History 170A

Folk & Elite Cultures in Ming Novels
Journey to the West

Narrative loosely based on journey of the monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (d. 664), a pilgrim who traveled from China to India in the early Tang dynasty in search of the authentic teachings of the Buddha.

After sixteen years, returned to China in 645 to great acclaim. Tang emperor built Great Goose Monastery 大雁寺 at Chang’an (its pagoda still stands near modern Xi’an) in Xuanzang’s honor.

Best known version of Journey to the West is the 100-chapter novel first printed in 1592 (author uncertain).
Return of Xuanzang from India

Painting commissioned c. 1300 by Kōfukuji Monastery in Nara, Japan, which was dedicated to Xuanzang’s teachings.
Newly-Cut, Fully-Illustrated Reprint of the Capital Edition of Journey to the West in One Hundred Chapters

§ This inexpensive edition of *Journey to the West* was issued by a Fujian printer c. 1610

§ Illustrations show Sun Wukong 孫悟空 being acknowledged as king of the monkeys
Right: In chapter 35, Sun Wukong and fellow pilgrims vanquish evil demons sent by Guanyin as a test of their resolve.

Left: In chapter 37, the ghost of a wrongfully-killed king visits the Tang monk in a dream.
Alternative Versions of *Journey to the West*

Kōzanji texts: Two manuscripts of a 17-chapter version, probably dating from 13th century, preserved in collection of Japanese monastery

*Yongle dadian* 永樂大典: fragment corresponding to chapters 10-12 of the full-length novel included in encyclopedia compiled c. 1408

*Zaju* drama version in 24 scenes: of uncertain date, but clearly a source for the 100-chapter novel

“Precious Scroll” (*baojuan* 寶卷): sectarian Buddhist recitation book (no earlier than 17th century); very different from dramas and novels
“Capturing Gold Coin Leopard”

This 19th-century print illustrates a theatrical performance of *Journey to the West*. This scene, in which Sun Wukong captures a leopard who has kidnapped a rich man’s daughter (at left; Zhu Bajie in disguise), is not included in the hundred-chapter novel.
Set in last days of the Northern Song, during the rule of the villainous prime minister Cai Jing
Recounts stories of band of 108 outlaws
Popular theme in Yuan drama
Full-length novel in 100 chapters: origin uncertain; in circulation in early 16th century, but oldest extant dated edition was published in 1610
Newly-Cut, Fully-Illustrated Legends of the Righteous and Loyal Heroes of the Water Margin

♠ Opening page of novel; frontispiece illustration shows bandit brotherhood gathered at “Hall of Righteousness & Loyalty”

♠ Inexpensive edition in 114 chapters issued by a Jianyang printer c. 1610
Key Figures in *Water Margin*

Song Jiang 宋江: paragon of righteousness & filial behavior

Li Kui 李逵: in dramas, boisterous and arrogant drunkard; foil to noble Song Jiang
The Pilgrims Enter the Country of the Amazons

In chapters 53-54 of *Journey to the West*, the Tang monk and his fellow pilgrims fend off the amorous advances of the queen and ladies of the Country of the Amazons 女國.
“Pilgrim Sun Subdues the Jade Hair Demon”
(Chapter 95)

This 19th-century print illustrates a theatrical performance of *Journey to the West*
Numerous episodes in novel are devoted to attempts by female demons to lure the pilgrims (especially the Tang Monk) into breaking their vows of celibacy