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The Monkey And The Monk: An Abridgment Of The Journey To The West



Synopsis

Anthony C. Yu's celebrated translation of *The Journey to the West* reinvigorated one of Chinese literature's most beloved classics for English-speaking audiences when it first appeared thirty years ago. Yu's abridgment of his four-volume translation, *The Monkey and the Monk*, finally distills the epic novel's most exciting and meaningful episodes without taking anything away from their true spirit. These fantastic episodes recount the adventures of Xuanzang, a seventh-century monk who became one of China's most illustrious religious heroes after traveling for sixteen years in search of Buddhist scriptures. Powerfully combining religious allegory with humor, fantasy, and satire, accounts of Xuanzang's journey were passed down for a millennium before culminating in the sixteenth century with *The Journey to the West*. Now, readers of *The Monkey and the Monk* can experience the full force of his lengthy quest as he travels to India with four animal disciples, most significant among them a guardian-monkey known as the Great Sage, Equal to Heaven. Moreover, in its newly streamlined form, this acclaimed translation of a seminal work of world literature is sure to attract an entirely new following of students and fans. A new translation of a major literary text which totally supersedes the best existing version. . . . It establishes beyond contention the position of *The Journey to the West* in world literature, while at the same time throwing open wide the doors to interpretive study on the part of the English audience. • "Modern Language Notes, on the unabridged translation

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Customer Reviews

I love 'Journey to the West' - the story is China's version of 'The Canterbury Tales', and the tales found within are both seminal works of Chinese literature and rewarding reads in and of themselves. For this particular edition, Anthony Yu does a good job of translating into English: the prose text is very readable, and Yu's footnotes provide a lot of help on obscure references to Chinese superstitions and Buddhist heritage. The translations of the poems are somewhat less satisfying, and I found myself frequently skipping over them to read just the prose storyline. My main complaint is with the books Yu decides to include here: out of the 100 chapters of the full edition, Yu includes only the 31 chapters that are crucial to the plotline. As a result, you get the barebones story, but some of the best-written and most comical subplots are left out. All in all, though, a pretty good read, especially for anyone looking for the middle ground between the comic book versions and the full 4-volume 100-chapter text.

First off: I'm really glad this was an abridgment-- the 100-chapter, four-volume complete story sounds utterly overwhelming. I've read long books, and I've read the entire Harry Potter series multiple times, but classic books are at times more difficult to digest than modern novels. Secondly, remember that this story is hundreds of years old. Some of the story-telling styles are old-school. If you've read other ancient books and stories, you might know what I mean. It's not organized the way a modern story might be, and while it is entertaining, it had its own religious goals as well. But don't forget to enjoy the ridiculous antics the characters often take part in. This leads me to my next point: it helped me to have some background knowledge before reading this book. While the translator/editor of this book adds a few footnotes, it doesn't explain the basics. To enjoy this story more, I would recommend attaining a little background knowledge of Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and ancient China. But no worries on becoming an expert! This is still an enjoyable story, at times adventurous and at times hilarious. I had to look up some things such as "what does 'kowtow' mean?" and "what are the eight trigrams?" and the like. But as I familiarized myself with this book and its contents, I began to understand some of the references to it. For example, I discovered that many animes draw on mythologies, including this story. Goku in Dragon Ball is based on the monkey of this book, as is a tailed beast in Naruto. Other references (especially in anime, but not exclusively) came not directly from this book, but from religious characters/items/stories/etc. mentioned in this book. I feel like I learned a lot both in reading this book and seeking to understand not only the story itself, but the background that goes into it.

After reading the complete set a few years ago, I thought it would be fun to re-read the abridged

version when it came out. As far as I can tell, the author has simply selected certain chapters from the full set to create this one book version. I'm realizing now that I don't really want to "skip" chapters! What's the rush anyhow? When I finish this, I'll be looking for my next book to read. I believe the first 15 chapters are the same in BOTH versions; so if unsure, you could start with the short one and switch over...

This is the best translation you will find Anthony C Yu has really made this book shine, it displays all that only people who can read Chinese could only know until now ,previous books in English on the monkey king have been dry and lacking in spirit this book is beautifully descriptive and spiritually deep at the same time,but don't let the word spiritual throw you off this book is full of adventure and excitement, not a boring moment to be found. .P.S. this is the abridged version of the 3 volume full version.I usually don't bother with abridged books but got this one to read to my [...]son,not only does my son love this,but I love just as much as the whole set

This long but nevertheless abbreviation of the Chinese classic story of the journey from China to India of the Buddhist monk Tripitaka to bring to China manuscripts of the teachings of the Buddha.The characters are spectacular, especially Monkey whose magical performances save the mission from disaster. The bizarre adventures involving magic and courage are at times very amusing and always astonishing at the invention and imagination of those who wrote this amazing and highly readable, scholarly translated work.The story has been translated into many languages, made into films and simplified versions published for children.Not to be missed.

What a great book, I was sad when I got to the end that there was no more. Its amazing it was written hundreds of years ago and still has relevant moderns themes and insights. The mix of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism is special. Such an unusual story of myth, fairytale, proverb and religion, all with beautiful imagery and fun.

Anthony Yu indeed is an excellent translator, summing up the most essential chapters to give a flavor of the importance spiritual depth of this book. It will engage readers to want to study further in his full translation version!

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