

Analysis of Sun Wukong from *Journey to the West* using Joseph Campbell's Concept of Monomyth

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Abstract

This paper explores Joseph Campbell's concept of the "Monomyth" or "hero's journey" as a universal narrative structure found across cultures and applies it to the character of Sun Wukong from *Journey to the West*. According to Campbell, the hero is a central archetype in the collective unconscious, embodying both personal and societal ideals. The hero's journey, characterized by the stages of separation, initiation, and return, provides a framework for understanding the transformative path of self-discovery. Campbell outlines this journey through seventeen specific stages, asserting that these occur repeatedly in myths worldwide. By examining Sun Wukong's transformation from the "Heaven-born Monkey" to "The Buddha", through the lens of the Monomyth, this paper reveals how his story mirrors the universal structure of the hero's journey, reflecting both individual growth and cultural values.

Keywords: Monomyth, Campbell, Hero's Journey, Archetype, Heroic Transformation, Sun Wukong

Methodology and Framework

This paper uses a qualitative research method and textual analysis to study the abridgement of *Journey to the West*, *The Monkey and the Monk* (2006). This paper will use the framework of Joseph Campbell's concept of Monomyth or the Hero's Journey, as outlined in his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). He believed that a hero undergoes the same essential quest regardless of culture. He also argued that a "hero's journey" is a "monomyth" that occurs again and again in the myths of all cultures. The hero that Campbell describes is not a specific hero from a specific narrative, rather, it is the universal trait shared by heroes from all mythologies. By using Campbell's concept of the "hero's journey", Sun Wukong's heroic journey from a mere "Heaven-born Monkey" to a "Buddha" can be analyzed. The three steps that stand for the process of self-discovery at the core of the "hero's journey" are separation, initiation, and return. Campbell further breaks these three steps into seventeen specific stages. Campbell's monomyth is based on the idea of a hero's transformation through trials, and it also reflects the internal and spiritual journey of growth and enlightenment. The hero begins in a familiar environment but is then called to an adventure, a journey that compels him to face the unknown. Throughout the journey, he faces many challenges and tests that lead to his self-discovery. The climax, which is often accompanied by a crisis, results in a dramatic transformation. The hero's return signifies

not only a physical return but a return with knowledge or wisdom that benefits society. Sun Wukong's character arc from an arrogant trickster to a more humble and enlightened being is a perfect example of transformation and redemption. His story fits perfectly with the universal pattern of the hero's journey. Therefore, the application of Joseph Campbell's Monomyth in the narrative of *Journey to the West* provides a compelling framework to analyze the transformation of the protagonist, Sun Wukong.

Application of Monomyth to Sun Wukong

The term "Monomyth", as introduced by Joseph Campbell, originates from James Joyce's 1939 book, *Finnegans Wake* (Indick 9). It highlights the essential elements of myth, encompassing the archetypal traits of legends and heroes that cut across different cultures and historical eras. Campbell's idea of "heroes with a thousand faces" indicates the shared universal qualities among heroes across various narratives rather than pointing to a single hero from one particular myth. In short, monomyth assumes that all myths have a similar structure, irrespective of their origin and period. The monomyth observes a common pattern in myths in which a hero embarks on an adventure, overcomes difficulties, and returns home transformed. In his work *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell mentions that, "The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return, which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth." (Campbell 28). These three steps signify self-discovery, which is important to the hero's journey. In his explanation, Campbell went even further, dissecting this three-stage formula into seventeen distinct phases, each of which he describes in great detail. He divides the stage of "Separation" or "Departure" into five phases, namely, "The Call to Adventure", "Refusal of the Call", "Supernatural Aid", "The Crossing of the First Threshold", and "The Belly of the Whale". He further divides the second stage, "Initiation", into six different phases, called "The Road of Trial", "The Meeting with the Goddess", "Women as the Temptress", "Atonement with the Father", "Apotheosis", and "The Ultimate Boon". Campbell then divides the third stage into the "Refusal of the Return", "The Magic Flight", "Rescue from without", "The Crossing of the Return Threshold", "Master of the Two Worlds", and "Freedom to Live". Each of these three stages is required to complete a hero's journey, but it does not mean all potential variations within each stage are compulsory.

Campbell claims that biblical stories like those about Moses and Jesus, epics like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and ancient Greek and Roman myths about Oedipus, Jason, and numerous other heroes all exhibit the same structural pattern underlying the hero's journey (Zhang 16). In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus embarks on a long journey to his home, Ithaca, after the Trojan War. His path is filled with trials and encounters with gods and monsters, all of which force him to grow in wisdom and humility and return happily to his family by the end. Whereas in the case of Oedipus, his call to adventure comes when he learns of the prophecy that he will be the one to kill his father and marry his mother. He tries to refuse the call by leaving his home, thinking that he would be successful in escaping his fate. However, by the end, he unintentionally ends up fulfilling the prophecy. When he realises his actions, he blinds himself, which symbolizes his acceptance of his tragic fate. Therefore, Oedipus's journey reflects the darker aspect of a hero's journey, where the hero must confront and bear the consequences of their actions. This shows that a hero's journey does not always end with a positive fate, sometimes, the inevitable destiny of a hero could lead him to his downfall rather than his personal growth.

Modern filmmakers and writers frequently use Campbell's structure to create engaging and universal stories that would appeal to a wider range of audiences. Whether it is Harry Potter from J.K. Rowling's saga or Simba from *The Lion King*, the hero's journey provides a compelling framework that explores the psychological themes of personal development and self-realization. Despite having its roots in ancient mythology, this structure has transcended its origin and continues to influence the contemporary narratives, particularly in genres like science fiction, fantasy, and superhero movies. There is no such compulsion that all the seventeen stages of a hero's journey should be included in a narrative (Rickett). Even if some movies and myths use five or ten stages in their narrative, they are still considered a part of the hero's journey.

Campbell studied a variety of genres, however, his primary concentration was on Native American and Indo-Aryan legends (Zhang 46). His research into Asian mythology focused mainly on India (Zhang 46). However, Campbell's theories can also be applied to the myths of one of the world's oldest cultures, China, through the analysis of "*Journey to the West*" by Wu Cheng'en. In the West, there were two types of heroes: internal and external. External heroes, often known as warriors, are those who become heroes through external conflict or fights. An internal hero, sometimes known as a saint, becomes a hero after years of soul training (Young 264). The Monkey King, Sun Wukong, can be considered an external hero in many ways, but his story also has strong internal elements. As an external hero, Wukong exhibits extraordinary physical strength and magical abilities. He defeats powerful enemies, travels long distances, and often engages in grand battles. However, there is also a strong internal hero aspect to Wukong's journey. His story is as much about personal growth, self-control, and spiritual awakening as it is about external struggle. Initially prideful, rebellious, and rowdy, he transforms along the journey. His internal struggle and ultimate progress reflect the more introspective hero's journey, where Wukong learns humility, discipline, and an understanding of his place in the universe.

When looking at the pattern of Campbell's theory, it is clear that Wukong's adventure closely resembles Campbell's initiation and departure structure. In this structure, a hero is called to an adventure, he departs from his familiar world, obtains a magical weapon, encounters supernatural assistance, embarks on the journey, goes through some very hard experiences, comes across many temptations, and ultimately succeeds in his mission, which in case of Wukong is to acquire the Buddhist texts. Campbell's examination of these stages is usually misunderstood for being strict and sequential in steps, which are inherent in all hero stories, however, that is not what Campbell intended in his work.

It was said that the universe was once a chaotic and formless mass, which was often described as an egg or a dark void. Pan Gu was born amid this chaos. It was claimed that he had emerged from the egg, and as he grew, heaven and earth began to separate. His task was to divide the two realms of heaven and earth, which he split using a giant axe. Over 18,000 years, he kept pushing the earth (Yin) lower and the sky (Yang) higher as he grew. After he was done growing, he died, and his four limbs became the pillars that supported the sky (Hamilton). Sun Wukong, like other mythical heroes Pan Gu, Hercules, Athena, and Aphrodite, was born under unusual circumstances (Zhang 50). Even Anthony Yu starts his abridged version of *Journey to the West* with a poem that draws parallels between Pan Gu and the birth of Sun Wukong,

Before Chaos divided, Heaven tangled with Earth;

Formless and void—this, no human had seen.
But when Pan Gu broke up the nebula,
Clearing began, the turbid parted from the pure. (Yu 1)

After millions of years in harmony with the Five Phases, or the Five Elements, namely Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, a magic stone on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit gives birth to a stone monkey (Zhang 50). As mentioned in chapter one of Yu's abridgement,

Since the creation of the world, it had been nourished for a long period by the seeds of Heaven and Earth and by the essences of the sun and the moon, until, quickened by the divine inspiration, it became pregnant with a divine embryo. One day, it split open, giving birth to a stone egg about half the size of a playing ball. Exposed to the wind, it was transformed into a stone monkey endowed with fully developed features and limbs. (Yu 3)

One day, when the Monkey King woke up from his dream, he realized that there must be a greater purpose behind his existence, and his primary concern was that he would die someday and be unable to experience his life's joys. The Monkey King was persuaded to leave his home by an older monkey to seek the aid of sages and immortals, who could grant him immortality. This was his "Call to Adventure", where he learned that there are spiritual practices and ways to transcend death and gain immortality. In his desire to gain immortality, the Monkey King leaves his life as a stone monkey and takes up the challenge of exploring the unknown. After a few years of journey, he reaches a cliff with the words, "The Mountain of Mind and Heart; The Cave of Slanting Moon and Three Stars" engraved on a stone slab (Yu 15). He convinces the Patriarch of the cave to accept him as his student. Eventually, Patriarch Subodhi was impressed by the monkey and decided to take him in as his student. Additionally, he also bestows the Monkey King with his religious name, Sun Wukong, meaning Wake-to-Vacuity (Yu 18).

The sub-stage of "Refusal of the Call" does not fit in the case of both Wukong. Wukong was eager to learn the knowledge offered to him. For seven years, Wukong dutifully sprinkled water on the ground and strived to speak and behave with politeness, indicating that he was deserving of the education he was receiving. The Patriarch was glad to teach Wukong the way of long life, he also taught him seventy-two magical transformations and a cloud somersault that could take him around the world. This newfound knowledge and power inflate his ego as he flaunts his abilities in front of his peers after mastering them. However, because of his arrogance, the Patriarch sent Wukong back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, even though Wukong was reluctant to leave.

I won't condemn you," said the Patriarch, "but you must leave this place." When Wukong heard this, tears fell from his eyes. "Where am I to go, Teacher?" he asked. "From wherever you came," the Patriarch said, "you should go back there. (Yu 28)

Additionally, before Wukong left the place he asked the Patriarch in what way he could repay him for all the knowledge he gained in The Mountain of Mind and Heart. To that the Patriarch replies, "There is nothing to be repaid for", and adds, "See that you don't get into trouble and involve me: that's all I ask."

According to Campbell, heroes usually possess a magical weapon that they obtain mysteriously (Zhang 52). After returning to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, Wukong was urged by the four older monkeys to go to the Dragon Palace of the East Sea to seek a unique weapon with the assistance of the Dragon King. Wukong rejects all the treasures offered to him by the Dragon King until he comes across “an iron rod more than twenty feet long and as thick as a barrel” (Yu 40). The rod has golden hoops at both ends and was made of solid black iron in the middle. Wukong was overjoyed and thanked the Dragon King for the treasure. Due to Wukong’s rebellious nature, he not only stole peaches and wine which disrupted the Grand Festival of the Immortal Peaches, but also stole the immortal elixir from Laozi for his enjoyment. These actions of Wukong led Buddha to take control of the situation. Buddha traps Wukong under the Five Elements Mountain, sending him into exile. From this point onwards there is a significant shift in his nature, from rebellious and arrogant to a situation where he must submit to the order of things. The time he spent imprisoned in the cave could be called a “transformative threshold”, as he could not escape, and his ego gradually broke down (Georgyan). Wukong was later released after 500 years of imprisonment by the Tang Monk, who was assigned by Bodhisattva Guanyin to acquire the Buddhist scriptures. This represents him “crossing” into a more higher and a meaningful mission. Therefore, the “Crossing of the First Threshold” in Wukong’s case happens after his unruly and egoistic nature leads to his punishment of exile.

The hero’s journey, where the hero symbolically dies and then has to be reborn, is called the sub-stage of “Belly of the Whale”. The belly depicts the womb (also a temple), the darkness within signifies death, and the hero’s emergence mirrors the process of birth (or rebirth) (Penn). This metamorphosis of the hero is similar to a worshipper entering a temple. When we enter a place of worship, be it a Church, Mosque, Shinto Shrine, or Pagan forest, it signifies a departure from our everyday world and a transformation of ourselves (Penn). For Wukong, the time he was imprisoned beneath the Five Elements Mountain can be considered the “Belly of the Whale”. This stage represents his symbolic “rebirth” into a new self. Wukong was physically and spiritually confined, isolated from the outside world, and only left with his thoughts for company. Here, he slowly undergoes a metamorphosis. Wukong then embarks on a journey of service after being released by the Tang Monk, which is closely related to his ultimate redemption. The belly, in this case, is not just physical; it is a spiritual space where his character is reshaped.

The “Road of Trial” represents a series of challenges the hero faces in his journey (Indick 12). After Xuanzang or Tang Monk and Wukong start on their journey for the Buddhist scriptures, Wukong protects and serves his master, Tang Monk, who is naive and easily misled. The Tang Monk usually finds himself in a difficult situation, leading to issues that Wukong has to solve. Wukong proves to be more logical than sentimental than Tang Monk (Zhang 48). Throughout the journey, Sun Wukong comes across various demons and magical creatures, who test him and his companions. The White Bone Demon disguises herself in various forms and repeatedly tries to deceive Wukong and the Monk, leading to battles and tests of loyalty. Whenever Wukong fails to save his master from any demon, like in the case of Wind Devil, he seeks Bodhisattva Guanyin’s help (Zhang 58). These trials test his loyalty, strength, and ability to overcome his rebellious nature.

The first stage also consists of “the mother”, or what Campbell referred to as the “Sacred Marriage” or “The Supernatural Aid”. According to Jungian psychoanalysis, “The Supernatural Aid”

suggests a psychological encounter with a protective mother figure that aids in the hero's process of self-discovery (Zhang 43). The sub-stage of a hero's journey where the hero encounters an otherworldly helper is known as a "Supernatural Aid". In European fairy tales, supernatural intervention is usually done by an elderly person, such as the fairy godmother, wizard, shepherd, smith, or woodsman (Penn). Additionally, supernatural aids can take several forms, such as that of the Virgin Mary, which was a part of numerous Christian Saint traditions from the Middle Ages (Penn). Additionally, in Egyptian and Greek mythology, this supernatural aid was a boatman or a ferryman who led souls to the afterlife (Penn). In the case of Egyptian folklore, it was Thoth, and in Greek folklore, it was Hermes-Mercury. Therefore, Campbell's supernatural aids include both male and female guardians. According to Campbell,

What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny. The fantasy is a reassurance—a promise that the peace of Paradise, which was known first within the mother womb, is not to be lost; that it supports the present and stands in the future as well as in the past ... that though omnipotence may seem to be endangered by the threshold passages and life awakenings, protective power is always and ever present within the sanctuary of the heart and even immanent within...Having responded to his own call, and continuing to follow courageously as the consequences unfold, the hero finds all the forces of the unconscious at his side. Mother Nature herself supports the mighty task. (Campbell 66)

In *Journey to the West*, Bodhisattva Guanyin protects Wukong in danger and acts as his "Supernatural Aid". Buddhist scriptures feature Guanyin in a rather significant way. According to Yu Chunfang, Guanyin is mentioned in over eighty Buddhist scriptures. The Lotus Sutra, Avatamsaka Sutra, Shurangama Sutra, and Heart Sutra are some of the most influential (Zhang 57). In *Journey to the West*, Guanyin is given the title "Efficacious Guanyin of Great Loving Kindness and Compassion" by the Jade Emperor, who was the ultimate deity of Taoism (Yu 82). In certain dramatic works, such as the *Story of the Western Chamber*, she is represented as a sexual beauty, whereas in *Journey to the West*, she is portrayed as Wukong's mother figure (Zhang 57). Guanyin is the one who intercedes to release Wukong from his imprisonment beneath the mountain and assigns him to protect the Tang Monk during his pilgrimage. She plays a major role in guiding Wukong throughout the journey. However, she also demonstrates her ability to inflict pain on Wukong by forcing Tang Monk to put a head clamp on his head whenever he misbehaves. Five hundred years after putting Wukong under the Mountain of Five Phases, Tathagata Buddha bestowed three treasures to Guanyin. One of the treasures was "tightening clamps", which were to be handed over to the Tang Monk by Guanyin. She advised the Tang Monk to "Recite the particular spell which belongs to the fillet and it will cause the head to swell and ache so painfully that he will think his brains are bursting. That will persuade him to come within our fold" (Yu 117). The existence of clamps may not be entirely negative, as Buddhism emphasizes restraint of mind (similar to clamps) (Zhang 58). Despite the clamps, Guanyin's constant support for Wukong is portrayed throughout the journey. Wukong regards Guanyin as his guide and relies on her for care and comfort, similar to how a child relies on his mother.

In Campbell's hero's journey, "Meeting with the Goddess" is a stage where the hero meets the goddess, who is a mother figure in the narrative, and she is someone who embodies beauty and represents the feminine ideal in all aspects (Penn). In Wukong's case, this mother figure is Bodhisattva

Guanyin. When Bodhisattva was on her way to find a scripture pilgrim, she visited Wukong, who was still imprisoned beneath the mountain. Wukong tries to convince her to rescue him from the punishment and show him some mercy. To that, Bodhisattva replies, “Your sinful karma is very deep,” and continues, “If I rescue you, I fear that you will again perpetrate violence, and that will be bad indeed.” (Yu 126). Wukong then promised that he was willing to change his way of living and would practice cultivation if Bodhisattva showed her a path. Bodhisattva was pleased by his words and replied,

The scripture says, ‘When a good word is spoken, an answer will come from beyond a thousand miles; but when an evil word is spoken, there will be opposition from beyond a thousand miles.’ If you have such purpose, wait until I reach the Great Tang Nation in the Land of the East and find the scripture pilgrim. He will be told to come and rescue you, and you can follow him as a disciple. You shall keep the teachings and hold the rosary to enter our gate of Buddha, so that you may again cultivate the fruits of righteousness. Will you do that?” (Yu 126)

To that, Wukong eagerly replied with a positive response and agreed to wait with patience for the scripture pilgrim. Wukong returned to the Buddhist faith, while the Bodhisattva resumed her search for the divine monk.

According to Campbell, in the “Women as Temptress” stage of the hero’s journey, the temptress, like a siren, poses a threat to the hero by luring him away from his path of trials (Indick 12). Even though Wukong is never influenced by temptations, there are times in the journey when Zhu Bajie and the Tang Monk are both swayed by worldly beauties. The White Bone Demon, for instance, tries to trick the Tang Monk into believing she is a kind and innocent woman who needs assistance. In one form, she is a gorgeous woman looking for food, and in the other, she is a form of a harmless old lady (Zhang 60). She disguises herself several times to deceive the Tang Monk and isolate him from his protectors. Her main aim was to capture the Monk and consume him since he is spiritually powerful, and by consuming him, she would gain enormous powers. Wukong sees through the demons’ disguises every time and fights them off, but the Monk chastises him repeatedly, unable to understand why he would kill someone who looks harmless. The Tang Monk was spiritually pure but was somewhat naive, often struggling to understand the danger, which further complicated the journey.

The sub-stage of “Atonement with Father” involves the hero reconciling with an authority figure, typically a father or a paternal figure (Penn). In the case of Wukong, the father figure could be Buddha himself. Wukong seeks atonement through his actions during the journey, showing his repentance for his past transgression. The hero’s attainment of enlightenment, a greater insight, or even a god-like status is represented by the phase of “Apotheosis” (Indick 13). Wukong, having completed his role as a protector and proving that he has changed from a mischievous monkey to a knowledgeable and enlightened person, achieves spiritual enlightenment and is bestowed with the title of Buddha. As various Buddhas were praising the great dharma of Tathagata, Wukong asked the Tang Monk, “Master, I’ve become a Buddha now, just like you. It can’t be that I still must wear a golden fillet! And you wouldn’t want to clamp my head still by reciting that so-called Tight-Fillet Spell, would you?” (Yu 494). The Tang Monk replied, “Because you were difficult to control previously, this method had to be used to keep you in hand. Now that you have become a Buddha, naturally it will be gone.” (Yu 494). In Campbell’s monomyth, the “Ultimate Boon” is the hero’s final reward or the completion of their quest (Indick 13).

For Wukong, the ultimate boon comes after he has completed his mission to protect the Tang Monk and is successful in helping him retrieve the Buddhist scriptures from India.

In the third stage of the “hero’s journey”, the hero is required to “return” to complete the entire circle of the monomyth after completing his quest (Zhang 46). In the case of *Journey to the West*, the phase of “Refusal to Return” is not entirely present in the story. In the stage of “The Magic Flight”, the gods pursue the hero to return the stolen elixir, marking the hero’s return home (Penn). Even though Wukong does steal an elixir from heaven in the early part of his life, this stage cannot be applied to his journey as the sequence of the stages would be disturbed. The “Rescue from Without” stage in Campbell’s hero’s journey occurs when the hero requires the assistance of a powerful external benefactor in order to leave the supernatural realm and return home (Penn). A hero will be in this situation if he has obtained the “Ultimate Boon” by deception and is being targeted by the gods who want to reclaim what was stolen from them. This is not possible in the case of Wukong as his “Ultimate Boon” was his mission completion of retrieving the Buddhist scriptures. Additionally, he never used any kind of deception to reach his goal. Therefore, the stage of “Rescue from Within” is also not applicable to Wukong’s journey.

“The Crossing of the Return Threshold” occurs in a hero’s journey after the hero completes his quest and returns to the ordinary world with the lessons he learned from his journey (Indick 15). For Wukong, this stage occurs after his successful retrieval of the scriptures and his return to China. Wukong’s “ordinary world” is no longer the rebellious and chaotic world of immortality and arrogance from where he started his journey. He returns to a completely new life where he is a wise and disciplined protector of the Buddhist teachings rather than a rebel. Therefore, the “threshold” crossing is more than just a return to the ordinary world, it is a reconciliation between his former self and his enlightened self.

The sub-stage of “Master of the Two Worlds” occurs in the hero’s journey when the hero achieves mastery over both the physical and spiritual realms (Langdon). Early in the story, Wukong exhibits his power over the physical world and demonstrates his skills by causing havoc in heaven using his Golden staff, his transformational power, and Cloud Somersault, allowing him to move anywhere in the blink of an eye. However, by the end of the story, having gone through difficulties and spiritual growth, he no longer uses his powers for selfish reasons; rather, he uses his powers to help his master on his pilgrimage. Moreover, Wukong achieved spiritual mastery the moment he was granted the title of Buddha. This symbolizes the highest honour, as it means that he has transcended the limitations of the mortal world and is looked upon as a spiritual figure.

As Wukong achieves mastery over both realms, his “Freedom to Live” is based on this new balance. According to Campbell, in the “Freedom to Live” stage of the hero’s journey, he no longer fears death and has achieved a balance between his internal and external worlds (Penn). Wukong is not only free from the constraints of the material world, but he is also free from the ego-driven impulses that once led him astray. His freedom is to serve, to protect, and to be selfless. Therefore, for him, true freedom comes from the self-acceptance of his place in the universe.

Therefore, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, a story does not need to have all seventeen phases for it to be called a hero’s journey. In Sun Wukong’s journey, the stages of “Refusal to the Call”, “Refusal to Return”, “The Magic Flight”, and “The Rescue from Without” do not appear. While these

sub-stages might be missing in Sun Wukong's journey, the overall structure still aligns with the trajectory of the Hero's Journey. Understanding that Wukong's transformation is not linear or simple is essential to comprehend his journey. His path to enlightenment involves complex trials that are often about internal growth, rather than escaping external forces or rejecting authority.

Conclusion

Sun Wukong's narrative in *Journey to the West* fits within the framework of a Hero's Journey or monomyth, not just as a physical journey, but as a spiritual one too. He transitions from arrogance to wisdom, from chaos to order, and ultimately achieves enlightenment. His story emphasizes the idea that the hero's journey is not just about external conquest but an inner transformation. The trials and challenges he faces, including his defiance against heaven, his imprisonment by Buddha, and his eventual role as a protector of the Tang Monk, are reflections of his transformation. This makes his narrative not just a perfect example of Campbell's theory but also a timeless tale of growth, redemption, and the power of overcoming one's flaws.

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