

# **The journey to the west**

(第一卷)

*translated and edited by Anthony C. Yu.*

# THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST

VOLUME ONE

*Translated and Edited by Anthony C. Yu*



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*For Priscilla and Christopher*

## Preface

Though *The Journey to the West* is one of the most popular works of fiction in China since its first publication in the late sixteenth century, and though it has been studied extensively in recent years by both Oriental and Western scholars (notably Hu Shih, Lu Hsün, Chêng Chên-to, Ogawa Tamaki, Ōta Tatsuo, C. T. Hsia, Liu Ts'un-yan, Sawada Mizuho, and Glen Dudbridge), a fully translated text has never been available to Western readers, notwithstanding the appearance in 1959 of what is reputed to be a complete Russian edition.<sup>1</sup> Two early versions in English (Timothy Richard, *A Mission to Heaven*, 1913, and Helen M. Hayes, *The Buddhist Pilgrim's Progress*, 1930) were no more than brief paraphrases and adaptations. The French brought out in 1957 a two-volume edition which presented a fairly comprehensive account of the prose passages, but it left much of the poetry virtually untouched.<sup>2</sup> It was, moreover, riddled with errors and mistranslations. In 1964, George Theiner translated into English a Czech edition which was also greatly abridged.<sup>3</sup> This leaves us finally with the justly famous and widely read version of [Arthur Waley], published in 1943 under the misleading title *Monkey, Folk Novel of China*.<sup>4</sup> Waley's work is vastly superior to the others in style

1. A. Rogačev and V. Kolokolov, trans., *Wu Ch'êng-ên: Putešestvije na zapad*, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1959). See Z. Novotná's note in *Revue bibliographique de sinologie* 5 (1959): 304, for a brief descriptive review. I have not been able to obtain a copy of this edition for examination.

2. *Si yeou ki, ou le voyage en occident*, trans. Louis Avenol (Paris, 1957).

3. *The Monkey King*, ed. Zdena Novotná and trans. George Theiner (London, 1964).

4. (London, 1943). The book is currently available in a paper edition by Grove Press.

and diction, if not always in accuracy, but unfortunately it, too, is a severely truncated and highly selective rendition.

Of the one hundred chapters in the narrative, Waley has chosen to translate only chapters 1-15, 18-19, 22, 37-39, 44-49, and 98-100, which means that he has included less than one-third of the original. Even in this attenuated form, however, Waley's version further deviates from the original by having left out large portions of certain chapters (e.g., 10 and 19). What is most regrettable is that Waley, despite his immense gift for, and magnificent achievements in, the translation of Chinese verse, has elected to ignore the many poems—some 750 of them—that are structured in the narrative. Not only is the fundamental literary form of the work thereby distorted, but also much of the narrative vigor and descriptive power of its language which have attracted generations of Chinese readers is lost. The basic reason for my endeavor here, in the first volume of what is hoped to be a four-volume unabridged edition in English, is simply the need for a version which will provide the reader with as faithful an image as possible of this, one of the four or five lasting monuments of traditional Chinese fiction.

My dependence on modern scholarship devoted to this work is apparent everywhere in both the Introduction and the translation itself. I have stressed, however, in my discussion of the work those narrative devices and structural elements which have received comparatively little attention from recent commentators. For, in addition to being a work of comedy and satire masterfully wrought, *The Journey to the West* appears to embody elements of serious allegory derived from Chinese religious syncretism which any critical interpretation of it can ill afford to ignore.

A small portion of the Introduction first appeared as "Heroic Verse and Heroic Mission: Dimensions of the Epic in the *Hsi-yu chi*," *Journal of Asian Studies* 31 (1972): 879-97, while another segment was written as part of an essay, "Religion and Allegory in the *Hsi-yu chi*," for *Persuasion: Critical Essays on Chinese Literature*, edited by Joseph S. M. Lau and Leo Lee (in preparation).

The commitment to so large an undertaking can hardly be kept without the encouragement and support of friends both at the University of Chicago and elsewhere. It has been my good fortune since my arrival at Chicago to have had Nathan Scott as a teacher and a colleague. He is an unfailing and illuminating guide in the area



has been invaluable in helping me read Japanese scholarship. Edmund Rowan, doctoral candidate at the Department of Far Eastern Languages and Civilizations, has proofread the entire typescript with meticulous care and discerning criticisms. No brief statement is adequate to indicate the selfless and painstaking labor of Mrs. Donna Guido and Miss Susan Hopkins in the preparation of the manuscript.

Finally, I owe the successful completion of this first volume above all else to my wife and my young son. For their affectionate exhortations, for their unswerving devotion to the translation, and for their cheerful forbearance toward long stretches of obsessive work, the dedication betokens only a fraction of my gratitude.



## Abbreviations

- BSOAS *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.*
- Fa-shih chuan *Ta-T'ang Ta Tz'ü-ên-ssü San-tsang fa-shih chuan* 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳. By Hui-li 慧立 and Yen-ts'ung 彦棕. T. 50, no. 2053.
- HJAS *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies.*
- Hu Shih (1923) Hu Shih 胡適, "Hsi-yu chi k'ao-chêng 西游記考證," first published in 1923; reprinted in *Hu Shih wên-ts'un* 胡適文存, 4 vols. (Hong Kong, 1962), ii, 354-99.
- HYC *Hsi-yu chi* 西游記 (Peking, 1954). Abbreviation refers only to this edition.
- JA *Journal asiatique.*
- JW *The Journey to the West*
- JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society.*
- JAS *Journal of Asian Studies.*
- LSYYCK *Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an* 歷史語言研究所集刊.
- LWC "Hsi-yu chi" *yen-chiu lun-wên chi* 西游記研究論文集 (Peking, 1957).
- SPPY *Szu-pu pei-yao* 四部備要.
- SPTK *Szu-pu ts'ung-k'an* 四部叢刊.
- T. Taishō Tripitaka.
- TPKC *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記, 10 vols. (Peking, 1961).
- TT *Tao Tsang* 道藏.

References to all Standard Histories, unless otherwise indicated, are to the SPTK *Po-na* 百衲 edition.

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## Introduction

### HISTORICAL AND LITERARY ANTECEDENTS

The story of the *Hsi-yu chi* 西游記 (*The Journey to the West*) is loosely based on the famous pilgrimage of Hsüan-tsang (596–664), the monk who went from China to India in quest of Buddhist scriptures. He was not the first to have undertaken such a long and hazardous journey, for according to the tabulations of a modern scholar,<sup>1</sup> at least fifty-four named clerics before him, beginning with Chu Shih-hsing 朱士行 in A.D. 260, had traveled westward both for advanced studies and for the procurement of sacred writings, though not all of them had reached the land of their faith. After Hsüan-tsang, there were another some fifty pilgrims who made the journey, the last of whom was the monk Wu-k'ung 悟空, who stayed in India for forty years and returned in the year 789.<sup>2</sup> Hsüan-tsang's journey, therefore, was not unique, for it was part of the wider movement of seeking the dharma in the West which spanned nearly five centuries, but his extraordinary achievements and his personality did become part of the permanent legacy of Chinese Buddhism. He was, by most accounts, one of the best-known and most revered Buddhist monks.

Born probably in the year 596 into a family of fairly high officials in the province of Honan,<sup>3</sup> Hsüan-tsang, whose secular surname was Ch'ên, is described by his biographers as having been a child of prodigious intelligence.<sup>4</sup> When he was but eight years old, he was taught the Confucian classics by his father, and the influence of an older brother who was a Buddhist monk may have been decisive for his joining the monastic community in the city of Lo-yang at the age of thirteen. Even at this tender age he had developed a deep interest in the study of Buddhist scriptures, and he later journeyed with his brother to Ch'ang-an in the neighboring province of Shensi to continue his studies with the dharma masters of that city.

Hsüan-tsang grew up in a period of tremendous social and intellectual ferment in Chinese history. Yang Chien (r. 581–604), the founding emperor of the Sui dynasty, came to power in 581, and though the dynasty itself lasted less than forty years (581–618), its accomplishments, as Arthur Wright has written, were

prodigious, and its effects on the later history of China were far-reaching. It represented one of those critical periods in Chinese history—paralleled perhaps only by the Ch'in dynasty (221–207 B.C.)—when decisions made and measures taken wrought a sharp break in institutional development in the fabric of social and political life. The Sui reunified China politically after nearly three hundred years of disunion; it reorganized and unified economic life; it made great strides in the re-establishment of cultural homogeneity throughout an area where subcultures had proliferated for over three centuries. Its legacy of political and economic institutions, of codified law and governmental procedures of a new concept of empire, laid the foundations for the great age of T'ang which followed.<sup>5</sup>

It was also a time marked by the revival of religious traditions, for Sui Wên-ti (Yang Chien) actively sought the support and sanction of all three religions—Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism—to consolidate his empire, thus reversing the persecutive policies of some of his predecessors in the Northern Chou dynasty and providing exemplary actions for the early T'ang emperors in the next dynasty.<sup>6</sup> Though he might lack some of the personal piety of a previous Buddhist emperor such as Liang Wu-ti (r. 502–49), Wên-ti himself was unquestionably a devout believer, whose imperial patronage gave to the Buddhist community the kind of support, security, and stimulus for growth not unlike that received by the Christian church under Constantine. Wên-ti began a comprehensive program of constructing stūpas and enshrining sacred relics in emulation of the Indian monarch Aśoka; he also established various assemblies of priests to propagate the faith and study groups to promote sound doctrines. Even allowing for some exaggerations in the Buddhist sources of the early T'ang period, it was apparent that Buddhism, by the end of the Sui dynasty, had enjoyed remarkable growth, as evidenced by the vast increase of converts, clerics, and temples throughout the land.

That Hsüan-tsang himself at an early age was very much caught up in the intellectual activities spreading through his religious com-

munity at this time can perhaps best be seen in the kind of training he received as a young acolyte. His biographers mention specifically that after he first entered the Pure Land Monastery in Lo-yang, he studied with abandonment the *Nieh-p'an ching* 涅槃經 (*Nirvāṇa Sūtra*) and the *Shê-ta-ch'êng lun* 攝大乘論 (*Mahāyāna-saṃparigraha śāstra*) with two tutors.<sup>7</sup> The citation of these two works is significant to the extent that it may reflect a salient part of the doctrinal controversy that went on for some three centuries in Chinese Buddhism. A major Mahāyāna text, the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* was translated three times: first by Fa-hsien in collaboration with Buddha-bhadra, then by Dharmakshema of Pei-Liang in 421, and again by a group of southern Chinese Buddhists led by Hui-yen (363–443) in the Yüan-chia era (424–453). Its widespread appeal, particularly in the south, and the repeated discussions of it can readily be attributed to its emphasis on a more inclusive concept of enlightenment and salvation. According to Kenneth Ch'en, the Buddhists until this time

had been taught that there is no self in nirvāṇa. In this sutra, however, they are told that the Buddha possesses an immortal self, that the final state of nirvāṇa is one of bliss and purity enjoyed by the eternal self. *Samśāra* is thus a pilgrimage leading to this final goal of union with the Buddha, and this salvation is guaranteed by the fact that all living beings possess the Buddha-nature. All living beings from the beginning of life participated in the Buddha's eternal existence, and this gives dignity to them as children of the Buddha.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, the śāstra, though also a Mahāyānist text, belongs to the Yogācāra school of Indian idealism, and it stresses what may be called a more elitist view of salvation.<sup>9</sup> In the biography, Hsüan-tsang is depicted as not only a specially able exponent of this text, but also as deeply vexed by the question of whether all men, or only part of humanity, could attain Buddhahood. It was to resolve this particular question as well as other textual and doctrinal perplexities that he decided to journey to India. Years later, when he was touring the land of the faith, he prayed before a famous image of Kuan-yin (Avalokiteśvara) on his way to Bengal, and his three petitions were: to have a safe and easy journey back to China, to be reborn in Lord Maitreya's palace as a result of the knowledge he gained, and to be personally assured that he would become a Buddha since the holy teachings claimed that not all men had the Buddha-nature.<sup>10</sup>

As he studied with various masters in China during his youth, Hsüan-tsang became convinced that unless the encyclopedic *Yogācārya-bhūmi śāstra* (*Yü-chia shih-ti lun* 瑜家師地論), the foundational text of this school of Buddhism, became available, the other idealistic texts could not be properly understood. He resolved to go to India, but his application to the imperial court for permission to travel was refused, probably because the frontier at that time was not yet secured. The second emperor of the T'ang dynasty, T'ai-tsung (r. 627–649), had just assumed his title, but his rule over the empire was hardly complete. Emboldened, however, by an auspicious dream in which he saw himself crossing a vast ocean treading on sprouting lotus leaves and uplifted to the peak of the sacred Sumeru Mountain by a powerful breeze, Hsüan-tsang set out probably, late in 627, by joining in secret a merchant caravan.<sup>11</sup> Sustaining appalling obstacles and hardships, he traversed Turfan, Darashar, Tashkent, Samarkand, Bactria, Kapisa, and Kashmir, until he finally reached the Magadha Kingdom of mid-India (now Bodhgaya) around 631. Here he studied with the aged Silabhadra (Chieh-hsien 戒賢) in the great Nālandā Monastery for five years—in three separate periods. He traveled widely throughout the land of his faith, visited many sacred sites, and, according to his biographers, expounded the Dharma before kings, priests, and laymen. Heretics and brigands alike were converted by his preaching, and scholastics were defeated in debates with him. After sixteen years, in 643, he began his homeward trek, taking the wise precaution while en route in Turfan the following year to send a letter to ask for imperial pardon for leaving China without permission. Readily absolved by T'ai-tsung, who owed his own rise to power in no small way to the decisive support of Buddhists on several occasions, Hsüan-tsang arrived at the capital, Ch'ang-an, in the first month of 645, bearing some 657 items (*pu* 部) of Buddhist scriptures. The emperor, however, was away in the eastern capital, Lo-yang, preparing for his campaign against Koguryō.

In the following month, Hsüan-tsang proceeded to Lo-yang where emperor and pilgrim finally met. More interested in “the rulers, the climate, the products, and the customs in the land of India to the west of the Snowy Peaks”<sup>12</sup> than in the fine points of doctrinal development, T'ai-tsung was profoundly impressed by the priest's vast knowledge of foreign cultures and peoples. He offered to make Hsüan-tsang an appointive official, but the priest declined; instead, Hsüan-tsang

declared his resolve to devote his life to the translation of sūtras and śāstras. He was first installed in the Hung-fu Monastery and subsequently in the Tz'ü-ên Monastery of Ch'ang-an, the latter edifice having been built by the crown prince (later, emperor Kao-tsung) in memory of his mother. Supported by continuous royal favors and a large staff of some of the most able Buddhist clerics of the empire, Hsüan-tsang spent the next nineteen years of his life translating and writing. By the time he died in 664, he had completed translations of seventy-four works in 1,355 volumes (*chüan*), including the lengthy *Yogācārya-bhūmi śāstra* for which T'ai-tsung wrote the famous *Shêng-chiao hsü* 聖教序 (Preface to the Holy Teachings). Among Hsüan-tsang's own writings, his *Ch'êng Wei-shih lun* 成唯識論 (Treatise on the Establishment of the Consciousness-Only System) and the *Ta-T'ang Hsi-yü chi* 大唐西域記 (The Great T'ang Record of the Western Territories) were the best known, the first being an elaborate and subtle exposition of the *Trimsika* by Vasubandhu and a synthesis of its ten commentaries, and the latter a descriptive and anecdotal travelogue dictated to the disciple Pien-chi 辯機 (d. 649).

It should be apparent from this brief sketch of Hsüan-tsang that the account of his life, as told by his biographers, has much of the engaging blend of facts and fantasies, of myth and history, out of which fictions are made. It is not surprising, therefore, that his exploits were soon incorporated into the biographical sections (*lieh-chuan*) of such a standard dynastic history as the *Chiu T'ang Shu*,<sup>13</sup> and subsequently the story of his life was repeatedly celebrated by the literary imagination. Yet, it must be pointed out that that story, as it was finally told in the hundred-chapter narrative published in 1592 and titled *Hsi-yü chi* (literally, the Record of the Westward Journey) of which the present work is a complete translation, and the historical Hsüan-tsang have only the most tenuous relation. In nearly a millennium of evolution, the story of T'ang San-tsang (Tripitaka, the honorific name of Hsüan-tsang) and his acquisition of scriptures in the West has been told by both pen and mouth and through a variety of literary forms which have included the short poetic tale, the drama, and finally the fully developed narrative using both prose and verse. In this long process of development, the theme of the pilgrimage for scriptures is never muted, but added to this basic constituent of the story are numerous features which have more in common with folktales and popular legends than with history. The account of a courageous



monk's undertaking, motivated by profound religious zeal and commitment, is thus eventually transformed into a tale of supernatural deeds and fantastic adventures, of mythic beings and animal spirits, of fearsome battles with monsters and miraculous deliverances from dreadful calamities. How all this came about is a study in itself, but since this has already been done systematically and thoroughly by Glen Dudbridge in his authoritative *The Hsi-yu Chi: A Study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth-Century Chinese Novel*,<sup>14</sup> I shall review briefly only the most important literary versions of the westward journey prior to the late Ming narrative.

Between the time of the historical Hsüan-tsang and the first literary version of his journey for which we have solid documentary evidence, there are only a few scattered indications that the story of this pilgrimage was working its way into the popular imagination. In the biography, the monk is represented as having a special fondness for the *Heart Sūtra* (the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*), for it was by reciting it and by calling upon Kuan-yin that he found deliverance from dying of thirst and from hallucinations in the desert.<sup>15</sup> By the time of the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記, the encyclopedic anthology of anecdotes and miscellaneous tales compiled in the late tenth century, the brief account of Hsüan-tsang contained therein already included the motif of the pilgrim's special relation with the sūtra. There we are told that an old monk, his face covered with sores and his body with pus and blood, was the one who had transmitted this sūtra to the pilgrim, for whom, "when he recited it, the mountains and the streams became traversable, and the roads were made plain and passable; tigers and leopards vanished from sight; demons and spirits disappeared. He thus reached the land of Buddha."<sup>16</sup> During the next century, the poet-official Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007-72) recalled drinking one night at the Shou-ling Monastery (壽靈寺) in Yang-chou. He was told by an old monk there that when the place was used as a traveling palace by the Later Chou emperor Shih-tsung (r. 954-59), all the murals were destroyed except that on one wall which depicted the story of Hsüan-tsang's journey in quest of the scriptures.<sup>17</sup>

These two references, while clearly pointing to popular interest in the story, provide us with scant information on how this story has been told. The first representation of a distinctive tale with certain characteristic figures and episodes appears, as Dudbridge puts it,