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Indigenous or Foreign?
A Look at the Origins of the Monkey Hero Sun Wukong

by
Hera S. Walker

Victor H. Mair, Editor
Sino-Platonic Papers
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305 USA
vmair@sas.upenn.edu
www.sino-platonic.org

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Hera S. Walker
Ursinus College

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INTRODUCTION

The integration of foreign elements into a culture's consciousness is a gradual progression. Furthermore, it cannot occur unless there are sufficient grounds for acceptance by the adopting culture. As S. Schrieke notes in his essay "Some Remarks on Borrowing in the Development on Culture,"

> It is a well-known fact that we do not absorb everything that we might potentially observe -- only certain impressions become ours consciously and unconsciously. The human mind selects, and what it selects is determined by the relations between that which is observed and that which is already present. A man's originality is determined by his capacity to combine heterogeneous elements. "There is nothing new under the sun;" the new is the combination of the known. An invention is not created out of nothing; it is rooted in the old. But even then, if a novelty is to gain currency in spite of the conservatism of the human mind, the times must be ripe, that is, the factors needed to make its acceptance possible must be present. (230-1)

If we consider Schrieke's words, it becomes more reasonable to understand just how and why a mythical character could develop from a combination of indigenous and foreign elements.

Since the first half of this century, there has been an ongoing scholarly debate concerning the origins of the Monkey-hero Sun Wukong in the Chinese epic novel *Xiyouji*. Is he a character developed from indigenous monkey figures or does his origin stem from Hanuman, the monkey-general of India's Rama tradition? In this paper I will present evidence showing that Sun Wukong is a product of both indigenous and foreign elements. The indigenous elements provided factors needed to make the acceptance of foreign elements possible (Schrieke 231).

When the theory of a possible connection between Sun Wukong and Hanuman existed was first proposed by Hu Shi, many of his contemporaries adamantly opposed the idea that China would have had to import foreign elements and claimed that Sun Wukong's origins lay solely in the legend of Wu'erji, a monkey-shaped water spirit whom the great Yu subdued when

he harnessed the flood[1]. However, after half a century of debate, several prominent scholars have shown that the Wu'erji legend itself is suspect of having been influenced by foreign elements.

Within their respective spheres of influence, the Rama tradition and the *Xiyouji* (translated as *Journey to the West*) have had a profound impact upon society. The *Xiyouji* is one of the most popular and well-known novels in the canon of Chinese literature. Likewise, the Rama tradition is not only pervasive in India, but is known and studied throughout Southeast Asia. Throughout the whole of Asia, representations of both monkey figures are depicted in oral narration, theater, art, and, in modern times, television shows. Shrines have been erected by devote worshippers to pay homage to them. Clearly, the popularity of these monkey heroes is without question.

The *Xiyouji* is based on the real life journey of Xuanzang, also known by the Buddhist honorific Tripitaka, to India along the overland route of the Silk Road. In this epic novel, Tripitaka is accompanied by four disciples: Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, Sha Heshang, and the Dragon Prince as the white horse. The novel begins with the birth and early years of Sun Wukong, the hero of the novel. Chapters one through six recount his quest for immortality, his unruly behavior, and finally his capture and punishment. From Chapter six to the end of the novel, the plot focuses on the birth of Tripitaka and his pilgrimage to Buddha's mountain, where he obtains sutras.

Since there are hundreds of renditions of the Rama saga within India alone, this paper will use the third-century epic *Ramayana*, written by Valmiki, for reference. The *Ramayana* is reputed to be the most prestigious and the most comprehensive of all the renditions. Hanuman is the monkey-general of the Monkey-king Sugriva. By the king's command, Hanuman is ordered to aid Prince Rama, the central hero of the saga, in finding his captive wife, Sita. The demon titan Ravana steals Sita from Rama. Hanuman occupies a central role in the search and rescue of

[1] See "Quellers of the Flood." Retold by Cyril Birch in *Chinese Myths and Legends*.

Sita. He is the one who finds Sita and leads the charge against the titan army to rescue her.

So how was the Rama tradition transmitted to Southeast Asia and China? Trade, more than any other factor, provided different civilizations with a vehicle for cultural exchange, motivating people to cross over mountains, deserts, and large bodies of water. Of all the civilizations that participated in long-distance trade across the Eurasian landmass and throughout the eastern oceans, India's was one of the most influential. In an overview of history it is easy to see the effect left by India's culture in the arts, statecraft, and religion of many Southeast Asian countries. For example, the early plastic arts of Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia exhibit a strong Indian flavor in their style and subject matter.

Unlike Southeast Asian civilization, Chinese civilization had already begun to develop independently of India's cultural influence, and thus the impact of Indian culture was not as powerful in China as it was in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, several elements of Chinese culture, including literature, were affected by Indian culture.

SECTION ONE – ANALOGIES BETWEEN THE *XIYOUJI* AND THE *RAMAYANA*

It is not hard for any reader of the *Xiyouji* and the *Ramayana* to locate remarkable analogies between the two texts. To quote Victor Mair in his article "Suen Wu-Kung=Hanumat?: The Progress of a Scholarly Debate,"

> Anyone who is fortunate enough to read both Wu Cheng-en's (1500?-1582?) justly famous Chinese vernacular novel entitled *Journey to the West* (*Shi-you ji*) and Valmiki's celebrated third century B.C.E. Indian epic, *Ramayana*... will invariably be struck by the remarkable similarities between the monkey heroes in each of them. (660)

The similarities are so numerous and extraordinary that they are the natural starting point for many esteemed scholars who have focused their study on the origin of Sun Wukong and his connection with Hanuman. Scholars who believe that Sun Wukong does originate from Hanuman turn to the two texts for evidence to strengthen their argument.

The first similarity that strikes the reader is that both Sun Wukong (referred to hereafter as Wukong) and Hanuman are the "monkey" heroes of their respective stories. Karl S.Y. Kao, in his article "An Archetypal Approach to the *Hsi-yu chi*," asserts that "Monkey [Wukong] structurally functions in the same companion role as Hanuman" (86). Both belong to the same category of animal helpers in a myth pattern (86). The reader may then notice the aptness of Wukong and Hanuman at adopting different shapes and sizes. Throughout the *Xiyouji*, Wukong displays his ingenuity and skill in "shapeshifting" in order to escape or save himself and his companions from danger, notably including Wukong's battle with the Immortal Master Erlang in Chapter 6. In this episode, Wukong is finally confronted with a worthy opponent who is able to outwit the monkey-hero at his own game. As the text states,

> The Immortal Master fought the Great Sage [i.e., Wukong] for more than three hundred rounds, but the result still could not be determined. The Immortal Master, therefore, summoned all his magical powers; with a shake, he made his

> body a hundred thousand feet tall. Holding with both hands the divine lance of three points and two blades like the peaks that cap the Hua Mountain, this green-faced, saber-toothed figure with scarlet hair aimed a violent blow at the head of the Great Sage. But the Great Sage also exerted his magical power and changed himself into a figure having the features and height of Erh-lang. (vol. 1 159)

Through the course of the battle, Wukong changes into a sparrow, a cormorant, a small fish, a water snake, a spotted bustard, a little temple for the local spirit, and finally the "Holy Father Erh-lang" himself (vol. 1 162). Another episode that demonstrates Wukong's manipulation of body size and shapeshifting is in chapter 2. Here, Wukong has mastered these skills taught to him by his mentor and master, the Taoist Patriarch Subodhi. Sun Wukong's keen intelligence makes him a quick study, which incurs the jealously of his fellow disciples. One day Wukong, wishing to show off his prowess to the other disciples, transforms himself into a pine tree:

> "I invite the various elder brothers to give me a subject," he said. "What do you want me to change into?" "Why not a pine tree?" they said. Wukong made the magic sign and recited the spell; with one shake of his body he changed himself into a pine tree. Truly it was
>
> Thickly held in smoke through all four seasons;
> Its chaste fair form rose straight to the clouds,
> With not the least likeness to the impish monkey,
> But only frost-tried and snow-tested branches. (vol. 1 92)

In these two episodes, Wukong not only shapeshifts but also displays his skill in manipulating his body size.

In the *Ramayana*, Hanuman displays his shapeshifting skill, as well as his cunningness, in Book 5, entitled "Sundara Kanda." In his attempt to reach Lanka, Hanuman is confronted by the Mother of Serpents, Surasa, who intends to devour him. As the tale explains, Surasa is granted a boon by the Gods, whereby she may devour anything that crosses her path. However, being a devoted servant of Rama, Hanuman asks her to wait until he has completed his mission and is free to return and enter her mouth. Surasa refuses his request and again demands he enter her mouth:

> "None shall pass me alive, this is the boon I have received." Then seeing him continue on his way, the Mother of Serpents added: – "I have received this favour from Brahma, first enter my mouth then go thy way."
>
> Thereafter, extending her capacious jaws, she places herself in front of Maruti [i.e., Hanuman]. Surasa's words incensed that lion among monkeys and he said: –
>
> "Open thy mouth wide enough to swallow me." Having said this in anger, Surasa extended her jaws to the width of forty miles and Hanuman increased his girth accordingly; thereat Surasa enlarged her mouth to fifty miles, and seeing the jaws of Surasa wide open with its long tongue, terrible to look upon, resembling a mountain, measuring fifty miles, Hanuman enlarged himself to that extent also.... Then Surasa enlarged her mouth to the extent of an hundred miles and Hanuman, reducing his body like a cloud to the size of a thumb's breath entered into her mouth and, re-emerging from it, standing in space, addressed her saying: –
>
> "O Dakshayani, salutations to thee, I have entered thy mouth, now I go to seek out Vaidehi. Thy boon has been honoured!" (vol. 2 335)

Seeing Hanuman emerge triumphant from their size game, Surasa acquiesces and lets him continue on his quest. In the same book, Hanuman changes himself into a small monkey so he can enter Lanka's gates without difficulty. As Hanuman contemplates,

> "If I remain here in my native form, I shall be courting disaster and the purpose of my master will be frustrated, therefore, reducing my size, I shall enter Lanka as a monkey in order to carry through Rama's design. Entering this inaccessible city by night, I shall penetrate into every dwelling in order to find Janaka's daughter."... When the day's orb had sunk behind the Asta Mountain, Maruti reduced his body to the size of cat, extraordinary to behold and, in the dusk, the mighty Hanuman, springing up, entered the city. (vol. 2 341)

In both these instances, Hanuman not only proves that he is clever and highly intelligent, but a skillful shapeshifter.

Out of all of the similarities between the two characters and the texts, one of the most significant, but not as noticeable, is that both Sun Wukong and Hanuman originate from wind. In the *Xiyouji*, Chapter 1, the narrator gives the reader a full account of Sun Wukong's birth. On the top of a mountain there was an immortal stone,

> On the stone were... nine perforations and eight holes, which corresponded to

> the Palaces of the Nine Constellations and the Eight trigrams. Though it lacked the shade of trees on all sides, it was set off by divine inspiration, it became pregnant with a divine embryo. One day, it split open, giving birth to a stone egg about the size of a playing ball. Exposed to the wind, it was transformed into a stone monkey endowed with fully developed features and limbs. (vol. 1 67)

Although an egg was born out of a stone, it was the wind that gave the egg its monkey shape and life to Wukong. In Chapter 7, when Lao Tzu imprisons Wukong in the Brazier of Eight Trigrams, so that all the divine elixir, immortal peaches, and imperial wine can be smelted and distilled out of him, the reader is told again that Wukong is made of wind:

> Sun [Wukong] symbolizes wind; where there is wind, there is no fire. However, wind could churn up smoke, which at that moment reddened his eyes, giving them a permanently inflamed condition. Hence they were sometimes called Fiery Eyes and Diamond Pupils. (vol. 1 167)

The wind is the paternal element to the maternal element of the earth. Like animals, the earth produces an egg, which is fertilized by the semen of the blowing wind. In giving the stone life, the wind makes Wukong immortal because he always has wind, or breath, within him.

In this way, the reader can parallel Sun Wukong's origins with Hanuman's. In the *Ramayana*, the reader is constantly told that Hanuman is the son of the Wind God, Maruta. In the Thai rendition of the Rama saga, King Rama I wrote that Hanuman "can never die, because whenever the wind blows on him he is always brought back to life" (16). In Book 4, entitled "Kishkindha Kanda," Chapter 66, Hanuman is told of his parentage. As Hanuman and the reader learn, Hanuman's mother was "the most noble of all the Apsaras [Nymphs], Punjika-Thala, [who] under the name of Anjana, became the wife of the monkey Kesarin" (Valmiki, Vol. 2 320). Jambavan, the oldest member of Hanuman's army, continues to recount the story:

> "She [Anjana] was renowned in the three worlds and her beauty was unequalled on earth. As a result of a curse, O Friend, she was born in the monkey race, able to change her form at will.
>
> "Once that daughter of the king among the monkeys, Kunjara, having assumed the form of a woman radiant with youth and beauty... was wandering

> about on the summit of a mountain, which resembled a mass of clouds in the rainy season.
>
> "And it happened that the God of the Wind stole away the red-bordered yellow robe of that large-eyed maiden, who stood on the mountain top. Then Maruta perceived her rounded well-proportioned thighs and her breasts touching each other and her amiable mien.... He was filled with desire and beside himself, enveloping that irreproachable lady in his arms, Manmatha embraced her.
>
> "In her distress, Anjana, faithful to her conjugal vows, cried out: – 'Who desires to sever the ties of a woman devoted to her lord?' Hearing these words, the Wind-God answered, 'I do not wish to wrong thee, O Lady of Lovely Hips.... By embracing thee and entering into thee, thou shalt bear a son endowed with strength and intelligence, of immense energy, of noble nature, possessed of vigour and courage and in agility and speed equal to myself." (vol. 2 320)

In both texts, the wind gives Wukong and Hanuman immense strength and power. It influences their character development and makes them the heroes of the texts.

Another parallel readers may draw upon is the ability of both Wukong and Hanuman to travel great distances through the air. There is a minor distinction of wording in the way both monkey-heroes perform this skill. Nevertheless, the impression the reader gets is essentially the same, that both leap or spring into the air to travel great distances. In the *Xiyouji*, Wukong expresses to his mentor and master, Patriarch Subodhi, his desire to "cloud-soar":

> "Thanks to the profound kindness of the master, your pupil has indeed attained perfection; I now can ascend like mist into the air and fly." The Patriarch said, "Let me see you try to fly." Wishing to display his ability, Wukong leaped fifty or sixty feet into the air, pulling himself up with a somersault. He trod on the clouds for about the time of a meal and traveled a distance of no more than three miles before dropping down again to stand before the Patriarch. "Master," he said, his hands folded in front of him, "this is flying by cloud-soaring." Laughing, the Patriarch said, "This can't be called cloud-soaring! It is more like cloud-crawling! The old saying goes, 'The immortal tours the North Sea in the morning and reaches Ts'ang-wu by night.' If it takes you half a day to go less than three miles, it can't even be considered cloud-soaring." (vol. 1 90-1)

The narrator stresses that, unlike other immortals, such as Guanyin and Erlang, Wukong cannot fly by cloud-soaring because he does not possess a human form. As Mi Wenkai explains,

> In typical Chinese legends, the spirits and immortals mount on clouds and ride them; they stand on top of the clouds. SWK [Wukong], however is different. He somersaults through the air...; this is not the usual method in China. Rather, he leaps through the air from a crouching position in the same fashion as H [Hanuman]. (Quoted by Mair 713)

In Figure 1, Wukong appears on top of a swirling cloud. Although it looks as if he is flying

Figure 1. Sun Wukong Cloud-Somersaulting

through the air on this cloud, Wukong is in a crouching position with one leg raised behind him. This gives the onlooker the impression that he is bounding through the air. As the Taoist Patriarch Subodhi further explains to Wukong in Chapter 2,

> "When the various immortals want to soar on the clouds, they all rise by stamping their feet. But you are not like them. When I saw you leave just now, you had to pull yourself up by jumping. What I'll do now is to teach you the cloud-somersault in accordance with your form." [Wukong] again prostrated himself and... the Patriarch gave him an oral formula, saying, "Make the magic sign, recite the spell, clench your fist tightly, shake you body, and when you jump up, one somersault will carry you a hundred and eight thousand miles." (vol. 1 91)

Wukong's monkey form separates him from all the other immortals of the novel. Rather than flying through the air on a cloud, Wukong must continuously somersault between clouds to travel more than "a hundred and eight thousand miles" (91).

Similarly, Hanuman must perform the same function in order to accomplish his mission for Rama. Before attempting to cross the sea to Lanka, he first must expand his body and assume "an immense stature" (Valmiki 327). Hanuman pressed himself against the side of a mountain and prepared himself for the leap. After he positioned himself to leap,

> Hanuman, the foremost of monkeys, without pausing for breath... sprang into the air and, such was the force of his leap, that the trees growing on the mountain, tossing their branches, were sent spinning on every side.
>
> In his rapid flight, Hanuman bore away those trees with their flowering boughs filled with lapwings intoxicated with love.... Carried away by the impetus of his tremendous bound, those trees followed in his wake, like an army its leader. (vol. 2 329)

Valmiki goes on for several more pages extolling Hanuman's great prowess in leaping over the vast sea:

> As in space, a meteor from a higher region rushes through the skies so did that elephant of monkeys appear like a great bird soaring into the air of a great

tusker tightly-bound by a girth, whilst the reflection of his body cast on the deep resembled a vessel foundering in a storm.

Wherever that great monkey passed, the sea rose tumultuously under the force of his bounds and, rushing on with extreme speed, with his breast like a great prow, he caused the salty sea to surge mountainously. Pushing those high heaving billows before him, that lion among monkeys seemed to be separating heaven and earth; the waves that rose up resembled Mount Meru and Mandara and, breasted by him in his impetuous course, the waters lashed by his speed, overspread the sky like autumnal clouds. (vol. 2 330)

Figure 2. Hanuman Leaves Lanka

In the illustration above (Figure 2), Hanuman is fleeing from Lanka after setting it on fire. His arms are extended above his head and his legs are in a release position, indicating that Hanuman is leaping off the outer wall of the city of Lanka. Therefore, both texts stress the fact that the monkey-heroes must jump or leap in order to travel great distances. This characteristic is just one of many several uncanny similarities shared by Sun Wukong and Hanuman.

OTHER SIMILARITIES:

– Both monkey heroes destroy a sacred grove of trees.

> Wukong steals four ginseng fruit from the Chen-yuan Immortal, which enables the consumer to live for three hundred and sixty years. Since the fruit take hundreds of years to grow and ripen, a close count of the number of fruit is kept by the immortal's disciples. When they discover that four fruit are missing they confront the four travelers. While being reprimanded by the immortal's disciples, Wukong removes himself from his body and goes to the ginseng garden. There he proceeds to give the tree a terrific blow with his golden-hooped rod. Uprooting the tree, he then gathers up his fellow travelers and flees from the Chen-yuan Immortal's dwellings. (*Xiyouji*, vol. 1, Chapter 25)

> After his arrival to Lanka, Hanuman finds Sita in the sacred Ashoka Grove guarded by female titans. Ravana arrives and attempts to rape Sita, but she is able to fend him off. Sita then foretells of Ravana's downfall and laments over her separation from Rama. After Hanuman converses with Sita and offers to rescue her, whom she refuses, Hanuman destroys the Ashoka Grove to prove his

strength and prowess to Ravana. He does this to "sow dissension among those who are proud of their strength" and lower the morale of Ravana's army, thus, making it easier for Rama and his army to defeat the titans (*Ramayana*, vol. 2, Book 5-"Sundara Kanda," Chapter 41)

– Two identical Monkey Kings fight for the throne.

After being dismissed by Xuanzang for committing the sin of murder, when in reality Wukong was protecting his master from demons, he returns home to the Water Curtain Cave. There he finds his throne usurped by an imposter, who looks exactly like him. A long drawn-out battle ensues between the two monkeys. The two combatants fight across the earth and every immortal they meet cannot distinguish between the two. Wukong finally goes to the Patriarch Buddha, Tathagata, and requests that he settle the dispute. Tathagata reveals who the real Wukong is and the imposter tries to flee. However, Wukong in anger slays the imposter with his rod. Tathagata orders him to return and rescue Xuanzang, who has been captured by a demon. (*Xiyouji*, vol. 3, Chapter 58)

In his quest to find Sita, Rama encounters Hanuman who serves his uncle, Sugriva. Sugriva wishes Rama to help him take the throne from Bali, Sugriva's brother, and in payment offers to help Rama find Sita. Bali has wronged Sugriva by stealing his consort. In the ensuing battle, Bali and Sugriva fight and Rama must shoot Bali with his bow and arrow. However, Rama is unable to distinguish between the two opponents and unable to kill Bali. In the second

and decisive battle, Rama is able to distinguish between the two and deals Bali a lethal blow with his bow and arrow. (*Ramayana*, vol. 2, Book 5-"Sundara Kanda," Chapter 12)

– Both monkey heroes were disruptive and a menace to the universe in their youths.

After finishing his studies with the Patriarch Subodhi, Wukong imposes himself on various immortals and forces gifts from them. An example is his visit to the Dragon King of the Four Oceans where he demands clothing and a weapon worthy of his use. After the Dragon King and several other immortals complain to the Jade Emperor in Heaven, Wukong is invited to court to be appointed Master of the Stables, so the court can keep an eye on his behavior. Wukong soon learns that his position in court is not a prestigious one. He proceeds to wreak havoc in Heaven and earth until the court bestows a hollow title upon him. Since Wukong's position does not entail any duties, he is free to wander around the court. When he again learns his position is too lowly for his status, the court is forced to make him Master of the Peach garden. There he helps himself to the Queen Mother's immortal peaches. When his theft is discovered, Wukong, feeling that anything else he does will not lighten his punishment, proceeds to steal Lao Tzu's elixir, and disrupts the normal functions of Heaven. The Jade Emperor sends his army to subdue Wukong but to no avail. Finally the Patriarch Buddha, Tathagata, is requested to capture Wukong and imprison him under the Mountain of the Four Elements. (*Xiyouji*, vol. 1, Chapter 3-7)

> A Sage recounts Hanuman's unruly youth to Rama. He explains how Hanuman as a baby had an insatiable appetite. Therefore his mother went into the forest to find him fruit to eat. The infant Hanuman was too hungry to wait, saw the sun and, thinking it was a piece of fruit, jumped to grab hold of it. The Sun God, seeing Hanuman pursue him, cried out to Indra for help. Indra took up his thunderbolt and struck Hanuman down and broke his jaw[1]. Afterwards Hanuman's father, the God of Wind, stops the life force or breath of all creatures in Heaven and earth. To save the universe and appease the God of Wind, Maruta, Indra and all other gods bestow Hanuman with various powers. For example, Yama, the King of the Dark Regions, pledges that Hanuman shall be made invulnerable and immune to all diseases and never slain in battle. With these powers, Hanuman grows bold and arrogant and disrupts Heaven, knowing he is immune to the wrath of the gods. However, as punishment, and for the protection of Heaven and earth, Hanuman is cursed to forget his powers until he needs them to help Rama find Sita. (*Ramayana*, vol. 3, Book 7-"Uttara Kanda," Chapter 35)

These examples are just a few of the obvious similarities between the two texts. To try to list all of the similarities would be unnecessarily time-consuming and would not suit the purpose of this paper. Rather, the few examples provided above are meant to establish the plausibility of a connection between the two monkey characters and their respective stories.

Despite the uncanny and numerous analogies that have been made, these similarities are

[1] Hanuman's name literally signifies that he has a broken jaw.

superficial and are not strong enough to form a convincing argument for the derivation of Sun Wukong from Hanuman. To fully understand and strengthen the connection between the two texts, it is necessary to look not only at antecedents and prototypes of the *Xiyouji* and the several renditions of the Rama saga in India, Southeast Asia and beyond, but also the various possible routes the Rama saga traveled along the maritime route of the Silk Road.

SECTION TWO – MARITIME TRADE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

To understand the transmission and impact of the Rama tradition on Southeast Asia and beyond, the various trade routes by which it transmitted across the region must be explored. These routes, especially the maritime routes, facilitated the transmission of the Rama tradition to Southeast Asia and other regions in Asia. The influence of Indian culture is most clearly found within those kingdoms that arose along these routes.

It is not known for certain when trade first began between the West and East. However, as early as the second century B.C.E. an overland trade route had been well established. The earliest routes ran from northwest China through Central Asia and Iran to the eastern Mediterranean, bypassing the Indian subcontinent. With the increasing demands of Rome for the goods of China, Indian traders started finding new routes to supply the empire in order to procure some of the wealth produced from the growing trade between West and East. G.C.F. Simkin believes that one reason India fostered trade with Rome was to compensate for India's lost gold supply from Siberia (23). The loss of this gold supply was due in part to conflicts between inland tribes in Central Asia and the constant migration of others just before the start of the Common Era (23). As John F. Cady points out in *Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development*, "The insistent demand for Oriental imports at Alexandria and Antioch had the effect of stimulating Indian and Asian traders to develop their contact with the Malay Peninsula" and other ports (26). The most desired of all imports from the East was China's silk. This may have been the motivating factor in the development during the early Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E-220 C.E.) of a route running from the eastern coast of India along the coast of the Bay of Bengal into Burma, up through Yunnan, and ultimately into Sichuan (Yu 153). Sichuan was a major center of silk production (23). By later Han, private households in this province had formed a highly developed textile industry to help meet the demand of traders (23). George Coedes, in his book *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, goes further to explain that Rome exported so much

gold in payment for Asian wares that Tiberius (14-37 C.E.) tried to restrain his subjects from wearing silk (23). In the reign of Emperor Vespasian (69-79 C.E.), Coedes continues, Rome's leaders feared that the mass outflow of coinage towards the east would threaten the imperial economy and therefore arrested the flight of currency (20). He hypothesizes that many Indian traders of varying castes looked to what they referred to as the "Golden Chersonese," or Southeast Asia, as an alternative source to appease India's voracious consumption of gold (20). Whatever reasons India had for initiating trade excursions by sea, it is known that by the first century C.E., merchants from the Indian subcontinent had begun traveling through Southeast Asian waters on their way to China (Shaffer 18). Despite the demands from the West for Asian goods, trade was not one-sided. China also developed a taste for foreign goods from India and the Middle East, and eventually became the primary consumer of Southeast Asian goods.

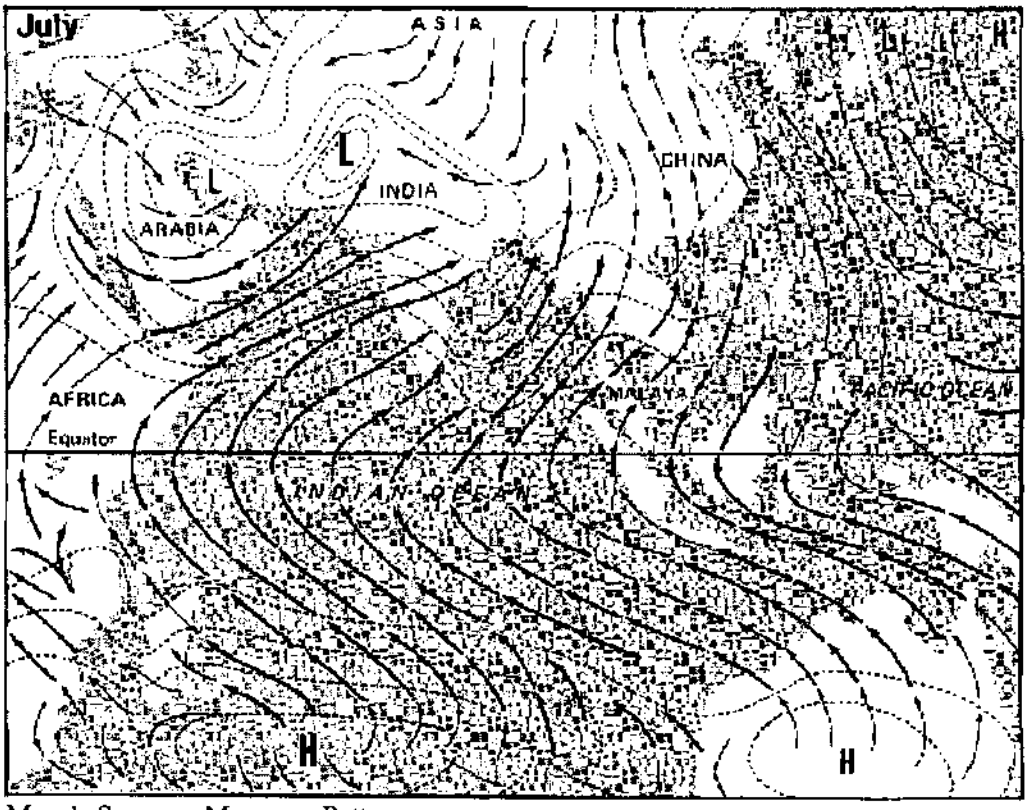
Another major factor in the development of maritime routes was the continuing turmoil along the overland routes. Prior to 439 C.E., the markets in the heartland of China and markets in the West had been primarily supplied by the overland routes. Goods continued to travel overland through Central Asia even after the fall of the Han Dynasty and eastward invasions by steppe people (Bellwood 196). However, after 439 the strategic roads of the overland routes were completely blocked when the Gansu Corridor, the major road from China's population centers to the West, was captured by the hostile Mongolian Northern Wei Dynasty, which consolidated its power over most of northern China (Shaffer 31). Furthermore, by 500 C.E., Central Asia was cut off to traders by the White Huns and other invaders from the northwest (Cady 35). These events, as well as the reduction of time in travel distance and the increased quantity traders were able to carry, helped the maritime route become a significant and major means of trade. It is clear that the motive behind India's expansion to the east was primarily economic.

The fact that the overland route was the dominant means of trade between the West and the East before the first century C.E. does not imply that sea routes did not exist before then.

Lynda Norene Shaffer notes that some scholars believe that Malay sailors first reached the East African coast and Madagascar as early as the first millennium B.C.E., supplying the Mediterranean market with cinnamon before the establishment of the overland or maritime silk route (15). As she states further,

> Even though cinnamon was never grown commercially in Africa, Egyptian and Hebrew texts dated to the first millennium B.C.E. speak of cinnamon coming from Africa, leading several scholars to suggest that Malay sailors were responsible for bringing this cinnamon from the coasts of the South China Sea to East Africa. (15)

These sailors traveled over 3,000 miles to trade this spice by means of riding the monsoons, one of the most significant discoveries in the history of navigation (14).



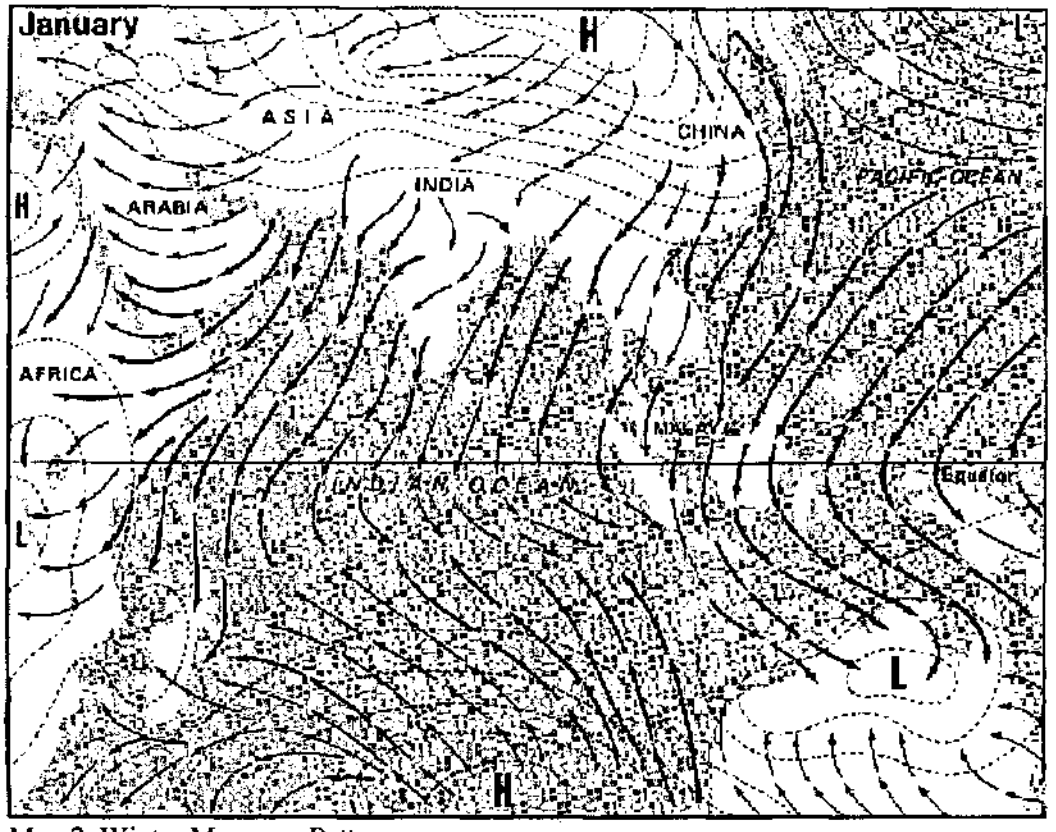
Map 1. Summer Monsoon Pattern

The monsoons are the seasonal winds of Asia. The cause of the monsoons lies in Central Asia, at the center of the Eurasian landmass, where extreme temperatures and harsh weather are common. As Shaffer succinctly states,

> Because ocean water is warmer than the air in winter and colder than the air in summer, the air close to an ocean is cooled by the water in the summer and warmed by it in the winter. Air masses in Central Asia, however, are so distant from any ocean that they escape such influence, making the winter air in the region much colder in winter and hotter in summer than air over or near the ocean. (14)

It is this difference in temperature between the air masses of the ocean and those of the Central Asian deserts that creates the monsoons. From April to August, the warmer air over Central Asia expands and rises, whereas the cooler ocean air is relatively dense and heavy. As a consequence, the ocean air moves inward to meet the lighter air and creates winds that blow from the southwest. Map 1 clearly illustrates the summer monsoon pattern. As the reader can see, it would be very easy for a ship to swing from west to east using the summer monsoons. From December to March, the air masses shift and the winds blow from the northeast (see Map 2). In the intervening months, winds are at their most unpredictable, making travel impossible. Although the wind shift in the spring occurs quickly, the autumn transition from winds flowing inwards towards the continent to them flowing outward is prolonged, causing unpredictable winds from September to November.

The monsoons brought Asia within "the operation of a single global variable" (Chaudhuri 23). The sailing season was fixed with precision by the timing of the prevailing winds, which could be predicted with near-certainty by skilled sailors (23). The monsoons allowed Indian, and eventually Arab, traders to move away from coastal waters and sail across the span of the Indian Ocean in a shorter amount of time. However, because of the monsoon patterns, traders were forced to stay at a given port for extended periods. When the winds were in transition, passengers, whether they were coming from India or China, could be waylaid in Southeast Asian



Map 2. Winter Monsoon Pattern

ports. As stated in the *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*,

> Because of the winds, travelers could not simply pass through [Southeast Asia]. For half the year, when the winds blew off the continent, one could sail to Southeast Asian ports from either China or India. But one could not go on either way until the winds had shifted and began to blow towards the continent. Thus, the ships all tended to arrive at the same time and leave at the same time, regardless of which way the travelers were going. Indeed, their arrivals and departures became so predictable that the local people began to call them 'the migratory birds.' Furthermore, they were often obliged to remain in port, sometime for a long as five months. (193)

Due to their extended stay in Southeast Asia, travelers needed a port that could provide them with a large and constant source of food and fresh water. These factors led to the development and growth of Funan, Southeast Asia first Indianized kingdom, around the first century C.E.

FUNAN (1st to 6th Centuries C.E.):

Prior to 350 C.E., the international traffic between India and China avoided the long trip around the Malay Peninsula due to its shallow reefs, strong currents, and pirates who could easily overcome passing ships at the narrowest point of the Strait of Malacca. Therefore, travelers heading towards China or India chose to cross over the Isthmus of Kra, near the neck of the Malay Peninsula, where traders could not only take advantage of the large inland lakes for fresh water and food, but also use the lakes and connecting estuaries to transport their goods (Stargardt 13) (See Map 3). However, the isthmus did not have land suitable for cultivation and could not support a substantial number of traders. Funan, on the other hand, was located where an indentation in the coast brought the waters of the Gulf of Thailand closest to the Tonle-Sap and Mekong River and had soil that enabled its people to grow significant amounts of rice (Shaffer 21). These rivers flowed through fertile valleys, where crops could be grown without irrigation owing to the rivers' natural flood patterns (21). The production of rice was further increased with the introduction of drainage control brought by Indian settlers (Pym 25). Prior to the arrival of Indian settlers, the region near the sea and the Mekong River delta had been an impossible place for farming and settlement (25). The Indian settlers, "by diverting the sea water into canals and sealing them with dikes, conserved pools of fresh water for irrigation and to supply ships with drinking water.... Most importantly, it allowed new land to be cultivated" (25). Thus, both its people and travelers could enjoy several plentiful and reliable harvests every year.

Another advantage was that Funan controlled the deltas of the Mekong River, which traders used for transporting goods up through Yunnan into China and vice versa. This route made it possible for some traders to continue onto China without waiting for the monsoon to change. However, for those who chose to wait out the monsoon and trade for goods that arrived from other regions of Southeast Asia, Funan offered safe anchorage, roomy warehouses, fresh water, and essential supplies (Pym 28). One indication of Funan's importance to the maritime

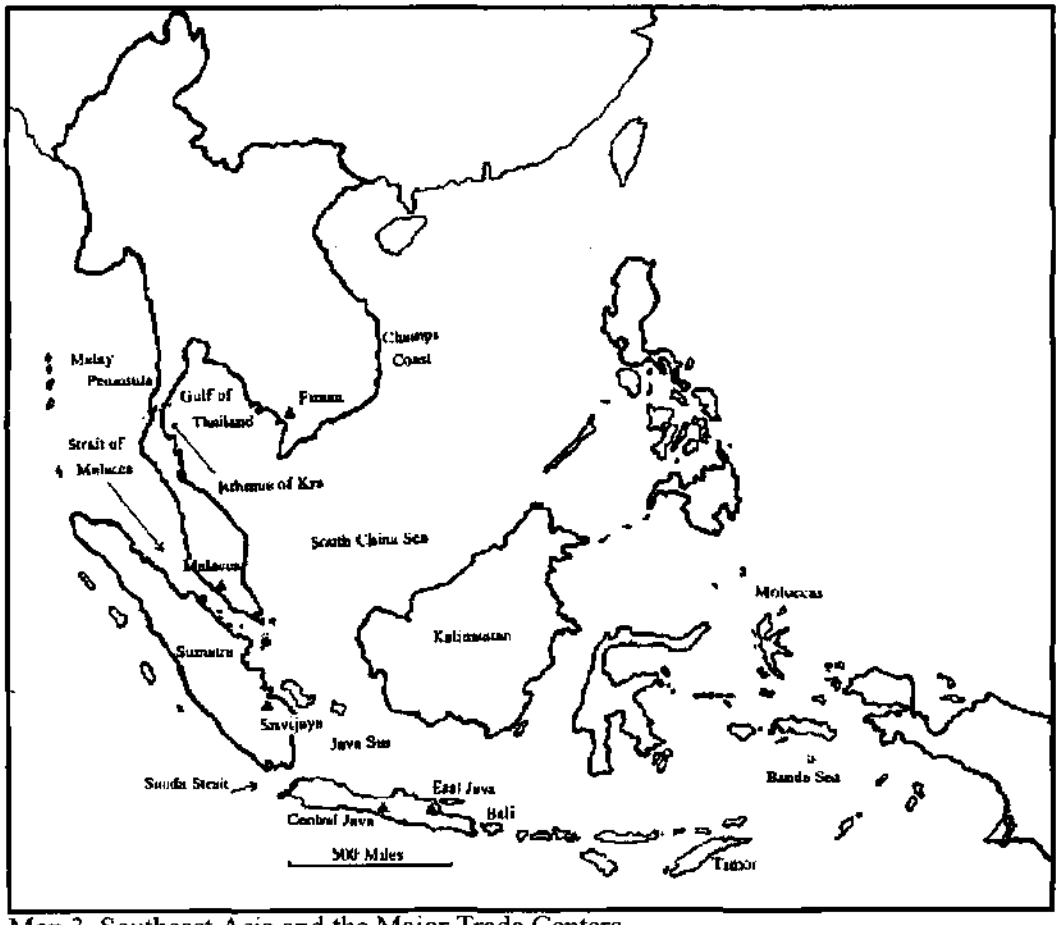
trade prior to the fourth century is provided by a mission sent from the Chinese kingdom of Wu to Funan in the third century (Shaffer 23). Wu was a regional kingdom in southern China that emerged after the fall of the Han Dynasty in 221 C.E. Its king, interested in obtaining foreign goods, had heard that goods from India and other regions could be had in Funan and thus sent two envoys there sometime between 245 to 250 (23). Along with the goods brought from India and China, products from the islands of Southeast Asia, such as cloves, nutmeg, and mace, were introduced by Malay sailors into Funan's market. Originally, international traders at Funan, who only desired to exchange their western goods for China's silk, were not interested in the specialties of Southeast Asia (Bellwood 195). The introduction of Southeast Asian products, which could not grow outside this region, marked a significant change in the demands of markets in the West, but more importantly in China. The jungle products of Indonesia, such as benzoin, camphor, and pine resin, which were cheaper and closer to China, soon replaced frankincense and myrrh imported from the Middle East (Simkin 112).

Funan was a nation of traders and exerted great influence over Southeast Asia by dominating trade routes to China (Pym 25). Funan reached the peak of its fortunes during the fourth century. Funan's position as a major trade center would last only two more centuries before being replaced by an entrepot 150 miles south in the Strait of Malacca. Although Janice Stargardt's archeological study indicates that the route through the Isthmus of Kra continued to be utilized well into the thirteenth century, especially for trade in China's ceramic wares, it would never regain its former importance (5). Two major factors may have led to Funan's demise. The first was the initiation of silk production in the Byzantine lands of the eastern Mediterranean around the middle of the first millennium (Shaffer 36). Prior to this event, no region outside China's territories knew how to produce silk (36). As Shaffer states in *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500*,

> Chinese silk would remain an important item in long-distance trade, but the centuries in which the demand for this product had been the driving force behind

new trade routes, both overland and overseas, had come to an end. (36)

The loss of China's monopoly on silk production, and the growing demand for the spices and rare products from Southeast Asian islands, may have prompted merchants to travel by the all-sea route through the Sunda and Malacca Straits. This route gave them direct access to the rare and highly desirable spices of the Moluccan islands, such as mace, clove, and nutmeg. Whatever factors influenced merchants to use the straits, Funan's importance as a trading port diminished by 683.



Map 3. Southeast Asia and the Major Trade Centers

SRIVIJAYA (670-1025):

Shortly after Funan reached its zenith as the major trade port in Southeast Asia, a competitive all-sea route was developing from India to China that went through the Straits of Malacca, where the kingdom of Srivijaya emerged (Bellwood 194). Even during the years of Funan's supremacy, a number of ports in the Sunda Strait region had assumed some importance (Bellwood 194). Sailors from this area frequented the ports of Funan and traded directly with Indian and Arab merchants. The area at the tip of the Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra formed an advantageous geographical position, which was a meeting ground for traders from the east and the west (see Map 3). However, the founding rulers of Srivijaya did not seek to consolidate control over Sumatra in order to control the trade that passed through the strait, but rather to act upon an animosity against a neighboring tribe known as the Jambi-Malayu (Shaffer 43). After emerging triumphantly from the battle, with the aid of other tribes under his command, the founder of Srivijaya erected a stone with an inscription to commemorate his accomplishment in 683 C.E. (43).

Many of the tribes consolidated under the Srivijayan kingdom previously had competing ports that supplied traders with food and other essentials. However, united under one rule, the whole area soon benefited from a unified economic system where everyone could share in the profits. The center of this kingdom was situated in Palembang, which is located inland on the Musi River. The monarch and his counselors administered the immediate and surrounding areas of Palembang (Bellwood 200). The Musi River hinterland was controlled by local chiefs who swore allegiance to the monarch (200). This allegiance was based more on mutual self-interest than loyalty. Since Srivijayan ports did not produce highly valued goods, its wealth and prosperity depended on the flow of trade through the Straits.

Srivijaya's rulers were very adept at exploiting every aspect of their position in the trade system. To attract more trade into the Straits, the rulers of Srivijaya needed to insure the safety

of merchants and their goods, whether it was from shallow reefs, strong currents, and/or pirates. The Srivijayan monarchs, unable to suppress the pirates, also referred to as sea nomads, resorted to buying them off with shares of the port's revenues (Bellwood 202). These nomads would help guide trade ships through the strait's shallow waters and engage in trade themselves (Shaffer 48). As well as undertaking its own trade missions to India and China, Srivijaya was known to have used forceful tactics to develop entrepot trade (Simkin 114). Mas'udi, most likely an Arab merchant, commented in 955 on the power and wealth of the "Maharaja of Zabag," who was "king of the isles of the eastern sea," ruling over the Isthmus of Kra and Srivijaya (113). Therefore, not only did the rulers of Srivijaya control the main sea routes to the South China Sea, but the flow of trade still going over the Isthmus of Kra as well. So no matter which route traders chose to use, they had to pay tariffs and/or tolls to Srivijaya. In addition, if any foreign ships passing near the straits refused to pay the tolls and tried to enter any Srivijayan ports, the ever-present navy had permission to attack and seize the ship and any cargo aboard (114).

To gain more power, Srivijayan rulers formed an alliance with the Sailendra Dynasty of Central Java. Central Java was essential to Srivijaya's dominance in the trade system due to their abundant supply of agricultural products, which helped feed the incoming merchants (Shaffer 49). The fates of these two kingdoms were intricately linked by a mutual interest in the continuation of Srivijaya's trade entrepot. In the middle of the ninth century, civil war wracked Central Java and power over the island shifted to the east. The new power in East Java became the first serious challenger to Srivijaya's domination, and from 990 to 1007 periodic fighting erupted between the two kingdoms (74). Central Java continued to supply Srivijaya with rice, but when Srivijaya collapsed so did Central Java. Finally in 1025, Rajendra I of the Chola Empire on the eastern coast of India launched a powerful and debilitating attack on Srivijaya (Simkin 116). Scholars do not agree on why the Cholas decided to attack Srivijaya. However, after the attack, Srivijaya's influence over the trade between the Indian and South China Sea gradually declined. Srivijaya's decline does not mean that the all-sea route through the straits

diminished as well. In 1400, the entrepot of Melaka (also spelled Malacca) emerged on the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, replacing Srivijaya's control over the region (Reid 205). Like its predecessor, Melaka could exert a great amount of influence over trade. Even today the straits still provide the main route for traders around the world.

THE TRADE KINGDOMS OF JAVA (927-1528):

From 927 up to the appearance of European expansionism during the 15th century, several trade-based kingdoms emerged on the island of Java. The two most influential of these kingdoms were East Java (927-1222) and Majapahit (1293-1528). Java was the direct benefactor of Srivijaya's decline, dominating international trade by controlling the spices that drew merchants to Southeast Asia (Bellwood 208). Although East Java's ports were a long way from the straits, Java's waters flowed up into the Java Sea were the Moluccan Islands are situated (209). In addition, it was here that,

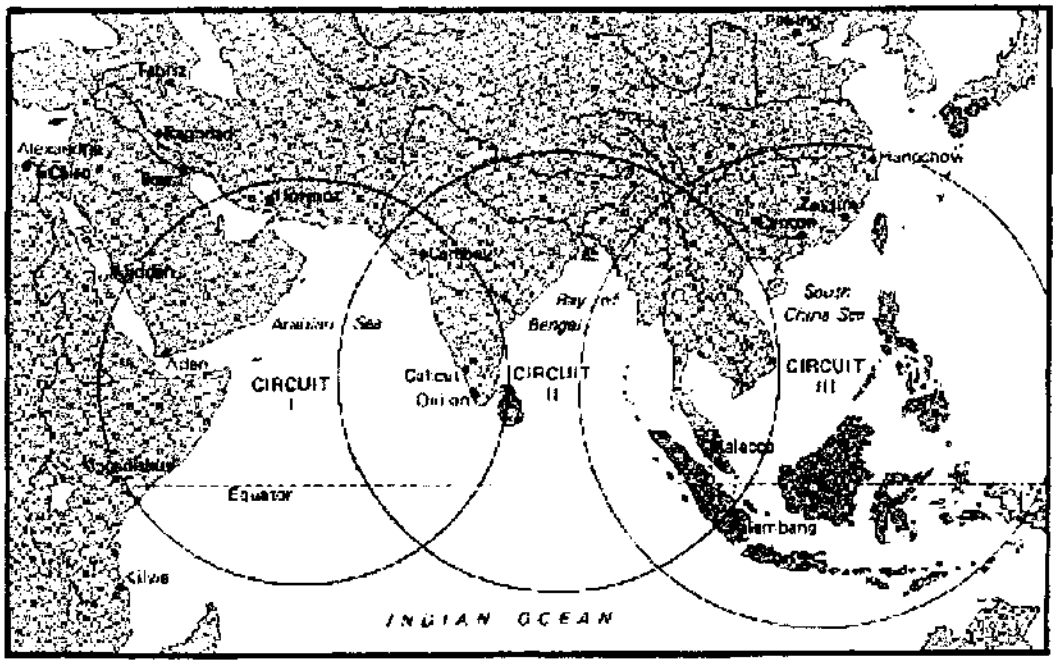
> For the first time in the island realm, kings emerged who combined within one realm a trading position equal to that of Srivijaya with a control over agricultural resources comparable to those of central Java, and who furthermore created what was tantamount to a monopoly on the marketing of the fine spices. (Bellwood 208)

However, after the death of Airlangga, the last and greatest of East Java's rulers, the kingdom was divided between his two sons, with Singhasari in the east and Kadiri to the west (215). These kingdoms remained prosperous and grew to be among the richest in the world. However, in the thirteenth century, the ruler of Singhasari subordinated the Kadiri population center and reunited the Kingdom of East Java (215). By 1293, under the rule of Kertanagara, the son of the last Singhasari ruler, Majapahit emerged as a major force (215). Under the leadership of Kertanagara and his successors, Majapahit gained an "unprecedented degree of central control over East Java" and eventually subordinated Bali and Central Java (Shaffer 88). In order to

maintain their entrepot position in the international trade market, the rulers of Majapahit used many of the same tactics as Srivijaya, such as paying off sea nomads, while using naval pressure to control the peripheries of their large realm (88).

The decline of Majapahit was gradual. One factor was its overwhelming success and the ever-expanding market for the goods it tried to control. As Shaffer states, "As coastal trading communities prospered both within and beyond the realm, the ports over which Majapahit held sway became increasingly independent" (99). As the *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* points out, by the twelfth century the Chinese, Southeast Asia's major consumer, were dealing directly with the sources of supply on the peninsula, Sumatra, Java, and Moluccas (Bellwood 251). This direct trade eliminated the need for a dominant port (251).

THE CIRCUIT TRADE PATTERN:



Map 4. Circuit Trade Pattern

Although the ports described above were at one time or another the dominant points of trade along the Indian Ocean trade zone, the variety of goods traded at different ports along the maritime routes offered merchants numerous options on where and how far they needed to travel to trade their goods. One option was to go to one of many port emporia and find a merchant who had the goods one wished to purchase. As Abu-Lughod points out,

> In the thirteenth century and considerably before as well, the Asian sea trade that traversed the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the South China Sea was subdivided into three interlocking circuits, each within the shared "control" of a set of political and economic and economic actors who were largely, although certainly not exclusively, in charge of exchanges with adjacent zones. (251)

Three major cultural groups dominated each respective circuit (See Map 4). The westernmost circuit, or circuit I, encompasses the Persians and Arabs, who not only acted in their own right but also as intermediaries for Mediterranean Europe (259). The middle circuit (circuit II) is comprised of India and Indochina. The easternmost circuit, which is circuit III, is Chinese "space" (253). Another option merchants could choose was to go directly to the source of the product they wished to obtain and trade their goods there. As Chaudhuri further explains,

> Although on occasion shippers of any subsystem might venture to trade in the adjacent circuit or even range freely over all three, the "natural" condition of the Indian Ocean was for several locally hegemonic powers to coexist; no single power ever exercised dominance over the entire system. (253)

Through these various trade routes, cultural influences spread freely. Of the three dominant cultures in the Indian Ocean, the Hindu/Buddhist culture of eastern India had the greatest influence not only in its trade zone but that of China's as well. The next section of this paper will illustrate the extent India's culture, especially the Rama tradition, influenced not only religious beliefs of Southeast Asia but also literature and the arts.

SECTION THREE – THE RAMA TRADITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

As explained in Section 2, three major cultural groups dominated the Indian Ocean: Muslim, Indian, and Chinese. Of the three, the religion and culture of India had the greatest influence across the Indian Ocean. Wherever maritime centers appeared and communication was established along the trade routes of Southeast Asia, some elements of Indian religion and statecraft were adapted into indigenous tribal societies to enhance the civilization's own political position (Shaffer 26). As Himansu Bhusan Sarkar explains in *Cultural Relations Between Indian and Southeast Asian Countries*,

> the Indianized way of life, mixed up with native elements, was installed at the upper levels of society, and kingdoms grew up throughout Southeast Asia. Such states flourished in those areas which lay on the sea-route between India and China. (133-4)

The establishment of these Southeast Asian kingdoms was done in one of two ways: a) by Indians who married daughters of local chiefs and carved out the kingdoms for themselves, or b) by the local chief, who adapted himself to the Indian culture through the help of a Brahman monk (Diskul 25). Many Indian settlers intermarried with the local women and acquainted them with most aspects of Indian life: writing (alphabet), literature, religion, and culture (Sarkar 26). This method is attested by the legend of the founding of Funan:

> According to the Sanskrit inscription of Champa, the Brahman Kaundinya, having received a javelin from the Brahman Asvatthaman, ...threw it to mark the location of his future capital, then married a daughter of the king of the Nagas, named Soma, who gave birth to a royal line. (Coedes 37)

The native wives, initiated into the religious and moral ideas, social customs and beliefs of their husbands, became instrumental in spreading these ideas and beliefs among their own people. As R.C. Majumdar states in *Ancient Indian Colonization in South-East Asia*,

> The wives of the Indians became the best missionaries for the propagation of

> Hindu religion and culture. Gradually the new culture spread from the coastal region to the interior. (8)

When Indian merchants established permanent settlements along the sea-routes of Southeast Asia, their presence "necessitated the induction of an ever-increasing number of *brahmanas* to conduct domestic religious rites and temple-services" (Sarkar 137).

From a general survey of the whole of the Indian Ocean, it is not difficult to conclude that the earliest stream of the Rama saga flowed towards Southeast Asia with the priestly Brahman class, the Ksatriya adventurers, traders, and others looking for their fortune outside the restricted caste society of the Indian subcontinent (311). As Sarkar notes, "it is the halting stations lying on the trade route and the Indianized royal courts which provided the initial impulse for the early diffusion of the Rama saga in Southeast Asia" (311). For example, in Cambodia a copy of the Rama saga, a complete copy of the *Mahabharata*, and an unnamed *Purana* were recited daily before the deity of the Tribhuvanesvara temple around 598 C.E. by Brahman monks (312).

Probably no other literary tradition has had such fervent, widespread, and long-lasting currency as the Rama saga. Along with Valmiki's *Ramayana*, considered by most scholars to be the most authoritative and prestigious rendition, there are hundreds of other tellings of the Rama story in India, Southeast Asia, and beyond (Richman 7). One notable rendition of the Rama saga is Kampan's epic poem, the *Iramavataram* [*Rama, the Incarnation of Vishnu*], which was composed at the Chola court during the 12th century (Blackburn 157). Kampan's poem, written in Tamil, is a work renowned for its aesthetic and religious merit (Erndl 72). This text generated its own offspring, its own special sphere of influence, becoming an important link in the transmission of the Rama story to Southeast Asia (Ramanujan 33). As Suresh Awasthi states in his essay, "The *Ramayana* Traditions and Performing Arts,"

> The [Rama] tradition in India and Southeast Asia, because of its pervasive character and deeprootedness, has greatly influenced the beliefs, customs, and life-styles of the peoples of these regions, comprised of different ethnic and cultural groups. The tradition has for over two thousand years been a vital and

> integral element of the cultures of these countries. It has profoundly enriched the literary, performing, and visual arts. Due to its dynamic character, the [Rama] tradition keeps adjusting itself to the new social settings and continues to inspire and stimulate the creative urge of the people and their sense of ideals and values. (660)

One important reason for its profound influence is its flexibility and openness. Despite its religious associations and ritualistic content, the Rama tradition lends itself to transformation and adaptation to suit different theological considerations and cultural needs (660).

In India itself, the Rama tradition is a living faith (Soedarsono 134), repeatedly rendered in the following vernaculars: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Maithili, Kanarese, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Oriya, Tamil, and Telegu (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 662). For the people of India, the Rama saga is not just a story or legend but a religious text for Hinduism, comparable to the Koran or Torah. Like these sacred texts, the Rama tradition "forms the basis of the moral instruction of the nation" (Soedarsono 134). The impact of the Rama tradition on the total populace of India is so pervasive that even the illiterate know the story by heart.

The Rama saga in India is an oral tradition, which can adapt itself to literary, visual, and pictorial genres. Victor Mair has listed the various genres to which the Rama tradition has assimilated itself on all social levels, both in India and abroad. The tradition occurs as

> String-puppets, shadow-plays, professional storytelling, ritual songs, marriage songs, drum songs, ballads, hymns, epics, devotional poems, temple paintings, banners, scroll paintings, dolls, sculptured reliefs, statues, local and regional dramas, pageants, masked dances and plays, ballet, folk tales, short stories, novels, grammatical treatises, and inscriptions. (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 664-5)

Many of these genres found there way into Southeast Asia and became an intregal part of many of the cultures there.

LITERATURE:

For a majority of Southeast Asian countries, the Indian epics, including the Rama saga, became the basis of their literary heritage. For example, one of the oldest literary works found in Old-Javanese is based on the Rama saga. Yogisvara, a tenth century poet, wrote the *Ramayana Kakavin*, the earliest Javanese version of the Rama saga (Soedarsono 132)[1]. The poem has 26 cantos, "written in different Sanskrit meters, with a mastery of style and *alamkara* (embellishment) which has never been excelled in Old Javanese literature" (313). Most scholars agree that this rendition of the Rama saga is one of greatest among the Old Javanese poetical works. The Old-Javanese Rama saga has been the most popular, well-known, and studied text of ancient Indonesia and has been kept alive in the minds of the Indonesian people (Santoso 20). Other stories based on the Rama saga in Java include the *Sumanasantaka*, the *Harisraya*, and the *Aryunavjaya* (Sarkar 313). The principal renditions of the Rama saga found later in the Malayo-Indonesian world are the *Serat Kanda*, the *Ramyana Sasak*, the *Rama Kling*, the *Rama Kidung Bali*, the *Rama Tambang*, and the Malay *Hikayat Ramayana* (314).

On the mainland of Southeast Asia, the Rama saga "found mooring in... Buddhist countries" as well (Sarkar 314). The saga is for the most part "presented and interpreted as a Hindu story told primarily in Hindu contexts" (Reynolds 50). However, within a Buddhist context, including such works as the *Dasaratha-Jataka*, the story forms an ancient, continuous and coherent tradition in Southeast Asia (Richman 9). Both religions have influenced the composition of the Thai *Ramakien* and the Laotian *Phra Lak/ Phra Lam*. From the medieval period, the Buddhist Rama sagas had a widespread distribution through northeast Thailand and Laos to the border of Cambodia in the south (Reynold 53). The Thai *Ramakien*, or *Ramakirti*, probably evolved from the legend being passed by storytellers from generation to generation (Tramod 241). As Tramod notes in his essay "Ramayana Dance and Music in Thailand," the

[1] Sarkar believes that the *Ramayana Kakavin* was composed towards the end of the eleventh century C.E. (313).

story is sometimes the same as Valmiki's *Ramayana* and at other times follows the Tamil rendition (241), most likely Kampan's, or the Buddhist renditions. As Sarkar further explains, "the dramatic literature of Thailand owes its origins to the Rama saga of India.... The floating legends bearing on the [story], particularly the *Dasaratha-Jataka*, furnish the base of the existing *Ramayana*" (293). The Rama saga's influence in Thailand is so strong that it became very popular for kings to take the name of the principal hero, Rama. The *Ramkien*'s authorship is attributed to King Rama I, who reigned from 1782-1809 (Dhaninivat 19). This rendition, like the *Ramayana Kakavin* of Java, is the most widely studied text in Thailand and the basis of many of the plays performed today.

THE *WAYANG* (THEATER):

The most notable genre to develop in Southeast Asia is the *wayang*, which in Southeast Asian languages is the general term to describe the theater or performing arts (Mair, *Painting* 55). Sarkar claims in *Cultural Relations Between Indian and Southeast Asian Countries* that the *wayang* has been responsible for the popularity of the Rama saga in Southeast Asia (316). The *wayang* of Southeast Asia, which originated in India, encompasses all aspects of the theater, including dancing, puppetry, picture-scrolls, and singing. Mair, in *Painting and Performances: Chinese Picture Recitation and its Indian Genesis*, lists more than half a dozen types of *wayang*. Some of the *wayang* listed are as follows:

1. *Wayang beber* – long horizontal scrolls upon which are a painted a series of sequentially related scenes. As the narrator unrolls the scroll, he recites the narrative that explains the illustrations.
2. *Wayang topeng* – a type of dance pantomine where performers use masks, turning human actors into puppets. The actors speak but while they are moving about a narrator explains what is being portrayed.
3. *Wayang wong* – similar to the *wayang topeng*, except that the dancers perform without masks, but are made up to appear as though they are wearing them. They intentionally adopt

puppet-like poses and mimic the two dimensional movement of the shadow puppets (57-8).

4. *Wayang kulit* – the complete generic name for the ancient shadow play, known and beloved... in Java.... Both narration and dialogue are recited by the *dalang*, the storyteller, who manipulates all the puppets. The audience sits either before or behind the screen and thus view either the puppets or their shadows. (Holt 123)

Figure 1. Wayang Kulit Performance

Since it would be impossible to describe fully all the *wayang* types in this paper, only puppetry, or *wayang kulit*, will be discussed in greater detail (see Figure 1).

The leather puppets used in *wayang kulit* are the product of "infinite care and meticulous skill" (Figure 2):

> Their silhouettes are first carved out of buffalo parchment and then the features and adornments are perforated in fine lines, dots, hair-thin curves and scrolls until, viewed against the light some parts are
> like exquisite filigree. Painted and gilded identically on both sides, the puppet is inserted between the gripping halves of a split, upward-curving, and tapering stem (gapit) which grows out of a solid handle with a pointed end. Most puppets have in addition two manipulating rods (tjempurit) attached to their hands. The only points of articulation are the elbows and the shoulder joints. But motion is not restricted to the arms since the whole puppet can be tilted, made to advance or recede, dance, fight, fall and rise, turn, hover, or descend from heights. (*Ibid.*, 133-4)

The Indian epics made a distinct contribution to the development and growth of the theater arts of Southeast Asia (Tilakasiri 231). In Indonesia, both the Rama saga and *Mahabharata* "served as inexhaustible quarries for the composition of stories called *lakons*,"

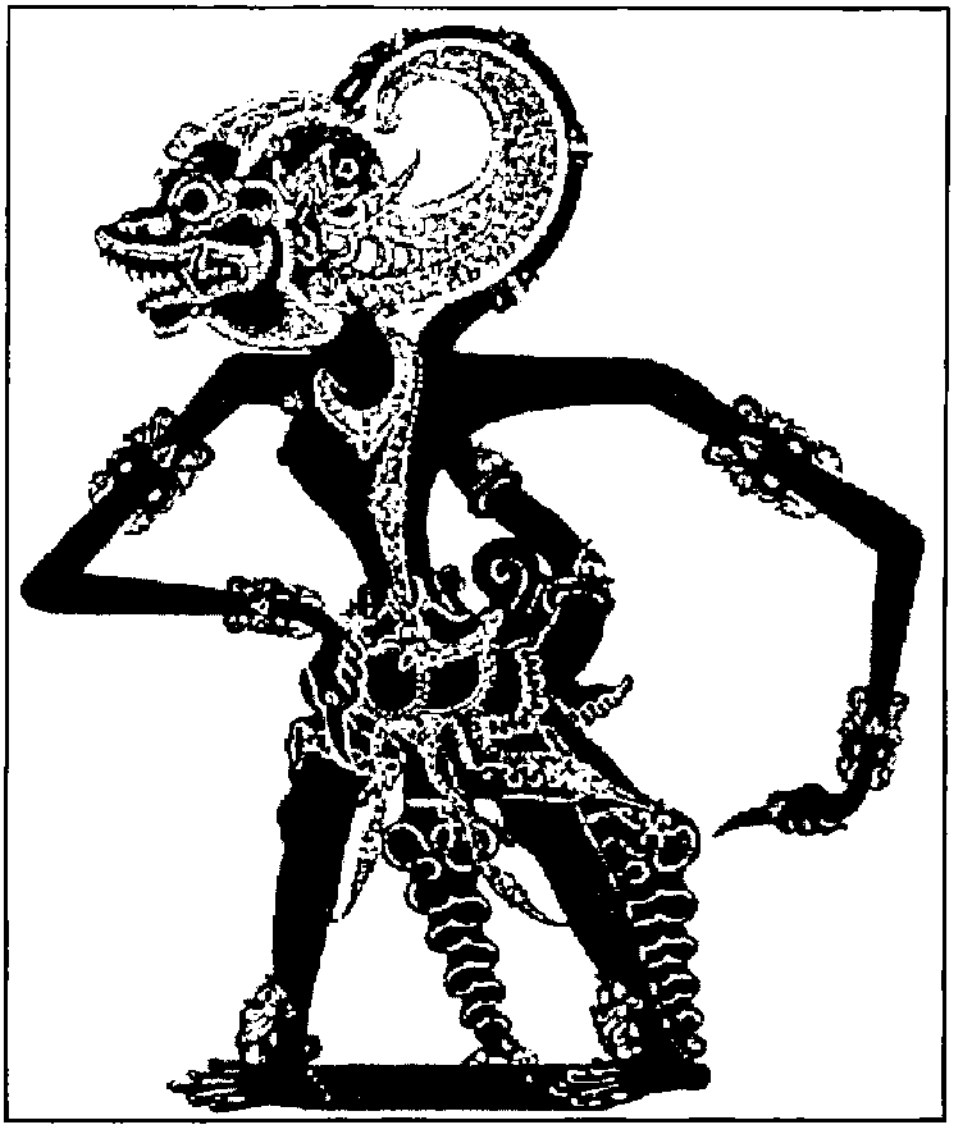


Figure 2. Shadow Puppet of Hanuman

which provided material for the *wayang kulit* (Sarkar 317). There are numerous *lakons* that puppeteers draw upon, such as the *Rama Tambak*, the *Hanuman Duta*, and the *Rama Gandrung*

(317). *Lakons* are still written about characters in the epics, but the stories are mainly indigenous (317).

From Java, the shadow plays were transmitted orally to other parts of Southeast Asia (Sweeney 125), bringing along with them various renditions of the Rama saga. In Northern Malaya and Southern Thailand, there are two types of shadow plays: the *wayang Siam* and the *wayang Java*. Both plays are similar in form and technique. However, the main differences are the matters of repertoire, appearance of the puppets, and music (125). The more popular of the two types is the *wayang Siam*. The *wayang Java*, in contrast, has a strong Javanese influence (125). Concerning the *wayang Siam*, Sweeney further notes in his essay, "The Malaysian *Ramayana* in Performance," that "it is possible to discern a number of other extraneous influences" (125). The costuming of the puppets exhibits strong Thai influences, while the music owes much to the "pan-Islamic tradition" (125). Like the literary works that the *wayang kulit* emerged from, the shadow plays have been synthesized and remolded to suit the needs of each culture.

The tradition of *wayang kulit* traveled to Southeast Asia through Kerala and Kamataka in South India, Andhra Pradesh, and Orissa (Aryan 84). In Kerala, the shadow plays existed among the Nayar, "a matrilineal warrior caste famous for its specialization in the... dance-drama performances of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (Holt 129). The popularity and performance of the *wayang kulit* is due in part to popular superstition: "In these provinces, the rural folk still subscribe to the belief -- a superstition cherished by them since hoary antiquity -- that the performance of shadow plays would ensure plenty of rain" (84). The *wayang kulit* employs the use of flat leather puppets set behind a screen of white fabric and is usually performed at night. In Kerala, the *wayang kulit* is "explicitly linked" to Hindu temples (Blackburn 157). They were one of many audiovisual techniques devised to educate the masses as well as members of nobility about Hinduism (Aryan 84). Since several renditions of the Rama saga, such as the *Ramayana*, are viewed by the Indians to be holy treatises on Hinduism, the story was frequently

used in the puppet plays. It is highly probable that when Brahman monks arrived in Southeast Asia, especially Java, they brought puppeteers along with them in order to help spread Hinduism. The earliest record confirming the existence of the *wayang kulit* in Central Java dates from 907 C.E., carved in Balitung's copper plate inscription (Soedarsono 133). On the island of Bali, it dates from 896 C.E., as recorded on a copper plate inscription which is now housed at the village of Bebetin (Soedarsono 133).

TEMPLE ART:

Much of the pictorial art and sculptures that deal with the Rama tradition can be found in the Hindu and Buddhist temples throughout Southeast Asia. The Rama saga was an extremely popular source of inspiration for bas-relief carvers and sculptors (Freeman 129). Majumdar points out that Indian settlers not only introduced traditions and techniques of developed Indian art but also probably actual specimens of Indian sculptures:

> Some of the earlier sculptures in Siam and Malay peninsula bear so striking a resemblance to Indian prototypes that many scholars have held that they were either brought from India or made by Hindu craftsmen who were fresh arrivals from India. Not only the motifs' general details but even the very technique was purely Indian, and there was hardly anything to distinguish them from Indian products. (81)

K.C. Aryan in *Hanuman: Art, Mythology, and Folklore* supports this conclusion by adding that countless sculptures of Hindu and Buddhist deities from Andhra Pradesh and South India were exported to Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, and other areas in Southeast Asia (Aryan 69).

The earliest example of the Rama Saga in narrative reliefs comes from Prambanam, Java. From the eighth until the middle of the tenth century, Central Java experienced a construction boom (Shaffer 67). This boom created two great temple complexes, the Buddhist temples at

Borobudur and the Hindu temples of Prambanam, both built during the ninth century. The existence of these two imposing temple complexes demonstrates a significant presence of both Hindu and Buddhist monks in Southeast Asia during the hegemony of Srivijaya. Of the two temples, Prambanam is the more relevant to this discussion.

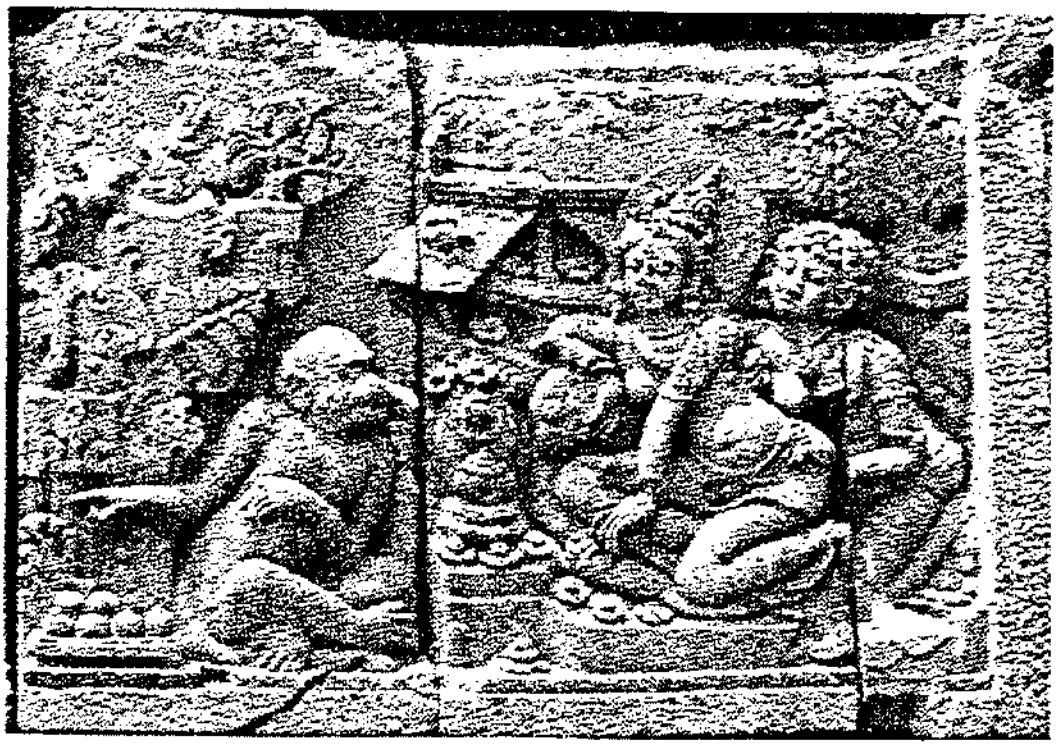


Figure 3. Hanuman Delivers Message to Sita, Prambanan, Central Java

Prambanam was a rich center of Hinduism (Gangoly 36). Among the group of temples in the complex, the most significant is Chandi Lara Jonggrang which is dedicated to Shiva (36). This temple was designed on an ambitious scale, "being placed on a walled terrace surrounded by a group of 156 smaller shrines spread outside the walls in three rows" (36). A succession of reliefs lining the inner side of the balustrade wall of the Siva temple within the compound illustrates the Rama saga. The tale begins with a scene of the god Vishnu enthroned upon

Figure 4. Hanuman Defeats Ravana's Army on Lanka, Panataran, East Java

Ananta, the world serpent, and stops abruptly at the point when Hanuman leads the monkey army across the sea onto the island city of Lanka (Soedarsono 129). The story continues on in the Brahman temple just south of the Siva temple (129). Aryan points out that the chiseled relief panels that adorn the walls of Prambanam have their prototypes in the sculptural carvings from the Mandavya-Narayan temple in Bhimavaram, India (69) (see Figure 3). However, in Gangoly's opinion, the Rama saga reliefs "in their dramatic story-telling power are of a high quality, the like of which is unknown in India proper" (36).

The Panataran temples in East Java, constructed around the fourteenth to fifteenth century, have a similar series of reliefs in a "continuous frieze round the lower terraces of the Shiva temple" (Aryan 76). Unlike their counterparts in Prambanam, these reliefs are not executed in "Indianesque style" but in the "plastic dialect of native Indonesian art" (76). Panataran's reliefs reflect the growth and development of Java's own unique style in this genre as the artists moved away from mimicking Indian prototypes, which is a common event for all the genres that found their way into Southeast Asia. The reliefs of this temple are depicted in an almost two-dimensional manner, their stylized shape resembling the puppets used in the leather shadow puppet plays (Soedarsono 130). Clearly, the "delineation [of these reliefs]... has been inspired by the curving stylization of the leather puppets used in the local shadow theatre" (Aryan 76). In comparing Figure 4, which depicts Hanuman defeating a soldier of Ravana's army on Lanka, with the illustration of a leather shadow puppet (Figure 2), the relief displays the same curious "amalgamation of human and animal form with long hooked noses, grinning mouths, set on coarse plump bodies" and sparse costuming (76).

On the mainland of Southeast Asia, the most notable examples of pictorial art and sculptures are in the various temple-mountains of the Khmer empire. The most famous and

magnificent of all the Khmer temples is Angkor Vat. In Sarkar's opinion, "Angkor Vat presents the most sumptuous representation of the *Ramayana*" (314). The temple was constructed during the reign of Suryavarman II (1112-52). Suryavarman II was determined to make his temple the grandest and largest, which would equal his status as the nation's greatest king (Freeman 162). Like the temples in Java and their prototypes in India, Suryavarman II lined the walls of the temple with bas-reliefs. Among the great epics of India depicted in the temple, the Rama saga can be found in the western gallery: "Every available surface is carved... with scenes from the *Ramayana*" (166). Figure 5, an illustration from Angkor Vat, is a close-up of Hanuman's face. This illustration is part of a bas-relief that lines the south side of the eastern gallery that stretches

Figure 5. Hanuman Churning the Sea of Milk, Angkor Vat, Cambodia

for 160 feet. It is the story of "The Churning of the Sea of Milk," considered by Freeman to be "the masterpiece of the bas-reliefs" (167). As Freeman further explains in *Angkor: The Hidden Glories*,

> Its theme is one of the most important in Khmer mythology; the treatment is an enormous but unified tableau, and the execution is of the highest order, probably by one supremely talented artist. The body of the giant serpent Vasuki is wound around Mount Mandara, which in turn is supported on the back of a giant turtle in the Sea of Milk, the primeval ocean. In a rare instance of cooperation between gods and demons, a team of each grasps either end of the serpent's body; they pull it first in one direction and then in the other in order to rotate the mountain and release *amrita*, or ambrosia (the elixir of life). In the myths, the gods and demons then fight for possession of [the ambrosia]. Vishnu commands the two teams from the center of the composition. (167)

The leader of the demons at the far left of the relief is Ravana and on the right the gods are led by Hanuman. This close-up reflects the meticulous care and skill of the carver, who clearly captures the majestic bearing of Hanuman. This relief demonstrates the widespread popularity of the Rama Saga's characters and the underlying theme of good versus evil within the tale, which can adapt itself to many different motifs and interpretations. It can also be held up as evidence of Hanuman's popularity in Southeast Asia since there is no mention in Indian texts of Hanuman or Ravana participating in this legendary event[2].

Similar reliefs can be found throughout Southeast Asia and even in the port city of Quanzhou, China. In all the temples mentioned above, the plot of the Rama saga depicted is generally the same, but the flavor and style of the various bas-reliefs clearly demonstrates each culture's acceptance of the story as part of its own heritage.

THE WORSHIP OF HANUMAN:

Hanuman is more than the monkey-hero of the Rama saga; he is also a god (Freeman

[2] See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists.*

130). Moriz Winternitz, in *A History of Indian Literature* has noted that

> none of the larger villages of India is without its image of the monkey-king Hanuman, and... monkeys are swarming in many temples, and are treated with great forbearance and love. This is particularly the case in Oudh, the ancient town of residence of Rama. (V. 1 478)

One major reason for his worship in Hinduism is that Hanuman is one of several manifestations of Siva (Aryan 88). According to the Shivite traditions in the *puranas*, Siva assumed the form of Hanuman with the express intention of helping Rama destroy Ravana (13).

As Mair and other scholars have noted, Hanuman has carved a niche for himself throughout India and other parts of Asia where he is venerated for his bravery, wisdom, intellect, and other virtues: "for Hanuman is an incarnation of devotion and selfless service par excellence" (Aryan 88). He inspires his devotees with "moral courage, the ability to overcome hurdles and obstacles in life, and above all, according to common and widespread beliefs, the god grants material gains" (88).

The adoration of Hanuman as a deity may have started during the late Gupta period (320-535 C.E.) in India (Nagar 238). Shanti Lal Nagar hypothesizes that Hanuman's popularity as a deity may have been due to the advent of foreign invaders and ultimately the establishment of Muslim rule who destroyed almost all Hindu temples or seized sacred sites for Muslim monuments (238):

> From the tenth to the sixteenth century C.E. the struggle for the firm establishment of the Muslim rule in India continued which ended with the establishment of the Mughal rule in 1526 C.E. The Hindu psyche during these five centuries was completely wounded, badly hurt, facing enormous humiliation at the hands of the Muslim rulers.... This indeed is the period when various Hindu deities were brought in the forefront and Hanuman happened to be one of them. Soon he became the deity not only of the Hindu rulers but also of the masses when everything concerning the Hindus was in turmoil. Their honour, their religion, their social, political and economic status had lost its lustre.... In Hanuman, they found a deity who was not only a great warrior but also had never faced a defeat in his life time and was always available to protect his worshippers and could be invoked to destroy his enemies. (Nagar 239-40)

On the battlefield, the Hindu army propitiated Hanuman for victory (Aryan 88).

In Ceylon, the Sinhalese people seek the aid of Hanuman, through his mother Anjanadevi, when they lose something of value or when they wish to avert an evil threatening them (Godakumbura 452). The Sinhalese claim that Hanuman appears and will expose the thief and where the stolen goods are, or show some sign in other matters like the healing of a gravely ill patient (452).

It is very easy to understand how and why a Hanuman cult spread throughout India and Asia when we look at the various attributes and powers associated with Hanuman. As Mair notes in his article "Suen Wu-Kung=Hanumat?: The Progress of a Scholarly Debate," most Southeast Asian treatments of the Rama saga feature Hanuman more prominently than any other character (696). Travelers along the maritime trade routes could not have failed to notice the elevation of a monkey figure to such high status and fame, with thousands of shrines in South and Southeast Asia dedicated to Hanuman (696).

As illustrated above, the inspiration of the Rama tradition as a theme did not confine itself to literary output alone, but expressed itself in theater and art. Sculptures, paintings and panels of the epic abound in temples not only all over India but also throughout Asia proper and the islands of the Southeast, "where the epic is woven into the web of the life of the people" (Sivaramamurti 636). As Diskul states, "At first they [Southeast Asians] more or less copied the art of their cultural masters but then the native influences slowly crept in until these arts became independent from their prototypes and varied according to each country, each having its own characteristics" (25).

SECTION FOUR – QUANZHOU

One of the key sites for the formation of the *Xiyouji* is the province of Fujian. Through the city of Quanzhou, which was a major center of cultural, religious, and commercial interchange, many elements of the Rama saga flowed into China. Since the city is situated on the southern coast of China, it was advantageously situated to receive traders from around the world. As Hugh Clark notes, "Quanzhou, possibly more than any other city in premodern China, came to depend upon long-range foreign trade for its well-being, and it was trade that brought foreigners to live there" (50-51).

Prior to the Tang, trade in Quanzhou remained only marginal, with international commerce conducted mostly in the southern city of Guangzhou (Canton). It was not until the fall of the Tang that several factors occurred to change Quanzhou's position in international trade. As John Guy explains in his article "Tamil Merchant Guilds and the Quanzhou Trade,"

> Two developments occurred towards the end of the first millennium which altered the Chinese perception of its relations with the Southern Ocean and the importance China attached to its Southern ports [also referred to as Nanhai]. The rise to commercial prominence of Quanzhou is directly linked to these trends. The first was a growing awareness that Southeast Asia rather than West Asia and India was the source of many of the luxury goods supplied by Persian, Arab, and Indian traders.... The second development was that South China was no longer a frontier realm, but was developing, with increased urbanization, its own internal market for the products of Nanhai. (4)

In addition, around the 920's during the Ten Kingdoms interregnum, the southern region of Fujian was able to assert an autonomy, which "positioned Quanzhou to become one of the principal ports of China" (Clark 53). Quanzhou's market emerged as a trade emporium around the late 900's, during the Song Dynasty, in direct response to the empire's desire to have more foreign merchants trade with China (Guy 4). One advantage Quanzhou held over Guangzhou as a port was its close proximity to the great tea and porcelain producing areas in Fujian (Fairbank 136). As Hugh Clark further points out, when a new empire was forming under the leadership of

Zhao Kuangyin, the founding Song emperor, "the radical transformation in the position of Quanzhou in South Seas trade was acknowledged" (53).

One factor in Quanzhou's rise in position was that the Song government sought to restore the various institutions of the Tang Dynasty's administrative structure (54). One of these institutions was the trade superintendency through which China controlled overseas trade (54). However, despite its recognition of the port's importance in international trade, it was not until 1087 that the Song established an office of superintendency in Quanzhou (54). By the twelfth century, with the volume of trade increasing, Quanzhou displaced Guangzhou (54) and became the foremost port in China's commercial traffic with the countries along the coasts of the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf (Yang 99). This displacement was acknowledged in an essay written by Lin Zhiqi around 1170:

> There are three prefectures that carry on trade relationships with the lands of the South Seas, among which Quanzhou is number one. The long-distance trade ships of Quanzhou carry on trade with numerous lands across the sea. (Quoted by Clark 54)

Lin Zhiqi's statement is further strengthened by the written accounts of two foreign traders, Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta. When Marco Polo visited Quanzhou in the late 1200's, he described the city as a haven

> ...frequented by all ships of India which bring thither spicery and all other kinds of costly wares. It is the port also that is frequented by all merchants of Manzi, for hither is imported the most astonishing quantity of goods and of precious stones and pearls, and from this they are distributed all over Manzi. And I assure you that for one shipload of pepper that goes to Alexandria... destined for Christendom, there come a hundred such, aye and more too, to this haven of Zayton [Quanzhou]: for it is one of the two greatest havens in the world of commerce. (Quoted by Ecke 3)

Half a century later, when the Arab merchant Ibn Battuta visited the city (c. 1343-4), Quanzhou appeared to him to be the greatest port in the world, its commercial traffic exceeding the port of

Alexandria, as well as the Indian ports of Quilon and Calicut (Chaudhuri 55).

A second reason for Quanzhou's rise as China's premiere port was due to the fact that it was located at a center of fine-quality porcelain, silk, and tea production (Fairbank 136). This made it easier and cheaper for traders to obtain the highly valued products from the local production sources.

The substantial volume of trade conducted through Quanzhou brought with it resident communities of foreigners (Clark 54). As early as the sixth century, records show that there were foreigners visiting the port such as the Indian monk Kularadha (Yang 106-7). However, the earliest evidence that foreign settlement had developed in Quanzhou dates from around the late tenth and early eleventh centuries (Clark 56). As Clark cites in his article "Muslims and Hindus in the Culture and Morphology of Quanzhou from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Century,"

> On the western edge of the modern city sits a stone monument delicately known today as the "Stone Bamboo Shoot" (*shixun*); all too obviously, however, it is a stone phallus. In 1011, because of some unspecified personal misfortune, the prefectural magistrate Gao Huilian "severed the monument in two," in which state it remained until it was reassembled in the fifteenth century. Beyond this there is no record of the origins of the monument, and some argue that it is of great antiquity, a remnant of a long-ago and long-forgotten indigenous culture. Of course, we cannot conclusively rule that out, but if it were the case, more examples of similar fertility monuments should exist, but they do not. On the other hand, stone phalluses, or lingam, are integral to the [Siva] cult of Hinduism. As most contemporary scholars agree, that is exactly what the Stone Bamboo Shoot is. We can safely assume, then, that by the early eleventh century a community of south or southeast Asian Sivaists had emerged beside the local Muslim community. (57)

Sections 2 and 3 have shown that Indian settlers and merchants formed communities along the sea-route of Southeast Asia, therefore it is plausible that Indians settled in the major ports of China to act as negotiators between the Chinese government and their fellow traders and even to marry with the locals. In 1956, scholars confirmed the presence of a Tamil-speaking merchant community in Quanzhou through the discovery of a Tamil-Chinese bilingual inscription dated

April 1281 (Guy 11). The letters on the inscription are poorly formed and often erroneous, indicating that they were executed by a non-Tamil speaker (12). The inscription has a religious affiliation with Hinduism and pays homage to Siva:

> Obesiance to Hara [Siva]. Let there be prosperity! On the day [having] Chitra in the month of Chittirai of the Saka year 1203, the Tavachchakkarvattigal *alias* Sambandhapperumal caused, in accordance with the *firman* of Chekachai-khan, to be graciously installed the God Udaiyar Tirukkadalisvaram Udaiya-nayinar, for the welfare of the illustrious body of the illustrious Chekachai Khan. (12)

Guy believes the inscription was commissioned for installation in a new temple or the installation of a new image of Siva in an existing temple, possibly during the reign of Kubilai Khan's son Chimkin (12). As several sources indicate, it was around this time that at least one Hindu temple was established.

Two stone pillars and a basement frieze, believed to be from this temple, now form part of the Kaiyuan Buddhist temple in Quanzhou (Guy 12). Guy in his article explains the presence of these artifacts in the structure of the Buddhist temple:

> The Kaiyuan temple underwent a major renovation in the Ming-period, and it appears that the Hindu architectural elements found their way into the structure of the temple in the course of that renovation. Interestingly, this is also the period when the city wall was enlarged, absorbing several hundred architectural pieces from the Hindu temple. There is, therefore, every reason to suggest that the temple recorded in 1281 was still in existence up until the fifteenth or sixteenth century, when its last remaining stones were pillaged for temple renovation and for use as masonry filler. The site may have been located in the south-east of the city as it was from this area, in the vicinity of the Tonghuai gate, that much of this material was recovered. (13)

Guy believes that this Hindu temple may have been built for an Indian priest named Lohuna. With the support of foreign merchants in the city, he bought land in the southern suburb of the city for a temple (13). Chinese sources claim this priest to be Buddhist. However, Clark hypothesizes that "given the date, by which time Buddhism was in definite decline throughout the Indian subcontinent in favor of a revived Hinduism, it does not seem likely that they [the

foreign merchants or Lohuna] were Buddhist," and suggests instead they were Hindu (56).

The Kaiyuan temple was not the only edifice that received stones from this Hindu temple. As Yang Qinzhang explains in his article "Cultural Contacts Between China's Quanzhou and South India During the Yuan Period,"

> nearly 200 pieces of Hindu sculpture have... been uncovered from Quanzhou and somewhere round about, where they were lying hidden under city walls, the wilds, water tanks, roads and small temples. They not only bear witness to the coming of Hinduism into China but also show a unique artistic style in which Hindu gods, mythology, and legends are combined with traditional Chinese motifs to give expression to the base of the foreign religion. (99-100)

One of the most recent discoveries is that of a relief depicting the Hindu goddess Kali, the goddess of destruction, worshipped locally as the Buddhist Goddess Guanyin, seated on the prostrate figure of Siva (Guy 13-4). Buddhism was an offspring from Hinduism, which would account for the easy adaptability of iconographic images from one religion to another. This adaptability made it very easy for the Chinese population to see images of Hanuman found in two sites within the city in a Buddhist context. The lesser known of the two images can be found in the base of a stone pillar of the city wall (Clark 64). Chinese scholars believe that this pillar is part of a pair (64). The other was found several years earlier at a nearby site "bearing the image of an Indianized man, perhaps Lord Rama himself, at the entrance to a Hindu temple" (64). These images may have provided the masons, who carved the bas-reliefs of the Kaiyuan temple, with visual prototypes for the Monkey-headed figure on the western pagoda. Further discussion of this bas-relief is found in Section 5.

As illustrated above, Quanzhou played an important function in the transmission of the Rama saga to China. Through this port, Indian settlements developed around the city, which provided the means for spreading the story through oral, visual, and literary genres.

Midway on the Journey. The figure of Hanuman inscribed all over with the word Rama, showing his utter devotion to the latter. Pataka Painting. Jodhpur, Rajasthan, 19th century.

SECTION FIVE – ANTECEDENTS TO THE *XIYOUJI*

The complete text of the *Xiyouji* was first published in 1592 during the Ming Dynasty. As Chang Ching-erh notes, the novel is not the "achievement of one single genius, but the product of an accretion of resources," contributed by writers and artists of different periods (191). A survey of the *Xiyouji* tradition shows that it emerged from a popular milieu, rather than an intellectual or literary one (Dudbridge 175). James Fu in *Mythic and Comic Aspects of the Quest* goes one step further than Dudbridge and points out that Chinese fiction developed between the Yuan and Ming period (1277-1644) from an outgrowth of the folk art of storytellers, historical materials and literary fragments (Preface ix). These three elements were expanded into complete stories adorned with rich details and vivid descriptions (Preface ix).

The Tang Dynasty (618-905) marked a significant period for the later development of the *Xiyouji*. It is during this period that the real Xuanzang, who was later transformed into the comic leader of the pilgrimage in the *Xiyouji*, made his historic journey to India against an imperial decree forbidding all Chinese subjects from leaving China's territories. Xuanzang, also known by the Buddhist honorific Tripitaka, journeyed west in order to study Sanskrit texts of the Yoga school (Fu 44). He traveled to India by following the overland trade route of the Silk Road through Central Asia. It took him 16 years (629-45 C.E.) to complete his pilgrimage and return to China. When he did return, the same emperor who had forbidden his journey received him as a holy monk. From that time on, Xuanzang's accomplishment has been counted among the great individual exploits in Chinese history (Dudbridge 11). Xuanzang's travels, in a sense, passed into legend almost in his own time. As Dudbridge further states,

> In the popular story-cycle of later centuries, Tripitaka stood out among the great names of his faith above all as a traveler of spectacular achievement. It was his journey that held the imagination, a prolonged excursion for readers and audiences into remote and semi-fabulous territory. (12)

There is no doubt to anyone who reads the *Xiyouji*, however, that Sun Wukong is the true hero of the story. He encompasses all the qualities of a great epic hero. Throughout the novel he displays his bravery, strength, cunningness against his enemies, and unquestionable loyalty to Tripitaka. He is the dynamic character with whom readers can most readily identify in the story. The question that arises is how did the fictional monkey character find its way into the real-life legend of Xuanzang's journey to India.

As explained by Victor Mair, Hu Shi, the early twentieth-century scholar who was the first to notice the Sun Wukong/ Hanuman parallel, believed that since Wukong bears little resemblance to the few monkey characters found in the classical tales of the Tang Dynasty and earlier, Hanuman of the Rama saga was the most likely model ("Suen Wu-Kung" 704). Although Hu Shi provided groundbreaking work in the Sun Wukong/Hanuman connection, I will argue that Sun Wukong's development was in fact an amalgamation of indigenous and imported elements. To understand this melding of characteristics, it is essential to look at the indigenous monkey stories of China.

EARLY EVIDENCE OF THE WHITE MONKEY LEGEND:

In the Chu kingdom (700-223 B.C.E.), which encompassed the central Yangtze River Basin, the people revered gibbon monkeys, especially white ones (Gulik 40). Robert van Gulik explains that the Chu kingdom was an ancient center of mystical beliefs and witchcraft out of which Taoism evolved (21). Chu folk culture considered the animal world on a par with human society and believed that some animals were rich in *qi*, or the mystical power of the cosmos (23). Taoism raised the status and power of the gibbon, which was regarded as one of the animals with the expert knowledge in inhaling *qi*, thereby acquiring occult powers (38). Among the many magical abilities credited to these monkeys is the ability to assume human shape and prolong their life several hundred years (38).

Gibbons appeared in various folktales in the Chu kingdom, one of which is found at the end of the Tang-Shang chapter in the *Lü Shi Chun Qiu*, a text that dates from the third century B.C.E.:

> A supernatural white gibbon used to frequent the palace grounds in Jingzhou (since 689 B.C.E the capital of Chu). Even the best archers in the city could not hit it. Then the king asked (the archer of legendary fame) Yang Youji to shoot it. Yang went there with the arrow ready on the string, but before shooting he aimed at the place where the moving gibbon had not yet arrived. When he then let go, the gibbon had not yet arrived...; the (moving) gibbon came as it where to meet the arrow, and fell down. Thus, Yang Youji could hit a target before it was there. (Gulik 40)

This story later found its way into chronicles and folk art of the Han Dynasty. However, in future renditions of this story, the gibbon is only referred to as a "white monkey."

It is important to note that, before his conversion to Buddhism, Wukong was a Taoist immortal; as I have explained in Section 1, Wukong became a disciple of the Taoist Patriarch Subodhi in the hope that he would achieve immortality. In the *Xiyouji*, the narrative clearly states that Wukong is "a seeker of Tao" (vol. 1 80), linking him back to the Chu monkey cult above and the tale that evolved around it.

Chu was one of several regional complexes outside the northern heartland of China possessing cultural traits that would eventually merge to become "Chinese" culture. The Chu language and folklore left an indelible mark on "Chinese" civilization (23). Robert van Gulik notes that within the heartland, which was controlled by the Zhou Dynasty, both the gibbon and the macaque gained a distinct position (37). The monkey figure in the extant text of the *Xiyouji* is explicitly referred to as a macaque, which is very much like a gibbon. However, as Gulik points out in *The Gibbon in China*,

> It was around the gibbon rather than the macaque that there clustered the ancient beliefs concerning the mysterious features of the monkey in general. There is a Chou character "yu" 禺 , that, according to the *Shuo-wen* dictionary, means a large monkey resembling a macaque with red eyes and a long tail; later,

> however, "yú" (also written ) serves as a term for the primates in general. This particular character has not yet been identified with a Shang graph, but in its Chou form it closely resembles that for "gui"  [or] "ghost." (33)

What we can infer, therefore, is that over time attributes associated with the gibbon were incorporated into the characteristics of an ambiguous "white monkey" figure that would eventually contribute to Sun Wukong's character.

SICHUAN REPRESENTATIONS OF THE WHITE MONKEY LEGEND:

Wu Hung, in his article "The Earliest Pictorial Representation of Ape Tales," further examines the "white monkey" motif as it was manifested in Sichuan. In the heart of the Chengdu basin in Sichuan, pictorial representations of early ape tales are carved into stone sarcophagi and cave tombs that date from the Han Dynasty. These carvings represent a local version of the "White Ape" legend, which later became the subject of the famous Tang short story "The White Monkey" (Wu 87). Wu points out that the "ape tale" motif and the "Yang Youji shooting a white ape" motif coexisted in Sichuan pictorial art (87). As Wu notes further, these two motifs became "two narrative 'kernels' around which two general themes of 'ape' stories developed: 'a demonic ape abducting women;' and 'the god Erlang defeating an ape spirit,' in post-Han literature and art" (87).

Concerning the first motif, three factors become very significant for the narrative development. The first is an early land-water trade route that ran along the coast of mainland Southeast Asia. Second, specific episodes in the Rama tradition that are analogous to the "demonic ape" legend and, finally, the physical representation of Hanuman in Southeast Asia.

It is known that by early Han times a trade route existed leading from Sichuan via Yunnan to Burma (see Section 2). Through this route, Sichuan and India shared private commercial contact (Yu 153), which was a primary means of cultural exchange. Wu Hung does not mention any written or visual sources for this motif prior to the Han Dynasty. As C.T. Hsia notes in *The Classic Chinese Novel*, however,

> Zheng Zhenduo [in the first half of this century] has examined Chinese stories about monkeys and come up with the interesting speculation that the Chinese must have received the *Ramayana* story in a garbled form since they often confused Hanuman with Ravana. In two well-known Chinese tales the monkey-villain appears as an abductor of women and in Yang Jingxian's plays Monkey himself kidnaps a princess and takes her to wife. As depicted in the novel [*Xiyouji*], the pre-Buddhist phase of Monkey's career also suggests the defiance of Ravana. (130-1)

In many renditions of the Rama saga, Bali, the Monkey King, instigates a drawn-out feud with his simian brother Sugriva by stealing his consort. In chapter 8 of Book 4, entitled "Kishkinda Kanda," of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Sugriva laments to Rama his loss of home and consort:

> "O Rama,...Bali, overwhelming me with insults, banished me from the kingdom. Seizing my consort, dearer to me than life itself, he bound my friends in chains. Then that perverse wretch sought to destroy me, O Rama, and often the monkeys themselves were bribed to that end, but I slew them. Full of apprehension on seeing thee, O Rama, I did not venture to go out to meet thee, being a prey to fear and yet in dread.
>
> "These monkeys with Hanuman as their leader are my sole companions; it is due to them that I am still alive, though the situation is grave. These loyal monkeys surround and protect me, accompanying me on all my journeys, remaining with me wherever I decide to stay. (vol. 2 185)

In Southeast Asia, Hanuman is virtually always depicted as a white monkey. As Mair further explains, "he is also often held to be licentious, a despoiler of daughters, an abductor of wives and, in other ways, to display behavior which is similar to that attributed to the *blanches betes noires* (*bai-yuan*) of several Tang and later tales" ("Suen Wu-Kung" 670-1).

In Sichuan, a narrative structure existed, consisting of three coherent episodes: the ape seizes women and hides them in its mountain dwelling; the ape abducts an individual woman and makes her his concubine; men or husbands pursue and eventually kill the ape (Wu 98). Two passages related to the "ape tale" can be found in texts dating from the first to fourth centuries C.E. The first passage is found in the *Yi Lin*, or *Forest of Changes*, under *bo* in the section "Kun." The lines are as follow:

> A great ape from the southern mountains
> Robbed me of my beloved wife.
> For fear, I dared not chase him.
> I could but retire, to dwell alone. (91)

The sentiments expressed in this poem echo Sugriva's lamentation over the loss of his consort in the excerpt above.

The second reference appears in two works, Zhang Hua's *Bo Wu Zhi* (Encyclopedic Records of Things, c. 290 C.E.), and the *Sou Shen Ji* (Records of Spirits, c. 340 C.E.) written by Gan Bao:

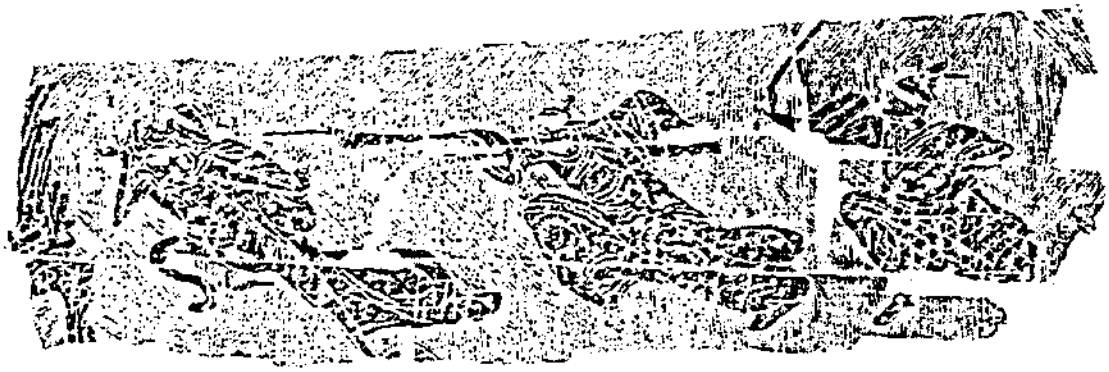


Figure 1. The Pursuit of the White Ape

> In the high mountains of southwestern Shu there is an animal resembling the monkey. It is seven feet in height, it can imitate the ways of human beings and is able to run fast in pursuit of them. It is named Jia-guo or Ma-hua; some call it Jue. It watches out for young women travelling on

> the road and seizes and bears them away without anyone being aware of it. If travelers are due to pass in its vicinity they lead one another by a long robe, but even this fails to avert disaster. The beast is able to distinguish between the smell of men and women and can thus pick out the women and leave the men. Having abducted a man's wife or daughter it makes her its own wife. Women that fail to bear its children can never return for the rest of their lives, and after ten years they come to resemble the beast in appearance, their minds become confused, and they no longer think of return. Those that bear sons return to their homes with the infants in their arms. The sons are all like men in appearance. If any refuse to rear them, the mothers die. So the women go in fear of the beast, and none dares refuse to bring up her son. Grown up, the sons are no different from men, and they all take the surname Yang, which is why there are so many people by that name now in the south west of Shu: they are mostly descended from the Jia-guo or Ma-hua. (91-2)

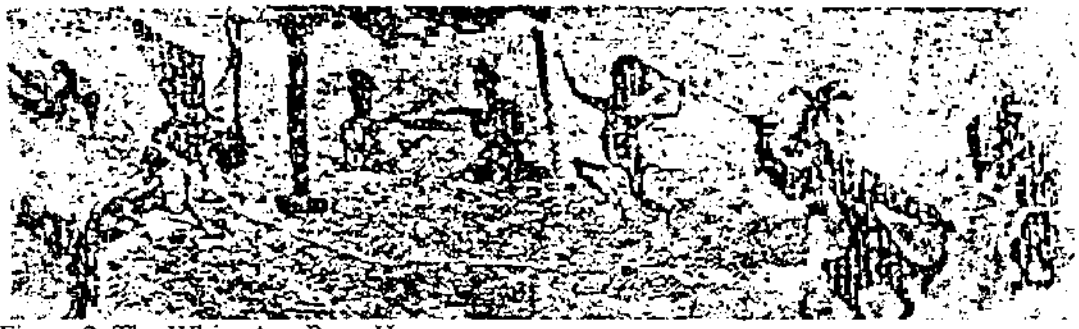


Figure 2. The White Ape Runs Home

Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate that the pursuit of the demonic ape by men from the "wife abducting ape" motif became a popular motif on tombs and sarcophagi in Sichuan.

Although no direct connection can be made between the wife-abducting motif and any motifs connected to the *Xiyouji*, it can be held up as evidence that a corruption of the Rama saga may have made its way into central China by Han times. However, a connection can be made between the "ape tale" motif and the "Yang Youji shooting a white ape" motif through the fact that both motifs focus on an episode where men pursue and then eventually slay the white ape. The major characteristics of the "ape tale" may have been introduced into Sichuan by Brahman or Buddhist missionaries traveling with Indian merchants and/or even the merchants themselves trading for silk along the Burma trade route. As explained in Section 3, monks and missionaries

often traveled with or followed traders to Southeast Asia and other parts of Asia.

There are a considerable number of "demonic" creatures in Sichuan funerary carvings in which either humans or dogs are attacking monkeys or apes (Wu 101). The "Erlang defeating an

Figure 3. Archer Yi Shooting False Suns

ape spirit" motif, which eventually found its way into the *Xiyouji*, has a connection to the Chu folktale of the great archer Yang Youji. From their composition, genre, and connection to literature, we can assume that the "ape tale" carvings are firmly related to a traditional motif of "demon quelling" or "soul protection" (99). Ancient China had a strong belief that archery

Figure 4. Yang Youji Shooting the White Ape

possessed certain magical powers capable of overcoming evil forces (104). Wu has noted that

> whenever a feudal lord disobeyed the order of the central government, the Zhou king would shoot a special target in the capital to ward off the lord's evil will. Down to the Eastern Zhou, officers entitled Ting-shi were in charge of quelling "demonic" birds and of warding off evil omens which they signified by shooting them with special bows and arrows. Again, the most famous "demon quellers" in Chinese legends, such as Yi, Yang Youji, and Erlang Shen, are always extraordinary archers. (104).

Wu has concluded, after analyzing the pictorial representations of "Yang Youji shooting the white ape" and "Archer Yi shooting false suns," that the former was actually based on the latter (104). In comparing the images in Figure 3 and 4, it is very easy to see the resemblance between the archers' images. The target of the archer in Figure 4 has been altered from false suns to an ape. Wu has further found an interesting parallel between the two archers in literature. In the *Yi Lin*, a sentence appears that has the same wording as one found in the *Shang Hai Jing tuzan*, written by Guo Pu (276-324 C.E.) (106). The former states, "As Yi is drawing his bow, the birds wail," while the latter states, "As Yang Youji is drawing his bow, the white ape gazes [at him] and wails.[1]" As the reader can clearly see, the sentences share a common structure and wording. These archers became the "ancestor archetype" on which the Holy Father Erlang emerged as "ape-queller" *par excellence* in later literature and art (107).

Erlang was initially a hunting deity worshipped by the Qiang people in Western Sichuan. His major attribute was the ability to control ghosts haunting the mountains in that region (Wu 107). Under the patronage of the Later Shu emperor Meng Chang, who reigned from 935 to 965, the cult of Erlang became more popular in Sichuan. When the Song incorporated the Shu Kingdom into its empire in 965, the cult was adopted and temples were erected throughout China

[1] The full tale of the Archer Yi is related in Appendix A.

Figure 5. Erlang Capturing a Monkey Demon

(107-8). As Erlang's popularity grew, the legendary accomplishments of other great archers, such as Yang Youji, were "homologized" into Erlang's myth (108). Among the accomplishments adapted was the defeat of the ape demon, which eventually became an important part in the Erlang legend (108). This conclusion by Wu may be further strengthened by the explanation given by van Gulik above concerning the similarities between the characters for monkey, *yu* 禺, and ghost, *gui* 鬼. A group of paintings has been identified concerning the story of Erlang and a monkey demon, which dates from around the Song or Yuan Dynasty (108). As the reader can see in Figure 5, Erlang is seated upon a horse and is chasing a simian creature, which is in the lower left corner. As Wu further states, "according to textual data, paintings of

this group were first created by Sichuan artists, and were thus possibly associated with the old 'ape-shooting' motif represented in the Eastern Han carvings" (109).

Another important aspect to note about the picture is that in the lower right corner is a pair of dogs. As Wu states, "there was a strong belief in Sichuan during the Han that dogs had power to protect the deceased against evil forces including demonic monkeys, and their images

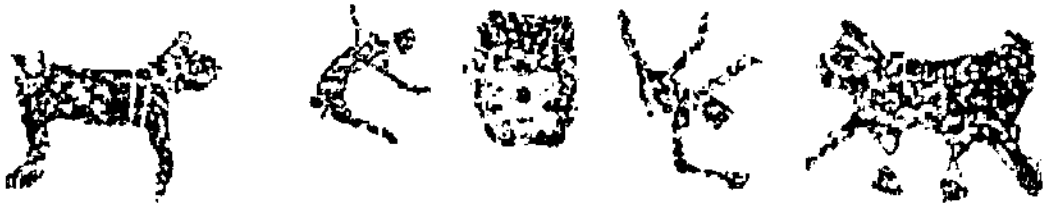


Figure 6. Dogs Capturing Two Monkeys

were often carved inside tombs" (101). An example is provided below (Figure 6). This carving on a lintel is found on a cave-tomb, showing a pair of enormous dogs pointing at two monkeys. The monkeys appear to be falling headlong to the ground, powerless against the dogs. In literary works such as *Sou Shen Ji*, monkeys were considered to embody evil and carry diseases, and dogs possessed the ability to overcome such demonic creatures (101).

This superstition combined with the Erlang legend finds its way into the *Xiyouji*. In the *Xiyouji*, after a long drawn out battle involving Sun Wukong and Erlang and many transformations by both, other immortals grow concerned about whether Erlang is able to subdue Wukong. As Anthony Yu's translation of the text relates:

> We tell you... about the demon king Mahabali, who, having requested the Immortal Master and his Six Brothers to lead their troops to subdue the monster, returned to the Region Above to make his report. Conversing with the Bodhisattva Guanyin, the Queen Mother, and the various divine officials in the Hall of Divine Mists, the Jade Emperor said, "If Erh-lang has already gone into battle, why has no further report come back today?" Folding her hands,

> Guanyin said, "Permit this humble cleric to invite Your Majesty and the Patriarch of Tao to go outside the South Heavenly Gate, so that you may find out personally how things are fairing." "That's a good suggestion," said the Jade Emperor. He at once sent for his imperial carriage and went with the Patriarch, Guanyin, Queen Mother, and various divine officials to the South Heavenly Gate, where the cortege was met by celestial soldiers and guardians. They opened the gate and peered into the distance; there they saw cosmic nets on every side manned by Heavenly soldiers, Devaraja Li and Nata in midair holding high the imp-reflecting mirror, and the Immortal Master and his Brothers encircling the Great Sage in the middle and fighting fiercely. The Bodhisattva opened her mouth and addressed Lao Tzu: "What do you think of Erh-lang, whom this humble cleric recommended? He is certainly powerful enough to have the Great Sage surrounded, if not yet captured. I shall now help him to achieve his victory and make certain that the enemy will be taken prisoner." "What weapon will the Bodhisattva use," asked Lao Tzu, "and how will you assist him?" "I shall throw down my immaculate vase which I use for holding my willow sprig," said the Bodhisattva. "When it hits that monkey, at least it will knock him over, even if it doesn't kill him. Erh-lang, the Little Sage, will then be able to capture him." "That vase of yours," said Lao Tzu, "is made of porcelain. It's all right if it hits him on the head. But if it crashed on the iron rod instead, won't it be shattered? You had better not raise your hands; let *me* help him win." The Bodhisattva said, "Do you have any weapon?" "I do indeed," said Lao Tzu. He rolled up his sleeve and took down from his left arm an armlet, saying, "This is a weapon made of red steel, brought into existence during my preparation of elixir and fully charged with theurgical forces. It can be made to transform at will; indestructible by fire or water, it can entrap many things. It's called the diamond cutter of the diamond snare. The year when I crossed the Han-ku Pass, I depended on it a great deal for the conversion of the barbarians, for it was practically my bodyguard night and day. Let me throw it down and hit him." After saying this, Lao Tzu hurled the snare down from the Heavenly Gate; it went tumbling down into the battlefield at the Flower-Fruit Mountain and landed smack on the Monkey King's head. The Monkey King was engaged in a bitter struggle with the Seven Sages and was completely unaware of the crown of his head. No longer able to stand on his feet, he toppled over. He managed to scramble up again and was about to flee, when the Holy Father Erh-lang's small hound dashed forward and bit him in the calf. He was pulled down for the second time and lay on the ground cursing, "You brute! Why don't you go and do your master in, instead of coming to bite old Monkey?" Rolling over quickly, he tried to get up, but the Seven Sages all pounced on him and pinned him down. They bound him with ropes and punctured his breastbone with a knife, so that he could transform no further. (*Xiyouji*, vol. 1 163-4)

Despite an army of immortals and magic weapons in the great battle between Erlang and Sun

Wukong, it is Erlang's divine dog who ultimately captures Wukong, a detail, as Wu observes, which again "leads... back to an old Sichuan belief during the Eastern Han" (111).

BUDDHIST ALLEGORIES:

When Buddhism was introduced into China during the first century C.E., it taught that all animals have souls (Gulik 23). Robert van Gulik argued that its doctrine on transmigration of the soul, when "linked up with those old, purely Chinese beliefs concerning animals' partaking in the *qi*," strengthened the popular Chinese beliefs in the magic properties of animals (23). Through Buddhism and its sutras, the earliest Chinese occurrences of allegorical devices anticipating Sun Wukong appeared. The first traceable appearance of Buddhist influence on the monkey legend is in the work of Kumarajiva, who died in 413. In his rendition of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* are the lines, "since the mind of one difficult to convert is like an ape, govern his mind by using certain methods and it can then be broken in" (Dudbridge 168). Another text, the *Samyutta-nikaya* (*Book of the Kindred Sayings*), states,

> Just as a monkey, brethren, faring through the woods, through the great forest catches hold of a bough, letting it go seizes another, even so that which we call thought, mind, conscious, that arises as one thing, ceases as another both by night and by day. (quoted by Dudbridge 168)

The metaphors above make a simple point, that the random, seemingly uncontrollable movements of a monkey symbolize the waywardness of man before he is able to achieve the composure which can only come through being a disciple of Buddha.

Shortly before the founding of the Tang Dynasty, the Liang emperor Jianwendi wrote a poem which makes a similar allusion to the ones above:

Hera S. Walker. *Indigenous or Foreign?: A Look at the Origins of the Monkey Hero Sun Wukong.* *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 81 (September 1998)

> The three ways of discipline exorcise the
> Horse of Desire.
> The six kinds of recollection still the
> Monkey of the mind. (quoted by Dudbridge 169)

This poem shows a Buddhist double metaphor concerning a monkey and a horse, both of which are characters in the *Xiyouji*. Concerning Wukong especially, these three excerpts become antecedents to the major theme of the novel, the object of the quest and the path of redemption for all souls (Fu 78). At the core of Mahayana Buddhism is the *Heart Sutra*. The transcendental teaching of this sutra is the unifying theme of the novel, from which developed the Chinese folk saying: "Form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form" (3). Significantly, Sun Wukong's name literally means "The Monkey Who Is Enlightened about Emptiness" (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 661). In his real pilgrimage, Xuanzang relied heavily on the *Heart Sutra* as a consoling companion on his way through the treacherous deserts and mountains of Central Asia. In this way, Wukong is the physical embodiment of this sutra. In the novel, it is Wukong who leads Xuanzang and his fellow disciples safely to Tathagata's mountain. As C.T. Hsia explains,

> During pauses between adventures, ...it is Monkey [Wukong] with his far superior understanding that repeatedly asks his master to heed the sutra. Thus in chapter 43, he makes another attempt, "Reverend master, you have forgotten the verse 'No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind.' Of all of us who have forsaken the world, our eyes should not see, our ears should not hear, our nose should not smell.... [T]his is known as 'routing the six thieves'." (129)

Wukong is the spokesperson for the sutra's teachings throughout the novel and teaches and protects the clownish Xuanzang on his way to enlightenment. The golden fillet on his head is a symbol of his function in the novel. It acts as a restraint, which will keep him and his fellow travelers on the righteous path to Buddhahood.

The *Heart Sutra* pays homage to the perfection of wisdom, personified in "the mother of

the Bodhisattvas," Guanyin (Fu 26-7). Guanyin, known as Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit, is the "Virgin Mother" of Compassion in China. She is the guiding goddess in the *Xiyouji*, the one who initiates the quest, who helps the exiled to become pilgrims and to redeem their sins through the redemption of all lost souls (26). Since this sutra is dedicated to Guanyin , "there is a spiritual affinity between the guiding goddess and the questing hero," who is Sun Wukong (31). Mair goes further to comment on a study by Isobe Akira, which states that in the Tang there was a connection between Xuanzang, Guanyin and "magically endowed attendants, some of whom are monkeys" or associated with monkeys ("Suen Wu-Kung" 693). One of these attendants, Andira, is described as a monkey-headed protective spirit who wears white clothing and lives in a mountain cave (693). As the reader can see, it is through the *Heart Sutra* and Guanyin that Sun Wukong forms the strongest connection with the *Xiyouji* cycle and Xuanzang.

THE RAMA TRADITION IN CHINA:

It is also through Buddhism that the Rama saga found its way into China. The saga traveled to China through three routes. By land, the northern route took the story from the Punjab and Kashmir into East Turkestan (Khotan), Tibet, and into China, or through the eastern route from Bengal into Burma, Thailand and Laos (Ramanujan 33). By sea, the southern route carried the story from Gujarat and South India into Java, Sumatra, Malaya, to Southern China (33). As early as 251 C.E., a Chinese translation of the Rama story can be found in the *Sat-paramita-samgraha-sutra*, the 46th story of which is a miniature version of Valmiki's *Ramayana* (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung 675). A monk of Sogdian extraction named Senghui, who probably came by sea to China via Southeast Asia, translated this sutra (675). It is important to note that

this story, entitled "Jataka of an Unnamed King," lacks proper names for its characters, which Mair notes to be very common in Chinese renditions of Indian texts (679).

Mair also mentions a recent study done by Takizawa Shigeru concerning the transmission of the Rama saga to China. Takizawa's study focuses on the Laotian *Gvay Dvorabhi*, a text which was first written down in the thirteenth or fourteenth century after centuries of oral transmission (697). As Mair further explains,

> Takizawa cites about a dozen representative episodes, motifs, and "patterns" – mostly from the *Gvay Dvorabhi* (but also making references to Thai, Malaysian, and other Southeast Asian sources) – that show an uncanny resemblance to JW [*Xiyouji*], even extending so far as bits of dialogue that are similar. He also makes clear that the affinity between Southeast Asian R[ama saga]s and JW [*Xiyouji*] is greater than that between Valmiki's *R*[*amayana*] and JW [*Xiyouji*] (697)

Anthony Yu, in the introduction to his translation of the *Xiyouji*, notes that a composition attributed to Valmiki, which is believed to have come from Tibetan and Khotanese manuscripts, has been found at Dunhuang. Studies by Chinese and Western scholars have demonstrated that known sources of early Chinese popular literature, whether in narrative or dramatic form, contain fragmentary and modified traces of the *Ramayana* epic (vol. 1, 10).

THE MONKEY CULT OF FUJIAN:

Isobe Akira suggests that from the late Tang a monkey-cult prevailed in the Fujian area. In his study of the development of Sun Wukong, Isobe cites a legend of a Monkey King Spirit in Fuzhou:

> A monkey is caught in the woods near the Temple of He Who Is Mighty in Loving Kindness (i.e. Sakyamuni [Buddha]) in Yungfu district. His captors

> cruelly use him as a living mold for a clay sculpture that they call "Monkey King." Encased within clay, as the months and years pass his spirit begins to wreak havoc in the surrounding communities. The terrified villagers develop malarial symptoms upon hearing his name. Many people, young and old, go mad or die because of the Monkey King with the result that his shrine is filled with worshippers. Never a day passes that the blood of the sacrifices they make there fully dries. Still the Monkey King continues to haunt the denizens of Yungfu who thereupon hire witches and warlocks to beat gongs and blow conches before the temple. The monks from the temple join in by ringing bells and beating drums to drive away the malignant spirit. These attacks against the Monkey King intensify with the passing days, but nothing changes.
>
> Finally, an elder named Zongyan addresses the monkey sympathetically telling him that, whereas those who killed him have already been punished, his depredations are now affecting innocent people. Zongyan warns the monkey that, if he keeps on this way, it will be impossible for him ever to gain release. The elder recites a Sanskrit *Mahakaruna-dharani* (or *mantra*) on the Monkey's behalf.
>
> That night, while the elder is sitting alone, a woman with monkey feet comes to him. Beneath her left armpit is the stain of blood and a small monkey is at her side. An iron chain binds her hands at the waist and she holds in them a little girl. The woman bows to the elder and confesses that she is the Monkey King. She has long borne the grudge but now, with the aid of the elder, she wishes to be reborn in heaven. Thanking the elder, she asks him to unbind her chains. Zongyan obliges her and utters a *gatha* (stanza). Again, the woman bows to him and disappears.
>
> The next day when the triple locked doors of the hall of the Monkey King are opened, Zongyan realizes that the blood beneath the woman's armpit came from a wound suffered at the hands of the witches the previous year. Once the images of the Monkey King and his attendants (all of whom resemble various kinds of fowls) are destroyed, the hauntings cease. (Trans and abridged by Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 694-5)

This legend, with its strong Buddhist content, postdates the popular Tang monkey cult under whose influence the Xuanzang – Guanyin – Guide Protector complex first took shape (695).

Isobe notes that in China it was extremely rare for monkeys to be deified (695). However, as this paper has demonstrated earlier in this section, the ancient kingdom of Chu had a cult centered on the gibbon (3-5). In addition, in India and Southeast Asia Hanuman gained notoriety and shrines were erected to pay him homage. Chinese travelers to these regions could not have missed noticing the elevation of a monkey to such fame and high status. It was during

this time that trade in several port cities through out China, including Quanzhou, flourished due to intercourse with Southeast Asia and India.

The earliest iconographic representation of a monkey-headed figure can be found on the western pagoda of the Kaiyuan Temple in Quanzhou. The temple was constructed in the early thirteenth century. The monkey-headed guardian is on the eleventh panel on the fourth level of the northeastern side of the pagoda (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 697). *In The Twin Pagodas of Zayton*, Paul Demiéville gives a description of the panel (Figure 7):

> A Guardian with a monkey-head, holding with one hand a rosary which is hanging around his neck, and with the other a sword emitting a cloud from its tip. He wears a short tunic, travel-sandals, and a rope-belt from which are hanging a calabash and a scroll with the Chinese title of the *Mahamayurividyarajni* (... a test which was used as a charm against all calamities, dangers, wounds, and diseases). *Trad*[itionally known to be Sun Wukong], the name of the monkey assistant (alias the Monkey-attendant, or the fair Monkey-King, or the Great Sage Equal to Heaven) of Hsuan-tsang [Xuanzang] in the *Hsi-yu chi* novel.... In the upper right corner of the carving there is a small monk-figure with a halo, evidently Hsuan-tsang himself[2], appearing on a cloud, seemingly the same cloud as that which emanates from the monkey's sword. In the version of the *Hsi-yu chi* now extant, the monkey assistant's weapon is not a sword, but an iron rod with two golden rings, which he can reduce, whenever he finds it convenient, into a needle and so keep inside his ear. Also, he wears a tiger-skin over the lower part of his body, a detail which does not agree with our carving. (35)

Although Demieville draws attention to the scimitar that is so prominent in the carving, noting its contrast to the rod with which Sun Wukong is traditionally armed, Wukong did use such a scimitar in earlier chapters of the *Xiyouji* prior to acquiring the golden-hooped rod (vol. 1, Chap. 2-3). For example, in Chapter 2, Wukong uses a scimitar in his battle with the Monstrous King of Havoc, who has usurped Wukong's throne while he has been studying with the Patriarch

[2] Anthony Yu notes that the monk-figure should be thought of simply as a figure of Buddha (not Xuanxang), which Monkey will become by virtue of bringing back scriptures (Xiyouji, vol. 1, 497n.23).

Subodhi:

> Plucking a handful of hairs from his own body and throwing them into the air, "Change!" he cried, and they changed at once into two or three hundred little monkeys encircling the combatants on all sides.... They rushed at the Monstrous King and surrounded him, some hugging, some pulling, some crawling in between his legs, some tugging at his feet. They kicked and punched; they yanked at his hair and poked at his eyes; they pinched his nose and tried to sweep him completely off his feet, until they tangled themselves into confusion. Meanwhile Wu-k'ung succeeded in snatching the scimitar, pushed through the throng of little monkeys, and brought the scimitar down squarely onto the monster's skull, cleaving it in two. (vol. 1 97)

One aspect concerning the Kaiyuan Temple image that Mair believes is ignored by Demieville and Yu is the Tight-Fillet (vol. 1 Chap. 14), which he says "recalls the band around the head of representations of Andira, the simian guardian of Avalokitesvara" (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 699). Mair notes other similarities between representations of Andira and Wukong:

> Identical earrings (these are key iconographical features of H[anuman] in many Southeast Asian R[ama saga]s), comparable tilt of the head... which seems to indicate enforced submission, long locks of hair... flaring out behind the head, elongated monkey's mouth, similar decorations on forearm and upper arm, etc. It is crucial to note that all these features can be found in South Asian and Southeast Asian representations of H[anuman]. (700)

Before ending this discussion, there is one more interesting connection concerning the weapons used by Sun Wukong and Hanuman in the Thai *Ramakien*. In the *Xiyouji*, Wukong is able to reduce his weapon to the size of a needle and store it inside his ear. In the *Ramakien*, Hanuman has a trident with a short handle for a weapon (Rama I 16). As the story further elaborates, "When he does not need it, he hid[es] it in the form of a diamond hair against his ribs" (16). In both stories, the monkey-heroes have retractable weapons, which they can hide on some part of their body.

Figure 7. The Monkey-Headed Disciple. Kaiyuan Temple, Quanzhou

THE KOZANJI TEXT AND OTHER SONG PROTOTYPES:

The Song was an important period for the formation of the *Xiyouji*. During this period, the first written documentation is found connecting Xuanzang and a monkey-disciple. The most significant of all the literary works concerning this connection is the Kozanji text, which dates from around the thirteenth century. Since the text was in the possession of the Kozanji, a temple-monastery founded in 1206 on Mt. Toganoo near Kyoto, it is usually referred to as the Kozanji text of the *Xiyouji* cycle (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 701). Dudbridge notes that "little evidence of its earliest development appears in advance of this text" (45).

The Kozanji text contains two stories, which are entitled *DaTang Xuanzang qujing shihua* (*The Poetical Tale of the Procurement of Scriptures by Tripitaka of the Great Tang*) and *DaTang Xuanzang fashi qujingji* (*The Record of the Procurement of Scriptures by Tripitaka of the Great Tang*). The plot of the two stories is basically the same and is therefore usually lumped together in most studies[3]. In these stories, the monkey-disciple is the only pilgrim in Xuanzang's six-member entourage with a distinct identity, personality, and name (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 701). The monkey-disciple first appears before Xuanzang in the guise of a *xiucai*, or scholar, in plain clothes and introduces himself:

> I am none other than the king of eighty-four thousand bronze-headed, iron-browed monkeys of... [the] Purple-cloud cave on [the] Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. (Trans. by Dudbridge)

After he is accepted into the group, the disciple receives a proper name, Hou Xingzhe, or the Monkey Novice-monk (Dudbridge 31). Mair points out a correlation between this monkey

[3] A summary of the Kozanji text is in Appendix B.

character and Hanuman:

> "Bronze-headed, iron-browed" is a conventional Chinese epithet for boldness and bravery. These lines might well have been spoken by the monkey king Sugriva, to whom H[anuman] is a counselor, and who lives in a cave on a mountain that is "famed for the variety of its trees and flowers." ("Suen Wu-Kung" 101)

As Dudbridge notes, the Kozanji text can be considered as representing a cycle which is largely the preserve of popular storytellers and their audience (Dudbridge 45), using the rich sources available from all over China.

The *Xiyouji* is a story of a quest, which by its nature lends itself to episodic treatment (Fu 101). This treatment meets the needs of the professional storyteller, who usually desires freedom to expand or contract material at will (101). Furthermore, individual performers are likely to specialize in certain episodes that best suit his or her talents and the entertainment of the public (101). In *The Hsi-yu chi: A Study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth-Century Chinese Novel*, Glen Dudbridge, summarizing a study of the storyteller and the storytelling tradition by Albert Bates Lord in his text *The Singer of Tales*, cites four major characteristics of storytelling: the fluidity of oral transmission, its alienation from the written tradition, formula and theme, and regional characteristics (8-9). Concerning the first characteristic, Dudbridge notes that storytellers will usually defer to the audience and learn from fellow bards, giving the story flexibility to grow and adapt to the audience being entertained. The first characteristic ties into the second. Dudbridge states that a written tradition presents a "serious menace to the freedom and hence to the life of an oral tradition" (8). Therefore, the storyteller must "alienate" his narrative from a written tradition, since it binds the storyteller to a set plot of events and action. Third, Dudbridge states that the storytellers must usually follow a "tested formula unit" during the process of "rapid

spontaneous composition" (8). In doing so, they will draw upon "set pieces" that relate to "corresponding episodes of other tales transmitted in the same environment" (8). Finally, the oral narration relies upon "the circumstances of regular physical proximity and will therefore tend to have strong local characteristics" (9). Given these factors, it can be assumed that as time went on many stories and tales such as the Rama saga developed and came in contact with each other, then melded to form a basic narrative which culminated in the *Xiyouji*.

Besides the Kozanji text, other works of literature concerning a monkey disciple began to emerge around the province of Fujian on the southern coast of China, which is considered to be the birthplace of Sun Wukong. Here a vast number of early references appear concerning the formation of the *Xiyouji* and the treatment of Wukong. This may be attributed to the monkey cult that flourished within this province, as explained above. The first items of evidence are two hexasyllabic poems by Liu Kezhaung (1187-1269). Liu hailed from Putian district, which is adjacent to Yongfu district where the cult was centered (Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 691). The first of the two poems is from a group of three poems entitled "Holding My Mirror":

> Back as hunched as a water-buffalo in the torrent of the Sz River,
> Hair as white as the thread spun by a winter silkworm:
> Face as ugly as the Monkey-disciple,
> Poems more paltry than the Taoist priest What's-His-Name. (Trans. by Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 691)

The second poem is to be found in a group of poems commenting on Buddhism and Taoism:

> With a single stroke of the brush, the meaning of the *Sarangama-sutra* is received,
> But three letters were sent along to Da-dian when Han Tu gave him some clothes:
> In retrieving scriptures [from India, Tripitaka had to] trouble the Monkey-disciple,
> When reciting poetry, you're sure to be defeated by the Taoist Priest So-and-So. (Trans by Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 691-2)

These two poems alone are not enough evidence to support the idea that a popular *Xiyouji* cycle existed by the Song. However, combined with the Kozanji text and the "new materials supplementing the tantalizing references in the Liu poems" from a study by Isobe Akira (693), it is hard not to come to this conclusion.

Mair cites a tale from Zhang Shinan's *Yuhuan jiwen* (*Memoirs of a Traveling Official*), dating from the early to mid-twelfth century (693). The story recounts the enlightenment of a farmer who goes into the mountains where he receives a magic peach from an immortal. This peach gives him literacy and the ability to see into the future. He achieves fame for his calligraphy and prognostication, and eventually becomes a Buddhist monk, changing his name to Zhang the Sage (693). One day the sponsor of a local temple asks him to compose a eulogy upon the completion of a bookcase for scriptures. The monk immediately produces the following:

> Fresh are the *pattra* (palm) leaves on which are written
> the unexcelled (*anuttara*), vigorous texts,
> In several lives, Tripitaka went west to India to retrieve them;
> Their every line, their every letter is a precious treasure,
> Each sentence and each word is a field of blessing (*punyaksetra*).
> In the waves of the sea of misery (*duhkha-sagara*),
> the Monkey-disciple presses on,
> Through the waters of the river that soak its hair,
> the horse rushes forward;
> No sooner have they passed the long sands than they must face
> the trials of the golden sands,
> Only while gazing towards the other shore do they know
> the reason (*pratyaya*) for being on this shore.
> The demons (*yaksas*) are delighted that they might
> get their heart's desire,
> But the Bodhisattva, with hand clasped in respectful greeting,
> sends them on;
> Now here are the five hundred and sixty-odd cases of scriptures,

> Their merit is difficult to measure, their perfection
> hard to encompass. (Trans. by Mair, "Suen Wu-Kung" 693-4)

Mair points out that the monkey-disciple's presence in this eulogy is a crucial factor in bridging the gap between the Tang and Song treatment of the Xuanzang journey, bring together all the fragmentary bits concerning monkeys from Fujian (694).

CONTEMPORARY SOURCES OF THE *XIYOUJI*:

During the Ming Dynasty, Zheng Zhizhen wrote a play, entitled *Mulian jiumu chuanshan xiwen*, that was contemporary to the *Xiyouji*, which seems to be an adaptation from a very old drama (Ota 101). The Mulian legend emerged during the Tang Dynasty with the introduction of the "Ghost Festival" based on Indian Buddhist models. The legend recounts the quest of Mulian (*Maudgalyayana* in Sanskrit), a disciple of Buddha who must journey to the "Dark Regions," or hell, and enlighten his mother in the ways of Buddhism. Although the festival and the legend's survival are due to their ritual connection with and sponsorship of the Buddhist monastic community, both easily incorporated themselves into the indigenous beliefs of China's people (Teiser 5). This incorporation is due in part to the fact that the festival occurred during the seventh month of each year, when the fall harvest began and local communities gathered to pay respect to their ancestors. In both the Buddhist festival and the indigenous ritual there is the common link of filial piety and remembrance of parents and ancestors (31).

In the Ming play, not only do we see the influence of the *Xiyouji* cycle of the Kozanji text, but elements of the Rama saga as well. The plot follows the basic Xuanzang tale, with Mulian trying to attain Buddhahood. The monkey-disciple is referred to as Baiyuan, translated

as White Monkey, who is said to have lived during the Zhou period, linking this character back to the White Monkey legend. In this play, Baiyuan's character acts in much the same function as Wukong or Hanuman. As Ota Tatsuo notes:

> Act 58 relates that Baiyuan is arrested by the generals of Heaven who received an order to do so by Guanyin. In Act 5, Baiyuan, receiving an order from Guanyin, cuts down trees and makes a path for Mulian (101)

However, the most striking aspect of this play can be found in Act 65. Here the white monkey appears to Mulian for the first time disguised as a Taoist priest. The Taoist priest advises Mulian to return to the east. However, Mulian refuses and the priest disappears, only to reappear again when a black dragon delays the questing monk. The priest bids Mulian to invoke the aid of Guanyin, who melts the dragon. The priest then escorts Mulian to India. The appearance of the monkey-disciple in the guise of a monk parallels Hanuman's first encounter with Rama in Valmiki's *Ramayana*. In the *Ramayana*, Hanuman disguises himself as a Brahman monk in order to enlist Rama's aid in usurping Bali from the Monkey throne.

Dudbridge has noted a link between the legend of Mulian and the Song Kozanji text. In Section 3 of the Kozanji text the pilgrims receive three magical aids from a Devaraja (God-King): a cap of invisibility, a gold-banded monk's staff, and an almsbowl (Dudbridge 32). In the footnotes, Dudbridge explains that the motif of the staff and almsbowl is part of the Chinese Buddhist legend of Mulian (32). In popular versions they become magic attributes bestowed by Buddha, which aids Mulian in his quest for his mother's soul in the underworld (32). Obviously the popular *Xiyouji* cycle that was developing in the Song was incorporating various attributes and aspects of different stories and legends that circulated throughout China.

As I have demonstrated in this section, there existed in China an indigenous monkey

legend dating back to the Chu kingdom, which became the fundamental basis for the development Sun Wukong. This indigenous monkey legend was "the factor needed to make" the acceptance of foreign elements, including fragmentary elements of the Indian Rama saga, into Chinese culture possible (Schrieke 231). As the Monkey legend evolved and developed, elements that contained monkey figures from Buddhist, Hindu and secular traditions were added through oral renditions performed by storytellers. The strong Buddhist traditions that grew up in China were a major influence in joining the Monkey legend with the Tripitaka legend. By the Ming Dynasty, Wu Cheng'en, the author of the extant *Xiyouji*, had a large tradition on which to draw upon in formulating his epic-novel.

CONCLUSION

The maritime trade routes of the Silk Road were vital in the dissemination of culture throughout Asia. As explained in Section 2, trade initiated the development of several major entrepot ports within Southeast Asia. The monsoon wind patterns that govern the region forced traders to remain in Southeast Asian ports for extended periods of time. The obligatory stays at port and the availability of undeveloped tracts in the hinterlands motivated Indian traders and monks to settle throughout Southeast Asia and China, bringing with them the social and political structures of Indian culture.

Along with the material goods that were traded, cultural elements were exchanged in the ports throughout Southeast Asia and China. As explained in Section 3, in each major Southeast Asian trade port such as those of Funan and Srivijaya Indian culture flourished, especially with the help of Hinduism and Buddhism. The conversion of the local population to Hinduism and Buddhism strengthened the bond between India and these Southeast Asian kingdoms by promoting pilgrimages and the patronage of local monasteries by the royal families, who often recruited Indian monks to run them. Through their continual presence in these various ports, traders and monks became a persistent influence on statecraft, music, theater, art, and literature.

The Rama saga was one of the most popular motifs for Southeast Asian arts, influencing such diverse genres as puppetry, picture scrolls, and temple carvings. As illustrated in Section 3, the impact of the Rama saga was so profound that shrines to Hanuman were erected throughout Asia. With the continual use of this saga in all aspects of art and entertainment, local society soon began to consider the tales and their characters to be an intimate a part of their own cultural heritage. Societies that had adopted the Rama tradition from India in turn further disseminated

their own distinct rendition of the Rama saga to other foreign societies, including China.

Within China, the port of Quanzhou became a vital link between India's cultural influence and the development of Sun Wukong. In Section 4, I have shown that through trade a foreign presence existed in the city featuring Arab and Indian settlers. Here Indian settlers erected monuments and temples to the deities they worshiped and decorated the walls with iconographic images, including Monkey-headed figures of Hanuman. These images helped provide local sculptors and masons with a prototype for the Monkey disciple on the Kaiyuan Temple.

In Section 5, I have shown that prior to contact with India through the various trade routes over land and sea, an ape legend was present within China's cultural sphere of influence. From the core legend from the Chu Kingdom of "Yang Youji Shooting the White Gibbon," further legends evolved providing a basis with which fragments of the Rama saga could be combined, culminating in the character of Sun Wukong. With the continual communication between India and China through maritime trade, Hindu and Buddhist monkey figures were introduced into China through pictures and writings, but mostly through storytellers. Through the oral tradition, storytellers in China created a large body of tales and episodes on which Wu Cheng'en could draw to form the extant *Xiyouji*.

Is Sun Wukong's character from indigenous monkey figures or does his origins stem from Hanuman? I have demonstrated in this paper that Sun Wukong is a product of both. Through centuries of trade the Rama tradition found its way into China. The existing monkey legends and tales that circulated orally throughout central China provided a foundation on which corrupted and distorted fragments of the Rama saga could be added. By the time the extant *Xiyouji* was written, Wu Cheng'en had a large oral tradition to draw upon for his epic-novel.

Hera S. Walker. *Indigenous or Foreign?: A Look at the Origins of the Monkey Hero Sun Wukong.* *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 81 (September 1998)

ILLUSTRATIONS:
Images of Hanuman and Sun Wukong
Plates 1-14

INDIA

Plate 1. Hanuman standing in humility. Tamilnadu, South India. 10^{th} century.

INDIA

Plate 2. Hanuman. Channakeshavaraswami Temple. South India. 17th century.

INDIA

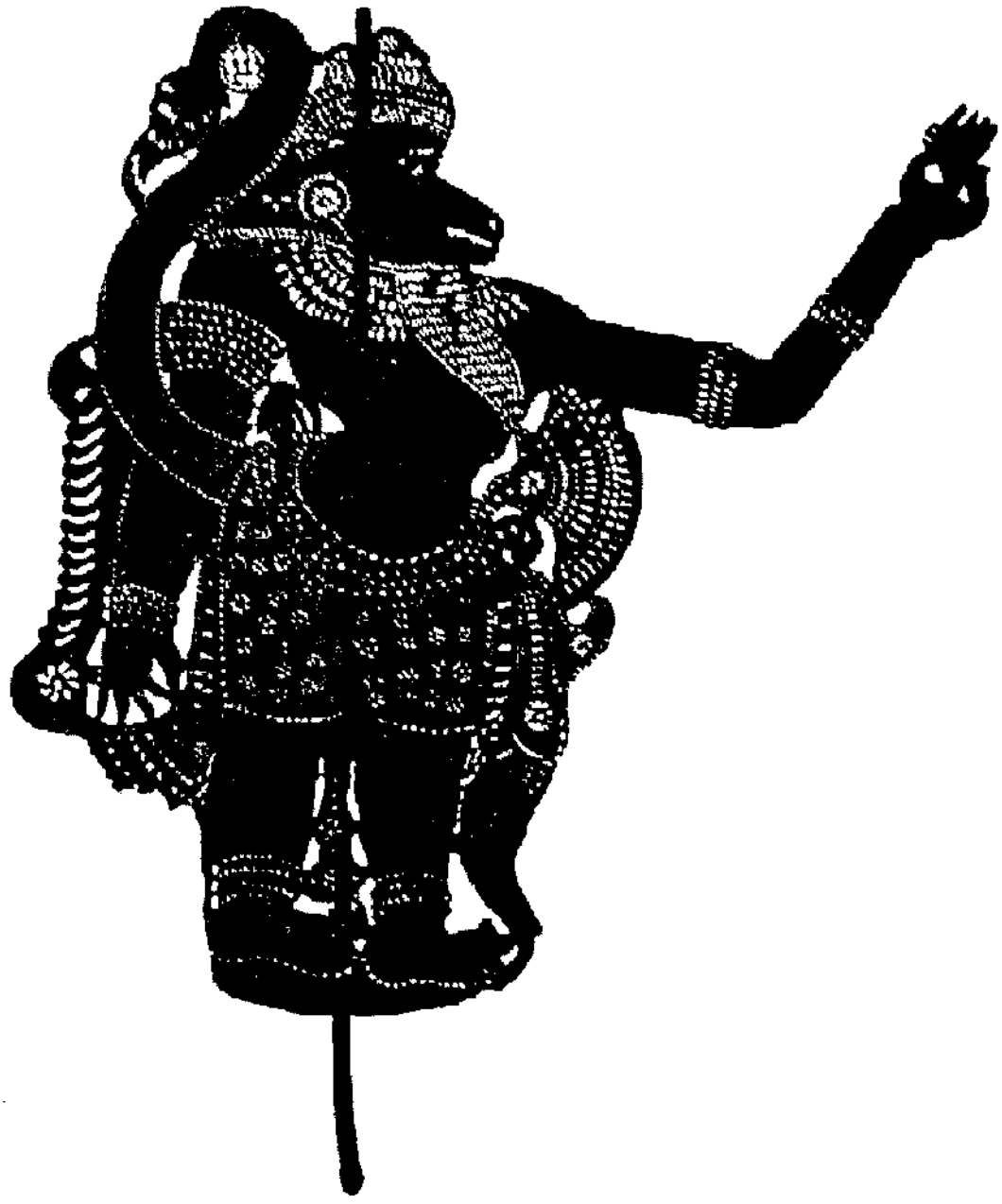


Plate 3. Hanuman shadow puppet. Kerala, South India.

CAMBODIA

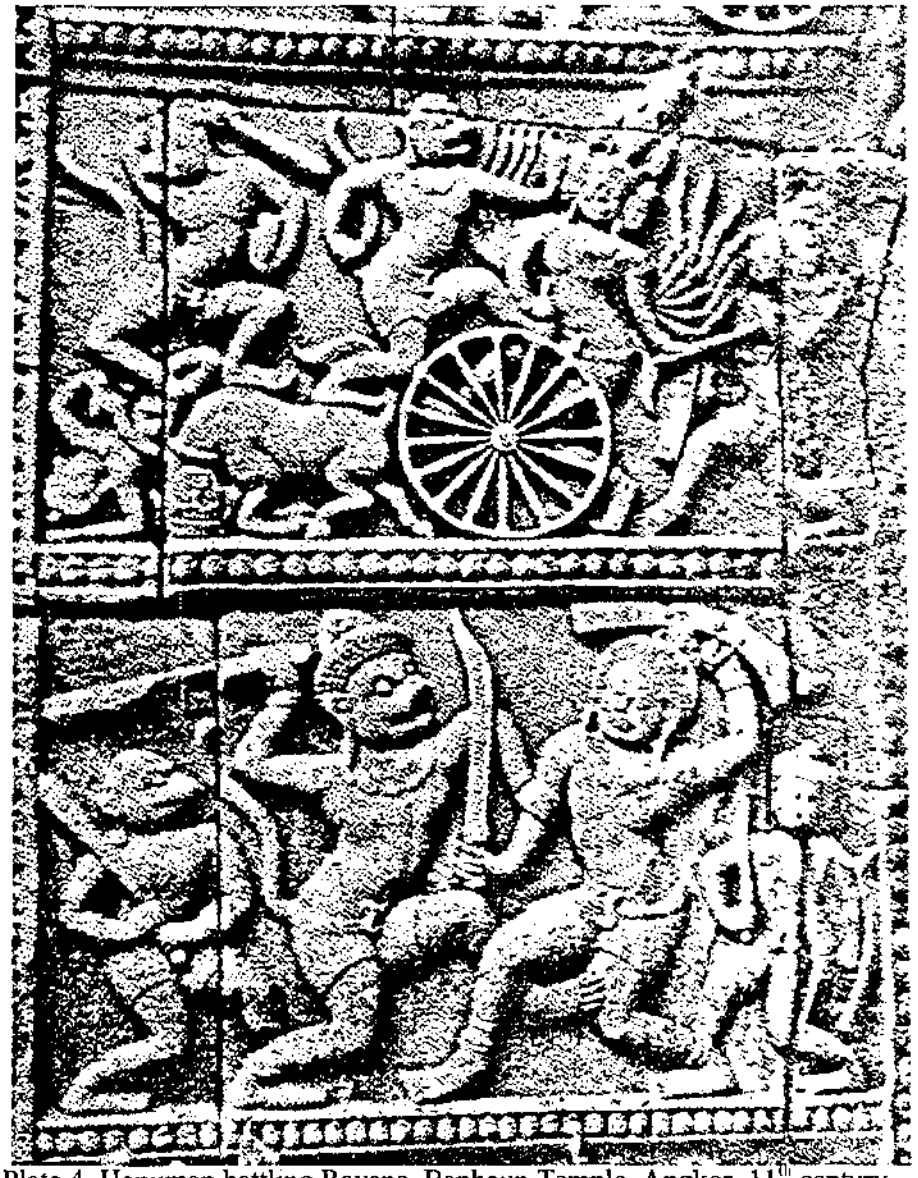


Plate 4. Hanuman battling Ravana. Baphoun Temple, Angkor. 11th century.

CAMBODIA

Plate 5. Hanuman as door guardian. Banteay Srei Temple. Late 10th or 14th century.

THAILAND

Plate 6. Hanuman making love to Supanna Matcha. Wat Phra Jetuban Weemol Temple, Bangkok.

INDONESIA

Plate 7. Hanuman. Outline sketch of a stone relief from Bali.

INDONESIA

Plate 8. Hanuman as envoy. Detail of a *Wayang Wong* from Indonesia. Ravana (center) listens to the pleas of captive Sita (right) as Hanuman (left) eavesdrops.

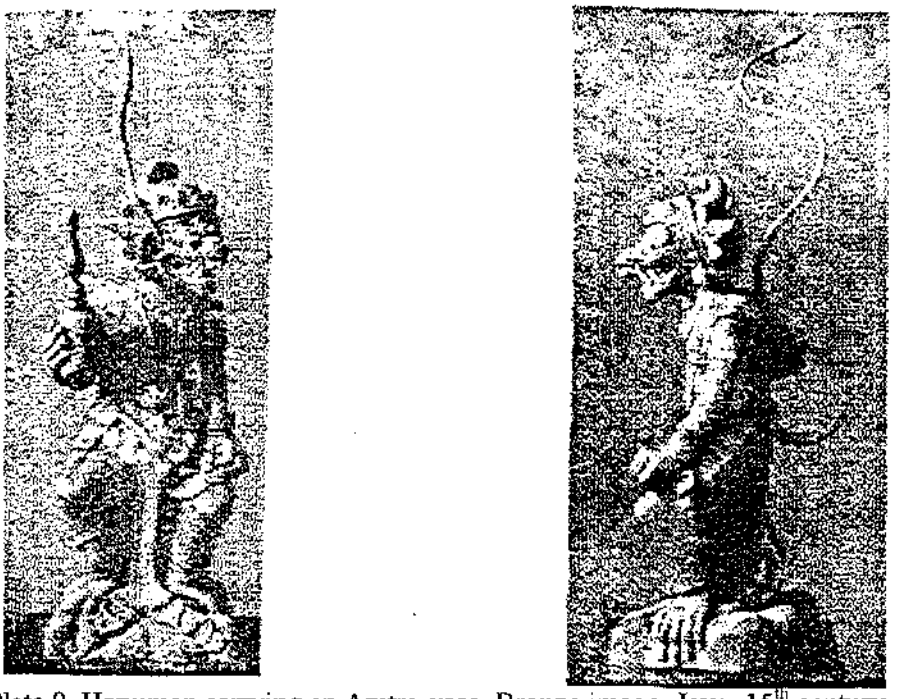


Plate 9. Hanuman carrying an Amtra-vase. Bronze image. Java. 15th century

INDONESIA

Plate 10. Hanuman. Line drawing of a carved relief on a temple in Bali.

CHINA

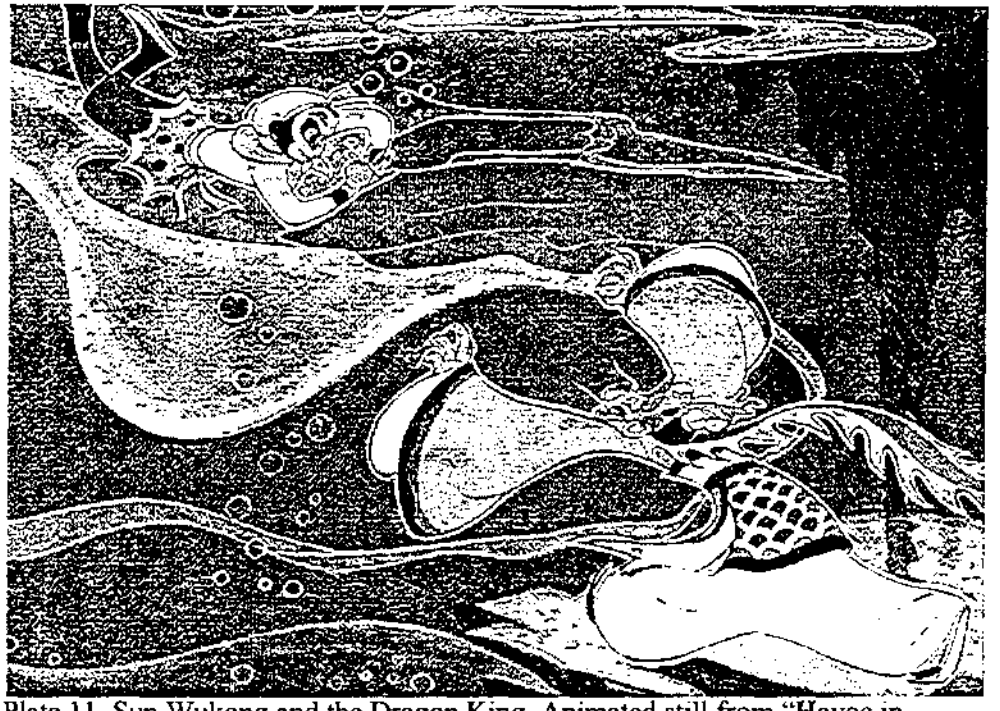


Plate 11. Sun Wukong and the Dragon King. Animated still from "Havoc in Heaven." Shanghai, China. 1970's.

Plate 12. Opera face of Sun Wukong. Playing card.

CHINA

Plate 13. Pigsy pleads with Sun Wukong to rescue Tripitaka from a demon. Drawing. Modern Times.

CHINA

Plate 14. Sun Wukong in opera. Photograph. Modern Times.

Hera S. Walker. *Indigenous or Foreign?:*
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APPENDIX A – THE GREATEST ARCHER

From *Chinese Myths and Legend* retold by Cyril Birch and Illustrated by Joan Kiddell-Monroe. Oxford Myths and Legends Series. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1961.

The greatest Archer of all archers was Yi, for the targets of his deadly arrows were not made of straw, nor were they mere creatures of flesh and blood. The enemies Yi fought and conquered were powerful spirits who rebelled against the order of Nature, in the time of the saintly Emperor Yao. Under his rule men lived in peace, but these malevolent spirits took to themselves the forces of the elements and threatened to destroy all that lived.

It all began harmlessly enough, when ten children tired of playing each one by himself and decided that they would all go out to play together. For these were the children of the Supreme Ruler, born of his wife Xihe. Each of these boys was a mighty star, a sun, and they lived all together above the Eastern Ocean. There a giant tree, the Fusang tree, rose thousands of feet from the surface of the water. A thousand men with arms outstretched could not span its trunk. It was in the branches of this tree that the ten suns took their rest. Each dawn it was from there that one of them would set out, as his turn came according to a fixed rota, on his journey across the heavens bringing light and warmth to earth. As they kept so obediently to their rota, men had never seen more than one sun at a time, and indeed they did not know that more than one sun existed, for all ten of them looked exactly alike.

No one knows quite why these ten sun-children suddenly took it into their heads to set out one morning all together across the sky. But the Supreme Ruler learned of this happening with alarm. He knew that his children brought great blessings to the earth – one at a time; but with ten in the sky together, surely only catastrophe could follow? His fears were confirmed when the Emperor Yao, in place of his customary prayers of thanksgiving, began to speak of blinding light, unbearable heat, of parched cattle and burning crops. All-powerful though he was

on earth, even Emperor Yao himself was helpless in the face of this new peril in the heavens. Assistance must be sent to him, some hero must descend who would save the world from the fate which threatened. At once the Supreme Ruler thought of his noblest warrior. Yi, the Heavenly Archer, had the skill, the courage and the goodness which the world would need. Yi it was, therefore, who on the night of full moon came down to earth and announced his presence at the gate of the simple dwelling from which Yao ruled his people.

Yao rose to welcome his visitor, and praised the great red bow he carried in his hand. He led him out into the street, where he pointed to the mountain peak which rose in the distance above the roofs of the capital. On its summit grew a solitary pine-tree. 'Let us see what use you make of this mighty bow you carry,' the Emperor commanded.

Slowly, deliberately, the great archer selected from the quiver at his side an arrow, long and straight and tipped with purest, hardest bronze. This he fitted to the string, which he drew back with one smooth gliding of his right arm. Legs apart, body upright, he faced the distant peak. The pine gleamed in the moonlight, a thread of silver. Yi took his aim. There was a sound like the plucking of a giant zither as he released the string of his bow – and the pine on the hill-top clove in two before the impact of the speeding shaft.

The Emperor smiled. 'Take your rest now,' he ordered. 'Tomorrow there is much for you to do.'

Yi spent the night on a bed of fragrant grasses. When the Emperor himself came to wake him the sky was not yet light. Yi knew that Yao had not slept: he must have spent the night in prayer for his people's deliverance. Still there was no sign of weariness in the compassionate lines of his face. 'Come now,' said the Emperor calmly. 'I wish you to witness the dawn.'

Unattended by any suite the two walked out through the streets of the sleeping capital. The watchman at the gate, wary at first of strangers at such an hour, threw himself flat on the ground when he recognized his Emperor. Yao raised him to his feet, and bade him light their way with his torch to the top of the gate-tower. No sooner had they reached this vantage-point than the first washes of silver on the eastern horizon began to seep into the deep blue of the night sky. The dawn was breaking. For a few moments all was just as in any other dawn. But soon it became apparent that a greater light than the light of the morning was waiting below the horizon. The silver washes were now a flood, and the silver itself was of heightened brilliance. In a second, it seemed, the sky gleamed gold in the east. At the centre of the gold, the disk of the sun lifted itself clear of the land-line. Then, at the precise moment when the sun stood clear in the sky, over the horizon flashed the rims of two suns, each of equal brilliance with the first. Now about this group of suns the sky flamed angrily for a while, until yet more suns rose, more than the watchers were able to make out in the liquid, boiling, white glare that filled the heavens.

And it was hot. Yi was astonished, when he put his hand on the stone rampart, to find that it burned and blistered, already in the early dawn. He opened his mouth to speak, but the parched air dried his mouth at once so that only a croaking sound came out. The Emperor Yao understood, and nodded and signed that they were to go down. But before they left the roof of the tower, he pointed to a field of millet below, close against the city wall. The ears had not yet formed on the stalks, and the stalks should have been green. But they were brown, withered. As they watched, from a corner of the field came wisps of smoke, and in a few moments the field was aflame. The flames themselves lasted only for a minute. Then all that was left was a layer of white ash, beneath which the ground was already beginning to crack.

Quickly the two men descended from the roof. As they left the tower they felt the soles

of their feet burn against the ground. Yi turned back to the tower, where in the shade he found a pail which still contained some water. With this they were able to make their way, though with pain, back to the Emperor's dwelling.

There Yao told his visitor of messengers who had come scores and hundreds of miles from all corners of the empire. They had brought stories of whole villages dying of thirst when the wells had dried; of men perishing in the fields from exhaustion in the heat; of forests ablaze, dense clouds of steam over boiling lakes, and even, from the south, of valleys overwhelmed with lava from the melting mountains.

News such as this was terrible to hear: but worse was to come. While the Emperor was still speaking there was a commotion outside the room and a man burst in. Another messenger – like the others, pale with fear beneath the stains of travel. His tale was the worst yet. Out of the unnatural happenings had come an unnatural creature, a monster with the giant body of a man and the head of an animal. It had one vicious weapon which none could resist: a great tooth, fully six feet in length, as sharp at the cutting edge as the edge of a chisel. This monster was creating havoc in the south, tearing down the people's flimsy huts before it tore at their bodies.

Hardly had the man finished his report when another came. 'Your Majesty, give ear to the sufferings of your people,' he cried. 'In the east a great bird flies, a peacock with mighty wings whose beating raises terrible raging winds. Trees are torn out by the roots, houses swept away like swirling autumn leaves, and the people cower, wretched and afraid, in caves and holes in the ground.'

And still a third, again exhausted by his journey through the fierce heat from the ten suns. 'The wide Dongting Lake,' reported this man, 'is terrorized by a monster, a sea-serpent whose passage through the water brings storm and flood. No one knows how many fishermen of the lake have disappeared down its cavernous throat nor how many whole villages have been swamped in its wake.'

Yi looked at the Emperor's expression and knew that he was suffering not for himself alone but for all his people. 'There is only one way,' the great archer said. 'First, the false suns must perish, or all life is at an end.'

Then Yi set to work. Carefully he chose ten arrows, which he placed in his quiver. He took up his bow and tested it, then strode out into the blinding light, into the choking heat. The Emperor followed him, and when they reached the market-place they found the people of the capital already assembled there, waiting patiently for the saviour of whom the watchman of the city gate had told them.

Yi closed his eyes for some seconds against the searing sunlight. Then he placed an arrow against the bow-string and drew to the full, his mighty shoulders forced back and the muscles leaping on his arms. Squinting upwards he loosed his shaft. There was a breathless pause: then, across the white pool of light of the sky leapt tongues of red. Now above the heads of the watchers floated tiny specks – the feathers of a bird; another instant, and something huge and black plummeted to the ground at the feet of the great archer. It was a monstrous crow, and it was transfixed by an arrow. This, then, was the spirit of the sun, a great crow just as the old magician had always said. 'The golden crow' – that was what they had called the sun: but now the crow was dead, and black, pierced by the arrow of Yi.

Still the sky blazed and the earth burned. Nine suns remained, nine suns which at any moment might transform themselves into giant crows and take wing over the horizon, beyond the reach of his swiftest arrow. With unhurried movements, but losing not a second, he loaded, drew

and released, loaded, drew and released. Two more explosions in the sky, soundless at that great distance; two more flurries of feathers, two more black bodies crashing to the ground. On and on laboured Yi, muscles bulging, shoulders aching from the prodigious strain of his bow. The air was filled with the singing of his bow-string. Now four suns remained, and could be counted clearly against the sky less molten in its brilliance. The burning had almost ceased. The faces of the watchers were no longer seared blind with pain, but were lit with half-unbelieving hope.

The eyes of the Emperor Yao fell on Yi's quiver. Four arrows still remained – and Yi was conscious of nothing but the need to shoot the suns from the sky. But one sun must be spared, thought Yao, if the world were not to be plunged into eternal night and winter. Quietly he withdrew one arrow from the archer's quiver, and placed it in his sleeve. The seventh sun fell from the sky, the eighth, the ninth – and Yi's hand reached to his quiver and found it empty. Sweating, weary, he looked at the Emperor Yao, then up to the clear blue sky, to the one welcome sun which has given its blessing to the world through all the ages since that moment. Yi looked at the sun; and then his ears were filled with the shouts of the crowd of watchers, and he smiled and laid down his bow.

Already, at the edge of the sky, white clouds were forming, clouds of happy omen which would soon bring rain to the parching earth. Yi, after his heroic labours, would dearly have loved to rest. It was pleasant here, tempting, under the now kindly sky. All the world was his friend, for he had saved all the world from destruction; and the saintly Emperor Yao was even now giving orders for the preparation of a feast for the hero. But Yi well knew that his labours were not yet ended. In the south and in the east still roamed the monsters, Chiseltooth, the Windbird, the serpent of the Dongting Lake. Pausing only to replenish his quiver and gird on his sword, Yi called for the messenger from the south and started in pursuit of Chiseltooth. It was a long, hard journey. Across the plains strode the great archer and his companion, over the passes, through the swamps and forests. Boatman ferried them across broad rivers, guides led them to the fords of a hundred streams, until at last they reached the mountains of the south where Chiseltooth had his home. Here they began to find the signs of the monster's presence. On the

ground lay bodies from which the heads had been severed by that razor-sharp fang; huts near by had been ripped from their foundations. Even as he looked, Yi heard behind him an angry roar. He turned – and there stood his quarry, the one huge tooth gleaming yellow against its chest.
In a flash Yi had raised his bow, an arrow fitted to the string. But before he could draw back the string Chiseltooth had disappeared into a cave behind him. Warily Yi approached the cave. The monster reemerged from its entrance, and this time little of him could be seen behind a massive shield. Yi stood his ground and waited, his bow still raised, arrow poised on the string. Chiseltooth lumbered nearer, very slowly, nearer, until it seemed the two must collide. Then, with a swift movement, he lowered his shield and the great fang reared up to strike. In that second Yi loosed the arrow he had held poised for so long. It flew straight to its mark at the root of the monster's tooth. At such a range the impact was like that of a thunderbolt. The tooth snapped off, and the monster, making not a sound, fell to the earth, dead.

The sun was sinking in the west, but Yi was not yet ready to take his rest. In the cool of evening he turned his back on the sunset and set out in search of the Windbird. After much journeying he came to a wide river, and down this he sailed, ever eastward. At last he met with the signs he had been looking for, signs of destruction by raging winds, crops flattened, trees and huts and boats all tossed about like straws. And then he heard a far-distant rustling, and peering up made out, far off in the sky, a speck of black – the Windbird was coming. He paddled in to the bank, sprang ashore and hid himself in a thicket which still stood and would be in the path of the approaching bird. As he waited he reasoned with himself, 'One arrow may not kill a bird of such a size. And if it is merely wounded, and flies off to its nest to wait till the wound is healed – it may do great harm thereafter, before I find it again. The answer is to capture it now, and make an end of it now.'

To do this he used a method which hunters of birds have followed ever since. To his straightest arrow he attached a long, strong cord, the other end of which he tied to his bow. Then he fitted arrow to bow-string and waited in the shelter of the thicket. Very soon the rustling he had heard had grown into a roaring, and the roaring into a deafening thunder, and now the sky was darkened and the giant peacock was overhead. The great archer shot, the arrow struck home, and the bird leapt upward in its flight. Still it flew on, and Yi braced his legs against the earth to withstand the storm from its beating pinions, while all about him tall trees shook and toppled before the howling wind. The tug as the line tautened on the bow sent a searing pain across his shoulders, but still he held on; until at last the Windbird's effort failed and it dropped to earth, captive at the end of Yi's cord. Yi ran to it, and as it lay thrashing its wings against the ground he drew his sword and cut the peacock's head from its body.

The Windbird was dead, and Chiseltooth was dead. But on the Dongting Lake the sea-serpent still reigned in terror. Once more Yi took up his bow and set out on his way. After many days he reached the shore of the lake, which is less a lake than an inland sea. There he took a small fishing-boat, and launched out alone on the face of the waters. Out into the lake he sailed, and hard and long he searched until he saw across the water before him coil after coil of the scaly monster rising and falling in awful succession. Closer he sailed, while the waters of the lake grew ever more turbulent. He took up his red bow. His first arrow pierced the neck of the serpent, but the only effect was that the waves rose higher than before. Again and again he shot, until the serpent's body bristled with arrows and it writhed in high anguish. Yi's little craft tossed and plunged on billows again. He drew his sword as his boat swept up a towering crest of water. Then, as it trembled on the brink of a sea-green precipice, he leapt, down, down, on to the broad

and slippery back of the monster.

Then followed the most desperate contest Yi had known. Time and again his sword plunged to the hilt in the serpent's body; time and again he kicked his own body out of the way of the menacing fangs which reared above him. The bubbling, surging water of the lake was no longer green, but stained dark red with the sea-serpent's blood. The end, at last, came suddenly: one final lunge of the hero's sword struck deep into the monster's vitals. The wicked, scaly body went limp, then quivered, and sank at last beneath the crimson waves.

Wearily Yi allowed himself to float to the lake-shore. His task was ended. Nine false suns had perished. Three monsters such as the world had never before seen had been destroyed. The saintly Emperor Yao could rule again a world of men at peace. Yi, the great archer, could take his rest.

APPENDIX B – SYNOPSES OF THE KOZANJI TEXT

From Glen Dudbrige's *The Hsi-yu chi: A study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth- Century Novel.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1970.

JUAN 1

[Section 1: missing]

Section 2: 'On their journey they meet the Monkey Novice-Monk.'

The band of six pilgrims sets out and encounters the *xiucai* scholar in plain clothes, strangely informed about Tripitaka's expeditions in previous lives, who turns out to be the Monkey King. He is initiated as a disciple under the name Hou Xingzhe. The pilgrims continue their journey.

Section 3: 'They enter the Palace of Mahabrahma Devaraja.'

In the course of conversation about his great age, the Monkey reveals that a feast is about to take place in the Crystal Palace, abode of Mahabrahma Devaraja, and proceeds to transport Tripitaka there. A great assembly of Buddhist saints is gathered in splendid surroundings. Tripitaka is invited to preach to them, but fails to mount the Crystal Throne. Later, his exposition of the *Lotus Sutra* is warmly received. The Devaraja gives them magic objects as safeguards on the journey and promises to appear in response to any cry for help.

Section 4: 'They enter the Xiangshan monastery.'

On a mountain with pious associations the pilgrims find a derelict monastery, guarded by frightening Vajra figures. They proceed through the Land of Snakes. However, the snakes, although of monstrous proportions and besetting them on all sides, do them no harm, and open up a way for them to pass. The Monkey gives warning of the next hazards.

Section 5: ' They pass through the Forest of Lions and the Land of the Tree-men.'

Lions and unicorns meet them with flowers and escort them onwards.

The Land of Tree-men is found to be full of fantastic rocks and ancient trees. They pass a deserted monastery in wonderful surroundings, and lodge in a small house. In spite of a warning of sorcery, the next morning they send a young novice to buy food. A man in the vicinity transforms him into a donkey. But Hou Xingzhe retaliates by changing the man's bride, described as peerlessly beautiful, into a bundle of grass in the donkey's mouth. The opponents then agree to restore the victims to their original forms. Hou Xingzhe leaves a warning against any further trifling.

Section 6: 'They pass the Long Pit and the Great Serpent Range.'

They are delivered from the resounding darkness of a great pit by flourishing their gold-ringed staff in an appeal to the Devaraja. They pass the harmless Great Serpents and proceed to the Fiery Hollow. Using their magic alms-bowl they appeal again to the Devaraja to save them from the flames. Warned by Hou Xingzhe, they are later approached by a woman all in white, whom Hou Xingzhe challenges. She turns into a tiger and engages him in battle. He destroys her by the device of attack from within her belly.

JUAN 2

Section 7: 'They enter the Nine-Dragon Pool.'

After another warning from Hou Xingzhe they are confronted by nine evil dragons sweeping towards them through turbulent waves. Using the magic aids, Hou Xingzhe overcomes one dragon, and the rest then submit. He extracts sinews from their backs to make a sash for his master and belabors them. The sash endows the wearer with magic powers. (Eventually we learn the sash is transfigured in Paradise.) Final words are missing.

Section 8: ['Title and Opening Sentences Missing.']

The demon Shensha shen is showing Tripitaka bones he has collected from the monk's expeditions in previous lives. But he at once submits to Tripitaka's threatening rebuke and, amid spectacular natural phenomena, holds out a golden bridge with silver rails for the pilgrims to pass over the hazard of the Deep Sands. They leave him, expressing thanks and promising their intercession in the closing verses.

Section 9: 'They enter the Land of Guizi mu.'

The travelers pass across a desolate tract of land, and enter a country where the inhabitants have no reply to questions and where the Buddhist monastery is deserted.

Eventfully they find themselves amid great numbers of three-year-old children, and received a warning and devout welcome from the King of the land. He gives them rich gifts and finally reveals to them that this country, 'not far from the Western Paradise,' is Guizi mu guo. The pilgrims then know that they have been addressing demons.

Some of the closing verses are put into the mouth of a character named Guizi mu.

Section 10: 'They pass through the Land of Women.'

In a deserted country the only sign of life is the activity of a few peasants in the fields. In an interim exchange of verse Hou Xingzhe urges his master on. They are held up by a torrential stream, but cross when the Devaraja dries it up.

Pressing on, they reach the Land of Women and have an audience with the Queen. She explains that the grit, which makes their meals uneatable, is there because the food was gathered from ground which otherwise remained barren.

Then she takes them into own opulent quarters, where beautiful women greet them seductively, with invitations to establish a monastery in the land and to become their own

husbands. Tripitaka is unbending, the women tearful. The Queen gives him jewels and a white horse. As the travelers depart, the Queen reveals in her final verse that her true name is 'Manjusri and Samantabhadra.'

Section 11: 'They enter the Pool of the Queen (of the West).'

As they approach the pool Hou Xingzhe tells of this past experience. At the age of eight hundred, the Queen punished him for stealing her magic peaches. Tripitaka is now moved by a desire to steal some.

In the midst of precipitous cliffs they see the peach-trees growing. As Tripitaka urges his monkey disciple to secure the magic fruit for them, three ripe peaches fall into the lake. In succession three small children then emerge, each claiming a greater supernatural age. Hou Xingzhe takes the third and eldest and invites Tripitaka to eat it. Tripitaka refuses, and the child, through Hou Xingzhe's magic arts, becomes a 'milk date,' which he swallows. (It is finally noted that the growth of *ginseng* in Sichuan derives from the seed of this fruit, spat out on the return journey.)

Section 12: 'They enter the Land of Chenxiang.'

It is marked by a tablet with the name. There is a vast forest of the chenxiang tree, at which the travelers exclaim.

Section 13: 'They enter Bolo guo.'

The inhabitants of this celestial land include beautiful women and children playing 'noisily' and 'gleefully rolling balls.' Wild beasts cry, and the place is marked by auspicious signs. (The closing verses, more extensive than the few sentences of prose, are irregular and perhaps corrupt.)

JUAN 3

Section 14: 'They enter the Land of *utpala* flowers.'

Here they find vast stretches of flowers and trees in bloom and never, according to Hou Xingzhe, disturbed by change of season or climate. In rhythmic lines he goes on to explain that the Buddha's paradise knows none of the effects of passing time. They are almost there.

Section 15: 'They enter India and cross the sea.'

Hou Xingzhe announces their approach to the Cock's-foot mountain. A tablet over a city-gate announces 'India:' the city within is full of auspicious signs of beauty and prosperity. Proceeding to the Buddhist monastery Fuxian si, they partake of celestial food. In conversation with the Superior, Tripitaka learns that the Buddha lives in the heights of Cock's-foot mountain, beyond hopelessly inaccessible obstacles. At Hou Xingzhe's suggestion Tripitaka offers up a ceremonial supplication. The Emperor and people of all China join in it. Darkness falls, and

after a period of deafening thunder and light-flashes the scriptures are revealed lying on a prepared prayer mat. Tripitaka finds 5,048 *juan*, and only the *Heart Sutra* is missing. At once they load up the books and set out for China, sped on by the good wishes of all the locals.

Section 16: 'They return as far as the Xianglin Monastery, where they receive the *Heart Sutra*.'

In the country of Panlu they stay in a town named Xianglin. Tripitaka in a dream hears a voice promising the *Heart Sutra* the following day.

Ahead of them in the clouds an apparition of a youthful monk gradually takes form, and produces the *sutra* from his sleeve. He gives it to Tripitaka, enjoining him solemnly to respect its powers and convey it to the people of China. Naming himself as the Dipamkara Buddha, he adds the instruction that monasteries must be built throughout China; Tripitaka and his party of seven must prepare to return to heaven on the fifteenth of the seventh month. Then he sails towards the west.

Section 17: 'They reach Shanxi, where the wife of Wang kills his son.'

In the city Hezhong fu there is a householder who has had sons (China and Zhuna) by two successive wives. While he is absent on business the second wife makes several attempts on the life of her stepson, assisted by a maid, Chunliu. He survives each ordeal by miraculous means, but finally succumbs when he is cast into a flooding river. His returning father arranges Buddhist memorial services. Tripitaka, arrives at this point and demands a large fish. The lost boy is found in the maw of this fish. (In the midst of an exchange of verses, Tripitaka ordains that this be the precedent for the split 'wooden fish' accompanying Buddhist ceremonial.)

As the party draws near the capital, the Emperor comes to meet them. Together they return and celebrate the new acquisitions with acts of piety. The appointed time of departure approaches: Tripitaka warns his Sovereign of what must happen on the fifteenth day of the month. The Emperor formally confers the title 'Master Tripitaka.'

NOTES ON ILLUSTRATIONS

INDIA

Plate 1: Hanuman standing in humility, a bronze icon of the early Chola style. Tamilnadu, South India. 10th century C.E.

Plate 2: Hanuman carved in relief on the Channakesharvaraswami Temple, Sompali, South India. 17th century C.E.

Plate 3: Leather Puppet of Hanuman from Kerala, South India.

CAMBODIA

Plate 4: Hanuman in combat with Ravana and his demons. Details from a relief on Baphoun, Angkor, Cambodia. 11th century C.E.

Plate 5: Hanuman as door guardian of the Banteay Srei temple, Cambodia. Late 10th or 14th century C.E.

THAILAND

Plate 6: Hanuman making love with Supanna Matcha. Bas-relief carving from the Wat Phra Jetuban Weemol Temple, Bangkok, Thailand.

INDONESIA

Plate 7: Hanuman. Outline Sketch of a stone relief from the island of Bali.

Plate 8: Hanuman as envoy. Detail of a *wayang wong* from Indonesia. Ravana (center) listens to the pleas of captive Sita (right) as Hanuman (left) eavesdrops.

Plate 9: Hanuman carrying an Amrta-vase. Bronzw image from the island of Java. 15th century C.E.

Plate10: Hanuman. Line drawing of a carved relief on a temple from the island of Bali.

CHINA

Plate 11: Sun Wukong and the Dragon King. Animated still from the movie "Havoc in Heaven." 1970's.

Plate 12: Opera face of Sun Wukong on a playing card. Drawing.

Plate 13: Pigsy pleads with Sun Wukong to rescue Tripitaka from a demon. Drawing. Modern times.

Plate 14: Sun Wukong in opera. Photograph of an opera performer.

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APPENDIX A:

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An illustration from a featured animated film by Shanghai Animation Studio.
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