

# Reflection paper



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Reflection Paper Stephen West's public lecture at Phoenix Art Museum about ancient China played a major role in simplifying and making understand the story of the Monkey king with little difficulty. West, a professor at ASU, begins his public lecture by drawing the listeners' attention to the ancient Chinese and European travel stories. According to him, while European China travel narratives are widely known in China, the ancient Chinese western travel stories are hardly known by the West. The public lecture by West offers a great insight into the Monkey king story, which focuses on the Chinese journey to the West.

The lecture explores various Chinese dynasties and how people migrated and settled within China and beyond. First, West discussed the Han Dynasty, which was organised around the emperor. During this era, there was massive movement of people into the empire, spreading out into Central Asia. There was a significant resettlement in the area. West then advanced to the Tang Dynasty, where he gave a clear talk about how the dynasty displaced the Turks, who originally occupied Central Asia, pushing them further to the north into Tibet and to the south of Vietnam. The Silk Road, which passed along steppes and deserts, provided a channel that the Turks used to reach their new areas of settlement.

West also proceeds to the Song dynasty, which existed from 960-1126, marking the end of medieval period and the birth of capitalism. It is from this lecture that it became clear to me that the Manchus emerged from the Southern Song. West argued that the largest migration in the history of China included migration from North to South to the lowlands. The lecture revealed that the Chinese had their expansionist ideology and strategy thwarted in Northern Asia as well as Central Asia. In the process of

continuous displacement of the Chinese deeper into south, there was extensive interaction of cultures. Despite the fact that Europe was expanding during this time, the only people who interacted with the Europeans were the Mongols.

The Monkey King displays qualities such as endurance, which enables him to successfully manoeuvre through his journey to the West. His smartness can be witnessed in the cases where he explores various means to get to the West, where he even uses clouds as automobile to cover 180, 000 miles in the in an epic span of one somersault. The professor's lecture is an eye opener into the highly ritualised Chinese society, which the " Journey to the West" focuses on. West exposed the thinking of the traditional Chinese society during the Tang Dynasty, a completely ritualised city. The lecture instigates a reflection on how the classical novel cuts through the Chinese superstitions as well as common beliefs.

Based on the professor's public lecture, one can easily run through the Chinese classic literature and effectively grasp the concepts or the message that any classic novel relays. This public lecture provided a platform for understanding the epic classical novel, ' the Journey to the West' and the ' Monkey King' narrative in particular. The lecture delved on people's movement and settlement into new areas and what is involved in the process, including cultural interactions. The professor also focused on power within the Chinese society and its structure, which sheds light into the " Monkey King," a perfect display of power in the society and the process of migration to new destinations.