

Journey to the west

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Chapter 1

The Divine Root Conceives and the Spring Breaks Forth As the Heart's Nature Is Cultivated, the Great Way Arises

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

Before Chaos was divided, Heaven and Earth were one;

All was a shapeless blur, and no men had appeared.

Once Pan Gu destroyed the Enormous Vagueness

The separation of clear and impure began.

Living things have always tended towards humanity;

From their creation all beings improve.

If you want to know about Creation and Time,

Read Difficulties Resolved on the Journey to the West.

In the arithmetic of the universe, 129,600 years make one cycle. Each cycle can be divided into twelve phases:

I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI and XII, the twelve branches. Each phase lasts 10,800 years.

Now within a single day, the positive begins at the time I; at II the cock crows; at III it is not quite light; at IV

the sun rises; V is after breakfast; and at VI one does business. VII is when the sun reaches noon; at VIII it is

slipping towards the West; IX is late afternoon; the sun sets at X; XI is dusk; and at XII people settle down for

the night.

If you compare this with the big numbers, then at the end of Phase XI Heaven and Earth were still one, and no

beings had appeared. 5,400 years later came the beginning of Phase XII, when all was darkness and there

were still no people or other creatures; for this reason it was called Chaos. Another 5,400 years later Phase XII

was drawing to a close and a new cycle was about to begin. As Phase I of the new era approached,

gradually

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there was light. As Shao Yong said,

"When winter reaches the mid—point of Phase I

The heart of Heaven does not move.

Where the Positive first appears

Nothing has yet come to life."

At this time, Heaven first had a foundation. 5,400 years later, in the middle of Phase I, the light and pure rose

upwards, and sun, moon, stars, and constellations were created. These were called the Four Images. Hence the

saying that heaven began in I.

Another 5,400 years later, when Phase I was nearing its end and Phase II was imminent, things gradually

solidified. As the Book of Changes says, "Great is the Positive; far—reaching is the Negative! All things are

endowed and born in accordance with Heaven." This was when the earth began to congeal. After 5,400 more

years came the height of Phase II, when the heavy and impure solidified, and water, fire, mountains, stone,

and Earth came into being. These five were called the Five Movers. Therefore it is said that the Earth was

created in Phase II.

After a further 5,400 years, at the end of Phase II and the beginning of the Phase III, living beings were

created. In the words of the Book of the Calendar, "The essence of the sky came down and the essence of

earth went up. Heaven and Earth intermingled, and all creatures were born." Then Heaven was bright and

Earth was fresh, and the Positive intermingled with the Negative. 5,400 years later, when Phase III was at its

height, men, birds and beasts were created. Thus the Three Powers—Heaven, Earth and Man—now had their

set places. Therefore it is said that man was created in Phase III.

Moved by Pan Gu's creation, the Three Emperors put the world in order and the Five Rulers laid down the

moral code. The world was then divided into four great continents: The Eastern Continent of Superior Body,

the Western Continent of Cattle—gift, the Southern Continent of Jambu and the Northern Continent of Kuru.

This book deals only with the Eastern Continent of Superior Body. Beyond the seas there is a country called

Aolai. This country is next to an ocean, and in the middle of the ocean is a famous island called the Mountain

of Flowers and Fruit. This mountain is the ancestral artery of the Ten Continents, the origin of the Three

Islands; it was formed when the clear and impure were separated and the Enormous Vagueness was divided. It

is a really splendid mountain and there are some verses to prove it:

It stills the ocean with its might,

It awes the jade sea into calm.

It stills the ocean with its might:

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

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It awes the jade sea into calm:

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

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

Its summit towers above the Eastern Sea.

Red cliffs and strange rocks;

Beetling crags and jagged peaks.

On the red cliffs phoenixes sing in pairs;

Lone unicorns lie before the beetling crags.

The cry of pheasants is heard upon the peaks;

In caves the dragons come and go.

There are deer of long life and magic foxes in the woods;

Miraculous birds and black cranes in the trees.

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

Green pine and bluish cypress ever in leaf,

Magic peaches always in fruit.

Clouds gather round the tall bamboo.

The wisteria grows thick around the mountain brook

And the banks around are newly-coloured with flowers.

It is the Heaven-supporting pillar where all the rivers meet,

The Earth's root, unchanged through a myriad aeons.

There was once a magic stone on the top of this mountain which was thirty-six feet five inches high and

twenty-four feet round. It was thirty-six feet five inches high to correspond with the 365 degrees of the

heavens, and twenty-four feet round to match the twenty-four divisions of the solar calendar. On top of it

were nine apertures and eight holes, for the Nine Palaces and the Eight Trigrams. There were no trees around

it to give shade, but magic fungus and orchids clung to its sides. Ever since Creation began it had been

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receiving the truth of Heaven, the beauty of Earth, the essence of the Sun and the splendour of the Moon; and

as it had been influenced by them for so long it had miraculous powers. It developed a magic womb, which

burst open one day to produce a stone egg about the size of a ball.

When the wind blew on this egg it turned into a stone monkey, complete with the five senses and

four limbs.

When the stone monkey had learned to crawl and walk, he bowed to each of the four quarters. As his eyes

moved, two beams of golden light shot towards the Pole Star palace and startled the Supreme Heavenly Sage,

the Greatly Compassionate Jade Emperor of the Azure Vault of Heaven, who was sitting surrounded by his

immortal ministers on his throne in the Hall of Miraculous Mist in the Golden-gated Cloud Palace.

When he

saw the dazzling golden light he ordered Thousand-mile Eye and Wind-accompanying Ear to open the

Southern Gate of Heaven and take a look. The two officers went out through the gate in obedience to the

imperial command, and while one observed what was going on the other listened carefully. Soon afterwards

they reported back:

"In obedience to the Imperial Mandate your subjects observed and listened to the source of the golden light.

We found that at the edge of the country of Aolai, which is East of the ocean belonging to the Eastern

Continent of Superior Body, there is an island called the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. A magic stone on the

top of this mountain produced a magic egg, and when the wind blew on this egg it turned into a stone monkey

which bowed to each of the four quarters. When he moved his eyes, golden light shot towards the Pole Star

Palace; but now that he is eating and drinking, the golden light is gradually dying."

In his benevolence and mercy the Jade Emperor said, "Creatures down below are born of the essence of

heaven and earth: there is nothing remarkable about him."

On his mountain the monkey was soon able to run and jump, feed from plants and trees, drink from brooks

and springs, pick mountain flowers and look for fruit. He made friends with the wolves, went around with the

tigers and leopards, was on good terms with the deer, and had the other monkeys and apes for relations. At

night he slept under the rockfaces, and he roamed around the peaks and caves by day. As the saying so rightly

goes, "There is no calendar in the mountains, and when winter's over you don't know the time of year." On hot

mornings he and all the other monkeys would play under the shade of some pines to avoid the heat. Just look

at them all:

Climbing trees, picking flowers, looking for fruit;

Throwing pellets, playing knucklebones;

Running round sandy hollows, building stone pagodas;

Chasing dragonflies and catching locusts;

Worshipping the sky and visiting Bodhisattvas;
Tearing off creepers and weaving straw hats;
Catching fleas then popping them with their teeth and fingers;
Grooming their coats and sharpening their nails;
Beating, scratching, pushing, squashing, tearing and tugging;
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Playing all over the place under the pine trees;
Washing themselves beside the green stream.
After playing, the monkeys would go and bathe in the stream, a mountain torrent that tumbled along like rolling melons. There is an old saying, "Birds have bird language and, animals have animal talk." All the monkeys said to each other, "I wonder where that water comes from. We've got nothing else to do today, so wouldn't it be fun to go upstream and find its source?" With a shout they all ran off, leading their children and calling to their brothers. They climbed up the mountain beside the stream until they reached its source, where a waterfall cascaded from a spring. They saw
One white rainbow arching,
A thousand strands of flying snow,
Unbroken by the sea winds,
Still there under the moon.
Cold air divides the greeny crags,
Splashes moisten the mountainside;
A noble waterfall cascades,
Hanging suspended like a curtain.
The monkeys clapped their hands and explained with delight, "What lovely water. It must go all the way to the bottom of the mountain and join the waves of the sea."
Then one monkey made a suggestion: "If anyone is clever enough to go through the fall, find the source, and come out in one piece, let's make him our king." When this challenge had been shouted three times, the stone monkey leapt out from the crowd and answered at the top of his voice, "I'll go, I'll go." Splendid monkey!

Indeed:

Today he will make his name;
Tomorrow his destiny shall triumph.
He is fated to live here;

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As a King he will enter the Immortals' palace.
Watch him as he shuts his eyes, crouches, and springs, leaping straight into the waterfall. When he opened his eyes and raised his head to look round, he saw neither water nor waves. A bridge stood in front of him, as

large as life. He stopped, calmed himself, took a closer look, and saw that the bridge was made of iron. The water that rushed under it poured out through a fissure in the rocks, screening the gateway to the bridge. He started walking towards the bridge, and as he looked he made out what seemed to be a house. It was a really

good place. He saw:

Emerald moss piled up in heaps of blue,

White clouds like drifting jade,

While the light flickered among wisps of coloured mist.

A quiet house with peaceful windows,

Flowers growing on the smooth bench;

Dragon pearls hanging in niches,

Exotic blooms all around.

Traces of fire beside the stove,

Scraps of food in the vessels by the table.

Adorable stone chairs and beds,

Even better stone plates and bowls.

One or two tall bamboos,

Three or four sprigs of plum blossom,

A few pines that always attract rain,

All just like a real home.

He took a good, long look and then scampered to the middle of the bridge, from where he noticed a stone

tablet. On the tablet had been carved in big square letters: HAPPY LAND OF THE MOUNTAIN OF FLOWERS AND FRUIT, CAVE HEAVEN OF THE WATER CURTAIN. The stone monkey was beside himself with glee. He rushed away, shut his eyes, crouched, and leapt back through the waterfall.

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"We're in luck, we're in luck," he said with a chuckle. All the other monkeys crowded round him asking,

"What's it like in there? How deep is the water?"

"There's no water, none at all," replied the stone monkey. "There's an iron bridge, and on the other side of the

bridge there's a house that must have been made by Heaven and Earth."

"How ever could you see a house there?" the other monkeys asked. The stone monkey chuckled again.

"The water here comes under the bridge and through the rocks, and it hides the gateway to the bridge from

view. There are flowers and trees by the bridge, and a stone house too. Inside the house are stone rooms, a

stone stove, stone bowls, stone plates, stone beds, and even stone benches. In the middle of it all is a tablet

which says 'Happy Land of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, Cave Heaven of the Water Curtain'.

It's just

the place for us to settle down in—there's room there for thousands. Let's all move in, then we won't have to

put up with any more nonsense from heaven. In there
We can hide there from the wind,
And shelter from the rain,
With nothing to fear from frost and snow,
And never a rumble of thunder.

The coloured mists glow bright
And the place smells lucky.

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

The other monkeys were all so delighted to hear this that they said, "You go first and take us with you."

The stone monkey shut his eyes, crouched, and leapt in again, shouting, "Follow me in, follow me in." The

braver monkeys all jumped through. The more timid ones peered forward, shrank back, rubbed their ears,
scratched their cheeks, shouted, and yelled at the top of their voices, before going in, all clinging to each

other. After rushing across the bridge they all grabbed plates and snatched bowls, bagged stoves and fought

over beds, and moved everything around. Monkeys are born naughty and they could not keep quiet for a

single moment until they had worn themselves out moving things around.

The stone monkey sat himself in the main seat and said, "Gentlemen, A man who breaks his word is

worthless. Just now you said that if anyone was clever enough to come in here and get out again in one piece,

you'd make him king. Well, then. I've come in and gone out, and gone out and come in. I've found you

gentlemen a cave heaven where you can sleep in peace and all settle down to live in bliss. Why haven't you

made me king?" On hearing this all the monkeys bowed and prostrated themselves, not daring to disobey.

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They lined up in groups in order of age and paid their homage as at court, all acclaiming him as the "Great

King of a Thousand Years." The stone monkey then took the throne, made the word "stone" taboo, and called

himself Handsome Monkey King. There is a poem to prove it that goes:

All things are born from the Three positives;

The magic stone was quick with the essence of sun and moon.

An egg was turned into a monkey to complete the Great Way;

He was lent a name so that the elixir would be complete.

Looking inside he perceives nothing because it has no form,

Outside he uses his intelligence to create visible things.

Men have always been like this:

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

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

In spring they picked flowers for food and drink,
In summer they lived off fruit.
In autumn they gathered tares and chestnuts,
They got through the winter on Solomon's—seal.

The Handsome Monkey King's innocent high spirits could not, of course, last three or four hundred years.

One day he suddenly felt depressed during a banquet with his monkey host, and he started to weep. The startled monkeys crowded round, bowed to him and asked, "What's the matter, Your Majesty?" "Although I'm happy now," the Monkey King replied, "I'm worried about the future. That's what's getting me down."

The other monkeys laughed and said, "Your Majesty is being greedy. We have parties every day; we live in a mountain paradise, in an ancient cave in a divine continent. We are spared the rule of unicorns, the Journey to the West

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domination of phoenixes, and the restraints of human kings. We are free to do just as we like—we are infinitely lucky. Why make yourself miserable worrying about the future?"

To this the Monkey King replied, "Yes, we don't have to submit to the laws and regulations of human kings, and we don't live in terror of the power of birds and beasts. But the time will come when we are old and weak, and the underworld is controlled by the King of Hell. When the time comes for us to die, we won't be able to go on living among the Blessed, and our lives will have been in vain." All the monkeys covered their faces and wept as everyone of them thought about death.

Suddenly a gibbon jumped out from their ranks and shrieked in a piercing voice, "If Your Majesty is thinking so far ahead, this is the beginning of enlightenment. Now of the Five Creatures, there are only three that do not come under the jurisdiction of the King of Hell."

"Do you know which they are?" asked the Monkey King.

"Yes," the ape replied. "They are the Buddhas, the Immortals and the Sages. They are free from the Wheel of Reincarnation. They are not born and they do not die. They are as eternal as Heaven and Earth, as

the
mountains and the rivers."
"Where do they live?" the Monkey King asked.
"Only in the human world," the ape replied, "in ancient caves on magic mountains." The Monkey King was
delighted to hear this.
"I shall leave you all tomorrow," he said, "and go down the mountain. If I have to, I'll roam the corners of the
oceans and go to the edge of the sky to find these three kinds of beings and discover the secret of eternal youth
that will keep us out of the clutches of the King of Hell for ever." Goodness! Because of these words he was
to learn how to be free from the Wheel of Reincarnation and become the Great Sage Equaling Heaven.
All the monkeys clapped with approval and said, "Great! Great! Tomorrow we'll climb all over the mountain
and get lots of fruit to give Your Majesty a really big banquet to send you off."
The next day the monkeys set out to pick magic peaches, gather rare fruits, dig out yams, and cut Solomon's—seal. Magic fungus and fragrant orchid were collected, and everything was set on the stone
benches and the stone tables, with fairy wine and dishes. You could see
Golden pills and pearl pellets,
Bursting red and plump yellow.
The golden pills and pearl pellets were winter cherries, beautiful and sweet;
The bursting red and plump yellow were ripe plums, tasty and sharp.
Fresh, sweet—fleshed longans with thin skins.
Fiery lichees with tiny stones in a red sack.
Branch after branch of crab—apples,
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Yellow—skinned loquats with their leaves on.
Rabbit—head pears and chicken—heart jujubes
To quench your thirst, remove your cares, and sober you up.
Fragrant peaches and tender apricots,
As sweet and luscious as jade wine.
Crisp plums and arbutus,
As sharp as glistening yogurt.
Ripe melons with red coats and black seeds,
Big, four—sectioned persimmons with yellow skins.
Bursting pomegranates:
Cinnabar pips shining like fire—crystal pearls.
Opened water—chestnuts
With firm round flesh like golden agate.
Walnuts and ginkgo fruits to eat with tea;
Coconuts and grapes to make into wine.
Dishes loaded with pine cones, yew—nuts, filberts, and crab—apples;
Tangerines, sugar—cane and oranges covering the table.

Hot roast yams,
Tender boiled Solomon's—seal.
Pounded china—root and Job's tears.
Simmered in soup in a stone—pot.
Although we humans have rare delicacies to eat,
We are no happier than those monkeys in the mountains.

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The host of monkeys ushered the Handsome Monkey King to the seat of honour and sat down below him according to age. Each of them took it in turns to bring him wine, flowers, and fruit, and they drank hard for a whole day. The next morning the Handsome Monkey King got up early and ordered, "Children, tear down some old pines and make me a raft. Find a bamboo pole to punt with and load it up with fruit. I'm going." He went aboard the raft all by himself, pushed off with all his might, and floated off towards the waves of the ocean. He intended to sail with the wind and cross over to the Southern Jambu Continent. The heaven—born monkey, whose conduct was so noble, Left his island to drift with heaven's winds. He sailed oceans and seas to find the Way of Immortality, Deeply determined to do a great deed. The predestined one should not have vulgar longings; He can attain the primal truth without care or worry. He is bound to find a kindred spirit, To explain the origins and the laws of nature. He had chosen just the right time for his journey. After he boarded his raft the Southeasterly wind blew hard for days on end and bore him to the Northwestern shore of the Southern Continent. Testing the depth of the water with his pole he found that it was shallow, so he abandoned the raft and jumped ashore. He saw humans by the coast, fishing, hunting geese, gathering clams, and extracting salt. He went up to them, leaping around and making faces, which so scared them that they dropped their baskets and nets and fled in all directions as fast as they could. The Monkey King grabbed one of them who was a poor runner, stripped him of his clothes, and dressed himself in them like a human. He swaggered through the provinces and prefectures, learning human behavior and human speech in the market places. Whether he was eating his breakfast or going to bed at night he was always asking about Buddhas, Immortals and Sages, and seeking the secret of eternal youth. He observed that the people of the world were too concerned with fame and fortune to be interested in their

fates.

When will the struggle for fame and fortune end?

Toiling from morning till night, never pleasing yourself.

Those who ride donkeys long for stallions,

The Prime Minister always wants to be a prince.

They only worry about having to stop work to eat or dress;

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They never fear that the King of Hell will come to get them.

When trying to ensure their sons and grandsons inherit their wealth and power,

They have no time to stop and think.

Although he asked about the way of the Immortals, the Monkey King was unable to meet one. He spent eight

or nine years in the Southern Jambu Continent, going through its great walls and visiting its little counties.

When he found that he had reached the Great Western Ocean he thought that there must be Sages and

Immortals on the other side of it, so he made himself another raft like the last one, and floated across the

Western Ocean until he came to the Western Continent of Cattle—gift. He went ashore and made extensive

and lengthy enquiries until one day he came upon a high and beautiful mountain, thickly forested on its lower

slopes. Not fearing wolves, and undaunted by tigers or leopards, he climbed to the summit to see the view. It

was indeed a fine mountain:

A thousand peaks brandishing halberds,

Screens ten thousand measures tall.

In the sunlight the mountain haze is lightly touched with blue;

After the rain the black rocks look coldly green.

Withered creepers coil round ancient trees,

And the old ford marks the bounds of the mysterious.

Strange flowers and precious plants,

Flourishing in all four seasons, rivaling fairyland.

The nearby cry of a hidden bird,

The clear running of a spring.

Valley upon valley of mushroom and orchid,

Lichen grows all over the cliffs.

The range rises and dips in dragon—like majesty.

Surely there must be lofty hermits here.

As he was looking at the view the Monkey King heard a human voice coming from the depths of the forest.

He rushed into the trees, and when he cocked his ear to listen he heard a song:

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"Watching the chess game I cut through the rotten,

Felling trees, ding, ding,

Strolling at the edge of the cloud and the mouth of the valley,
I sell firewood to buy wine,
Cackling with laughter and perfectly happy.
I pillow myself on a pine root, looking up at the moon.
When I wake up it is light.
Recognizing the old forest
I scale cliffs and cross ridges,
Cutting down withered creepers with my axe.
When I've gathered a basketful
I walk down to the market with a song,
And trade it for three pints of rice.
Nobody else competes with me,
So prices are stable.
I don't speculate or try sharp practice,
Couldn't care less what people think of me,
Calmly lengthening my days.
The people I meet
Are Taoists and Immortals,
Sitting quietly and expounding the Yellow Court."
The Monkey King was overjoyed to hear this, and he said with glee, "So this is where the Immortals have been hiding." He bounded deeper into the woods for a closer look and saw that the singer was a woodcutter cutting firewood. He was wearing the most unusual clothes:
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On his head he wore a hat
Woven from the first skin shed by new bamboo shoots.
The clothes on his body
Were made of yam from the wild cotton—tree.
The belt round his waist
Was of silk from an old silkworm.
The straw sandals under his feet
Had straps torn from rotten sago trees.
In his hand he held a steel axe
On his back he carried a hempen rope
At climbing pines and felling dead trees,
Who was a match for this woodcutter?
The Monkey King went closer and called to him. "Old Immortal, your disciple greets you."
The woodcutter dropped his axe in astonishment and turned round to say, "No, no. I don't even have enough to eat or drink, so how can I possibly let you call me an Immortal?"
"If you're not an Immortal," the Monkey King said, "why do you talk like one?"
"I don't talk like an Immortal," the woodcutter said.
"At the edge of the wood just now," the Monkey King replied, "I heard you say, 'The people I meet are Taoists and Immortals, sitting quietly and expounding the Mantingfang.' The Mantingfang contains

the truth

about the Way, so if you're not an Immortal, what are you?" The woodcutter laughed.

"It's quite true that the song is called 'The Fragrance of the Mantingfang,' and an Immortal who lives near my

hut taught me it. He said he saw how hard I had to work and how I was always worried, so he made me sing

this song when things were getting me down. It lightens my cares and makes me forget my weariness. I was

singing it just now because I had some problems on my mind, and I never imagined that you would be

listening."

"If you've got an Immortal for a neighbour, you ought to learn from him how to cultivate your conduct and get

him to teach you a recipe for eternal youth."

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"I've had a hard life," the woodcutter replied. "My mother and father brought me up till I was about eight, and

just when I was beginning to know about life my father died. My mother remained a widow, and I had no

brothers or sisters. As I was the only child I had to look after my mother morning and night. Now she is old

that I can't possibly leave her. Our land is so overgrown that I can't grow enough to feed and clothe both of us,

so I have to cut a couple of bundles of firewood to sell in the market for a handful of coppers to buy the few

pints of rice that I cook for myself and for my mother. That's why I can't cultivate my conduct."

"From what you say," the Monkey King replied, "you're a filial son and a gentleman—you're bound to be

rewarded for it one day. But I'd be grateful if you could show me where that Immortal lives, so that I can go

and pay him my respects."

The woodcutter said, "It's not far from here. This mountain is the Spirit Tower Heart Mountain, and in it there

is the Cave of the Setting Moon and the Three Stars. In that cave lives an Immortal called the Patriarch

Subhuti. I don't know how many disciples he has trained—there are thirty or forty of them cultivating their

conduct with him at the moment. If you take that path South for two or three miles you'll reach his home."

The Monkey King tugged at the woodcutter and said, "Take me there, Elder Brother. If I get anything out of

this, I won't forget your kindness."

"You idiot," the woodcutter replied, "didn't you understand what I told you just now? If I went with you I

wouldn't be able to earn my living, and who would look after my poor old mother then? I've got to get on with

my woodcutting. Go by yourself."

After hearing this the Monkey King had to take his leave. He came out of the forest and found the path, which

led up a mountain slope for two or three miles, when he saw the cave. He pulled himself up to his full height

to take a look, and it was a really magnificent place:

Misty clouds scattered colours,

Sun and moon shimmered bright.

A thousand ancient cypresses,

Ten thousand lofty bamboos.

A thousand ancient cypresses,

A soft green drawing the rain from the sky.

Ten thousand lofty bamboos,

And a misty valley is azure blue.

Outside the gate rare flowers spread brocade;

Beside the bridge wafts the scent of jade flowers.

Rocky crags jut, glossy with green moss;

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On overhanging cliffs blue lichen grows.

Sometimes the call of the crane is heard

And often you see the phoenix soar.

The call of the crane

Echoes beyond the Ninth Heaven and the Milky Way.

When the phoenix soars,

The brilliance of its wings colours the clouds.

Black apes and white deer can be just made out;

Golden lions and jade elephants prefer to keep hidden.

If you look closely at this happy land,

You will see that it rivals paradise.

He saw that the doors of the cave were shut fast, and that everything was still, with no signs of any people. He

turned round and noticed that there was a stone tablet about thirty feet high and eight feet wide at the top of

the cliff. On it was carved in enormous letters: SPIRIT-TOWER HEART MOUNTAIN, CAVE OF THE SETTING MOON AND THE THREE STARS. The Monkey King exclaimed with delight, "The people here really are honest. The mountain and the cave do exist." He took a good long look, but did not dare to knock on

the door. He climbed to the end of a pine branch and ate some pine seeds to amuse himself.

Before long the doors of the cave opened with a creak, and an immortal boy came out. In the nobility of his

bearing and the exceptional purity of his features he was completely different from an ordinary boy.

His hair was bound with a pair of silken bands,

His flowing gown had two capacious sleeves.

His face and body were naturally distinguished;

His mind and appearance were both empty.

For many years a guest beyond the world of things,
An eternal child amid the mountains,
Untouched by any speck of dust,
Journey to the West

Chapter 1 18

He let the years go tumbling by.

When this boy had come out he shouted, "Who's making that row out here?"

The Monkey King scampered down the tree, went up to him, and said with a bow, "Immortal child, I am a

disciple who has come to ask about the Way and study under the Immortal. The last thing I'd do would be to

make a row here?" The boy laughed.

"So you've come to ask about the Way, have you?"

"Yes," the Monkey King replied.

"Our master has just got up," the boy said, "and has now mounted the dais to expound the Way.

Before he had

started to explain about origins he told me to open the door. He said, 'There is someone outside who wants to

cultivate his conduct. Go and welcome him.' I suppose he must have meant you."

"Yes, he meant me," the Monkey King said with a smile.

"Come with me," the boy said.

The Monkey King straightened his clothes and followed the boy deep into the depths of the cave. He saw

majestic pavilions and towers of red jade, pearl palaces and gateways of cowry, and countless rooms of

silence and secluded cells leading all the way to a jasper dais. He saw the Patriarch Subhuti sitting on the dais

and thirty–six minor Immortals standing below it.

A golden Immortal of great enlightenment, free from filth,

Subhuti, the marvel of the Western World.

Neither dying nor born, he practices the triple meditation,

His spirit and soul entirely benevolent.

In empty detachment he follows the changes;

Having found his true nature he lets it run free.

As eternal as Heaven, and majestic in body,

The great teacher of the Law is enlightened through aeons.

As soon as the Handsome Monkey King saw him he bowed low and knocked his head on the ground before

him many times, saying, "Master, master, your disciple pays his deepest respects."

Journey to the West

Chapter 1 19

"Where are you from?" the Patriarch asked. "You must tell me your name and address before you can become

my pupil."

"I come from the Water Curtain Cave in the Flowers and Fruit Mountain in the land of Aolai in the Eastern

Continent of Superior Body," replied the Monkey King.

"Throw him out," the Patriarch roared. "He's a liar and a cheat, and even if he tried cultivating his conduct he would get nowhere."

The Monkey King desperately kept hitting his head on the ground and said, "Your disciple spoke the truth. I promise I wasn't lying."

The Patriarch asked, "If you were speaking the truth, why did you say that you came from the Eastern

Continent of Superior Body? Between here and the Eastern Continent there are two seas and the Southern

Jambu Continent, so how could you possibly have come here from there?"

The Monkey King, still kowtowing, replied, "I sailed across seas and oceans, crossed frontiers and wandered

through many countries for over ten years before I arrived here."

"So you came here by stages," the Patriarch remarked. "What is your surname?"

"I'm not surly," the Monkey King replied. "If people call me names it doesn't bother me, and if they hit me I

don't get angry. I'm just polite to them and that's that. I've never been surly."

"I didn't ask if you were surly. I wanted to know the surname you inherited from your parents."

"I didn't have any parents," the Monkey King replied.

"If you had no parents, did you grow on a tree?"

"I grew not on a tree but in a stone," the Monkey King replied. "All I remember is that there was a magic

stone on the top of the Flower and Fruit Mountain, and that one year the stone split open and I was born."

Concealing his delight at hearing this, the Patriarch remarked, "In other words, you were born of Heaven and

Earth. Walk around for a moment and let me have a look at you." The Monkey King leapt to his feet and

shambled round a couple of times.

The Patriarch smiled and said, "Though you have rather a base sort of body, you look like one of the rhesus

monkeys that eat pine seeds, and I ought to give you a surname that fits your appearance and call you Hu

('Macaque'). The elements that make up the character Hu are 'animal,' 'old' and 'moon'. What is old is ancient,

and the moon embodies the Negative principle, and what is ancient and Negative cannot be transformed. But I

think I would do much better to call you Sun ('Monkey'). Apart from the 'animal' element, the character Sun

has one part implying male and one part suggesting a baby, which fits in with my basic theories about

children. Your surname will be Sun."

When the Monkey King heard this he kowtowed with delight and said, "Great! Great! Now I have a surname.

I am eternally grateful to you for your mercy and compassion, master. I beg you to give me a personal name

to go with my new surname, then it will be much easier to address me."

"There are twelve words within my sect," said the Patriarch, "which I give as names. You belong to the tenth

generation of my disciples."

Journey to the West

Chapter 1 20

"What are these twelve words?" asked the Monkey King.

"Broad, great, wisdom, intelligence, true, likeness, nature, sea, bright, awakened, complete and enlightenment.

If we work out the generations of disciples, then you should have a name with Wu ('Awakened') in it. So we

can give you the Dharma—name Sun Wukong, which means 'Monkey Awakened to Emptiness'. Will that do?"

"Marvellous, marvellous," said the smiling Monkey King. "From now on my name will be Sun Wukong."

Indeed:

When the Great Vagueness was separated there were no surnames;

To smash foolish emptiness he had to be awakened to emptiness.

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

next installment.