with, both Monkey and Erlang were protean. Proteus was a minor Titan of the sea known for his ability to assume many forms. That Erlang was protean is to be expected; he could effect multiple transformations as a god of the river. But Monkey had that power too: he had acquired the magical power of earthly transformation, or, better, lunar metamorphosis. Water and moon are related—the lunar pull on the tides is well known and is an accepted part of the mythopoeic imagination. Unlike land, which is formed mass, water is formless and fluid; unlike the sun, which is known for its constancy, the moon is prized for its changes. It waxes and wanes. When the poem “Questions to Heaven” in *Songs of the South* asks, “What virtue (*de* 德) / Has the moon / That as it waxes / It also wanes?” it only underscores the irony that *de*, which nowadays is associated with constancy—we say “constancy of virtue,” for example—used to be associated with inconstancy or potency. *De* was “power,” as Waley has it, the potency for endless change.

As Monkey was protean, he was aquatic. That is why Monkey had no trouble diving into the waterfall next to his mountain cave so that he could make his way to the palace of the Dragon King. This he was able to do because in China, as in a number of cultures, all land was

thought to rest on water, so that any opening of water would lead to the subterranean ocean and thereby to any other water opening on land. The idea that Monkey could not swim is a legacy of a purely chthonic reading of his past, and is perhaps based on the *Rāmāyana* (see note 8), or upon an attempt to set up a division of labor among the three fighting attendants of Tripitaka in *Journey*. Monkey, Pigsy, and Sandy were best able to fight in the air, on land, and in the water (quicksand), respectively. Monkey, however, had clear aquatic ties. It is as a water monster that he was confined by the Buddha under land, i.e., under a cosmic mountain. Such mountains have regularly been used to keep water ogres down—Wuzhiqi, the Chinese Hydra, suffered that fate under Sage-King Yu. In the story of Madame White Snake, the she-demon of the lake who tried to drown the Golden Mountain was likewise finally pinned under a pagoda (a *Buddhakāya*) on an isle in the middle of the lake.

Just as Monkey was not simply a land dweller, Erlang who subdued him was not purely a denizen of the water. Erlang also had both land and water associations—in fact, the name Erlang, which is usually read “Number Two Son,” could well mean that there were originally “two” of them. And there *were* two Erlangs: Li Erlang, who was the god of the waters, and Yang Erlang, who was the god of the forest and the hunt and who ran about with two white hounds. It seems that Li Erlang was worshipped by fishermen and farmers, while Yang Erlang was worshipped by hunters and herdsmen. The god Erlang that appears in *Monkey* is a mix of the two. When Monkey exercises his protean power, Erlang matches his transformations one by one. He thus fights Monkey on land, in the air, and underwater. This is his Li Erlang aspect. But Erlang’s final capture of Monkey is in a game: Monkey is lassoed by Erlang while cornered by two white hounds. Monkey is a victim of the hunt. Here we have the aspect of Yang Erlang surfacing.¹¹

What all this says is that Erlang and Monkey were kindred spirits. They were quarrelsome siblings. Both can represent land or water such that their cosmic battle was as much a battle of land vs. water, land vs. land, or water vs. water. There is no inconsistency in Monkey’s being both fearful of water and capable (of swimming) in water.

This brings us to the other alleged inconsistency: the charge that Monkey could not possibly be the White Ape because Monkey was not a womanizer.

Beauty and the Beast

In the context of his eventual salvation in a religion (Buddhism) that

prizes asceticism, it is of course important that Monkey does not seduce women. But to argue therefore that Monkey cannot possibly have had a tie to White Ape the playboy is to forget another Janus aspect of this demigod. Seduction is, after all, the flip side of asceticism, with both pointing to the same age-old concern with fertility.

Both river nymphs and forest satyrs were regarded as quite fertile. What they did with their fertility—indulge it or deny it—was a matter of choice. Ho Bo, the river god, indulged it by insisting on his annual bride. Ximen Bao, we are told, denied him that perpetual human sacrifice when he stopped the licentious cult by throwing the ugly female shamans into the river and saving the pretty prospective bride. But the idea that Bao was a St. Michael saving a “maiden in distress” from a dirty old monster is a distortion of fact. The female shamans *were* the happy brides of this Chinese Dracula. Bao was just a disgruntled Mr. Killjoy who did not approve of the rowdy goings-on in this fertility rite during the Chinese lunar version of the “Merrie Month of May.”¹²

Ximen Bao might have decided to starve the river god’s sexual appetite, but Li Bing, who battled the same evil river kraken, apparently decided on a different ruse. It is said that Li Bing once changed himself into two beautiful women (*erliang* 二娘), in order to seduce and entrap the monster. This has led some to think that the name Erlang (two males) derives from *erliang* (thus, two females). The seduction in this case is a positive use of sex to battle the demon. But whether it be positive or negative, the theme is that of fertility, and the cult is that of a man-god romance.

In fertility religions, such seduction was fair play in spring, when nymphs by the river inlets and satyrs in the hillsides enticed men and women into sex. In China, Archer Yi 羿 fooled around with one such river nymph—to the anger of Ho Bo, who claimed to own all the nymphs. In Greece, the women of Athens ran off merrily to the hills to greet the boyish Dionysos in the forest. In India, gopis still court Kṛṣṇa in his haunts. All of this was considered harmless fun until Confucian morality, Christian righteousness, and Buddhist asceticism decided that such erotic license was evil. Thus in medieval piety the once innocent nymph became a she-demon and the once worry-free satyr a devil. In Chinese folklore these two classic figures were, respectively, Madame White Snake who dined on young men and King White Ape who kidnapped young girls. They became witch and warlock, with her paying the higher price in the sexist rewrites: he was only enslaved, but she was killed outright.¹³

Not all of the demigods of old ended up as demons in the new religions. Some made good, like Erlang. Ximen Bao, who could well

have become the Dog of Hades, ended up as the witch hunter, while Xiwangmu 西王母, his female counterpart who was originally a man-eating tigress, is now remembered as the generous Queen Mother of the West and bestower of immortality.¹⁴ Monkey and the White Ape parted company at this point. Monkey could easily have been a womanizer too—he is, after all, much sought after as a mate by the female demons who prey on the pilgrims in *Journey*. It is just that whereas the gullible Pigsy is still driven by lust, the wiser Monkey chooses to remain chaste. He thus does what Diana, goddess of the hunt and lady of the forest, did in Greece. Diane bathing in her pool was as naked and nubile as Venus rising fresh from the sea, but she chose to be a manly huntress, an eternal virgin. Monkey too chooses to remain a preadolescent imp and thereby avoids the skirt-chasing career of the White Ape, Playboy of the West (i.e., of the western hills).

The ascetic Śiva and the erotic Śiva are not viewed as separate—there is only one Śiva with two aspects.¹⁵ So too, Monkey and the White Ape appear to be opposite only if we dwell on their surface differences. Satan was a seducer and a rebel angel, and for that he came to a well-deserved end. Monkey was a rebel but not a seducer, and for that he remained redeemable. To see how his puerile chastity made him eligible to become a defender of the faith, it is not enough to consider Jungian archetypes—we must examine the history of religions.

PART 2: FROM TITAN TO SAINT

In the succession of religions, there are only so many ways the old gods can end up. They can fade away, in which case they are lost to us for good; they can be held up to scorn as pagan demons who persisted in their old, evil ways; or they can be recruited into the new faith as its servants and defenders. Monkey followed the last pattern. He was an old Titan, once chained and damned, who was somehow freed and made to serve the Buddha and his messenger, Tripitaka.

This pattern of subjugation and conversion had already occurred during the rise of Buddhism in India with the Vedic gods and demons (the *deva* and the *asura*). Indra, the storm god of the warriors, became Sakra, who piously requested teachings from the Buddha. Brahman, the creator god, turned into a defender of the Law. Lesser deities too resurfaced in new roles. The nymph-like *yakṣī* came to decorate the gates of the stūpas at Sanchi, and heavenly nymphs became angelic musicians, scattering flowers in the air (they remained scantily dressed, as fertility deities should). Satyr-like *yakṣas* ran errands for Yama, the old moon god who now supervised the Buddhist hells, and so on. Their fate is not unlike that of the gods of Old Europe. Those who did not

fade away ended up either as denizens of hell or as saints in the Christian calendar.

The same pattern is observable as Buddhism spread into China. Old Chinese gods and demiurges were recruited into the burgeoning Sinitic Mahāyāna pantheon, and in the process a form of hierarchy among them emerged. We see one pecking order of these native gods in *Monkey*, most clearly in the way Monkey is captured. Earlier, Erlang would have single-handedly captured Monkey, much as Sage-King Yu did his Hydra. In *Monkey*, however, Erlang takes his orders from the Jade Emperor, who has headed the Taoist pantheon since the Sung. In the process, Erlang, instead of lassoing Monkey himself, now defers to Laozi, who does the actual lassoing.

Laozi, a hermit sage who moved outside the theocratic order, was not an official subordinated to the Jade Emperor. If anything, he was a Pure One, one of a trio that oversaw everything below the realm of his Grotto Heaven. In the novel, he is a freelance “ghost-buster” brought in especially for the occasion. Were this a purely Taoist novel, that would have been the end of it: Laozi would have been powerful enough to cook Monkey alive in his alchemic caldron, and the Jade Emperor would have thanked the Old Boy for his effortless effort. But this is now a Buddhist, not just a Taoist, tale. Thus Monkey has to prove too powerful a demon for even Laozi, whose Taoist exorcism fails (it also fails in the Buddhist rewrite of *Madame White Snake*—the she-demon outwits a Taoist exorcist, proves too powerful for a Buddhist monk, and is only subdued when Guanyin 觀音, the Mahāyāna goddess of mercy, steps in). Monkey not only escapes Laozi’s caldron unscathed, he actually becomes a better immortal for it. The mightier Buddha finally has to step in to finish the job. This is how *Monkey* ends. In *Journey*, however, this was deemed incomplete: the Buddha with his cosmic power had more Hīnayānist wisdom than Mahāyānist compassion. So in the sequel, Guanyin is called in to tame Monkey and bring him into the fold of the One Vehicle.

Monkey’s conversion here only replicates the earlier conversion of the Four Heavenly Kings and anticipates more of the same. The Heavenly Kings were the Vedic Atlases, holding up the four corners of the heavens. Like Śiva and Durgā or Apollo and Mithra, they were demon-crushers, their icons depicting them stepping on and subduing these chthonic beings; once converted, the Heavenly Kings trampled down the Buddha’s earthly enemies. In the novel they help subdue Monkey. Nata (Natha), the first-born of the first Heavenly King, battles Monkey and proves to be his equal, but cannot defeat him. It is at this point that Erlang, Monkey’s old nemesis with a proven record of effectiveness,

is called in to do the job (in this case, a Buddhist figure defers to a native folk hero, and, for a change, the pecking order favors the latter).

Following his conversion in *Journey*, Monkey repeats this drama, becoming himself a Nata who, in the name of the Buddhist Law, fights off other pagan demons all the way from China to India. The demons seek to harm the pilgrims, but in the standard warfare of one-to-one combat Monkey either smashes the unrepenting head demon, converts it to observance of Buddhist *ahimsā* (!), or brings the vanquished being into the Buddhist faith, at which point the demon's underlings convert en masse. These new converts then repeat Monkey's career, vowing to defend the Dharma against other demons. Such is the never-ending tale of the triumphant spread of the gospel, whether Buddhist or Christian.

It is in this larger context of a missiological myth that the transformation of Monkey from imp to pilgrim should be read. The change is not unreasonable, so that Dudbridge's search for precedents in tales of pious monkeys and of animal troupes under Mulian is not entirely necessary. These tales are not irrelevant, but they are less relevant than what WHITE has unearthed in his study, *Myths of the Dog-Man* (1991). It is not possible to relate all of White's encyclopedic findings here, but what he basically shows is that all civilizations at some point consider the barbarians living outside their borders to be less than human. Often these people are imagined to be half-animal, i.e., Dog-Men. For being so "totally Other," they both attract and repel. The same attitudes apply to their societies, which are viewed as either utopian or barbaric. To these subhumans, much as to the minorities within our midst, are attributed both savagery and romance. Like blacks in White America, they can be either glorified as "noble savages" or charged with an exaggerated sexual prowess that leads them, as rumor would have it, to "rape our women" (WHITE 1991, 1-10). Their society being deemed lawless by the standards of the civilized critics, they are at once demons to be killed, animals to be enslaved, or pagans waiting to be converted. What concerns us is the last option, which has given rise to myths about the Dog-Man becoming the Christian missionary's vanguard.

The story is told, over and over again, that as the early evangelists ventured into the unknown spreading the gospel, they intruded deeper and deeper into the "forest." To help prepare the way, God or the angels would prepare the way for them by appearing selectively to certain aliens and readying them for their eventual discipleship under the missionaries. These then became the first converts, guides, and protectors of the faithful. A number of such enculturated aliens qua native missionaries have been recorded. The most outstanding example

of a jungle-beast-turned-saint is Saint Christopher (nowadays the patron saint of travelers), originally a barbarian represented as a Dog-Man (half-dog, half-man; a man with a canine head). Monkey is no dog but he comes close enough. This simian is the Ape-Man, Tarzan, and (as my students in class pointed out to me) a venerable King Kong. He is the Buddhist St. Christopher.

The careers of St. Christopher and of Monkey are in this sense comparable. The history of China's perception of alien races parallels that which White traces for the West. Classical China too knew the distinction between city and village; Confucius, for example, lived and worked in the city—that is, among civilized men (the gentlemen)—and would have little to do with the inferior men who inhabited the villages. Like Socrates, he was more concerned with humans than animals: when a stable burnt down, he inquired about the people present, not about the horses. Beyond the Chinese villages lay the barbaric horde, nomads on horseback. They were worse than the peasants and only slightly better than the wild animals. Classical China recognized two rings of such barbarians living in the four directions beyond China proper. The inner ring was semicivilized, and could become Chinese. The outer ring was truly barbaric.

This outer ring consisted of a race of men with names the characters for which all contained the dog radical. They were subhuman, half-animal beings who were little romanticized about until the Han, when, as in the contemporary Roman Empire, a new cosmopolitanism began to change that perception. Although the negative image of the uncouth barbarian persisted, there was in Han China also a new fascination with the exotic places that lay outside the Han imperium, faraway lands beyond the double rings of barbarians. East and west held the promise of being the land of the immortals. China was drawn to reports of the fantastic and monstrous, as Rome was with similar “monstrations” (*monere*)—both saw them as warnings (*monare*) from above, or as “omens and auspices” sent by Heaven (WHITE 1991, 1). In Han China, these became the mythic lands of the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 [Classic of mountains and waters].

Hills and streams—chaos by another name—were regularly the domiciles of monstrous beasts and protean dragons. As danger was found there, so might be paradisiacal lands and alternate social orders. Europe had its share of such mythic kingdoms. One such remote kingdom that supposedly harbored a race of Dog-Men has survived on our maps as the Canary Islands off the western coast of Africa. In China, there were the Land of the Gentlemen to the east and the Kingdom of the One-Legged Giants to the west. The intentional exaggeration of

social traits and anatomical features helped sharpen distinctions, and was one way to better classify categorical realities. It also served to highlight alternative life-styles by holding them up like a mirror to ordinary reality.

What would correspond to the myth of the Canary Islands in the western sea would be the isles of the immortals off the eastward coast of China. Monkey, our Dog-Man in ape's clothing, was king over one of these paradisiacal isles in the Eastern Sea. His Flower-Fruit Mountain was an Eden regained, with blossoms that never faded and fruits forever in season. The mountain itself was a clone of Tai Shan 泰山, China's world mountain. It was the conduit between Heaven and Earth, and housed the chambers of Hell below. Since the mountain touched Heaven, Monkey claimed for himself the same status, calling himself "The Great Sage on a par with Heaven." His regime was, by the standards of the Confucian Heaven, lawless. Monkey ruled with proverbial Taoist *wuwei* 無爲—laissez-faire, non-action, or non-ado. His island's celebration of natural anarchy was bound to clash with Confucian order and upset the hierarchy of Name and Rank in the court of the Jade Emperor. And this trickster did turn the world of the Jade Emperor upside down, much to the delight of any Taoist reader of this text.

In time, though, Monkey turned from Titan to Saint. As a Titan he was crushed "between a rock and a hard place"; as a prospective saint he was released by Guanyin to become a protector of the Buddhist pilgrim Tripitaka. We scholars may think of Monkey as nothing more than a literary creation, but the common folk of China know better. To us, a text is just a text, but to them *Journey* is more than fable: it tells of reality. The Sage Equal to Heaven is a living reality, as real as St. Christopher is to an old-time Catholic. As St. Christopher still protects travelers, Monkey still answers prayers. Monkey has his own temple; he was worshipped and prayed to as a god by the history-making rebels of the Boxer Rebellion. This Great Sage is still present to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. We will return to this issue of his ancient reality in the final section of this essay. Let us now turn to his enlightened career.

PART 3: A MONKEY OF A SIXTH PATRIARCH

There is a famous Zen kōan (meditation problem) that is relevant to our discussion of Monkey:

Do dogs have Buddha-nature?

No.

This kōan is the first in the Zen collection known as the *Wumenguan* 無

門關 (Jap. *Mumonkan* [Gateless gate]). I used to see it as extending Buddhahood beyond the realm of the human mind, where the anthropocentric position of Hongzhou Zen 洪州禪 had restricted it. Now WHITE's study on the Dog-Man (1991) puts a new twist to it, for it is possible that the word "dog" did not refer to animals but to "sub-human" barbarians. If so, the question raised is whether non-Chinese are also capable of enlightenment. Can barbarians be Zen masters?

The question is not as silly as it may seem, because in South China the Yao and Man tribes actually did trace their ancestry back to a Dog Prince—southern barbarians were, in a certain sense, "dogs." And in Zen history the question of whether such "dogs" possess Buddha-nature had indeed been raised, in no less a text than the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*. The story is that Huineng 慧能 (613–713), a boy from the South and the future Sixth Patriarch, was out gathering firewood one day when he chanced to hear someone chanting the *Diamond Sūtra*. Awakened on the spot, he asked the cantor about it and was told that he could learn its truth more directly from Hongren 弘忍 (601–74), the reigning Fifth Patriarch. Journeying north to see Hongren, Huineng was asked upon his arrival from whence he came. Upon hearing the boy's place of origin, Hongren wondered aloud whether a southern barbarian could ever hope to be enlightened.

That set the stage for Huineng's famous rejoinder. He supposedly said, "In terms of place of origin, men may indeed be of North or of South. But as to their possessing Buddha-nature, no such division exists."¹⁶ Hongren recognized the boy's innate wisdom, but nevertheless sent him out to do menial work as a laborer in the monastic compound. Later, when Hongren was seeking a Dharma heir, Shenxiu 神秀 (605?–706), his leading disciple, composed a verse that said:

The body is the bodhi tree,
The mind is a mirror bright.
Daily and with diligence wipe it
Let no dust upon it adhere.

When told of this, Huineng composed a rejoinder that proved he was the better of the two:

Originally there is no tree of Bodhi
Nor a mirror with a stand.
From the beginning nothing exists,
Where can dust adhere?

Seeing this poem, Hongren sent for Huineng and transmitted the

Dharma and the patriarchal robe to him. This he supposedly did in secret, at midnight. He thereupon told Huineng to go back south for his own safety. This story was well known by the Sung era, and whoever compiled *Journey* must have known of it.

What concerns us is this: when read more closely, it will be noted that when Hongren characterized Huineng as a “barbarian” from the South, the Chinese word rendered in English as “barbarian” is actually the word for a species of monkey. That is because the civilized northern Chinese viewed the southerners as dogs, or, in this case, as monkeys (a near synonym). So in this exchange between Hongren and Huineng, the question was, to wit:

Can a southern barbarian, or “monkey,” have Buddha-nature?
(The answer was) Yes.

In a sense, this exchange anticipated the Zen kōan about whether dogs—another nickname for southern barbarians—have Buddha-nature. The answer to this latter question might be “No,” but that No might be a comment on the questioner’s presumption: there is no North versus South, no Man versus Dog/Monkey, as far as Buddha-nature is concerned.

The *Platform Sūtra* is significant here because there is a real possibility that, if Huineng was an enlightened “southern monkey,” Monkey could well have been intended as an enlightened Huineng. That is to say, the whole narrative about Monkey’s initial enlightenment under the patriarch Subodhi might have been consciously modeled on the enlightenment of Huineng under Hongren. Since the episode of Monkey’s apprenticeship under Subodhi—a Taoist master who taught Monkey the power of transformation and the magic of immortality—is not found in the folklore of either the White Ape or the Sage Equal to Heaven, it is possibly the work of its final compiler, who, as mentioned above, was quite likely familiar with the *Platform Sūtra*. The episode is pivotal because it did much to humanize this simian: Monkey became more human as he beat out the human disciples of Subodhi in acquiring the Dharma from his master. This demiurge acquired his powers not by birth but, in the old-fashioned way, by earning them. We love him more for this.

The name of his master, Subodhi, is clearly a take-off on that of Subhūti, the guardian of the Mahāyāna wisdom mentioned in the *Diamond Sūtra*. Since this scripture taught *śūnyatā* (emptiness), it is fitting that Monkey should awaken to his identity as Sun Wukong, Monkey Awakened to Emptiness. And just as Huineng stole the Dharma from

the northern master Shenxiu, his cultural superior, so Monkey stole the transmission from his superiors, the human disciples of Subodhi. Zen purists may point out that Monkey comes in a poor second compared with Huineng, and his enlightenment is indeed a humorous parody. This parody, though, is not without its share of Zen wit. We are dealing with "folk Zen,"¹⁷ but then even classic Zen was, almost from the start, indebted to such folk wisdom. The popular text of the *Platform Sūtra* itself took over much folksy material that had found its way into the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (801).¹⁸

Not everything in Monkey's journey to enlightenment is modeled after Huineng's. Monkey's journey to find Subodhi is rather unique—and peculiar. Monkey goes from east of China (the Eastern Continent) to the Western Continent (where Subodhi lived) by first stopping over in the Southern Continent (i.e., India). This somehow involves mixing the Chinese cosmography of the Nine Continents (nine boxes in a 3×3 square) with the Indian Sumeru cosmography (based on a cross-and-circle pattern). Try as I might to come up with a reasonable package of the two, I cannot see how Monkey could have made the journey the way he did. The text has Monkey traveling northwestward by boat from his Aolai Island east of China and landing on the northwestern coast of the Southern Continent. Finding India too hot and the people too gross with passion, Monkey transverses that land, crosses another ocean, and arrives on the Western Continent. But there is no way a northwestward journey from east of China could ever end up in a southwestward India. The only explanation I can come up with is that for some reason the compiler of *Monkey* reversed the route taken by the Indian Monkey King Hanuman, who crossed from the southeastern tip of India to southeastward Sri Lanka.

Once Monkey arrives on the Western Continent, his story more closely parallels that of Huineng. Soon after arriving he encounters a woodcutter; Huineng was either a woodcutter himself or met such a hidden sage. The woodcutter that Monkey meets sings the secrets of the Taoist *Yellow Court Classic*, a text that is to Taoism what the *Diamond Sūtra* is to Buddhism. Huineng was awakened by the latter text and thereby led to Hongren; Monkey is awakened too but makes a comic fool of himself by worshipping the woodcutter, mistaking him for an enlightened master. The woodcutter hastily refuses the homage and sends Monkey to Subodhi. At their initial meeting, Subodhi doubts Monkey's worthiness as a student, as Hongren did Huineng's. Subodhi thinks Monkey is a liar, for, he believes, no one could possibly have made the long journey from Aolai. Finding out that Monkey in fact did make the trip, Subodhi asks his surname. The word for surname is

xing 性 in Chinese, but this word can also denote “temperament” in general or “nature,” as in “Buddha-nature” (*fo-xing* 佛性). Monkey thought the question concerned his (monkey) nature or temperament, so he answered:

I have no *xing*. If a man rebukes me, I am not offended; if he hits me, I am not angered. In fact, I just repay him with a ceremonial greeting and that’s all. My whole life is without ill temper. (YU 1977, 81)

Yu takes the word *xing* in the last line to denote “(ill) temper.” The lack of *xing* then means that Monkey had no ill temper—even when abused, he just played dumb. Philologically, Yu’s translation is correct. But his very polish obscures a fine point about Monkey’s claim to having *fo-xing*, or Buddha-nature. Waley’s translation is less polished but his colloquial rendition better captures this “folk Zen” flavor:

I never show *xing*. If I am abused, I am not at all annoyed. If I am hit, I am not angry; but on the contrary, twice more polite than before. All my life, I have never shown *xing*. (WALEY 1943, 19)

Monkey had never “shown *xing*.” In colloquial Chinese, this means *shengxing* 生性, which connotes the acquisition by man (not by monkeys) of normative, social behavior.

Since Monkey had misunderstood the question, the Patriarch hastens to correct him—he was, he says, inquiring about Monkey’s surname, not about his (dumb monkey) nature. Once more, Waley’s folksy translation better captures the tone of the original:

“I have no family,” said Monkey, “neither father nor mother.”
 “Oh indeed,” said the Patriarch. “Perhaps you grew on a tree!”
 “Not exactly,” said Monkey, “I came out of a stone.” (WALEY 1943, 19)

It is upon learning of Monkey’s extraordinary birth that Subodhi recognizes Monkey for his worth. This is a cosmogonic being, one born of chaos and nursed by Heaven and Earth.

This initial exchange may seem merely humorous: Monkey’s initial answer (“I have no *xing*”) was due to a misunderstanding; his amended answer (“I have no name”) seems a non sequitur. But actually there is much Zen wisdom in this. In Zen (as in Taoism), the values of the world are often turned upside down and the wise often

appear foolish (thus D. T. Suzuki was named Daisetsu 大拙, “great fool”). Monkey’s first answer makes him seem a nitwit—that monkey of a description of himself is his being himself. But when he further clarifies the situation with his second answer, he truly shows his “naturalness.” He is, to use an American expression that the Taoists would applaud, “a natural.” This child of nature is as nameless as nature itself.

Names came with culture; they are what man (Adam) labeled things with. But before men so named things, there was the Tao, and that Tao was Nameless. Laozi characterized it as the “uncarved block.” Monkey was born of that uncarved boulder. This offspring of the Tao had no human name, nor had he a human nature. People get angry when insulted because they have a sense of right and wrong and possess a sense of pride. So, as Mencius noted, even a hungry beggar would rather starve than eat a bowl of rice kicked across the floor to him by a spiteful donor. Only dogs take whatever food is given them, and only monkeys are doubly eager to please when they are made fools of. Yet by not being civilized in the ways of men, Monkey kept intact what Zen calls his “original face (the face of nature) before he was born.” Monkey was *tianran* 天然, spontaneous like heaven.

In the Hongzhou Zen of Maxu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–88), to be natural is to be one with the Way. This school gave us the *Baolin zhuan*, which incorporated folk wisdom as Zen wisdom. It also rewrote the so-called Transmission Verses, poems supposedly composed by the Zen patriarchs to mark the transmission of the teaching. The original Transmission Verses in the *Platform Sūtra* tell of Bodhidharma coming to China “to sow the seed of enlightenment” so that five generations later, the seed would bear an upright, five-petaled flower in Huineng. The patriarchs in between supplied the conditions necessary for this blossoming: they provided the soil, the warmth, the moisture, and the care that brought the seed to flower.

The *Baolin zhuan* redacted these verses and one of its lines well describes Monkey himself. By dropping all reference to the old “seed-conditions-fruit” (i.e., causative analysis), it glorified Buddhahood as a natural given. There is no need to wait for the seed of wisdom to bloom. Why? Because ultimately there is neither *xing* (nature to nurture) nor *sheng* 種 (seed to germinate). Buddha-nature is *wuxing yi wusheng* 無性亦無生 (neither innate nor nursed). That describes Monkey, who had “no nature to show.” This nameless orphan is somehow the Unborn (a pun on *anupātti-dharmakṣānti*). He is *sūnyatā* itself.¹⁹

Monkey acts the fool but is no fool. This becomes evident soon enough. Made to work in the garden, as Huineng was, Monkey sees

the truth one day when, standing at the back of the hall, he hears the Patriarch lecture. Monkey scratches his ears, rubs his jaw, and grins from ear to ear, antics that remind us of a disciple of Mazu who, after Mazu kicked him into enlightenment near the water, was unable to stop laughing. And indeed Monkey, enlightened by the lecture, is soon dancing on all fours, to the amazement of the unenlightened lot. Later Monkey steals to the Patriarch's room at midnight and receives the secret transmission. But because he shows off his talent too publicly—he turns himself into a pine tree (a symbol of immortality) to entertain his fellows—Monkey too is sent homeward by the Patriarch, as Huineng was by Hongren. Read side by side, the stories of Huineng and Monkey run a remarkably similar course.

But the two lives soon diverge. Upon his return home, Monkey uses his newly acquired powers to eliminate the demon who took over his kingdom in his absence. He then coerces the Dragon King into giving him the Wish-Granting Rod for a weapon. Soon afterwards he deletes names from the register of death in hell, and later, steals the peaches of immortality from the garden of the Queen Mother of the West. Puffed up by pride and egged on by the small monkeys, Monkey declares himself "Equal to Heaven." Demanding his rightful place in the sky, Monkey gets himself an official post. He happily strolls about Heaven, a Taoist natural whose Confucian gown wears badly on him. Though still a good-tempered fellow, he is not always courteous, since he never quite learned the decorum of civilized men. He then blows his top when he discovers that the Jade Emperor has hoodwinked him with the empty title of "Royal Stable Hand." In his rage, Monkey nearly brings Heaven down.

Although he is never malicious—this is his redeeming trait—we still have to wonder: What happened to his good nature, his claim to being never "annoyed even when provoked" nor "angry when struck"? Something is amiss—his awakening to *śūnyatā* under Subodhi was somehow incomplete. He needs a second journey to the West to truly find himself. Somewhere in this likable imp lurks a demon with a deep-seated grievance against Heaven. It appears that before Monkey can turn from Titan to Saint, he has first to take on Heaven.

The Titans were Greek Chthonians who were pushed out of Mt. Olympus, attempted a last revolt against Zeus and company, lost, and were banished forever to the lower regions of land and water. Legacies of the Mycenaean era, they survived as Medusas and Cyclopes. The latter herded sheep on outlandish islands, still refusing to bow to the rule of Zeus or heed Odysseus's request for basic (Zeus-sanctioned) hospitality.

However, this type of Titanic revolt was rarely postulated in China. It is true that the Shang 商 dynasty (c. 1500–100 B.C.E.) worshipped a sky god, while the prehistoric Xia 夏 dynasty that preceded it worshipped dragons, snakes, and tortoises, and that these Xia gods were apparently demoted to the lower, watery regions during the rise of the Shang “high ancestor” called Shangdi 上帝, the Lord on High. And just as Zeus fathered the noble houses of Greece, Shangdi fathered the royal lineages of Shang and Zhou. Both did so by mating with a female ancestress (one of Shangdi’s mates swallowed the egg of the sun-bird, while the other stepped on a giant bird’s footprint). The Chthonians of Xia that preceded Shangdi and the kings of Shang and Zhou he fathered usually replicated themselves autochthonically, much as old Kronos and Uranus did.

Monkey is rock-born and thus of this autochthonic species. His birth is similar to that of Pangu 盤古, the “Coiled Ancient”²⁰ or the giant who burst from a world egg. Pangu pushed one half of the egg up and the other half down, and they became heaven and earth. Monkey was Pangu reborn; heaven and earth nursed him. He also came out with all his faculties complete, in the manner of the Buddha (like the baby Buddha, Monkey also claimed that there was no one equal to him on earth).

Though heroes are deserving of such cosmogonic births, the last figure in Chinese history reputed to have been born from a rock was Qi 啓, son of Sage-King Yu and the true founder of the Xia dynasty (which, as mentioned above, once worshipped the Chthonians). Qi’s birth from a rock resulted from the disobedience of Yu’s wife. Yu had ordered her not to intrude upon him during his Herculean labor of stemming the Flood. When she did, she saw Yu in his animal form—a three-legged tortoise—and fled in fear, turning herself to stone when Yu gave chase. Yu demanded his son. The pregnant stone burst and Qi (meaning “beginning,” “dawn,” or “first light”) was born. This episode has been interpreted variously as a female breaking the taboo of a male initiation rite or as a lunar myth involving death and rebirth, but the core is nevertheless about an autochthonic birth. Earth, as Mother, swallowed her sons only to give birth to them anew at the beginning of the new year. All Xia rulers were born in this way: Yu himself was born of Gun, who was also able to change himself into the mythic three-legged turtle. A turtle in its wintry hibernation is an inanimate rock. In spring the turtle (Gun) is believed to give birth to the dragon (Yu). A turtle intertwined with a snake is still a Chinese symbol of life and death—it is the Dark Warrior of winter conjoined to the Green Dragon of spring.²¹

The Greek Chthonians recycled themselves between Kronos and

Uranus. Zeus put an end to that by killing his father Uranus; then, by his many amorous affairs, he initiated the Age of Men. In China the Xia gods also recycled themselves until the sky god, Shangdi, put an end to that by fathering the house of Shang. Subsequent to this we do not hear of stone-born kings until we come to the fabled birth of Monkey, who ruled his island outside China proper much as the Cyclopes did. Monkey presumably could have ruled there forever had he not decided to take on Heaven; in that sense, his act constitutes a belated Titanic revolt. We will offer further evidence for the existence of a conflict between sky gods and earth deities in the Appendix; to introduce this material here would lead us too far afield. Meanwhile we will pick up the story from where we left off, namely with the Stone Monkey's running amok in the citadel of Heaven.

PART 4: THE PREHISTORIC FACE OF MONKEY

Having wrought havoc in heaven, Monkey storms out and, with regal spite, returns home. The Jade Emperor calls on all the help he can summon in order to make Monkey pay for his unforgivable transgressions, but Monkey is able to fight off his attackers until Erlang, his old nemesis, joins the fray. Erlang can match, one by one, Monkey's seventy-two transformations of the Earthly Multitude. Protean strength is thus pitted against Protean strength. It is a no-win situation for Monkey, so, during a breather between bouts, he takes flight. After a number of changes, Monkey tries one final masquerade in an attempt to trap Erlang.

Rolling down the mountain slope, he squatted there and changed into a little temple for the local spirit. His wide-open mouth became the entrance, his teeth the doors, his tongue the Bodhisattva, and his eyes the windows. Only his tail he found to be troublesome, so he stuck it up in the back and changed it into a flagpole. (WALEY 1943, 68)

If Erlang walks in the temple door, Monkey can swallow him alive. But the flagpole gives Monkey away—Erlang has seen many a temple before, but never one with a flagpole sticking up at the back. Seeing through Monkey's disguise, he vows to "smash down the windows and kick in the doors." Fearful of having his eyes blinded and his teeth knocked out, Monkey escapes just in time.

This episode allows us to see the original face of this little monster. The flagpole tail, the gateway mouth—these give away more than even Erlang knows. They put Monkey back in time, back into the company

of some very ancient Chinese deities. We will begin with the tail because it makes an infamous appearance in European mythology also, being the telltale trait that the Devil, Satan, shares with the little devil Monkey. In medieval Europe, exorcists could reveal the Devil for what he was by exposing his tail. This tail is one of the traits that the Devil inherited from certain of the early Chthonians (such as his cloven hooves, also shared by the satyrs of old). The Devil's serpentine tail goes back to the snake in the Garden of Eden, while the Devil's trident goes back to Neptune. The trident, an ancient symbol of power (*de*) and of the "coincidence of opposites," is associated with Poseidon, brother of Zeus and a Titan who rode the waves on a sea serpent (dragon), trident in hand. This pre-Olympian deity left his mark (three holes) at Delphi where his trident once struck, long before Apollo claimed Delphi as his own.

Monkey's flagpole of a tail not only gives him away, it also ties him to an ancient species of Chinese Chthonian. Sky gods like Zeus or Shang-di, as the reputed ancestors of man, are naturally anthropomorphic, while the earlier Chthonians, being prehuman, are naturally zoomorphic. The prehistoric Xia dynasty knew these demiurges of theirs as "snakes, turtles, and dragons": Yu was a dragon; his father Gun was a turtle; and his son Qi, born from a rock (an inanimate turtle shell), still had tiny green dragons dangling from his ears. Nowadays we might not believe that we descend from such watery animals—Darwin has taught us to look to the ape as our ancestor instead. But even so, mankind won its distinction from the simian lot by losing fully and finally the monkey's tail. To have or to grow a tail is to regress to this prehuman form.

Fish, snake, dragon, and turtle all share the common trait of a tail. Three of these creatures are still represented in modern Chinese calligraphy as having tails turned upward towards the sky.²² Here are the characters (note the rising end of the lower right-hand lines):

snake 蛇 turtle 龜, 龜 dragon 竜, 龍

In Shang and Zhou ritual bronzes, the serpentine tail coils itself counterclockwise. Like circular animal bands found on other ancient artifacts from other early cultures, the counterclockwise movement symbolizes the path of the moon. (The clockwise path is solar; the popular yin-yang circle still follows the lunar path.) In Chinese myth, that up-turned tail is associated with a chthonic defiance of Heaven. This is indicated in a number of fragments of ancient myths:

—the tortoise Gun, who stole the magical earth from Heaven, dragged its tail behind it;

- Wei-tuo, the marsh spirit, stood tall like a chariot's mast (see Appendix);
- Cripple Shu, a Turtle-Woman in *Zhuangzi* 莊子 5, wears a pig-tail pointing upwards;
- Monkey pokes a hole in heaven with his magical rod and sticks his flagpole tail up with similar insolence.

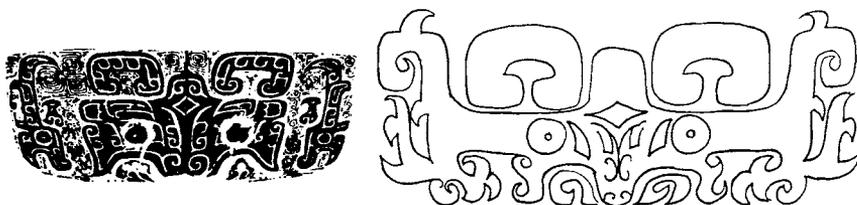
In a future article, I will explain how this tail goes back to the myth of the famous "one-legged Qui" (Yizhu Qui 一足夔). Morohashi's *Dai-kanwa jiten* offers a Ming-Qing picturesque rendition of Qui as a cow standing on one hind leg. This, however, is silly. What "one leg" originally indicated was simply seminal life, wiggling germ, incipient motion. One-legged Qui is the Ur-Being of all beings, taking, on land, the form of a land animal (thus the cow); in water, that of a sea creature (thus the snake-fish); and in the air, that of the one-legged Qui phoenix. This is the Great One, Laozi's mystic female, and the mother of all things.²³ The one-legged often walks with a limp: it is incipient movement seeking mature mobility. Since anything primeval should be one-legged, Fuxi and Nugua, China's first divine couple, are regularly given intertwining, serpentine tails in ancient tomb carvings (see the earlier discussion on the *gao-long*). Nor is the myth of the One-Legged unique to China: in the West, we know this seminal human in the person of Oedipus, the "swollen-legged," son of Laius, the "lame" (in the Bible, Jacob, after wrestling with the angel, also walked with a limp). In China the same father-son Laius-Oedipus relationship is found between Yu and Gun. Yu was the dragon who danced on one leg; his father Gun was the mythic three-legged turtle.

The meaning of the myth of the sacred cripple is too complex to unravel here. Suffice it to note that with the rise of the anthropomorphic sky gods, the cripple, once prized, was deemed to be—in Biblical terms—an abomination to the Lord. But in older, chthonic cults, to be incomplete was to be on the way to completion. As with the moon that waxes and wanes, a crippled being is a potent being. It is Becoming itself. What is now remembered of the Titans—that they were "deformed" and "monstrous"—was perceived differently in their own time. They were not Beast, but Beauty incarnate.

Like the single tail or the single leg, the single horn ("unicorn") carried the power of beauty and seminal life. This is the reason why, in my earlier discussion of Li Bing, I prefer to see him as a rhino instead of a cow or a water buffalo, even though the word refers to all three (and actually the Chinese rhino is double-horned, with a full front horn and a stubby secondary one). The rhino's horn is potent: it con-

notes seminal life and is highly prized as an aphrodisiac (like the deer antler). The Chinese still kill the animal to procure this horn. Furthermore, the rhino is armored like the turtle and is likewise amphibious—a desirable trait for China’s liminal (draconic, transformative) species. Rhinos once roamed central China; they were known to the Shang, and can be seen in a beautiful Shang ritual goblet sculptured in the naturalistic shape of a rhino at the Palace Museum in Taipei.

When Monkey stuck up his tail as a flagpole, it both gave away his chthonic identity and belied his Titanic insolence. But Monkey’s mouth, masquerading as the door of the shrine, is iconographically just as telling. Hoping to eat Erlang alive, Monkey turned his mouth into the “portal of death.” But “portal of death” is the namesake of his totemic cousin, Ximen Bao, the Leopard of the Western Gate. The West, where the sun sets, is the gateway to death and paradise; the Dog of Hades stands guard there. In China, the role went to the leopard. Since food offered to the dead had to go through this gateway (i.e., this animal’s mouth), the Shang used to roast meat over a bronze tripod decorated with the *dautie* 饕餮, an animal mask made up of two leopards in profile facing one another. As a single, frontal, animal mask, it is a picture of half a gaping mouth topped by an angry-looking upper face:



Known in this form as the monster Insatiable, it is believed to devour everything, including itself. The name, however, reflects a Confucian judgment of this Shang glutton’s demand for endless sacrifice. In truth, the *dautie* is just another persona of the *gao-long*, the snake that bites or swallows its own tail. It is an alias of the Great Mother, Kronos, Uranus, the Dark Warrior, the Sphinx, and the Queen Mother of the West (in her most primitive tigress form).

Thus when Monkey turns his mouth into the door of a shrine and the “portal of death” to swallow Erlang, he is again regressing to his primeval form. Monkey is the *dautie*, the mask of a Xia god, condemned since the Zhou as a vampire and a cannibal—an agent of Death instead of a giver of (cyclical) Life. Monkey’s masquerade expresses this fall from grace. By the Han, the *dautie* design, once so prominent, had declined, often ending up as a crude drawing above the entrance to

a tomb, precisely what Monkey had turned his own insatiable mouth into.

This is not an uncommon fate for the old chthonic gods. In India an equally insatiable "Face of Glory" is stationed outside temples, supposedly to scare away the evil spirits. In Rome, the griffin was the guardian of the sarcophagus (which means "meat-eater"). In medieval Europe, gargoyles likewise crouched watchful on eaves. In Egypt, Anubis the Jackal—Dog-Man by another name—witnessed the weighing of souls. In Buddhism, Māra the Devil holds saṃsāra in his jaws. In Tang China, a pair of life-size hounds with human heads (and sometimes single horns) stood guard near the dead.

Admittedly, the animal mask of Shang employed the leopard, not the monkey, so we still have not accounted for the rise of Monkey in this dance of death. I have tried, but have not been able, to find monkey designs on early Shang and Zhou bronzes. It was only in the Han that monkey figures appeared on sizable numbers of tombs.

Yet ancient China must have known the existence of monkeys. The oracle bone script for one-legged Qui may well be a picture of a monkey standing on a single leg holding onto a branch. A close relative of the same Qui character yields something called a "mother monkey" 母猴, thought to represent the form of Shun 俊, a high ancestor of the Shang, and possibly linked to that monkey subspecies mentioned in the *Platform Sūtra*. Among the Yue 越 ethnic tribes in the south, Qui is still remembered as a one-legged mountain monkey with the face of a man and the body of a monkey, and gifted with a human tongue. Darwinians should not object to this connection between man and monkey, especially not when Peking Man is possibly the first Chinese Ape-Man.²⁴

Our search for the original face of Monkey should not distract us from his final destiny. Genealogy is only half the story. In his second westward trip Monkey rises above his animal past, above even humanity, to become a Buddha. In his first trip he acquired only Taoist immortality, and discovered only his premoral, childlike, monkey nature. Still capable of grudges against Heaven, Monkey loses his good temper and is damned for his Titanic pride. Only on his second trip West does Monkey, guided by the compassionate Guanyin, find his true self, his Buddha-nature. Guanyin teaches Monkey an invaluable lesson: that it is more important to tame the demon—the "monkey mind"—within than subdue the demons without.

In that second journey to the West, Monkey learns the art of Buddhist self-discipline. Guanyin initially puts a headband, a "crown of thorns" as it were, on Monkey's forehead. The headband gives Mon-

key insufferable headaches every time he harbors evil thoughts. Mindfulness of good and evil eventually allows Monkey to “Do good, avoid evil, and cleanse the mind.” By journey’s end, Monkey is his own master, a victor over the demons within. When he finally asks Guanyin to kindly remove the headband, Monkey is told that it is not necessary. The crown of thorns had long since magically disappeared. At last this protean Ape had grown, in his progress as a pilgrim, into a Buddhist saint.

APPENDIX

Weituo 委陀 and the Frog Folklore

The Duke of Ai asked Confucius, “I have heard of there being a one-legged Qui. Is this true?” The master answered, “Qui is a man. What is this about his being one-legged? His physical form is no different from that of other men. It is only that he was so uniquely gifted in understanding music that Yao said, ‘Qui is such that one (*i* —) of him is enough (*shu* 足).’ Thereupon he was made Minister of Music. The gentleman thus says: Qui is sufficient as one (*yizhu* 一足). It does not mean that he has only one leg (*yizhu* 一足).”
—*Huainanzi*

What is it that
Walked on all four in the morning,
Two at noon,
Three in the evening,
And the more legs it has, the weaker it becomes?
—The Sphinx’s Riddle, from *Oedipus Rex*

If a European is asked if Oedipus was lame or “hard of walking,” only one who knows the literal meaning of the name Oedipus would dream of agreeing. Most would say, as Confucius said when he was asked about the one-legged Qui [dragon] (*yizhu Qui*), “No, he was no cripple. He was a man like you and I— just more virtuous [heroic].”²⁵

Likewise, most people would agree with the answer given by Oedipus to the Sphinx’s riddle: “It is Man.” Few would consider the possibility that the answer intended by the Sphinx was: “It is the Sphinx.” Yet that was indeed the original solution to the mystery of life: namely, that men rose out of the four-legged kingdom, all sons of the Great Mother. Metonym-wise, this rise of man is captured by the

design of the Sphinx itself: a hairless human face (the mark of the naked ape called man) rising out of the torso of a four-legged lioness. We are indeed born of the animal kingdom. As babies, we go about on all fours, only later learning to stand upright (*homo erectus*). First walking with an uneven limp, one leg being stronger than the other, we progress to walking steadily on two. But in the autumn of our lives, we hobble again on three (two legs and a cane) before finally crawling on all fours back to the womb of Mother Earth. From dust we come; to dust we return. This is the lot of man. This was the intended answer of the Sphinx's riddle.

Oedipus, the "swollen-legged," was one-legged or seminal humanity. In China, this role is given to one-legged Qui. Here the word "leg" 足 is a metaphor for growth. To this day, the Chinese and the Japanese languages still use this character to mean "sufficiency." "Lack of leg" means "not enough." A threesome in mahjong is still called "short one leg," and to be satiated is literally to be "full of legs." Confucius could read "one leg" as "one (is) enough" because of this metaphoric usage, but, as mentioned, "one-legged" originally indicated a seminal being. Qui was the seminal dragon, the Ur-Being of all beings. When Laozi traced all things back to the One, he was just demythologizing this One(-legged) into the abstract One and calling it the Mother of All Things. Laozi, however, does not mention Qui by name—only Zhuangzi does, remembering Qui vaguely as a mountain spirit. But in the same paragraph where he recalls this about Qui, he mentions a marsh spirit, a swarm thing, called Weituo. He gives us this more detailed description:

The Weituo is as big as a wheel hub, as tall as a carriage shaft, has a purple robe and a vermilion hat and, as creatures go, is very ugly. When it hears the sound of thunder or a carriage, it grabs its head and stands up. Anyone who sees it will soon become a dictator. (WATSON 1964, 125)

We will read between the lines of this quote to present a story of the fall of this and other Chthonians in ancient China.

Since Weituo is said to be of the marshes, it is of water. Water belongs to the lower regions when contrasted with the sky above. Since all land rests on water in Chinese cosmography, water connects with the subterranean ocean itself. Water goes with rain and has natural ties with thunder. The *Yijing* 易經 [Book of changes] even remembers thunder as "rising from the ground in the second month (spring) and disappearing back into it in the tenth (fall)." This nine-month period

marks the farming season. Rain heralds it; rain ends it. Even today, the Chinese character for thunder 雷 depicts rain (coming down) over the fields. We will later see how the sound of thunder might be tied to the croaking of frogs.

Thunder, however, can also be the sound made by the wheels of the sun chariot as it rambles across the heavenly plain. Usually drawn by four horses, the sun chariot has large wheels set on giant hubs. When Zhuangzi remembers Weituo as being “as large as those hubs,” he is indicating its tie to the sun chariot. When he says the Weitou stands “as tall as the chariot’s shaft,” he is referring again to the sun chariot, but also pointing to the chthonic “one leg” or “one upturned tail” that we linked to the Chthonians in the main essay above. Whenever rain is imminent, this Weituo is said to “grab its head and stand up,” which is one way of saying that it becomes awake and alert. In Shakespearean terms, he “stands to” (becomes erect). That it “awakes” at the first sound of thunder (in spring) suggests that the Weituo has been asleep (in the winter months).

One animal known for poking its head out at the same time of the year is the tortoise, but the tortoise is more generally thought of as an animal that slumbers through the winter. In China the creature most often associated with waking up when spring comes is the dragon (the Dragon Boat Festival in spring celebrates this rebirth of life).²⁶ Thus the turtle of winter is succeeded by the dragon of spring. This is told in the myth of Yu and Gun, where Yu the dragon (snake) is said to be born of his father Gun the turtle. Yu is the new life that rises from the old, which Gun is regarded as being since the turtle essentially becomes a hard rock (a lifeless shell) when it withdraws its head and limbs and hibernates. Sometimes, though, this headless and limbless turtle can still wag its tail outside its shell, and this is its “one leg” (this also constitutes the “third leg” of the mythic *neng* 熊 turtle).²⁷ From this slumbering turtle of winter, the one-legged dragon of spring is born.

The myth has an empirical base. Farmers can still attest to how the turtle can foretell rain: it becomes “alert” when rain is near, it “grabs its head” (pokes it out), opens its mouth, and drinks up the raindrops. If the turtle Gun is remembered for poking its tail at Heaven, it is because in defiance of Heaven, Gun once stole the magical earth from Heaven and used it to stop the Flood, dragging his tail behind him. When Zhuangzi rejected political office—he preferred to be like the turtle resting in the mud—he was recalling Gun’s defiance of the imperial authorities.

Weituo the marsh spirit shared that defiant attitude—it too was a Titan with a grudge against Heaven. We are told that Weituo was ugly,

had a purple robe, and wore a vermilion hat, and was a bad omen since its appearance signaled the rise of evil kings. Purple is the color of royalty, which means that Weituo was at one time a god on high. Vermilion is the color of the sun-bird, so Weituo once had a celestial home, only being demoted to the watery regions below during the rise of more distinct sky gods. That suggests that there was a race of Titans who ruled the sky in China before they suffered a fate similar to the Chthonians of ancient Greece, pushed from Mt. Olympus by Zeus and company. In that political turnover, the Chthonians—once beautiful to their worshippers—became big and ugly, like the Cyclopes. That Weituo was “big and ugly” too puts him in the same league as these displaced Titans. A Xia demiurge, Weituo was probably demoted during the Shang and the Zhou with the rise of the new cult of Shangdi and Heaven. Since it was by the mandate of Shangdi and Heaven that the virtuous kings of Shang and Zhou ruled, Weituo, who championed the cause of the Xia and thus sided with the evil ruler overthrown by the Shang, is naturally perceived as an evil omen.

But what would Weituo actually look like if we ran into him in real life today? Although he could be turtle or snake, the best candidate offered us by the folklore of the Zhuang 壯 tribesmen in South China is the frog. A perennial symbol of fertility, this lunar animal is valued for its seasonal metamorphosis. Its stomach waxes and wanes like the moon. Its belly groans like thunder. It comes alive in spring and hibernates through the winter. For the Zhuang tribes now living in central and western Guangxi 廣西, the frog is also their totemic ancestor, their Shangdi. They still have myths that tell of the frog as the agent announcing the coming of rain and prophesying the fortunes of the harvest for the community.²⁸

Every New Year is attended by a rite of hunting and sacrificing a frog, a celebration that lasts for fifteen days. It begins on New Year's Day with everybody out digging in the fields, looking for a hibernating frog. The first man to find one is sure to have good fortune for the rest of the year, and his catch is announced throughout the village. A small coffin is then prepared and the frog entombed in it, after which it is paraded through the village amidst much merrymaking and general gift-giving. That night, everyone attends a formal funeral for the frog. But first, the body of last year's frog is exhumed. Based on its coloration, the fortune for the coming year is told. If the bones have turned yellow, it means a good harvest; if black, a bad one; if grayish, an average one. If they are white, it means there will be a good cotton crop.

The ritual is more intact than the myths, which have apparently

suffered some corruption. Some totemic beliefs have been overly rationalized. In one myth, for example, it is said that the frog was the son of the thunder god. Whenever mankind needed rain, it had only to inform the frog, and the frog, by croaking, would pass man's request for rain to his father. The thunderclouds would then gather and rain would fall. The croaking of the frog apparently acted as sympathetic magic, imitating the thunder of Heaven that preceded the rain. Originally the sacrifice of the frog was the sacrifice of the tribe's totemic ancestor, its giver of life, rain, fertility, and general good fortune.

But this sense of reverence has been lost in some redacted versions of the myth, perhaps because men had trouble identifying themselves with the frog as a fellow kinsman. Thus it is now said in one tale, for example, that a certain family was mourning its dead when a frog nearby joined in the chorus. Offended by its noisy croaking, one family member grabbed a pot of boiling water (a wicked substitute for the falling rain) and killed the frog with it. With the messenger so killed, prayers for rain to the god of thunder went unanswered. It was not until the people consulted their (human, not frog) ancestors and learned the cause of the drought that amends were made. Henceforth mankind showed filial respect to the frog and gave it a decent burial every year to ensure that the rain would fall. This is clearly a patched-up story, a broken and badly retold myth about a totemic sacrifice. If, indeed, the mistake lay simply in killing the messenger, why not stop the annual ritual killing altogether?

The next two stories have been affected even more by secular rationality. In one, thunder was plotting to strike a human hero (a rewrite of the old ancestor). The frog, a general serving the god of thunder (instead of being the god's son), leaked the secret to the man. The hero then laid a trap, captured the thunder god, and coerced him into sending rain. That the god did, but he was so angered by the frog's betrayal that he has sought to strike frogs dead with lightning ever since. A popular proverb now has man boasting, "No frog in hand, no fear of being hit by lightning." The other redacted tale, an explanation of the New Year's rite outlined above, goes even further. Mankind now boasts of killing one frog, and of threatening the thunder god with killing more if he does not send rain. This is not worship, it is blackmail. These tales tell of a mankind no longer fearful of the thunder god. As a result, the frog ends up being a mere pawn in the struggle between man and the natural elements.

The Confucian rationalization of the frog myth is complete in the following tale. Once upon a time, the thunder god had decreed that at death the old must allow themselves to be eaten by the young. This

cult of human sacrifice (a rewrite of the totemic feast) ended when one filial (i.e., Confucianized) family secretly killed a cow instead. The god was angry at the deception and sent the frog down to spy on man and find out who innovated this practice. But the frog was caught and forced to reveal to man the secret of how thunder was made, which was by beating on a large bronze drum topped by four carved frogs. This drum would send off lightning bolts. Learning this, the family made a similar drum with six frogs, two more than the god's. Beating the drum not only brought rain but also chased the god of thunder away for good. Large, ancient, bronze drums with four frogs on top have now been retrieved from archeological sites in South China. The above story is now told at funerals even as the shamans dance to modern versions of these frog drums.

In these frog tales, we see how an ancient Chthonian who used to rule on high suffered during the rise of the cult of Heaven. First it was demoted to the status of a fertility god in the marshes. For some time, though, this totemic god could inspire fear in men by withholding rain from the fields, before it suffered further indignities as the myth was rewritten into mere folktales about the unlucky frog.²⁹ The White Ape fared better in this regard. It at least retained the virile power to seduce women. Not so the frog, which lacks even enough potency (*de*) to qualify as an occasional Frog Prince for a human mate.³⁰

NOTES

1. I shall follow Waley in using the names Pigsy and Sandy for easier recognition. Anthony Yu's translation includes many invaluable annotations, another point in its favor. Henceforth in this essay *Monkey* refers to Waley and the first seven chapters, and *Journey* refers to Yu and the rest of the one-hundred-chapter version of this text.

2. For a general discussion, see YU 1977, 8-12. The tale, entitled "The Wife of the Monkey," is no. 30 in EBERHARD 1965, 67-68. See also tale no. 18, 29-31; notation on Monkey King on pages 214 and 206; and further references therein. The Palace Museum in Taipei has a large painting of a White Ape.

3. Cited by YU 1977, 9.

4. The Buddhist Jātaka tales contain many monkeys. Monkeys have often been used for their imitative piety. But Mulian's troupe is probably important for having provided the context for introducing Indian acrobatics to the theatrics of the Monkey King Hanuman on stage.

5. As noted by YU 1977, 10; found in chapter 66 as the Great Sage of Water Ape.

6. The two faces of the holy and the demonic lie behind the actual double masks of the gods. Śiva has three, with the third uniting the other two. See later discussion on the trident as a symbol of this union of opposites.

7. There has always been a relationship between the moon and the madness of multiple transformations (or, nowadays, multiple personalities). Water, as an exten-

sion of lunar myth (via the tide), is seen as formless, chaotic, and too slippery to grab hold of. On the moon and its mystique, see ELIADE 1963, 154–87. Carl Hentze has done much work on lunar myth, but his work is in German; for an example of his approach in English, see NAUMANN 1982.

8. A word of gratitude is in order here. Anthony Yu alerted me in a private communication that the novel knew of the possibility of a double for Monkey, “especially in the comic episode of the ‘Two Minds Disturbing the Universe’ in chapters 56–58.” I had not noticed this. *AFS* editor Peter Knecht also pointed out to me that monkeys can swim; I had assumed that they cannot. The idea that Monkey could not swim might be based on the *Rāmāyaṇa*: Hanuman, the Indian Monkey King, unable to swim from South India to Sri Lanka, climbed a hill, magically expanded his body, and leapt across the strait.

9. WALEY 1943, 17–100. This work is dated, of course. GRAHAM, nevertheless, uses a similar term: “potency” (1989, 13–15).

10. See WANG 1983 (a Chinese translation of Shirakawa Shizuka’s 白川靜 collected essays in Japanese), 35–47, for an overview of flood stories and their place in the early culture of China. On Li Bing, see note 11.

11. For the exploits of Erlang, see HUANG 1934. I am drawing on more recent data unearthed by XIAO (1987), whose article covers Li Bing, the cow and the river, Li Erlang, and, most importantly, Yang Erlang. My reason for reading “cow” (bull, water buffalo) as “rhinoceros” (another possibility) will be explained in part 4 of this essay. Anthony Yu, in a personal communication (16 August 1992), informed me that the White Ape assumes the form of a monster who led the Seven Fiends of Plum Mountain on the side of the Shang against the righteous forces of the rising Chou (chapters 87–93 of the *Fengshen yenyi* 封神演義). The Fiends were defeated by Nata and Erlang (under a different name) in a manner resembling the duel in *Monkey*.

12. See LAI 1990.

13. See LAI 1992.

14. See WANG 1983, 64–69. He has some observations on the leopard and the tigress that I missed in my essay (LAI 1990).

15. See O’FLAHERTY 1973.

16. My translation uses the later popular account—not the oldest Donghuang text—since the popular text was what counted in the Ming-Qing period. The idea that Huineng was a little boy comes from this later text.

17. “Folk Zen” is my term for a post-Sung genre of popularized Zen wisdom found in the literature of Ming-Qing. Besides *Monkey*, we see such folk Zen in works like *Water Margin*, *Drunken Buddha*, and *Dream of the Red Chambers*.

18. Popular culture upsurged in the later Tang, after 755. The *Baolin zhuan* took in much folk wisdom, but then much of Mahāyāna *avādana* literature too has a folk origin. The distinction between elite wisdom and folk wisdom in literature can be a precarious one, and ideologically motivated.

19. See LAI 1984a, which explains how the verses were redacted by the Hongzhou school.

20. This is my liberal reading, based on the coiled serpent in Shang libation bronzes. WHITE (1991) offers the more accepted reading of the name. The most detailed study of this southern chaos myth in English is by GIRARDOT (1983). I take the snake in the libation bronze to represent the awakening of the dragon by spring rain. Nelly Naumann sees it as another lunar symbol: the snake drinking from the water of life rooted in the moon. See NAUMANN 1982, 16–23.

21. On Gun, see LAI 1988, 28–36. See also ALLAN 1990 and my review of her

book in *Taoist Resources* 3/1: 73–82.

22. On Gun and Yu, see LAI 1984b. For the fish mask that goes with Qi having two dragons dangling from his ears, see LAI 1990. There are other pictograms in Chinese for animals with tails, but, in both the animal designs on ancient bronzes and in Chinese calligraphy, the tiger's tail does not point upward and the bird's tail is always tucked in.

23. On the Qui, see CHING and GUISSO 1991; certain of the essays are relevant to the discussion here, though the authors tend to accept the later readings of the dragon. See especially Raymond Dragan's "The Dragon in Chinese Myth and Ritual: Rites of Passage and Sympathetic Magic" on pages 135–62.

24. The material in this paragraph is taken from WANG 1983, 118–19.

25. I will present a more detailed analysis of the One-Legged in a future essay, tentatively titled "Unmasking the Cripples in *Zhuangzi* 5."

26. The Dragon Boat Festival actually falls in summer, so the intertwining of snake and tortoise is as much "summer and winter" as it is "spring libation and fall sacrifice."

27. The *neng* is three-legged, which is a metaphor of the amphibious animals that can walk on land and also swim in the water. The bird (a waterfowl) is also three-legged. To come up with the count of three, count the front fins of a sea turtle and the paddling feet of a duck as two, and add the "pulled-together" hind legs of the former and the tail of the latter as the third leg.

28. Materials for this discussion are taken from NAN 1987. See this issue of *Asian Folklore Studies* for my review of the PRC journal that Nan's article appears in.

29. NAN (1987) sees the Zhuang as originally fishermen, whose totems, when they were still living farther north, were the fish and snake. There are records of such a totemic tribe in the south; people there "cut off their hair and tattooed their bodies with fish scales so that as they swam in the waters, they would not be bitten by fish and snakes." (I myself see this as the source of the Xia myths about Yu and Gun.) But Nan's theory requires him to postulate that the Zhuang tribesmen adopted the frog as their totem after they stopped fishing following the introduction of agriculture to the area. I find such drastic changes in ancestry unlikely, even inconceivable, since the frog totems can be traced to frog drawings on the prehistoric red pottery of Yangshou. The author also uses a more Marxian reading, seeing the decline in potent frog stories as resulting from man's increasing dominance over nature. I prefer to remain with the symbolic paradigm shift, with Heaven and humanism (Zhou) rising at the expense of the Chthonian (Xia). The latter was then valued for its fertility role but condemned for its blood sacrifice.

30. The Frog Prince is a survival of the memory of the frog as a fertility deity and as an ancestor. The Dog Prince is by far the more widespread lore in South China. See WHITE 1991 and GIRARDOT 1983.

REFERENCES

ALLAN, Sarah

1990 *The shape of the turtle: Myth, art, and cosmos in early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

CHING, Julia and R.W.L. GUISSO, eds.

1991 *Sages and filial sons: Mythology and archaeology in ancient China*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

DUDBRIDGE, Glen

- 1970 *The Hsi-yu chi: A study of antecedents to the sixteenth-century Chinese novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

EBERHARD, Wolfram

- 1965 *Folktales of China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

ELIADE, Mircea

- 1963 *Patterns in comparative religion*, trans. by Rosemary Sheed. New York: New American Library.

GIRARDOT, Norman

- 1983 *Myth and meaning in early Taoism: The themes of chaos (hun-tun)*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

GRAHAM, A. C.

- 1989 *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical argument in ancient China*. La Salle, IL: Open Court.

HUANG Zhigang 黃芝岡

- 1934 *Zhongguo de shuishen* 中國的水神 [Chinese water gods]. Shanghai: Shenghuo.

LAI, Whalen

- 1984a The transmission verses of the Chan patriarchs: An analysis of the genre's evolution. *Chinese Studies* 1/2: 593-624.
- 1984b Symbolism of evil in China: The K'ung-chia myth analyzed. *History of Religions* 23: 316-43.
- 1988 Icon and iconoclasm: The earth diver Gun. *Taoist Resources* 1/2: 28-36.
- 1990 Looking for Mr. Ho Po: Unmasking the River God of ancient China. *History of Religions* 29: 335-50.
- 1992 From folklore to literate theater: Unpacking *Madame White Snake*. *Asian Folklore Studies* 51: 51-66.

NAN Hong'en 藍鴻恩

- 1987 *Zhuangzu qingwa shenhua pouxu* 壯族青蛙神話剖析 [An analysis of the frog myth of the Zhuang tribe]. In YUAN 1987, 45-52.

NAUMANN, Nelly

- 1982 *Sakahagi*: The "reverse flaying" of the heavenly piebald horse. *Asian Folklore Studies* 41: 7-38.

O'FLAHERTY, Wendy Doniger

- 1973 *Asceticism and eroticism in the mythology of Śiva*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

WALEY, Arthur, trans.

- 1934 *The way and its power*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- 1943 *Monkey: Folk novel of China by Wu Cheng'en*. New York: John Day Company.

WANG Xiaolian 王孝廉

- 1983 *Zhongguo shenhua* 中國神話 [Myths of China]. Taipei: Chang'an.

WATSON, Burton, trans.

- 1964 *Chuang-tzu: Basic writings*. New York: Columbia University Press.

WHITE, David Gordon

- 1991 *Myths of the Dog-Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

XIAO Bing 蕭兵

- 1987 *Erlang shenhua gushi de yuanshi yu shanxi* 二郎神話故事的原始與嬗襲 [The origin and development of the story of Erlang Shen]. In YUAN 1987, 143-68.

Yu, Anthony C., trans

1977 *The journey to the West*. 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

YUAN Ke 袁珂 ed.

1987 *Zhongguo shenhua* 中國神話, vol. 1. Peking: Xianhua.