Eng 3229 Comparative Literature Fall Semester 2013

Great Works: Texts for Study

Week 2 Homer's Odyssey

The Odyssey is full of marvels, journeys, and domestic household scenes. It is more "popular" than the Iliad, less "sublime". Like the Iliad, it begins in medias res (in the middle of things), but its structure is far more complex because of its use of "flash-back".

The beginning of the Odyssey is in Olympus, where the gods describe the situation of Ulysses/Odysseus kept prisoner for almost ten years after the fall of Troy on the island of the nymph Calypso while his wife and son in Ithaka wonder if he is alive or dead. Athena goes to his son, Telemachus, and orders him to go on a journey looking for news of his father. The house of Penelope is invaded by suitors wanting to become her husband but she weaves an endless shroud for her father-in-law, saying she will remarry when it is finished. Telemachus sets out, and goes to visit Helen and Menelaus now reunited, to see if they have news. But nothing clear can be known about his father's fate.

Only in Book 5 does the gods' messenger Hermes go to Calypso and order her to let Odysseus go. He makes a raft and sets out. He is almost shipwrecked on rocks but manages to land in an estuary. There he is found by the local princess Naussikaa, and brought to her home, the court of Alkinoos her father, who makes him welcome. During the evening he hears a minstrel sing a song of the wooden horse and the fall of Troy (Book 8) and he weeps. Asked why, he delares his identity and tells his tale.

Books 9-12 are the story of Odysseus's "Odyssey" from Troy to Calypso's island, told by him to Alkinoos: he and his companions avoid the dangers of the land of the Lotus-eaters and reach the Island of the one-eyed Cyclops Polyphemus, son of Poseidon. They enter the cave in which he pens his sheep, not realizing what a monster he is. Finding them there, he makes them his prisoners and begins to eat them. Fortunately, Odysseus sees a way of escape. First he prepares a sharp stake of wood, then he makes Polyphemus drunk with wine. He tells Polyphemus that his name is 'Nobody'.

And now I drove the stake under a heap of ashes,
to bring it to a heat, and with my words
emboldened all my men, that none might flinch through fear.
Then when the olive stake, green though it was, was ready to take fire,
and through and through was all aglow, I snatched it from the fire,
while my men stood around
and Heaven inspired us with great courage.
Seizing the olive stake, sharp at the tip, they plunged it in his eye,
and I, perched up above, whirled it around.
As when a man bores shipbeams with a drill,
and those below keep it in motion with a strap held by the ends,
and steadily it runs; even so we seized the fire-pointed stake
and whirled it in his eye. Blood bubbled round the heated thing.
The vapor singed off all the lids around the eye, and even the brows,
as the ball burned and its roots crackled in the flame.
As when a smith dips a great axe or adze into cold water,
hissing loud, to temper it, for that is strength to steel,
so hissed his eye about the olive stake.
A hideous roar he raised; the rock resounded; we hurried off in terror.
He wrenched the stake from out his eye, all dabbled with the blood,

and flung it from his hands in frenzy.
Then he called loudly on the Cyclops who dwelt about him in the caves,
along the windy heights. They heard his cry, and ran from every side,
and standing by the cave they asked what ailed him:
  '"What has come on you, Polyphemus,
that you scream so in the immortal night,
and keep us thus from sleeping?
Is a man driving off your Hocks in spite of you?
Is a man murdering you by craft or force?'
"Then in his turn from out the cave big Polyphemus answered:
'Friends, Nobody is murdering me by craft. Force there is none.'
"But answering him in winged words they said:
"If nobody harms you when you are left alone,
illness which comes from mighty Zeus you cannot fly.
But make your prayer to your father, lord Poseidon.'

Odysseus and his companions tie themselves under the bellies of the sheep.

"Soon as the early rosy-fingered dawn appeared,
the rams hastened to pasture,
but the ewes bleated unmilked about the pens,
for their udders were well nigh bursting.
Their master, racked with grievous pains,
felt over the backs of all the sheep as they stood up,
but foolishly did not notice how under the breasts of the woolly sheep
men had been fastened.
After we were come a little distance from the cave and from the yard,
first from beneath the ram I freed myself
and then set free my comrades.
So at quick pace we drove away those long-legged sheep, heavy with fat,
many times turning round, until we reached the ship.
A welcome sight we seemed to our dear friends,
as men escaped from death.
Yet for the others they began to weep and wail;
but this I did not suffer; by my frowns I checked their tears.
  Instead, I bade them straightway toss
the many fleecy sheep into the ship, and sail away over the briny water.
Quickly they came, took places at the pins,
and sitting in order smote the foaming water with their oars.
But when I was as far away as one can call,
I shouted to the Cyclops in derision: (...)
I called aloud out of an angry heart:
' Cyclops, if ever mortal man asks you
the story of the ugly blinding of your eye,
say that Odysseus made you blind, the spoiler of cities,
Laertes' son, whose home is Ithaca.'
"So I spoke, and with a groan he answered:
'Ah, surely now the ancient oracles are come upon me!
Here once a prophet lived, a prophet brave and tall,
Telemus, son of Eurymus,
who by his prophecies obtained renown
and in prophetic works grew old among the Cyclops.
He told me it should come to pass in aftertime
that I should lose my sight by means of one Odysseus;

but I was always watching
for the coming of some tall and comely person, arrayed in mighty power;
and now a little miserable feeble creature has blinded me of my eye,
overcoming me with wine. nevertheless,
come here, Odysseus, and let me give the stranger's gift,
and beg the famous Land-shaker to aid you on your way.
His son am I; he calls himself my father.
He, if he will, shall heal me; none else can,
whether among the blessed gods or mortal men.'
"So he spoke, and answering him said I:
'Ah, would I might as surely strip you of life and being
and send you to the house of Hades,
as it is sure the Earth-shaker will never heal your eye!'
"So I spoke, whereat he prayed to lord Poseidon,
stretching his hands forth toward the starry sky:
'Hear me, thou girder of the land, dark-haired Poseidon
If I am truly thine, and thou art called my father,
vouchsafe no coming home to this Odysseus,
spoiler of cities, Laertes' son, whose home is Ithaca.
Yet if it be his lot to see his friends once more,
and reach his stately house and native land,
late let him come, in evil plight, with loss of all his crew,
on the vessel of a stranger,
and may he at his home find trouble.'

This curse, which inspires the enmity of the god Poseidon, is the explanation for all the disasters that befall Odysseus in his attempts to return home.

He continues with his tale, telling of the careless loss of the winds given by Aiolus, and the dangers of the witch Circe, able to turn men into swine, but who at last is forced to help Odysseus (Book 10); then comes the visit to the shades of the Underworld to con-sult the spirit of the wise Tiresias about the way home. There he meets Agamemnon and hears of the murderous way Clytemnestra and Aegisthus welcomed him on his return from Troy. He meets others of the dead, his mother too, from whom he learns that his father still lives (Book 11).

The Odyssey: BOOK XII (Meeting with Circe)

"AFTER we were clear of the river Oceanus, and had got out into the open sea, we went on till we reached the Aeaean island where there is dawn and sunrise as in other places. We then drew our ship on to the sands and got out of her on to the shore, where we went to sleep and waited till day should break.

"Then, when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, I sent some men to Circe's house to fetch the body of Elpenor. We cut firewood from a wood where the headland jutted out into the sea, and after we had wept over him and lamented him we performed his funeral rites. When his body and armour had been burned to ashes, we raised a cairn, set a stone over it, and at the top of the cairn we fixed the oar that he had been used to row with.

"While we were doing all this, Circe, who knew that we had got back from the house of Hades, dressed herself and came to us as fast as she could; and her maid servants came with her bringing us bread, meat, and wine. Then she stood in the midst of us and said, 'You have done a bold thing in going down alive to the house of Hades, and you will have died

twice, to other people's once; now, then, stay here for the rest of the day, feast your fill, and go on with your voyage at daybreak tomorrow morning. In the meantime I will tell Ulysses about your course, and will explain everything to him so as to prevent your suffering from misadventure either by land or sea.'

"We agreed to do as she had said, and feasted through the livelong day to the going down of the sun, but when the sun had set and it came on dark, the men laid themselves down to sleep by the stern cables of the ship. Then Circe took me by the hand and bade me be seated away from the others, while she reclined by my side and asked me all about our adventures.

"'So far so good,' said she, when I had ended my story, 'and now pay attention to what I am about to tell you—heaven itself, indeed, will recall it to your recollection. First you will come to the Sirens who enchant all who come near them. If any one unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song. There is a great heap of dead men's bones lying all around, with the flesh still rotting off them. Therefore pass these Sirens by, and stop your men's ears with wax that none of them may hear; but if you like you can listen yourself, for you may get the men to bind you as you stand upright on a cross-piece half way up the mast, and they must lash the rope's ends to the mast itself, that you may have the pleasure of listening. If you beg and pray the men to unloose you, then they must bind you faster.

"'When your crew have taken you past these Sirens, I cannot give you coherent directions as to which of two courses you are to take; I will lay the two alternatives before you, and you must consider them for yourself. On the one hand there are some overhanging rocks against which the deep blue waves of Amphitrite beat with terrific fury; the blessed gods call these rocks the Wanderers. Here not even a bird may pass, no, not even the timid doves that bring ambrosia to Father Jove, but the sheer rock always carries off one of them, and Father Jove has to send another to make up their number; no ship that ever yet came to these rocks has got away again, but the waves and whirlwinds of fire are freighted with wreckage and with the bodies of dead men. The only vessel that ever sailed and got through, was the famous Argo on her way from the house of Aetes, and she too would have gone against these great rocks, only that Juno piloted her past them for the love she bore to Jason.

"'Of these two rocks the one reaches heaven and its peak is lost in a dark cloud. This never leaves it, so that the top is never clear not even in summer and early autumn. No man though he had twenty hands and twenty feet could get a foothold on it and climb it, for it runs sheer up, as smooth as though it had been polished. In the middle of it there is a large cavern, looking West and turned towards Erebus; you must take your ship this way, but the cave is so high up that not even the stoutest archer could send an arrow into it. Inside it Scylla sits and yelps with a voice that you might take to be that of a young hound, but in truth she is a dreadful monster and no one—not even a god—could face her without being terror-struck. She has twelve mis-shapen feet, and six necks of the most prodigious length; and at the end of each neck she has a frightful head with three rows of teeth in each, all set very close together, so that they would crunch any one to death in a moment, and she sits deep within her shady cell thrusting out her heads and peering all round the rock, fishing for dolphins or dogfish or any larger monster that she can catch, of the thousands with which Amphitrite teems. No ship ever yet got past her without losing some men, for she shoots out all her heads at once, and carries off a man in each mouth.

"'You will find the other rocks lie lower, but they are so close together that there is not more than a bowshot between them. [A large fig tree in full leaf grows upon it], and under it lies the sucking whirlpool of Charybdis. Three times in the day does she vomit forth her waters, and three times she sucks them down again; see that you be not there when she is sucking, for if

you are, Neptune himself could not save you; you must hug the Scylla side and drive ship by as fast as you can, for you had better lose six men than your whole crew.'

"'Is there no way,' said I, 'of escaping Charybdis, and at the same time keeping Scylla off when she is trying to harm my men?'

"'You dare-devil,' replied the goddess, you are always wanting to fight somebody or something; you will not let yourself be beaten even by the immortals. For Scylla is not mortal; moreover she is savage, extreme, rude, cruel and invincible. There is no help for it; your best chance will be to get by her as fast as ever you can, for if you dawdle about her rock while you are putting on your armour, she may catch you with a second cast of her six heads, and snap up another half dozen of your men; so drive your ship past her at full speed, and roar out lustily to Crataiis who is Scylla's dam, bad luck to her; she will then stop her from making a second raid upon you.

"'You will now come to the Thrinacian island, and here you will see many herds of cattle and flocks of sheep belonging to the sun-god—seven herds of cattle and seven flocks of sheep, with fifty head in each flock. They do not breed, nor do they become fewer in number, and they are tended by the goddesses Phaethusa and Lampetie, who are children of the sun-god Hyperion by Neaera. Their mother when she had borne them and had done suckling them sent them to the Thrinacian island, which was a long way off, to live there and look after their father's flocks and herds. If you leave these flocks unharmed, and think of nothing but getting home, you may yet after much hardship reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, then I forewarn you of the destruction both of your ship and of your comrades; and even though you may yourself escape, you will return late, in bad plight, after losing all your men.'

"Here she ended, and dawn enthroned in gold began to show in heaven, whereon she returned inland. I then went on board and told my men to loose the ship from her moorings; so they at once got into her, took their places, and began to smite the grey sea with their oars. Presently the great and cunning goddess Circe befriended us with a fair wind that blew dead aft, and stayed steadily with us, keeping our sails well filled, so we did whatever wanted doing to the ship's gear, and let her go as wind and helmsman headed her.

"Then, being much troubled in mind, I said to my men, 'My friends, it is not right that one or two of us alone should know the prophecies that Circe has made me, I will therefore tell you about them, so that whether we live or die we may do so with our eyes open. First she said we were to keep clear of the Sirens, who sit and sing most beautifully in a field of flowers; but she said I might hear them myself so long as no one else did. Therefore, take me and bind me to the crosspiece half way up the mast; bind me as I stand upright, with a bond so fast that I cannot possibly break away, and lash the rope's ends to the mast itself. If I beg and pray you to set me free, then bind me more tightly still.'

"I had hardly finished telling everything to the men before we reached the island of the two Sirens, for the wind had been very favourable. Then all of a sudden it fell dead calm; there was not a breath of wind nor a ripple upon the water, so the men furled the sails and stowed them; then taking to their oars they whitened the water with the foam they raised in rowing. Meanwhile I look a large wheel of wax and cut it up small with my sword. Then I kneaded the wax in my strong hands till it became soft, which it soon did between the kneading and the rays of the sun-god son of Hyperion. Then I stopped the ears of all my men, and they bound me hands and feet to the mast as I stood upright on the crosspiece; but they went on rowing themselves. When we had got within earshot of the land, and the ship was going at a good rate, the Sirens saw that we were getting in shore and began with their singing.

"'Come here,' they sang, 'renowned Ulysses, honour to the Achaean name, and listen to our two voices. No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting sweetness of

our song—and he who listens will go on his way not only charmed, but wiser, for we know all the ills that the gods laid upon the Argives and Trojans before Troy, and can tell you everything that is going to happen over the whole world.'

"They sang these words most musically, and as I longed to hear them further I made by frowning to my men that they should set me free; but they quickened their stroke, and Eurylochus and Perimedes bound me with still stronger bonds till we had got out of hearing of the Sirens' voices. Then my men took the wax from their ears and unbound me.

"Immediately after we had got past the island I saw a great wave from which spray was rising, and I heard a loud roaring sound. The men were so frightened that they loosed hold of their oars, for the whole sea resounded with the rushing of the waters, but the ship stayed where it was, for the men had left off rowing. I went round, therefore, and exhorted them man by man not to lose heart.

"'My friends,' said I, 'this is not the first time that we have been in danger, and we are in nothing like so bad a case as when the Cyclops shut us up in his cave; nevertheless, my courage and wise counsel saved us then, and we shall live to look back on all this as well. Now, therefore, let us all do as I say, trust in Jove and row on with might and main. As for you, coxswain, these are your orders; attend to them, for the ship is in your hands; turn her head away from these steaming rapids and hug the rock, or she will give you the slip and be over yonder before you know where you are, and you will be the death of us.'

"So they did as I told them; but I said nothing about the awful monster Scylla, for I knew the men would not go on rowing if I did, but would huddle together in the hold. In one thing only did I disobey Circe's strict instructions—I put on my armour. Then seizing two strong spears I took my stand on the ship Is bows, for it was there that I expected first to see the monster of the rock, who was to do my men so much harm; but I could not make her out anywhere, though I strained my eyes with looking the gloomy rock all over and over

"Then we entered the Straits in great fear of mind, for on the one hand was Scylla, and on the other dread Charybdis kept sucking up the salt water. As she vomited it up, it was like the water in a cauldron when it is boiling over upon a great fire, and the spray reached the top of the rocks on either side. When she began to suck again, we could see the water all inside whirling round and round, and it made a deafening sound as it broke against the rocks. We could see the bottom of the whirlpool all black with sand and mud, and the men were at their wit's ends for fear. While we were taken up with this, and were expecting each moment to be our last, Scylla pounced down suddenly upon us and snatched up my six best men. I was looking at once after both ship and men, and in a moment I saw their hands and feet ever so high above me, struggling in the air as Scylla was carrying them off, and I heard them call out my name in one last despairing cry. As a fisherman, seated, spear in hand, upon some jutting rock throws bait into the water to deceive the poor little fishes, and spears them with the ox's horn with which his spear is shod, throwing them gasping on to the land as he catches them one by one—even so did Scylla land these panting creatures on her rock and munch them up at the mouth of her den, while they screamed and stretched out their hands to me in their mortal agony. This was the most sickening sight that I saw throughout all my voyages.

"When we had passed the [Wandering] rocks, with Scylla and terrible Charybdis, we reached the noble island of the sun-god, where were the goodly cattle and sheep belonging to the sun Hyperion. While still at sea in my ship I could bear the cattle lowing as they came home to the yards, and the sheep bleating. Then I remembered what the blind Theban prophet Teiresias had told me, and how carefully Aeaean Circe had warned me to shun the island of the blessed sun-god. So being much troubled I said to the men, 'My men, I know you are hard pressed, but listen while I tell you the prophecy that Teiresias made me, and how

carefully Aeaean Circe warned me to shun the island of the blessed sun-god, for it was here, she said, that our worst danger would lie. Head the ship, therefore, away from the island.'

But the sailors force him to land on to the island of the Sun whose cattle are sacred. There the sailors, hungry, kill the cattle despite previous warnings. The ship is wrecked, all die, only Odysseus survives by his skill, and arrives at the island of Calypso. So the story is brought in full circle.

Alkinoos equips him with a ship and the second half of the epic begins the story of the "Return of the Warrior", his arrival in Ithaka disguised with divine help (Book 13), finding hospitality in the home of the swineherd Eumaeus to whom he tells a false story of his iden-tity. Telemachus now (Book 14) returns from his journey, suspicious of the suitors who have laid a trap, while Odysseus makes the swine-herd talk about his parents and the past memories of himself (Book 15).

In Book 16 Telemachus comes to Eumaeus' hut and Odysseus reveals his identity to him. Telemachus, then Odysseus, set out for the palace, Odysseus again disguised as a beggar. As Odysseus enters the court-yard, the old dog Argos recognizes his master:

As they were thus talking, a dog that had been lying asleep
raised his head and pricked up his ears.
This was Argos, whom Ulysses had bred before setting out for Troy,
but he had never had any work out of him.
In the old days he used to be taken out by the young men
when they went hunting wild goats, or deer, or hares,
but now that his master was gone he was lying neglected
on the heaps of mule and cow dung that lay in front of the stable doors
till the men should come and draw it away to manure the great close;
and he was full of fleas.
As soon as he saw Ulysses standing there,
he dropped his ears and wagged his tail,
but he could not get close up to his master.
When Ulysses saw the dog on the other side of the yard,
he dashed a tear from his eyes without Eumaeus seeing it, and said:
"Eumaeus, what a noble hound that is over yonder on the manure heap:
his build is splendid; is he as fine a fellow as he looks,
or is he only one of those dogs that come begging about a table,
and are kept merely for show?"
"This hound," answered Eumaeus, "belonged to him
who has died in a far country.
If he were what he was when Ulysses left for Troy,
he would soon show you what he could do.
There was not a wild beast in the forest
that could get away from him when he was once on its tracks.
But now he has fallen on evil times, for his master is dead and gone,
and the women take no care of him. . ."
As he spoke he went inside the buildings to the cloister
where the suitors were,
but Argos died as soon as he had recognized his master.

(From Book 17).

The suitors welcome the old man with mockery, until he almost kills one. The tone now changes to foreboding as Odysseus observes them and plans his revenge (Book 18), while Penelope comes down into the hall and shows her faithfulness by her attitude. Later that evening, Penelope returns to the hall and talks with the old man, telling him of her ploy with the weaving done by day, undone by night (Book 19). Odysseus tells her a tale of an encounter with Odysseus. Penelope is deeply moved. He tells her that Odysseus will soon be back. His former nurse, Eurycleia, comes to wash his feet and recognizes the scar of an old wound on his leg; he forces her to keep the secret. Penelope tells him her plan to test the suitors with his bow and arrows.

The responses of people to the wretched-looking Odysseus show their moral character; bad people show no human pity for the unfortunate. The scenes of Book 20 stress this theme of judgement, of the difference between the cruel and the noble. In Book 21, Penelope fetches Odysseus' great bow, while he makes himself known to Eumaeus and the cowman Philoetius. The suitors try in vain to string the great bow, but get very angry when Odysseus asks to try too. Telemachus sends Penelope away, as the tension rises. Once all the women are away, and the doors bolted, Odysseus calmly strings the bow and shoots an arrow through the upright axes.

The slaughter of Book 22 comes as a shock; it is a great conflict, not at all one-sided, although Athena's help is considerable. When all the suitors are dead, the women servants who have slept with them have to clear up the mess before being executed. The house has been purified. Meanwhile, Penelope has slept. In Book 23 Eurycleia wakes her and announces Odysseus' return. Penelope is too prudent to believe her tale at once. She goes down to the hall and sits in silence opposite Odysseus, examining him carefully. He arranges for music so that the families of the dead men will not suspect something:

The house re-echoed with the sound of men and women dancing, and the people outside said, "I suppose the queen is getting married at last. She ought to be ashamed of herself for not continuing to protect her husband's property until he comes home." This was what they said, but they did not know what it was that had been happening.

The upper servant Eurynome washed and anointed Ulysses in his own house and gave him a shirt and cloak, while Minerva made him look taller and stronger than before; she also made the hair grow thick on the top of his head, and flow down in curls like hyacinth blossoms; she glorified him about the head and shoulders just as a skilful workman who has studied art of all kinds under Vulcan or Minerva- and his work is full of beauty- enriches a piece of silver plate by gilding it. He came from the bath looking like one of the immortals, and sat down opposite his wife on the seat he had left.

"My dear," said he, "heaven has endowed you with a heart more unyielding than woman ever yet had. No other woman could bear to keep away from her husband when he had come back to her after twenty years of absence, and after having gone through so much. But come, nurse, get a bed ready for me; I will sleep alone, for this woman has a heart as hard as iron."

"My dear," answered Penelope, "I have no wish to set myself up, nor to depreciate you; but I am not struck by your appearance, for I very well remember what kind of a man you were when you set sail from Ithaca. Nevertheless, Euryclea, take his bed outside the bed chamber that he himself built. Bring the bed outside this room, and put bedding upon it with fleeces, good coverlets, and blankets."

She said this to try him, but Ulysses was very angry and said, "Wife, I am much displeased at what you have just been saying. Who has been taking my bed from the place in which I left it? He must have found it a hard task, no matter how skilled a workman he was, unless some god came and helped him to shift it. There is no man living, however strong and in his prime, who could move it from its place, for it is a marvellous curiosity which I made with my very own hands.

"There was a young olive growing within the precincts of the house, in full vigour, and about as thick as a bearing-post. I built my room round this with strong walls of stone and a roof to cover them, and I made the doors strong and well-fitting. Then I cut off the top boughs of the olive tree and left the stump standing. This I dressed roughly from the root upwards and then worked with carpenter's tools well and skilfully, straightening my work by drawing a line on the wood, and making it into a bed-prop. I then bored a hole down the middle, and made it the centre-post of my bed, at which I worked till I had finished it, inlaying it with gold and silver; after this I stretched a hide of crimson leather from one side of it to the other. So you see I know all about it, and I desire to learn whether it is still there, or whether any one has been removing it by cutting down the olive tree at its roots."

When she heard the sure proofs Ulysses now gave her, she fairly broke down. She flew weeping to his side, flung her arms about his neck, and kissed him. "Do not be angry with me Ulysses," she cried, "you, who are the wisest of mankind. We have suffered, both of us. Heaven has denied us the happiness of spending our youth, and of growing old, together; do not then be aggrieved or take it amiss that I did not embrace you thus as soon as I saw you. I have been shuddering all the time through fear that someone might come here and deceive me with a lying story; for there are many very wicked people going about. Jove's daughter Helen would never have yielded herself to a man from a foreign country, if she had known that the sons of Achaeans would come after her and bring her back. Heaven put it in her heart to do wrong, and she gave no thought to that sin, which has been the source of all our sorrows. Now, however, that you have convinced me by showing that you know all about our bed (which no human being has ever seen but you and I and a single maid servant, the daughter of Actor, who was given me by my father on my marriage, and who keeps the doors of our room) hard of belief though I have been I can mistrust no longer."

Then Ulysses in his turn melted, and wept as he clasped his dear and faithful wife to his bosom. As the sight of land is welcome to men who are swimming towards the shore, when Neptune has wrecked their ship with the fury of his winds and waves- a few alone reach the land, and these, covered with brine, are thankful when they find themselves on firm ground and out of danger- even so was her husband welcome to her as she looked upon him, and she could not tear her two fair arms from about his neck. Indeed they would have gone on indulging their sorrow till rosy-fingered morn appeared, had not Minerva determined otherwise, and held night back in the far west, while she would not suffer Dawn to leave Oceanus, nor to yoke the two steeds Lampus and Phaethon that bear her onward to break the day upon mankind.

Book 24 (which many think was not written by Homer, but it is necessary to end the story) begins with the arrival of the souls of the suitors in the Underworld, where they are welcomed by the soul of Agamemnon, stressing the contrast between his return and that of Odysseus. Odysseus sets out to visit his father, Laertes, and finds him working in the orchard, dressed in rags. He pretends not to know who he is, and again tells of having met Odysseus some years before. Laertes shows his sorrow, and Odysseus identifies himself, proving his identity by remembering details from his childhood. Meanwhile the Assembly has met to discuss the deaths. The truth is told but the majority demand revenge and march out. At the farmhouse, the family and friends arm themselves with courage. Fighting begins, but is stopped by Athena. Zeus too inter-venes to restore peace under the

rule of Odysseus.

Week 4: Oedipus & Antigone

Sophocles

Born in 496, died in 406, Sophocles wrote some 120 plays, won the first prize 18 times, 7 of his plays survive: "Antigone", "Oedipus", "Electra", "Ajax", "Trachiniae" (The Death of Heracles), "Philoc-tetes", and "Oedipus at Colonus". While Aeschylus is deeply religious, Sophocles shows a human individual at the centre, choosing to act, then assuming the consequences of that choice. The role of the Chorus is less developed than in Aeschylus, while the dialogue in Sophocles is more 'realistic' and 'psychological' than in Aeschylus; the plays offer more detailed psychology, although always of a heroic kind. Antigone and Electra are noble female figures, gentle and full of courage. Sophocles' dramas have great simplicity, all is reduced to its noblest human essence. He was much admired by Racine, by Lessing; Shelley drowned with a book of his works in his pocket. He is the most frequently acted of the three in modern times.

Oedipus the King (c. 427 B.C.)

The play opens in front of the palace of Oedipus at Thebes. Oedipus asks a priest and his supplicants what they want. The priest thanks him for saving them from the Sphinx, but tells him that the city needs saving again from a plague that has descended. Oedipus says that he has sent a messenger to Apollo's shrine to find out what he must do to save the city. The messenger arrives and says that Apollo told him that the man who murdered former King Laius must be discovered and driven from the land. Oedipus vows to do so.

Oedipus asks anyone knowing the identity of the murderer to step forward without fear of harm. He curses those who have knowledge and do not step forth. The chorus says he should ask the prophet Teiresias. Teiresias enters. He says he knows something but refuses to speak. Oedipus accuses Teiresias of having a part in the murder. Teiresias accuses Oedipus of being the murderer: "the accursed polluter of this land is you." Oedipus concludes that former king Creon must have put Teiresias up to making the accusations. Teiresias tells Oedipus that his downfall will come when he learns the secret of his marriage, and asks him if he knows who his parents are. Oedipus orders him out of the house. Teiresias tells him that the murderer will be proved both father and brother to his children. Teiresias and Oedipus leave separately. The Chorus sings:

Chorus
That wise interpreter of prophecies
stirs up my fears, unsettling dread.
I cannot approve of what he said
and I cannot deny it.
I am confused. What shall I say?
My hopes flutter here and there,
with no clear glimpse of past or future.
I have never heard of any quarrelling,
past or present, between those two,
the house of Labdacus and Polybus' son,
which could give me evidence enough
to undermine the fame of Oedipus,
as he seeks vengeance for the unsolved murder
for the family of Labdacus.

Apollo and Zeus are truly wise—

they understand what humans do.
But there is no sure way to ascertain
if human prophets grasp things any more
than I do, although in wisdom one man
may leave another far behind.
But until I see the words confirmed,
I will not approve of any man
who censures Oedipus, for it was clear
when that winged Sphinx went after him
he was a wise man then. We witnessed it.
He passed the test and endeared himself
to all the city. So in my thinking now
he never will be guilty of a crime.

Creon enters, denying the allegations that he has heard Oedipus made. Oedipus enters and accuses Creon of being the murderer and trying to take the throne. Creon denies this. Oedipus proposes to kill Creon. Oedipus' wife, Jocasta, enters. Everyone, including Jocasta, begs Oedipus to spare Creon on the strength of Creon's oath that he is innocent. Oedipus consents, but pledges to forever hate Creon. Creon exits.

Oedipus tells Jocasta that Creon had sent the prophet to accuse him of the murder.

Jocasta All right, forget about those things you've said.
Listen to me, and ease your mind with this—
no human being has skill in prophecy.
I'll show you why with this example.
King Laius once received a prophecy.
I won't say it came straight from Apollo,
but it was from those who do assist the god.
It said Laius was fated to be killed
by a child conceived by him and me.
Now, at least according to the story,
one day Laius was killed by foreigners,
by robbers, at a place where three roads meet.
Besides, before our child was three days old,
Laius fused his ankles tight together
and ordered other men to throw him out
on a mountain rock where no one ever goes.
And so Apollo's plan that he'd become
the one who killed his father didn't work,
and Laius never suffered what he feared,
that his own son would be his murderer,
although that's what the oracle had claimed.
So don't concern yourself with prophecies.
Whatever gods intend to bring about
they themselves make known quite easily.

OEDIPUS: Lady, as I listen to these words of yours,
my soul is shaken, my mind confused . . .

JOCASTA: Why do you say that? What's worrying you?

OEDIPUS: I thought I heard you say that Laius
was murdered at a place where three roads meet.

JOCASTA: That's what was said and people still believe.

OEDIPUS: Where is this place? Where did it happen?

JOCASTA: In a land called Phocis. Two roads lead there—
one from Delphi and one from Daulia.

OEDIPUS: How long is it since these events took place?

JOCASTA: The story was reported in the city
just before you took over royal power
here in Thebes.

OEDIPUS: Oh Zeus, what have you done?
What have you planned for me?

JOCASTA: What is it,
Oedipus? Why is your spirit so troubled?

OEDIPUS: Not yet,
no questions yet. Tell me this—Laius,
how tall was he? How old a man?

JOCASTA: He was big—his hair was turning white.
In shape he was not all that unlike you.

OEDIPUS: The worse for me! I may have just set myself
under a dreadful curse without my knowledge!

JOCASTA: What do you mean? As I look at you, my king,
I start to tremble.

OEDIPUS: I am afraid,
full of terrible fears the prophet sees.
But you can reveal this better if you now
will tell me one thing more.

JOCASTA: I'm shaking,
but if you ask me, I will answer you.

OEDIPUS: Did Laius have a small escort with him
or a troop of soldiers, like a royal king?

JOCASTA: Five men, including a herald, went with him.
A carriage carried Laius.

OEDIPUS: Alas! Alas!
It's all too clear! Lady, who told you this?

JOCASTA: A servant—the only one who got away.
He came back here.

OEDIPUS: Is there any chance
he's in our household now?

JOCASTA: No.
Once he returned and understood that you
had now assumed the power of slaughtered Laius,
he clasped my hands, begged me to send him off
to where our animals graze out in the fields,
so he could be as far away as possible
from the sight of town. And so I sent him.
He was a slave but he'd earned my gratitude.
He deserved an even greater favour.

OEDIPUS: I'd like him to return back here to us,
and quickly, too.

JOCASTA: That can be arranged—
but why's that something you would want to do?

OEDIPUS: Lady, I'm afraid I may have said too much.
That's why I want to see him here in front of me.

JOCASTA: Then he will be here. But now, my lord,
I deserve to learn why you are so distressed.

OEDIPUS: My forebodings now have grown so great
I will not keep them from you, for who is there
I should confide in rather than in you
about such a twisted turn of fortune.
My father was Polybus of Corinth,
my mother Merope, a Dorian.
There I was regarded as the finest man
in all the city, until, as chance would have it,
something really astonishing took place,
though it was not worth what it caused me to do.
At a dinner there a man who was quite drunk
from too much wine began to shout at me,
claiming I was not my father's real son.
That troubled me, but for a day at least
I said nothing, though it was difficult.
The next day I went to ask my parents,
my father and my mother. They were angry
at the man who had insulted them this way,
so I was reassured. But nonetheless,
the accusation always troubled me—
the story had become well known all over.
And so I went in secret off to Delphi.
I didn't tell my mother or my father.
Apollo sent me back without an answer,
so I didn't learn what I had come to find.
But when he spoke he uttered monstrous things,
strange terrors and horrific miseries—
it was my fate to defile my mother's bed,
to bring forth to men a human family
that people could not bear to look upon,
to murder the father who engendered me.
When I heard that, I ran away from Corinth.

From then on I thought of it just as a place
beneath the stars. I went to other lands,
so I would never see that prophecy fulfilled,
the abomination of my evil fate.
In my travelling I came across that place
in which you say your king was murdered.
And now, lady, I will tell you the truth.
As I was on the move, I passed close by
a spot where three roads meet, and in that place
I met a herald and a horse-drawn carriage.
Inside there was a man like you described.
The guide there tried to force me off the road—
and the old man, too, got personally involved.
In my rage, I lashed out at the driver,
who was shoving me aside. The old man,
seeing me walking past him in the carriage,
kept his eye on me, and with his double whip
struck me on my head, right here on top.
Well, I retaliated in good measure—
I hit him a quick blow with the staff I held
and knocked him from his carriage to the road.
He lay there on his back. Then I killed them all.
If that stranger was somehow linked to Laius,
who is now more unfortunate than me?
What man could be more hateful to the gods?
No stranger and no citizen can welcome him
into their lives or speak to him. Instead,
they must keep him from their doors, a curse
I laid upon myself. With these hands of mine,
these killer's hands, I now contaminate
the dead man's bed. Am I not depraved?
Am I not utterly abhorrent?
Now I must fly into exile and there,
a fugitive, never see my people,
never set foot in my native land again—
or else I must get married to my mother
and kill my father, Polybus, who raised me,
the man who gave me life. If anyone
claimed this came from some malevolent god,
would he not be right? O you gods,
you pure, blessed gods, may I not see that day!
Let me rather vanish from the sight of men,
before I see a fate like that roll over me.

CHORUS LEADER: My lord, to us these things are ominous.
But you must sustain your hope until you hear
the servant who was present at the time.

OEDIPUS: I do have some hope left, at least enough
to wait for the man we've summoned from the fields.

JOCASTA: Once he comes, what do you hope to hear?

OEDIPUS: I'll tell you. If we discover what he says
matches what you say, then I'll escape disaster.

JOCASTA: What was so remarkable in what I said?

OEDIPUS: You said that in his story the man claimed
Laius was murdered by a band of thieves.
If he still says that there were several men,
then I was not the killer, since one man
could never be mistaken for a crowd.
But if he says it was a single man,
then I'm the one responsible for this.

JOCASTA: Well, that's certainly what he reported then.
He cannot now withdraw what he once said.
The whole city heard him, not just me alone.
But even if he changes that old news,
he cannot ever demonstrate, my lord,
that Laius' murder fits the prophecy.
For Apollo clearly said the man would die
at the hands of an infant born from me.
Now, how did that unhappy son of ours
kill Laius, when he'd perished long before?
So as far as these oracular sayings go,
I would not look for confirmation anywhere.

OEDIPUS: You're right in what you say. But nonetheless,
send for that peasant. Don't fail to do that.

JOCASTA: I'll call him here as quickly as I can.

A messenger arrives and tells Jocasta that Oedipus' father Polybus has died and the Corinthians want Oedipus as their king now. Jocasta sends for Oedipus and tells him the good news -- his father is dead, and it is not at Oedipus' hand. Oedipus is comforted, but he is still afraid that he is fated to sleep with Polybus' wife. He tells the messenger his fear. The messenger tells him not to worry, that he has no blood-tie with his 'parents'. The messenger had received Oedipus from a shepherd as an abandoned baby and had given him to them. The chorus believes the messenger is referring to the shepherd that Oedipus wanted to see. Jocasta begs Oedipus not to seek the truth. Oedipus sends for the shepherd.

OEDIPUS: [to Chorus] Go, one of you, and bring that shepherd here.
Leave the lady to enjoy her noble family.

JOCASTA: Alas, you poor miserable man!
There's nothing more that I can say to you.
And now I'll never speak again.

[JOCASTA runs into the palace]

CHORUS LEADER: Why has the queen rushed off, Oedipus,
so full of grief? I fear a disastrous storm
will soon break through her silence.

OEDIPUS: Then let it break,
whatever it is. As for myself,
no matter how base born my family,
I wish to know the seed from where I came.
Perhaps my queen is now ashamed of me
and of my insignificant origin—
she likes to play the noble lady.
But I will never feel myself dishonoured.
I see myself as a child of fortune—
and she is generous, that mother of mine
from whom I spring, and the months, my siblings,
have seen me by turns both small and great.
That's how I was born. I cannot change
to someone else, nor can I ever cease
from seeking out the facts of my own birth.

CHORUS: If I have any power of prophecy
or skill in knowing things,
then, by the Olympian deities,
you, Cithaeron, at tomorrow's moon
will surely know that Oedipus
pays tribute to you as his native land
both as his mother and his nurse,
and that our choral dance and song
acknowledge you because you are
so pleasing to our king.
O Phoebus, we cry out to you—
may our song fill you with delight!

Who gave birth to you, my child?
Which one of the immortal gods
bore you to your father Pan,
who roams the mountainsides?
Was it some daughter of Apollo,
the god who loves all country fields?
Perhaps Cyllene's royal king?
Or was it the Bacchanalian god
dwelling on the mountain tops
who took you as a new-born joy
from maiden nymphs of Helicon
with whom he often romps and plays?*

OEDIPUS: [looking out away from the palace]
You elders, although I've never seen the man
we've been looking for a long time now,
if I had to guess, I think I see him.
He's coming here. He looks very old—
as is appropriate, if he's the one.
And I know the people coming with him,
servants of mine. But if you've seen him before,
you'll recognize him better than I will.

CHORUS LEADER: Yes, I recognize the man. There's no doubt.
He worked for Laius—a trusty shepherd.

[Enter SERVANT, an old shepherd]

OEDIPUS: Stranger from Corinth, let me first ask you—
is this the man you mentioned?

MESSENGER: Yes, he is—
he's the man you see in front of you.

OEDIPUS: You, old man, over here. Look at me.
Now answer what I ask. Some time ago
did you work for Laius?

SERVANT: Yes, as a slave.
But I was not bought. I grew up in his house.

OEDIPUS: How did you live? What was the work you did?

SERVANT: Most of my life I've spent looking after sheep.

OEDIPUS: Where? In what particular areas?

SERVANT: On Cithaeron or the neighbouring lands.

OEDIPUS: Do you know if you came across this man
anywhere up there?

SERVANT: Doing what?
What man do you mean?

OEDIPUS: The man over here—
this one. Have you ever run into him?

SERVANT: Right now I can't say I remember him.

MESSENGER: My lord, that's surely not surprising.
Let me refresh his failing memory.
I think he will remember all too well
the time we spent around Cithaeron.
He had two flocks of sheep and I had one.
I was with him there for six months at a stretch,
from early spring until the autumn season.
In winter I'd drive my sheep down to my folds,
and he'd take his to pens that Laius owned.
Isn't that what happened—what I've just said?

SERVANT: You spoke the truth. But it was long ago.

MESSENGER: All right, then. Now, tell me if you recall
how you gave me a child, an infant boy,
for me to raise as my own foster son.

SERVANT: What? Why ask about that?

MESSENGER: This man here, my friend,
was that young child back then.

SERVANT: Damn you!
Can't you keep quiet about it!

OEDIPUS: Hold on, old man.
Don't criticize him. What you have said
is more objectionable than his account.

SERVANT: My noble master, what have I done wrong?

OEDIPUS: You did not tell us of that infant boy,
the one he asked about.

SERVANT: That's what he says,
but he knows nothing—a useless busybody.

OEDIPUS: If you won't tell us of your own free will,
once we start to hurt you, you will talk.

SERVANT: By all the gods, don't torture an old man!

OEDIPUS: One of you there, tie up this fellow's hands.

SERVANT: Why are you doing this? It's too much for me!
What is it you want to know?

OEDIPUS: That child he mentioned—
did you give it to him?

SERVANT: I did. How I wish
I'd died that day!

OEDIPUS: Well, you're going to die
if you don't speak the truth.

SERVANT: And if I do,
there's an even greater chance that I'll be killed.

OEDIPUS: It seems to me the man is trying to stall.

SERVANT: No, no, I'm not. I've already told you—
I did give him the child.

OEDIPUS: Where did you get it?
Did it come from your home or somewhere else?

SERVANT: It was not mine—I got it from someone.

OEDIPUS: Which of our citizens? Whose home was it?

SERVANT: In the name of the gods, my lord, don't ask!
Please, no more questions!

OEDIPUS: If I have to ask again,
then you will die.

SERVANT: The child was born in Laius' house.

OEDIPUS: From a slave or from some relative of his?

SERVANT: Alas, what I'm about to say now . . .
it's horrible.

OEDIPUS: And I'm about to hear it.
But nonetheless I have to know this.

SERVANT: If you must know, they said the child was his.
But your wife inside the palace is the one
who could best tell you what was going on.

OEDIPUS: You mean she gave the child to you?

SERVANT: Yes, my lord.

OEDIPUS: Why did she do that?

SERVANT: So I would kill it.

OEDIPUS: That wretched woman was the mother?

SERVANT: Yes.
She was afraid of dreadful prophecies.

OEDIPUS: What sort of prophecies?

SERVANT: The story went
that he would kill his father.

OEDIPUS: If that was true,
why did you give the child to this old man?

SERVANT: I pitied the boy, master, and I thought
he'd take the child off to a foreign land
where he was from. But he rescued him,
only to save him for the greatest grief of all.
For if you're the one this man says you are
you know your birth carried an awful fate.

OEDIPUS: Ah, so it all came true. It's so clear now.
O light, let me look at you one final time,
a man who stands revealed as cursed by birth,
cursed by my own family, and cursed
by murder where I should not kill.

[OEDIPUS moves into the palace]

CHORUS: O generations of mortal men,
how I count your life as scarcely living.
What man is there, what human being,
who attains a greater happiness

than mere appearances, a joy
which seems to fade away to nothing?
Poor wretched Oedipus, your fate
stands here to demonstrate for me
how no mortal man is ever blessed.

Here was a man who fired his arrows well—
his skill was matchless—and he won
the highest happiness in everything.
For, Zeus, he slaughtered the hook-taloned Sphinx
and stilled her cryptic song. For our state,
he stood there like a tower against death,
and from that moment, Oedipus,
we have called you our king
and honoured you above all other men,
the one who rules in mighty Thebes.

But now who is there whose story
is more terrible to hear? Whose life
has been so changed by trouble,
by such ferocious agonies?
Alas, for celebrated Oedipus,
the same spacious place of refuge
served you both as child and father,
the place you entered as a new bridegroom.
How could the furrow where your father planted,
poor wretched man, have tolerated you
in such silence for so long?

Time, which watches everything
and uncovered you against your will,
now sits in judgment of that fatal marriage,
where child and parent have been joined so long.
O child of Laius, how I wish
I'd never seen you—now I wail
like one whose mouth pours forth laments.
To tell it right, it was through you
I found my life and breathed again,
and then through you my eyesight failed.

A second messenger enters and announces that Jocasta has hanged herself. When Oedipus came upon the body, he tore her brooches off and gouged them into his own eyes, crying that they will never see the crime he has committed. The messenger says that Oedipus wants to show himself to the people of Thebes, and then leave the city forever. The doors open, and blind Oedipus enters. The chorus expresses their pity. Oedipus cries out about his evil deeds and asks the chorus to lead him away from the city or kill him.

Creon enters. Oedipus asks Creon to drive him from the city. Creon wants to wait for the gods to tell him what to do. Oedipus tells Creon to bury his wife, to let him live on the mountain where he was left as a child, and to take care of Oedipus' daughters. Oedipus' two daughters enter. Oedipus laments the difficult life they will lead now that their ancestry is revealed. Oedipus says that the gods hate him. Creon and Oedipus leave together.

Chorus

You residents of Thebes, our native land,
look on this man, this Oedipus, the one
who understood that celebrated riddle.
He was the most powerful of men.
All citizens who witnessed this man's wealth
were envious. Now what a surging tide
of terrible disaster sweeps around him.
So while we wait to see that final day,
we cannot call a mortal being happy
before he's passed beyond life free from pain.

Antigone (c. 441 B.C.)

The play opens in Thebes, before the royal palace. Antigone and her sister Ismene, the daughters of Oedipus, enter. They are distraught over the recent death in battle of their brothers at each other's hands. Antigone tells Ismene that king Creon has decreed that their brother Eteocles will be buried and honoured in death, while their brother Polyneices will be left unburied. Antigone tries to convince Ismene to help her bury Polyneices against Creon's orders. Ismene refuses to break the law, but says that she won't tell.

Creon announces to the people his plans for the brothers. He explains that Eteocles died defending the city, while Polyneices died attempting to destroy it. He commands the Chorus not to take sides with any who may disobey his order. The Chorus agrees that it would be foolish to do so. A very human guard enters and tells Creon that someone has managed to bury the body of Polyneices. Creon sends him to uncover the body. Soon after, the guard returns, having caught Antigone re-burying the corpse.

Antigone says that she was following the law of the gods, not Creon's law. Creon calls for Ismene because he believes she helped plan the crime. Guards bring Ismene out. She says she is guilty if Antigone says she is. Antigone says Ismene had no part.

Creon's son Haemon (who was to marry Antigone) tells his father that he supports him. Creon explains that he must kill Antigone to set an example for others who might disobey his laws. Haemon tells Creon that the feeling among the citizens is that the girl was wrongly condemned. He asks Creon to reconsider his decree. The two then quarrel about the justness of the decree. Creon calls to bring her out so that he may kill her in front of Haemon. Haemon leaves before she is brought out. Creon tells the chorus that he plans to leave Antigone in a cave and let her starve to death.

Antigone is led away to her death. Teiresias the blind prophet enters and tells Creon that as a result of Creon's decision, sacrificial fires will not burn, and rites cannot be performed. Creon holds to his decision. Teiresias tells him that he will be cursed by the gods for his acts and that his son will die as a result. Teiresias leaves. Creon is torn. He knows that Teiresias is always accurate in his prophesies. The chorus convinces Creon to change his mind. Creon hurries off to free Antigone.

A messenger enters and tells the chorus that Creon's son Haemon has killed himself and that it is Creon's fault. Creon's wife Eurydice enters from the palace. She has overheard the news. The messenger tells of how Creon and his party discovered that Haemon had come before them to the cave and that he was crying over the lifeless body of Antigone, who had hanged herself. Haemon then spat in Creon's face and leaned on his own sword to kill himself. Eurydice goes back inside in silence. Creon and his men enter, carrying Haemon's body. Creon laments that he has learned justice too late.

The messenger re-enters and announces that Eurydice has taken her own life. Creon cries for his servants to take him away. He wishes for his own death. Creon and his men enter the palace. The chorus comments that the gods control our destiny, that we can only be happy through wisdom, and that men of pride must often suffer greatly to earn wisdom.

Week 5: Ramayana

The Ramayana (Rama’s Journey), by Valmiki, Sanskrit, 4th century B.C.

In 7 books, the first, Bala Kanda describes the birth of Rama, his childhood and marriage to Sita. The Ayodhya Kanda describes the preparations for Rama's coronation and his exile into the forest. The third part, Aranya Kanda, describes the forest life of Rama and the kidnapping of Sita by the demon king Ravana. The fourth book, Kishkinda Kanda, describes the meeting of Hanuman with Rama, the destruction of the vanara king Vali and the coronation of his younger brother Sugriva to the throne of the kingdom of Kishkindha. The fifth book is Sundara Kanda, which narrates the heroism of Hanuman, his flight to Lanka and meeting with Sita. The sixth book, Yuddha Kanda, describes the battle between Rama's and Ravana's armies. The last book, Uttara Kanda, describes the birth of Lava and Kusha to Sita, their coronation to the throne of Ayodhya, and Rama's final departure from the world.

Book 1: The Epic relates to the ancient traditions of two powerful races, the Kosalas and the Videhas, who lived in Northern India between the twelfth and tenth centuries before Christ. The names Kosala and Videha in the singular number indicate the kingdoms,--Oudh and North Behar,--and in the plural number they mean the ancient races which inhabited those two countries.
According to the Epic, Dasa-ratha king of the Kosalas had four sons, the eldest of whom was Rama the hero of the poem. And Janak king of the Videhas had a daughter named Sita, who was miraculously born of a field furrow, and who is the heroine of the Epic.
Janak ordained a severe test for the hand of his daughter, and many a prince and warrior came and went away disappointed. Rama succeeded, and won Sita. The story of Rama's winning his bride, and of the marriage of his three brothers with the sister and cousins of Sita, forms the subject of this Book.

Book 2: The events narrated in this Book occupy scarcely two days. The description of Rama's princely virtues and the rejoicings at his proposed coronation, with which the Book begins, contrast with much dramatic force and effect with the dark intrigues which follow, and which end in his cruel banishment for fourteen years.
The first six days of Rama's wanderings are narrated. Sita and the faithful Lakshman accompanied Rama in his exile, and the loyal people of Ayodhya followed their exiled prince as far as the banks of the Tamasa river, where they halted on the first night. Rama had to steal away at night to escape the citizens, and his wanderings during the following days give us beautiful glimpses of forest life in holy hermitages. Thirty centuries have passed since the age of the Kosalas and Videhas, but every step of the supposed journey of Rama is well known in India to this day, and is annually traversed by thousands of devoted pilgrims. The past is not dead and buried in India, it lives in the hearts of millions of faithful men and faithful women, and shall live for ever.
On the third day of their exile, Rama and his wife and brother crossed the Ganges; on the fourth day they came to the hermitage of Bharad-vaja, which stood where Allahabad now stands, on the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna; on the fifth day they crossed the Jumna, the southern shores of which were then covered with woods; and on the sixth day they came to the hill of Chitra kuta, where they met the saint Valmiki, the reputed author of this Epic.

CROSSING THE JUMNA--VALMIKI'S HERMITAGE
Morning dawned, and faithful Sita with the brothers held her way,
Where the dark and eddying, waters of the sacred Jumna stray,
Pondering by the rapid river long the thoughtful brothers stood,
Then with stalwart arms and axes felled the sturdy jungle wood,

Usira of strongest fibre, slender bamboo smooth and plain,
Jambu branches intertwining, with the bent and twisting cane,
And a mighty raft constructed, and with creepers scented sweet,
Lakshman for the gentle Sita made a soft and pleasant seat.
Then the rustic bark was floated, framed with skill of woodman's craft,
By her loving lord supported Sita stepped upon the raft,
And her raiments and apparel Rama by his consort laid,
And the axes and the deerskins, bow and dart and shining blade.
Then with stalwart arms the brothers plied the bending bamboo oar,
And the strong raft gaily bounding left for Jumna's southern shore.
"Goddess of the glorious Jumna!" so the pious Sita prayed,
"Peaceful be my husband's exile in the forest's darksome shade,
May he safely reach Ayodhya, and a thousand fattened kine,
Hundred jars of sweet libation, mighty Jumna, shall be thine,
Grant that from the woods returning he may see his home again,
Grant that honoured by his kinsmen he may rule his loving men!
On her breast her arms she folded while the princes plied the oar,
And the bright bark bravely bounding reached the wooded southern shore.
And the wanderers from Ayodhya on the river's margin stood,
Where the unknown realm extended mantled by unending wood,
Gallant Lakshman with his weapons went before the path to clear,
Soft-eyed Sita followed gently, Rama followed in the rear.
Oft from tree and darksome jungle, Lakshman ever true and brave,
Plucked the fruit or smiling blossom and to gentle Sita gave,
Oft to Rama turned his consort, pleased and curious evermore,
Asked the name of tree or creeper, fruit or flower unseen before.
Still with brotherlv affection Lakshman brought each dewy spray,
Bud or blossom of wild beauty from the woodland bright and gay,
Still with eager joy and pleasure Sita turned her eye once more,
Where the tuneful swans and saras flocked on Jumna's sandy shore.
Two miles thus they walked and wandered and the belt of forest passed,
Slew the wild deer of the jungle, spread on leaves their rich repast,
Peacocks flew around them gaily, monkeys leaped on branches bent,
Fifth night of their endless wanderings in the forest thus they spent.
"Wake, my love, and list the warblings and the voices of the wood,"
Thus spake Rama when the morning on the eastern mountains stood,
Sita woke and gallant Lakshman, and they sipped the sacred wave,
To the hill of Chitra-kuta held their way serene and brave.
"Mark, my love," so Rama uttered, "every bush and tree and flower,
Tinged by radiant light of morning sparkles in a golden shower,
Mark the flaming flower of Kinsuk and the Vilwa in its pride,
Luscious fruits in wild profusion ample store of food provide,
Mark the honeycombs suspended from each tall and stately tree,
How from every virgin blossom steals her store the faithless bee!
Oft the lone and startled wild cock sounds its clarion full and clear,
And from flowering fragrant forests peacocks send the answering cheer,
Oft the elephant of jungle ranges in this darksome wood,
For yon peak is Chitra-kuta loved by saints and hermits good,
Oft the chanted songs of hermits echo through its sacred grove,
Peaceful on its shady uplands, Sita, we shall live and rove!"
Gently thus the princes wandered through the fair and woodland scene,
Fruits and blossoms lit the branches, feathered songsters filled the green,
Anchorites and ancient hermits lived in every sylvan grove,
And a sweet and sacred stillness filled the woods with peace and love!
Gently thus the princes wandered to the holy hermitage,

Where in lofty contemplation lived the mighty Saint and Sage,
Heaven inspired thy song, Valmiki! Ancient Bard of ancient day,
Deeds of virtue and of valour live in thy madying lay!
And the Bard received the princes with a father's greetings kind,
Bade them live in Chitra-kuta with a pure and peaceful mind,
To the true and faithful Lakshman, Rama then his purpose said,
And of leaf and forest timber Lakshman soon a cottage made.
"So our sacred Sastras sanction," thus the righteous Rama spake,
"Holy offering we should render when our dwelling-home we make,
Slay the black buck, gallant Lakshman, and a sacrifice prepare,
For the moment is auspicious and the day is bright and fair."
Lakshman slew a mighty black-buck, with the antlered trophy came,
Placed the carcass consecrated by the altar's blazing flame,
Radiant round the mighty offering tongues of red fire curling shone,
And the buck was duly roasted and the tender meat was done.
Pure from bath, with sacred mantra Rama did the holy rite,
And invoked the bright Immortals for to bless the dwelling site,
To the kindly VISWA-DEVAS, and to RUDRA fierce and strong,
And to VISHNU Lord of Creatures, Rama raised the sacred song.
Righteous rite was duly rendered for the forest-dwelling made,
And with true and deep devotion was the sacred mantra prayed,
And the worship of the Bright Ones purified each earthly stain,
Pure-souled Rama raised the altar and the chaitya's sacred fane.
Evening spread its holy stillness, bush and tree its magic felt,
As the Gods in BRAHMA'S mansions, exiles in their cottage dwelt,
In the woods of Chitra-kuta where the Malyavati flows,
Sixth day of their weary wand'rings ended in a sweet repose.

Book 3: The love of a Raksha princess for Rama and for Lakshman is rejected with scorn, and smarting under insult and punishment she fires her brother Ravan, the king of Ceylon, with a thirst for vengeance. The dwellers of Ceylon are described in the Epic as monsters of various forms, and able to assume different shapes at will. Ravan sends Maricha in the shape of a beautiful deer to tempt away Rama and Lakshman from the cottage, and then finds his chance for stealing away the unprotected Sita.
The misfortunes of our lives, according to Indian thinkers, are but the results of our misdeeds; calamities are brought about by our sins. And thus we find in the Indian Epic, that a dark and foul suspicion against Lakshman crossed the stainless mind of Sita, and words of unmerited insult fell from her gentle lips, on the eve of the great calamity which clouded her life ever after. It was the only occasion on which the ideal woman of the Epic harboured an unjust thought or spoke an angry word; and it was followed by a tragic fate which few women on earth have suffered. To the millions of men and women in India, Sita remains to this day the ideal of female love and female devotion; her dark suspicions against Lakshman sprang out of an excess of her affection for her husband and her tragic fate and long trial proved that undying love.

Book 4: Rama’s wanderings in the Nilgiri mountains, and his alliance with Sugriva the chief of these regions, form the subject of the Book.

Book 5: The Sundara Kanda forms the heart of Valmiki's Ramayana and consists of a detailed, vivid account of Hanuman's journeys and adventures. After learning about Sita, Hanuman (a monkey-like figure) assumes a gargantuan form and makes a colossal leap across the ocean to Lanka. Here, Hanuman explores the demon's city and spies on Ravana. He locates Sita in Ashoka grove, who is wooed and threatened by Ravana and his rakshasis to marry Ravana. He reassures her, giving Rama's signet ring as a sign of good faith. He offers to carry Sita back to Rama, however she refuses, reluctant to allow herself to be

touched by a male other than her husband. She says that Rama himself must come and avenge the insult of her abduction. Hanuman then wreaks havoc in Lanka by destroying trees and buildings, and killing Ravana's warriors. He allows himself to be captured and produced before Ravana. He gives a bold lecture to Ravana to release Sita. He is condemned and his tail is set on fire, but he escapes his bonds and, leaping from roof to roof, sets fire to Ravana's citadel and makes the giant leap back from the island. The joyous search party returns to Kishkindha with the news.

From Book 6: SITA IN THE ASOKA GARDEN

Crossed the ocean's boundless waters, Hanuman in duty brave,
Lighted on the emerald island girded by the sapphire wave,
And in tireless quest of Sita searched the margin of the sea,
In a dark Asoka garden hid himself within a tree.
Creepers threw their clasping tendrils round the trees of ample height,
Stately palm and feathered cocoa, fruit and blossom pleased the sight,
Herds of tame and gentle creatures in the grassy meadow strayed,
Kokils sang in leafy thicket, birds of plumage lit the shade,
Limpid lakes of scented lotus with their fragrance filled the air,
Homes and huts of rustic beauty peeped through bushes green and fair,
Blossoms rich in tint and fragrance in the checkered shadow gleamed,
Clustering fruits of golden beauty in the yellow sunlight beamed!
Brightly shone the red Asoka with the morning's golden ray,
Karnikara and Kinsuka dazzling as the light of day,
Brightly grew the flower of Champak in the vale and on the reef,
Punnaga and Saptaparna with its seven-fold scented leaf,
Rich in blossoms many tinted, grateful to the ravished eye,
Gay and green and glorious Kanka was like garden of the sky,
Rich in fruit and laden creeper and in beauteous bush and trep.
Flower-bespangled golden Lanka was like gem-bespangled sea!
Rose a palace in the woodlands girt by pillars strong and high.
Snowy-white like fair Kailasa cleaving through the azure sky,
And its steps were ocean coral and its pavement yellow gold.
White and gay and heaven-aspiring rose the structure high and bold!
By the rich and royal mansion Hanuman his eyes did rest,
On a woman sad and sorrowing in her sylvan garments drest,
Like the moon obscured and clouded, dim with shadows deep and dark,
Like the smoke-enshrouded red fire, dying with a feeble spark,
Like the tempest-pelted lotus by the wind and torrent shaken,
Like the beauteous star Rohini by a graha overtaken!
Fasts and vigils paled her beauty, tears bedimmed her tender grace,
Anguish dwelt within her bosom, sorrow darkened on her face,
And she lived by Rakshas guarded, as a faint and timid deer,
Severed from her herd and kindred when the prowling wolves are near,
And her raven locks ungathered hung behind in single braid,
And her gentle eye was lightless, and her brow was hid in shade!
"This is she! the peerless princess, Rama's consort loved and lost,
This is she! the saintly Sita, by a cruel fortune crost,"
Hanuman thus thought and pondered: "On her graceful form I spy,
Gems and gold by sorrowing Rama oft depicted with it sigh,
On her ears the golden pendants and the tiger's sharpened tooth,
On her arms the jewelled bracelets, tokens of unchanging truth,
On her pallid brow and bosom still the radiant jewels shine,
Rama with a sweet affection did in early days entwine!
Hermit's garments clothe her person, braided is her raven hair,
Matted bark of trees of forest drape her neck and bosom fair,

And a dower of dazzling beauty still bedecks her peerless face.
Though the shadowing tinge of sorrow darkens all her earlier grace!
This is she! the soft-eyed Sita, wept with unavailing tear,
This is she! the faithful consort, unto Rama ever dear,
Unforgetting and unchanging, truthful still in deed and word,
Sita, in her silent suffering sorrows for her absent lord,
Still for Rama lost but cherished, Sita heaves the choking sigh,
Sita lives for righteous Rama, for her Rama she would die!"

THE VOICE OF HOPE

Hanuman from leafy shelters lifts his voice in sacred song,
Till the tale of Rama's glory Lanka's woods and vales prolong:
"Listen, Lady, to my story;--Dasa-ratha famed in war,
Rich in steeds and royal tuskers, arméd men and battle car,
Ruled his realm in truth and virtue, in his bounty ever free,
Of the mighty race of Raghu mightiest king and monarch he,
Robed in every royal virtue, great in peace in battle brave,
Blest in bliss of grateful nations, blest in blessings which he gave
And his eldest-born and dearest, Rama soul of righteous might,
Shone, as mid the stars resplendent shines the radiant Lord of Night,
True unto his sacred duty, true unto his kith and kin,
Friend of piety and virtue, punisher of crime and sin,
Loved in all his spacious empire, peopled mart and hermit's den,
With a truer deeper kindness Rama loved his subject men!
Dasa-ratha, promise-fettered, then his cruel mandate gave,
Rama with his wife and brother lived in woods and rocky cave,
And he slayed the deer of jungle and he slept in leafy shade,
Stem destroyer of the Rakshas in the pathless forests strayed,
Till the monarch of the Rakshas,-fraudful is his impious life,
Cheated Rama in the jungle, from his cottage stole his wife
Long lamenting lone and weary Rama wandered in the wood,
Searched for Sita, in the jungle where his humble cottage stood,
Godavari's gloomy gorges, Krishna's dark and wooded shore,
And the ravine, rock and valley, and the cloud-capped mountain hoar!
Then he met the sad Sugriva in wild Malya's dark retreat,
Won for him his father's empire and his father's royal seat,
Now Sagriva's countless forces wander far and wander near,
In the search of stolen Sita still unto his Rama dear!
I am henchman of Sugriva and the mighty sea have crost,
In the quest of hidden Sita, Rama's consort loved and lost,
And methinks that form of beauty, peerless shape of woman's grace,
Is my Rama's dear-loved consort, Rama's dear-remembered face!"
Hushed the voice: the ravished Sita cast her wond'ring eyes around,
Whence that song of sudden gladness, whence that soul-entrancing sound?
Dawning hope and rising rapture overflowed her widowed heart,
Is it dream's deceitful whisper which the cruel Fates impart?

RAMA'S TOKEN

"'Tis no dream's deceitful whisper!" Hantiman spake to the dame,
As from darksome leafy shelter he to Rama's consort came,
"Rama's messenger and vassal, token from thy lord I bring,
Mark this bright ring, jewel-lettered with the dear name of thy king,
For the loved and cherished Sita, is to Rama ever dear,
And he sends his loving message and his force is drawing near!
Sita, held that tender token from her loved and cherished lord,

And once more herself she fancied to his loving arms restored,
And her pallid face was lighted and her soft eve sent a spark,
As the Moon regains her lustre freed from Rahu's shadows dark!
And with voice of deep emotion in each softly whispered word,
Spake her thoughts in gentle accents of her consort and her lord:
"Messenger of love of Rama! Dauntless is thy deed and bold,
Thou hast crossed the boundless ocean to the Raksha's castled hold,
Thou hast crossed the angry billows which confess no monarch's sway,
O'er the face of rolling waters found thy unresisted way,
Thou hast done what living mortal never sought to do before,
Dared the Raksha in his island, Ravan in his sea-girt shore!
Speak, if Rama lives in safety in the woods or by the hill,
And if young and gallant Lakshman faithful serves his brother still,
Speak, if Rama in his anger and his unforgiving ire,
Hurls destruction on my captor like the world-consuming fire,
Speak, if Rama in his sorrow wets his pale and drooping eye,
If the thought of absent Sita wakes within his heart a sigh!
Doth my husband seek alliance with each wild and warlike chief,
Striving for a speedy vengeance and for Sita's quick relief,
Doth he stir the warlike races to a fierce and veng-eful strife,
Dealing death to ruthless Rakshas for this insult on his wife,
Doth he still in fond remembrance cherish Sita loved of yore,
Nursing in his hero-bosom tender sorrows evermore!
Didst thou hear from far Ayodhya, from Kausalya royal dame,
From the true and tender Bharat prince of proud and peerless fame,
Didst thou hear if royal Bharat leads his forces to the fight,
Conquering Ravan's scattered army in his all-resistless might,
Didst thou hear if brave Sugriva marshals Vanars in his wrath
And the young and gallant Lakshman seeks to cross the ocean path?"
Hanuman with due obeisance placed his hand upon his head,
Bowed unto the queenly Sita and in gentle accents said:
"Trust me, Lady, valiant Rama soon will greet his saintly wife,
E'en as INDRA greets his goddess, SACHI dearer than his life,
Trust me, Sita, conquering Rama comes with panoply of war,
Shaking Lanka's sea-girt mountains . slaying Rakshas near and far!
He shall cross the boundless ocean with the battle's dread array,
He shall smite the impious Ravan and the cruel Rakshas slay,
Mighty Gods and strong Asuras shall not hinder Rama's path,
When at Lanka's gates he thunders with his more than godlike wrath,
Deadly YAMA, all-destroying, pales before his peerless might
When his red right arm of vengeance wrathful Rama lifts to smite!
By the lofty Mandar mountains, by the fruit and root I seek,
By the cloud-obstructing Vindhyas, and by Malya's towering peak,
I will swear, my gentle Lady, Rama's vengeance draweth nigh,
Thou shalt see his beaming visage like the Lord of Midnight Sky,
Firm in purpose Rama waiteth on the Prasra-vana hill,
As upon the huge Airavat, INDRA, motionless and still!
Flesh of deer nor forest honey tasteth Rama true and bold,
Till he rescues cherished Sita from the Raksha's castled hold,
Thoughts of Sita leave not Rama dreary day or darksome night,
Till his vengeance deep and dreadful crushes Ravan in his might,
Forest flower nor scented creeper pleases Rama's anguished heart,
Till he, wins his wedded consort by his death-compelling dart!"

SITA'S TOKEN

Token from her raven tresses Sita to the Vanar gave,
Hanuman with dauntless valour crossed once more the ocean wave,
Where in Prasra-vana's mountain Rama with his brother stayed,
Jewel from the brow of Sita by her sorrowing consort laid,
Spake of Ravan's foul endearment and his loathsome loving word,
Spake of Sita's scorn and anger and her truth unto her lord,
Tears of sorrow and affection from the warrior's eyelids start,
As his consort's loving token Rama presses to his heart!
"As the mother-cow, Sugriva, yields her milk beside her young,
Welling tears upon this token yields my heart by anguish wrung,
Well I know this dear-loved jewel sparkling with the ray of heaven,
Born in sea, by mighty INDRA to my Sita's father given,
Well I know this tender token, Janak placed it on her hair,
When she came my bride and consort decked in beauty rich and rare,
Well I know this sweet memorial, Sita wore it on her head,
And her proud and peerless beauty on the gem a lustre shed!
Ah, methink the gracious Janak stands again before my eye,
With a father's fond affection, with a monarch's stature high,
Ah, methinks my bride and consort, she who wore it on her brow,
Stands again before the altar, speaks again her loving row,
Ah, the sad, the sweet remembrance! ah, the happy days gone by,
Once again, O loving vision, wilt thou gladden Rama's eye!
Speak again, my faithful vassal, how my Sita wept and prayed,
Like the water to the thirsty, dear to me what Sita said,
Did she send this sweet remembrance as a blessing from above,
As a true and tender token of a woman's changeless love,
Did she waft her heart's affection o'er the billows of the sea,
Wherefore came she not in person from her foes and fetters free?
llanuman, iny friend and comrade, lead me to the distant isle,
Where my soft-eyed Sita lingers midst the Rakshas dark and vile,
Where my true and tender consort like a lone and stricken deer,
Girt by Rakshas stern and ruthless sheds the unavailing tear,
Where she weeps in ceaseless anguish, sorrow-stricken, sad and pale,
Like the Moon by dark clouds shrouded then her light and lustre fail!
Speak again, my faithful henchman, loving message of my wife,
Like some potent drug her accents renovate my fainting life,
Arm thy forces, friend Sugriva, Rama shall not brook delay,
While in distant Lanka's confines Sita weeps the livelong day,
Marshal forth thy bannered forces, cross the ocean in thy might
Rama speeds on wings of vengeance Lanka's impious lord to smite!"

Book 6: Ravan was thoroughly frightened by the deeds of Hanuman. For Hanuman had not only penetrated into his island and discovered Sita in her imprisonment, but had also managed to burn down a great portion of the city before he left the island. Ravan called a Council of War, and as might be expected, all the advisers heedlessly advised war. All but Bibhishan. He was the youngest brother of Ravail, and condemned the folly and the crime by which Ravan was seeking a war with the righteous and unoffending Rama. He advised that Sita should be restored to her lord and peace made with Rama. His voice was drowned in the cries of more violent advisers. Bibhishan was driven from the court with indignity, and joined the forces of Rama, to whom he gave much valuable information about Lanka and its warriors. Rama crossed over with his army from India to Ceylon. There is a chain of islands across the strait, and the Indian poet supposes them to be the remains of a vast causeway which Rama built to cross over with his army. The town of Lanka, the capital of Ceylon, was invested, and the war which followed was a succession of sallies by the great leaders and princes of Lanka. But almost every sally was repulsed, every chief was killed, and at last

Ravan himself who made the last sally was slain and the war ended.

The real Epic ends with the war, and with Rama's happy return to Ayodhya. Sita proves her stainless virtue by an Ordeal of Fire, and returns with her lord and with Lakshman in an aërial car, which Ravan had won from the Gods, and which Bibhishan made over to Rama. Indian poets are never tired of descriptions of nature, and the poet of the Ramayana takes advantage of Rama's journey from Ceylon to Oudh to give us a bird's-eye view of the whole continent of India, as well as to recapitulate the principal incidents of his great Epic.

The gathering of men at Ayodhya, the greetings to Rama, and his consecration by the Vedic bard Vasishtha, are among the most pleasing passages in the whole poem. And the happiness enjoyed by men during the reign of Rama--described in the last few couplets of this Book--is an article of belief and a living tradition in India to this day.

WOMAN'S TRUTH VINDICATED

Slow the red flames rolled asunder, God of Fire incarnate came,
Holding in his radiant bosom fair Videha's sinless dame,
Not a curl upon her tresses, not a blossom on her brow,
Not a fibre of her mantle did with tarnished lustre glow!
Witness of our sins and virtues, God of Fire incarnate spake,
Bade the sorrow-stricken Rama back his sinless wife to take:
"Ravan in his impious folly forced from thee thy faithful dame,
Guarded by her changeless virtue, Sita still remains the same,
Tempted oft by female Rakshas in the dark and dismal wood,
In her woe and in her sadness true to thee hath Sita stood,
Courted oft by royal Ravan in the forest far and lone,
True to wedded troth and virtue Sita thought of thee alone,
Pare is she in thought and action, pure and stainless, true and meek,
I, the witness of all actions, thus my sacred mandate speak!"
Rama's forehead was unclouded and a radiance lit his eye,
And his bosom heaved in gladness as he spake in accents high:
Never from the time I saw her in her maiden days of youth,
Have I doubted Sita's virtue, Sita's fixed and changeless truth,
I have known her ever sinless,--let the world her virtue know,
For the God of Fire is witness to her truth and changeless vow!
Ravan in his pride and passion conquered not a woman's love,
For the virtuous like the bright fire in their native radiance move,
Ravan in his rage and folly conquered not a faithful wife,
For like ray of sun unsullied is a righteous woman's life,
Be the wide world now a witness,-pure and stainless is my dame,
Rama shall not leave his consort till he leaves his righteous fame!"
In his tears the contrite Rama clasped her in a soft embrace,
And the fond forgiving Sita in his bosom hid her face!

RETURN HOME BY THE AËRIAL CAR

"Mark my love," so Rama uttered, as on flying Pushpa car,
Borne by swans, the home-returning exiles left the field of war,
"Lanka's proud and castled city on Trikuta's triple crest,
As on peaks of bold Kailasa mansions of Immortals rest!
Mark the gory fields surrounding where the Vanars in their might,
Faced and fought the charging Rakshas in the long and deathful fight,
Indrajit and Kumbha-kama, Ravan and his chieftains slain,
Fell upon the field of battle and their red blood soaks the plain.
Mark where dark-eyed Mandodari, Ravan's slender-waisted wife,
Wept her widow's tears of anguish when her monarch lost his life,
She hath dried her tears of sorrow and bestowed her heart and hand,
On Bibhisban good and faitbful, crowned king of Lanka's land.

See my love, round Ceylon's island how the ocean billows roar.
Hiding pearls in eaves of corals, strewing shells upon the shore,
And the causeway far-extending,--monument of Rama's fame,--
'Rama's Bridge' to distant ages shall our deathless deeds proclaim!
See the rock-bound fair Kishkindha and her mountain-girdled town,
Where I slayed the warrior Bali, placed Sugriva on the throne,
And the hill of Rishyamuka where Sugriva first I met,
Gave him word,--he would be monarch ere the evening's Sun had set.
See the sacred lake of Pampa by whose wild and echoing shore,
Rama poured his lamentations when he saw his wife no more,
And the woods of Janasthana where Jatayu fought and bled,
When the deep deceitful Ravan with my trusting Sita fled.
Dost thou mark, my soft-eyed Sita, cottage on the river's shore,
Where in righteous peace and penance Sita, lived in days of yore,
And by gloomy Godavari, Saint Agastya's home of love,
Holy men by holy duties sanctify the sacred grove!
Dost thou, o'er the Dandak forest, view the Chitrakuta hill.
Deathless bard the Saint Valmiki haunts its shade and crystal rill,
Thither came the righteous Bharat and my loving mother came,
Longing in their hearts to take us to Ayodhya's town of fame,
Dost thou, dear devoted Sita, see the Jumna in her might '
Where in Bharad-waja's asram passed we, love, a happy, night,
And the broad and ruddy Ganga sweeping in her regal pride,
Forest-dweller faithful Guha crossed us to the southern side.
Joy! joy! my gentle Sita,! Fair Ayodhya looms above,
Ancient seat of Raghu's empire, nest of Rama's hope and love,
Bow, bow, to bright Ayodhya! Darksome did the exiles roam,
Now their weary toil is ended in their father's ancient home!

THE CONSECRATION

Joy! joy in bright Ayodhya gladness filled the hearts of all,
Joy! joy a lofty music sounded in the royal hall,
Fourteen years of woe were ended, Rama now assumed his own,
And they placed the weary wand'rer on his father's ancient throne,
And they brought the sacred water from each distant stream and hill,
From the vast and boundless ocean, from each far and sacred rill.
Vasishtha, the Bard of Vedas with auspicious rites and meet
Placed the monarch and his consort on the gemmed and jewelled seat,
Gautama. and Katyayana, Vamadeva priest of yore,
Jabali and wise Vijaya verged in holy ancient lore,
Poured the fresh and fraurant water on the consecrated kine,
As the Gods anointed INDRA from the pure ethereal spring!
Vedic priests with sacred mantra, dark-eyed virgins with their song,
Warriors girt in arms and weapons round the crownéd monarch throng,
Juices from each fragrant creeper on his royal brow they place,
And his father's crown and jewels Rama's ample forehead grace,
And as Manu, first of monarchs, was enthroned in days of yore,
So was Rama consecrated by the priests of Vedic lore!
Brave Satrughna on his brother cast the white umbrella's shade
Bold Sugriva and Bibhishan waved the chowri gem-inlaid,
VAYU, God of gentle zephyrs, gift of golden garland lent,
INDRA, God of rain and sunshine, wreath of pearls to Rama sent,
Gay Gandharvas raised the music, fair Apsaras formed the ring,
Men in nations hailed their Rama as their lord and righteous king!
And tis told by ancient sages, during Rama's happy reign,

Death untimely, dire diseases came not to his subject men,
Widows wept not in their sorrow for their lords untimely lost,
Mothers wailed not in their anguish for their babes by YAMA crost,
Robbers, cheats, and gay deceivers tempted not with lying word,
Neighbour loved his righteous neighbour and the people loved their lord!
Trees their ample produce yielded as returning seasons went,
And the earth in grateful gladness never failing harvest lent,
Rains descended in their season, never came the blighting gale,
Rich in crop and rich in pasture was each soft and smiling vale,
Loom and anvil gave their produce and the tilled and fertile soil,
And the nation lived rejoicing in their old ancestral.

Book 7: A dark cloud of suspicion still hung on the fame of Sita, and the people of Ayodhya made reflections on the conduct of their king, who had taken back into his house a woman who had lived in the palace of Ravan. Rama gave way to the opinion of his people, and he sent away his loving and faithful Sita to live in forests once more.
Sita found an asylum in the hermitage of Valmiki, the reputed author of this Epic, and there gave birth to twins, Lava and Kusa. Years passed on, and Lava and Kusa grew up as hermit boys, and as pupils of Valmiki. After years had passed, Rama performed a great Horse-sacrifice. Kings and princes were invited from neighbouring countries, and a great feast was held. Valmiki came to the sacrifice, and his pupils, Lava and Kusa, chanted there the great Epic, the Ramayana, describing the deeds of Rama. In this interesting portion of the poem we find how songs and poetry were handed down in ancient India by memory. The boys had learnt the whole of the Epic by heart, and chanted portions of it, day after day, till the recital was completed. Rama recognised his sons in the boy-minstrels, and his heart yearned once more for Sita, whom he had banished but never forgotten. He asked the Poet Valmiki to restore his wife to him, and he desired that Sita might once more prove her purity in the great assembly, so that he might take her back with the approval of his people. Sita came. But her life had been darkened by an unjust suspicion, her heart was broken, and she invoked the Earth to take her back. And the Earth, which had given Sita birth, yawned and took back her suffering child into her bosom. Finally, Rama also dies.

Week 6: Journey to the West

Journey to the West is one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature. It was written in the 16th century during the Ming Dynasty. Its authorship is attributed to Wu Cheng'en. In English-speaking countries, the work is widely known as Monkey, the title used for a popular and partial translation by Arthur Waley.

The novel is a fictionalized account of the legendary pilgrimage to India of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang, and loosely based its source from the historic text Great Tang Records on the Western Regions and traditional folk tales. The monk travelled to the "Western Regions" during the Tang Dynasty, to obtain sacred texts (sūtras). The bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin), on instruction from the Buddha, gives this task to the monk and his three protectors in the form of disciples — namely Sun Wukong (the Monkey), Zhu Bajie (the Pig) and Sha Wujing (the Monster) — together with a dragon prince who acts as Xuanzang's steed, a white horse. These four characters have agreed to help Xuanzang as an atonement for past sins.

Sun Wukong's childlike playfulness is a huge contrast to his cunning mind. This, coupled with his great power, makes him a trickster hero. His antics present a lighter side in what proposes to be a long and dangerous trip into the unknown. His early adventures, during which he causes endless trouble, end when he is imprisoned for 500 years under a mountain.

Zhu Bajie was once an immortal commanding 100,000 naval soldiers of the Milky Way, but he drank too much during a celebration of gods and attempted to flirt with the moon goddess Chang'e, resulting in his banishment into the mortal world. He was supposed to be reborn as a human, but ends up in the womb of a female boar due to an error at the Reincarnation Wheel, which turns him into a half-man half-pig monster.

Sha Wujing was exiled to the mortal world and made to look like a monster because he accidentally smashed a crystal goblet belonging to the Queen Mother of the West during a Peach Banquet.

From Chapter 4

The Great White Planet led the Handsome Monkey King to the outside of the Hall of Miraculous Mist. He went straight in to the imperial presence without waiting to be summoned, and did obeisance to the throne. Sun Wukong stood bolt upright beside him, not bothering with any court etiquette, but just concentrating on listening to the Great White Planet make his report to the Jade Emperor: "In obedience to the Divine Edict, your subject has brought the demon Immortal here."

The Jade Emperor lowered his curtain and asked, "And which of you is the demon Immortal?"

"Me," replied Sun Wukong, only now making a slight bow.

The faces of the officials went white with horror as they exclaimed, "What a savage monkey! He has the impudence to answer 'Me,' and without even prostrating himself first! He must die!"

In reply to this the Jade Emperor announced, "Sun Wukong is a demon Immortal of the lower world who has only just obtained human form, so he is not acquainted with court procedure. We shall forgive him this time."

"We thank you for your mercy," said the immortal ministers. Only then did Sun Wukong

express his respect by bowing low and chanting "na−a−aw" at the top of his voice. The Jade Emperor ordered his immortal civil nd military officials to find a vacancy in some department for Sun Wukong.

The Star Lord Wuqu stepped forward form the side and reported, "There are no vacancies in any of the palaces, halls, and departments of Heaven except for a superintendent in the Imperial Stables."

"Then make him Protector of the Horses," ordered the Jade Emperor. All the ministers thanked him for his mercy, apart from Sun Wukong, who just expressed his respect with a loud "na−a−aw." The Jade Emperor then told the Wood Planet to take him to the Imperial Stables.

The Wood Planet accompanied the delighted Monkey King to his post and then went back to the palace. The Monkey King then called together the deputy and the assistant superintendent, the book−keeper, the grooms, and all the other officials, high and low, to find out about the duties of his department. He found that he had to look after a thousand heavenly horses. The Monkey King looked through the register and counted the horses. In the stables the book−keeper was responsible for ordering the fodder, the head groom was in charge of currying the horses, chopping up and cooking the fodder, and giving them water; the deputy superintendent and his assistant helped to oversee the work. The Protector of the Horses looked after his charges, sleeping neither by day nor by night. It is true that he fooled around by day, but at night he looked after the animals with great diligence, waking them up and making them eat whenever they fell asleep, and leading those still on their feet to the trough. At the sight of him the heavenly horses would prick up their ears and paw the ground, and they became fat and plump. Thus more than half a month slipped by.

On one morning that was a holiday all the officials of the stables held a feast both to welcome and congratulate the Protector of the Horses.

In the middle of the party the Monkey King suddenly put down his cup and asked, "What sort of office is this 'Protector of the Horses?'"

"What the name suggests, that's all."

"Which official grading does it carry?"

"Unclassified."

"What does 'unclassified' mean?"

"Bottom grade," the others replied, going on to explain, "It is a very low and unimportant office, and all you can do in it is look after the horses. Even someone who works as conscientiously as Your Honour and gets the horses so fat will get no more reward than someone saying 'good'; and if anything goes at all wrong you will be held responsible, and if the losses are serious you will be fined and punished."

The Monkey King flared up on hearing this, gnashed his teeth, and said in a great rage, "How dare they treat me with such contempt? On the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit I am a king and a patriarch. How dare he trick me into coming here to feed his horses for him? It's a low job for youngsters, not for me. I won't do it, I won't. I'm going back." He pushed the table over with a crash, took his treasure out of his ear, and shook it. It became as thick as a rice bowl, and he brandished it as he charged out of the Imperial Stables to the Southern Gate of Heaven. As the celestial guards knew that his name was on the register of immortal officials they did not dare to block his path, but let him out through the gate.

He descended by cloud and was back on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit in an instant. Seeing the four Stalwart Generals and all the kings of the monsters drilling their troops there he shouted in a shrill voice, "Children, I'm back." The monkeys all bowed to him, took him into the heart of the cave, and asked him to sit on his throne, while they prepared a banquet to welcome him back.

"Congratulations, Your Majesty," they all said. "After over a dozen years up there you must be coming back in glory and triumph."

"What do you mean, over a dozen years?" asked the Monkey King. "I've only been away for a fortnight or so."

"Your Majesty can't have noticed the time passing in heaven. A day in heaven lasts as long as a year on earth. May we ask what office you held?"

"It hurts me to tell you," replied the Monkey King with a wave of his hand. "I feel thoroughly humiliated. That Jade Emperor doesn't know how to use a good man. A man like me−−'Protector of the Horses'. That meant I had to feed his animals for him and wasn't even given an official grading. I didn't know this at first, so I fooled around in the Imperial Stables until today, when I found out from my colleagues how low the job was. I was so angry that I pushed the table over and quit the job. That's why I've come back."

"Quite right too," the other monkeys said. "Your Majesty can be king in our cave paradise and enjoy as much honour and pleasure as you like, so why go and be his groom?" Then they gave orders for wine to be brought at once to cheer their king up.

As they were drinking someone came in to report, "Your Majesty, there are two Single−horned Devil Kings outside who want to see you."

"Ask them in," said the Monkey King, and the two formally−dressed devil kings hurried into the cave and prostrated themselves.

"Why have you come to see me?" asked the Handsome Monkey King; and they replied, "We have long heard that Your Majesty is looking for men of talent, but we were unable to see you before. Now that Your Majesty has been given heavenly office and come back in triumph, we would like to offer you this yellow robe as a token of our congratulations. We also hope that you will not reject us although we are low and worthless, but will accept our humble services." An exultant Monkey King put on the yellow robe and his happy subjects bowed to him in order of precedence. The two devil kings were appointed Commanders of the Van, and when they had thanked the Monkey King for this they asked, "What office did Your Majesty hold while you were all that time in Heaven?"

"The Jade Emperor has no respect for talent," replied the Monkey King. "He made me something called 'Protector of the Horses.'"

"Your Majesty has such miraculous powers: you should never have been feeding his horses for him. You should have been made a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' shouldn't you?" The Monkey King was beside himself with delight at this suggestion, and he kept saying how splendid it was.

"Get me a banner made at once with the words 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven' in big letters on it, and put up a pole to hang it from," he ordered his four Stalwart Generals. "From now on I am to be called 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' not 'Your Majesty' or 'King'. Pass this order on to all the other kings of the monsters." We will leave him at this point.

When the Jade Emperor held his morning court the next day the Heavenly Teacher Zhang led the deputy and assistant superintendents of the Imperial Stables to the vermilion steps, bowed low, and reported, "Your Majesty, Sun Wukong, the new Protector of the Horses, left Heaven yesterday because he thought his office was too humble."

Just as he was speaking the Heavenly Guardian Virudhaka came from the Southern Gate of Heaven with his heavenly soldiers and reported, "The Protector of the Horses has gone out through the gate. We do not know why."

On hearing this the Jade Emperor commanded, "Let the two divine officials return to their posts; we shall send heavenly soldiers to capture this devil."

The pagoda-bearing Heavenly King Li Jing and Prince Nezha stepped forward from the ranks of those attending the audience, and they memorialized, "Your Imperial Majesty, we beg you to command us, your incompetent servants, to subdue this fiend." The Emperor was delighted with this suggestion, and he appointed the Pagoda-bearing Heavenly King as Demon quelling High Marshal, and Prince Nezha as Great God of the Seas. He told them to take their forces down to the lower world at once.

Heavenly King Li and Nezha kowtowed, took their leave, went straight back to their own palace, and assembled their troops, commanders and officers. They put the Mighty Miracle God in charge of the vanguard, and General Fishbelly in command of the rear, while General Yaksa was made adjutant. Within an instant they were outside the Southern Gate of Heaven, and they went straight to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. They chose a piece of level and open ground on which to construct a fortified camp, and ordered the Mighty Miracle God to issue the challenge to battle. On receiving this order the Mighty Miracle God tied on his armour firmly and went to the Water Curtain Cave, holding his flower-spreading battle-axe. When he got there he saw huge numbers of devils--wolves, tigers and leopards--wielding spears, brandishing swords, leaping around, fighting each other, and making a great noise outside the little entrance to the cave.

"Accursed beasts," shouted the Mighty Miracle God, "tell the Protector of the Horses at once that I am a heavenly general come on the orders of the Jade Emperor to subdue him. If you make him come out and surrender immediately it will save the lot of you from being wiped out."

The devils went rushing into the cave and reported, "Disaster, disaster."

"What disaster?" the Monkey King asked.

"There's a heavenly general outside who says he's come on the orders of the Jade Emperor to subdue you. If you go out and surrender immediately, he says he'll spare our lives."

"Fetch me my armour," said the Monkey King. He then donned his golden helmet, tied on his golden armour, put on his cloud-walking shoes, and took his As-You-Will gold-banded cudgel in his hand. He led his troops out of the cave and drew them up in battle array. The Mighty Miracle God gazed wide-eyed at the excellent Monkey King:

On his body was gleaming golden armour,
On his head a dazzling golden helmet,
In his hand a gold-banded club,
On his feet a pair of cloud-walking shoes to match.
His devil eyes shone like stars,
His ears were long and hard.

His sturdy frame could be transformed at will,
His voice rang clearly as a bell.

The sharp−mouthed Horse Protector with protruding teeth Wanted to become a Sage Equaling Heaven.

The Mighty Miracle God shouted in a harsh voice, "Insolent ape! Don't you recognize me?"

The Great Sage Sun Wukong replied at once, "I've never met you before. How should I know which wretched little deity you are? Tell me your name at once."

"I'll get you, you conceited baboon. So you don't know who I am? I am the Heavenly General Mighty Miracle, the commander of the vanguard for Heavenly King Li, the Pagoda−bearer. I have come here on the orders of the Jade Emperor to accept your surrender. Take off your armour at once and submit to the mercy of Heaven, or I'll wipe out every animal on the mountain. And if you so much as hint at a refusal, I'll smash you to powder."

"Stop talking so big, you lousy god," retorted the furious Monkey King, "and give that long tongue of yours a rest. I'd just love to kill you with this cudgel of mine, but if I did there'd be no one to deliver my message for me, so I'll spare your life. Hurry back to Heaven and tell that Jade Emperor that he doesn't know how to use a good man. Why did he make me waste my infinite powers on feeding his horses for him? Take a look at what's written on my standard. If he's willing to give me this title officially, I'll call off my troops and let Heaven and Earth continue in peace; but if he refuses I'm coming up to the Hall of Miraculous Mist to knock him off his dragon throne." When the Mighty Miracle God heard this he looked hard and saw that a tall pole had been planted outside the entrance to the cave, on which hung a banner reading GREAT SAGE EQUALING HEAVEN.

"Heh, heh, heh," he mocked, "you ignorant ape. What shameless effrontery, to want to be a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven!' Take that!" He swung with his battle−axe at the Monkey King who, quite unflustered, parried with his gold banded cudgel. It was a fine battle. The Mighty Miracle God was no match for his opponent. He hastened to block the Monkey King's first blow with his axe, which broke in two with a crunch. He fled for his life as fast as he could, and the Monkey King said mockingly, "You bag of pus, I'll spare you this time. Hurry back with my message, and look sharp about it."

The Mighty Miracle God returned to his camp, went straight to the Pagoda−bearing Heavenly King Li Jing, knelt before him, and said with an awkward laugh, "The Protector of the Horses has really tremendous magic powers. I was no match for him. He beat me, and now I have come to take my punishment."

"This fool has ruined our morale," exploded the Heavenly King Li in a fury. "Take him away, and off with his head."

Prince Nezha, who was standing to one side, stepped forward, bowed, and said, "Do not be angry, Your Majesty. Forgive the Mighty Miracle God, and let me go and do battle; then we'll see who's boss." The heavenly king accepted his advice, and told Mighty Miracle God to go back and look after the camp while he awaited his punishment.

When he had put on his armour and helmet, Prince Nezha charged straight out of the camp to the Water Curtain Cave. Sun Wukong, who was just going to pull back his troops, saw the ferocity of his onslaught. Sun Wukong went up to him and asked, "Whose little boy are you then? What do you mean, charging up to my door?"

"Stinking monkey fiend," shouted Prince Nezha, "don't you know who I am? I am Nezha, the

third son of the pagoda−bearing Heavenly King, and I have been commanded by the Jade Emperor to come here and arrest you."

"You do talk big, don't you, little prince," said Sun Wukong, laughing at him. "But as you've still got all your milk teeth and are still wet behind the ears I'll spare your life and I won't hit you. Do you see what it says on my standard? Go and tell the Jade Emperor that if he gives me that title I'll call off my armies and submit to him once more. But if he doesn't do what I want him to, I'll surely attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist." Nezha looked up and saw the words "Great Sage Equaling Heaven."

"You wicked monkey! How dare you give yourself a title like that, whatever your magic powers may be!

Don't worry, all you're getting is my sword."

"Give me a few swipes, then," replied Sun Wukong, "I won't move."

"Change," yelled Nezha in a passion, and at once he had three heads and six arms, which made him look most ferocious. In his hands he held six weapons, a demon−beheading sword, a demon−hacking cutlass, a demon−binding rope, a demon−quelling pestle, an embroidered ball, and a fire−wheel−−and wielding all these he rushed straight at Sun Wukong.

At the sight of him Sun Wukong exclaimed with astonishment, "Well, my boy, you certainly know a trick or two. But just behave yourself and watch what I can do." Our dear Great Sage shouted "Change," and he too had three heads and six arms. He shook his gold−banded cudgel, and it turned into three cudgels, which he gripped with his six hands to ward off Nezha's blows. It was a great fight, and it made the earth shake and the mountains tremble. Prince Nezha and Sun Wukong both used their divine powers to the full as they fought thirty rounds. When the six weapons of the prince turned into thousands and tens of thousands, so did Sun Wukong's gold−banded cudgel. The air was filled as if with drops of rain or shooting stars, and there was no way of telling who was winning. As Sun Wukong was deft of hand and quick of eye, he plucked one of the hairs from his body in the midst of the fray and shouted "Change!" It changed into his own double to mislead Nezha while his real self leapt round till he was behind Nezha and struck at his left shoulder. Nezha was in the middle of performing a spell when he heard the whistle of the cudgel through the air and twisted away as fast as he could. But he was unable to avoid the blow and had to flee wounded. He brought his magic to an end, put his six weapons away, reverted to his true appearance, and abandoned the field of battle in defeat.

This had all been observed by Heavenly King Li, who was on the point of sending reinforcements when his son appeared before him and reported in fear and trembling, "Father, the Protector of the Horses is very powerful. My magic was outclassed and he has wounded me in the shoulder."

The color drained from the face of the horror−struck Heavenly King as he said, "If the creature has magic powers like that, how are we going to defeat him?"

"Outside the gates of the cave," the prince went on to report, "there is a banner on a pole that reads 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven'. He bragged that if the Jade Emperor gave him this title he would call everything off; otherwise he said he would attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist."

"In that case," said the Heavenly King, "we'll disengage now, go back to Heaven, and request that more heavenly troops be sent to capture this wretch. There is plenty of time."

The prince, in pain and unable to go on fighting, went back to Heaven with the Heavenly King and put in this request, but of that no more for the moment.

Watch as the Monkey King returns to the mountain in triumph to receive the congratulations of the seventy−two kings of the monsters and his six sworn brothers. There was great drinking and singing in the cave paradise. Sun Wukong said to his six sworn brothers, "As I've called myself Great Sage Equaling Heaven, you can all call yourselves great sages too."

"Honorable brother, you're right," roared the Bull Demon King. "I shall call myself the Great Sage Matching Heaven."

"I'll be the Great Sage Overturning the Sea," said the Salamander Demon King.

"I'll be the Great Sage Throwing Heaven into Confusion," said the Roc Demon King.

"I'll be the Great Sage Who Moves Mountains," said the Camel Demon King.

"I'll be the Great Sage Who Travels with the Wind," said the Macaque King.

"And I'll be the Great Sage Who Drives Away Gods," said the Lion King. The seven great sages then did just as they pleased and gave themselves the titles they chose, and after enjoying themselves all day they went home.

Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha led their forces straight to the Palace of Miraculous Mist and made this request: "We, your subjects, took our forces down to the lower world, under your Divine Edict, to subdue the immortal fiend Sun Wukong. But to our surprise we found that his magical powers were too far−reaching for us to be able to defeat him. We therefore hope that Your Imperial Majesty will send more troops to exterminate him."

"How could a mere monkey goblin have such great powers that you actually need more troops?" asked the Jade Emperor.

Prince Nezha then came forward and memorialized, "We beg Your Majesty to spare us the deaths we deserve.

That monkey fiend has an iron cudgel that he used to defeat the Mighty Miracle God and wounded me on the shoulder. He has set a banner up outside the entrance to his cave that reads 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven,' and he says that if you give him this office he will stop fighting and submit; otherwise he will attack the Hall of Miraculous Mist."

When the Jade Emperor heard this he asked in horror, "How dare that monkey fiend talk so wildly? Send all the generals to execute him at once."

As he spoke the Great White Planet stepped forward from the ranks of officials. "That monkey fiend knows how to talk," he suggested, "but he has no idea about real power. If more soldiers were sent to fight him, they might not be able to overcome him at once and their energies would be wasted. But if Your Imperial Majesty were to show your great mercy, you could send down a pacificatory amnesty and let him be a Great Sage Equaling Heaven. It would only be an empty title that he was given, just an honorary appointment."

"What do you mean by an honorary appointment?" asked the Jade Emperor.

"He would be called a Great Sage Equaling Heaven, but he would not be given any responsibility or paid any salary. He would be kept between Heaven and Earth, where his evil nature would be under control and he would be kept from wickedness. Thus Heaven and

Earth can be at peace, while sea and sky enjoy tranquillity." The Jade Emperor approved this suggestion and ordered that a new edict should be issued for the Great White Planet to deliver.

The Great White Planet left once more through the Southern Gate of Heaven and went straight to have a look at the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. It was quite different from before. There was an awe−inspiring and spine−chilling atmosphere, and every kind of fiend was present. They were roaring and leaping around with their swords, spears, cutlasses and staves. As soon as they saw the Great White Planet they all went for him.

"Will your commander please come forward," said the Planet. "I would trouble you to inform your Great Sage that I am a heavenly envoy sent by the Jade Emperor, and I am carrying a divine edict with an invitation for him."

The fiends rushed in to report, "There's an old man outside who says he's come from Heaven with an edict of invitation for you."

When Sun Wukong heard this he said, "I'm glad he's come. I expect he's that Great White Planet who came before. Although I wasn't given a decent job last time I went to Heaven, I did get up there and learn my way around. If it's him again, his intentions must be good." He told his commanders to put on a big display of banners and drums and to turn out a guard of honour to welcome him.

Then the Great Sage, wearing his helmet, his yellow robe over his armour, and his cloud−walking shoes, hurried out of the cave at the head of his monkey host, bowed in greeting, and shouted in a loud voice, "Please come in, venerable Planet. Forgive me for not being here to welcome you."

The Planet walked straight into the cave, stood facing the South and said, "Great Sage, when you left the Imperial Stables because you found the post too humble, the officials of that department naturally reported the matter to the Jade Emperor. The Jade Emperor decreed that all officials have to work their way up from the bottom, and asked why you objected to its being humble. After this Heavenly King Li took Nezha down to the lower world to do battle with you. Your divine powers, Great Sage, were more than they expected, and they suffered defeat. On their return to Heaven they reported that you had set up a banner and wanted to be a 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven'. All the generals wanted to punish you; but I, Great Sage, ran the risk of punishment by suggesting that the armies should not be called out, and that Your Majesty should be given a post instead.

The Jade Emperor approved my memorial, and that is why I have come here to invite you."

"I am most grateful for this honour after the trouble I caused you earlier," replied Sun Wukong, "but I am not sure whether there is such a title as 'Great Sage Equaling Heaven' in the upper world."

"After obtaining imperial approval for this title," said the Planet, "I came down bearing a decree. If anything goes wrong, I'll bear the responsibility."

A highly delighted Sun Wukong tried his hardest to persuade the Planet to stay to a banquet, but without success, so he went with him by propitious cloud to the Southern Gate of Heaven. The heavenly generals and soldiers all greeted them with respectfully folded arms, and they went straight to the Hall of Miraculous Mist. The Great White Planet did obeisance and said, "In obedience to the imperial edict your subject has summoned Sun Wukong, the Protector of the Horses, and he is present."

"Let Sun Wukong come forward," said the Jade Emperor. "We do now proclaim you Great Sage Equaling Heaven. Your rank is now very high. Let there be no more mischief from you." The monkey simply chanted "na-a-aw" to express his thanks to the Emperor. The Jade Emperor then ordered the two officials in charge of public works, Zhang and Lu, to build a residence for the Great Sage Equaling Heaven to the left of the Peach Orchard. In the residence there were to be two offices: a Tranquillity Office and a Calm Divinity Office. Both these offices were to have immortal clerks and senior and junior assistants. He then told the Star Lords of the Constellation Five to escort Sun Wukong to his post, and in addition gave him two bottles of imperial wine and ten golden flowers, and admonished him to settle down and keep out of mischief. The Monkey King accepted the order and went that same day with the Star Lords of the Constellation Five to his residence, where he opened the bottles of wine and drained them dry with the help of all present. He then saw the star officials off and returned to his own palace. From then on he lived in happiness and content, and enjoyed untrammelled pleasure in the Palace. Truly,

His immortal name was for ever inscribed in the register of eternal life,
To be transmitted for ten thousand ages, free of the wheel of rebirth.

Chapter 5

After Chaos Among the Peaches the Great Sage Steals the Pills
In the Revolt Against Heaven the Gods Capture the Demons

The story goes on to relate that the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, a mere monkey devil after all, was quite satisfied that his name was on the register of office without caring about the grading of his job and his own rank, or the size of his salary. The immortal clerks in the two offices in his residence were in constant attendance on him, he had three meals a day and a bed to sleep on at night, and he lived a free and easy life without worries. In his spare time he would visit the other palaces, get together with his old friends, and make new ones. When he saw the Three Pure Ones, he would address them as "venerable," and when he met the Four Emperors he called them "Your Majesty." He was on fraternal terms with the Nine Bright Shiners, the Generals of the Five Regions, the Twenty-Eight Constellations, the Four Great Heavenly Kings, the Gods of the Twelve Branches, the Five Ancients of the Five Regions, the star ministers of the whole sky, and the countless gods of the Milky Way. Today he would wander East, and tomorrow he would go West, coming and going by cloud, and never staying anywhere for long.

When the Jade Emperor was holding his morning court one day the Immortal Xu of Jingyang came forward from the body of officials, kowtowed, and suggested, "The Great Sage Equaling Heaven is spending his time in idle travel, and is making the acquaintance of all the stars in the sky, calling them all his friends irrespective of their rank. It would be as well to give him some responsibility, and prevent his idleness leading to trouble later on."

The Jade Emperor's response to this suggestion was to send for the Monkey King at once. He came in a cheerful mood and asked, "What promotion and reward have you summoned me here to receive, Your Majesty?" "Seeing that you are idle and have nothing to do," replied the Jade Emperor, "we are giving you a job. You are to administer the Peach Orchard, and you will give it your attention day and night." The Great Sage was overjoyed, and after expressing his thanks and chanting "na-a-aw" he withdrew. In his eagerness to be at work he went straight to the Peach Orchard to have a look round. When he got there he was stopped by a local tutelary god who asked him, "Where are you going, Great Sage?" "I've been put in charge of the Peach Orchard by the Jade Emperor, and I've come to inspect it." The local god hastened to greet him formally, and he called the men who weeded, brought water, looked after the trees, and swept the grounds to come and kowtow to the Great Sage.

When Sun Wukong was taken inside this is what he saw:

Charming Every tree.
Charming and luxuriant the full blossom;
Every tree weighed down with fruit.
The fruit−laden branches bend like carding−bows;
The blossoming trees are covered with powder and rouge.
Always blossoming, always in fruit, they are ripe for a thousand years;
They know no summer or winter, but linger for ever.
The early ripeners
Look red−faced and tipsy;
The ones still growing
Are green in stalk and skin.
When the dew forms, their flesh has a touch of blue,
While the sun picks out their vermilion beauty.
Below the trees exotic flowers grow,
Bright and unfading throughout the year.
On either side stand towers and pavilions,
And a rainbow always arches the sky.
These are not the common breeds of the Dark Earth Capital,
But are tended by the Queen Mother of the Jade Pool.

After taking a good look at this the Great Sage asked the local god, "How many of these trees are there?" "Three thousand six hundred all together," the local god replied. "The ones growing at the front have tiny blossoms and small fruits, and they ripen every three thousand years. Anyone who eats them becomes an Immortal and understands the Way, and his body becomes both light and strong. The twelve hundred in the middle have multiple blossoms and sweet fruits, and ripen every six thousand years; whoever eats them can fly and enjoy eternal youth. The back twelve hundred are streaked with purple and have pale yellow stones. They ripen once every nine thousand years, and anyone who eats them becomes as eternal as Heaven and Earth, as long−lived as the Sun and Moon." The Great Sage was beside himself with joy on learning this, and that day he checked the number of the trees and looked over the buildings in the orchard before going back to his residence. From then on he went to admire them every three or four days. He dropped his friends, and made no more pleasure jaunts.

One day he noticed that the peaches near the end of the branches of one old tree were all but ripe, and he felt like trying one; but as the local god, the workmen, and the immortal clerks from his residence were close on his heels it was impossible. Suddenly he had an idea, and he said, "Go and wait for me outside the gates while I take a nap in this summer−house."

All the Immortals thereupon withdrew, and the Monkey King took off his official hat and clothes, climbed one of the bigger trees, and chose some large, ripe peaches. When he had picked a good number he sat at his ease in the branches and ate his fill of them, then jumped down from the tree, pinned on his hat, put on his clothes, and shouted for all his attendants to go back to his residence with him. Two or three days later he thought of another trick to steal some more peaches, and he ate his fill of them.

One day the Queen Mother arranged a banquet, opening many precious pavilions for a feast of peaches by the Jade Pool. She sent the Red Fairy, the Blue Fairy, the White Fairy, the Black Fairy, the Purple Fairy, the Yellow Fairy, and the Green Fairy to the Peach Orchard with their baskets to pick peaches for the feast. The seven fairies went straight to the orchard gates, the workmen of the orchard and the immortal superintendents of the two offices of the Equaling Heaven Residence were guarding the gate.

The fairies went up to them and said, "We have come on the orders of the Queen Mother to pick peaches for a feast." "Wait a moment please, Immortal Beauties," said the local god. "Things are different this year. The Jade Emperor has appointed the Great Sage Equaling Heaven to be the guardian of this orchard, and we must ask him before we can open the orchard to you." "Where is the Great Sage?" the fairies asked, and the local god replied, "Inside the orchard. As he was feeling tired he is having a nap by himself in a summerhouse." "In that case, please find him without delay," requested the fairies, and the local god took them into the orchard. But all they could find of him in the summerhouse were his hat and clothes. They had no idea where he could have gone, and looked everywhere without success. The Great Sage had in fact made himself only two inches long after eating some of the peaches for fun, and he was sleeping under a large leaf at the top of one of the big trees.

"We have come by decree, and we can't go back empty−handed, although the Great Sage is nowhere to be found," said the fairies. One of the immortal superintendents who was standing nearby replied, "As you Immortal Beauties have come by order of the Queen Mother, we must not delay you. Our Great Sage is always wandering off, so I expect that he has gone away to visit some of his friends. You had better pick the peaches; it will be all right if we inform him."

The fairies did as he suggested and went into the orchard to pick peaches. First they filled two baskets from the trees in front, and then they picked three basketfuls from the trees in the middle; but when they came to the trees at the back, they saw that peaches and blossoms were few and far between. Only a few unripe fruits with furry stalks and green skins were left. All the ripe ones had been eaten up by the Monkey King. The seven fairies looked everywhere, but all they could see was a single red and white peach on a Southern branch. The Blue Fairy pulled the branch down, the Red Fairy picked the peach, and then they let the branch go again. This woke up the Great Sage, who had changed himself into this peach to take a nap on this branch. He resumed his own form, took his gold−banded cudgel from his ear, shook it till it was as thick as a ricebowl, and shouted at them, "Where are you from, you thieving fiends?" The seven fairies fell on their knees in confusion.

"Please don't be angry with us, Great Sage. We're not fiends but seven fairies sent by Her Majesty the Queen Mother of the West to pick peaches of immortality and open the precious halls here for a Feast of Peaches. When we arrived here we saw the local god and other deities of the place, but we could not find you, Great Sage. We could not delay carrying out the Queen Mother's orders, so we went ahead and picked the peaches without waiting for you, Great Sage. We very much hope that you will forgive us."

These words turned the Great Sage's bad mood into a good one, and he said, "Please rise, Fairy Beauties. Who is the Queen Mother inviting to this feast?" "There are old rules about who attends: The Buddha of the Western Heaven, Bodhisattvas, holy monks, Arhats, the Guanyin of the South Pole, the Merciful and Sage Emperor of the East, the Venerable Immortals of the Ten Continents and the Three Islands, the Mystic Divinity of the North Pole, and the Great Yellow−horned Immortal of the Yellow Pole at the Centre. These make up the Five Venerable Ones of the Five Regions. There will also be the Star Lords of the Five Constellation; the Three Pure Ones, the Four Emperors and the Heavenly Immortal of the Great Monad from the Eight High Caves; the Jade Emperor, the immortals of the Nine Mounds, and the gods of the Seas and Mountains and the Ruler of the Nether World from the Eight Lower Caves; and the terrestrial deities. All the major and minor gods of all the halls and palaces will come to the Feast of Peaches."

"Will I be invited?" asked the Great Sage with an ingratiating smile.

"Not as far as we've heard," the fairies replied.

"I'm the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, so why shouldn't I be asked?" said the Great Sage.

"That was what happened before: we don't know about this time," the fairies replied.

"You're right," he said. "Just wait here while I go and find out whether I'm invited."

Splendid Great Sage. Making a magic with his hands as he spoke the words of the spell, he said to the fairies, "Stay where you are! Stay where you are!" As this was an immobilizing spell, the seven fairies were left standing in a daze under the peach tree with their eyes wide open as the Great Sage leapt out of the orchard on a somersault cloud and headed for the Jade Pool. As he traveled he saw that

The sky shimmered with auspicious light
As clouds of many colours streamed across it.
The white stork's cry made the heavens shake;
A thousand leaves grew on the purple asphodel.
Amid it all an Immortal appeared,
Carrying himself with heaven-sent elegance,
As he danced on the rainbow, cloaked by the Milky Way,
With a talisman at his waist to ward off birth and death.
His name was Bare-Foot Immortal,
And he was going to the feast of longevity-giving peaches.

As the Bare-foot Immortal saw him, the Great Sage lowered his head and thought of a plan by which to trick the Immortal and get to the banquet himself.

"Where are you going, reverend sir?" he asked; and the Immortal replied, "I'm going to the Peach Banquet by the invitation of the Queen Mother."

"There is something you do not know, venerable sir," said the Great Sage. "As my somersault cloud is so fast, the Jade Emperor has sent me everywhere to tell all you gentlemen to go to the Hall of Universal Brightness for a ceremony before going on to the banquet."

As the Immortal was an open and upright man, he took this lie for the truth, but wondered, "The thanksgiving ceremony is usually held by the Jade Pool, so why are we having the ceremony in the Hall of Universal Brightness before going to the Jade Pool for the banquet?" Nevertheless, he turned his propitious cloud around and went to the Hall of Universal Brightness.

As the Great Sage rode his cloud he said a spell, shook himself, took the form of the Bare-foot Immortal, and hurried to the Jade Pool. He reached the pavilion there a moment later, stopped his cloud, and went quietly inside. He saw

Fabulous perfumes coiling,
A confusion of auspicious clouds;
The jade tower set with color,
The precious pavilions scattering mists;
The phoenix soars till almost lost to view,
And jeweled flowers seem to rise and fall.
Above a nine-phoenix screen
A rainbow stool of the eight precious things,
A coloured golden table,

Green jade bowls with a thousand flowers.
On the table were dragon livers and marrow of phoenix bone,
Bears' paws and apes' lips−−
A hundred different dishes, and all of them good;
Rare fruits and fine delicacies, every one unique.

Everything was neatly set out, but no Immortals had yet arrived. The Great Sage had not finished looking when he smelt wine; and as he whirled round he saw under a portico to the right several immortal officials in charge of brewing liquor with some workmen who stirred the lees, a number of novices who carried water and some boys who looked after the fires. They were washing the vats and scrubbing the pots, having made jade liquor and a fragrant fermentation of the lees. The Great Sage could not stop himself from drooling, and he longed to drink some, but unfortunately all those people were there. So he performed a spell by pulling several hairs from his body, chewing them up, spitting them up, saying the magic words, and shouting "Change"; whereupon the hairs turned into sleep insects, which flew into the faces of all the liquor−makers. Watch them as their hands go limp, their heads droop, their eyes close, and they drop their symbols of office and all fall asleep. Whereupon the Great Sage grabbed the rare delicacies and exotic foods, then went under the portico and drank from the vats and pots until he was completely drunk.

Only then did he think, "This won't do at all. When the guests come for the banquet they'll be furious with me, and I'll be for it if I'm caught. I'd better get back to the Residence as soon as I can and sleep it off." Our dear Great Sage staggered and swayed, charging about all over the place under the influence of the liquor, and going the wrong way. He arrived not at the Equaling Heaven Residence but at the Tushita Heavenly Palace. As soon as he saw this he sobered up and said to himself, "The Tushita Palace is the highest of the thirty−three heavens, where Lord Lao Zi of the Great Monad reigns. However did I get here? Never mind, I've always wanted to see that old chap, and I've never managed to come here before. I might as well go and have a look at him now that I'm passing this way."

He straightened his clothes and rushed in, but did not see Lord Lao Zi. There was no sign of anyone. This was because Lao Zi and the Ancient Buddha Dipamkara were expounding the Way from a red dais in a triple−storied pavilion, and all the immortal boys, generals, officials and petty functionaries were standing to right and left listening to the lecture. The Great Sage went straight to the room in which the elixir was kept, and although he could not find Lao Zi there he saw that there was a small fire in the stove beside the range over which pills were made. On either side of the stove were five gourds, full of golden pills of refined elixir.

"This is the Immortals' greatest treasure," he exclaimed in delight. "I've wanted to refine some of these golden pills to save people with ever since I understood the Way and mastered the principle of the correspondence of the Esoteric and Exoteric, but I've never had time to come here. Today I'm in luck−−I've found them. As Lao Zi isn't here I'll try a few." He emptied the gourds of their contents and ate up all the pills as if he were eating fried beans.

Before long he was full of pills and quite sober. "This is terrible," he thought, "this is a colossal disaster. If the Jade Emperor is shocked by this, I'm done for. I must get out of here. I'd be much better off as a king in the lower world."

He rushed out of the Tushita Palace, avoiding his usual route. Using a spell to make himself invisible, he left by the West Gate of Heaven, and went straight down to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit by cloud. When he got there he saw flags, banners, spears and halberds gleaming in the sun: the four Stalwart Generals and the seventy−two kings of the monsters were holding military exercises.

"Children, I'm back," shouted the Great Sage in a loud voice, and all the fiends dropped their weapons and fell to their knees.

"You don't care, do you, Great Sage?" they said. "It's been so long since you left us, and you never came back to see us."

"I haven't been long, I haven't been long," protested the Great Sage, and as they talked they walked into the innermost part of the cave. When the four Stalwart General's had tidied the place up and made him sit down, they kowtowed to him and asked, "What office did you hold, Great Sage, during your century and more in Heaven?"

The Great Sage laughed and said, "As far as I can remember it was only six months, so why do you say it was over a century?"

"A day in Heaven is the same as a year on earth," the Stalwart Generals replied.

"I was lucky this time," said the Great Sage. "The Jade Emperor took a liking to me and ennobled me as the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. He had an Equaling Heaven Residence built for me, complete with a Tranquillity Office and a Calm Divinity Office with Immortal functionaries, attendants and guards. Later on, when he saw that I had nothing to do, he put me in charge of the Peach Orchard. Recently the Queen Mother Goddess gave a Peach Banquet, but she didn't invite me. Instead of waiting for an invitation, I went to the Jade Pool and stole all the immortal food and drink. I staggered away from the Jade Pool and blundered into Lord Lao Zi's palace, and there I ate up his five gourds of pills of immortality. Then I got out through the heavenly gates and came here because I was scared that the Jade Emperor was going to punish me."

All the fiends were delighted with what they heard, and they laid on liquor and fruit with which to welcome him back.

They filled a stone bowl with coconut toddy and handed it to him, but when he tasted it the Great Sage grimaced and said, "It's awful, it's awful."

Two of his Stalwart Generals, Beng and Ba, explained, "You don't find coconut toddy very tasty because you have drunk immortal liquor and eaten immortal food in the heavenly palace, Great Sage. But as the saying goes, 'Sweet or not, it's water from home.'"

To this the Great Sage replied, "And all of you, whether related to me or not, are from my home. When I was enjoying myself beside the Jade Pool today I saw jars and jars of jade liquor under a portico there. As none of you have ever tasted it I'll go and pinch you a few jars; then you can each have a little drink, and live for ever." All the monkeys were beside themselves with glee. The Great Sage then went out of the cave, turned a somersault, made himself invisible, and went straight to the Peach Banquet. As he went through the gates of the Jade Pool he saw that the men who made the wine, stirred the lees, carried the water, and looked after the fire were still snoring away. He tucked two big jars of wine under his arms, took two more in his hands, then turned his cloud round and went back to have a feast of immortal wine with the monkey masses in the cave.

They all drank several cups and were very happy, but we will not go into this.

The story returns to the seven fairies, who were only able to free themselves a whole day after Sun Wukong had immobilized them with his magic. They picked up their baskets and went back to report to the Queen Mother that they were late because the Great Sage Equaling Heaven had held them there by magic. "How many peaches did you pick?" the Queen Mother asked.

"Two baskets of little ones and three baskets of medium ones. But when we got to the back we could not find a single big one; we think that they were all eaten by the Great Sage. While we were looking for some the Great Sage suddenly appeared, and he beat and tortured us to make us tell him who had been invited to the banquet. After we had told him he immobilized us there, and we don't know where he went. We only came round and freed ourselves a moment ago."

On hearing this the Queen Mother went to see the Jade Emperor and gave him a full account of what had happened. Before she had finished, the liquor-makers arrived with their immortal officials to report that an unknown person had thrown the Grand Peach Banquet into confusion and stolen the jade liquor as well as the precious delicacies of a hundred flavors. Then came Four Heavenly Teachers to announce that the Supreme Patriarch of the Way, Lao Zi, had arrived.

The Jade Emperor went out with the Queen Mother to meet him, and after doing obeisance Lao Zi said, "I had refined some Golden Pills of the Nine Transformations in my palace for a Feast of Elixir Pills with Your Majesty, but a thief has stolen them. This is what I have come to report to Your Majesty." This news made the Jade Emperor tremble with fear.

Not long afterwards the immortal administrators from the Equaling Heaven Residence came to kowtow and report: "The Great Sage Sun Wukong abandoned his post and went wandering off yesterday. He has not come back yet and we do not know where he has gone." The Jade Emperor, now more suspicious than ever, then saw the Bare-Foot Immortal bow his head to the ground.

"Your subject was going to the banquet on a summons from the Queen Mother," he reported, "when I

happened to meet the Great Sage Equaling Heaven. He told me, O Lord of Ten Thousand Years, that you had issued a decree ordering him to tell all the rest of us to go to the Hall of Universal Brightness for a ceremony before going to the banquet. Your subject went back to the Hall of Universal Brightness as he had told me to, but as I did not see the Imperial Dragon and Phoenix Chariot outside I hurried here to await orders."

"This wretch has the impudence to invent fraudulent decrees and deceive eminent ministers," exclaimed the Jade Emperor with anger and astonishment. "The Miraculous Investigator is to find out at once what he has been up to."

The Miraculous Investigator left the palace in obedience to the edict, and by making thorough enquiries he found out all the details of what had happened.

"The wrecker of the Heavenly Palace was Sun Wukong," he reported, and he went on to give a full account. The Jade Emperor was furiously angry, and he ordered the Four Great Heavenly Kings along with Heavenly King Li and Prince Nezha to mobilize the Twenty-eight Constellations, the Nine Bright Shiners, the Twelve Gods of the Twelve Branches, the Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions, the Four Duty Gods, the Constellations of the East and West, the Gods of the North and South, the Deities of the Five Mountains and the Four Rivers, the star ministers of all Heaven, and a total of a hundred thousand heavenly soldiers. They were to descend to the lower world with eighteen heaven-and-earth nets, surround the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, and capture that wretch for punishment. The gods called out their troops at once, and left the heavenly palace.

A gusty sandstorm blotted out the heavens,
Purple fog threw the earth into darkness.

Just because the monkey fiend offended the Supreme Emperor
Heavenly hosts were sent down to the mortal dust.
The Four Great Heavenly Kings,
The Revealers of the Truth of the Five Regions.
The Four Great Heavenly Kings held the supreme command,
And the Revealers controlled the soldiers' movements.
Li the Pagoda Carrier commanded the central corps,
Nezha the deadly led the van.
The star Rahu ordered the leading rands,
And the star Ketu towered behind.
The Sun revealed his divinity,
And radiance shone from the Moon.
The stars of the Five Elements were mighty in valour,
And the Nine Bright Shiners were fond of battle.
The stars of the Branches Zi, Wu, Mao and You,
Were all great heavenly warriors.
The Five Plagues and the Five Mountains were drawn up on the East and West,
While the Six Ding and Six Jia marched to right and left.
The Dragon Gods of the Four Rivers stood above and below,
And the Twenty−eight Constellations were drawn up in serried ranks:
Horn, Gullet, Base, and Chamber were the officers commanding,
Strider, Harvester, Stomach, and Mane wheeled and soared;
Dipper, Ox, Woman, Barrens, Roof, House, and Wall, Heart, Tail, and
Winnower−−all able stars−−
Well, Ghost, Willow, Spread, Whig and Axletree
Wielded their swords and spears, showed forth their power,
Halted their clouds and descended in mists to the mortal world,
Pitching camp before the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.
There is a poem that runs:
Many the transformations of the heaven−born Monkey King
Happy in his lair after stealing the pills and wine.
Just because he wrecked the banquet of peaches,
A hundred thousand heavenly troops now spread their nets.

Heavenly King Li gave the order for the heavenly soldiers to pitch camp and throw a watertight cordon round the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. Above and below they spread eighteen heaven−and−earth nets, and the Nine Bright Shiners were sent out to start the battle. They took their soldiers to the outside of the cave, where they saw the monkeys, big and small, leaping and fooling around.

The star officers shouted in harsh voices, "Little goblins, where's that Great Sage of yours? We are gods, sent from the upper world to subdue your mutinous Great Sage. Tell him to surrender at once−−−and if there's so much as a hint of a 'no' from him, we will exterminate every last one of you."

The little monkeys went rushing in to report, "Great Sage, a disaster, a disaster. There are nine evil gods outside who say they've been sent from the upper world to subdue you."

The Great Sage, who was just then sharing the immortal liquor with the seventy−two kings of the monsters and his four Stalwart Generals, paid no attention to the report, saying:

"Today we have wine so today we celebrate:

To hell with what's happening outside the gate."

But before the words were out of his mouth another group of little devils came in. "Those nine evil gods are using foul and provocative language to challenge us to fight," they announced.

"Never mind them," said the Great Sage with a laugh.

"With verse and wine we're happy today;

Who cares when fame will come our way?"

But before these words were out of his mouth yet another group of devils came rushing in. "Sir, those nine evil gods have smashed the gates and are charging in."

"The stinking gods!" exploded the Great Sage, "What nerve! I never wanted a fight with them, so why should they come here to push us around?" He thereupon ordered the One−horned Monster King to lead the seventy−two monster kings into battle while he followed them with the four Stalwart Generals. The monster king hastily assembled the devil soldiers and sallied forth to meet the enemy. They were all stopped by a charge by the Nine Bright Shiners, who held the head of the iron bridge so that no one could enter or leave. During the tumult the Great Sage came on the scene, and shouting "Make way!" he raised his iron cudgel, shook it till it was as thick as a bowl and twelve feet long, and struck and parried as he came charging out. The Nine Bright Shiners, who were no match for him, fell back.

"You reckless Protector of the Horses," they shouted when they were back in the safety of their own position.

"You have committed the most terrible crimes. You stole the peaches and the wine, wrecked the Peach Banquet, and pilfered the immortality pills of Lord Lao Zi. On top of all this you brought some of the immortal liquor you stole back here. Don't you realize that you have piled crime upon crime?" The Great Sage laughed.

"It's true, it's true," he said, "but what are you going to do about it?"

"In obedience to a golden edict of the Jade Emperor," the Nine Bright Shiners replied, "we have led out troops here to subdue you. Submit at once, or else all these creatures of yours will have to pay with their lives. If you refuse, we shall trample this mountain flat and turn your cave upside−down."

"You hairy gods," roared the Great Sage in a fury, "what magic powers have you got to let you talk so big? Clear off, or I'll give you a taste of my cudgel." The Nine Bright Shiners did a war−dance together, which did not frighten the Handsome Monkey King in the least. He whirled his gold−banded cudgel, parrying to right and left, and fought the Nine Bright Shiners till their muscles were weak and their strength was gone; then each of them broke ranks and fled, dragging their weapons behind them. They rushed to the command post of the central corps and reported to the Pagoda−Bearing Heavenly King Li that the Monkey King was so ferocious that they had fled from the battlefield, unable to defeat him. Heavenly King Li then sent the Four Heavenly Kings and the Twenty−eight Constellations into battle. The Great Sage, not at all frightened at this, ordered the One−horned Demon King, the seventy−two kings of the monsters, and the four Stalwart Generals to draw up their line of battle outside the gates of the cave. The ensuing melee was really terrifying.

Howling winds,
Dark, sinister clouds.
On one side flags and standards colorfully flying,
On the other side the gleam of spears and halberds.

Round helmets shine,
Layered armour gleams.
The shining round helmets reflect the sun,
Like silver boulders reaching to the sky;
Gleaming layers of armour are built into a wall
Like a mountain of ice weighing down the earth.
Long−handled swords
Flash through the clouds like lightning;
Paper−white spears
Pierce mists and fogs;
Heaven−shaped halberds,
Tiger−eye chains,
Bristling like a field of hemp;
Bronze swords,
And four−brightness spears
Drawn up like a dense forest.
Bows and crossbows, eagle−feathered arrows,
Short clubs and snaky spears to terrify the soul.
Wielding his single As−You−Will cudgel,
The Great Sage fights against the heavenly gods.
Such is the slaughter that no bird flies over it;
And tigers and wolves flee in terror.
The swirling stones and clouds of sand make everything dark,
The dirt and the dust blot out the heavens.
The clash of arms startles the universe
As the battle strikes awe into gods and demons.

The battle started in the morning and went on till the sun set behind the mountains in the West. By then the One−horned Demon King and the seventy−two kings of the monsters had all been captured by the heavenly hosts. Only the four Stalwart Generals and the monkeys had got away, and they were now hiding in the innermost recesses of the Water Curtain Cave. The Great Sage's solitary cudgel had fought off the Four Heavenly Kings, Li the Pagoda−bearer and Prince Nezha, who were all in the sky. After the battle had gone on for a long time the Great Sage saw that night was drawing on, so he plucked out one of his hairs, munched it up, spat out the pieces and shouted, "Change!" They changed into thousands of Great Sages, all with gold−banded cudgels, who forced Prince Nezha and the five Heavenly Kings to withdraw.

After winning this victory the Great Sage put back his hair and hurried back to the cave, where the four Stalwart Generals at once led the monkeys out to kowtow at the head of the iron bridge to welcome him back. They sobbed three times and then laughed three times. "Why are you laughing and crying at the sight of me?" the Great Sage asked. "When we led all the commanders into battle against the heavenly kings this morning," replied the Stalwart Generals, "the seventy−two kings of the monsters and the One−horned Demon King were all captured by the gods, and we had to flee for our lives. That is why we cried. We laughed because you, Great Sage, have come back victorious and unharmed."

To this the Great Sage replied, "Victory and defeat are all the soldier's lot. As the ancients said, 'To kill ten thousand of the enemy you must lose three thousand of your own.' Anyhow, the officers of ours who were captured were all tigers, leopards, wolves, badgers, river−deer, foxes, and raccoon−dogs. Not one of our own kind was even wounded, so there's no need for us to be bothered about it. But although I forced the enemy to withdraw by dividing up my body through magic, they're still encamped at the foot of our mountain, so we'll have to remain on our guard. Meanwhile we must eat a good meal and get a good night's sleep to build up our energy. Tomorrow morning I'll use powerful magic to capture those heavenly

generals and avenge our people." After the four Stalwart Generals and the other monkey commanders had drunk several cups of coconut toddy, they went to bed with their worries calmed.

When the four Heavenly Kings had withdrawn their troops and ended the battle, those who had distinguished themselves reported what they had done. Some had captured tigers and leopards, some lions and elephants, and others wolves and raccoon−dogs, but not one single monkey goblin had been taken. Then they built a mighty stockade around their camp. Commanders who had distinguished themselves wee rewarded, and the soldiers who made up the heaven−and−earth nets were ordered to surround the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, holding bells and shouting, ready for a great battle the next day. Every man heard the orders, and they were strictly obeyed. Indeed:

A wicked monkey made chaos, shocking heaven and earth,
So they spread their nets and watched by night and day.

Listen to the next installment to hear how he was dealt with the following morning.

Week 7: Romance of the Three Kingdoms

Romance of the Three Kingdoms written by Luo Guanzhong in the 14th century, is a Chinese historical novel based upon events in the turbulent years near the end of the Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms era of China, starting in 169 and ending with the reunification of the land in 280.

Cao Cao declares himself Chancellor and leads his troops to attack southern China after uniting the north. He is defeated twice at Xinye by Liu Bei's forces but Liu loses the city as well. Liu leads his men and the civilians of Xinye on an exodus southwards and they arrive at Jiangxia where Liu establishes a foothold against Cao Cao.

To resist Cao Cao, Liu Bei sends Zhuge Liang to persuade Sun Quan to form an alliance. Zhuge succeeds in his diplomatic mission and remains in Jiangdong as a temporary advisor to Sun Quan. Sun places Zhou Yu in command of the armies of Jiangdong (Eastern Wu) in preparation for an upcoming war with Cao Cao. Zhou feels that Zhuge will become a future threat to Eastern Wu and he tries to kill Zhuge on a few occasions but he fails and decides to co-operate with Zhuge for the time being. Cao Cao is defeated at the Battle of Red Cliffs by the allied forces of Sun Quan and Liu Bei and he is forced to retreat north.

Chapter 45

At The Three Gorges, Cao Cao Loses Soldiers;
In The Gathering Of Heroes, Jiang Gan Is Trapped.

Zhou Yu was very annoyed by the words of Zhuge Jin, and a fierce hatred for Zhuge Liang took root in his heart. He nourished a secret resolve to make away with Zhuge Liang. He continued his preparations for war, and when the troops were all mustered and ready, he went in for a farewell interview with his lord. "You go on first, Noble Sir," said Sun Quan. "I will then march to support you." Zhou Yu took his leave and then, with Cheng Pu and Lu Su, marched out with the army. He invited Zhuge Liang to accompany the expedition, and when Zhuge Liang cheerfully accepted, the four embarked in the same ship. They set sail, and the fleet made for Xiakou. About twenty miles from Three Gorges the fleet anchored near the shore, and Zhou Yu built a stockade on the bank near the middle of their line with the Western Hills as a support. Other camps were made near his. Zhuge Liang, however, took up his quarters in a small ship.

When the camp dispositions were complete, Zhou Yu sent to request Zhuge Liang to come and give him advice. Zhuge Liang came. After the salutations were ended, Zhou Yu said, "Cao Cao, though he had fewer troops than Yuan Shao, nevertheless overcame Yuan Shao because he followed the advice given by Xun You to destroy Yuan Shao's supplies at Wuchao. Now Cao Cao has over eight hundred thousand troops while I have but fifty or sixty thousand. In order to defeat him, his supplies must be destroyed first. I have found out that the main depot is at the Iron Pile Mountains. As you have lived hereabout, you know the topography quite well, and I wish to entrust the task of cutting off supplies to you and your colleagues Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhao Yun. I will assist you with a thousand soldiers. I wish you to start without delay. In this way we can best serve our masters." Zhuge Liang saw through this at once. He thought to himself, "This is a ruse in revenge for my not having been persuaded to enter the service of the South Land. If I refuse, I shall be laughed at. So I will do as he asks and trust to find some means of deliverance from the evil he intends." Therefore Zhuge Liang accepted the task with alacrity, much to the joy of Zhou Yu.

After the leader of the expedition had taken his leave, Lu Su went to Zhou Yu secretly and said, "Why have you set him this task?" "Because I wish to compass his death without appearing ridiculous. I hope to get him killed by the hand of Cao Cao and prevent his doing further mischief." Lu Su left and went to see Zhuge Liang to find out if he suspected anything. Lu Su found him looking quite unconcerned and getting the soldiers ready to march. Unable to let Zhuge Liang go without a warning, however, Lu Su put a tentative question, "Do you think this expedition will succeed?" Zhuge Liang laughingly replied, "I am an adept at all sorts of fighting, with foot, horse, and chariots on land and marines on the water. There is no doubt of my success. I am not like you and your friend, only capable in one direction." "What do you mean by our being capable only in one direction?" said Lu Su. "I have heard the street children in your country singing: "To lay an ambush, hold a pass, Lu Su is the man to choose; But when you on the water fight, Zhou Yu is the man to use. "You are only fit for ambushes and guarding passes on land, just as Zhou Yu only understands fighting on the water," said Zhuge Liang. Lu Su carried this story to Zhou Yu, which only incensed him the more against Zhuge Liang.

"How dare he flout me, saying I cannot fight a land battle? I will not let him go. I will go myself with ten thousand troops and cut off Cao Cao's supplies." Lu Su went back and told this to Zhuge Liang, who smiled and said, "Zhou Yu only wanted me to go on this expedition because he wanted Cao Cao to kill me. And so I teased him a little. But he cannot bear that. Now is the critical moment, and Marquis Sun Quan and my master must act in harmony if we are to succeed. If each one tries to harm the other, the whole scheme will fail. Cao Cao is no fool, and it is he who usually attack enemies through cutting off their supplies. Do you not think Cao Cao has already taken double precautions against any surprise of his own depot? If Zhou Yu tries, he will be taken prisoner. What he ought to do is to bring about a decisive naval battle, whereby to dishearten the northern soldiers, and then find some other means to defeat them utterly. If you could persuade him what his best course was, it would be goodl."

Without loss of time, Lu Su went to Zhou Yu to relate what Zhuge Liang had told him. Zhou Yu shook his head when he heard it and beat the ground with his foot, saying, "This man is far too clever. He beats me ten to one. He will have to be done away with, or the South Land will suffer." Said Lu Su, "This is the moment to use people. You must think of the country's good first of all. When once Cao Cao is defeated, you may do as you please." Zhou Yu had to confess the reasonableness of this.

Liu Bei had ordered his nephew Liu Qi to hold Jiangxia, while he and the bulk of the army returned to Xiakou. Thence he saw the opposite bank thick with banners and flags and glittering with every kind of arms and armors. He knew then that the expedition from the South Land had started. So he moved all his force from Jiangxia to Fankou. Then he assembled his officers and said to them, "Zhuge Liang went to Wu some time ago, and no word has come from him, so I know not how the business stands. Will anyone volunteer to go to find out?" "I will go," said Mi Zhu. So presents were prepared and gifts of flesh and wine, and Mi Zhu prepared to journey to the South Land on the pretext of offering a congratulatory feast to the army.

He set out in a small ship and went down river. He stopped opposite the camp, and the soldiers reported his arrival to Zhou Yu, who ordered him to be brought in. Mi Zhu bowed low and expressed the respect which Liu Bei had for Zhou Yu and offered the various gifts. The ceremony of reception was followed by a banquet in honor of the guest. Mi Zhu said, "Zhuge Liang has been here a long time, and I desire that he may return with me." "Zhuge Liang is making plans with me, and I could not let him return," said Zhou Yu. "I also wish to see Liu Bei that we may make joint plans. But when one is at the head of a great army, one cannot get away even for a moment. If your master would only come here, it would be very gracious on his part." Mi Zhu agreed that Liu Bei might come and presently took his leave.

Then Lu Su asked Zhou Yu, "What is your reason for desiring Liu Bei to come?" "Liu Bei is the one bold and dangerous man and must be removed. I am taking this opportunity to persuade him to come. When he shall be slain, a great danger will cease to threaten our interests." Lu Su tried to dissuade him from this scheme, but Zhou Yu was deaf to all Lu Su said. Zhou Yu even issued orders: "Arrange half a hundred executioners to be ready to hide within the lining of the tent if Liu Bei decides to come; and when I drop a cup, that will be a signal for them to fall on and slay him."

Mi Zhu returned and told Liu Bei that his presence was desired by Zhou Yu. Suspecting nothing, Liu Bei at once ordered them to prepare a fast vessel to take him without loss of time. Guan Yu was opposed to his going, saying, "Zhou Yu is artful and treacherous, and there is no news from Zhuge Liang. Pray think more carefully." Liu Bei replied, "I have joined my forces to theirs in this attack on our common enemy. If Zhou Yu wishes to see me and I refuse to go, it is a betrayal. Nothing will succeed if both sides nourish suspicions." "If you have finally decided to go, then will I go with you," said Guan Yu. "And I also," cried Zhang Fei. But Liu Bei said, "Let Guan Yu come with me while you and Zhao Yun keep guard. Jian Yong will hold Exian. I shall not be away long."

So leaving these orders, Liu Bei embarked with Guan Yu on a small boat. The escort did not exceed twenty. The light craft traveled very quickly down the river. Liu Bei rejoiced greatly at the sight of the war vessels in tiers by the bank, the soldiers in their breastplates, and all the pomp and panoply of war. All was in excellent order. As soon as he arrived, the guards ran to tell Zhou Yu. "How many ships has he?" asked Zhou Yu. They replied, "Only one; and the escort is only about a score." "His fate is sealed," said Zhou Yu. Zhou Yu sent for the executioners and placed them in hiding between the outer and inner tents, and when all was arranged for the assassination he contemplated, he went out to receive his visitor. Liu Bei came with his brother and escort into the midst of the army to the Commander's tent. After the salutations, Zhou Yu wished Liu Bei to take the upper seat, but he declined saying, "General, you are famous throughout all the empire, while I am a nobody. Do not overwhelm me with too great deference." So they took the positions of simple friends, and refreshments were brought in.

Now by chance Zhuge Liang came on shore and heard that his master had arrived and was with the Commander-in-Chief. The news gave Zhuge Liang a great shock, and he said to himself, "What is to be done now?" He made his way to the reception tent and stole a look therein. He saw murder written on Zhou Yu's countenance and noted the assassins hidden within the walls of the tent. Then he got a look at Liu Bei, who was laughing and talking quite unconcernedly. But when he noticed the redoubtable figure of Guan Yu near his master's side, he became quite calm and contented. "My lord faces no danger," said Zhuge Liang, and he went away to the river bank to await the end of the interview.

Meanwhile the banquet of welcome proceeded. After the wine had gone around several times, Zhou Yu picked up a cup to give the signal agreed upon. But at that moment Zhou Yu saw so fierce a look upon the face of the trusty henchman who stood, sword in hand, behind his guest, that Zhou Yu hesitated and hastily asked who he was. "That is my brother, Guan Yu," replied Liu Bei. Zhou Yu, quite startled, said, "Is he the slayer of Yan Liang and Wen Chou?" "Exactly; he it is," replied Liu Bei. The sweat of fear broke out all over Zhou Yu's body and trickled down his back. Then he poured out a cup of wine and presented it to Guan Yu. Just then Lu Su came in, and Liu Bei said to him, "Where is Zhuge Liang? I would trouble you to ask him to come." "Wait till we have defeated Cao Cao," said Zhou Yu, "then you shall see him." Liu Bei dared not repeat his request, but Guan Yu gave him a meaningful look which Liu Bei understood and rose, saying, "I would take leave now. I will come again to congratulate you when the enemy has been defeated and your success shall be complete." Zhou Yu did not press him to remain, but escorted him to the great gates of the camp, and

Liu Bei left.

When he reached the river bank, they found Zhuge Liang awaiting them in their boat. Liu Bei was exceedingly pleased, but Zhuge Liang said, "Sir, do you know in how great danger you were today?" Suddenly sobered, Liu Bei said, "No; I did not think of danger." "If Guan Yu had not been there, you would have been killed," said Zhuge Liang. Liu Bei, after a moment's reflection, saw that it was true. He begged Zhuge Liang to return with him to Fankou, but Zhuge Liang refused. "I am quite safe," said Zhuge Liang. "Although I am living in the tiger's mouth, I am as steady as the Taishan Mountains. Now, my lord, return and prepare your ships and soldiers. On the twentieth day of the eleventh month, send Zhao Yun with a small ship to the south bank to wait for me. Be sure there is no miscarriage." "What are your intentions?" said Liu Bei. "When the southeast wind begins, I shall return." Liu Bei would have questioned him further, but Zhuge Liang pressed him to go. So the boat started up river again, while Zhuge Liang returned to his temporary lodging.

The boat had not proceeded far when appeared a small fleet of fifty ships sweeping down with the current, and in the prow of the leading vessel stood a tall figure armed with a spear. Guan Yu was ready to fight. But when they were near, they recognized that was Zhang Fei, who had come down fearing lest his brother might be in some difficulty from which the strong arm of Guan Yu might even be insufficient to rescue him. The three brothers thus returned together.

After Zhou Yu, having escorted Liu Bei to the gate of his camp, had returned to his quarters, Lu Su soon came to see him. "Then you had cajoled Liu Bei into coming, why did you not carry out your plan?" asked Lu Su. "Because of that Guan Yu. He is a very tiger, and he never left his brother for a moment. If anything had been attempted, he would certainly have had my life." Lu Su knew that Zhou Yu spoke the truth.

Then suddenly they announced a messenger with a letter from Cao Cao. Zhou Yu ordered them to bring him in and took the letter. But when he saw the superscription The First Minister of Han to Commander-in-Chief Zhou Yu, he fell into a frenzy of rage, tore the letter to fragments, and threw them on the ground. "To death with this fellow!" cried he. "When two countries are at war, their emissaries are not slain," said Lu Su. "Messengers are slain to show one's dignity and independence," replied Zhou Yu. The unhappy bearer of the letter was decapitated, and his head sent back to Cao Cao by the hands of his escort. Zhou Yu then decided to move. The van under Gan Ning was to advance, supported by two wings led by Han Dang and Jiang Qin. Zhou Yu would lead the center body in support. The next morning the early meal was eaten in the fourth watch, and the ships got under weigh in the fifth with a great beating of drums.

Cao Cao was greatly angered when he heard that his letter had been torn to fragments, and he resolved to attack forthwith. His advance was led by the Supreme Admiral Cai Mao, the Vice-Admiral Zhang Yun, and others of the Jingzhou officers who had joined his side. Cao Cao went as hastily as possible to the meeting of the three rivers and saw the ships of the South Land sailing up. In the bow of the foremost ship from the south stood a fine figure of a warrior, who cried, "I am Gan Ning. I challenge anyone to combat!" Cai Mao sent his young brother, Cai Xun, to accept the challenge. But as Cai Xun's ship approached, Gan Ning shot an arrow and Cai Xun fell. Gan Ning pressed forward, his crossbowmen keeping up a heavy discharge which Cao Cao's troops could not stand. The wings of Han Dang from the left and Jiang Qin from the right also joined in. Cao Cao's soldiers, being mostly from the dry plains of the north, did not know how to fight effectually on water, and the southern ships had the battle all their own way. The slaughter was very great. However, after a contest lasting till afternoon, Zhou Yu thought it more prudent, in view of the superior numbers of his enemy,

not to risk further the advantage he had gained. So he beat the gongs as the signal to cease battle and recall the ships.

Cao Cao was worsted, but his ships returned to the bank, where a camp was made and order was restored. Cao Cao sent for his defeated leaders and reproached them, saying, "You did not do your best. You let an inferior force overcome you." Cai Mao defended himself, saying, "The Jingzhou marines have not been exercised for a long time, and the others have never been trained for naval warfare at all. A naval camp must be instituted, the northern soldiers trained, and the Jingzhou force drilled. When they have been made efficient, they will win victories." "You are the Supreme Admiral. If you know what should be done, why have you not done it?" said Cao Cao. "What is the use of telling me this?"

So Cai Mao and Zhang Yun organized a naval camp on the river bank. They established twenty-four "Water Gates," with the large ships outside as a sort of rampart, and under their protection the smaller ships went to and fro freely. At night when the lanterns and torches were lit, the very sky was illuminated, and the water shone red with the glare. On land the smoke of the camp fires could be traced for one hundred mile without a break.

Zhou Yu returned to camp and feasted his victorious fighting force. A messenger bore the joyful tidings of victory to his master Sun Quan. When night fell, Zhou Yu went up to the summit of one of the hills and looked out over the long line of bright lights stretching toward the west, showing the extent of the enemy's camp. He said nothing, but a great fear came in upon him. Next day Zhou Yu decided that he would go in person to find out the strength of the enemy. So he bade them prepare a small squadron which he manned with strong, hardy men armed with powerful bows and stiff crossbows. He also placed musicians on each ship.

They set sail and started up the stream. When they got opposite Cao Cao's camp, the heavy stones that served as anchors were dropped, and the music was played while Zhou Yu scanned the enemy's naval camp. What he saw gave him no satisfaction, for everything was most admirable. He said, "How well and correctly built is that naval base! Anyone knows the names of those in command?" "They are Cai Mao and Zhang Yun," said his officers. "They have lived in the south a long time," said Zhou Yu, "and are thoroughly experienced in naval warfare. I must find some means of removing them before I can effect anything." Meanwhile on shore the sentinels had told Cao Cao that the enemy craft were spying upon them, and Cao Cao ordered out some ships to capture the spies. Zhou Yu saw the commotion of the commanding flags on shore and hastily gave the order to unmoor and sail down stream. The squadron at once got under way and scattered; to and fro went the oars, and each ship seemed to fly. Before Cao Cao's ships could get out after them, they were all far away. Cao Cao's ships took up the chase but soon saw pursuit was useless. They returned and reported their failure.

Again Cao Cao found fault with his officers and said, "The other day you lost a battle, and the soldiers were greatly dispirited. Now the enemy have spied out our camp. What can be done?" In eager response to his question one stepped out, saying, "When I was a youth, Zhou Yu and I were fellow students and pledged friends. My three-inch tongue is still good, and I will go over and persuade him to surrender." Cao Cao, rejoiced to find so speedy a solution, looked at the speaker. It was Jiang Gan of Jiujiang, one of the counseling staff in the camp. "Are you a good friend of Zhou Yu?" said Cao Cao. "Rest content, O Prime Minister," replied Jiang Gan. "If I only get on the other side of the river, I shall succeed." "What preparations are necessary?" asked Cao Cao. "Just a youth as my servant and a couple of rowers. Nothing else." Cao Cao offered him wine, wished him success, and sent him on his way. Clad in a simple white robe and seated in his little craft, the messenger reached Zhou Yu's camp and bade the guards say that an old friend Jiang Gan wished to see him. The commander was in his tent at a council when the message came, and he

laughed as he said to those about him, "A persuader is coming." Then he whispered certain instructions in the ear of each one of them, and they went out to await his arrival.

Zhou Yu received his friend in full ceremonial garb. A crowd of officers in rich silken robes were about him. The guest appeared, his sole attendant a lad dressed in a simple blue gown. Jiang Gan bore himself proudly as he advanced, and Zhou Yu made a low obeisance. "You have been well I hope since last we met," said Jiang Gan. "You have wandered far and suffered much in this task of emissary in Cao Cao's cause," said Zhou Yu. "I have not seen you for a very long time," said the envoy much taken aback, "and I came to visit you for the sake of old times. Why do you call me an emissary for the Cao Cao's cause?" "Though I am not so profound a musician as Shi Kuang* of old, yet I can comprehend the thought behind the music," replied Zhou Yu. "As you choose to treat your old friend like this, I think I will take my leave," said Jiang Gan. Zhou Yu laughed again, and taking Jiang Gan by the arm, said, "Well, I feared you might be coming on his behalf to try to persuade me. But if this is not your intention, you need not go away so hastily." So they two entered the tent. When they had exchanged salutes and were seated as friends, Zhou Yu bade them call his officers that he might introduce them.

There soon appeared civil and military officials, all dressed in their best. The military officers were clad in glittering silver armor and the staff looked very imposing as they stood ranged in two lines. The visitor was introduced to them all. Presently a banquet was spread, and while they feasted, the musicians played songs of victory and the wine circulated merrily. Under the mellowing influence, Zhou Yu's reserve seemed to thaw and he said, "Jiang Gan is an old fellow student of mine, and we are pledged friends. Though he has arrived here from the north, he is no artful pleader so you need not be afraid of him." Then Zhou Yu took off the commanding sword which he wore as Commander-in-Chief and handed it to Taishi Ci, saying, "You take this and wear it for the day as master of the feast. This day we meet only as friends and speak only of friendship, and if anyone shall begin a discussion of the questions at issue between Cao Cao and the South Land, just slay him." Taishi Ci took the sword and seated himself in his place. Jiang Gan was not a little overcome, but he said no word.

Zhou Yu said, "Since I assumed command, I have tasted no drop of wine; but today as an old friend is present and there is no reason to fear him, I am going to drink freely." So saying he quaffed a huge goblet and laughed loudly. The rhinoceros cups went swiftly round from guest to guest till all were half drunk. Then Zhou Yu, laying hold of the guest's hand, led him outside the tent. The guards who stood around all braced themselves up and seized their shinning weapons. "Do you not think my soldiers a fine lot of fellows?" said Zhou Yu. "Strong as bears and bold as tigers," replied Jiang Gan. Then Zhou Yu led him to the rear of the tent whence he saw the grain and forage piled up in mountainous heaps. "Do you not think I have a fairly good store of grain and forage?" "Your troops are brave and your supplies ample: The empire's gossip is not baseless, indeed."

Zhou Yu pretended to be quite intoxicated and went on, "When you and I were students together, we never looked forward to a day like this, did we?" "For a genius like you, it is nothing extraordinary," said the guest. Zhou Yu again seized his hand, and they sat down. "A man of the time, I have found a proper lord to serve. In his service, we rely upon the right feeling between minister and prince outside, and at home we are firm in the kindly feeling of relatives. He listens to my words and follows my plans. We share the same good or evil fortune. Even when the great old persuaders like Su Qin, Zhang Yi, Lu Jia, and Li Yiji lived again, even when their words poured forth like a rushing river, their tongues were as a sharp sword, it is impossible to move such as I am!" Zhou Yu burst into a loud laugh as he finished, and Jiang Gan's face had become clay-colored. Zhou Yu then led his guest back into the tent, and again they fell to drinking. Presently Zhou Yu pointed to the others at table and said, "These are all the best and bravest of the land of the south. One might call this the

'Gathering of Heroes.'" They drank on till daylight failed and continued after lamps had been lit. Zhou Yu even gave an exhibition of sword play.

By this time it was getting late, and the guest begged to be excused. "The wine is too much for me," said Jiang Gan. His host bade them clear the table. As all the others left, Zhou Yu said, "It has been many a day since I shared a couch with my friend, but we will do so tonight." Putting on the appearance of irresponsible intoxication, he led Jiang Gan into the tent and they went to bed. Zhou Yu simply fell, all dressed as he was, and lay there emitting uncouth grunts and groans, so that to the guest sleep was impossible. Jiang Gan lay and listened to the various camp noises without and his host's thunderous snores within. About the second watch he rose and looked at his friend by the dim light of the small lamp. He also saw on the table a heap of papers, and coming out and looking at them furtively, he saw they were letters. Among them he saw one marked as coming from Cai Mao and Zhang Yun, Cao Cao's Supreme Admiral and Vice-Admiral. He read it and this is what it said:

"We surrendered to Cao Cao, not for the sake of pay but under stress of circumstances. Now we have been able to hold these northern soldiers into this naval camp but, as soon as occasion offers, we mean to have the rebel's head to offer as a sacrifice to your banner. From time to time there will be reports as occasions serve, but you may trust us. This is our humble reply to your letter."

"Those two were connected with the South Land in the beginning," thought Jiang Gan, so he secreted the letter in his dress and began to examine the others. But at that moment Zhou Yu turned over, and so Jiang Gan hastily blew out the light and went to his couch. Zhou Yu was muttering as he lay there as if dreaming, saying, "Friend, I am going to let you see Cao Cao's head in a day or two." Jiang Gan hastily made some reply to load on his host to say more. Then came, "Wait a few days; you will see Cao Cao's head. The old wretch!" Jiang Gan tried to question him as to what he meant, but Zhou Yu was fast asleep and seemed to hear nothing.

Jiang Gan lay there on his couch wide awake till the fourth watch was beating. Then someone came in, saying, "General, are you awake?" At that moment as if suddenly awakened from the deepest slumber, Zhou Yu started up and said, "Who is this on the couch?" The voice replied, "Do you not remember, General? You asked your old friend to stay the night with you. It is he, of course." "I drank too much last night," said Zhou Yu in a regretful tone, "and I forgot. I seldom indulge to excess and am not used to it. Perhaps I said many things I ought not." The voice went on, "A man has arrived from the north." "Speak lower," said Zhou Yu, and turning toward the sleeper, he called him by name. But Jiang Gan affected to be sound asleep and made no sign. Zhou Yu crept out of the tent, while Jiang Gan listened with all his ears. He heard the man say, "Cai Mao and Zhang Yun, the two commanders, have come." But listening as he did with straining ears, he could not make out what followed.

Soon after Zhou Yu reentered and again called out his companion's name. But no reply came, for Jiang Gan was pretending to be in the deepest slumber and to hear nothing. Then Zhou Yu undressed and went to bed. As Jiang Gan lay awake, he remembered that Zhou Yu was known to be meticulously careful in affairs, and if in the morning Zhou Yu found that a letter had disappeared, he would certainly slay the offender. So Jiang Gan lay there till near daylight and then called out to his host. Getting no reply, he rose, dressed, and stole out of the tent. Then he called his servant and made for the camp gate. "Whither are you going, Sir?" said the watchmen at the gate. "I fear I am in the way here," replied Jiang Gan, "and so I have taken leave of the Commander-in-Chief for a time. So do not stop me."

He found his way to the river bank and reembarked. Then, with flying oars, he hastened back to Cao Cao's camp. When he arrived, Cao Cao asked at once how he had sped, and

he had to acknowledge failure. "Zhou Yu is very clever and perfectly high-minded," said Jiang Gan. "Nothing that I could say moved him in the least." "Your failure makes me look ridiculous," said Cao Cao. "Well, if I did not win over Zhou Yu, I found out something for you. Send away these people, and I will tell you," said Jiang Gan. The servants were dismissed, and then Jiang Gan produced the letter he had stolen from Zhou Yu's tent. He gave it to Cao Cao. Cao Cao was very angry and sent for Cai Mao and Zhang Yun at once. As soon as they appeared, he said, "I want you two to attack." Cai Mao replied, "But the soldiers are not yet sufficiently trained." "The soldiers will be well enough trained when you have sent my head to Zhou Yu, eh?" Both commanders were dumb-founded, having not the least idea what this meant. They remained silent for they had nothing to say. Cao Cao bade the executioners lead them away to instant death. In a short time their heads were produced. By this time Cao Cao had thought over the matter, and it dawned upon him that he had been tricked.

The death of these two naval commanders caused much consternation in the camp, and all their colleagues asked the reason for their sudden execution. Though Cao Cao knew they had been victimized, he would not acknowledge it. So he said, "These two had been remiss, and so had been put to death." The others were aghast, but nothing could be done. Two other officers, Mao Jie and Yu Jin, were put in command of the naval camp.

Spies took the news to Zhou Yu, who was delighted at the success of his ruse. "Those two Cai Mao and Zhang Yun were my only source of anxiety," said he. "Now they are gone: I am quite happy." Lu Su said, "General, if you can continue like this, you need not fear Cao Cao." "I do not think any of them saw my game," said Zhou Yu, "except Zhuge Liang. He beats me, and I do not think this ruse was hidden from him. You go and sound him. See if he knew."

Chapter 46

Using Strategy, Zhuge Liang Borrows Arrows;
Joining A Ruse, Huang Gai Accepts Punishment.

Lu Su departed on his mission and found Zhuge Liang seated in his little craft. "There has been so much to do that I have not been able to come to listen to your instructions," said Lu Su. "That is truly so," said Zhuge Liang, "and I have not yet congratulated the Commander-in-Chief." "What have you wished to congratulate him upon?" "Why Sir, the matter upon which he sent you to find out whether I knew about it or not. Indeed I can congratulate him on that." Lu Su turned pale and gasped, saying, "But how did you know, Master?" "The ruse succeeded well thus played off on Jiang Gan. Cao Cao has been taken in this once, but he will soon rise to it. Only he will not confess his mistake. However, the two men are gone, and the South Land is freed from a grave anxiety. Do you not think that is a matter for congratulation? I hear Mao Jie and Yu Jin are the new admirals, and in their hands lie both good and evil for the fate of the northern fleet."

Lu Su was quite dumbfounded. He stayed a little time longer passing the time in making empty remarks, and then took his leave. As he was going away, Zhuge Liang cautioned him, saying, "Do not let Zhou Yu know that I know his ruse. If you let him know, he will seek some chance to do me harm." Lu Su promised. Nevertheless he went straight to his chief and related the whole thing just as it happened. "Really he must be got rid of," said Zhou Yu. "I have quite decided to put the man out of the way." "If you slay him, will not Cao Cao laugh at you?" "Oh, no; I will find a legitimate way of getting rid of him so that he shall go to his death without resentment." "But how can you find a legitimate way of assassinating him?" "Do not ask too much. You will see presently."

Soon after all the officers were summoned to the main tent, and Zhuge Liang's presence was desired. He went contentedly enough. When all were seated, Zhou Yu suddenly addressed Zhuge Liang, saying, "I am going to fight a battle with the enemy soon on the water. What weapons are the best?" "On a great river arrows are the best," said Zhuge Liang. "Your opinion and mine agree. But at the moment we are short of them. I wish you would undertake to supply about a hundred thousand arrows for the naval fight. As it is for the public service, you will not decline, I hope." "Whatever task the Commander-in-Chief lays upon me, I must certainly try to perform," replied Zhuge Liang. "May I inquire by what date you require the hundred thousand arrows?" "Could you have them ready in ten days?" "The enemy will be here very soon. Ten days will be too late," said Zhuge Liang. "In how many days do you estimate the arrows can be ready?" "Let me have three days. Then you may send for your hundred thousand." "No joking, remember!" said Zhou Yu. "There is no joking in war time." "Dare I joke with the Commander-in-Chief? Give me a formal military order. If I have not completed the task in three days, I will take my punishment."

Zhou Yu, secretly delighted, sent for the secretaries and prepared the commission then and there. Then he drank to the success of the undertaking and said, "I shall have to congratulate you most heartily when this is accomplished." "This day is too late to count," said Zhuge Liang. "On the third from tomorrow morning send five hundred small boats to the river side to convey the arrows." They drank a few more cups together, and then Zhuge Liang took his leave. After he had gone, Lu Su said, "Do you not think there is some deceit about this?" "Clearly it is not I! It is he who has signed his own death warrant," said Zhou Yu. "Without being pressed in the least, he asked for a formal order in the face of the whole assembly. Even if he grew a pair of wings, he could not escape. Only I will just order the workers to delay him as much as they can, and not supply him with materials, so that he is sure to fail. And then, when the certain penalty is incurred, who can criticize? You can go and inquire about it all and keep me informed."

So off went Lu Su to seek Zhuge Liang, who at once reproached him with having blabbed about the former business. Zhuge Liang said, "He wants to hurt me, as you know, and I did not think you could not keep my secret. And now there is what you saw today, and how do you think I can get a hundred thousand arrows made in three days? You will simply have to rescue me." "You brought the misfortune on yourself, and how can I rescue you?" said Lu Su. "I look to you for the loan of twenty vessels, manned each by thirty people. I want blue cotton screens and bundles of straw lashed to the sides of the boats. I have good use for them. On the third day, I shall undertake to deliver the fixed number of arrows. But on no account must you let Zhou Yu know, or my scheme will be wrecked." Lu Su consented, and this time he kept his word. He went to report to his chief as usual, but he said nothing about the boats. He only said, "Zhuge Liang is not using bamboo or feathers or glue or varnish, but has some other way of getting arrows." "Let us await the three days' limit," said Zhou Yu, puzzled though confident.

On his side Lu Su quietly prepared a score of light swift boats, each with its crew and the blue screens and bundles of grass complete and, when these were ready, he placed them at Zhuge Liang's disposal. Zhuge Liang did nothing on the first day, nor on the second. On the third day at the middle of the fourth watch, Zhuge Liang sent a private message asking Lu Su to come to his boat. "Why have you sent for me, Sir?" asked Lu Su. "I want you to go with me to get those arrows." "Whither are you going?" "Do not ask. You will see." Then the twenty boats were fastened together by long ropes and moved over to the north bank.

The night proved very foggy and the mist was very dense along the river, so that one person could scarcely see another. In spite of the fog, Zhuge Liang urged the boats forward as if into the vast fairy kingdom. The little fleet reached Cao Cao's naval camp about the fifth watch, and Zhuge Liang gave orders to form line lying prows west, and then to beat the drums and shout. "But what shall we do if they attack us?" exclaimed Lu Su. Zhuge Liang replied with a

smile, "I think their fleet will not venture out in this fog. Go on with your wine, and let us be happy. We will go back when the fog lifts."

As soon as the shouting from the river was heard by those in the camp, the two admirals, Mao Jie and Yu Jin, ran off to report to Cao Cao, who said, "Coming up in a fog like this means that they have prepared an ambush for us. Do not go out, but get all the force together and shoot at them." He also sent orders to the ground camps to dispatch six thousand of archers and crossbowmen to aid the marines. The naval forces were then lined up shooting on the bank to prevent a landing. Presently the soldiers arrived, and ten thousand and more soldiers were shooting down into the river, where the arrows fell like rain.

By and bye Zhuge Liang ordered the boats to turn round so that their prows pointed east and to go closer in so that many arrows might hit them. Zhuge Liang ordered the drums to be kept beating till the sun was high and the fog began to disperse, when the boats got under way and sailed down stream. The whole twenty boats were bristling with arrows on both sides. As they left, Zhuge Liang asked all the crews to shout derisively, "We thank you, Sir Prime Minister, for the arrows!" They told Cao Cao, but by the time he came, the light boats helped by the swift current were seven miles long down the river and pursuit was impossible. Cao Cao saw that he had been duped and was very sorry, but there was no help for it.

On the way down Zhuge Liang said to his companion, "Every boat must have five or six thousand arrows and so, without the expenditure of an ounce of energy, we must have more than ten myriad arrows, which tomorrow can be shot back again at Cao Cao's army to his great inconvenience." "You are really superhuman," said Lu Su. "But how did you know there would be a thick fog today?" "One cannot be a leader without knowing the workings of heaven and the ways of earth. One must understand the secret gates and the interdependence of the elements, the mysteries of tactics and the value of forces. It is but an ordinary talent. I calculated three days ago that there would be a fog today, and so I set the limit at three days. Zhou Yu would give me ten days, but neither artificers nor materials, so that he might find occasion to put me to death as I knew. But my fate lies with the Supreme, and how could Zhou Yu harm me?" Lu Su could not but agree.

When the boats arrived, five hundred soldiers were in readiness on the bank to carry away the arrows. Zhuge Liang bade them go on board the boats, collect them and bear them to the tent of the Commander-in-Chief. Lu Su went to report that the arrows had been obtained and told Zhou Yu by what means. Zhou Yu was amazed and sighed sadly, saying, "He is better than I. His methods are more than human." When, shortly after his return, Zhuge Liang went to the tent of the Commander-in-Chief, he was welcomed by Zhou Yu, who came forward to greet him, saying, "Your superhuman predictions compel one's esteem." "There is nothing remarkable in that trifling trick," replied he. Zhou Yu led him within and wine was brought.

Week 9: Dante’s Commedia

The (Divine) Comedy is composed of over 14,000 lines that are divided into three canticas (Ital. pl. cantiche) — Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso — each consisting of 33 cantos (Ital. pl. canti). An initial canto serves as an introduction to the poem and is generally considered to be part of the first cantica, bringing the total number of cantos to 100. The number 3 is prominent in the work, represented here by the length of each cantica. The verse scheme used, terza rima, is hendecasyllabic (lines of eleven syllables), with the lines composing tercets according to the rhyme scheme aba, bcb, cdc, ded, ...

The poem is written in the first person, and tells of Dante's journey through the three realms of the dead, lasting from the night before Good Friday to the Wednesday after Easter in the spring of 1300. The Roman poet Virgil guides him through Hell and Purgatory; Beatrice, Dante's ideal of womanhood, guides him through Heaven. Beatrice was a Florentine woman whom he had met in childhood and admired from afar in the mode of the then-fashionable courtly love tradition, a story told in Dante's earlier work La Vita Nuova.

In Northern Italy's political struggle between Guelphs and Ghibellines, Dante was part of the Guelphs, who in general favored the Papacy over the Holy Roman Emperor. Florence's Guelphs split into factions around 1300, the White Guelphs, and the Black Guelphs. Dante was among the White Guelphs who were exiled in 1302 by the Lord-Mayor Cante de' Gabrielli di Gubbio, after troops under Charles of Valois entered the city, at the request of Pope Boniface VIII, who supported the Black Guelphs. This exile, which lasted the rest of Dante's life, shows its influence in many parts of the Comedy, from prophecies of Dante's exile to Dante's views of politics to the eternal damnation of some of his opponents.

In Hell and Purgatory, Dante shares in the sin and the penitence respectively. The last word in each of the three parts of the Divine Comedy is stelle, "stars."

Inferno

The poem begins on the night before Good Friday in the year 1300, "halfway along our life's path" (Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita). Dante is thirty-five years old, half of the biblical life expectancy of 70 (Psalms 90:10), lost in a dark wood, assailed by beasts (a lion, a leopard, and a she-wolf) he cannot evade, and unable to find the "straight way" (diritta via) - also translatable as "right way" - to salvation (symbolized by the sun behind the mountain). Conscious that he is ruining himself and that he is falling into a "deep place" (basso loco) where the sun is silent ('l sol tace), Dante is at last rescued by Virgil, and the two of them begin their journey to the underworld. Each sin's punishment in Inferno is a contrapasso, a symbolic instance of poetic justice; for example, fortune-tellers have to walk with their heads on backwards, unable to see what is ahead, because that was what they had tried to do in life.

Allegorically, the Inferno represents the Christian soul seeing sin for what it really is, and the three beasts represent three types of sin: the self-indulgent, the violent, and the malicious. These three types of sin also provide the three main divisions of Dante's Hell: Upper Hell (the first 5 Circles) for the self-indulgent sins; Circles 6 and 7 for the violent sins; and Circles 8 and 9 for the malicious sins.

At the start of his journey, Dante passes through the gate of Hell, which bears an inscription, the ninth (and final) line of which is the famous phrase "Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate", or "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here." Before entering Hell completely, Dante and his guide see the Uncommitted, souls of people who in life did nothing, neither for good

nor evil (among these Dante recognizes either Pope Celestine V or Pontius Pilate; the text is ambiguous). Mixed with them are outcasts who took no side in the Rebellion of Angels. These souls are neither in Hell nor out of it, but reside on the shores of the Acheron, their punishment to eternally pursue a banner (i.e. self interest) while pursued by wasps and hornets that continually sting them while maggots and other such insects drink their blood and tears. This symbolizes the sting of their conscience and the repugnance of sin.

Then Dante and Virgil reach the ferry that will take them across the river Acheron and to Hell. The ferry is piloted by Charon, who does not want to let Dante enter, for he is a living being. Virgil forces Charon to take him by means of another famous line *Vuolsi così colà ove si puote* (which translates to So it is wanted there where the power lies, referring to the fact that Dante is on his journey on divine grounds), but their passage across is undescribed since Dante faints and does not awake until he is on the other side.

Virgil guides Dante through the nine circles (gyres) of Hell. The circles are concentric, representing a gradual increase in wickedness, and culminating at the center of the earth, where Satan is held in bondage. Each circle's sinners are punished in a fashion fitting their crimes: each sinner is afflicted for all of eternity by the chief sin he committed. People who sinned but prayed for forgiveness before their deaths are found not in Hell but in Purgatory, where they labor to be free of their sins. Those in Hell are people who tried to justify their sins and are unrepentant.

Purgatorio

Having survived the depths of Hell, Dante and Virgil ascend out of the undergloom, to the Mountain of Purgatory on the far side of the world. The Mountain is on an island, the only land in the Southern Hemisphere, created by the displacement of rock which resulted when Satan's fall created Hell (which Dante portrays as existing underneath Jerusalem).

Dante starts the ascent of Mount Purgatory at sunrise. On the lower slopes (designated as "ante-Purgatory" by commentators) Dante meets first a group of excommunicated souls. Ascending higher, he encounters those too lazy to repent until shortly before death, and those who suffered violent deaths (often due to leading extremely sinful lives). These souls will be admitted to Purgatory thanks to their genuine repentance, but must wait outside for an amount of time equal to their lives on earth (Cantos III through VI). Finally, Dante is shown a beautiful valley where he sees the lately deceased monarchs of the great nations of Europe, and a number of other persons whose devotion to public and private duties hampered their faith (Cantos VII and VIII). From this valley Dante is carried (while asleep) up to the gates of Purgatory proper (Canto IX).

From there, Virgil guides the pilgrim Dante through the seven terraces of Purgatory. These correspond to the seven deadly sins, each terrace purging a particular sin in an appropriate manner. Those in purgatory can all leave their circle voluntarily, but will only do so when they have corrected the nature within themselves that caused them to commit that sin. Souls can only move upwards and never backwards, since the intent of Purgatory is for souls to ascend towards God in Heaven, and can ascend only during daylight hours, since the light of God is the only true guidance. A dramatic reconciliation scene between Beatrice and Dante, in which she rebukes his sin (Cantos XXX and XXXI), helps cover the disappearance of Virgil, who, as a non-Christian, can help him no further and in the rest of the Divine Comedy, Beatrice is Dante's guide.

Paradiso

After an initial ascension (Canto I), Beatrice guides Dante through the nine celestial spheres of Heaven. These are concentric and spherical, similar to Aristotelian and Ptolemaic cosmology. Dante admits the vision of heaven he receives is the one that his human eyes permit him to see. Thus, the vision of heaven found in the Cantos is Dante's own personal vision, ambiguous in its true construction. The addition of a moral dimension means that a soul that has reached Paradise stops at the level applicable to it. Souls are allotted to the point of heaven that fits with their human ability to love God. Thus, there is a heavenly hierarchy. All parts of heaven are accessible to the heavenly soul. That is to say all experience God but there is a hierarchy in the sense that some souls are more spiritually developed than others. This is not determined by time or learning as such but by their proximity to God (how much they allow themselves to experience Him above other things). In Dante's schema all souls in Heaven are, on some level, always in contact with God.

While the structures of the Inferno and Purgatorio were based around different classifications of sin, the structure of the Paradiso is based on the four cardinal virtues and the three theological virtues.

From the ninth sphere, the “Primum Mobile”, Dante ascends to a region beyond physical existence, called the Empyrean (Cantos XXX through XXXIII). Here the souls of all the believers form the petals of an enormous rose. Here, Beatrice leaves Dante with Saint Bernard, because theology has reached its limits. Saint Bernard prays to Mary on behalf of Dante. Finally, Dante comes face-to-face with God Himself, and is granted understanding of the Divine and of human nature. His vision is improved beyond that of human comprehension. God appears as three equally large circles within each other representing the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit with the essence of each part of God, separate yet one. The book ends with Dante trying to understand how the circles fit together, how the Son is separate yet one with the Father but as Dante put it "that was not a flight for my wings" and the vision of God becomes equally inimitable and inexplicable that no word or intellectual exercise can come close to explaining what he saw. Dante's soul, through God's absolute love, experiences a unification with itself and all things, "but already my desire and my will were being turned like a wheel, all at one speed, by the Love which moves the sun and the other stars."

Inferno 1

When I had journeyed half of our life's way,
I found myself within a shadowed forest,
for I had lost the path that does not stray.
Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was,
that savage forest, dense and difficult,
which even in recall renews my fear:
so bitter-death is hardly more severe!
But to retell the good discovered there,
I'll also tell the other things I saw.

I cannot clearly say how I had entered
the wood; I was so full of sleep just at
the point where I abandoned the true path.
But when I'd reached the bottom of a hill-
it rose along the boundary of the valley
that had harassed my heart with so much fear-

I looked on high and I saw its shoulders clothed
already by the rays of that same planet
which serves to lead men straight along all roads. 18
At this my fear was somewhat quieted,
for through the night of sorrow I had spent,
the lake within my heart felt terror present. 21
And just as he who, with exhausted breath,
having escaped from sea to shore, turns back
to watch the dangerous waters he has quit, 24
so did my spirit, still a fugitive,
turn back to look intently at the pass
that never has let any man survive. 27
I let my tired body rest awhile.
Moving again, I tried the lonely slope-
my firm foot always was the one below. 30
And almost where the hillside starts to rise-
Look there!-a leopard, very quick and lithe,
a leopard covered with a spotted hide. 33
He did not disappear from sight, but stayed;
indeed, he so impeded my ascent
that I had often to turn back again. 36

Dante meets his guide to Inferno, Virgil

While I retreated down to lower ground,
before my eyes there suddenly appeared
one who seemed faint because of the long silence. 63
When I saw him in that vast wilderness,
"Have pity on me," were the words I cried,
"whatever you may be- a shade, a man." 66
He answered me: "Not man; I once was man.
Both of my parents came from Lombardy,
and both claimed Mantua as native city. 69
And I was born, though late, sub julio,
and lived in Rome under the good Augustus-
the season of the false and lying gods. 72
I was a poet, and I sang the righteous
son of Anchises who had come from Troy
when flames destroyed the pride of Ilium. 75
But why do you return to wretchedness?
Why not climb up the mountain of delight,
the origin and cause of every joy?" 78
"And are you then that Virgil, you the fountain
that freely pours so rich a stream of speech?"
I answered him with shame upon my brow. 81
"O light and honour of all other poets,
may my long study and the intense love
that made me search your volume serve me now. 84
You are my master and my author, you-
the only one from whom my writing drew
the noble style for which I had been honored. 87
You see the beast that made me turn aside;
help me, o famous sage, to stand against her,
for she has made my blood and pulses shudder." 90
"It is another path that you must take,"

he answered when he saw my tearfulness,
"if you would leave this savage wilderness;
the beast that is the cause of your outcry
allows no man to pass along her track,
but blocks him even to the point of death;
her nature is so squalid, so malicious
that she can never sate her greedy will;
when she has fed, she's hungrier than ever.
She mates with many living souls and shall
yet mate with many more, until the Greyhound
arrives, inflicting painful death on her.
That Hound will never feed on land or pewter,
but find his fare in wisdom, love, and virtue;
his place of birth shall be between two felts.
He will restore low-lying Italy
for which the maid Camilla died of wounds,
and Nisus, Turnus and Euryalus.
And he will hunt that beast through every city
until he thrusts her back again to Hell,
from which she was first sent above by envy.
Therefore, I think and judge it best for you
to follow me, and I shall guide you, taking
you from this place through an eternal place,
where you shall hear the howls of desperation
and see the ancient spirits in their pain,
as each of them laments his second death;
and shall see those souls who are content
within the fire, for they hope to reach-
whenever that may be-to the blessed people.
If you would then ascend as high as these,
a soul more worthy than I am will guide you;
I'll leave you in her care when I depart,
because that Emperor who reigns above,
since I have been rebellious rebellious to His law,
will not allow me entry to His city.
He governs everywhere, but rules from there;
there is His city, His high capital:
o happy those He chooses to be there!"
And I replied: "O poet-by that God
whom you had never come to know-I beg you,
that I may flee this evil and worse evils,
to lead me to the place of which you spoke,
that I may see the gateway of Saint Peter
and those whom you describe as sorrowful."
Then he set out, and I moved on behind him.

Virgil tells how Beatrice sent him to help Dante. They arrive at the gate to the Underworld.

Through me the way to the city of woe,
Through me the way into eternal pain,
Through me the way among the lost.
Justice moved my maker on high.
Divine power made me,
Wisdom supreme, and primal love.
Before me nothing was but things eternal,

And I endure eternally. 9
Abandon all hope, you who enter here.
These words, dark in hue, I saw inscribed
over an archway. And then I said: 12
'Master, for me their meaning is hard.'
And he, as one who understood:
'Here you must banish all distrust, 15
here must all cowardice be slain.
'We have come to where I said
you would see the miserable sinners 18
who have lost the good of the intellect.'
And after he had put his hand on mine
with a reassuring look that gave me comfort, 21
he led me toward things unknown to man.
Now sighs, loud wailing, lamentation
resounded through the starless air, 24
so that I too began to weep.
Unfamiliar tongues, horrendous accents,
words of suffering, cries of rage, voices 27
loud and faint, the sound of slapping hands—
all these made a tumult, always whirling
in that black and timeless air, 30
as sand is swirled in a whirlwind.
And I, my head encircled by error, said:
'Master, what is this I hear, and what people 33
are these so overcome by pain?'
And he to me: 'This miserable state is borne
by the wretched souls of those who lived 36
without disgrace yet without praise.
'They intermingle with that wicked band
of angels, not rebellious and not faithful 39
to God, who held themselves apart.
'Loath to impair its beauty, Heaven casts them out,
and depth of Hell does not receive them 42
lest on their account the evil angels gloat.'
And I: 'Master, what is so grievous to them,
that they lament so bitterly?' 45
He replied: 'I can tell you in few words.
'They have no hope of death,
and their blind life is so abject 48
that they are envious of every other lot.
'The world does not permit report of them.
Mercy and justice hold them in contempt. 51
Let us not speak of them—look and pass by.'
And I, all eyes, made out a whirling banner
that ran so fast it seemed as though 54
it never could find rest.
Behind it came so long a file of people
that I could not believe 57
death had undone so many.
After I recognized a few of these,
I saw and knew the shade of him 60
who, through cowardice, made the great refusal.
At once with certainty I understood
this was that worthless crew 63

hateful alike to God and to His foes.
These wretches, who never were alive,
were naked and beset
by stinging flies and wasps
that made their faces stream with blood,
which, mingled with their tears,
was gathered at their feet by loathsome worms.
And then, fixing my gaze farther on,
I saw souls standing on the shore of a wide river,
and so I said: 'Master, permit me first
'to know who they are and then what inner law
makes them so eager for the crossing,
or so it seems in this dim light.'
And he to me: 'You shall know these things,
but not before we stay our steps
on the mournful shore of Acheron.'
Then, my eyes cast down with shame,
fearing my words displeased him,
I did not speak until we reached that stream.
And now, coming toward us in a boat,
an old man, his hair white with age, cried out:
'Woe unto you, you wicked souls,
'give up all hope of ever seeing heaven.
I come to take you to the other shore,
into eternal darkness, into heat and chill.
'And you there, you living soul,
move aside from these now dead.'
But when he saw I did not move,
he said: 'By another way, another port,
not here, you'll come to shore and cross.
A lighter ship must carry you.'
And my leader: 'Charon, do not torment yourself.
It is so willed where will and power are one,
and ask no more.'
That stilled the shaggy jowls
of the pilot of the livid marsh,
about whose eyes burned wheels of flame.

Inferno Canto 5

Now notes of desperation have begun
to overtake my hearing; now I come
where mighty lamentation beats against me.
I reached a place where every light is muted,
which bellows like the sea beneath a tempest,
when it is battered by opposing winds.
The hellish hurricane, which never rests,
drives on the spirits with its violence:
wheeling and pounding, it harasses them.
When they come up against the ruined slope,
then there are cries and wailing and lament,
and there they curse the force of the divine.
I learned that those who undergo this torment
are damned because they sinned within the flesh,
subjecting reason to the rule of lust.

And as, in the cold season, starlings' wings
bear them along in broad and crowded ranks,
so does that blast bear on the guilty spirits:
now here, now there, now down, now up, it drives them.
There is no hope that ever comforts them-
no hope for rest and none for lesser pain.
And just as cranes in flight will chant their lays,
arraying their long file across the air,
so did the shades I saw approaching, borne
by that assailing wind, lament and moan;
so that I asked him: "Master, who are those
who suffer punishment in this dark air?"

"The first of those about whose history
you want to know", my master then told me,
"once ruled as empress over many nations.
Her vice of lust became so customary
that she made license licit in her laws
to free her from the scandal she had caused.
She is Semiramis, of whom we read
that she was Ninus' wife and his successor:
she held the land the Sultan now commands.
That other spirit killed herself for love,
and she betrayed the ashes of Sychaeus;
the wanton Cleopatra follows next.
See Helen, for whose sake so many years
of evil had to pass; see great Achilles,
who finally met love-in his last battle.
See Paris, Tristan . . ."-and he pointed out
and named to me more than a thousand shades
departed from our life because of love.

No sooner had I heard my teacher name
the ancient ladies and the knights, than pity
seized me, and I was like a man astray.
My first words: "Poet, I should willingly
speak with those two who go together there
and seem so lightly carried by the wind."
And he to me: "You'll see when they draw closer
to us, and then you may appeal to them
by that love which impels them. They will come."
No sooner had the wind bent them toward us
than I urged on my voice: "O battered souls,
if One does not forbid it, speak with us."

Even as doves when summoned by desire,
borne forward by their will, move through the air
with wings uplifted, still, to their sweet nest,
those spirits left the ranks where Dido suffers,
approaching us through the malignant air;
so powerful had been my loving cry.
"O living being, gracious and benign,
who through the darkened air have come to visit
our souls that stained the world with blood, if He
who rules the universe were friend to us,

then we should pray to Him to give you peace,
for you have pitied our atrocious state.
   Whatever pleases you to hear and speak
will please us, too, to hear and speak with you,
now while the wind is silent, in this place.

   The land where I was born lies on that shore
to which the Po together with the waters
that follow it descends to final rest.
   Love, that can quickly seize the gentle heart,
took hold of him because of the fair body
taken from me-how that was done still wounds me.
   Love, that releases no beloved from loving,
took hold of me so strongly through his beauty
that, as you see, it has not left me yet.
   Love led the two of us unto one death.
Caina waits for him who took our life."
These words were borne across from them to us,
   When I had listened to those injured souls,
I bent my head and held it low until
the poet asked of me: "What are you thinking?"
   When I replied, my words began: "Alas,
how many gentle thoughts, how deep a longing,
had led them to the agonizing pass!"

   Then I addressed my speech again to them,
and I began: "Francesca, your afflictions
move me to tears of sorrow and of pity.
   But tell me, in the time of gentle sighs,
with what and in what way did Love allow you
to recognize your still uncertain longings?"
   And she to me: "There is no greater sorrow
than thinking back upon a happy time
in misery-and this your teacher knows.
   Yet if you long so much to understand
the first root of our love, then I shall tell
my tale to you as one who weeps and speaks.
   One day, to pass the time away, we read
of Lancelot-how love had overcome him.
We were alone, and we suspected nothing.
   And time and time again that reading led
our eyes to meet, and made our faces pale,
and yet one point alone defeated us.
   When we had read how the desired smile
was kissed by one who was so true a lover,
this one, who never shall be parted from me,
   while all his body trembled, kissed my mouth.
A Gallehault indeed, that book and he
who wrote it, too; that day we read no more."
   And while one spirit said these words to me,
the other wept, so that-because of pity-
I fainted, as if I had met my death.

In the lowest pit of Hell, virtually covered in ice, is Satan / Lucifer. After seeing him, Dante and Virgil emerge on the opposite side of the world.

Inferno Canto 34

But after we had made our way ahead,
my master felt he now should have me see
that creature who was once a handsome presence;
he stepped aside and made me stop, and said:
"Look! Here is Dis, and this the place where you
will have to arm yourself with fortitude."
O reader, do not ask of me how I
grew faint and frozen then-I cannot write it:
all words would fall far short of what it was.
I did not die, and I was not alive;
think for yourself, if you have any wit,
what I became, deprived of life and death.
The emperor of the despondent kingdom
so towered from the ice, up from midchest,
that I match better with a giant's breadth
than giants match the measure of his arms;
now you can gauge the size of all of him
if it is in proportion to such parts.
If he was once as handsome as he now
is ugly and, despite that, raised his brows
against his Maker, one can understand
how every sorrow has its source in him!
I marveled when I saw that, on his head,
he had three faces: one-in front-bloodred;
and then another two that, just above
the midpoint of each shoulder, joined the first;
and at the crown, all three were reattached;
the right looked somewhat yellow, somewhat white;
the left in its appearance was like those
who come from where the Nile, descending, flows.
Beneath each face of his, two wings spread out,
as broad as suited so immense a bird:
I've never seen a ship with sails so wide.
They had no feathers, but were fashioned like
a bat's; and he was agitating them,
so that three winds made their way out from him-
and all Cocytus froze before those winds.
He wept out of six eyes; and down three chins,
tears gushed together with a bloody froth.
Within each mouth-he used it like a grinder-
with gnashing teeth he tore to bits a sinner,
so that he brought much pain to three at once.
The forward sinner found that biting nothing
when matched against the clawing, for at times
his back was stripped completely of its hide.
"That soul up there who has to suffer most,"
my master said: "Judas Iscariot-
his head inside, he jerks his legs without.
Of those two others, with their heads beneath,
the one who hangs from that black snout is Brutus-
see how he writhes and does not say a word!

That other, who seems so robust, is Cassius.
But night is come again, and it is time
for us to leave; we have seen everything."
Just as he asked, I clasped him round the neck;
and he watched for the chance of time and place,
and when the wings were open wide enough,
he took fast hold upon the shaggy flanks
and then descended, down from tuft to tuft,
between the tangled hair and icy crusts.
When we had reached the point at which the thigh
revolves, just at the swelling of the hip,
my guide, with heavy strain and rugged work,
reversed his head to where his legs had been
and grappled on the hair, as one who climbs-
I thought that we were going back to Hell.
"Hold tight," my master said-he panted like
a man exhausted-"it is by such stairs
that we must take our leave of so much evil."
Then he slipped through a crevice in a rock
and placed me on the edge of it, to sit;
that done, he climbed toward me with steady steps.
I raised my eyes, believing I should see
the half of Lucifer that I had left;
instead I saw him with his legs turned up;
and if I then became perplexed, do let
the ignorant be judges-those who can
not understand what point I had just crossed.
"Get up," my master said, "be on your feet:
the way is long, the path is difficult;
the sun's already back to middle tierce."
It was no palace hall, the place in which
we found ourselves, but with its rough-hewn floor
and scanty light, a dungeon built by nature.
"Before I free myself from this abyss,
master," I said when I had stood up straight,
"tell me enough to see I don't mistake:
Where is the ice? And how is he so placed
head downward? Tell me, too, how has the sun
in so few hours gone from night to morning?"
And he to me: "You still believe you are
north of the center, where I grasped the hair
of the damned worm who pierces through the world.
And you were there as long as I descended;
but when I turned, that's when you passed the point
to which, from every part, all weights are drawn.
And now you stand beneath the hemisphere
opposing that which cloaks the great dry lands
and underneath whose zenith died the Man
whose birth and life were sinless in this world.
Your feet are placed upon a little sphere
that forms the other face of the Judecca.
Here it is morning when it's evening there;
and he whose hair has served us as a ladder
is still fixed, even as he was before.
This was the side on which he fell from Heaven;

for fear of him, the land that once loomed here
made of the sea a veil and rose into
our hemisphere; and that land which appears
upon this side-perhaps to flee from him-
left here this hollow space and hurried upward."
There is a place below, the limit of
that cave, its farthest point from Beelzebub,
a place one cannot see: it is discovered
by ear-there is a sounding stream that flows
along the hollow of a rock eroded
by winding waters, and the slope is easy.
My guide and I came on that hidden road
to make our way back into the bright world;
and with no care for any rest, we climbed-
he first, I following-until I saw,
through a round opening, some of those things
of beauty Heaven bears. It was from there
that we emerged, to see-once more-the stars.

The last lines of Paradise 33 (lines 82-145), the Vision of God

O grace abounding, through which I presumed
to set my eyes on the Eternal Light
so long that I spent all my sight on it!
In its profundity I saw ingathered
and bound by love into one single volume
what, in the universe, seems separate, scattered:
substances, accidents, and dispositions
as if conjoined in such a way that what
I tell is only rudimentary.
I think I saw the universal shape
which that knot takes; for, speaking this, I feel
a joy that is more ample. That one moment
brings more forgetfulness to me than twenty-
five centuries have brought to the endeavor
that startled Neptune with the Argo's shadow!
So was my mind completely rapt, intent,
steadfast, and motionless gazing; and it
grew ever more enkindled as it watched.
Whoever sees that Light is soon made such
that it would be impossible for him
to set that Light aside for other sight;
because the good, the object of the will,
is fully gathered in that Light; outside
that Light, what there is perfect is defective.
What little I recall is to be told,
from this point on, in words more weak than those
of one whose infant tongue still bathes at the breast.
And not because more than one simple semblance
was in the Living Light at which I gazed
for It is always what It was before
but through my sight, which as I gazed grew stronger,
that sole appearance, even as I altered,
seemed to be changing. In the deep and bright
essence of the exalted Light, three circles

appeared to me; they had three different colors,
but all of them were of the same dimension;
one circle seemed reflected by the second,
as rainbow is by rainbow, and the third
seemed fire breathed equally by those two circles.
How incomplete is speech, how weak, when set
against my thought! And this, to what I saw
is such--to call it little is too much.
Eternal Light, You dwell within
Yourself, and only You know You; Self-knowing,
Self-known, You love and smile upon Yourself!
That circle--which, begotten so, appeared
in You as light reflected--when my eyes
had watched it with attention for some time,
within itself and colored like itself,
to me seemed painted with our effigy,
so that my sight was set on it completely.
As the geometer intently seeks
to square the circle, but he cannot reach,
through thought on thought the principle he needs,
so I searched that strange sight; I wished to see
the way in which our human effigy
suited the circle and found place in it--
and my own wings were far too weak for that.
But then my mind was struck by light that flashed
and, with this light, received what it had asked.
Here force failed my high fantasy; but my
desire and will were moved already--like
a wheel revolving uniformly--by
the Love that moves the sun and the other stars (Paradiso XXXIII.82-145).

Week 10: Hamlet

The Tragical History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Act I
Scene 1: Horatio and guards see the ghost of the dead king.
Scene 2: King and queen with Hamlet contrasted with Laertes and his father Polonius; the dark mood of Hamlet illuminated in Soliloquy 1 (line 129) "O that this too too sullied flesh". Horatio tells him of the ghost.
Scene 3: Laertes warns Ophelia against Hamlet's approaches. Polonius (their father) gives Laertes parting advice, warns Ophelia.
Scene 4: (midnight). The Ghost appears, Hamlet follows it.
Scene 5: Ghost tells Hamlet of his murder. "Remember me!" Soliloquy 2 (line 93) "O all you host of heaven"

Act II
Scene 1: Polonius sends Reynaldo to spy on Laertes in Paris. Ophelia tells of Hamlet's strange behaviour in her room.
Scene 2: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive. Solution to Fortinbras crisis announced, he had been intending to attack Denmark. Polonius comments on Hamlet's madness, explaining it as frustrated love for Ophelia; Hamlet plays with him. Hamlet on "Man" (line 300); the coming of the Players announced. Polonius mocked. Hamlet and the players, the "Phyrrus" speech, ending in the actor's tears for Hecuba: Soliloquy 3 (line 515) "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I".

Act III
Scene 1: King etc prepare to spy on Hamlet's talk with Ophelia. Soliloquy 4 (line 56) "To be or not to be"; Hamlet with Ophelia, "Get thee to a nunnery".
Scene 2: (The Play Scene) Hamlet's advice to the Players on acting; he warns Horatio to watch the king during the play. The Court enters. The dumb show, the Play-within-the-play ("The Mousetrap", "The Murder of Gonzago"), the king storms out. The queen sends for Hamlet; dialogue about recorders. Soliloquy 5 (line 387) "Now could I drink hot blood".
Scene 3: King makes a plan with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to send Hamlet to England. Polonius promises to hide behind the arras to hear what Hamlet will say to his mother. King's Soliloquy (line 36) "O my offense is rank". Hamlet comes in, refuses to kill the praying king. Soliloquy 6 (line 73) "Now might I do it pat".
Scene 4: Polonius hides; Hamlet comes to the queen, and suddenly kills Polonius through the curtain. Hamlet talks with queen, compares the portraits of her two husbands. The Ghost appears to calm and encourage Hamlet. Hamlet asks his mother to tell the king he is mad, not to sleep with him, mentions the journey to England.

Act IV
Scene 1: The queen tells the king what has happened to Polonius. The king sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to help.
Scene 2: Hamlet rejects them
Scene 3: Hamlet and the king, the king orders him to go to England. The king reveals his plot to kill Hamlet in a soliloquy (line 55).
Scene 4: Fortinbras passes through Denmark, resolved to capture a small piece of useless ground in Poland. Hamlet compares himself with him: Soliloquy 7 (line 32) "How all occasions do inform".
Scene 5: Queen with the mad Ophelia; the king comes. Laertes arrives seeking revenge, forces his way in. Ophelia enters, the flower gifts; king and Laertes agree to work together.
Scene 6: Horatio receives letter telling of Hamlet's escape from ship going to England during battle with pirates.

Scene 7: King and Laertes talk about Hamlet; Hamlet's letter arrives, announcing his return; they prepare a plot involving poisoned rapiers, with poison in a cup in case. Queen announces Ophelia's death.

Act V
Scene 1: The Grave-diggers joking and singing are overheard by Hamlet and Horatio; Hamlet joins the game, "Alas, poor Yorick!" Death theme. Ophelia's very simple funeral enters. Laertes and Hamlet fight in her grave. Hamlet: "I loved Ophelia".
Scene 2: Hamlet tells Horatio how he discovered the king's plot against him by reading the sealed letter asking for him to be killed, his revenge on R and G (sending them to their deaths in England), his escape. Osric, a comic courtier, brings the challenge to a test of skill. All enter, the duel begins. The queen toasts Hamlet with the poisoned cup. Hamlet is wounded, the rapiers change hands, Laertes is wounded. The queen collapses, Laertes tells Hamlet they will both die, "the king's to blame". Hamlet wounds king with rapier, then forces him to drink the poison. Hamlet and Laertes are reconciled, as Laertes dies. Horatio wants to join them in death, Hamlet asks him to stay alive to tell their story. Arrival of Fortinbras announced, Hamlet names him as next king. Hamlet dies. "Good night, sweet prince." Fortinbras enters, ambassadors from England announce deaths of Rosencrantz and Goldenstern. Bodies carried off. Guns fire salute.

One of the intriguing features of Hamlet is its great length; it cannot be acted without being heavily cut. The length of the text suggests a play which Shakespeare was writing for a private reason that we cannot know. Hamlet is often a play about the words people use, their limits, their futility and their fascination. The fact that he was revising, or re-creating, a once-familiar play may have inspired Shakespeare to fill his text with references to the theater in a way that makes it a prime example of Renaissance "meta-drama" or "self-conscious dramaturgy" in which the audience is invited to view a "mirror image" of the theatrum mundi (theater of the world) to which they belong.

Since the Romantic period, Hamlet has been considered the greatest of plays because the hero seems to be the essential intellectual, full of ideas but unable to act. Hamlet is the paradigm of modern humanity, but there is no character more variously interpreted. Hamlet is the focus of the audience's sympathy, yet certain critics have been very hostile to him.

The source is a primitive Scandinavian story of madness used as a disguise until revenge becomes possible. There is a similar tale told about the Roman hero Brutus who drove the Tarquins out of Rome. The story is found in a 12th century Latin History of the Danes by Saxo Grammaticus, from which it was developed by the French writer Belle- forest in his Histoires Tragiques first published in 1570. Since the play by Kyd (?) known as the Ur-Hamlet does not exist, it is not possible to judge whether Shakespeare knew Belleforest's French text, or simply applied his own imagination to the earlier play that was based on it.

The theme of revenge recalls Kyd's Spanish Tragedy; but in Hamlet the ghost intervenes directly in the plot in a way unparalleled in other revenge plays. Without the Ghost of his father (also called Hamlet), the son would not have known of his murder. Part of the theatricality of the play comes from this sudden call to become an Avenger addressed to a student who is not equipped for that role, by a ghost dressed in the old- fashioned armour of another age.

At the heart of Hamlet's predicament is the question of a son's relationship to his father, and to his mother. The strong sexual disgust Hamlet feels at his mother's remarriage with his

father's brother is almost the first thing we know about him, continues to the end of the play, and is expressed with greater feeling than any distress at his father's death. Psychological interpretations based on Freud's theory of oedipal conflict have been popular, and in many productions Hamlet is shown in a more or less incestuous closeness to his mother.

One striking aspect of Hamlet is the use of soliloquies; in this way we are brought into Hamlet's mind in a unique way. In terms of plot action, the play is striking for what does not happen. More than any other tragedy, the centre of our interest is the mind of the protagonist. Hamlet takes each aspect of his situation and generalizes it by referring to universal realities of the human predicament. The most famous speech in the play comes in the first scene of Act III:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die--to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream--ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause--there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action... (Act III.i)

It is often said that in this speech Hamlet is thinking of committing suicide, that the question is whether to go on living or not. On the contrary, he is reflecting on the kind of life he cannot avoid living because suicide is not a possibility. The "question" of the first line is a "topic for discussion" in an academic disputation at university. The words "to be or not to be" are the familiar abbreviation of a popular debate topic: "even when there is pain, it is better to be alive (though unhappy) than not to be alive." The stress on the impossibility of suicide, or of any easy way out, leads to the conclusion that we have to waste a lot of time and energy thinking (conscience) because there seems to be nothing we can do! The university dispute was always inconclusive, there was never a single right answer to the question/topic

proposed.

At the end of the play, when Hamlet first wounds the king and then forces him to drink the poison, he seems to be making him pay first for his own and Laertes's deaths (by the sword) and then for the queen's (by the cup). In this sense, the king's death is not in revenge for his brother's death at all, although it is a direct consequence of it. Shakespeare uses the conventions of revenge tragedy, but in a radically different direction from Seneca or Kyd, since Hamlet never looses his human dignity.

Week 11: Jean Racine's *Phèdre*

Jean Racine: Phèdre

Synopsis from Wikipedia

The play is set at the royal court in Troezen, on the Peloponnesus coast in Southern Greece.

Act 1. Following Theseus's six month absence, his son Hippolytus tells his tutor Theramenes of his intention to leave Troezen in search of his father. When pressed by Theramenes, he reveals that the real motive is his forbidden love for Aricia, sole survivor of the royal house supplanted by Theseus and under a vow of chastity against her will. During her husband's absence, Phèdre has become consumed by an illicit but overpowering passion for her stepson Hippolytus, which she has kept as a dark secret. Close to death and reeling about half-dementedly, under pressure from her old nurse Oenone she explains her state, on condition that she be permitted to die rather than face dishonour. The death of Theseus is announced with the news that his succession is in dispute. Oenone urges her mistress that, since her love for her stepson is now legitimate, she should form an alliance with him, if only for the future benefit of the infant son of her own flesh.

Act 2. With fresh hope for her liberty, Aricia reveals to her maidservant Ismène her feelings towards Hippolytus, who promptly appears to declare his love for her. Their discourse is interrupted by Phèdre, who distraughtly pleads for the rights of her infant son, explaining her coldness and personal despair. Suddenly entering a trance-like state overcome by emotion, she involuntarily confesses her hidden passions to her horrified dumb-struck stepson. Sensing rejection, she leaves in a wild frenzy, demanding Hippolytus' sword to end her torment. Theramenes brings news to Hippolytus that Theseus might still be alive.

Act 3. In desperation Phèdre sends word to Hippolytus inviting him to share the crown of Athens. However, Oenone brings her the devastating news that Theseus has returned in perfect health. To avert Phèdre's deathwish and her possible betrayal by Hippolytus, Oenone urges that a story should be concocted around his abandoned sword. Seeing Hippolytus by Theseus' side, Phèdre grants Oenone free rein. After his long period in captivity, Theseus is surprised by the cold reception from his wife and son, each anxious to conceal their passions: Phèdre, consumed by guilt; and Hippolytus, anxious to distance himself from his stepmother's advances, but unable to tell his father of his love for Aricia.

Act 4. Theseus has just been told by Oenone that Hippolytus has attempted to take Phèdre by force. Overcome by rage, Theseus banishes Hippolytus and invokes the god Neptune, who has promised to grant any wish of Theseus, to avenge him by his son's death. Protesting his innocence, Hippolytus discloses his secret love for Aricia to his incredulous father and leaves in despair. Fearing that she might be guilty for Hippolytus' death, Phèdre determines to reveal the truth to her husband, until she is told of Hippolytus' love for Aricia. Consumed by jealousy, she refuses to defend Hippolytus further, leaving his father's curse to run its course. When Oenone tries to make light of her mistress's illicit love, Phèdre in a towering rage accuses her of being a poisonous scheming monster and banishes her from her presence.

Act 5. Hippolytus takes his leave of Aricia, promising to marry her in a temple outside Troezen. On witnessing the tenderness of their parting, Theseus begins to have doubts about his son's guilt. He decides to question Oenone, but it is too late: Oenone has thrown herself to the waves. Theramenes brings news of his son's death: Hippolytus' departing chariot has been interrupted by a terrifying horned monster rising from the waves; mortally wounded by Hippolytus, its death throes drive his horses into a wild frenzy; in their flight, the

chariot is dashed against the rocks and their master dragged helplessly to his death. In the closing scene, Phèdre, now calm, appears before Theseus to confess her guilt and to confirm Hippolytus's innocence. She finally succumbs to the effects of a self-administered draught of Medean poison, taken to rid the world of her impurity. As an act of atonement and in respect for his son's parting promise, Theseus pardons Aricia and adopts her as his daughter.

The genealogy of Phèdre gives a number of indications as to her character's destiny. Descended from Helios, god of the Sun, and Pasiphaë, she nevertheless avoids being in the judgmental presence of the sun throughout the play. The simultaneous absence of a god-figure combined with the continual presence of one has been extensively explored in Lucien Goldmann's Le Dieu caché. This sense of patriarchal judgment is extended to Phèdre's father, Minos, who is responsible for weighing the souls of the dead upon their arrival in Hades. Phèdre is right to fear judgment; she is driven to an incestual love for her stepson Hippolytus, much like the other women in her family, who tended to experience desires generally considered taboo. Her mother, Pasiphaë was cursed by Aphrodite to fall in love and mate with a white bull, giving rise to the legendary Minotaur. Phèdre meets Theseus, her future husband, when he arrives on the Minoan scene to kill her monstrous half-brother, the minotaur.

Contrary to Euripides, Racine has Phèdre dying on stage at the end of the play; she thus has had time to learn of the death of Hippolyte. The character of Phèdre is one of the most remarkable in Racine's tragic oeuvre. The instrument of others' suffering, she is also the victim of her own impulses, a figure that inspires both terror and pity.

Week 12: Genesis

Genesis

Chapter 1:1-2:3 offers a formal, theological narrative of the Creation of all things, all creatures, by God, an expression of the unity of creation and of the universal power of God. The basic structure of the narrative is that of the seven-day week. Seven was a sacred number, and the week was the fundamental unit of the Hebrew calendar.

The story is clearly designed to be a 'scientific' account, in the Aristotelian manner, emphasizing the unity of the Many by grouping things within broad general categories. The living creatures are introduced in a hierarchy determined by the way in which they reproduce; first come plants with seeds and fruit, then the egg-laying fish and birds, then the mammals, and finally humans, who are recognized as mammals by being created on the sixth day. The Creation ends on the Sabbath, the resting from work on the seventh day (Saturday). Since Sunday, the "first day of the (new) week", was the day of Jesus' Resur-rection, it became the day when Christians rest and attend worship. It is not the Old Testament Sabbath.

1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light" and there was light. God saw that the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness he called "night". And there was evening, and there was morning the first day.

6. And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the water below from the water above. And it was so. God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning the second day.

9. And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered together and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land" and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and trees on the land that bear fruit with seeds in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation:plants bearing seeds according to their kinds.And trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14. And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so.

God made two great lights, the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20. And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every

living, moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24. And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.

God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the wild animals of the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

(Chapter 2)

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Chapters 2:4-3:end contain another, older story of the creation of humanity, with the symbolic names Adam (Man) and Eve (Living), their life in "Paradise" (garden) with visits from YHWH (the name is not used in Chapter 1), the story of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the temptation of Eve, the Fall, the punishment and the Expulsion from the Garden. A mysterious story, combining many elements, not at all a "full explanation" or a "myth" in the usual sense. It stands at the beginning of the Bible as an expression of a truth about humanity: people do not do what they know to be God's will, and the result is un-happiness, suffering, hardship.

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up; the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. And the LORD God formed a man (Adam) from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living being.

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life

and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ....

(15) The LORD God took Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for when you eat of it you will surely die."

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him..... (21) So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man ....

(25) The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Chapter 3: The Fall

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say You must not eat from any tree in the garden?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves to-gether and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Adam, where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that -1 commanded you not to eat from?"

Adam said, "The woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The ser-pent deceived me, and I ate."....

So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Chapter 4:1-16, the story of Cain and Abel, the first murder, the picture of "fallen humanity" begins, with a growth in disasters and moral corruption leading up to the story of Noah. The idea of social responsibility and of interdependence is present from the beginning, as also the irrationality of evil.

Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the

firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Now Cain said to his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother, Abel?

"I don't know," he replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

In Chapter 5 there are strange lists of people reported to have lived for 900 years, the oldest being Methuselah, who has become proverbial.

Chapter 6:1-9:17 contains the epic of Noah, a story which is close to that found in Mesopotamia, (see the Gilgamesh Flood Myth in Chapter 1) where terrible floods were very common. It should be seen as a symbolic new beginning offered to humanity by God, the hope exists that even the worst disaster is not the end of God's love and promises. Noah is shown as a man of faith, and a craftsman able to build the Ark, but not as an extraordinary person, Noah is a normal human being, the Bible is not interested in the "heroic".

This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.

I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark--you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for youand for them."

Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Genesis 7

The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. Take with you seven [1] of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made."

And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, 9male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. Every living thing that moved on the earth perished--birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

Genesis 8

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive

leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you--the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground--so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it."

So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds--everything that moves on the earth--came out of the ark, one kind after another. Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.

The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

In Chapter 10 there are lists of strange tribes, records of places: the Bible is from the beginning anchored in a culture, a history, a specific geography, not ours. It expresses its message in a universal context. This is the meaning of what follows.

Chapter 11:1-9, the story of the Tower of Babel, an allegory of the multiplicity of languages by which people are divided, both a blessing and a curse. Here, as in the stories about Eve and Noah, we must note that humour is not absent.

With the end of Chapter 11 we enter a new stage in the narrative of Israel's past. What had been told until now applied to all humanity, was not linked to "history" in the way that what follows claims to be. Now the Bible begins the history of salvation worked out in reality, not myth, through faithful individuals and families, the Patriarchs (fathers). This is essentially a family epic, in prose, preserving many memories of an early period in human history when life was nomadic and pastoral, and here too there is none of the heroic exaggeration of other cultures. The only "extraordinary" thing noted about Abraham, for example, is his trust in God.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Patriarchs, are seen as the founding fathers of the families (tribes) making up the later Amphictyony of Israel. Israel is a later name given to Jacob. As in all such foundation histories, the symbolic is mixed with the historical. Most important, there is here nothing of the usual Myth, no unions with gods, no supernatural origin, only the appearance of a group of people seeing itself as being in a special relationship with God, who has made them a promise of blessings. The meeting with God remains mysterious.

Chapter 12:1-7, the beginning of the Abraham story, expresses the promise of God in a very undramatic way, with no details about how God appeared. Abraham sets out, returning to the nomadic life which was already being replaced by sedentary farming. Abraham's setting out is seen as a expression of his trust in God, who has promised him another life in another place.

In the saga of Abraham, there are many adventures, in which he is sometimes seen meeting God in humble ways (chapter 18), and even arguing with him, making God change his mind (chapter 18:25-end). For a long time Abraham has no son, there is the puzzle of who will inherit the promise. Then, very late, God enables him to have a son, Isaac.

Chapter 22:1-18, tells how God "tests" Abraham, ordering him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Child sacrifice was common in the tribes of Canaan, this story is designed to discourage it, but later the Church saw in it a "type" of the love of God who was ready to give up his only Son. "Typology" involves finding a new meaning in a story by events happening later, so that events of the Old Testament are found to be "allegories" of what happens when Jesus comes.

The last part of Genesis (chapters 37-50) consists of another literary type, an adventure story or popular romance in which a person is separated from his family, becomes very powerful, then confronts the family in this new position; once the relationship is discovered, there is reconciliation. The story of Joseph, sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt where he becomes the servant of Pharaoh thanks to his interpretation of dreams, is one of the world's first "comic" stories.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them. Now his father Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe (a coat of many colours) for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind. His brothers sell Joseph as a slave, then dip his coat in blood to suggest that he has been eaten by an animal. He becomes slave in the house of Potiphar, a high official in Egypt, but soon rises to a posiion of great responsibility. There he undergoes a difficult situation with Potiphar's wife:

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go

to bed with her or even be with her.

One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house." When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. Joseph's master took him and put him in prison.

In prison, Joseph correctly interprets dreams for the Pharaoh'scup-bearer and baker. The cup-bearer is restored to his position and recalls the event when Pharaoh has a strange dream. Joseph explains that the dream means that Egypt is going to experience a long famine, and should take appropriate measures. Pharaoh makes Joseph his chief minister. The same famine strikes Jacob (Israel) and he sends ten of Joseph's brothers to buy grain in Egypt, keeping the youngest , Benjamin, at home.

Joseph allows them to buy corn, but then accuses them of being spies, keeps one of the brothers as hostage, and commands them to return to Egypt with Benjamin. They have not recognized Joseph, of course, yet they suddenly recall him:

They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother Joseph. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us." Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood."

They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter. He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.

Yet on their way home, they find that the money they paid for their grain has been put into their sacks. Confused, they return to Egypt with Benjamin, and double the money, 'in case it was a mistake'.

When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and prepare dinner; they are to eat with me at noon." The man did as Joseph told him and took the men to Joseph's house.

Now the men were frightened when they were taken to his house. They thought, "We were brought here because of the silver that was put back into our sacks the first time. He wants to attack us and overpower us and seize us as slaves and take our donkeys."

So they went up to Joseph's steward and spoke to him at the entrance to the house. "Please, sir," they said, "we came down here the first time to buy food. But at the place where we stopped for the night we opened our sacks and each of us found his silver--the exact weight--in the mouth of his sack. So we have brought it back with us. We have also brought additional silver with us to buy food. We don't know who put our silver in our sacks."

"It's all right," he said. "Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver." Then he brought Simeon out to them. The steward took the men into Joseph's house, gave them water to wash their feet and provided fodder for their donkeys. They prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon, because they had heard that they were to eat there.

When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts they had brought into the house, and they bowed down before him to the ground. He asked them how they were, and then he said, "How is your aged father you told me about? Is he still living?" They replied, "Your servant our father is still alive and well." And they bowed low to pay him honor.

As he looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, he asked, "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son."

Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there. After he had washed his face, he came out and, controlling himself, said, "Serve the food."

Joseph plays the same trick as before, sending them off with their money placed in their sacks; but this time he puts his own cup in Benjamin's sack. His steward rides after them, discovers the cup, and accuses them of stealing it. They all ride back to the city, where Joseph decrees that Benjamin must become his slave, the others can go. They tell his it would kill their father to lose Benjamin; they even offer to all become his slaves, if only Benjamin can go home.

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me."

When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

"So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to my father and say to him, `This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me--you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

"You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

This story is remarkable, both by its "change in fortunes" themes and by the emotionally touching scenes involving Benjamin (the youngest son) and the old father Jacob. It is extremely well structured. The story is put here to explain why the "children of Israel" were in Egypt.

Week 13: John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*

Paradise Lost

Milton was born in London in1608 and died in 1674. Milton's vision of poetry was essentially that which he received through the Italian tradition, that had already deeply influenced French and English poets such as Ronsard and the Pléiade in France, or Spenser. In this tradition, rooted in the classics, the highest form of poetic expression was the epic and a country could only claim artistic maturity if it had produced an acclaimed epic. Milton knew that if he was to be the great British poet God seemed to intend, he would have to write an epic, since Spenser had failed to complete the Faerie Queene. For a time he imagined that it would be a national British epic, perhaps about King Arthur. Milton originally (in about 1640) seems to have intended to use the subject matter of Paradise Lost, the Fall of Adam, for a tragedy.

Nobody knows when Milton decided to write his epic on the Fall of Man, instead of on the glories of Britain under God, but it seems likely that it was only when he realized that the Commonwealth had failed. It is hard to imagine Milton's disappointment when human pride and ambitions frustrated his dream of seeing the reign of God on earth, yet he did not lose his hope in God's Providence. Instead, he set out to show that even sin was a part of God's plan for humanity, and that the Fall leads towards an eternal promise of life. Human history, he seems to say, full of pain and death though it is, has meaning for those who know what God has in store for those who trust in him. The epic mingles tragic and comic perspectives, which has been a problem for critical purists. There is even much debate as to whether its ultimate meaning is pessimistic or optimistic.

Starting perhaps in 1658, Milton began to dictate his great poem to secretaries. Nothing is known of the details of its composition, for example whether Milton composed it from beginning to end as it now stands. He often composed the day's section mentally during the night, somewhere between sleeping and waking probably. It seems that often the poem almost wrote itself and Milton felt that God was guiding him.

The style of Paradise Lost has usually been criticized for its power rather than for its failings. Milton had read all the great European epics and chose to write in a high style often heavily marked by Latin. He develops many visual passages of great power, the poem's landscapes are frequently grandiose. Yet the enterprise was a daunting one, in many senses impossible, since Milton has to use words and images to portray the unspeakable and unimaginable. At the heart of the poem, and probably its greatest problem, is the representation of God. Milton's God has very often been criticized for seeming less than loving.

Milton knew very well that we cannot know God as God is, but only as God allows us to conceive of God with our fallen and severely limited human minds. Milton's God is therefore not to be seen as a failed picture of God, but as a precise picture of how people and the Bible have spoken of God. To become aware of the unsatisfactory aspects of this picture is not to find a weakness in Milton's art but to sense that God as God is other than anything humans can know. Similarly, Christians believe that Heaven has neither dimensions as we know them nor time as we know it, and that angels have no shape, locality, or history in our sense. Milton knows this, and expects his readers to feel the contradiction in his use of heroic conventions to describe the unimaginable War in Heaven.

In its final form, Paradise Lost tells the familiar story of the creation and fall of Adam and Eve in its second half, starting with book seven. The first half of the poem tells a story that is

barely hinted at in the Bible. According to this ancient tale, that originated in the Middle East and was already current in Jewish circles before the birth of Jesus, Satan (the name means Adversary) was created by God to be the greatest of all angels, God's very special partner in love. His name then was Lucifer (Light-bearer, also the name of the "morning star"). In the instant of his coming into being, Satan was, like every angel, given the freedom to choose to accept God's love. Love cannot, by definition, impose itself on another person by force. Only Satan was so much "like God" that he chose to know no other than himself. He became the "rebel angel" and gathering part of Heaven's angelic host about him he waged war against God.

Modern thought is so accustomed to the idea of God's absolute omnipotence that we can hardly deal with the idea of a real struggle against him. In the Middle East, though, the nations were accustomed to the idea of clusters of gods ruling different parts of the universe and there were many tales of enmity and battles between the gods. In Old Testament times, the temple in Jerusalem celebrated the worship of YHWH as the Lord of Israel but its walls also sheltered shrines of other gods. The victory of monotheism in Israel was never assured and the concept of the absolute nature of God was always threatened.

According to the mythical tale of Satan, there was a great battle (reflected in the Apocalyptic battle described in the New Testament book of Revelation 12:7) which God and his army won by ejecting the rebel forces from Heaven. As in Greece, beings like angels were considered to be invulnerable and immortal so that not even God could abolish them. The fall of Satan and his angels ended when they arrived in the lowest point possible, which later cosmology came to turn "Hell". In Israel, the myth continued by showing God looking around his half-empty Heaven and deciding to create Humanity as an experiment in the hope that, if all went well, human beings would finally prove worthy to occupy the place of the fallen angels. Satan could no longer confront God directly, so he decided to continue the struggle against him by trying to turn the newly-created human beings into rebels like himself. It is from this tale that comes the interpretation of Genesis by which the snake who causes Eve to eat the fruit is seen as Satan in disguise.

Milton's intention in writing Paradise Lost was to give epic form to his own understanding of what it means to be human. Human life, for him, is given by God and is destined to be lived in obedience to God's commands; ultimately, after human history has run its course, God will raise to a life of eternal happiness all who have served him. Milton was a radical Protestant, but not a "fundamentalist". He was convinced that the Bible was God's revelation of himself but that each human person had to come to an understanding of the sense of the words by thinking about what they mean.

Milton's greatest difference from other Protestants, who mostly followed Calvin and Augustine in believing that the Fall had corrupted human nature so utterly that no one could do anything good. Milton detested this doctrine of "absolute depravity". He considered, with the Greeks, that although people were weak and found virtue hard, still there was always the possibility of using our powers of reason to see correctly what is right and our will to do it.

Milton's vision of the place of the individual in human society was dominated by a fierce concern for individual freedom. He was convinced that Adam and Eve before the Fall had been free and happy. They lived in harmony with Nature, which was in turn totally harmonious and knew no cycles of growth and decay. In the Garden God gave them, Adam and Eve could enjoy total freedom because they were completely bound by the laws of Reason. Milton did not believe that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil had any magic powers; he thought that God had forbidden Adam and Eve to eat its fruit merely as a kind of test of their readiness to obey him, a token of their freedom. When they disobeyed God's command, they followed their passions instead of their reason. That was the Fall. The tree of the "knowledge of good and evil" was so called because, after disobey-ing God's

command, Adam and Eve were in a state where they knew the good they had lost and the evil they had gained.

Milton was convinced that humanity needed to know both good and evil in order to become truly free. The Fall was something terrible, but potentially wonderful; after it comes the development of human history, culminating in Christ's Redemption of a wiser humanity. Milton did not think we could know how or why the cosmos itself lost its primal perfection after Adam's sin.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of Paradise Lost is the power of its overall structure. When he first published the poem, in 1667, Milton divided the poem into ten books of varying length, books seven and ten being much longer than the rest. He perhaps thought of the work as being comprised of two five-act dramas, while ten is also a symbolic number (1+2+3+4). Virgil's Aeneid has twelve books, though, and in the second edition (1674) Milton divided books seven and ten into two books each to bring the total to twelve. The summary of the contents placed at the start of the books dates from the second edition.

Paradise Lost is clearly divided into two halves, six books each in the second edition. Each half then can be subdivided by its contents into three sets of two books:

The poem starts with its most well-known portion, the initial invocation of the Spirit-muse and the exposition of the theme of the entire work in a dramatic question-and-answer which seems to suggest that the entire poem is the Spirit's reply to Milton's initial question about "the cause" of human society's and the cosmos's corruptions:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos: or if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outs[read
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss
And madst it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the highth of this great argument
I may assert eternal providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
    Say first, for heaven hides nothing from thy view
Nor the deep tract of hell, say first what cause
Moved our grand parents in that happy state,
Favoured of heaven so highly, to fall off

From their creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lord of the world besides?
The infernal serpent; he it was...

(Book 1 line 1-34)

Books 1 and 2 are centered on Satan. The poem begins, as tradition requires, in medias res with Satan and his fellows lying on the floor of Hell. Satan's first speech, to Beelzebub, indicates his fixed nature as rebel against God:

If thou beest he; But O how fall'n! how chang'd
From him, who in the happy Realms of Light
Cloth'd with transcendent brightnes didst outshine
Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope,
And hazard in the Glorious Enterprize,
Joynd with me once, now misery hath joynd
In equal ruin: into what Pit thou seest
From what highth fal'n, so much the stronger provd
He with his Thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those
Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict do I repent or change,
Though chang'd in outward lustre; that fixt mind
And high disdain, from sence of injur'd merit,
That with the mightiest rais'd me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd
That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd
In dubious Battel on the Plains of Heav'n,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That Glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deifie his power
Who from the terrour of this Arm so late
Doubted his Empire, that were low indeed,
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since by Fate the strength of Gods
And this Empyreal substance cannot fail,
Since through experience of this great event
In Arms not worse, in foresight much advanc't,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal Warr
Irreconcileable, to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the Tyranny of Heav'n.

So spake th' Apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despare:

How to continue the fight? The hall of Pandemonium rises and they gather in assembly round Satan, their manipulative dictator. In Book 2, after a debate on continuing resistance to God, in which Satan strikes poses of rebel hero, he sets out to find the newly-created world. At the gates of Hell he finds the figures Sin and Death; Sin says that Death is her son and that Satan is his father. Satan journeys through Chaos and arrives at the world.

Books 3 and 4 form a strong contrast. Book 3 is set in Heaven; the Father tells the Son what will happen to Adam and Eve as a result of Satan's journey. The Son freely offers to give his own life for the redemption of their sin. Meanwhile Satan is trying to find where Adam and Eve are living. In Book 4 Satan slips into Paradise disguised as a bird.

Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle Tree and highest there that grew,
Sat like a Cormorant; yet not true Life
Thereby regaind, but sat devising Death
To them who liv'd; nor on the vertue thought
Of that life-giving Plant, but only us'd
For prospect, what well us'd had bin the pledge
Of immortalitie. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to thir meanest use.
Beneath him with new wonder now he views
To all delight of human sense expos'd
In narrow room Natures whole wealth, yea more,
A Heaven on Earth, for blissful Paradise
Of God the Garden was, by him in the East
Of EDEN planted; EDEN stretchd her Line
From AURAN Eastward to the Royal Towrs
Of great SELEUCIA, built by GRECIAN Kings,
Or where the Sons of EDEN long before
Dwelt in TELASSAR: in this pleasant soile
His farr more pleasant Garden God ordaind;
Out of the fertil ground he caus'd to grow
All Trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming Ambrosial Fruit
Of vegetable Gold; and next to Life
Our Death the Tree of Knowledge grew fast by,
Knowledge of Good bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through EDEN went a River large,
Nor chang'd his course, but through the shaggie hill
Pass'd underneath ingulft, for God had thrown
That Mountain as his Garden mould high rais'd
Upon the rapid current, which through veins
Of porous Earth with kindly thirst up drawn,
Rose a fresh Fountain, and with many a rill
Waterd the Garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the neather Flood,

Which from his darksom passage now appeers,
And now divided into four main Streams,
Runs divers, wandring many a famous Realme
And Country whereof here needs no account,
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell,
How from that Saphire Fount the crisped Brooks,
Rowling on Orient Pearl and sands of Gold,
With mazie error under pendant shades
Ran Nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flours worthy of Paradise which not nice Art
In Beds and curious Knots, but Nature boon
Powrd forth profuse on Hill and Dale and Plaine,
Both where the morning Sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierc't shade
Imbround the noontide Bowrs: Thus was this place,
A happy rural seat of various view;
Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gumms and Balme,
Others whose fruit burnisht with Golden Rinde
Hung amiable, HESPERIAN Fables true,
If true, here onely, and of delicious taste:
Betwixt them Lawns, or level Downs, and Flocks
Grasing the tender herb, were interpos'd,
Or palmie hilloc, or the flourie lap
Of som irriguous Valley spread her store,
Flours of all hue, and without Thorn the Rose:
Another side, umbrageous Grots and Caves
Of coole recess, o're which the mantling Vine
Layes forth her purple Grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant; mean while murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, disperst, or in a Lake,
That to the fringed Bank with Myrtle crownd,
Her chrystall mirror holds, unite thir streams.
The Birds thir quire apply; aires, vernal aires,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while Universal PAN
Knit with the GRACES and the HOURS in dance
Led on th' Eternal Spring. Not that faire field
Of ENNA, where PROSERPIN gathring flours
Her self a fairer Floure by gloomie DIS
Was gatherd, which cost CERES all that pain
To seek her through the world; nor that sweet Grove
Of DAPHNE by ORONTES, and th' inspir'd
CASTALIAN Spring might with this Paradise
Of EDEN strive; nor that NYSEIAN Ile
Girt with the River TRITON, where old CHAM,
Whom Gentiles AMMON call and LIBYAN JOVE,
Hid AMALTHEA and her Florid Son
Young BACCHUS from his Stepdame RHEA'S eye;
Nor where ABASSIN Kings thir issue Guard,
Mount AMARA, though this by som suppos'd
True Paradise under the ETHIOP Line
By NILUS head, enclos'd with shining Rock,
A whole dayes journey high, but wide remote
From this ASSYRIAN Garden, where the Fiend
Saw undelighted all delight, all kind

Of living Creatures new to sight and strange:
Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native Honour clad
In naked Majestie seemd Lords of all,
And worthie seemd, for in thir looks Divine
The image of thir glorious Maker shon,
Truth, Wisdome, Sanctitude severe and pure,
Severe, but in true filial freedom plac't;
Whence true autoritie in men; though both
Not equal, as thir sex not equal seemd;
For contemplation hee and valour formd,
For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
Hee for God only, shee for God in him:
His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd
Absolute rule; and Hyacinthin Locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustring, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
Shee as a vail down to the slender waste
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dissheveld, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
As the Vine curles her tendrils, which impli'd
Subjection, but requir'd with gentle sway,
And by her yeilded, by him best receivd,
Yeilded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet reluctant amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then conceald,
Then was not guiltie shame, dishonest shame
Of natures works, honor dishonorable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubl'd all mankind
With shews instead, meer shews of seeming pure,
And banisht from mans life his happiest life,
Simplicitie and spotless innocence.
So passd they naked on, nor shund the sight
Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they passd, the lovliest pair
That ever since in loves imbraces met,
ADAM the goodliest man of men since borne
His Sons, the fairest of her Daughters EVE.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh Fountain side
They sat them down, and after no more toil
Of thir sweet Gardning labour then suffic'd
To recommend coole ZEPHYR, and made ease
More easie, wholsom thirst and appetite
More grateful, to thir Supper Fruits they fell,
Nectarine Fruits which the compliant boughes
Yeilded them, side-long as they sat recline
On the soft downie Bank damaskt with flours:
The savourie pulp they chew, and in the rinde
Still as they thirsted scoop the brimming stream;
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance as beseems
Fair couple, linkt in happie nuptial League,
Alone as they. About them frisking playd
All Beasts of th' Earth, since wilde, and of all chase

In Wood or Wilderness, Forrest or Den;
Sporting the Lion rampd, and in his paw
Dandl'd the Kid; Bears, Tygers, Ounces, Pards
Gambold before them, th' unwieldy Elephant
To make them mirth us'd all his might, & wreathd
His Lithe Proboscis; close the Serpent sly
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His breaded train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
Coucht, and now fild with pasture gazing sat,
Or Bedward ruminating: for the Sun
Declin'd was hasting now with prone carreer
To th' Ocean Iles, and in th' ascending Scale
Of Heav'n the Starrs that usher Evening rose:
When SATAN still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length faild speech recoverd sad.

O Hell! what doe mine eyes with grief behold,
Into our room of bliss thus high advanc't
Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
Not Spirits, yet to heav'nly Spirits bright
Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love, so lively shines
In them Divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that formd them on thir shape hath pourd.
Ah gentle pair, yee little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish and deliver ye to woe,
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy;
Happie, but for so happie ill secur'd
Long to continue, and this high seat your Heav'n
Ill fenc't for Heav'n to keep out such a foe
As now is enterd; yet no purpos'd foe
To you whom I could pittie thus forlorne
Though I unpittied: League with you I seek,
And mutual amitie so streight, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me
Henceforth; my dwelling haply may not please
Like this fair Paradise, your sense, yet such
Accept your Makers work; he gave it me,
Which I as freely give; Hell shall unfould,
To entertain you two, her widest Gates,
And send forth all her Kings; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous ofspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me loath to this revenge
On you who wrong me not for him who wrongd.
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I doe, yet public reason just,
Honour and Empire with revenge enlarg'd,
By conquering this new World, compels me now
To do what else though damnd I should abhorre.

The angels detect his presence and arrest him while he is trying to tempt the sleeping Eve,

now reduced to the shape of a toad.

Book 5 introduces Adam and Eve in their perfect but slightly precarious harmony. God sends the archangel Raphael to warn them of the approaching danger. While Eve cuts fruit for their meal, Raphael starts to describe to Adam in suitably adapted heroic style how Satan rebelled, created an opposition party and easily fooled a host of angels by his seeming sincerity.

In Book 6, Raphael's tale continues: there is open warfare in epic mode; the hosts of God's angels are led by Michael and Gabriel. The first day's battle is inconclusive; on the second day, Satan's army invents heavy artillery but the guns are buried by God's angels under uprooted mountains. On the third day, the Son himself comes out to battle as Messiah and by his unique power drives the rebels straight through the wall of heaven.

The two halves hinge around the division between books 6 and 7, the fall of Satan in book 6 being followed in Book 7 by Raphael's story (from Genesis) of the six days of creation by the Son who then returns to Heaven. They reach the point in the story where Adam is already created. In Book 8, Adam shows his human nature by taking over the story-telling from Raphael and plying him with questions about the mechanics of the cosmos. Raphael discourages too much scientific curiosity. The creation of Eve to be Adam's "fit companion" is described by Adam, who tells how they fell in love at a moment when Eve was in danger of falling in love with her own reflection in a pond. Raphael warns Adam and Eve again of the danger Satan represents, then withdraws.

The climax of the story comes in Books 9 and 10. Satan takes the shape of the serpent, tempts Eve while she is working away from Adam, she eats. Hearing what has happened, Adam is horrified. He recalls God's "you shall surely die" and decides he would rather die with her than live alone again. He eats and they are both overcome by liberated sexual passion of a degenerate kind that leads to discord. In book 10 the Son comes to judge them and give them clothes. Sin and Death create a highway linking earth and Hell while Satan returns to Pandemonium to tell of his success. All the inhabitants of Hell are turned into serpents eating ashes. The cosmos itself is corrupted as a result of humanity's Fall, although God in heaven promises the final victory of good. Adam and Eve consider suicide but Adam begins to use his reason, finds grounds for hope, and they turn towards God in prayer.

The final two books, Books 11 and 12, are oriented towards the future. The Son prays to the Father for Adam and Eve; his prayers are accepted. Adam and Eve must leave Paradise and live out in the harsh world. Michael is sent to tell them of their exile. Michael tells Adam of the future consequences of the Fall, as portrayed in the early chapters of Genesis, with the murder of Abel, the corruptions that follow, until God decides to send the flood to destroy humanity. Adam is appalled. Book 12 turns from disaster to hope, with the call of Abraham and his obedience to God. Michael tells Adam all the history of Israel, constantly wavering between obedience and sin, until one woman, Mary, says yes to God and the Son is born. The life and death of Jesus are reported, and the continuing work of salvation in the Christian Church with the same alternations of disaster and hope until finally the Last Day brings the Return and final victory of the Son. Adam is comforted. Eve, who has been asleep, dreams similar things and together they set out to begin human society's history:

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and providence their guide:
They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

(Book 12 lines 645-9)

Books 1 and 3, 7 and 9 each begin with an invocation to the muse who, in book 7, is named "Urania"--not one of the classical muses but a figure used in the Reformation times to refer to the inspiring Spirit of Christian poetry. These invocations divide each half of the poem into sections of two books followed by four, a significant pattern of harmony as well as indicating the proper proportion between reason and concupis-cence according to Pico.

At the same time, the last book of the first half and the first of the second are marked by a double triumph of the Son; he drives the rebels from Heaven, then he creates the world. We see him mounting his chariot in book 6 lines 760-3:

He in celestial panoply all armed
Of radiant urim, work divinely wrought,
Ascended, at his right hand victory
Sat, eagle-winged...

It is no coincidence that in the first edition of the poem the exact half-way point in terms of line-count fell between "wrought" and "ascended". Similarly, though ambiguously opposite in content, the second half of the second edition in terms of books-count begins "Descend"!

The reception of Paradise Lost is a long story in itself. In many ways the work was a challenge. The choice of a biblical theme was criticized by Dryden, for example. Yet the greatness of the work was quickly recognized. The first edition, for which Milton received ten pounds, sold well over one thousand copies. The second edition, the final text, continued to be published after Milton's death.

In the coming Age of Reason, Milton's poem might appeal because of its reasonableness. Milton was not much interested in the laws of universal mechanics that were the dominant interest of the scientific age, he never chose between the old earth-centred system and the new sun-centred one, but he did consider that Christian belief, based on the Bible, was in accordance with the demands of reason. Milton wanted to know and express in words the truth, as much as any other seventeenth or eighteenth century philosopher.

Milton was writing in an age that had largely lost the ability to take seriously the old myths of Greece and Rome, or even to use them in metaphorical ways. He benefits from this, since his subject matter is still universally recognized as true and treated with the deepest respect, even though many of the details of the Bible, the Old Testament in particular, were already beginning to be found unacceptable to a modern enlightened sensibility.

One of the most influential writers in the elevation of Paradise Lost to the rank of a great classic was Joseph Addison (1672-1719) who wrote a long series of articles centred on Paradise Lost in the Saturday issues of The Spectator, starting in January 1712. He compares the poem to the great classical epics and applies Aristotle's criteria, to show that Milton's work is in effect superior to the old epics, in part at least because it is Christian and therefore "true" in ways their pagan mythologies could not be.

Later in the century, Dr. Johnson published a well-known essay on Milton's works in 1779 in which he spends a long time on the excellence of Paradise Lost:

Here is a full display of the united force of study and genius; of a great accumulation of materials, with judgement to digest and fancy to combine them: Milton was able to select from nature or from story, from ancient fable or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind,

fermented by study and exalted by imagination.

His main complaint is that the poem has "neither human actions nor human manners" since all happens in Heaven, in Hell, or in Paradise where Adam and Eve "are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know".

Dr. Johnson was blunt enough to add a celebrated comment with which many have had to agree:

But original deficience cannot be supplied. The want of human interest is always felt. Paradise Lost is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for compan-ions.

The history of reactions to Paradise Lost is one of admiration and rejection.

Week 14: Japanese No plays

KAGEKIYO By SEAMI

PERSONS

A GIRL (Kagekiyo's daughter).
HER ATTENDANT.
KAGEKIYO THE PASSIONATE.
A VILLAGER.
CHORUS.

GIRL and ATTENDANT.
Late dewdrops are our lives that only wait
Till the wind blows, the wind of morning blows.

GIRL.
I am Hitomaru. I live in the valley of Kamegaye. My father Kagekiyo the Passionate fought for the House of Hei, and for this was hated by the Genji. I am told they have banished him to Miyazaki in the country of Hyūga, and there in changed estate he passes the months and years. I must not be downcast at the toil of the journey; for hardship is the lot of all that travel on unfamiliar roads, and I must bear it for my father's sake.

GIRL and ATTENDANT.
Oh double-wet our sleeves
With the tears of troubled dreaming and the dews
That wet our grassy bed.
We leave Sagami; who shall point the way
To Tōtōmi, far off not only in name?
Over the sea we row:
And now the eight-fold Spider Bridge we cross
To Mikawa. How long, O City of the Clouds,
Shall we, inured to travel, see you in our dreams?

ATTENDANT.
We have journeyed so fast that I think we must already have come to Miyazaki in the country of Hyūga. It is here you should ask for your father.

(The voice of KAGEKIYO is heard from within his hut.)

KAGEKIYO.
Behind this gate,
This pine-wood barricade shut in alone
I waste the hours and days;
By me not numbered, since my eyes no longer
See the clear light of heaven, but in darkness,
Unending darkness, profitlessly sleep
In this low room.
For garment given but one coat to cover
From winter winds or summer's fire
This ruin, this anatomy!

CHORUS (speaking for KAGEKIYO).

Oh better had I left the world, to wear
The black-stained sleeve.
Who will now pity me, whose withered frame
Even to myself is hateful?
Or who shall make a care to search for me
And carry consolation to my woes?

GIRL.
How strange! That hut is so old, I cannot think that any one can live there. Yet I heard a voice speaking within. Perhaps some beggar lodges there; I will not go nearer. (She steps back.)

KAGEKIYO.
Though my eyes see not autumn
Yet has the wind brought tiding

GIRL.
Of one who wanders
By ways unknown bewildered,
Finding rest nowhere

KAGEKIYO.
For in the Three Worlds of Being
Nowhere is rest, but only
In the Void Eternal.
None is, and none can answer
Where to thy asking.

ATTENDANT (going up to KAGEKIYO'S hut).
I have come to your cottage to ask you something.

KAGEKIYO.
What is it you want?

ATTENDANT.
Can you tell me where the exile lives?

KAGEKIYO.
The exile? What exile do you mean? Tell me his name.

ATTENDANT.
We are looking for Kagekiyo the Passionate who fought for the Taira.

KAGEKIYO.
I have heard of him indeed. But I am blind, and have not seen him. I have heard such sad tales of his plight that I needs must pity him. Go further; ask elsewhere.

ATTENDANT (to GIRL, who has been waiting).
It does not seem that we shall find him here. Let us go further and ask again. (They pass on.)

KAGEKIYO.
Who can it be that is asking for me? What if it should be the child of this blind man? For long ago when I was at Atsuta in Owari I courted a woman and had a child by her. But since the child was a girl, I thought I would get no good of her and left her with the head. man of the valley of Kamegaye. But she was not content to stay with her foster-parents and has come

all this way to meet her true father.

CHORUS.
To hear a voice,
To hear and not to see!
Oh pity of blind eyes!
I have let her pass by;
I have not told my name;
But it was love that bound me,
Love's rope that held me.

ATTENDANT (calling into the side-bridge).
Hie! Is there any villager about?

VILLAGER (raising the curtain that divides the side-bridge from the stage).
What do you want with me?

ATTENDANT.
Do you know where the exile lives?

VILLAGER.
The exile? What exile is it you are asking for?

ATTENDANT.
One called Kagekiyo the Passionate who fought for the Taira.

VILLAGER.
Did you not see some one in a thatched but under the hillside as you came along?

ATTENDANT.
Why, we saw a blind beggar in a thatched hut.

VILLAGER.
That blind beggar is your man. He is Kagekiyo.
(The GIRL starts and trembles.)
But why does your lady tremble when I tell you that he is Kagekiyo? What is amiss with her?

ATTENDANT.
No wonder that you ask. I will tell you at once; this lady is Kagekiyo's daughter. She has borne the toil of this journey because she longed to meet her father face to face. Please take her to him.

VILLAGER.
She is Kagekiyo's daughter? How strange, how strange! But, lady, calm yourself and listen.
Kagekiyo went blind in both his eyes, and finding himself helpless, shaved his head and called himself the beggar of Hyūga. He begs a little from travellers; and we villagers are sorry for him and see to it that he does not starve. Perhaps he would not tell you his name because he was ashamed of what he has become. But if you will come with me I will shout "Kagekiyo" at him. He will surely answer to his own name. Then you shall go to him and talk of what you will, old times or now. Please come this way.

(They go towards the hut.)

Hie, Kagekiyo, Kagekiyo! Are you there, Kagekiyo the Passionate?

KAGEKIYO (stopping his ears with his hands, irritably).
Noise, noise!
Silence! I was vexed already. For a while ago there came travellers from my home! Do you think I let them stay? No, no. I could not show them my loathsomeness. . . . It was hard to let them go,--not tell them my name!
A thousand rivers of tears soften my sleeve!
A thousand, thousand things I do in dream
And wake to idleness! Oh I am resolved
To be in the world as one who is not in the world.
Let them shout "Kagekiyo, Kagekiyo":
Need beggars answer?
Moreover, in this land I have a name.

CHORUS.
"In Hyūga sunward-facing
A fit name found I.
Oh call me not by the name
Of old days that have dropped
Like the Low from a stricken hand!
For I whom passion
Had left for ever
At the sound of that wrathful name
Am angry, angry."

(While the CHORUS speaks his thought KAGEKIYO mimes their words, waving his stick and finally beating it against his thigh in a crescendo of rage.)

KAGEKIYO (suddenly lowering his voice, gently).
But while I dwell here

CHORUS.
"But while I dwell here
To those that tend me
Should I grow hateful.
Then were I truly
A blind man staffless.
Oh forgive
Profitless anger, tongue untended,
A cripple's spleen."

KAGEKIYO.
For though my eyes be darkened

CHORUS.
"Though my eyes be darkened
Yet, no word spoken,
Men's thoughts I see.
Listen now to the wind
In the woods upon the hill:
Snow is coming, snow!
Oh bitterness to wake
From dreams of flowers unseen!
And on the shore,
Listen, the waves are lapping
over rough stones to the cliff.

The evening tide is in.

(KAGEKIYO fumbles for his staff and rises, coming just outside the hut. The mention of "waves," "shore," "tide," has reminded him of the great shore-battle at Yashima in which the Tairas triumphed.)

"I was one of them, of those Tairas. If you will listen, I will tell you the tale . . ."

KAGEKIYO (to the VILLAGER).
There was a weight on my mind when I spoke to you so harshly. Pray forgive me.

VILLAGER.
No, no! you are always so! I do not heed you. But tell me, did not someone come before, asking for Kagekiyo?

KAGEKIYO.
No,--you are the only one who has asked.

VILLAGER.
It is not true. Some one came here saying that she was Kagekiyo's daughter. Why did you not tell her? I was sorry for her and have brought her back with me.

(To the GIRL.)

Come now, speak with your father.

GIRL (going to KAGEKIYO'S side and touching his sleeve).
It is I who have come to you.
I have come all the long way,
Through rain, wind, frost and dew.
And now--you have not understood; it was all for nothing.
Am I not worth your love? Oh cruel, cruel! (She weeps.)

KAGEKIYO.
All that till now I thought to have concealed
Is known; where can I hide,
I that have no more refuge than the dew
That finds no leaf to lie on?
Should you, oh flower delicately tended,p. 96
Call me your father, then would the World know you
A beggar's daughter. Oh think not ill of me
That I did let you pass!

(He gropes falteringly with his right hand and touches her sleeve.)

CHORUS.
Oh sad, sad!
He that of old gave welcome
To casual strangers and would raise an angry voice
If any passed his door,
Now from his own child gladly
Would hide his wretchedness.
He that once
Among all that in the warships of Taira
Shoulder to shoulder, knee locked with knee,

Dwelt crowded--
Even Kagekiyo keen
As the clear moonlight--
Was ever called on to captain
The Royal Pinnace.
And though among his men
Many were brave and many of wise counsel,
Yet was he even as the helm of the boat.
And of the many who served him
None cavilled, disputed.
But now
He that of all was envied
Is like Kirin grown old,
By every jade outrun.

VILLAGER (seeing the GIRL standing sadly apart).
Poor child, come back again.
(She comes back to her father's side.)
Listen, Kagekiyo, there is something your daughter wants of you.

KAGEKIYO.
What is it she wants?

VILLAGER.
She tells me that she longs to hear the story of your high deeds at Yashima. Could you not tell us the tale?

KAGEKIYO.
That is a strange thing for a girl to ask. Yet since kind love brought her this long, long way to visit me, I cannot but tell her the tale. Promise me that when it is finished you will send her back again to her home.

VILLAGER.
I will. So soon as your tale is finished, I will send her home.

KAGEKIYO.
It was in the third year of Juyei,
At the close of the third month.
We of Heike were in our ships,
The men of Genji on shore.
Two armies spread along the coast
Eager to bid in battle
For final mastery.
Then said Noritsune, Lord of Noto,
"Last year at Muro Hill in the land of Harima,
At Water Island, even at Jackdaw Pass,
We were beaten again and again; outwitted
By Yoshitsune's strategy.
Oh that some plan might be found, some counsel given
For the slaying of Kurō." So spoke he.
Then thought Kagekiyo in his heart,
"Though he be called 'Judge,'
Yet is he no god or demon, this Yoshitsune.
An easy task! Oh easy for one that loves not
His own life chiefly!

So he took leave of Noritsune
And landed upon the beach.
The soldiers of Genji
"Death to him, death to him!" cried
As they swept towards him.

CHORUS.
And when he saw them,
"What great to-do!" he cried, then waving
His sword in the evening sunlight
He fell upon them swiftly.
They fled before his sword-point,
They could not withstand him, those soldiers;
This way, that way, they scuttled wildly, and he cried,
"They shall not escape me!"

KAGEKIYO (breaking in excitedly).
Cowards, cowards all of you!

CHORUS.
Cowards, all of you!
Sight shameful alike for Gen and Hei.
Then, thinking that to stop one man
Could not but be easy,
Sword under arm,
"I am Kagekiyo," he cried,
"Kagekiyo the Passionate, a captain of the soldiers of Hei."
And swiftly pursued, with naked hand to grasp
The helm that Mionoya wore.
He clutched at the neck-piece,
Twice and again he clutched, but it slipped from him, slid through his fingers.
Then crying "He shall not escape me, this foe I have chosen,"
Swooped like a bird, seized upon the helmet,
"Eya, eya," he cried, tugging,
Till "Crack"--the neck-piece tore from the helm and was left in his hand,
While the master of it, suddenly free, ran till he was come
A good way off, then turning,
"O mighty Kagekiyo, how terrible the strength of your arm!"
And the other called back to him, "Nay, say rather 'How strong the shaft
Of Mionoya's neck!'" So laughed they across the battle,
And went off each his way.

(KAGEKIYO, who has been miming the battle, breaks off abruptly and turns to the VILLAGER. The CHORUS speaks for him.)

CHORUS.
"I am old: I have forgotten--things unforgettable!
My thoughts are tangled: I am ashamed.
But little longer shall this world,
This sorrowful world torment me.
The end is near: go to your home;
Pray for my soul departed, child, candle to my darkness,
Bridge to salvation!

(He rises to his feet groping with his stick, comes to the GIRL, and gently pushes her before

him towards the wing.)

"I stay," he said; and she "I go."
The sound of this word
Was all he kept of her,
Nor passed between them
Remembrance other.

Matsukaze by Kan'ami, reworked by Zeami.

Introduction

The word matsukaze (wind in the pines) evokes for Japanese a feeling of exquisite solitude and melancholy. Suma Bay, the scene of the play, has similar associations, for it was the place where Genji was exiled. The account of Genji's exile, recounted in the "Exile at Suma" chapter of The Tale of Genji, was apparently inspired by the exile of Ariwara no Yukihira (818-893), a famous poet, courtier, and scholar. Yukihira's poem on his exile, found in the Kokinshu, is quoted in the play. Another source for the play is a story told in the Senshusho, a thirteenth-century collection of tales: One day, when Yukihira was walking along a beach near Suma he met some men spearing fish. He asked where they lived, and they replied,

"We who spend our lives
By the shore where the white waves break
Are fishermen's sons, and we have
No home we can call our own."

Yukihira was moved to tears.

Most of Matsukaze, however, appears to have been the invention of the playwright. It gives an impression of youthful vigor, but is constructed with care. Matsukaze's "mad scene" is made almost inevitable, and the lack of surprise only heightens the dramatic power. Only at the conclusion of the play does the reader (or, even more so, the spectator) realize how completely he has been gripped by the lyrical and dramatic tension, when he is released from the dream by one of the most effective wordplays in literature: Matsukaze and her sister Murasame (Autumn Rain) withdraw, and suddenly the chorus restores their names to their original meanings. The ghosts dissolve back into nature, leaving us alone, listening only to the wind in the pines. No more beautiful awakening could be imagined.

The play's imagery is built around the sea (salt, brine, the tide, waves, the sea wind), the moon, and pine trees. These, with the mountains looming in the background, compose an archetypal Japanese landscape. The moon, moreover, is a symbol of Buddhist enlightenment. Although it shines alone in the sky, it is reflected in many waters, just as the unified Buddha-nature is manifested in seemingly distinct beings.

PERSONS

AN ITINERANT PRIEST (waki):
A VILLAGER (kyogen):
MATSUKAZE (shite):
MURASAME (tsure):

PLACE
SUMA BAY IN SETTSU PROVINCE

TIME
AUTUMN, THE NINTH MONTH

[The stage assistant places a stand with a pine sapling set into it at the front of the stage. The Priest enters and stands at the naming-place. He carries a rosary.]

Priest

I am a priest who travels from province to province. Lately I have been in the Capital. I visited the famous sites and ancient ruins, not missing a one. Now I intend to make a pilgrimage to the western provinces. [He faces forward.]
I have hurried, and here I am already at the Bay of Suma in Settsu Province. [His attention is caught by pine tree.]
How strange! That pine on the beach has a curious look. There must be a story connected with it. I'll ask someone in the neighborhood. [He faces the bridgeway.]
Do you live in Suma?

[The Villager comes down the bridgeway to the first pine. He wears a short sword.]
Villager

Perhaps I am from Suma; but first tell me what you want.

Priest

I am a priest and I travel through the provinces. Here on the beach I see a solitary pine tree with a wooden tablet fixed to it, and a poem slip hanging from the tablet. Is there a story connected with the tree? Please tell me what you know.

Villager

The pine is linked with the memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and Murasame. Please say a prayer for them as you pass.

Priest

Thank you. I know nothing about them, but I will stop at the tree and say a prayer for them before I move on.

Villager

If I can be of further service, don't hesitate to ask.

Priest

Thank you for your kindness.

Villager

At your command, sir.

[The Villager exits. The Priest goes to stage center and turns toward the pine tree.]

Priest

So, this pine tree is linked with the memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and Murasame. It is sad! Though their bodies are buried in the ground, their names linger on. This lonely pine tree lingers on also, ever green and untouched by autumn, their only memorial. Ah! While I have been chanting sutras and invoking Amida Buddha for their repose, the sun, as always on autumn days, has quickly set. That village at the foot of the mountain is a long way. Perhaps I can spend the night in this fisherman's salt shed.

[He kneels at the waki-position. The stage assistant brings out the prop, a cart for carrying pails of brine, and sets it by the gazing-pillar. He places a pail on the cart.
Murasame enters and comes down the bridgeway as far as the first pine. She wears the tsure mask. Matsukaze follows her and stops at the third pine. She wears the wakaonna mask. Each carries a water pail. They face each other.]

Matsukaze and Murasame
A brine cart wheeled along the beach
Provides a meager livelihood:
The sad world rolls
Life by quickly and in misery!

Murasame
Here at Suma Bay
The waves shatter at our feet,
And even the moonlight wets our sleeves
With its tears of loneliness.

[Murasame goes to stage center while Matsukaze moves to the shite-position.]
Murasame

The autumn winds are sad.
When the Middle Counselor Yukihira
Lived here back a little from the sea,
They inspired his poem,
"Salt winds blowing from the mountain pass. . . ." 1
On the beach, night after night,
Waves thunder at our door;

And on our long walks to the village
We've no companion but the moon. 2
Our toil, like all of life, is dreary,
But none could be more bleak than ours.
A skiff cannot cross the sea,
Nor we this dream world.
Do we exist, even?
Like foam on the salt sea,
We draw a cart, 3
friendless and alone,
Poor fisher girls whose sleeves are wet
With endless spray, and tears
From our hearts' unanswered longing.

Chorus
Our life is so hard to bear
That we envy the pure moon
Now rising with the tide.
But come, let us dip brine,
Dip brine from the rising tide!
Our reflections seem to shame us!
[They look down as if catching a glimpse of their refiections in the water. The movement of their heads "clouds" the expression on their masks, making it seem sad.]
Yes, they shame us!
Here, where we shrink from men's eyes,
Drawing our timorous cart;
The withdrawing tide
Leaves stranded pools behind.
How long do they remain?
If we were the dew on grassy fields,
We would vanish with the sun.
But we are sea tangle,

Washed up on the shore,
Raked into heaps by the fishermen,
Fated to be discarded, useless,
Withered and rotting,
Like our trailing sleeves,
Like our trailing sleeves
[They look down again.]
Endlessly familiar, still how lovely
The twilight at Suma!

The fishermen call out in muffled voices;
At sea, the small boats loom dimly.
Across the faintly glowing face of the moon
Flights of wild geese streak,
And plovers flock below along the shore.
Fall gales and stiff sea winds:
These are things, in such a place,
That truly belong to autumn.
But oh, the terrible, lonely nights!

[They hide their faces.]
Matsukaze
Come, dip the brine

Murasame
Where the seas flood and fall.
Let us tie our sleeves back to our shoulders

Matsukaze
Think only, "Dip the brine."

Murasame
We ready ourselves for the task,

Matsukaze
But for women, this cart is too hard.

Chorus
While the rough breakers surge and fall,
[Murasame moves upstage to stand beside Matsukaze.]
While the rough breakers surge and fall,
And cranes among the reeds
Fly up with sharp cries.
The four winds add their wailing.
How shall we pass the cold night?
[They look up.]
The late moon is so brilliant --
What we dip is its reflection!
Smoke from the salt fires
May cloud the moon. Take care!
Are we always to spend only
The sad autumns of fishermen?
At Ojima in Matsushima 6
[Matsukaze halfkneels by the brine cart and mimes dipping with her fan.]
The fisherfolk, like us,

Delight less in the moon
Than in the dipping of its reflection;
There they take delight in dipping
Reflections of the moon.
[Matsukaze returns to the shite-position.]

We haul our brine from afar,
As in far-famed Michinoku
And at the salt kilns of Chika --
Chika, whose name means "close by."

Matsukaze
Humble folk hauled wood for salt fires
At the ebb tide on Akogi Shore;

Chorus
On Ise Bay there's Twice-See Beach --
Oh, could I live my life again!

[Matsukaze looks off into the distance.]
Matsukaze
On days when pine groves stand hazy,
And the sea lanes draw back
From the coast at Narumi --

Chorus

You speak of Narumi; this is Naruo,
Where pines cut off the moonlight
From the reed-thatched roofs of Ashinoya.

Matsukaze
Who is to tell of our unhappiness
Dipping brine at Nada?
With boxwood combs set in our hair
From rushing seas we draw the brine,
Oh look! I have the moon in my pail!

[Murasame kneels before the brine cart and places her pail on it. Matsukaze, still standing, looks into her pail.]
Matsukaze
In my pail too I hold the moon!

Chorus
How lovely! A moon here too!

[Murasame picks up the rope tied to the cart and gives it to Matsukaze, then moves to the shite-position. Matsukaze looks up.]

Matsukaze
The moon above is one;
Below it has two, no, three reflections
[She looks into both pails.]
Which shine in the flood tide tonight,
[She pulls the cart to a spot before the musicians.]

And on our cart we load the moon!
No, life is not all misery
Here by the sea lanes.

[She drops the rope. The stage assistant removes the cart. Matsukaze sits on a low stool and Murasame kneels beside her, a sign that the two women are resting inside their hut. The Priest rises.]

Priest
The owner of the salt shed has returned. I shall ask for a night's lodging. [to Matsukaze and Murasame]
I beg your pardon. Might I come inside?

Murasame
[standing and coming forward a little.]
Who might you be?

Priest
A traveler, overtaken by night on my journey. I should like to ask lodging for the night.

Murasame
Wait here. I must ask the owner. [She kneels before Matsukaze.]
A traveler outside asks to come in and spend the night.

Matsukaze
That is little enough but our hut is so wretched we cannot ask him in. Please tell him so.

Murasame
[standing, to the Priest.]
I have spoken to the owner. She says the house is too wretched to put anyone up.

Priest
I understand those feelings perfectly, but poverty makes no difference at all to me. I am only a priest. Please say I beg her to let me spend the night.

Murasame
No, we really cannot put you up.

Matsukaze
[to Murasame.]
Wait!
I see in the moonlight
One who has renounced the world.
He will not mind a fisherman's hut,
With its rough pine pillars and bamboo fence;
I believe it is very cold tonight,
So let him come in and warm himself
At our sad fire of rushes.
You may tell him that.

Murasame
Please come in.

Priest
Thank you very much. Forgive me for intruding.

[He takes a few steps forward and kneels. Murasame goes back beside Matsukaze.]
Matsukaze

I wished from the beginning to invite you in, but this place is so poor I felt I must refuse.

Priest
You are very kind. I am a priest and a traveler, and never stay anywhere very long. Why prefer one lodging to another? In any case, what sensitive person would not prefer to live here at Suma, in the quiet solitude. Yukihira wrote,

"If ever anyone
Chances to ask for me,
Say I live alone,
Soaked by the dripping seaweed
On the shore of Suma Bay." 14
[He looks at the pine tree.]

A while ago I asked someone the meaning of that solitary pine on the beach. I was told it grows there in memory of two fisher girls, Matsukaze and Murasame. There is no connection between them and me, but I went to the pine anyway and said a prayer for them.
[Matsukaze and Murasame weep. The Priest stares at them.]
This is strange! They seem distressed at the mention of Matsukaze and Murasame. Why?

Matsukaze and Murasame
Truly, when a grief is hidden,
Still, signs of it will show.
His poem, "If ever anyone
Chances to ask for me,"
Filled us with memories which are far too fond.
Tears of attachment to the world
Wet our sleeves once again.

Priest
Tears of attachment to the world? You speak as though you are no longer of the world. Yukihira's poem overcame you with memories. More and more bewildering! Please, both of you, tell me who you are.

Matsukaze and Murasame
We would tell you our names,
But we are too ashamed!
No one, ever,
Has chanced to ask for us,
Long dead as we are,
And so steeped in longing
For the world by Suma Bay
That pain has taught us nothing.
Ah, the sting of regret!
But having said this,
Why should we hide our names any longer?
At twilight you said a prayer
By a mossy grave under the pine
For two fisher girls,

Matsukaze and Murasame.

We are their ghosts, come to you.
When Yukihira was here he whiled away
Three years of weary exile
Aboard his pleasure boat,
His heart refreshed
By the moon of Suma Bay.
There were, among the fisher girls
Who hauled brine each evening,
Two sisters whom he chose for his favors.
"Names to fit the season!"
He said, calling us
Pine Wind and Autumn Rain.
We had been Suma fisher girls,
Accustomed to the moon,
But he changed our salt makers' clothing
To damask robes,
Burnt with the scent of faint perfumes. 15

Matsukaze
Then, three years later,
Yukihira Returned to the Capital.

Murasame
Soon, we heard he had died, oh so young!

Matsukaze
How we both loved him!
Now the message we pined for
Would never, never come.

Chorus
Pine Wind and Autumn Rain
Both drenched their sleeves with the tears
Of hopeless love beyond their station,
Fisher girls of Suma.
Our sin is deep, o priest.
Pray for us, we beg of you!
[They press their palms together in supplication.]
Our love grew rank as wild grasses;
Tears and love ran wild.
It was madness that touched us.
Despite spring purification,
Performed in our old robes,
Despite prayers inscribed on paper streamers
The gods refused us their help.
We were left to melt away

Like foam on the waves,
And, in misery, we died.
[Matsukaze looks down, shading her mask.]
Alas! How the past evokes our longing!
Yukihira, the Middle Counselor,
[The stage assistant puts a man's cloak and court hat in Matsukaze's left hand.]
Lived three years here by Suma Bay.
Before he returned to the Capital,

He left us these keepsakes of his stay:
A court hat and a hunting cloak.
Each time we see them,
[She looks at the cloak.]
Our love grows again,
And gathers like dew
On the tip of a leaf
So that there's no forgetting,
Not for an instant.
Oh endless misery!
[She places the cloak in her lap.]
"This keepsake
Is my enemy now;
For without it
[She lifts the cloak.]
I might forget."
[She stares at the cloak.]

The poem says that
And it's true:
My anguish only deepens.
[She weeps.]

Matsukaze
Each night before I go to sleep,
I take off the hunting cloak

Chorus
And hang it up. . ."
[The keepsakes in her hand, she stands and, as in a trance, takes a few steps toward the gazing-pillar.]
I hung all my hopes
On living in the same work with him,
But being here makes no sense at all
And these keepsakes are nothing.

[She starts to drop the cloak, only to cradle it in her arms and press it to her.]
I drop it, but I cannot let it lie;
So I take it up again
To see his face before me yet once more.
[She turns to her right and goes toward the naming-place, then stares down the bridgeway as though something were coming after her.]
"Awake or asleep,
From my pillow, from the foot of my bed,
Love rushes in upon me."
Helplessly I sink down,
Weeping in agony.

[She sits at the shite-position, weeping. The stage assistant helps her take off her outer robe and replace it with the cloak. He also helps tie on the court hat.]
Matsukaze

The River of Three Fords
Has gloomy shallows
Of never-ending tears;

I found, even there,
An abyss of wildest love.
Oh joy! Look! Over there!
Yukihira has returned!
[She rises, staring at the pine tree.]
He calls me by my name, Pine Wind!
I am coming!

[She goes to the tree. Murasarne hurriedly rises and follows. She catches Matsukaze's sleeve.]
Murasame
For shame! For such thoughts as these
You are lost in the sin of passion.
All the delusions that held you in life --
None forgotten!
[Both step back from the tree.]
That is a pine tree.
And Yukihira is not here.

Matsukaze
You are talking nonsense!
[She looks at the pine tree.]
This pine is Yukihira!
"Though we may part for a time,
If I hear you are pining for me,
I'll hurry back."
Have you forgotten those words he wrote?

Murasame
Yes, I had forgotten!
He said, "Though we may part for a time,
If you pine, I will return to you."

Matsukaze
I have not forgotten.
And I wait for the pine wind
To whisper word of his coming.

Murasame
If that word should ever come,
My sleeves for a while
Would be wet with autumn rain.

Matsukaze
So we await him. He will come,
Constant ever, green as a pine.

Murasame
Yes, we can trust

Matsukaze
his poem:

Chorus
"I have gone away

[Murasame, weeping, kneels before the flute player. Matsukaze goes to the first pine on the bridgeway, then returns to the stage and dances.]

Matsukaze
Into the mountains of Inaba,
Covered with pines,
But if I hear you pine,
I shall come back at once."
Those are the mountain pines
Of distant Inaba,
[She looks up the bridgeway.]
And these are the pines
On the curving Suma shore.
Here our dear prince once lived.
If Yukihira comes again,
I shall go stand under the tree
[She approaches the tree.]
Bent by the sea-wind,
And, tenderly, tell him
[She stands next to the tree.]
I love him still

[She steps back a little and weeps. Then she circles the tree, her dancing suggesting madness.]

Chorus
Madly the gale howls through the pines,
And breakers crash in Suma Bay;
Through the frenzied night
We have come to you
In a dream of deluded passion.
Pray for usl Pray for our rest!
[At stage center, Matsukaze presses her palms together in supplication.]
Now we take our leave.
The retreating waves
Hiss far away, and a wind sweeps down
From the mountain to Suma Bay.
The cocks are crowing on the barrier road.
Your dream is over. Day has come.
Last night you heard the autumn rain;
This morning all that is left
Is the wind in the pines,
The wind in the pines.

Week 15: The Story of Simcheong

The following version of the tale is one compiled by Heinz Insu Fenkl from regional variants in the same way the Brothers Grimm constructed "ideal" versions of stories based on several different tellings.

In the last years of the Hongpung era of Sung, in Tohwadong in Hwangju, there lived a poor blind yangban by the name of Shim Hakkyu. He and his devoted wife, Kwakssi, were childless for the longest time, and it was only after many years of faithful prayer to the spirits that Kwakssi bore a beautiful daughter whom they named Shimchong. But, alas, the ordeal of giving birth at such an advanced age was too much for Kwakssi, and she passed away. Shim did his best to raise his daughter alone and together the two of them endured great hardships.

Shimchong was an obedient and filial daughter who accompanied her father as soon as she could walk and begged alms with him the moment she could speak. It was not many years before she was a beautiful young girl. One day, Old Man Shim was out alone begging for alms and he stumbled into a deep irrigation ditch. As he was foundering in the water, trying vainly to climb out, bemoaning his bad fate and his handicap, he heard a voice speak to him from above. "Old man," it said, "I have heard you lamenting about your blindness. If you will give 300 bushels of rice to my temple as a tribute to the Lord Buddha, we will offer up our prayers to return your sight." Gentle but firm hands that seemed to reach down from the heavens themselves took hold of Old Man Shim's trembling arms and pulled him from the waters of the ditch. Shim was so thankful and so full of hope that he momentarily forgot his dire circumstances, and without thinking he blurted out, "Thank you kind monk. Thank you! I will give you those 300 bags of rice! I swear it!"

It wasn't until much later, when his elation had worn off, that Old Man Shim had the terrible realization that he did not have the means to offer three bowls of rice — let alone 300 bushels — to the temple.

"Shimchong–ah," he said to his daughter that evening, recounting his misfortune. "What shall I do? I was filled with gladness and the world seemed bright to me. Other men jostle me out of the way or steal my alms from out of my hands but the monk was kind. All I wanted was to return his kindness, and look what I have done. What terrible thing will befall us if I have offended the Buddha himself?"

It just so happened that the Dragon King of the East Sea was displeased with the merchant fleet and had sent foul weather and storms that had sunk ship after ship on its way to China. To appease the Dragon King, the merchants needed to sacrifice a beautiful maiden, but as of yet they had found no family willing to sell a maiden daughter. So when Shimchong appeared the next dawn and offered herself in exchange for the tribute for her father, the captain of the merchant fleet was more than happy to accept.

The sea was calm at the beginning of the voyage, but soon the sky grew gray and ominous. The water, at first, was only choppy, but then the sea boiled as if the Dragon King were thrashing his massive body beneath the waves. Lightning flashed from the dark clouds and the wind ripped at the sails. Oars and anchor chains snapped in the violent sea. The merchant captain brought Shimchong out of the hold, dressed up in bright–colored bridal finery. Although Shimchong told him that she would leap into the waves of her own will, he did not believe her, and he had her hands and feet securely bound. With the sailors all weeping copiously with their admiration for her bravery and her filial virtue, Shimchong said a quiet prayer and leapt overboard into the ocean. And just as she disappeared under the

waves, the violent seas grew calm once again.

Shimchong descended into the cold water. As she sank deeper and deeper, the water around her was suddenly bright with light and she found that she could breath. She looked around her in wonder as the minions of the Dragon King approached her, released her from her bonds, and escorted her to the magnificent underwater palace.

And there she dwelled, happy, for it is said that the spirit of her mother also dwelt there. But after a time she was homesick for the world of the surface, and she longed to see her dear father again. Her cheerful demeanor grew sad, and it came to the notice of the Dragon King, who called her to him one day and said, "I cannot bear to see your unhappiness any longer, Shimchong. I have seen that your filial piety and your selfless devotion are far greater than that of any other mortal I have known. It touches my heart to see your concern for your poor father, so as a reward for your devotion, I will send you back up into the world above." And with this the Dragon King transformed Shimchong into a lotus flower.

So it happened that a giant white lotus blossom was found at the mouth of a river along the coast, and the local fisherman, awed by its beauty, decided to make it a gift for their King. The King was recently widowed, and known to be in a deeply mournful mood. They hoped the bright flower would lift his spirits.

When the King first beheld the flower, his eyes lit up in wonder. He rewarded the fishermen handsomely and had the lotus installed in its own special room where he would stand for hours each day in a melancholy mood, admiring its beauty. Each night Shimchong would emerge from the blossom, and at the crack of each dawn she would merge into it again. Time and seasons passed and the King's love for the flower did not wane.

One moonlit night the King was restless, and as he wandered the palace he found himself, by and by, at the chamber of the lotus flower. He stepped inside to gaze upon the lotus in the moonlight, but what he saw was far more wonderful — a woman so beautiful it took his breath away. "Who are you?" he said. "Are you a ghost come to bewitch me or are you real?"

"It is only I," said Shimchong. "It is I who live in the giant flower." Out of modesty, she tried to hide herself, but when she turned, she found the lotus flower had vanished.

And this is how Shimchong came to be the King's bride. There was a magnificent wedding, and they passed their days together in great happiness, but the King sensed a great sadness about his new Queen. One day he found her weeping in the garden. "My dear wife," he said, "I cannot bear to see your tears. Tell me your wish — any wish — and it shall be granted."

"There is only one thing I desire," Shimchong replied. "Let there be a great public banquet to celebrate our marriage, and let all the blind men of the Kingdom be invited to partake of the feast. That is what will make my heart glad."

The King honored his Queen's strange request, and so from far and wide, from all corners of the kingdom, the blind beggar men were invited to a banquet to celebrate the wedding. For three days they came to drink and to dine on the fine foods, and each day the new Queen watched from behind her gauzy silk curtains, hoping that the next blind man might be her father. But it was to no avail.

On the last day, as the gates were closing and the Queen had turned forlornly away, a loud racket was heard outside. The servants were turning away a blind beggar who had arrived too late. And just as the gates were closing, the Queen happened to glance backwards to

see that under the dirt and dust of his long journey and under the tatters of his rags, the old man was none other than her father. "Father!" she cried. "Father! It is my dear father! Let him in!"

Old Man Shim staggered inside, nearly losing his balance from the shock of hearing the familiar voice. "Aigo! Shimchong–ah!" he called. "Is it a ghost or have the dead come to life? My daughter! Is that your voice I hear? Let's have a look at you, girl!"

Once again, in his enthusiasm, Old Man Shim forgot his circumstances. He opened his eyes wide, oblivious to his own blindness, and when he did so he found that he could suddenly see. Before him was his daughter, more beautiful than he could have imagined. Shim wept with joy and embraced her, and she, too, was tearful with joy. Soon there was a happy commotion throughout the palace, and it is said that every blind man there who wanted to have a look at Shimchong, the filial daughter, had his vision restored that day.