

THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST

Adapted by Mary Zimmerman

From the translation by Anthony C. Yu of 'His Yu Chi'

Originally produced by the Goodman Theatre, Chicago, IL on May 8, 1995.

Set Design based on the original scenic design concept of Scott Bradley

ENSEMBLE

MONKEY KING.....	Alex Hasse
TRIPITAKA.....	Joey Krohlow
PIG (ZHU WUNENG OR BAJIE).....	Austin Solheim
SHA MONK (SHA WUJING).....	Caroline Augustine
TATHAGATA BUDDHA.....	Alyssa Rogoff
JADE EMPEROR, KING OF HEAVEN.....	David Fisher
GUANYIN, A BODHISATTVA.....	Jaya Mallela
MOKSA, ATTENDANT IN HEAVEN.....	Rachel Sina
SUBDOHI, A DAOIST MASTER.....	Alex Cronmiller
DEATH GIRLS/PEACH GIRLS.....	Becca Bailey, Zoe Lee, Rachel Sina
DRAGON KING.....	Saul Roselaar
DRAGON QUEEN.....	Ella Janson
YAMA, KING OF THE UNDERWORLD.....	Jon Hale
EIGHT AND TEN.....	Jack Russell
LONESOME RECTITUDE.....	Mike Bray
CLOUD BRUSHING DEAN.....	Jon Hale
MASTER VOID SURMOUNTING.....	Alex Cronmiller
APRICOT IMMORTAL.....	Fionna Rausch
TANG EMPEROR, KING OF THE EASTERN REALM.....	Jack Russell
MR. GAO.....	Jack Russell
GREEN ORCHID, MR. GAO'S DAUGHTER.....	Rachel Charniak
GRANDMOTHER.....	Molly Biskupic
FERRYWOMAN.....	Kaelah Byrom
INNKEEPER.....	Leah Dreyer
DAOIST GUARDIAN.....	Brett Peters
OLD MONK.....	Alyssa Benyo
BHIKSU KING.....	Alex Cronmiller
DAOIST FATHER IN LAW.....	Saul Roselaar
GIRL.....	Maddy Schilling
OFFICER.....	Lue Yang
PRINCESS OF SRAVASTI.....	Ella Janson
FATHER KING.....	John Bray
FIRST MONKEY.....	Maddy Schilling
SECOND MONKEY.....	Rachel Charniak
THIRD MONKEY.....	Lue Yang
GIRL IN AUDIENCE.....	Sarah Long

Other Characters including Extra Monkeys, Daoist Disciples, A Fiend, Attendants, Courtiers, Immortals, Six Robbers, Women of Western Liang, Demons, Villagers, Vajra Guardians, Tripitaka's Mother and Father, Boatman played by various members of the ensemble.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director.....	Ron Parker
Technical Director.....	Jason Pohlkotte
Assistant Technical Director.....	Pete Abraham
Costume Designer.....	Tina Hoff
Lighting Designer.....	Adam Gunn
Scenic Designer.....	Roy Hoglund
Scenic Artist.....	Allison O'Brien
Stage Manager.....	Elise Edwards
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Maddy Cuff
Construction Assistance.....	Tony Tennesen
Lightboard.....	George Kunesh
Asst. Lights.....	Freddie Xu
Spotlight Operator.....	Mady Veith, Kate Bennett
Sound.....	Katherine Larson, Emily Madalinski
Backstage Mics.....	Drake Schneider
Properties Mistresses.....	Skye Iwanski, Kamy Veith, Ashley Lehr
Costume Mistress.....	Sophie Plzak
Asst. Costumes.....	Yasmeen Ashour, Amber Schumacher
Make-up.....	Deniza Peja, Grace Kunesh
Stage Crew Head.....	Cody Hansen
Stage Crew.....	Oscar Brautigam, James Counters, Emma Hammond, Andrew Ida, Cheyenne Jahnke, Ivory Knutson, Olivia Peterson, Garrett Richey, Kayla Schang, Tess Stevenson, Anne Vander Linden
Consultant on Buddhist philosophy and Asian culture.....	Lue Yang

Original musical score composed by Jay Chakravorty, London, England.
<https://www.facebook.com/cajitamusic>

JOURNEY TO THE WEST is produced by special arrangement with Bruce Ostler, BRET ADAMS LTD.,
448 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036. www.bretadamsltd.net

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Mr. James Huggins, principal, Boosters of Lightning Theatre, the Wisconsin High School Theatre Festival and the families of cast and crew without whose support and encouragement this production would not have been possible.



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Mary Zimmerman is a professor of performance studies at Northwestern University. Her credits as an adapter-director include METAMORPHOSES, ARGONAUTIKA, THE NOTEBOOKS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI, THE ODYSSEY, THE ARABIAN NIGHTS, ELEVEN ROOMS OF PROUST, THE SECRET IN THE WINGS, and JOURNEY TO THE WEST, as well as numerous operas worldwide. She is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, and ensemble member of Chicago's Lookingglass Theatre Company, and a Manilow Resident Director at the Goodman Theatre. She was awarded the Tony Award for her direction of METAMORPHOSES in 2001. Her most recent work includes directing a stage version of THE JUNGLE BOOK and THE WHITE SNAKE which is currently running at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago.



Mary Zimmerman, chatting with the audience, after North's production of *The Secret in the Wings*, May 2011

Her hope is to have a child's openness and imagination, for—to paraphrase one of her favorite quotes by Willa Cather—"I'll never be the artist I was as a child."

"I love that quote," Zimmerman says. "It is a statement of my own belief that I'm at my best when I'm unselfconscious and using what's in the room. They don't call it a play for nothing. We think of 'play' as a noun. 'I'm going to see a play.' We forget that it's also a verb. Children play in order to survive. They're practicing at life in order to cope and survive later in life. Plays do the same thing.

They're teaching us how to cope with situations, like the advent of our death. And we can sit back and observe."



NOTES

FROM THE FOREWORD TO JOURNEY TO THE WEST BY ANTHONY C. YU

In her work, she continues to be drawn to ancient literature and stories based in oral tradition. Her rehearsal process is open and organic, especially when she serves as both adapter and director. She allows time for a production's imagery to develop, often working off the physical improvisations of her ensemble of actors. When directing Shakespeare, her engagement is primarily with the text.

"I'm not a big one for seeing what other people have to say about it, how it was done elsewhere," Zimmerman says. "I try to be very open in my reception to what the story wants to be and how I can make it as absolutely clear and visually clear as possible. My goal is to express the play in a way that feels as right as possible. I'm not ever trying to force something on these stories."

The story of JOURNEY TO THE WEST (Chin. XIYOUJI) was published in a more or less definitive hundred-chapter version in 1592 Ming China and almost instantaneously attained the status of a monumental classic of late-imperial Chinese fiction. Its skeletal plot was based on the famous pilgrimage of the priest Xuanzang (596?-664 C.E.), who traveled overland from Tang China to distant India in quest of additional Buddhist scriptures, the teachings of which were deemed canonical to his particular division of the faith. . . . The protracted and arduous journey lasting nearly seventeen years (627-44) gave him the scripts of his desire and also immediate



imperial recognition and patronage. The pilgrim spent the remaining twenty years of his life as a master translator of classic Buddhist texts. Together with his collaborators, he gave to the Chinese people in their own language seventy-five volumes or 1.341 scrolls of Buddhist writings, surpassing the accomplishment of any scripture translator in Chinese history before or since.

Since its publication in the late-sixteenth –century China, *JOURNEY TO THE WEST* has not only enjoyed vast readership among the Chinese people of all regions and social strata, but its popularity has continued to spread to other peoples and lands through increased translation and adaptation in different media—illustrated books, comics, plays, Peking and other regional operas, shadow puppet plays, radio show, film, TV series, and rewriting (such as the work of Timothy Mo, and David Henry Hwang). Of its many features attractive to the old and the young, the elite and the demotic, one undeniable element pervasive of the story’s inventions is to be found in the multicultural character of the original no less in its fictional transformation. The spirit of *JOURNEY TO THE WEST*, whether in history or fiction, can thus never be monolithically and narrowly Han Chinese.

My acquaintance with Mary Zimmerman, speaking somewhat personally, began in early 1995, when I was told that in about two month’s time, Chicago’s Goodman Theatre would be mounting a stage version of *JOURNEY TO THE WEST*

based on that Chinese novel, published in four volumes. I was both elated and concerned, the latter feeling aroused by my puzzlement over how a late-imperial Chinese epic narrative (estimated to be about one and three-quarters the length of *WAR AND PEACE*) would fit on the modern stage. About a fortnight later, I finally had the chance to meet Ms. Zimmerman face to face for the first time, and after more than an hour’s conversation over coffee at Chicago’s Bloomingdale’s, I was persuaded already that mine was the good fortune—and even more so, that of this Chinese literary masterpiece—to have found so capable and brilliant a director as Mary Zimmerman to be the novel’s first English stage adapter.

Subsequent attendance of the play cemented my conviction that hers indeed was the highest artistic creativity. The translation of this late-Ming narrative onto a modern American-stage had been accomplished with the most daring imagination combined with the most faithful commitment to the original story’s letter and spirit. . . . To shorten the fictive fourteen-year trek into a manageable performance, the plot was judiciously and seamlessly compressed (sometimes with several episodes summarized or montaged onstage), while it retained at the same time a magnificent sense of beginning, development, progress, and climactic end.

Like the Greek epics, the Chinese narrative is one that weds exciting entertainment to serious



reflection. Ingeniously and consistently, Zimmerman’s staging followed its narrative example and sought to merge rousing adventure and humor with Buddhist and Daoist wisdom. In this director’s hand, there was never any room for cultural condescension. Mary Zimmerman’s adaptation of the story belongs crucially to the ongoing process of its contemporary globalization, but her script, for me, represents the happiest attempt at honoring distinctive cultural otherness in the universal medium of art.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I sat with my notebook at North’s final performance of Mary Zimmerman’s *JOURNEY TO THE WEST* in May, I began to reflect on the artistic journey cast, crew, and production team had embarked upon just a few weeks earlier. It was an intense and exhilarating rehearsal process which culminated in a performance unlike any other we had experienced before. The play concludes with the four pilgrims having reached the end of their adventure together by achieving their mission of bringing back sacred scriptures from the West — each having grown and gained enlightenment along the way, yet also ready and eager to embark upon the next, grander venture that awaits them. It seemed fitting then that we do the same with our



“journey” by applying for the opportunity to bring this classic epic of Eastern literature adapted by one of America’s most celebrated playwrights to this year’s festival.

The Appleton North Theatre Department has had a long-standing love affair with the works of Mary Zimmerman. It all began in 2006 with our production of her *METAMORPHOSES*—complete with an 1800 gallon pool of water on stage! This was followed over the ensuing years by her *ARABIAN NIGHTS*, *THE ODYSSEY* as well as two of her then unpublished works, *THE SECRET IN THE WINGS* and *ARGONAUTIKA*-- both of which were presented with the special permission of the playwright and whose performances at North she graciously attended. (A experience which myself and my students found thrilling and continue to cherish.) It was our hope she might make a stop here at the festival, but unfortunately (for us anyway) she is in China with her latest adaptation of another Chinese tale, *THE WHITE SNAKE*, a play, which she commented to me after its debut at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, she would love to see us do. Needless to say it’s next on our list.

Why have we at North been so committed to her work? To put it simply, Zimmerman embodies all that is best about theatre. She understands that theatre is a place where anything is possible. It is the realm of thought into action—where the mind can make magic. As Shakespeare said to his audiences at the Globe Theatre at the beginning of *HENRY V*:

*“On your imaginary forces work....
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
Into a thousand parts divide one man,
And make imaginary puissance;
Think when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i’ the receiving earth;
For ‘tis your thoughts that now must deck our
kings,
Carry them here and there; jumping o’er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass.”*

Through her powerful and poetic use of language and startling stage imagery, Zimmerman, like the Bard, paints with the palette of our imaginations. We have tried to stay true to her style and staging in our rendition of her *JOURNEY TO THE WEST*: the entire play takes place inside a Buddhist temple taking its cue from Monkey’s line, “The whole of Heaven and Earth is one large room.” This

large room instantaneously changes from the palace of an emperor to the Chinese countryside to a village in India and back again; goddesses fly on the shoulders of actors; a river is created with blue fabric and waving fans. It’s everything that makes theatre so exciting and different from other storytelling mediums. And Mary Zimmerman is the consummate storyteller. In our modern, media-saturated age where film, television and the internet have come to dominate our limited time for entertainment, the sheer joy and anticipation created by listening to stories seems to have been forgotten. Yet, it is one of the oldest

of all art forms—and a good story, told well, stirs something deep within our being. We are drawn to it, leaning in eagerly with our imaginations to experience something we cannot experience in any other way.

As you will see, *JOURNEY TO THE WEST* is not typical high school fare. The story of Tripitaka, Monkey King, Pigsy and Sandy while incredibly popular and celebrated throughout the Asian world, is virtually unknown to us in the West. The tale has often been called the Asian *ODYSSEY* and comparisons of the pilgrims have been made to those appearing in one our most beloved

Legends do what all great stories do: reveal to us who we are as well as who we may become. The quest for the scriptures containing wisdom and enlightenment which is at the heart of *JOURNEY TO THE WEST* is really the quest we all undergo in life—to find truth, understanding and redemption. And like the pilgrims in the story, we realize that in the end, it is only through the strength and support of each other that we can ever hope to reach the end of our journey.

Western journey-stories—*THE WIZARD OF OZ*. In order to adequately prepare for our performance both the cast and myself had to determine and assimilate what we did not know about Chinese culture and philosophy—which was pretty much everything. We studied the history behind the

legend of Tripitaka, poured over details about the play’s supernatural characters, and spent many hours learning about and discussing Buddhist teachings and beliefs. All of this intense education took place before even the first minute of rehearsal occurred. It was both an exciting and frustrating process as we attempted to familiarize ourselves with a way of seeing and thinking which was in so many ways so very unfamiliar. Throughout the rehearsal process, cast members continued their contemplation and investigation of the ideas and principles revealed in the play. Along the way they acquired a deeper under-

standing and appreciation for the beauty and wisdom which can be found in Eastern thought and culture.

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thank you for your willingness to join us on this special pilgrimage—Mary Zimmerman style—tonight. Like Tripitaka and his disciples on their journey west, we met many metaphorical “demons” and real-life obstacles along the

way—and despite them—or maybe in part because of them—it was a voyage of discovery we are all so very grateful to have taken. Thank you Mary. And thank you all for your attendance this evening. Enjoy the show and the festival!

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES....

In her production notes at the end of the script to JOURNEY TO THE WEST, Mary Zimmerman writes, “Resist the temptation to lard your production’s program and preproduction literature with too much somber and learned information about Buddhism and Daoism and so on. . . Don’t make the audience study up in order to see the show. It will frighten them and give them far too respectful an attitude toward the play.” She, of course, is right—yet if the cast’s own confusion

and need for information on the complex nature of Eastern thought was any indication, I felt it necessary to find some way to explain to our audience the basic tenet of Buddhist beliefs which were at the heart of this story.

After much

discussion, we developed an idea—the reality of which you will see played out before you this evening. It prevents the overburdening of information, yet provides what we hope will be an interesting and effective vehicle for presenting essential terms and ideas which lie outside our Western experience.



WHO'S WHO



Tripitaka is a Buddhist monk who had renounced his family to become a monk from childhood. He set off for Dahila kingdom (India) to retrieve original Buddhist scriptures for China. Although he is helpless in defending himself, the bodhisattva (boh-duh-suht-vuh) Guanyin helps by finding him powerful disciples who aid and protect him on his journey. In return, the disciples will receive

enlightenment and forgiveness for their sins once the journey is done. Along the way, they help the local inhabitants by defeating various monsters and demons.

Sun Wukong is the name given to this character, the latter part of which means “Awakened to Emptiness.”

He is called

Monkey

King. He was born on Flower Fruit Mountain from a stone egg that forms from an ancient rock created by the coupling of Heaven and

Earth. After angering several gods and coming to the attention of the Jade Emperor, he is given a minor position in heaven as the Keeper of Horses so they can keep an eye on him. This job is a very low position, and when he realises that he is put into such a low position and not considered a full-fledged god, he becomes very angry. His primary weapon is a rod which he can shrink down to the size of a needle and keep in his ear, as well as expand it to gigantic proportions. The rod, originally a pillar supporting the under-



sea palace of the Dragon King of the East Sea, weighs 17,550 pounds. Sun Wukong’s childlike playfulness is in contrast to his cunning mind. This, coupled with his great power, makes him a trickster hero.

Zhu Bajie (literally “Pig of the Eight Prohibitions”) is also known as Zhu Wuneng (“Pig Awakened to Ability”), and given the name Pigsy, Monk Pig or just simply **Pig** in English.

Once an immortal who was the Marshal of the Heavenly Canopy commanding 100,000 naval soldiers of the Milky Way, he drank too much during a celebration of gods and attempted to flirt with the moon goddess 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. His weapon of choice is the nine-tooth iron rake.



Shā Wùjīng (literally meaning “Sand Awakened to Purity”), given the name Friar Sand, Sandy, or the **Sha Monk** in English, was once a celestial Curtain Lifting General. He 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. The now-hideous immortal took up residence in the Flowing Sands River, terrorising surrounding villages and travellers trying to cross the river. Sha’s weapon is the “Crescent-Moon-Shovel” or “Monk’s Spade.”