



The Magical Monkey King: Mischief in Heaven

By Ji-Li Jiang, Youshan Tang

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The ALA Notable author of "Red Scarf Girl" presents traditional tales about the Monkey King, the irrepressible trickster hero of Chinese legend. Embellished with Hui Hui Su-Kennedy's charming black-and-white illustrations, these hilarious stories bring the Monkey King and his friends to life.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 2-6-One of the best-loved figures in Chinese popular culture is the trickster Monkey King. Early traditional stories about him coalesced into Wu Cheng-en's 16th-century epic novel *Journey to the West*, which uses 100 chapters to chronicle the insouciant, courageous hero's adventures. In this engaging version of his story, Jiang begins with Monkey's birth on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruits. After proving himself to the monkey tribe, who choose him as their king, Monkey tries to learn the secret of immortality, travels under the sea to steal a powerful weapon from the Dragon King, and wreaks havoc at the heavenly court of the Jade Emperor. Only Buddha can stop his mischief, and does so in a scene that works as exciting action and profound metaphor. Lively, colloquial language distinguishes this telling, and Su-Kennedy's black-and-white woodcuts enhance the action. Jiang's format serves the old tale better than the two picture-book retellings currently available, Ed Young's *Monkey King* (HarperCollins, 2001) and Robert Kraus and Debby Chen's *The Making of Monkey King* (Pan Asian, 1998). David Kherdian's *Monkey: A Journey to the West* (Shambhala, 1992) abridges the entire story for adults and is accessible to middle and high school students. Jiang's is the best version for elementary school students, and libraries will want it as a good story for younger fantasy lovers, whether or not it is used as an introduction to authentic Chinese literature.

Margaret A. Chang, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 3-5. Monkey, born of both heaven and earth, is a lively trickster. Like all tricksters, he is quick-witted and full of himself, seeking knowledge and helping his people but also wreaking more than his share of havoc. In this cycle of related stories, readers learn of Monkey's miraculous birth, his bold success in finding a new home for his people, and his clever manipulations of his enemies and his betters--including Jade Emperor and other celestial bodies whom Monkey has tried to trick. It takes Buddha himself to rein Monkey in and lock him up until he learns from his mistakes. Jiang, the author of *Red Scarf Girl* (1997), provides a lively telling, and the stories move briskly. Accompanying black-and-white pictures have the look of woodcuts but with a cartoonish appearance that displays less polish than the stories. This may have use for children studying China. See the "Read-alikes: Beginning Buddhism" in the January 2002 issue for other recent titles of interest. *Denise Wilms*

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About the Author

Ji-li Jiang is the author of *Red Scarf Girl* (an ALA Notable Book), her own account of growing up in China under the Cultural Revolution. Born in Shanghai in 1954, she was a science teacher before coming to the United States in 1984. In 1992 she started a company, East West Exchange, to promote cultural exchange between Western countries and China. She lives near San Francisco, California.

Users Review

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