



American Born Chinese

by Gene Luen Yang

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

Chapter 1: Monkey King

Deities and spirits attend a party in heaven. On earth, the Monkey King watches the monkeys frolic on Flower-Fruit Mountain. The monkeys rid the area of the tiger spirit and ruled gently. The Monkey King rides a cloud to the heavenly party, but must wait in line. A security guard refuses him entry because the monkey has no shoes—and, after all, while he may be a king and a deity, he is still a monkey. In retaliation, the Monkey King attacks the guests at the party and returns, shaking, to Flower Fruit Mountain, where he broods for hours, thinking of ways to get rid of the smell of the pervasive smell of monkey fur, which he had never noticed before his humiliation at the party.

Chapter 2: Jin Wang

Jin's parents reached America a week apart and met 18 months later at the San Francisco State University library, where he studied engineering and she became a librarian. After the boy's birth in Chinatown, he lives there to age nine. An herbalist's wife promises he can be anything he wants if he forfeits his soul. Jin and his parents move from Chinatown, and Jin starts third grade at an all-white school, Mayflower Elementary, where everyone (the teacher included) believes Chinese people eat dogs, and where rude white boys ridicule Jin's buck teeth and a rumor starts that Jin and Suzy Nakamura (the only other Asian in the class) are to be married by pre-arrangement when they are thirteen. Of course, Jin and Suzy avoid each other as much as possible. Two months later, a Taiwanese boy, Wei-Chen Sun, joins the class and shares his robot toy with Jin.

Chapter 3: Chin-Kee

Danny, an American who lives in a suburban house, is studying chemistry with his girlfriend, Melanie. From the kitchen, Danny's mother announces that "cousin Chin-Kee from China" is arriving from the airport at any minute. Instantly embarrassed, the Caucasian-looking Danny is mortified when Chin-Kee arrives, dressed in traditional "coolie clothes" and speaking and behaving like a stereotype. Chin-Kee proceeds to suggest that Melanie, a "pretty Amellican girl wiff bountiful Amellican bosom," have her feet bound. Danny's mother tells him Chin-Kee will be going to high school with him tomorrow.

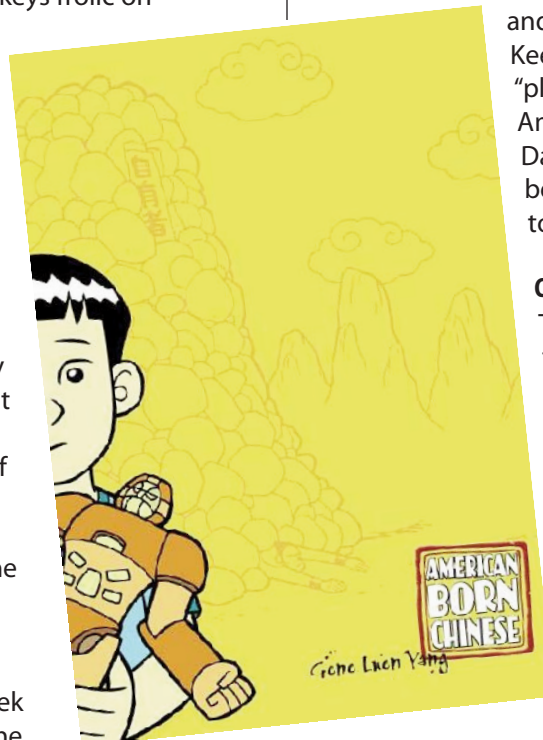
Chapter 4: Monkey King

The Monkey King orders all monkeys to wear shoes. He retreats to an underground lair to train and develop invulnerability to heat, cold, water, and wounds. He learns to shape-shift and turn his hairs into clones. A note from heaven sentences him to visit Ao-Jun to be executed for trespassing above. Monkey King gives himself a new identity—a sage equal to heaven. When Ao-Kuang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea, tries to execute

the Monkey King, the victim survives beheading. Ao-Kuang gives him a cudgel that causes instant shape-shifting. The Monkey King terrorizes the poet Lao-Tzu, Yama the underworld caretaker, and the Jade Emperor. Tze-Yo-Tzuh, the creator, chases the Monkey King beyond reality and covers him with rock for 500 years.

Chapter 5: Jin Wang

Jin Wang notices Amelia Harris, another seventh grader whom he's known since third grade. Wei-Chen laughs at the notion of young teen boys choosing girlfriends. When Jin reminds him that he is now an American, Wei-Chen starts dating Suzy Nakamura. Jin worries that Amelia likes Greg, a Caucasian with blond curly hair. Jin curls his black hair to attract Amelia's attention. With Amelia, Wei-Chen feeds lab animals and accidentally locks the supply closet door when he searches for pink



mice. Stuck in the closet with Amelia, Wei-Chen awaits Jin, his best friend, who bribes janitor McGroul into opening the biology room door. Jin opens the door and makes a date with Amelia.

Chapter 6: Chin-Kee

Danny takes Chin-Kee to Oliphant High School to conceal his noisy cousin from other students. The newcomer identifies the three branches of American government and answers questions about anatomy, algebra, and Spanish. Because Steve humiliates Danny, Chin-Kee urinates in Steve's Coke. Chin-Kee continues answering questions in chemistry and English. Melanie notices that Danny has buck teeth. After detention for tardiness, Danny misses basketball practice. Danny grouches to Steve that Chin-Kee's humiliating visits have caused Danny to transfer three times since he began high school. Steve offers to make life easier for Danny.

Chapter 7: Monkey King

Unlike monks Chi Dao, Jing Sze, and Jiang Dao, Wong Lai-Tsao is poor at meditation, fasting, and preaching. Each morning, Jiang Dao feeds and dresses the wounds of vagrants. For his goodness, Tze-Yo-Tzuh sends the monk on a perilous mission to deliver three packages to the West. At the monk's urging, the Monkey King frees himself and rescues the monk from two demons. At the monk's direction, the Monkey King gives up his shoes.

Chapter 8: Jin Wang

Jin convinces Wei-Chen to lie to the Wangs about Jin's forbidden date with Amelia. At the movies, Jin uses bubbling powdered soap to wash under his arms. When he puts his arm around Amelia, he leaves soap on her shoulder. Wei-Chen helps Jin through the situation; Jin daydreams about marrying Amelia. Greg asks Jin to stop dating her to preserve her reputation. Jin drifts away from Amelia to Suzy, who confesses that her ex-friend Lauren humiliated her at a party. Jin kisses Suzy, who bashes him in the cheek. Jin insults Wei-Chen, who bashes Jin on the other cheek. Jin dreams of the herbalist's wife's advice and awakens as a Caucasian. He names himself Danny. In fact, Jin *is* Danny, Chin-Kee's embarrassed cousin.

Chapter 9: Chin-Kee

Danny finds Chin-Kee singing rock tunes in the library and ends up dragging him to an ally, where he attacks Chin-Kee for "ruining his life." Chin-Kee warns Danny he's making a mistake; when Danny continues fighting, Chin-Kee displays amazing kung-fu prowess and handily defeats Danny. Danny knocks Chin-Kee's head off,

revealing that Chin-Kee is actually the Monkey King, now an emissary of Tze-Yo-Tzuh after completing a test of virtue. The Monkey King changes Danny back into Jin—minus the curly hair—and tells him his story and that of Wei-Chen Sun. Wei-Chen, it turns out, is the Monkey King's son, who aspired to be an emissary himself; as his test of virtue, he planned to live a vice-free life on earth for 40 years in mortal form. As Chin-Kee, the Monkey King has visited earth once a year to check up on his son. However, Wei-Sun committed a sin by lying (to Jin's mother), and declared that humans are petty and soulless. The Monkey King tells Jin he has come to serve as his conscience. He tells Jin that if he had realized how good it was to be a monkey, he would have saved himself hundreds of years of imprisonment under a rock—the message being to accept himself and his heritage. Before leaving, the Monkey King gives Jin the address of a Chinese bakery. Jin goes every day after school for a month, doing his homework, drinking pearl milk tea, and waiting for something to happen. Finally, one day, Wei-Chen arrives, dressed like a punk (and minus his Chinese accent). Jin apologizes, and the two reconcile. As the book ends, Wei Chen is inviting Jin to go with him somewhere else—to another Chinese restaurant, where the pearl milk tea is better.

Timeline of Asian American History

1600s	Chinese and Filipinos reach Mexico on ships of the Manila galleon.
1830s	Chinese "sugar masters" work in Hawaii; Chinese sailors and peddlers work in New York.
1835	U.S. and China sign first treaty.
1848	Gold discovered in California. Chinese begin to arrive.
1850	California imposes Foreign Miner's Tax and enforces it mainly against Chinese miners, who often had to pay more than once.
1852	First group of 195 Chinese contract laborers lands in Hawaii. Over 20,000 Chinese enter California. Chinese first appear in court in California. Missionary William Speer opens Presbyterian mission for Chinese in San Francisco.
1854	Chinese in Hawaii establish a funeral society, their first community association in the islands. People v. Hall rules that Chinese can't give testimony in

1857	court. U.S. and Japan sign first treaty. San Francisco opens a school for Chinese children (changed to an evening school two years later). Missionary Augustus Loomis arrives to serve the Chinese in San Francisco.		
1858	California passes a law to bar entry of Chinese and "Mongolians."	1880	U.S. and China sign treaty giving the U.S. the right to limit but "not absolutely prohibit" Chinese immigration. Section 69 of California's Civil Code prohibits issuing of licenses for marriages between whites and "Mongolians, Negroes, mulattoes and persons of mixed blood."
1859	First Chinese woman immigrant arrives in the United States.	1881	Hawaiian King Kalakaua visits Japan during his world tour. Sit Moon becomes pastor of the first Chinese Christian church in Hawaii.
1860	Japan sends a diplomatic mission to U.S.	1882	Chinese Exclusion Law suspends immigration of laborers for ten years. Chinese community leaders form Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA or Chinese Six Companies) in San Francisco. U.S. and Korea sign first treaty.
1862	Six Chinese district associations in San Francisco form loose federation. California imposes a "police tax" of \$2.50 a month on every Chinese.	1883	Chinese in New York establish CCBA.
1865	Central Pacific Railroad Co. recruits Chinese workers for the transcontinental railroad.	1884	Joseph and Mary Tape sue San Francisco school board to enroll their daughter Mamie in a public school. Chinese Six Companies sets up Chinese language school in San Francisco. United Chinese Society established in Honolulu. CCBA established in Vancouver. 1882 Chinese Exclusion Law amended to require a certificate as the only permissible evidence for reentry.
1867	Two thousand Chinese railroad workers strike for a week.	1885	San Francisco builds new segregated "Oriental School." Anti-Chinese violence occurs at Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory. First group of Japanese contract laborers arrives in Hawaii under the Irwin Convention.
1868	U.S. and China sign Burlingame-Seward Treaty recognizing rights of their citizens to emigrate. Eugene Van Reed illegally ships 149 Japanese laborers to Hawaii. Sam Damon opens Sunday school for Chinese in Hawaii.	1886	Residents of Tacoma, Seattle, and many places in the American West forcibly expel the Chinese. End of Chinese immigration to Hawaii. Chinese laundrymen win case in <i>Yick Wo v. Hopkins</i> , which declares that a law with unequal impact on different groups is discriminatory.
1869	Completion of first transcontinental railroad. J.H. Schnell takes several dozen Japanese to California to establish the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony. Chinese Christian evangelist S.P. Aheong starts preaching in Hawaii.	1888	Scott Act renders 20,000 Chinese reentry certificates null and void.
1870	California passes a law against the importation of Chinese, Japanese, and "Mongolian" women for prostitution. Chinese railroad workers in Texas sue company for failing to pay wages.		
1871	"Chinese Massacre" leaves eighteen Chinese dead in Los Angeles.		
1872	California's Civil Procedure Code drops law barring Chinese court testimony.		
1875	Page Law bars entry of Chinese, Japanese, and "Mongolian" prostitutes, felons, and contract laborers.		
1877	Anti-Chinese violence perpetrated in Chico, California. Japanese Christians set up the Gospel Society in San Francisco, the first immigrant association formed by the Japanese.		
1878	In re Ah Yup rules Chinese not eligible for naturalized citizenship.		
1879	California's second constitution prevents municipalities and corporations		

1889	First Nishi Hongwanji priest from Japan arrives in Hawaii. <i>Chae Chan Ping v. U.S.</i> upholds constitutionality of Chinese exclusion laws.	1903	without search warrants, arrest almost 250 Chinese who allegedly had no registration certificates on their persons. First group of Korean workers arrives in Hawaii. Strike by 1,500 Japanese and Mexican sugar beet workers in Oxnard, California. Koreans in Hawaii form Korean Evangelical Society. Filipino students (<i>pensionados</i>) arrive in the U.S. for higher education.
1892	Geary Law renews exclusion of Chinese laborers for another ten years and requires all Chinese to register. <i>Fong Yue Ting v. U.S.</i> upholds constitutionality of Geary Law.	1904	Chinese exclusion made indefinite and applicable to U.S. insular possessions. Japanese plantation workers engage in first organized strike in Hawaii. Punjabi Sikhs begin to enter British Columbia.
1893	Japanese in San Francisco form first trade association, the Japanese Shoemakers' League. Attempts are made to expel Chinese from towns in southern California.	1905	Chinese in the U.S. and Hawaii support boycott of American products in China. Koreans establish Korean Episcopal Church in Hawaii and Korean Methodist Church in California. San Francisco School Board attempts to segregate Japanese schoolchildren. Korean emigration ends. Koreans in San Francisco form Mutual Assistance Society. Asiatic Exclusion League formed in San Francisco. Section 60 of California's Civil Code amended to forbid marriage between whites and "Mongolians."
1894	Sun Yat-sen founds the Xingzhonghui in Honolulu. U.S. circuit court in Massachusetts declares in <i>In re Saito</i> that Japanese are ineligible for naturalization. Japanese immigration to Hawaii under Irwin Convention ends and emigration companies take over.	1906	Anti-Asian riot in Vancouver. Japanese nurserymen form California Flower Growers' Association. Koreans establish Korean Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles. Japanese scientists studying the aftermath of the San Francisco earthquake are stoned.
1895	<i>Lem Moon Sing v. U.S.</i> rules that district courts can no longer review Chinese habeas corpus petitions for landing in the U.S.	1907	Japan and the U.S. reach "Gentlemen's Agreement" whereby Japan stops issuing passports to laborers desiring to emigrate to the U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt signs Executive Order 589 prohibiting Japanese with passports for Hawaii, Mexico, or Canada to re-emigrate to the U.S. Koreans form United Korean Society in Hawaii. First group of Filipino laborers arrives in Hawaii. Asian Indians are driven out of Bellingham, Washington.
1896	Shinsei Kaneko, a Japanese Californian, is naturalized. Bubonic plague scare in Honolulu triggers burning of Chinatown.	1908	Japanese form Japanese Association of America. Canada curbs Asian Indian immigrants by denying entry to immigrants who haven't come by "continuous journey" from their homelands
1897	Nishi Hongwanji includes Hawaii as a mission field.		
1898	<i>Wong Kim Ark v. U.S.</i> decides that Chinese born in the U.S. can't be stripped of their citizenship. Japanese in San Francisco set up Young Men's Buddhist Association. U.S. annexes Hawaii and the Philippines.		
1899	Chinese reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao tour North America to recruit members for the Baohuanghui. First Nishi Hongwanji priests arrive in California and set up North American Buddhist Mission.		
1900	Japanese Hawaiian plantation workers begin going to the mainland after the Organic Act ends contract labor. Bubonic plague scare in San Francisco—Chinatown cordoned and quarantined.		
1902	Chinese exclusion extended for another ten years. Immigration officials and the police raid Boston's Chinatown and,		

(there is no direct shipping between Indian and Canadian ports). Asian Indians are driven out of Live Oak, California.

1909 Koreans form Korean Nationalist Association. Some 7,000 Japanese plantation workers strike major plantations on Oahu for four months.

1910 Administrative measures used to restrict influx of Asian Indians into California.

1911 Pablo Manlapit forms Filipino Higher Wages Association in Hawaii. Japanese form Japanese Association of Oregon in Portland.

1912 Sikhs build gurdwara in Stockton and establish Khalsa Diwan. Japanese in California hold statewide conference on Nisei education.

1913 California passes alien land law prohibiting "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from buying land or leasing it for longer than three years. Sikhs in Washington and Oregon establish Hindustani Association. Asian Indians in California found the revolutionary Ghadar Party and start publishing a newspaper. Pablo Manlapit forms Filipino Unemployed Association in Hawaii. Japanese form Northwest Japanese Association of America in Seattle. Korean farm workers are driven out of Hemet, California.

1914 Aspiring Asian Indian immigrants who had chartered a ship to come to Canada by continuous journey are denied landing in Vancouver.

1915 Japanese form Central Japanese Association of Southern California and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce.

1917 Arizona passes an Alien Land Law. 1917 Immigration Law defines a geographic "barred zone" (including India) from which no immigrants can come. Syngman Rhee founds the Korean Christian Church in Hawaii.

1918 Servicemen of Asian ancestry who had served in World War I receive right of naturalization. Asian Indians form the Hindustani Welfare Reform Association in the Imperial and Coachella valleys in southern California.

1919 Japanese form Federation of Japanese Labor in Hawaii.

1920 Strike conducted by 10,000 Japanese and Filipino plantation workers. Japan stops issuing passports to picture brides due to anti-Japanese sentiments. Initiative in California ballot plugs up loopholes in the 1913 alien land law.

1921 Japanese farm workers driven out of Turlock, California. Filipinos establish a branch of the Caballeros Dimas Alang in San Francisco and a branch of the Legionarios del Trabajo in Honolulu. Washington and Louisiana pass alien land laws.

1922 *Takao Ozawa v. U.S.* declares Japanese not eligible for naturalized citizenship. New Mexico passes an alien land law. Cable Act declares that any American female citizen who marries "an alien ineligible to citizenship" would lose her citizenship.

1923 *U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind* declares Asian Indians not eligible for naturalized citizenship. Idaho, Montana, and Oregon pass alien land laws. *Terrace v. Thompson* upholds constitutionality of Washington's alien land law. *Porterfield v. Webb* upholds constitutionality of California's alien land law. *Webb v. O'Brien* rules that sharecropping is illegal because it is a ruse that allows Japanese to possess and use land. *Frick v. Webb* forbids aliens "ineligible to citizenship" from owning stocks in corporations formed for farming.

1924 Immigration Act denies entry to virtually all Asians. Eight-month strike conducted by 1,600 Filipino plantation workers in Hawaii.

1925 Warring tongs in North America's Chinatowns declare truce. Hilario Moncado founds Filipino Federation of America.

1928 Filipino farm workers are driven out of Yakima Valley, Washington. Filipinos in Los Angeles form Filipino American Christian Fellowship.

1930 Anti-Filipino riot occurs in Watsonville, California.

1931 Amendment to Cable Act declares that no American-born woman who loses

	her citizenship (by marrying an alien ineligible to citizenship) can be denied the right of naturalization at a later date.		to Asian Indians and Filipinos. Wing F. Ong becomes first Asian American to be elected to state office in the Arizona House of Representatives.
1934	Tydings-McDuffie Act spells out procedure for eventual Philippine independence and reduces Filipino immigration to fifty persons a year. Filipino lettuce pickers in the Salinas Valley, California, go on strike.	1947	Amendment to 1945 War Brides Act allows Chinese American veterans to bring brides into the U.S.
1936	American Federation of Labor grants charter to a Filipino-Mexican union of fieldworkers.	1949	Chinese Communists win the bitter civil war that has plagued China since the World War II defeat of Japan four years earlier. Mao Tse-tung and the Communists declare the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1st. The Nationalist Chinese government, led by Chiang Kai-shek, moves its republic to the province of Taiwan. The U.S. grants refugee status to 5,000 highly educated Chinese fleeing Communist rule.
1937	Last ethnic strike in Hawaii.	1952	One clause of the McCarran-Walter Act grants the right of naturalization and a small immigration quota to Japanese.
1938	Chinese-owned National Dollar Stores is subject of three-month strike by 150 Chinese women garment workers.	1956	California repeals its alien land laws. Dalip Singh from the Imperial Valley, California, is elected to Congress.
1940	AFL charts the Filipino Federated Agricultural Laborers Association.	1962	Daniel K. Inouye becomes U.S. senator and Spark Matsunaga becomes U.S. congressman from Hawaii.
1941	After declaring war on Japan, 2,000 Japanese community leaders along Pacific Coast states and Hawaii are rounded up and interned in Department of Justice camps.	1964	Patsy Takemoto Mink becomes first Asian American woman to serve in Congress as representative from Hawaii.
1942	President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 authorizing the secretary of war to delegate a military commander to designate military areas "from which any and all persons may be excluded"—primarily enforced against Japanese. Congress passes Public Law 503 to impose penal sanctions on anyone disobeying orders to carry out Executive Order 9066. Protests go forth at Poston and Manzanar relocation centers.	1965	Immigration Law abolishes "national origins" as basis for allocating immigration quotas to various countries—Asian countries now on equal footing.
1943	Protest at Topaz Relocation Center. Registration crisis leads to Tule Lake Relocation Center's designation as a segregation center. Hawaiian Nisei in the 100th Battalion sent to Africa. Congress repeals all Chinese exclusion laws, grants right of naturalization and a small immigration quota to Chinese.	1968	Students on strike at San Francisco State University to demand establishment of ethnic studies programs.
1944	Tule Lake placed under martial law. Draft reinstated for Nisei. Draft resistance at Heart Mountain Relocation Center. 442nd Regimental Combat Team gains fame. Exclusion orders revoked.	1969	Students at the University of California, Berkeley, go on strike for establishment of ethnic studies programs.
1946	Luce-Celler bill grants right of naturalization and small immigration quotas	1979	President Richard Nixon's trip to the People's Republic of China opens up diplomatic relations with the Communist state and marginalizes the Nationalists in Taiwan, who had previously been recognized as the legitimate government of China. Taiwan eventually loses its seat as a standing member of the United Nations. The perception of "two Chinas" impacts community life

1974 among Chinese living overseas, including in the United States. March Fong Eu elected California's secretary of state. *Lau v. Nichols* rules that school districts with children who speak little English must provide them with bilingual education.

1975 More than 130,000 refugees enter the U.S. from Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos as Communist governments are established there.

1976 President Gerald Ford rescinds Executive Order 9066.

1978 National convention of the Japanese American Citizens League adopts resolution calling for redress and reparations for the internment of Japanese Americans. Massive exodus of "boat people" from Vietnam.

1979 Resumption of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States of America reunites members of long-separated Chinese American families.

1980 The Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees set up an Orderly Departure Program to enable Vietnamese to emigrate legally.

1981 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (set up by Congress) holds hearings across the country and concludes the internment was a "grave injustice" and that Executive Order 9066 resulted from "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."

1982 Vincent Chin, a Chinese American draftsman, is clubbed to death with a baseball bat by two Caucasian men spouting anti-Asian vitriol in an attack in Detroit.

1983 Fred Korematsu, Min Yasui, and Gordon Hirabayashi file petitions to overturn their World War II convictions for violating the curfew and evacuation orders.

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act imposes civil and criminal penalties on employers who knowingly hire undocumented aliens.

1987 The U.S. House of Representatives votes 243 to 141 to make an official apology

to Japanese Americans and to pay each surviving internee \$20,000 in reparations.

1988 The U.S. Senate votes 69 to 27 to support redress for Japanese Americans. American Homecoming Act allows children in Vietnam born of American fathers to emigrate to the U.S.

1989 President George Bush signs into law an entitlement program to pay each surviving Japanese American internee \$20,000. U.S. reaches agreement with Vietnam to allow political prisoners to emigrate to the U.S. A U.S. executive order allows students from the People's Republic of China to stay in the United States following the Chinese government's massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

1999 Wen Ho Lee, a Taiwan-born scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, is hauled away by FBI agents in leg shackles on charges of leaking sensitive defense secrets to China. His case sparks protests by Chinese American civil rights groups. After 278 days in solitary detention, charges are dropped and Lee is released in 2000. The judge in the case apologizes on behalf of the United States government.

Author Sketch

A specialist in American comics and graphic novels, Gene Luen Yang ventures beyond the parameters of plain print. Born in 1973 in Alameda, California, he heard bedtime stories from his mother about Sun Wukong, the Monkey King. With a small number of other Asian kids, he grew up in Saratoga (a San Francisco suburb) in an era of uncertainty for minority children, and traded insults with an East Indian contemporary.



Yang began drawing his own graphic adventure stories of Spade Hunter in fifth grade. With a friend, he photocopied pages, colored them individually, and sold them to raise money for the Save the Statue of Liberty Fund.

Ridicule from other teens in junior high and interest in girls caused Yang to stop drawing. In high school in the 1980s, he returned to the genre after reading *Dark Knight Returns*, *Maus*, and *Watchmen*.

Following a summer course in comics writing at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, at age 23, Yang became a professional cartoonist at a time when the comic market was at an ebb of popularity. He earned a B.S. in computer science and creative writing from the University of California at Berkeley, where he came under the influence of the works of Japanese cartoonist Osama Tezuka. While completing a master's of education degree from California State University at Hayward, Yang conducted research in the potential of comics as teaching tools that motivate, engage, and entertain. The result was *Factoring with Mr. Yang and Mosley the Alien*, an online math tutorial.

Yang's comics express his life as an Asian-American by combining genres—autobiography, legend, and satiric sit-com. He began producing comics for adults with *Gordon Yamamoto and the King of the Geek*, a pop culture fool tale. In 1998, Yang took a job teaching algebra, trigonometry, computer art, computer applications, computer science, and business technology at Bishop O'Dowd High School, a Catholic school in Oakland, where he directs information services. He introduced the folk hero the Monkey King in *The Motherless One*, a black and white mini-comic, which he brushed on vellum, the beginning of a favorite method. The character derives from *The Journey to the West* (ca. 300 A.D.) in which a Chinese Buddhist trickster monkey deity mirrors the Greek superhero Hercules, the Jewish Samson and the Golem, and Hanuman of India. Yang explained his Christian approach to legend: "I eventually came up with the idea to use the Monkey King as a lens through which to reflect on my own experience as an Asian-American."

In 2003, Yang explored a Catholic theme in *The Rosary Comic Book*, which explains the scriptural basis of the twenty-segment rosary prayer. He published a sequel, *Loyola Chin and the San Peligran Order*, which introduces Gordon's girlfriend, a Chinese-American sophomore in high school who conjures up strange dreams. Since Yang's marriage in 2000, he has lived in Fremont, California, with his Korean-American wife, Theresa, and son Kobe, who imitates his father by drawing trucks.

Critic's Corner

Yang began earning awards the year after he entered the cartooning profession. In 1997, *Gordon Yamamoto*

and the King of the Geeks won a Xeric Grant. In 2006, Yang broke ground for the innovative graphic novel with *American Born Chinese*, the first full-color comic narrative to win a Michael L. Printz Award and the first to be nominated for a National Book Award. For research, he used details from the photos he took during a family visit to China. The novel received an overflow of citations: two Eisner Awards, a *Library Media* editor's choice award, a Reuben Award, a Chinese American Librarians Association best book, two best book citations from *Publishers Weekly*, a New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age award, a *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year, placement on the YALSA Great Graphic Novel for Teens Top Ten List, an American Library Association top ten YA books citation, an Amazon.com comic of the year, a *Booklist* Editor's Choice award for 2006, and a nomination for a Harvey Award for best colorist.

Yang stays in demand as a lecturer and spokesman for the educational comic book. The Asian Art Museum named him cartoonist in residence; the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco exhibited his brush and pen artistry, which he cleans up by scanning it into Photoshop. On September 15, 2007, he was a panelist at the Museum of Chinese in the Americas in New York discussing the depiction of Asian-Americans in comics. Three weeks later, he read at Litquake: San Francisco's Literary Festival. In 2008, the state read in Wisconsin will feature *American Born Chinese*.

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Other Works by Gene Luen Yang

Gordon Yamamoto and the King of the Geeks, 1997
Duncan's Kingdom (with artist Derek Kirk), 1999
Rosary Comic Book, 2003
Loyola Chin and the San Peligran Order, 2004
American Born Chinese, 2006

Related Reading

Joseph Bruchac, *Bowman's Store*
 Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth*
 Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*
 Chris Crutcher, *Whale Talk*
 Michael Dorris, *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*
 Robin Lee Graham, *Dove*
 Esther Hautzig, *The Endless Steppe*
 Gish Jen, *Who's Irish?* and "Fish Cheeks"
 Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*
 James Vance Marshall, *Walkabout*
 Walter Dean Myers, *The Glory Field*
 Ann Petry, *Tituba of Salem Village*
 Conrad Richter, *The Light in the Forest*
 Art Spiegelman, *Maus*
 Jane Wagner, *J.T.*
 Yoko Kawashima Watkins, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*

Objectives

General Objectives

1. To identify standard values and behaviors
2. To characterize the pairing of cartoon drawings with captions
3. To discuss the nature of legend, autobiography, parable, and satire
4. To outline the relationship between "insiders" and "outsiders," "natives" and "non-natives"
5. To contrast types of compromise
6. To note the value of solitude and reflection
7. To read aloud examples of tradition and wisdom
8. To study the conventions of action cartoons
9. To enumerate incidents of social rejection and ridicule
10. To explain the impact of shame and regret

Specific Objectives

1. To describe the problems of Asian-American school students
2. To recount how and why Chin-Kee destroys Danny's life
3. To discuss the different achievements of monks Chi Dao, Jing Sze, Jiang Tao, and Wong Lai-Tsao
4. To summarize the issue and significance of shoes on

- monkeys as a cover for natural traits
5. To account for Amelia Harris's interest in Jin Wang
6. To characterize racist slurs at Jin Wang, Suzy Nakamura, and Wei-Chen Sun
7. To list school incidents involving student cooperation
8. To evaluate changes in the Monkey King, Jin Wang, and Chin-Kee
9. To account for multiple acts of shape-shifting in the last chapter
10. To describe the Monkey King's encounters with heaven and Tze-Yo-Tzuh

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Gene Yang's style, present the following terms and applications to his graphic novel:

Graphic novel: a long comic book or suite of cartoons encompassing a complex plot and involving a full range of primary and secondary characters and literary themes. By setting Jin Wang and Danny in Mayflower Elementary and Oliphant High School, the author pictures child-dominant situations that test character and tolerance in multicultural student populations. The blending of genres—legend, autobiography, and satire—helps the author to explain how grounding in Chinese Monkey King legends prepares his alter ego, Jin Wang, for a lesson in humility and an apology to Wei-Chen Sun at the Chinese bakery.

Trickster tale: a pervasive motif in folklore picturing a god, human, or animal who creates tension or conflict through pranks, deception, or flouting of standards of behavior. Through his conceit, the Monkey King learns that being a sage is not so important as being a rescuer, friend, and disciple and emissary of Tze-Yo-Tzuh.

Universality: a quality or theme that applies to all people at all times. The intertwined motifs of pride, arrogance, shame, and isolation encourage cross-analysis of traits in the strutting Monkey King who becomes ashamed of his "monkeyness," in Jin Wang's rudeness to the newcomer Wei-Chen Sun, and in Danny's embarrassment at Chin-Kee's overt and stereotypical Asian style of dress and behavior.

The Importance of Setting

The interweaving of fantasy locations on Flower-Fruit Mountain with an American elementary school and high school community prepares the reader for the merger of legend with autobiography and satiric sitcom. The idyllic setting of Flower-Fruit Mountain and floating on a cloud to the party in heaven at first seems incongruous with Jin Wang's life in Chinatown in San

Francisco. Gene Yang introduces the herbalist's shop to mediate the variance in settings by having the herbalist's wife encourage fantasy in Jin Wang, while simultaneously issuing a warning about forfeiting his soul. The narrative segues to a Caucasian-dominated setting, Mayflower Elementary, a school bearing the name of the ship bringing the first English settlers to New England. The shift to Danny and Melanie studying chemistry moves deeper into American boy-girl behaviors and sets up Danny to explode when Chin-Kee threatens Danny's shaky social standing with an outsider's mistakes.

The trio of settings begins cyclic repetitions with the Monkey King's underground lair and his return by cloud to heaven. Yang repeats the pattern, picturing Jin Wang in classes with Wei-Chen, Suzy Nakamura, and Greg. The description of the biology supply room narrows the range of action to focus on Jin Wang's attempt to impress Amelia Harris. Advancing to the next teen level, the sixth chapter pictures Danny trying to sneak Chin-Kee into Oliphant High School (which author Yang reportedly named as a jibe at famed political cartoonist Pat Oliphant, who has drawn fire for stereotypical—some say racist—depictions of Asians) without drawing attention to the noisy newcomer. The third triad repeats the broad backdrop of the Monkey King's legend, then tightens the focus on Jin's longings before launching into the first transformation, in which Jin becomes Danny. In the final scenario, the swift shape-shifting leads Jin/Danny away from the previous settings to the bakery, an outpost of Chinese culture where an apology settles past issues and restores friendship with Wei-Chen Sun in a context that reaffirms their mutual Chinese identity.

Cross-Curricular Sources

For related reading and more information about Gene Yang, Asian-Americans, graphic novels, Chinatown, herbalism, the Monkey King, Lao-Tzu, and trickster lore, consult these sources:

Periodicals

"Gene Luen Yang," Booklist 103, no. 13 (1 March 2007): 75.

Vitone, Elaine. "On Learning New Tricks," Publishers Weekly 254, no. 25 (18 June 2007): 44.

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The Light in the Forest, Conrad Richter — Listening Library

Audio CD

A Yellow Raft in Blue Water, Michael Dorris, Audio Bookshelf

Autobiography

Bowman's Store: A Journey to Myself, Joseph Bruchac

Dove, Robin Lee Graham and Derek L.T. Gill

Farewell to Manzanar, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James P. Houston

So Far from the Bamboo Grove, Yoko Kawashima Watkins

Biography

Anna and the King of Siam, Margaret Landon

Historical novels

The Light in the Forest, Conrad Richter

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, Eleanor Coerr and Ronald Himler

Tituba of Salem Village, Anne Petry

Internet

"Chinese Herbalism in America," <http://www.planetherbs.com/articles/chinese.html>

"Graphic Novels," <http://www.libraryjournal.com/community/Graphic+Novels/47115.html>

Legends and myths

Animals in the Stars: Chinese Astrology for Children, Gregory Crawford

Five Heavenly Emperors: Chinese Myths of Creation, Song Nan Zhang

Legend of Mu Lan, Wei Jiang and Cheng an Jiang

Trick of the Tale: A Collection of Trickster Tales, John Matthews, Caitlin Matthews, Tomislav Tomic

Novels

The Bean Trees, Barbara Kingsolver

Dove, Robin Lee Graham and Derek L.T. Gill

Dragon Gate, Lawrence Yep

The Glory Field, Walter Dean Myers

The Good Earth, Pearl S. Buck

Walkabout, James Vance Marshall

Plays

J.T., Jane Wagner

The King and I, Richard Rodgers

Poem

"The Ballad of East and West," Rudyard Kipling

Reference works

Asian Americans: An Interpretive History, Sucheng Chan

The Gods and Goddesses of Ancient China, Leonard Everett Fisher

Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching: A Book About the Way and the Power of the Way, Ursula K. LeGuin and Lao Tzu

San Francisco's Chinatown, Judy Yung and Chinese Historical Society of America

Trickster Makes This World Mischief, Myth, and Art, Lewis Hyde

Short story

"Fish Cheeks," Gish Jen

Videos

Anna and the King, Fox, 1999

Eyes on the Prize, Blackside, 1987

Farewell to Manzanar, Kory Films/Universal TV/NBC, 1976

The Good Earth, MGM, 1937

The Joy Luck Club, Hollywood Pictures, 1993

A Passage to India, EMI Films, 1984

Snow Falling on Cedars, Kennedy-Marshall/Universal Pictures, 1999

Souder, Radnitz/Mattel, 1972

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Gene Yang's *American Born Chinese* should include these aspects:

Themes

- identity
- tolerance
- price
- social status
- disorder
- racism
- friendship
- kindness
- compassion
- challenge

Motifs

- making friends with newcomers
- surveying American values
- trying to fit in
- bicultural assimilation
- overcoming faults and weaknesses

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words.

There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important. Be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the graphic novel.

Character Interaction

1. Why does Jin reject, then befriend Wei-Chen Sun? *(When Wei-Chen Sun arrives at Mayflower Elementary from Taiwan, he tries to befriend Jin Wang, the only other Asian, who eats alone on the playground. Jin, who has already spent two months acclimating to a new setting, rejects Wei-Chen for speaking Chinese and for needing a friend. Jin's antipathy arises from seeing his own despair mirrored in Wei-Chen. When the newcomer plays with the robot toy that his father gave him before he left home, Jin changes his mind and becomes Wei-Chen's best friend.)*

Action

2. How does Jin alter Wei-Chen's attitude toward girls? *(Wei-Chen learns about Jin's interest in Amelia Harris a month after the fact. In Taiwanese style, Wei-Chen ridicules a boy under eighteen years of age who admits to loving a girl. Jin reminds Wei-Chen that the U.S. has different standards for boy-girl relationships. The jibe "F.O.B." [fresh off the boat] nudges Wei-Chen out of his native mindset and suggests that the newcomer should look at dating from a more liberal American perspective. In two weeks, the prod to Wei-Chen works. He begins dating Suzy Nakamura.)*

Exposition

3. What does the Monkey King learn about crashing dinner parties? *(After bidding goodbye to the subject monkeys in his realm, the Monkey King mounts his cloud and arrives at the gates of heaven. He discovers that the entrance line requires patience. At a hint from Ao-Jun, the Dragon King of the Western Sea, the guard refuses the monkey. The cajoling of the monkey from the entrance results in ridicule that embarrasses the proud monkey. His attack on the diners is violent and effective, but he trembles on his way home to Flower-Fruit Mountain. The incident causes him revulsion at the smell of monkey fur in his royal chamber. Rather than recover from humiliation, he chooses to rid himself of simian qualities.)*

Folklore

4. How do four Chinese monks achieve legendary status? *(Gene Yang pictures Chi Dao as a meditator so*

focused and immobile that he turns to stone. A second monk, Jing Sze, refrains from food for fourteen months and spends his last three months of life grinning at death. The third paragon, Jiang Tao, delivers such moving sermons that bamboo weeps while repenting of its sins. The comic, yet Christ-like, figure of Wong Lai-Tsao pictures monasticism less as a contemplative duty than as active service to the poor. God tests Wong by having vagrants show ingratitude for food and wound-care that the monk delivers each morning. As a result of Wong's humility and gratitude to God for his blessings, Tze-Yo-Tzuh elevates Wong above the first three monks by assigning him a perilous mission delivering three packages to the West.)

Setting

5. How does the rock mountain serve as a backdrop to the rescue of Wong Lai-Tsao?
(In a barren stretch, Wong Lai-Tsao instructs the Monkey King that the only way to free himself from the rock mountain is to locate his true identity. The grisly scene of two demons stabbing the monk with a spear and slow-roasting him over a fire becomes the impetus to the monkey's humbling himself by accepting his true identity, and as a result, freeing himself from 500 years of imprisonment. All-out war with the shape-shifting monkey redirects him from self-advancement to becoming a sage. Instead of thinking of self, he challenges the plight of the monk. By becoming the monk's disciple in the sparse setting, the monkey is able to abandon his shoes, a symbol of vanity and self-deception. The human and simian footsteps that the monk and his disciple leave behind in the sand accentuate the new-found humility of the formerly pompous, overbearing Monkey King.)

Interpretation

6. What causes the Asian-Americans in American Born Chinese the most grief?
(Numerous racist stereotypes plague the characters. Gene Yang depicts a number of stereotypes that shadow newcomers to American culture, particularly the image of the overly bright Chinese student who applies kung-fu to personal conflicts with rude Caucasians. White authority figures mispronounce Asian names and lend credence to such ignorant notions as a Chinese diet of dogs and the frequent confusion of China with Taiwan. A rumor that Suzy Nakamura was pledged in childhood to marry Jin Wang at age thirteen contributes to misconceptions

about Asian culture. (The fact that Suzy is Japanese, not Chinese, underscores the irony, along with the racist misconception that "all Asians are alike.") At lunch, jokes about eating Lassie and dumplings, and references to buck teeth, isolate Jin Wang. At Oliphant High School (which the author named after a famous political cartoonist criticized for using derogatory ethnic stereotypes in his work), Danny hears white boys ridiculing Chin-Kee by implying that his saliva carries SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), which Canadians blamed on Asian immigrants during an outbreak in 2002-2003. In the final frames, Yang reverses the stereotypes by picturing Wei-Chen as the typical American punk: smart-mouthing, smoking, driving a souped-up car, dressed in shades and earrings, and spouting crude, disrespectful slang.)

Literary Foils

7. How does Amelia Harris contrast with the other girls?
(Amelia Harris, an attractive student at Oliphant High School, is less biased and prideful than other white students and more willing to give Jin Wang a chance to be her friend. Unlike Lauren Suzuki, the hostess who deliberately snubs Suzy Nakamura at a party, Amelia accepts Jin's invitation to go to a movie, where she cuddles against his shoulder. More outgoing and involved than Melanie, who studies chemistry with Danny, Amelia takes seriously the volunteer work to tend the animals in the biology lab.)

Theme

8. What does Gene Yang reveal about divinity?
(The cartoonist, a devout Roman Catholic, pictures God in the form of the Chinese Tze-Yo-Tzuh, the creator. Unlike lesser deities, God questions the Monkey King's anger and refers to him as silly and little, two descriptors intended to quell the monkey's conceit. God (Tze-Yo-Tzuh) holds out his hand to indicate that the monkey is forever in the creator's reach. After defacing the five gold pillars at the edge of reality and urinating on one of them, the monkey deludes himself with a false sense of power. More self-centered boasting from the monkey precedes God's revelation of total power by holding up his hand, on which one finger displays the irreverent gesture the monkey made to the gold pillar. In a self-introduction to the monkey, God declares himself omnipresent in time, and impresses on the monkey that God chose the simian species for the Monkey King's identity. Only after complete rebellion does the monkey realize that God is capable of bestowing

punishment on defiers of the almighty.)

Tone

9. Why is humility integral to the novel's tone?
(Gene Yang reduces strutting characters for their lack of hospitality toward others and for their arrogance toward God. In the Monkey King's battle with the gatekeeper, extreme violence takes the discourteous guard by surprise and reduces him to a pulp. At the Mayflower Elementary School playground, two white boys who hassle Jin Wang forget themselves when they turn against Greg. Greg's belligerence forces a new alliance as all three white boys turn against Jin and accuse him of eating dog for lunch. In the episode regarding the four legendary monks, only Wong Lai-Tsao accepts the role of the suffering servant and relieves the misery of the homeless. The final scene pictures Jin Wang atoning for alienating Wei-Chen. As a token of their shared culture, the two plan to share a Chinese beverage, pearl milk tea.)

Style

10. How does the author juggle identity in the concluding segment?
(Jin, whose efforts to assimilate have caused him to morph into Danny, tries to rid himself of Chin-Kee, who looks ridiculous singing rock songs on a library table. Danny's accidental beheading of the cartoonish Chin-Kee produces a multiple shape-shifting that retrieves the Monkey King from legend and places him and his son, Wei-Chen, in an American teen scenario. After Wei-Chen turns his back on the almighty and gives up his interest in discipleship, he plunges fully into human life in America. The monkey father has little choice but to serve Jin as a conscience and to point the way to Asian-American identity as Jin's true path, which the Chinese call the tao. After over a month of meditation and self-examination at a Chinese bakery, Jin is ready to humble himself to Wei-Chen and accept friendship from a fellow Asian.)

How Language Works

Gene Yang permeates his graphic text with brief statements of wisdom that emerge from ordinary dialogue.

1. The herbalist's wife warns Jin Wang, "It's easy to become anything you wish so long as you're willing to forfeit your soul."
2. God, or Tze-Yo-Tzuh, reminds the strutting monkey, "You I have created, therefore, you can never escape my reach." To restore self-esteem in the Monkey King, God adds, "I made you with awe

and wonder, for wonderful are all of my works."

3. Wong Lai-Tsao explains to the vagrants the human relationship to God: "I am no more worthy of love than you, yet Tze-Yo-Tzuh loves me deeply and faithfully provides for my daily needs. How can I not respond in kind?"

Across the Curriculum

Language

1. Place these vocabulary terms into categories: Mark either abstract or concrete under one of the five senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling. List reasons for your choices. Place a star by all proper terms.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| • abacus | • antiquity | • aspired |
| • celestials | • clone | • Confucius |
| • cudgel | • detention | • disciple |
| • disciplines | • duration | • emissaries |
| • executive | • forfeit | • herbalist |
| • humanoid | • humerus | • impudence |
| • incense | • inevitable | • jeopardize |
| • judicial | • kung-fu | • Lao-Tzu |
| • legislative | • lisp | • Mandarin |
| • muster | • ninja | • parable |
| • parameters | • paranoid | • peril |
| • pinnacle | • prerequisites | • purged |
| • sage | • SARS | • seclusion |
| • steed | • stilted | • tangible |
| • ulna | • vagrants | • vice |
| • vulnerability | • wok | |

Science

1. Explain with a chart the combustion of incense as a token of honor in Chinese ancestor worship. Contrast the burning of candles with the lighting of incense sticks.
2. Appoint a panel to discuss scapegoating of Asian-Canadians during the SARS outbreak of 2002-2003. Explain why the targeting of a single race or culture ignores the causes and spread of human pathogens.

Journalism

1. Compose newspaper or online headlines about these events:
 - a. The Monkey King escapes the rocks.
 - b. Jin meets the Monkey King.
 - c. Chin-Kee lies.
 - d. A guard threatens the Monkey King in heaven.
 - e. Wei-Chen needs a friend.

- f. A party humiliates Suzy.
 - g. Amelia escapes the supply closet.
 - h. Wong Lai-Tsao becomes the emissary of Tze-Yo-Tzuh
 - i. The Monkey King decrees that monkeys must wear shoes.
 - j. Emigrants at the university library meet and marry.
 - k. An herbalist in Chinatown treats allergies.
 - l. A monkey becomes Jin's conscience.
2. Outline a cartoon strip featuring a week's adventures of one of these trios:
- a. Wei-Chen Sun/Suzy Nakamura/the Monkey King
 - b. Melanie/Chin-Kee/Ao Kuang
 - c. Tze-Yo-Tzu/Jade Emperor/Steve
 - d. Amelia Harris/Wong Lai-Tsao/Jin Wang
 - e. Peter Garbinsky/Greg/the herbalist's wife
 - f. Lauren/Lauren's mother/Suzy's mother
 - g. Yama/Wong Lai-Tsao/Mr. McGroul
 - h. Jin Wang/Mr. Wang/boys in Chinatown

Religion

1. Act out the differences between a deity, monk, king, emissary, disciple, preacher, guard at the gates of heaven, spirit, conscience, and demon.
2. Comment in a paragraph on Wei-Chen's reason for telling a lie to the Wangs about Jin Wang's whereabouts.
3. Using posters, explain why Tze-Yo-Tzuh deserves to watch the Monkey King and punish him for wrongdoing.

Research

1. Create a bulletin board listing places to visit in San Francisco's Chinatown. Include historical sites, restaurants, food and clothing stores, book and curio shops, herbal counters, museums, theaters, art displays, and amusements.
2. Divide the class into small groups to contrast the influence of Confucius and Lao-Tzu on Chinese culture and beliefs.
3. Using stick figures, create a series of moves common to kung-fu movies and posters. Include sparring, meditating, hand-to-hand conflict, grappling, kicking, leaping, crouching, rolling, jump kicking, deflecting a blow, and brandishing different types of weaponry.

Reading

1. Read aloud other literary descriptions of racial or cultural misunderstanding. Include Sheila Gordon's *Waiting for the Rain*, Joseph Bruchac's *The Warriors*, Yoko Kawashima Watkins's *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*, Laurence Yep's *Dragon's Gate*, Jane Wagner's *J.T.*, Chris Crutcher's *Whale Talk*, Mildred Taylor's *The Land*, Walter Dean Myers's *Monster*, Forrest Carter's *The Education of Little Tree*, Jean Craighead George's *Julie of the Wolves*, Theodore Taylor's *The Cay*, Ann Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village*, Ben Mikaelson's *Touching Spirit Bear*, Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*, Michael Dorris's *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*, William H. Armstrong's *Souder*, Gary Soto's *Taking Sides*, James Vance Marshall's *Walkabout*, and Gish Jen's *Who's Irish?* and "Fish Cheeks." List behaviors that welcome outsiders.
2. Read aloud Langston Hughes's poem "Black Like Me." Explain how the speaker builds self-confidence by taking stock of strengths.

Literature

1. With a group, list animal stories similar to episodes of the Monkey King's story. Include Rudyard Kipling's "Rikki Tikki Tavi"; J.J. Reneaux's "Why Alligator Hates Dog"; Caribbean "Anansi the Spider" fables; Aesop's "The Hare and the Tortoise"; Virginia Hamilton's "He Lion"; the American folk tales of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, and of Pecos Bill and Widowmaker; and Joel Chandler Harris's "The Tarbaby Story." Why are pride and vanity common themes of animal tales?
2. Explain to a small group the importance of these minor characters: Yama, Melanie, Chi Dao, Steve, Mrs. Greeder, Danny's parents, Lauren, Ao-Jun, McGroul, the guard to heaven, demons, Suzy's mother, Mr. Wang, hair clones, the Wangs, Mr. Kirk, Charlie, Clarissa, Dragon King, Yama, Jing Sze, Greg, Peter Garbinsky, Mr. Kirk, Clarissa, Ao-Kuang, Mr. Graham, Timmy, Lauren's mother, and the Jade Emperor.
3. Write a theme in which you explain the purpose of a minor incident in the action. Choose from these: showing a monkey how to wear shoes, avoiding Ao Jun, calculating with an abacus, looking for pink mice, meditating underground, meeting in the San Francisco State University library, studying

chemistry with Melanie, getting Chinese herbal treatment for allergies, going to detention, living in Chinatown, suggesting foot binding, getting advice from Charlie, leaving Rohmer High, singing rock songs in the library, solving a chemistry equation, and ordering from the menu at the bakery.

4. Compile and discuss a favorite scene from the graphic novel that has no caption; for example, Chin-Kee's kung-fu moves. Provide three possible captions to suit the action and meaning.

Math

1. Draw multiple views of a Chinese abacus. Explain the color-coding of beads and methods of counting, adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, and working with decimals, square roots, and cube roots.

Geography

1. On a map of the United States and Canada, highlight the largest enclaves of Asian immigrants. Color code the groups by country—China, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

Computer Art

1. Draw cels for an animated cartoon on the subject of emigrating from Taiwan to California. Show the process of getting a passport, entering a foreign country, and securing a visa.

Social Studies

1. Explain in a theme how the author portrays Asian-American problems in particular situations. Choose from an anatomy class, relative's home, cafeteria, bakery, library, gym, biology lab, playground, study session, and movie theater.
2. Compose a brief timeline of American cartoons. Include comments on Dondi, Li'l Abner, Archie, Little Orphan Annie, Katzenjammer Kids, Superman, Peanuts, Santa Claus, The Phantom, Dennis the Menace, Nancy and Sluggo, The Family Circus, Wonder Woman, Dick Tracy, Spiderman, Prince Valiant, Pogo, The Flintstones, Terry and the Pirates, Ziggy, Brenda Starr, Half Acre Castle, Beetle Bailey, and Opus.

Psychology

1. Compare Melanie, Suzy, and Amelia as girlfriends of Danny, Wei-Chen, and Jin Wang. What is the individual appeal of each girl? Why does Greg urge Jin

Wing to stop seeing Amelia?

2. Describe character interaction by simplifying the events and meaning of a single scene. For example, what causes friction in the classroom between Chin-Kee and other students? Why does Steve pity Danny for arriving late to basketball practice? How does Jin Wang convince Mr. McGroul to unlock the biology lab? Why does the Monkey King worry about monkey smell in his royal chambers?
3. Select cels from the graphic novel that depict the following emotions: hurt feelings, embarrassment, friendship, attraction, pride, arrogance, vanity, regret, and shame.

Cinema

1. Draw movie settings for Danny's visit to Chin-Kee's home in China. What aspects of Chinese life might cause Danny to embarrass Chin-Kee and his parents, such as meals with chopsticks, stereotyping native Chinese, or interaction with teenage Chinese girls?
2. Describe parts of the novel that are suited to radio, film, tableau, poster, stage, puppetry, and pageant; for example, joking about eating Lassie, Monkey King's emergence from the rocks, newly permed hair, feeding caged animals, sitting alone at the bakery, selling wigs door-to-door, learning invulnerability to drowning, dreaming of marrying Amelia, ridiculing people with slanted eyes, and treating wounded vagrants.
3. View various films featuring Asian culture, e.g., *The Joy Luck Club*, *The Good Earth*, *Flower Drum Song*, *Empire of the Sun*, *Madame Butterfly*, *The Last Emperor*, *A Passage to India*, and *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Discuss how filmmakers' ideals and feelings shared by all races, particularly loyalty, courtesy, and family love.

Art, Costume Design, and Music

1. Using desktop publishing or other media, design a map of the route from Taiwan to California, a menu for the bakery featuring dumplings and pearl milk tea, letterhead stationery for Oliphant High School or Hughes Academy, an advertisement for a transforming robot or for herbal allergy cures, high school library rules, printed warnings about detention for tardiness, a TV schedule for favorite programs in Chinatown or Taiwan, a list of

Chinese mythic and legendary characters and of gods and goddesses, a story about the five gold pillars at the end of reality, and instructions for opening cages for small animals and feeding them pink mice.

2. Create a bulletin board or mural illustrating visual scenes from the story of the Monkey King. Include his underground hideout, explaining to his son about remaining vice-free for 40 years, urinating on the five gold pillars, flying on a cloud, rescuing the monk, meditating, issuing a decree about shoes, learning kung-fu, becoming a disciple of Wong Lai-Tsao, defying Tze-Yo-Tzuh, waiting in line for a dinner party, wielding a cudgel, walking barefoot, surviving 500 years under the rock mountain, becoming Jin Wang's conscience, shape-shifting, and talking with his son.

Drama and Speech

1. Write a conversation in which the main characters plan a performance of a Monkey King legend. Propose dialogue that allows every participant an opinion on costumes, music, lighting, special effects, advertisement, staging, and acting.
2. Describe aloud the multiple purposes of blending three story genres into one. Explain how the three narrative styles incorporate humor, action, dialogue, fantasy, and wisdom. How would the graphic novel change if the author reduced the story to only Wei-Chen and the Monkey King or to Chin-Kee and Jin Wang?
3. Discuss your reaction to the Monkey King's encounter with the almighty, Tze-Yo-Tzuh. Why does the creator let the boastful monkey exhaust himself before revealing great strength and his control of all living things?

Composition

1. Make an oral report on the purpose of shape-shifting in folklore. Cite examples from fable and adventure lore, such as Cadmus and the dragon's teeth, the vanishing of the invisible man, Gollum's abuse of Frodo's ring in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Narcissus as a flower and Arachne as a spider in Greek myth, Sir Gawain's elderly bride, Clark Kent into Superman, Pinocchio's transformation from a puppet to a real boy, the barn animals that talk on Christmas Eve, the main characters in *Beauty and the Beast* and in *The Frog Prince*, vam-

pires and werewolves, robots and cyborgs changing into people, the talking mirror in *Snow White* and the Seven Dwarves, and Circe turning sailors into swine in Homer's *Odyssey*.

2. Compose a first-person account of the dinner party in heaven when the Monkey King tries to gain entrance. Choose your role as a servant, a security guard, Lao-Tzu, a demon, a cook, a musician, Tze-Yo-Tzuh, a spirit, an angel, a dinner guest, or a deity.
3. Compose an extended definition of cultural pride in which you compare the behaviors of Wei-Chen, Jin Wang, the Monkey King, Suzy Nakamura, Mr. or Mrs. Wang, or Chin-Kee.
4. Compose an informal essay on writing graphic novels. Determine the best way to make captions suit each cel.

Alternate Assessment

1. List in chronological order and describe these significant events: sealing a rock mountain, trying to attend a dinner party, studying van der Waals's force, being ignored by Lauren Suzuki, putting an arm around a date, singing "She Bang" in the library, introducing a newcomer from Taiwan, lying to Wang's parents, sharing a robot toy, forcing monkeys to wear shoes, bribing McGroul, noticing Danny's buck teeth, ordering pearl milk tea, delivering three packages, telling a boy about forfeiting his soul, moving to the university, riding a cloud, offering to bind Melanie's feet, eating a dumpling, declaring humans petty and soulless, arriving at the airport, missing basketball practice, and leaving Hughes Academy.
2. List events from the graphic novel that express strong attitudes toward ridicule, home, welcome, volunteering, disobeying God, toughening the body, dating, and American history. Indicate Gene Yang's opinion on each subject.
3. Compose brief definitions of legend, autobiography, and parable as they apply to American Born Chinese. What changes in the text would demand more Chinese folklore? More information about deities and demons? More facts about Chin-Kee's annual arrivals? Another visit to the herbalist? More information about Amelia Harris?

4. Summarize scenes that depict conflict, particularly animosity toward Asian-Americans, suspicion of outsiders, lying to the Wangs, rescuing Wong Lai-Tsao, attacking Chin-Kee, avoiding making a scene, pretending to have slanted eyes, getting a perm, disagreements about dating, demanding admission to a dinner party, and asking Jin Wang to stop dating Amelia Harris.

How Language Works

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the graphic novel. Explain each in context. Chapter and page numbers pinpoint each entry so you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. Tee Hee! Oh stop it Lao-Tzu! (Chapter 1, p. 7)
(A Chinese philosopher from the sixth century B.C., Lao Tzu wrote the Tao Te Ching, a classic compendium on philosophy, spirituality, human behavior, and politics.)
2. The Monkey King ruled with a firm but gentle hand. (Chapter 1, p. 10)
(A primordial trickster who emerged at the time of creation, the Monkey King is a pervasive character in Chinese folklore, literature, and popular culture. His adventures appear in Wu Cheng'en's epic novel, Journey to the West (ca. 1580), and in legend, aphorism, cartoons and comic books, video games, film, television, and online action figures.)
3. My mother once told me an old Chinese parable. (Chapter 2, p. 23)
(A parable is a didactic or teaching story about morals or religious concepts. It features human actions and serves as a model or tutorial of right thinking.)
4. Translated from Mandarin Chinese. (Chapter 2, p. 23)
(Mandarin is the official language of China and Taiwan and one of four languages of Singapore, an international city. By some estimates, Mandarin is spoken by more people than any other language.)
5. Every Sunday Mother used to visit the Chinese herbalist just around the corner for her allergies. (Chapter 2, p. 27)
(Herbalism is a folk or traditional healing system based on available plants and some mushrooms, bee pollen, minerals, animal parts, snake venom, and seashells. Valuable ingredients in Chinese herbalism include ginkgo, rhinoceros horn, sea salt, chicken gizzards, pine needles, tiger bones, seahorses, datura, gentian, geckos, camphor, turtle shells, mustard, holly bark, garlic, bat dung, aloe, pepper, cinnabar, abalone, and marijuana.)
6. I would sit in the front room, listening to the herbalist's wife calculate bills on her abacus. (Chapter 2, p. 27)
(Chinese merchants, bankers, and schoolchildren have used the abacus, or counting frame, since pre-history. The vertical counting rods hold hardwood beads that serve as counters. Manipulation of beads up and down the rods creates arithmetic functions, decimals, and square and cube root computations.)
7. It's easy to become anything you wish ... so long as you're willing to forfeit your soul. (Chapter 2, p. 29)
(The herbalist's wife serves as the stereotypical sage by warning Jin Wang that transforming the self requires the abandonment of a true or inborn nature. The statement sticks in his mind and recurs when he needs to reflect on his true identity rather than what the majority tries to impress on him.)
8. Van der Waals' forces of attraction are strong when more of what are present? (Chapter 3, p. 45)
(Melanie's chemistry drill with Danny focuses on an observation by Dutch physicist Johannes Diderik van der Waals that attraction and repulsion of molecules changes, depending on whether the substance is a solid, liquid, or gas.)
9. Discipline three: hair-into-clones. (Chapter 4, p. 58)
(A clone is a living plant or animal created by copying the molecular makeup of another being.)
10. Hey, I think it's getting a little nippy out here. You're right! I'm gettin' gook bumps. (Chapter 5, p. 96)
(Harassers of Jin Wang, Wei-Chen Sun, and Suzy Nakamura make puns on slang terms—chink, nip, gook—that denigrate Asian people.)

Vocabulary Test

Match each term from the graphic novel with a synonym from the list that follows.

- _____ 1. extent: antiquity, disciplines, duration, prerequisites, emissary
- _____ 2. rudeness: vulnerability, impudence, detention, celestial, legislative
- _____ 3. sport: Confucius, kung-fu, Mandarin, SARS, Lao-Tzu
- _____ 4. threaten: jeopardize, behoove, aspire, purge, forfeit
- _____ 5. boundary: parable, legend, clone, vice, parameter
- _____ 6. wanderer: cudgel, lisp, ninja, ulna, vagrant
- _____ 7. order: decree, disciple, executive, repentance, humanoid
- _____ 8. unavoidable: humerus, tangible, paranoid, inevitable, judicial
- _____ 9. adviser: pinnacle, sage, steed, demon, rollick
- _____ 10. top: stilt, jolt, muster, buck, varsity

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions to the names or places each refers to:

- _____ 1. Monkey King's transportation
- _____ 2. food in the supply closet
- _____ 3. menu item
- _____ 4. absence of vice
- _____ 5. Monkey King's defense
- _____ 6. wise one
- _____ 7. Jin's conscience
- _____ 8. son's vice
- _____ 9. Mrs. Wang's complaint
- _____ 10. government branch
- _____ 11. dinner party attendee
- _____ 12. underworld caretaker
- _____ 13. shape-shifter that turns into a monkey
- _____ 14. five pillars of gold
- _____ 15. honor to the dead

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| A. mice | F. lying | K. end of reality |
| B. demon | G. robot | L. sage |
| C. Monkey King | H. cloud | M. Yama |
| D. incense | I. executive | N. boba |
| E. kung-fu | J. virtue | O. allergies |

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Name the following characters

- _____ 1. reputed fiancée of Jin Wang
- _____ 2. predicts forfeiture of the soul
- _____ 3. shares a toy with Jin Wang
- _____ 4. Dragon King of the Eastern Sea
- _____ 5. F.O.B.
- _____ 6. late to practice
- _____ 7. feeds vagrants
- _____ 8. wears thick glasses
- _____ 9. young mother in a fantasy
- _____ 10. hostess at the party

Part III: Settings (20 points)

Identify where these events take place.

- 1. Jin Wang frees Amelia Harris.

- 2. Suzy's mother visits a friend.

- 3. Monkey King urinates .

- 4. Chin-Kee sings "She Bang"

- 5. Steve offers protection.

- 6. 500 years' imprisonment

- 7. Jin uses powdered soap.

- 8. Jin misreads "cash only."

- 9. Jin breaks glass.

- 10. abandoned shoes

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

- 1. Account for Danny's embarrassment at his cousin.
- 2. Summarize the author's attitude toward humility.
- 3. Compare the Monkey King before and after his imprisonment.
- 4. Cite examples of humiliation of Asian-American students.
- 5. Describe the author's use of shape-shifting.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: True/False (30 points)

Mark each statement either T for true or F if any part is false:

- _____ 1. McGroul frees Amelia and Wei-Chen.
- _____ 2. No one sees the Monkey King urinate on the five gold pillars at the end of reality.
- _____ 3. Danny states that Chin-Kee flew home early to China.
- _____ 4. Lauren Suzuki is rude to a party guest.
- _____ 5. Jin Wang has no playmates in Chinatown.
- _____ 6. Teachers tend to misidentify Asian-American students by confusing their names.
- _____ 7. The Monkey King becomes a disciple of Wong Lai-Tsao.
- _____ 8. The self-appointed sage teaches monkeys to give up shoes.
- _____ 9. The Monkey King reveals Danny's true form.
- _____ 10. Chin-Kee ridicules Danny's romance with Amelia Harris.
- _____ 11. Students admire Chin-Kee's answer in Spanish class.
- _____ 12. Jin must hide the powdered soap bubbles from Amelia.
- _____ 13. Chin-Kee finds the pink mice stored in a glass jar in the cosmetic closet.
- _____ 14. McGroul demands dumplings from Jin as a bribe.
- _____ 15. The teacher assures students that Chinese people eat no dogs.
- _____ 16. Vagrants thank Tze-Yo-Tzuh for fruit and medical care.

Part II: Fill in the Blanks (20 points)

Fill in the blanks with terms that make a true statement:

- 1. The Monkey King retreats underground to train and develop invulnerability to heat, _____, drowning, and wounds.
- 2. He learns to shape-shift and turn his _____ into clones.
- 3. A note from heaven sentences him to _____ for trespassing at the dinner party.
- 4. The Monkey King declares himself a _____ equal to heaven.
- 5. When Ao-Kuang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea, tries to execute the Monkey King, the victim survives _____.
- 6. Ao-Kuang gives him a _____ that causes instant shape-shifting.
- 7. The Monkey King terrorizes the poet Lao-Tzu, _____ the underworld caretaker, and the

Jade Emperor.

- 8. Tze-Yo-Tzuh the creator chases the Monkey King to the five _____ beyond reality.
- 9. Tze-Yo-Tzuh covers the Monkey King with a mountain of rock for _____ years.
- 10. At Wong Lai-Tsao's urging, the Monkey King frees himself and rescues the monk from two _____.

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose the correct answer to complete each statement below:

- _____ 1. Jin convinces Wei-Chen to lie to the Wangs about
 - A. Mr. Wang's sister in China.
 - B. singing "She Bang" in the library.
 - C. Jin's forbidden date.
 - D. unlocking the door to the biology lab.
- _____ 2. Because Steve humiliates Danny, Chin-Kee
 - A. urinates in Steve's Coke.
 - B. recites an ancient Confucian parable.
 - C. compares Steve to Peter Garbinsky.
 - D. punches Danny in the face.
- _____ 3. Chin-Kee suggests that Danny's girlfriend Melanie
 - A. volunteer to feed the lab animals.
 - B. have her feet bound.
 - C. meet Danny for pearl milk tea at the bakery.
 - D. go to the movies.
- _____ 4. Unlike monks Chi Dao, Jing Sze, and Jiang Dao, Wong Lai-Tsao is
 - A. Tze-Yo-Tzuh's emissary to the East.
 - B. a vagrant.
 - C. chosen to put the seal on the rock mountain.
 - D. poor at meditation, fasting, and preaching.
- _____ 5. The Monkey King identifies Wei-Chen as his son, whose mission is to live on earth for 40 years while
 - A. remaining vice-free.
 - B. delivering four packages.
 - C. going barefoot.
 - D. studying kung-fu.
- _____ 6. Jin's parents reached America a week apart and
 - A. welcomed Chin-Kee each year for a visit.
 - B. met at the San Francisco State University library.
 - C. studied engineering.
 - D. visited the herbalist in Chinatown.
- _____ 7. At Mayflower Elementary, rude white boys ridicule Jin's
 - A. milk tea.
 - B. buck teeth.
 - C. slant-eyed girlfriend.

D. dog.

_____ 8. Jin worries that Amelia likes

A. Greg.

B. Steve.

C. Chin-Kee.

D. Danny.

_____ 9. After Danny takes Chin-Kee to Oliphant High School, the newcomer identifies

A. the radius and ulna.

B. pink mice.

C. a big white Spanish dog.

D. the three branches of American government.

_____ 10. Jin dreams of the herbalist's wife and awakens

A. with allergies.

B. Amelia with bubbles on his shirt.

C. as a Caucasian.

D. alongside a robot toy.

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

1. Explain why Jin chooses to impress Amelia.
2. Account for Jin's visits to the bakery for a month.
3. Describe the duties of an emissary of God.
4. Explain how the son violates the Monkey King's orders.
5. Discuss Danny's numerous embarrassments.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. duration | 6. vagrant |
| 2. impudence | 7. decree |
| 3. kung-fu | 8. inevitable |
| 4. jeopardize | 9. sage |
| 5. parameter | 10. varsity |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. H | 6. L | 11. B |
| 2. A | 7. C | 12. M |
| 3. N | 8. F | 13. G |
| 4. J | 9. O | 14. K |
| 5. E | 10. I | 15. D |

Part II: Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Suzy | 6. Danny |
| 2. herbalist's wife | 7. Wong Lai-Tsao |
| 3. Wei-Chen Sun | 8. Jin's father |
| 4. Ao-Kuang | 9. Amelia |
| 5. Wei-Chen Sun | 10. Lauren |

Part III: Settings (20 points)

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. supply closet | 6. mountain of rock |
| 2. Lauren's party | 7. theater restroom |
| 3. five gold pillars | 8. bakery |
| 4. library | 9. science class |
| 5. gym | 10. journey to the West |

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T | 11. F | 16. F |
| 2. F | 7. T | 12. T | |
| 3. T | 8. F | 13. F | |
| 4. T | 9. T | 14. F | |
| 5. F | 10. T | 15. F | |

Part II: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

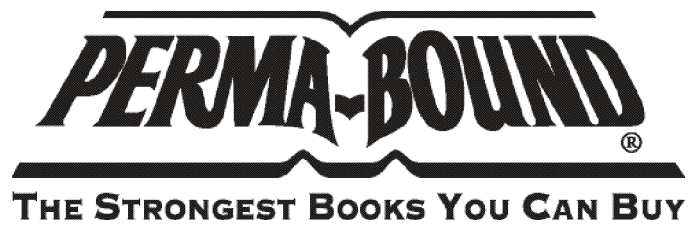
- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. cold | 6. cudgel |
| 2. hairs | 7. Yama |
| 3. death | 8. gold pillars |
| 4. sage | 9. 500 |
| 5. beheading | 10. demons |

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. B |
| 2. A | 7. B |
| 3. B | 8. A |
| 4. D | 8. D |
| 5. A | 10. C |

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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