



A Comparative Study of *Journey to the West* and Indian Mythology

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Abstract— The Monkey and the Monk: An Abridgement (2006) by Anthony Yu is a modern English translation and adaptation of Wu Cheng'en's classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. The Confucian ideology that ruled the 16th-century Ming dynasty strongly emphasised women's responsibilities as mothers, wives, and devoted daughters. Women were supposed to follow rigid social norms and preserve family honour by maintaining their purity. Recently, scholars have started pointing out that Wu Cheng'en might have been influenced by the societal understanding of the Ming Dynasty while writing *Journey to the West*. Especially, the women characters were said to be the exact reflection of women in the Ming dynasty. In this paper, I propose to look at how women characters in *Journey to the West* were constructed through a patriarchal perspective. Additionally, to examine the societies of the respective times, this paper will explore the mythical parallels between the Hindu and Chinese societies by comparing the female characters, Wenjiao from *Journey to the West*, Sita from *Ramayana*, and Savitri from *Mahabharata*. This paper will also highlight the similarities and differences between Sun Wukong from *Journey to the West* and Hanuman from *Ramayana*. By drawing these comparisons, this paper seeks to provide insights into how these characters reflect the values and beliefs of their respective traditions.



Keywords— Ming dynasty, Confucian ideology, chastity, comparative mythology, Sun Wukong.

Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative method of research. The main aim of the study is to conduct a thematic and comparative analysis of the characters Sun Wukong and Hanuman, and Savitri, Sita, and Wenjiao, respectively. The primary source used for the textual analysis of this study is the abridgement of *Journey to the West*, *The Monkey and the Monk* (2006), by Anthony Yu.

Introduction

Anthony Yu, in the preface of his abridgement, *The Monkey and The Monk* (2006), talks about how *Journey to the West* is deeply rooted in the Chinese philosophical and religious tradition known as Three-religions-in-one-view, which integrates Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism (Yu xii). The novel is centred on the pilgrimage of the Buddhist Tang Monk to India to retrieve sacred Buddhist scriptures, symbolising a journey towards spiritual enlightenment.

Additionally, Taoism played an important role in shaping the magical and metaphysical elements of the story. The concept of Confucianism emphasised social order, ethics, and proper conduct, which is reflected in various relationships and moral lessons within the text. In the context of *The Journey to the West*, Sun Wukong's respect for the Tang Monk, despite his immense powers, illustrates the Confucian ideals of order and discipline. This synthesis reflects the cultural and spiritual landscape of China during the Ming dynasty when the novel was written. A Confucian society thrived on strict moral order, hierarchy, duty, and respect for authority. Similarly, Hinduism's varna system shares similarities with Confucian hierarchy, as both emphasise duty based on one's social role.

Wenjiao, Sita and Savitri as Mirrors of Society

In China, there are three primary religious practices: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Confucianism emphasises values such as respect for family,

social harmony, and moral integrity. Living a harmonious life in society is a kind of social conduct. Since the 6th-5th century, it has had a significant impact on Chinese socio-political systems, worldviews, ethics, education, religions, customs, individual and community life, as well as traditions. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism all place a strong focus on virtue because they view an individual's behaviour as a reflection of their inner morals. Despite varying religious and cultural contexts, the concept of chastity shared several similarities throughout South Asian cultures.

According to the well-known Chinese cosmology "*Book of Changes*", the world is split into two elements, *Yin* and *Yang*. The masculine or positive principle in nature is referred to as *yang*, while the feminine or negative principle is known as *yin*. In literal terms, *yang* signified "the sun", while *yin* meant "shade" or "overcast". This shows that there existed sexual inequality even before the concept of Confucianism came into being. However, it was Confucianism that was responsible for turning the marriage system into a form of female bondage wherein women were treated as their husband's property (Gao 114). The ancient Chinese people followed the concept of "*Three Obediences and Four Virtues*" (*San Cong Shi De*), particularly regarding women. According to the Three Obediences, women were to obey their father before getting married, their spouse after getting married, and their first son after the husband passed away. The Four Virtues were sexual morality, modesty, proper speech, and diligent work (Gao 116).

Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West*, published in the 16th century under the Ming dynasty, reflects and questions these social conventions. The author's reflections on women's rights and equality are reflected in the representation of female characters, which also reflects society's views on women's status and roles during that time. Women in *Journey to the West* were classified into three categories- humans, goddesses, and immortals (He 134). The female human characters in *Journey to the West* most closely resemble the definition of women by dictionaries. They are constrained by social norms and dependent on society. Though many of the prominent female characters are supernatural beings or demonesses, there are a few human female characters who play notable roles.

One of the primary representations of women is that of a morally upright woman. A typical representation of this could be Yin Wenjiao, Tang Xuanzang's mother. In a male-dominated society, Yin Wenjiao's image lacks self-reliance and represents feminine morality (He 136). Her only descriptions are that of a mother of Xuanzang, the wife

of a scholar, and the daughter of a chancellor. In ancient China, a woman's role could be categorised into three stages: a girl, a wife, and a mother. In a traditional Chinese family, a girl's birth was never as cherished as a boy's (Gao 118). This strongly suggests that Wenjiao's identity is tied to male characters. Her situation is always moral; she committed suicide because she violated the unwavering moral standards that society expected women to uphold. On her wedding day, Wenjiao was forcibly kidnapped by the bandits Liu Hong and Lui Biao, who killed her husband. Liu Hong was entranced by Lady Yin's beauty, "who had a face like a full moon, eyes like autumnal water, a small, cherrylike mouth, and a tiny, willowlike waist. Her features were striking enough to sink fishes and drop wild geese, and her complexion would cause the moon to hide and put the flowers to shame." (Yu 131). In the late Ming dynasty, it was a common practice for women to be forced to commit suicide after their husband's death. However, after the incident, though Wenjiao was not forced to commit suicide, she tried to take her own life three times. The first time she tried to commit suicide was when she saw that Liu Hong had killed her husband; she tried to drown herself, but was saved by Liu Hong. When she again tried to commit suicide after fulfilling her life's ultimate goal of meeting her son, her attempt was stopped by her father and her son. However, her third suicide attempt was successful, but there were no interventions or responses of others to this event ever mentioned in the book. This shows that the morality that was moulded by society eventually caused harm to Wenjiao since she violated the moral idea of a wife following only one husband.

In traditional Chinese families, the birth of a girl child was less celebrated than that of a boy. The birth of a male child was referred to as "big happiness", while the birth of a female child was seen as "small happiness" (Gao 118). If the first child in the family was a girl, it was always looked upon as a disappointment. If the second child were also a girl, the family would be devastated, and having a third daughter would be tragic for the mother, who would be blamed and criticised by society (Gao 119). After getting kidnapped, when Wenjiao found out that she was pregnant, her first thought was, "whether it would be a boy or a girl, she had no alternative but to yield reluctantly to her captor." (Yu 132). This shows her attention to her family's lineage even during the crisis. However, because Wenjiao was forced to marry one of the bandits, Liu Hong, she knew that her unborn child was not safe with her. After giving birth, Wenjiao put the baby into the river to keep him safe. After eighteen years, her son Xuanzang returned to seek revenge for what happened to his family. She remained alive until her son came back, and he avenged his parents. However, in the end, Wenjiao suffered from morality shaped by

society, because she felt that she had violated the moral code of Confucianism that a woman can have only one husband. She could not bear that her chastity was stained, so she committed suicide. Confucian thought held that a woman's devotion to her husband was so important that the court publicly honoured her when she died in order to maintain her chastity. Similarly, even *Manusmriti* talked about the chastity of women. According to *Manusmriti*, till her death, a woman was to remain patient, self-controlled, and chaste, seeking that most excellent merit that accrues to women having a single husband (Verse 5.156) (www.wisdomlib.org)

आसीतामरणात् क्षान्ता नियता ब्रह्मचारिणी ।

यो धर्म एकपत्नीनां काङ्क्षन्ती तमनुत्तमम् ॥ १५६ ॥

Confucianism viewed that it was the beauty and the appearance of a woman that triggered male objectification impulses. Men are more likely to adopt a male-centric perspective and ignore the inner attributes of women. Even though a woman is considered a sexual object for her partner's amusement, it is always the woman's responsibility if the guy overindulges in her, failing to fulfil his obligations or advances in his job in the process (Gao 118). In *Journey to the West*, the author portrays male demons as someone with terrifying appearances, whereas female demons look gorgeous. They were closer to a human female in appearance and used their beauty to accomplish their evil deeds. For example, Lady White Bone was one of the first female monsters to be introduced in *Journey to the West*, and she used her beauty to seduce Xuanzang. She changed her form into a beautiful woman to eat Xuanzang's flesh. In the process, she also successfully created a rift between Xuanzang and his disciples. This shows that women were also viewed as a threat to the social relationships of men. The character of Lady White Bone represents the concept of female evil from a male viewpoint. Showcasing that women have the power to disrupt a society that is ruled by patriarchy.

Similarly, in India, Manu was revered as the "father" of the Hindu legal system in Hinduism. The *Manusmriti*, written by him, was not only a legal work from the ancient past but also reflected the socio-cultural, religious, political, and judicial life of the time. The *Manusmriti* addresses various aspects of human life, including Vedic study, marriage, hospitality, dietary laws, pollution, administrative laws, and religion. *The Ramayana* strongly focused on dharma and righteousness, while *the Mahabharata* presented a more complex and multi-faceted view of society, with its ethical dilemmas, caste distinctions, and gender struggles. Despite being written before *Manusmriti*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* include

many social norms and customs later codified in *Manusmriti*.

In both *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the family structure was patriarchal, with the eldest male member usually in charge of the family. The idea of "*Stridharma*", or a woman's duty, was also important during that time. *Stridharma*'s core values are devotion to the husband, household management, childcare, respect for elders, and adherence to social norms, which are largely practised in many parts of our society today. Wives were also supposed to exhibit selflessness and unwavering loyalty. In *Ramayana*, Sita is presented as an epitome of ideal womanhood through her loyalty and obedience. She followed her husband, Rama, into exile without any hesitation, despite knowing that the path she chose would be filled with hardships. In *Mahabharata*, Draupadi, the wife of Pandavas, was devoted to her husbands (the five Pandavas) and played the role of a supportive wife, following the prescribed dharma of a woman in a marriage. Even though she suffered personally, Draupadi always had a sense of duty and devotion towards her husbands. Similarly, Madri, Pandu's wife, epitomises the concept of Sati by deciding to burn herself alive at her husband's funeral. In solidarity with her husband Dhritarashtra's misery, Gandhari decided to blindfold herself. Additionally, Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, exhibited the traditional role of a mother by guiding and advising her sons, ensuring that they followed the path of righteousness laid down by society. She sacrifices her happiness for the well-being of her sons and kingdom. Notably, *Manusmriti* defines women's roles and responsibilities in society, emphasising ideals such as obedience to fathers, husbands, and elders and the importance of chastity, purity, and household responsibility. *Manusmriti* talks specifically about how, in childhood, a woman was to remain under the control of her father; in youth, under that of her husband, and after her husband's death, under that of her sons; a woman was never to have recourse to independence. (Verse 5.146) (www.wisdomlib.org)

बाल्ये पितुर्वशे तिष्ठेत् पाणिग्राहस्य यौवने ।

पुत्राणां भर्तारि प्रेते न भजेत् स्त्री स्वतन्त्रताम् ॥ १४६ ॥

Sita was often associated with chastity and virtue. Her character revolved around her unshakable loyalty towards her husband, Rama. Even after Ravana kidnapped Sita, her devotion towards Rama remains the same. She rejects Ravana's advances towards her and upholds her purity. However, after being freed from Ravana's captivity, Sita faces a fire trial (*Agni Pariksha*) to demonstrate her chastity and purity. She is protected by the fire god Agni, who affirms her virtue and chastity. Rama wanted to prove his wife's honesty since, despite his deep love for her, he

was aware of the criticism she would face. According to a few scholars, Rama's true motivation for fighting Ravana was to regain his honour rather than to protect Sita (Sodha 30). While fighting the war, he was thinking about his family's reputation (Sodha 30). Sita was banished from the country despite being innocent. Even though it was a difficult choice for Rama, he sent Sita away to uphold his reputation and fulfil public expectations. Her experience serves as a reminder of the pressures women faced to preserve moral and family reputations.

Similarly, Savitri, one of the central figures in the context of *Mahabharata*, is often depicted as a model of devotion, strength, and adherence to *stridharma*. When the Pandavas were in exile, Jayadratha abducted Draupadi. When the Pandavas were returning after rescuing Draupadi in the company of Rishis and saints, that is when the story of "Sati Savitri" was narrated by Rishi Markandeya. Savitri's story showcases her strong love and loyalty towards her husband, Satyavan. According to the mythology, Satyavan was cursed to die within a year of their marriage. Despite knowing this, Savitri married him and followed her *stridharma*, maintaining her commitment as his wife. When Yama, the god of death, came to claim her husband's soul, she followed and engaged Yama in a conversation where her wisdom moved him, and he ultimately granted her the power to revive her husband. Her adherence to dharma, or the cosmic law of order, was central to her character. A woman's role during that time was often seen as a nurturer and sacrificial, particularly in relationship to her family. Savitri embodied this selflessness in the highest sense, by choosing her husband's well-being above her own, even when she had to face great difficulties on the way. However, Savitri was not forced to follow the norms, but she chose to actively engage. She embraced the traditional roles of wife and woman, but she did so in an empowering way, by demonstrating that love and devotion can even transcend death if one tried.

It can be said that the female characters from *Journey to the West* accurately depict the circumstances in which women lived during the period. They were the results of a consciousness dominated by men. Wenjiao was not forced to commit suicide. Similarly, Savitri was not forced to follow the god of death, Yama, to save her husband. In contrast, Sita was asked to prove her purity and was driven to take the fire test. Nevertheless, it was because of the societal norms of the respective periods that forced them to always abide by the patriarchal norms. Therefore, Wenjiao, Savitri, and Sita all embody the concepts of chastity and virtue, but their portrayals differ. They provide a fascinating comparison of how different cultures represent these ideals. Therefore, though modern ideals increasingly impact the ideology of "Three Obediences and Four Virtues", old

Confucian values and Buddhist practices dictate attitudes toward chastity in nations like China and India. Therefore, *Journey to the West* can be said to be a reflection of the real society of the Ming Dynasty. In the Hindu culture, Sita was said to be the incarnation of Goddess Laxmi (Brinda). However, even she had to endure hard stages to prove her chastity and purity. This shows that no matter in what form the woman is, either a deity or a human. At some point in history, she has faced this discrimination and inequality. In contemporary times, scholars and activists are trying hard to challenge traditional gender norms and gender inequality, but still, there is a long way to go.

Sun Wukong vs Hanuman: Comparative analysis

Hanuman is a central figure in Hindu mythology, known for his strength, devotion, and power. Hanuman is a key character in the epic *Ramayana*, where he serves as a loyal companion to Lord Rama. Whereas, Sun Wukong, also known as the Monkey King, one of the most famous and powerful characters in *Journey to the West*, is known for his loyalty, strength, cleverness, and rebellious spirit. Sun Wukong and Hanuman are two of the most iconic mythical figures in Chinese and Indian cultures, respectively. Both are extremely powerful and display extraordinary strengths and supernatural abilities. However, despite their similar qualities, their origins, personalities, and mythological significance differ, reflecting the distinct cultural ideals of China and India.

India and China are two geographically neighbouring countries. These two country's economic and cultural links have been documented since the Han dynasty. Around 100 AD, Indian Buddhism had spread to China. In 64 AD, the then-emperor of the East Han dynasty asked two Indian monks to preach Buddhism (Pan 79). Over time, there was an increase in the number of Buddhist temples and monks in China. Therefore, the introduction of *Ramayana* in China was a natural result of frequent religious interactions between the two countries. The *Ramayana* expanded widely over China's central areas and has been mentioned in the translations of numerous well-known Buddhist texts since the Jin dynasty (Pan 79). These translations were the earliest accounts of the *Ramayana* in China, even though they only contained some introductory material. As a result, it is evident that the Chinese people had a basic conception of the *Ramayana* 2000 years ago. Therefore, it can be understood that the influence of *Ramayana* in China has a long history. *The Journey to the West's* author, Wu Cheng'en, was described as a "smart and well-read person" in the *Tian'qi Huai'an Chronicles* (Pan 79). It was said that Wu Cheng'en had a great fascination with gathering folktales. He used several ape legends to create the figure of Sun Wukong. The character Sun

Wukong was, therefore, likely inspired by both indigenous and foreign cultures, including the Ramayana and some old Chinese ape tales (Pan 79).

In the 1920s, Hu Shi was the first Chinese scholar to suggest a possible connection between Hanuman and Sun Wukong (Zang 62). In his research on *Journey to the West*, Hu Shi argued that the character Sun Wukong was not born in China but was imported from India, and it was the Indian epic *Ramayana* that served as a backdrop for the creation of Sun Wukong (Pan 78). Many Chinese scholars believed that Wukong was a significant symbol in Chinese classical literature, leading to a strong hostility towards the argument. They were unable to accept that Sun Wukong would become a symbol of Indian culture rather than native Chinese culture. According to Lu Xun, a well-known Chinese novelist, the Character Sun Wukong was based on Wu Zhixie, a monkey from Chinese mythology who lived underwater (Pan 78). Though Lu Xun's ideals influenced intellectuals in subsequent generations, many scholars did not dispute Hanuman's influence on Sun Wukong.

However, there are many similarities between Hanuman and Sun Wukong. Firstly, in *Ramayana*, Hanuman was a monkey who was endowed with formidable powers. He flew over the sea to find Ravana's home to save Sita. Hanuman also carried a mountain to retrieve the *Sanjeevani* herb to save Rama's brother, Lakshmana. He could change his size and appearance easily, which he used to enter Ravana's castle to approach Sita covertly. He could shrink to the point where he is invisible to the naked eye, as well as increase his size to that of the largest enemy at his will. When Ravana's guards recognized him, he "swelled to a huge size, and crushed dozens with each swipe of his gigantic hands." (Wolcott 658). Similarly, even Sun Wukong boasts to his fellow monkeys of the skills he had learned from the Patriarch, he states,

I have the ability of seventy-two transformations. The cloud-somersault has unlimited power. I am familiar with the magic of body concealment and the magic of displacement. I can find my way to Heaven or I can enter the Earth. I can walk past the sun and the moon without casting a shadow, and I can penetrate stone and metal without hindrance. Water cannot drown me, nor fire burns me. Is there any place I can't go to? (Yu 37).

Secondly, there was a similarity between Hanuman and Sun Wukong based on how they both had weapons, which was later associated with their character. The divine weapon *Gada* used by Hanuman in *Ramayana* symbolized power, protection, and his ability to conquer evil. It is often depicted as a solid, large, and heavy weapon made of stone or metal, typically with a round head and a

short handle. Hanuman is mostly shown using his weapon while fighting demons in Lanka. When Hanuman ventured into Ravana's kingdom during his search for Sita, his weapon acted as a symbol of his readiness to fight if necessary, however, he relied more on his wits to carry out any mission before turning towards any physical act. Similarities can be found in the way Sun Wukong carried a weapon around. His weapon was an "iron rod more than twenty feet long and as thick as a barrel." (Yu 39). The stick was buried under the sea for thousands of years and was given to him by Aoguang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean. Sun Wukong used this stick throughout his journey to vanquish numerous monsters and demons. The stick had a "golden hoop at each end, with solid black iron in between. Immediately adjacent to one of the hoops was the inscription, "The Compliant Golden-Hooped Rod. Weight: thirteen thousand five hundred pounds.'" (Yu 40). According to the text, the "Golden-Hooped Rod" could adjust its size as desired. On one instruction from Sun Wukong, the rod could turn into the size of an object that had the thickness of a rice bowl (Yu 40).

Thirdly, Wukong's dedication to his mentor mirrors Hanuman's devotion to Rama. Hanuman does everything for the pleasure and benefit of Rama, whether it is building bridges, fighting demons, or flying across the country to fetch life-saving herbs. Similarly, in *Journey to the West*, Sun Wukong exhibits his complete loyalty and devotion towards Xuanzang. However, unlike in *Ramayana*, Guanyin, the Bodhisattva, tells Xuanzang to place a metal clamp on Wukong's skull after rescuing him from beneath the mountains. This was vital because, without the clamp, Wukong's thoughts would be restless and agitated. The clamps symbolised Buddhist sovereignty because only the Tathagata Buddha could judge a perfect mind. It was said that the clamps would automatically dissolve when Tathagata Buddha decided that a person had attained their greatest potential and a perfectly balanced mind (Zhang 68).

Even though there is a connection between these two characters, the differences between Hanuman and Wukong are visible. Hanuman is usually depicted as someone with a human body and a monkey's head. Even though he was considered a monkey, his engagement with complex psychological processes made it difficult to accept the fact. During the Battle of Lanka, Ravana abducted Hanuman and burnt his tail. However, he was not afraid; rather, he "ran through the streets, leaving a burning trail behind him, and before making the great leap over to India, he extinguished his fiery appendage in the Southern Sea." (Pan 81). This demonstrates Hanuman's strategic abilities. Therefore, the narrative contains numerous explanations of Hanuman's human character, that a reader might even

forget that he is a monkey. On the other hand, Sun Wukong possessed the characteristics of God, humans, monkeys, and even demon-like. He was known for his hot-headed and rebellious nature and though he was quick-witted, his cleverness was both his strength and weakness. Wukong had a habit of underestimating others and acting without considering the consequences. He fled from Heaven after committing numerous sins and returned to his Flower-Fruit Mountain as an escape. He not only stole peaches and wine, disrupting the Grand Festival of Immortal Peaches, but also plundered the winery for his enjoyment and stole an immortal elixir from Laozi. The poem goes like this,

Many are the forms of the changeful Heaven-Born
Monkey King!

Snatching wine and stealing elixir, he reveals in his
mountain lair.

Since he has wrecked the Grand Festival of
Immortal Peaches,

A hundred thousand soldiers of Heaven now
spread the net of God. (Yu 74)

All these actions show that his Monkey nature is the dominant part of his personality. Nonetheless, Sun Wukong was born from a stone, he stole from Heaven, deleted the names of all the monkeys from the Hell of Ninefold, and created an army of demons and monsters against Heaven, showing his mischievous and demon-like nature (Pan 81).

Hanuman gained his immortality when he was young due to the gods' intervention and gifts. When Hanuman was hungry one morning, he mistook the sun for a mango. Indra, the king of the gods, halted him with his thunderbolt as Hanuman jumped up to catch the sun. The bolt struck Hanuman, and he fell back to earth with a deformed jaw. As a result, in a fit of rage, Hanuman's godfather, Vayu, cut off the airflow between the three worlds. Because of the suffering caused by the absence of airflow, Lord Shiva decided to revive Hanuman for Vayu to restore the balance of the universe once again. Hanuman could no longer be harmed because Lord Shiva made his body as powerful as Indra's bolt. Similarly, Lord Varuna and Lord Vayu gave Hanuman immunity to wind and water, while Lord Agni gave him immunity to fire so that it would not hurt him. Additionally, Lord Vishnu handed Hanuman a weapon called Gada, and Lord Brahma granted him the wish that he could travel anywhere in the world and would be unstoppable. Whereas, Sun Wukong learned how to become immortal from the Taoist sage Subhuti, who also taught him the seventy-two transformations. Additionally, Wukong also crossed off his name in the World of Darkness's registry of life and death, which did not enable the fetchers of death to approach him.

Even if the stories of *Ramayana* and *Journey to the West* are very different, the character of Sun Wukong is very similar to that of Hanuman. Therefore, there might be a possibility that Chengen Wu created the character of Sun Wukong after he was influenced by the stories of Hanuman and other local ape stories. Although Sun Wukong and Hanuman are identical in some ways, their cultural distinctions show us how character traits are expressed differently.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis shows how Indian and Chinese traditions reveal intriguing parallels in themes, characters, and spiritual philosophy. Both traditions explore divine intervention, the struggle between good and evil, moral transformation, and the importance of perseverance on a spiritual journey. The concept of ideal women is frequently linked to attributes like selflessness, love, loyalty, and purity. In particular, figures like Sita, Savitri, and Wenjiao embody the virtues of an ideal and chaste wife who endures hardships for their husband and upholds moral integrity. Therefore, these characters transcend their cultural origins to serve as a universal symbol of idealised femininity in their respective traditions and cultures. Additionally, Sun Wukong, also known as the Monkey King, closely parallels Hanuman from *Ramayana*. Wukong and Hanuman are monkey figures endowed with extraordinary strength and abilities, and they undergo spiritual growth through their service towards their master. While Wukong's rebellion and eventual humility emphasise the themes of redemption and discipline, Hanuman represents a more straightforward path of devotion and loyalty towards Rama. The narratives of *Journey to the West* and *Ramayana* emphasise that the journey is not merely a physical one but also a path to spiritual and moral development.

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