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## **Family Plays**



# **Monkey, Monkey**

**The Marvelous Adventures of  
the Magical Monkey King**

**By  
Charles Jones**

# Monkey, Monkey

## The Marvelous Adventures of the Magical Monkey King

*Folktale. Adapted by Charles Jones. From the novel Monkey by Wu Ch'eng-en. Cast: 6m., 3w., with doubling, or up to 18+ (7m., 2w., 9 either gender) extras optional.* The marvelous, legendary adventures of the daring and sometimes mischievous Magical Monkey King are adapted from the 16th-century Chinese novel in an energetic, contemporary retelling of an Asian folklore favorite. This tale shows what can happen when one gets too big for one's breeches! Monkey is "born" from a magic stone placed on a hillside by the Jade Emperor, Ruler of Earth and Sky. A brave and daring creature, Monkey soon earns the title Handsome Monkey King when he fearlessly breaks through the falling water and returns to tell of a lush land for his monkey colony to claim. Not easily satisfied, Monkey uses his wily mind to trick his way into the terrifying cave of Yama, the King of Death, erasing the names of his colony from the great scroll. Monkey returns to find all but one subject captured by the Demon of Havoc, whom he conquers with the help of a few "monkeys" from the audience. When Monkey greedily steals a cache of golden weapons from the Great Dragon King, Jade Emperor reins him in and banishes Monkey to the Palace of Clouds, where he can keep a close watch on him. Finally, Monkey's subjects bid him farewell as he rides the Royal Sunset Dragon across the sky. *Production notes are available in the script containing details on set, staging, effects and costumes. One set, preferably of colorful piping, monkey bars, and bright panels of cloth. Costumes: suggestive of Asian origin. Approximate running time: 40 minutes. Code: MK2.*

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## Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308

Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170

Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

[www.FamilyPlays.com](http://www.FamilyPlays.com)



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## DEDICATION

This production of *Monkey, Monkey* is dedicated to our son, Jonathan, whose toy monkeys have for many years been a part of our family life.

# Monkey, Monkey

## The Marvelous Adventures of the Magical Monkey King

### The Nebraska Theatre Caravan Production—1981-82

#### THE CAST

The Jade Emperor .....	Daniel Prescher
The Spirit of the Planet Venus .....	John Foley
Monkey .....	John Arcangeli
Kerchin—A grandfather Monkey .....	Andy Alsup
Zinzue—A Grandmother Monkey .....	Page Morrow
Ling—A Female Monkey .....	Sally Neumann
Ringa—A Male Monkey .....	Jerry Longe
Beadin—A Baby Monkey .....	Chris Kliesen
The Demon of Havoc .....	Daniel Prescher
Yama, King of Death .....	Fred Wells
Patriarch Sorcerer .....	John Foley
First Student .....	Sally Neumann
Second Student .....	Page Morrow
Third Student .....	Chris Kliesen
Great Dragon King of the Eastern Sea .....	Jerry Longe
Green Sea Horse .....	Sally Neumann
Blue Sea Horse .....	Chris Kliesen
Ten or Fifteen Small Monkeys .....	Third Grade Students from each school where the Company performed
The Royal Dragon of Sunrise/Sunset .....	Steve Chene and all the Children



## HOW THE MONKEY KING MOVED TO NEBRASKA AND HOW HIS PLAY WAS PRODUCED

For hundreds of years, legends and stories concerning the fabulous Monkey King have been an integral part of the cultural fabric of Asian life. The Monkey marches through folk lore in all regions of China and the countries of Southeast Asia. His first known literary appearance is in the fables, Ra-Ma-Ya-Na of India. The Opera Companies of Peking, Taiwan, and Bangkok include at least one Monkey story in their repertoire each season. In the aftermath of the Vietnamese War and the government change-overs in Cambodia and Laos, hundreds of displaced Southeast Asian families found new homes in Nebraska. The Omaha Public School system requested that the Nebraska Theatre Caravan find some way of sharing the literary and folk heritage of Southeast Asia with these displaced children and their new friends in Nebraska. Obviously, the universal language of the Monkey King stories leapt to our attention.

The Nebraska Theatre Caravan is a professional company of young performers who adopted Monkey and his stories at once. They discovered that simple mime and acting techniques could carry an audience wherever Monkey might want to go for his next adventure.

We discarded any use of makeup and the temptation to wear fuzzy suits in creating the monkeys or any character in the play. We did, however, spend a good bit of time observing the monkeys at Monkey Island in the zoo and adapted their movement patterns to our needs.

The personality of the Monkey King embraces the bold, free-wheeling spirit in every human soul. Our production was very simple; the cast and audience shared an ebullient excitement. We found that the production could not be hurried. There had to be time for each monkey to respond to the Monkey King to tell him their name in their own way and to teach him new words and activities. When the monkeys traveled up the river and discovered their new homes, they had to have time. At the end of the play when the monkeys say goodbye forever, they must have time to do this in their own personal way.

## PRODUCTION NOTES FOR: MONKEY, MONKEY

*The Setting:* The play is performed on and around an assemblage of colorfully painted pipes. This assemblage, or “jungle gym”, is reminiscent of school playground equipment with a slide and “monkey bars”. The jungle gym can be as large or as small as the performing space allows.

The jungle gym can be assembled from standard pipes, couplings and fittings available from any plumbing supply company and many hardware stores. The jungle gym must be firmly bolted to the floor to allow the actors to swing on the pipes. For touring, a portable but heavy platform can be used as a base for securing the support pipes. (The Caravan’s tour used three heavy platforms six inches high that were locked together to form a six foot by ten foot base.)

Boards or plywood pieces can be bolted to the pipe assembly at various heights to provide bits of flooring. It is important that a flooring section at least six feet square be mounted high in the assembly to provide a space for the Jade Emperor.

A removable flooring section two feet by four feet should be mounted at shoulder height stage left in the gym assembly. This will be lifted out as Monkey’s raft.

A small sliding board should be attached to the jungle gym assembly stage right. Above the top of the slide is a two-foot pipe arm high in the assemblage that can be pivoted out over the slide. A small section of silver rain curtain is hung on this arm to suggest a waterfall. When the play starts, the arm is pivoted to a closed position and the “waterfall” covered from view by a black cloth.

During the play, five large rectangles of cloth will be used: green for the Jade Emperor’s clouds, blue for the river, orange for Havoc’s cave, aqua for the ocean, and purple for Yama’s Pit of Darkness. Each cloth should be at least six feet wide by ten feet long and made of silk-like fabric. Before the audience enters, these cloths should be attached by velcro or snaps to six wooden poles. These free-standing poles are placed upright in a semicircle downstage of the jungle gym with the cloths stretched between them forming a screen masking the jungle gym from the audience’s view. In effect, the adventures of Monkey are waiting inside a brightly colored silk cocoon. If the play is to be performed in an open space instead of a conventional stage, the poles can stand in metal bases. When the cloths and poles are taken away at the beginning of the play, the metal bases can remain to outline the semicircle of space downstage of the jungle gym that will be used by the actors.

*Sound Effects:* If at all possible, the sound effects for the show should be created live and in full view of the audience. A percussion or sound effects area should be created downstage left of the performing space. This area should include a thunder sheet, a large Oriental gong, cymbals, wind chimes, bells and a wood block. Other instruments or sound makers may be added.

*Fireworks:* The production is greatly enhanced by the excitement of live flashes and explosions. Several small electrical flashpots located in selected safe locations around the playing space are recommended.

*The Costumes:* Each player wears a simple wraparound jacket belted at the waist with trousers that are mid-calf length. These “uniforms” suggest the classic Oriental martial arts costume. Each uniform should be of a different rich color. As the players assume their roles they add caps, vests or robes that suggest the importance or personality of their character. All need gymnastic slippers with suregrip soles.

The robes should be designed to easily tie on so that each player can quickly move from being an assistant to being a character.

*The Monkeys*—earth colored basic uniforms with a short vest.

*The Jade Emperor*—green basic uniform—flowing green robe, turned up collar with green dragon appliqued to the full length back of robe—green turban with green ostrich feathers.

*Spirit of the Planet Venus*—blue basic uniform—flowing robe in sky blue with wispy swirls of dry-brushed rainbow colored dyes and sequin dust—headdress features a golden globe on a sky blue turban.

*Yama, King of Death*—red basic uniform—flowing robe in black satin trimmed in red and purple—headdress features a large skull with ruby eyes—a black gauze veil that covers the actor's face and neck is attached to the headdress.

*The Demon of Havoc*—orange basic uniform—headdress and huge robe are shredded streamers of orange, red and brown cloth—the streamers resemble ribbons of blood and darts of fire.

*The Patriarch*—blue basic uniform—lilac robe covered by orange zodiac symbols—tall pointed wizard's hat in similar colors and designs.

*The Dragon King of the Eastern Sea*—turquoise basic uniform—flowing aquamarine colored robe with large fabric fish scales in iridescent colors—a blue fabric bathing cap with tall fin-shaped coxcomb.

*The Sea Horses*—basic uniforms—one blue, one green—tie on capes of shiny wet-look fabric—bathing caps to match with fin-shaped coxcombs—each "rides" a large stick pony or hobby horse.

*To Begin:* The set and performing space is screened from view by a semicircle of colorful cloth panels. When the audience is in place, the Jade Emperor and Venus assume positions at the top of the Jungle Gym. Monkey assumes a position in the center of the playing space downstage of the Gym. Monkey stands as a stone completely motionless. Six other players stand back of each of the poles supporting the cloth panels. The lights fade out in the auditorium. Sound effects of a gong, cymbals and thunder. Lights shine on the screen of cloth panels. The players behind the panels vibrate the cloths, then rip them off the poles and swirl them in the air. A spotlight shines on Monkey, frozen as a stone. The other players run off stage with all the poles and cloth panels except the green one which is tossed "like a cloud" high in the Jungle Gym.

# Monkey, Monkey

(With a flash of lightning and a crash of thunder, the play begins.)

VENUS

Look! Your majesty, look! Your little stone on Granite Mountain . .

JADE EMPEROR

(Conjuring.)

Soon . . Soon . . Soon

VENUS

Your favorite stone . . . your special treasure . .

JADE EMPEROR

Now!! It's about to happen, any moment, now!

VENUS

Yes, Great Emperor, it is time, now! At last.

JADE EMPEROR

I've waited for centuries . . . . .

VENUS

Eons and eons . . . . .

JADE EMPEROR

Millions of years ago I, the Jade Emperor, Ruler of Earth and Sky, and all the regions under the Seas placed that small stone on the side of the Great Granite Mountain.

(MONKEY opens his eyes suddenly . . . quickly glances about then closes his eyes again remaining motionless.)

VENUS

It moved!! No, my liege, I'm sorry. I thought the stone had moved.

JADE EMPEROR

Very soon, old Planet, very soon.

VENUS

For such a long, long time I've watched that little stone. I, the Planet Venus, brightest star in the midnight sky have watched the Four Winds blow hot and cold across the Granite Mountain. Silver rain has soaked the little stone and golden sunlight blistered it.

JADE EMPEROR

I sent Mother Lightning and the Black Thunder Dragon crashing through a millennium of time to chisel and carve my little stone.

VENUS

But I can't quite tell . . . . .

JADE EMPEROR

No, I can't quite tell . . . . .

VENUS

What kind of shape . . . . .

JADE EMPEROR

What kind of shape will my little stone treasure explode to be?

VENUS

Explode to be.

BOTH

What will the stone explode to be? Now!!!!

(With a blinding flash and a great cloud of smoke, MONKEY is "born". From his motionless position he suddenly leaps and flips and scampers all over the stage. He is gloriously happy to be free of his "stone prison".)

JADE EMPEROR

What's this, what's this!?!

VENUS

A joke. A trick . . . . .

JADE EMPEROR

Impossible! Impossible!

VENUS

A prank. A mischief . . . . .

JADE EMPEROR

A mistake!

VENUS

It looks like . . . . .

JADE EMPEROR

Yes, old Planet, I have eyes, I can see.

VENUS

But for all the world it looks like . . . . .

JADE EMPEROR

My marvelous little stone has been born as . . . . .

VENUS

Oh, dear me, no!

JADE EMPEROR

Yes!

VENUS

Oh, no!

(MONKEY swings onto a low gym pipe and hangs there.)

JADE EMPEROR AND VENUS

A MONKEY!!

(MONKEY grins at the audience and scratches his head.)

JADE EMPEROR

HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE.

(MONKEY stares at his hand in surprise. He wiggles his fingers than tickles himself with his hand. He drops from the pipe roaring with laughter. He looks to find another hand at the end of his other arm. To his great delight he discovers he has feet, elbows and knees.)

VENUS

Look again, Great Emperor, look again, the little stone monkey is rather charming in his way.

JADE EMPEROR

But a monkey.

VENUS

Oh do look, sir, he's very clever.

JADE EMPEROR

A monkey . . . . .

VENUS

(Laughing at MONKEY's antics.)

Watch him, my liege.

**JADE EMPEROR**

(In a rage.)

Yes! Watch him! Venus, brightest Planet in the midnight sky. You watch Monkey, our magical mischief maker—very closely—for the little stone we nurtured through eons of eons may turn our universe topsy-turvy!

**VENUS**

No.

**JADE EMPEROR**

Give him time, just a little time.

(The **JADE EMPEROR** disappears into his Palace of Clouds by turning U.S., flipping the green cloth over his back and exiting down the U.S. side of the set with the cloth floating as a train behind him.

**VENUS** lingers a few moments.

**MONKEY** has now discovered his tongue which he is trying to see.

**KERCHIN**, grandfather of the other monkeys, cautiously jumps on from S.L. and peers at **MONKEY** from a distance under the gym.

**MONKEY** is suddenly aware of **KERCHIN**'s presence and quickly turns to see him. **KERCHIN** screeches and begins jumping around the stage circling **MONKEY**. **MONKEY** watches **KERCHIN** for a moment then mirrors his activity and he joins **KERCHIN** in loud screeches and bounding jumps.

**ZINZUE**, the bossy grandmother monkey, enters from U.L. under the gym screeching at **KERCHIN** and curiously watching **MONKEY**. **MONKEY** watches her closely.

**LING**, an attractive, intelligent younger monkey, swings from off Left through the lower bars of the gym to a hiding place under the slide. **MONKEY** starts for the slide but is interrupted by the noisy roar of **RINGA** as he leaps on stage.

**RINGA** is a large, somewhat dumb, male monkey. **RINGA** rapidly pounds the floor with the back of his hand and roars loudly.

**MONKEY** loudly mirrors **RINGA**'s noise and activity. **VENUS** holds his ears and exits U.S.

**BEADIN**, the timid baby monkey, races on to join **LING** hiding under the slide.

The screeching and roaring sounds now give way to much softer chirping monkey sounds.

**KERCHIN** squats down for a long look at **MONKEY**.

**MONKEY** squats down for a long look at **KERCHIN**.

**KERCHIN** does a forward roll.

**MONKEY** does a forward roll.

**KERCHIN** does a back flip.

**MONKEY** does a back flip.

The others begin to laugh and join the "monkey see—monkey do" antics. **LING** sits on the slide to watch. **BEADIN** scampers to her grandmother **ZINZUE** for safety.

**KERCHIN** shakes both hands over his head.

**MONKEY** shakes both hands over his head.

**ZINZUE**, **LING** and **RINGA** shake their hands above their heads also.

**BEADIN** sucks her thumb as usual.

All laugh wildly as they jump and tumble to new positions.

**KERCHIN** and **MONKEY** wind up hanging in matching or mirrored positions on the jungle gym.)

**KERCHIN**

What is your name?

MONKEY

(Startled by the new sound, then quickly fires back.)

What is your name?

KERCHIN

I am Grandfather Kerchin. What is your name?

MONKEY

(Quickly.)

I am Grandfather Kerchin. What is your name?

KERCHIN

No, what is *your* name?

MONKEY

No, what is *your* name?

KERCHIN

My name is Kerchin.

MONKEY

My name is Kerchin.

KERCHIN

Your name is not Kerchin.

MONKEY

Your name is not Kerchin?

KERCHIN

No.

MONKEY

No?

KERCHIN

I mean, yes. My name is Kerchin. Your name shall be Magical Monkey who was born from a stone.

MONKEY

(Delighted, but still repeating.)

Magical Monkey who was born from a stone.

(He struts.)

Magical Monkey who was born from a stone.

(The other monkeys cheer.)

ZINZUE

(Pointing to herself.)

Grandmother Zinzue.

MONKEY

(With a little bow.)

Zinzue . . . Zinzue

LING

(Swinging down near MONKEY, then speaks very bell like.)

Ling.

MONKEY

(Bowling.)

Ling.

RINGA

(Swings down near MONKEY scratching himself. He pounds his chest.)

Ringa!

MONKEY

(Aping him.)

Ringa!

(MONKEY looks toward BEADIN expecting her to say her name, but BEADIN is too shy. She giggles and scampers to hide behind ZINZUE while still sucking her thumb.)

ZINZUE

(Scolding.)

Baby Beadin!

MONKEY

(Waving his fingers at the BABY.)

Hello, Beadin.

(BEADIN giggles loudly and then, without removing her thumb, waves the fingers of her "thumb" hand toward MONKEY.

MONKEY laughs at BEADIN, then as he turns away he seems to notice the space above him for the first time.)

KERCHIN

(Pointing with both hands at the space above them.)

Sky.

MONKEY

(Understanding.)

Sky.

LING

(With an arching gesture toward the horizon.)

Rainbow.

MONKEY

(Understanding.)

Rainbow.

ZINZUE

(Holding out an apple towards MONKEY.)

Apple.

MONKEY

(Grabbing for the apple.)

Apple.

ZINZUE

(Holding the apple away.)

No! You must say, "thank you".

MONKEY

Apple?

ZINZUE

I am giving you an apple. You must say, "thank you".

MONKEY

Thank you, Apple. Thank you, Apple. Thank you . . . .

RINGA

(Jumps in front of MONKEY holding out his big fist.)

Pow.

MONKEY

(Startled.)

Pow?

RINGA

(Slaps the floor with both hands.)

Zap.

MONKEY

(Slaps the floor with both hands.)

Zap?



RINGA

(Kicking out a leg karate fashion.)

Wham.

MONKEY

(Kicking his leg.)

Wham?

RINGA

(Fiercely with fist, then hand on floor, then kicking leg.)

Pow—Zap—Wham.

MONKEY

(With gestures.)

Pow—Zap—Wham.

RINGA

(Faster with gestures.)

Pow—Zap—Wham

Pow—Zap—Wham

ALL (Except BEADIN)

(Gleefully.)

Pow—Zap—Wham

Pow—Zap—Wham

Pow—Zap—Wham

(Suddenly BEADIN removes her thumb from her mouth and begins to talk softly while holding up her thumb. With everyone Pow, Zap, Whamming so loudly she cannot be heard. ZINZUE shhhs everyone sharply and they turn silently toward BEADIN.)

BEADIN

(Holding her thumb towards MONKEY.)

Beadin.

MONKEY

(Looking at his thumb quizzically.)

Beadin??

ZINZUE

No, Beadin, that's your thumb.

BEADIN

(Definitely.)

Beadin—Beadin.

(She resumes sucking her thumb.)

MONKEY

(Waving to her as before.)

Hello, Thumb.

(BEADIN giggles again and waves her fingers at MONKEY. All laugh.

Suddenly their happiness is interrupted by ominous, eerie sounds—low rumbling thunder and high flutelike cries.

The monkeys are alert to danger at once.

KERCHIN motions the monkeys toward the slide and they quickly but silently scamper to hide beneath it. MONKEY is left alone. LING dashes out of hiding, grabs MONKEY and drags him to the safety of the hiding space under the slide.

The DEMON OF HAVOC enters from U.S. of the Jungle Gym and begins to circle the set from the Left. He is searching for monkeys to eat for his dinner. He carries an enormous sword. As he searches for his dinner, he swings the sword hoping to cut down a monkey or two. The force of the swinging, over-

sized sword whirls the DEMON around, allowing the streamers of his costume to swirl. He smashes the slide with his sword, but the monkeys huddled below remain silent. Growling, the DEMON completes his circle of the Set exiting unhappily U.S.R.

Carefully the monkeys tiptoe out of hiding. MONKEY shudders, then makes a terrible face toward the DEMON.)

KERCHIN

That is the Demon of Havoc. He is our mortal enemy.

ALL MONKEYS

(Slowly.)

Enemy.

(LING and RINGA spread the blue cloth on the floor D.S. of the slide and kneel at either end. They each hold an end of the cloth and ripple it along the floor. When MONKEY "falls in the river", they flutter and billow the blue cloth around him.)

MONKEY

(Jumping on slide.)

Enemy? Let me at him. I'll fix him. I'll give him Pow. I'll give him Zap. I'll give him Wham. I'll give him . . . . .

(He falls in the river.)

EYOW!!!

(The sudden surprise of being "all wet" causes MONKEY to race from the river crying.)

KERCHIN

(Laughing.)

Don't you like to swim, Stone Monkey?

RINGA

Monkey's all wet. Monkey's all wet.

LING

It's the river, Monkey.

ZINZUE

Don't be frightened, magical Stone Monkey. Falling into the river won't hurt you. It's only water.

(LING and RINGA gently ripple the blue cloth. BEADIN hops on the slide for a better view.)

See how the river tumbles along like rolling melons.

MONKEY

(Making a face.)

Enemy?

LING

No, silly Monkey. Water!

(LING reaches into a fold of the blue cloth, then splashes MONKEY by throwing handfuls of blue, shiny paper confetti. The confetti is carried by each actor in pockets on their coats.

BEADIN laughs so hard at MONKEY's fear of the water she loses her balance and happily slides into the river—still sucking her thumb of course.

The other MONKEYS laugh and jump merrily into the river splashing themselves and each other. Soon MONKEY's curiosity overcomes his fear and he is splashing and swimming with the others.)

MONKEY

Where does this river named Water come from and where is it rushing?

RINGA

It is rushing to the Great Eastern Sea or so they say.