



Journey to the West (9)

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Chapter Three

The Four Seas and Thousand Mountains all submit; In the Ninth Hell the Tenth Category is struck off the Register.

(As you remember, Monkey receives Tao, returns to his hometown, goes to the Eastern Sea and gets the As-You-Will Golden Pole, weighing 13,500 kg)

We see the numbers one, three, and five in 13,500. It is a heavenly number.

(Sun Wukong thought he didn't, have clothing to fit with the Pole; he demanded a whole outfit from the Eastern, Southern, Northern, and Western Sea Dragon Kings)

At this time, flags were displayed, and drums and gongs were played; he set up banquets composed of hundreds of delicacies and cups full of coconut juice and raisin liquor. Sun Wukong established a group of seven sworn brothers: including himself, they were the Bull Demon King, the Salamander Demon King, the Roc Demon King, the Camel King, the Macaque King; and the Lion King. Every day they talked about literature, practiced martial arts, drank wine, and had fun; life was very easy and naturally happy. This situation was a Fool's Paradise, and Sun Wukong himself

is just like emperor of this Fool's Paradise. In conclusion, the first half paragraph is talking about his situation in the Fool's Paradise. But the last paragraph says why we call this a Fool's Paradise.

(The Monkey King dreamed that he met people with ox heads and people with horse faces, and deleted his name from the King of Hell's book)

In this Fool's Paradise, the Monkey King seems not to be controlled by the King of Hell, but his name is still listed in the palace of the King of Hell. The Fetchers of the Dead can still catch him. But this monkey has high magic skill and strong martial art. The King of Hell has no way to oppose him. He can only let Sun Wukong remove his name from the Register of Life and Death. This the situation in Fool's Paradise. Monkey thought he is the only big one, and also the king of his Fool's Paradise; when he used his potent magic and strong martial arts, the King of the Hell cannot compete with him. So he won't governed by the King of Hell.

But this only depends on the magic skill. It's illegal. This is not as if he owns some special right. Similarly police try to catch gangsters and Mafiosi, but it difficult to catch all of them. This difficulty does not mean that gangsters are legal. One day if the

police are successful in enforcing their power, they may still catch gangsters. And this Monkey King is in exactly this situation. But cultivating Tao is different; cultivating Tao leads one to leap out of the Three Worlds (in Buddhism, the world of desire, the material world, and the world of concepts) and outside the five elements. Thus one can jump out of death and reincarnation.

That time Sun Wukong used some magic to jump from the Three Worlds and five elements. This is “magic by intention” [in Chinese, “you wei” or the opposite of “wu wei”]. Why did we say this is magic by intention? Because he is elevated individually, and did not ensure that other people elevate with him. The other monkeys only depend on Sun Wukong’s magic power to have their names removed from the Register of Life and Death. Actually, those monkeys don’t have this power themselves. In other words, all depends on the efforts of the King of Fool’s Paradise. Not all the monkeys are upgraded. So this Fool’s Paradise is totally different from us because we emphasize the group elevation approach to cultivating Tao.

In the book, although this is only a dream sequence, Sun Wukong definitely is not under the governance of the King of Hell. Therefore, in the sequel Sun Wukong will wreak havoc in the Heavenly Palace. He will do this because he took the names of all the monkeys from the Register of Life and Death. The King of Hell went to appeal to the Heavenly Palace. Also, because the Monkey King forced the Dragon Kings to give him a weapon and suit of armor, all the sea dragons appealed against him. All of this is rebellion against the regulations of Heavenly discipline, therefore the King of Hell and the sea dragons

complained of him.

(The Jade Emperor and the Great White Planet talk about a punishment for Sun Wukong)

The Jade Emperor at the beginning planned to send generals to arrest Sun Wukong. But because of the intervention of the Great White Planet [also known as Venus], the Jade Emperor did not seek to catch Sun Wukong but instead invited him to the Heavenly Palace and assigned him an official job. In fact, the Great White Planet was sent to the Flower and Fruit Mountain to find Sun Wukong.

Chapter Four

Dissatisfied at being appointed Protector of the Horses; Not content with the title of Equal of Heaven.

(Monkey follows the Great White Planet to the Heavenly Gate)

In this paragraph, the most important part is that the Great White Planet brought the Monkey King to the Heavenly Palace and that the Jade Emperor assigned Sun Wukong the official title Bi Ma Wun (Horse official). This is a job controlling the horses. Last time, we touched upon this. In the eyes of the Jade Emperor, Sun Wukong is only a monkey, Monkey is “Mind” and the Mind controls “Thought.” Therefore, the Mind Ape should control “Thought Horse” and it is fitting to let the monkey take care of the horses. At first glance, this seems to be a very suitable job for him, but the Jade Emperor did not think about whether this monkey is an ordinary monkey. One day, when Sun Wukong found out that this job is

just a tiny official title, he became very angry, and chose to go back to his Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.

(Sun goes back to the Flowers and Fruit Mountain, and proclaims himself “Great Sage Equaling Heaven”)

This title, “Great Sage Equaling Heaven,” is the suggestion of two Devil Kings, and he takes this to name himself. Of course, when he did this, the Jade Emperor also knows it so heavenly soldiers are sent to catch him. The emperor sends the Mighty Miracle God to lead the fight as well as the Heavenly King Li Jing and Prince Nuozha (哪吒). But all the heavenly soldiers cannot defeat him, so Sun Wukong is very proud of himself.

(All the heavenly generals are defeated and return to Jade emperor. The Great White Planet appeals to the Jade emperor to give the monkey the title “Great Sage Equaling Heaven.”)

Then, the Great White Planet continued to speak in behalf of Sun Wukong. He asked the Jade Emperor to assign the Monkey King the honorary title “Great Sage Equaling Heaven.” This is only a title but without salary, and in reality it is equivalent to having no official job. The Jade Emperor found the Great White Planet’s suggestion persuasive and approved it. Therefore, the Great White Planet was sent to the Flowers and Fruit Mountain to invite Monkey to return to Heaven.

(Monkey stays as the Great Sage Equaling Heaven in his own Palace in Heaven in happiness and

contentment.)

We know Sun Wukong was assigned the title “Great Sage Equaling Heaven” and lived on the right side of the Peach Garden. Why do I underline this point? We know Sun Wukong represents Mind, and the Heavenly Peach is the best peach, it is a “Right Fruit” (Right result). The story takes place at the end of the Red sun period, which is Heavenly Peach gathering time. [By contrast, we are now at the beginning of the White Sun period.] The peach is the right fruit at that time, and only those who gain the right result can attend the Peach Gathering. The peach garden is the place of right result. Right fruit is located on the left side. The Great Sage Equaling Heaven lives on the right side, which is not the right result. His title Great Sage Equaling Heaven is requested by himself; although he has been assigned that name, this is not a true name. Therefore, here we have a hint - the peach garden is on the left hand side, our heart is in the left hand side, but the right hand side is where Sun Wukong lives. This is not the right result. Therefore, Monkey’s Palace contains two departments: one is Tranquility Office, and the other is Calm Divinity Office. Thus tranquility and calm are urged on Sun Wukong so that he will go back to the correct palace. This is the main point of the paragraph.

Chapter Five

After chaos among the peaches, the Great Sage steals the pills; In the revolt against Heaven the gods capture the demons.

When the book speaks of 3600 trees, this refers to the 3600 kinds of Dharma that can be cultivated. To explain this further, in this Peach Orchard we are

talking about the Right Fruit (right result.) and in Buddhist theory there are 3600 kinds of Right Fruit, which is the same as the number of peach trees. One peach tree represents one kind of Dharma; note that it is not true that one peach corresponds to one kind of Dharma. The many peaches in the orchard represent many people cultivating Tao. The spirits of Tao cultivators are derived from the spirits of ancient sages, just as the peaches are divided from the peach trees. If we cultivate properly, the tree will give the right result.

How can anyone harvest the peaches? Only through cultivating can one reach the right fruit. Once you reach the right fruit, a peach will grow on a peach tree. But, Sun Wukong stole and ate most of the peaches.

(Monkey steals and eats the peaches.)

After Sun Wukong started to take care of the Peach Orchard, he often stole and ate the peaches. Because he is the person controlling the Orchard, nobody knew he stole the peaches. We call this “the guard as robber.” But, one day when the Queen Mother opened many precious pavilions by the Jade Pool for a peach banquet, seven fairy girls were sent to the Peach Orchard to pick the peaches and prepare the banquet. Here, these seven fairy girls represent the seven kinds of love. Because the peaches represent the right fruit (right result), then, who can steal them? Only the seven love emotions can steal them

(Banquet, seven fairies pick peaches)

The seven fairy girls cannot find Sun Wukong.

They pick the peaches by themselves, but during this time, Monkey was asleep on one of the peach trees. He was awakened when one of the fairy girls tried to pick a peach on the branch on which he was sleeping. He resumed his normal self, brought out the golden pole from his ear, shook it until it was as thick as a bowl, and shouted out, “Where are you thieving monsters from that dare to steal my peaches?” Many people criticize Sun Wukong for this sentence; the Peach Orchard belonged to the Queen Mother. The Jade Emperor only asked Sun Wukong to take care of it, but he saw the Orchard as belonging to himself.

(Monkey talks to the seven fairy girls, and goes to the banquet.)

Then, he used magic to take the form of the Barefoot Immortal, and went to the Jade Pool. He used more magic to make all the guests at the banquet sleep, then, he took some of the many delicious and treasured unique foods. He walked toward a long alley. Alone with the big vases and bottles, he released himself and drank the wine. He ate until he was full, and drank until he was drunk. He thought to himself, “Not good, not good, I must go back to my Palace to sleep it off.”

(The drunken monkey goes to Lao-tzu’s temple, instead of to his own Palace, and eats the medicine he finds there.)

Sun Wukong had already learned the correspondence of the inside and outside. The inward pills and outward pills were thus all the same for him. He took both the inside pills and the outside pills, and ate every pill he could find.

Interpretation

(The monkey sobers up and runs away the palace and returns to the Flower and Fruit Mountain.)

Thus far, Sun Wukong has single-handedly made mischief in the Heavenly Palace. But at last he understands he has stolen too many heavenly delicacies. He understands he will not be able to stay in Heaven and can only return to the Flower and Fruit Mountain. All the small monkeys are very flattered and treat him well.

(The monkeys treat Sun Wukong well. The Great Sage Equaling Heaven says to the small monkeys, “in the palace there are jars and jars of jade liquor; I will steal some for you so that you all gain immortality.”)

In the previous section, we talked about how he stole things, and escaped back to the Flower and Fruit Mountain, So in order that those monkeys could drink the jade liquor, he flew back to Heaven, used his magic to become invisible, and returned to the Peach Banquet to steal some more jade liquor.

(Sun Wukong steals the wine, the seven fairy girls return to the banquet, the Queen Mother reports to the Jade Emperor, and the Jade Emperor sends soldiers to the Flowers and Fruit Mountain.)

The ensuing story tells how the heavenly soldiers and generals set up the heaven and earth nets to catch the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. Some monkeys return to the mountain to report to the Great Sage that some accident has happened and that the enemy is asking for Sun Wukong’s surrender.”

(The Heavenly soldiers come to the Flowers and

Fruit Mountain, and the Nine Bright Shiners too.)

Why, after the Great Sage Equaling Heaven precipitated this big disaster, did the Nine Bright Shiners only say that they were following the command of the Jade Emperor to bring all the gods to ask Sun Wukong to be obedient, instead of to kill him? The Jade Emperor only wanted to baptize him, in order that Sun Wukong not hurt other life and spirits.

(Sun Wukong fights back against those Heavenly soldiers who surround the mountain.)

Seeing those Heavenly generals and soldiers fight with Sun Wukong a whole day, the four Heavenly Kings stopped the battle. They caught all the tigers, leopards, lions, and elephants, but not a single monkey. On the surface, they seem to have won, but in fact they have not won at all. The Jade Emperor sent the soldiers to make Sun Wukong obey, but they did not reach that goal. This is the last paragraph about Sun Wukong wrecking the Heavenly Palace.

(To be continued)

