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# Beautiful Warrior: The Legend Of The Nun's Kung Fu



## Synopsis

This is the dramatic, multilayered story of two legendary women warriors, Wu Mei, the "beautiful warrior", and her most famous pupil, Mingyi, set in the vibrant colors of China.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD630L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

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Product Dimensions: 12.2 x 10.1 x 0.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 20 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Kindergarten-Grade 5?The story of two legendary female kung fu masters who may have lived in the last part of the 17th century. The first, Wu Mei, born to an aristocratic family, was educated like a boy and excelled at martial arts. Made homeless by the overthrow of the last Ming emperor (1644), the young woman finds her way to the Shaolin Monastery, made famous in television and movies. She convinces the monks to continue her training and becomes a nun and renowned teacher of kung fu. After she rescues the scatterbrained daughter of a bean-curd seller from thieves, the girl begs for her help in escaping a forced marriage to a local thug. Wu Mei advises Mingyi to postpone the wedding for a year, promising the odious would-be groom that she will marry him only if he can best her at kung fu. The year is long enough for a crash course, focusing on the development and use of qi, or vital energy. As she studies, Mingyi develops into a calm, sturdy young woman who gains her freedom. McCully steeped herself in Chinese painting, but develops her own fresh interpretation of classic Chinese art. She alternates a format of using succeeding frames with double-page spreads that evoke the sweep of Chinese scroll paintings. The last scenes, depicting

the climactic fight, show that the result of Mingyi's self-mastery is not lost on the young girls of the village. Celebrating discipline and inner strength while retelling legends connected with styles of kung fu, this story authentically re-creates a period of Chinese history and gives readers not one but two lively heroines. Margaret A. Chang, North Adams State College, MA Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Ages 5<sup>+</sup>-9. Like McCully's Caldecott winner, *Mirette on the High Wire* (1992), this extends the picture book with a tense drama about brave young women who find strength in themselves. McCully tells a kung fu story about two legendary women in seventeenth-century China. First, there is the child prodigy whose father refuses to allow her to become an idle lady with bound feet. Instead, she studies the five pillars of learning and the martial arts and becomes a Buddhist nun named Wu Mei, beautiful warrior. Then Wu Mei saves a desperate, scatterbrained young girl from a forced marriage to a hooligan bandit. The warrior nun teaches the girl to save herself with kung fu, and as the girl learns that softness and yielding can prevail over hardness and brute force, she grows strong and calm. In a great climactic fight, the small girl uses her technique to rout the bandit and send him flying. The defeat of the swaggering bully has elemental appeal, and there are great comic action scenes of the huge bandit hurtling through the air. In traditional Chinese style, the art of this large-size book includes narrow narrative panels that alternate with wide, detailed, misty landscapes in watercolor, tempera, and pastel. The pictures reinforce the story of strength that comes from mastering yourself and finding harmony with the universe. Hazel Rochman

This book is exceptionally well done. Finally a historical narrative that is interesting to kids. The story is well told. The characters are likeable for kids. The illustrations are beautiful. The messages are the best kinds--women's strength and determination, the power of study and concentration over hasty brute force.

If you are looking at this, and bothering to read a review, you want this. Nice art, nice story, good values, etc. Similar, but not exactly the same, to the story I grew up hearing how wing chung was started. My kid is early 5, we have often been reading this book in two settings, I expect that to get down to one setting shortly.

I love this book. Beautifully illustrated, this book tells the story of the nun who created one of the most popular forms of Kung-Fu. Not a story commonly told, this story belongs on every library shelf.

I bought this book to use as a lesson with my special education class in a middle school. It is a wonderful story with beautiful illustrations. While some of the words were a bit difficult, I read the story to them and they completed a story circle based upon identifying the heroine(s), the setting, the problem, the action and the result. It was a great book for this kind of simple project. It taught about being calm and I was able to simply leave out the parts about "chi" - I teach in public school and don't tread on religion.

One of my favorites.

I want more depth from this story and more precision in the content. I would like to see more detail on the explanation of the martial styles and more character development.

Wonderful story. Book is in great condition as advertised.

First, I want to say that this is a beautiful book, the art and layout are wonderful. But with that said, I would like to give my opinion on this book:1. It's not really a book for children. In my opinion, the writer, while trying to simplify this story, really did not write it in a style that a child would understand or gravitate to. It really is written in a simplistic adult form. Also, the story did not flow smoothly. It tries too hard to be clever, or deep, or "art-sie", and misses the point. Funny thing is, the story kept talking about heart, focus, relaxation, and simplicity- and the author could not seem to find that herself.2. For those of martial arts background, I'm not sure where she got this story from (and the author does admit that there are many variations of this story), as the story does not follow the popular, or most accepted path. I think the author got a good idea for a story, got one "version" of it, and really didn't go any further from there in her research.3. At the end of the book, the author tries to give some more details on the story, but tries in a very confusing way, as at the end of the book the style "Wing Chun" is brought up, as if it was talked about before, and yet it was never mentioned before in the book.....and this is what the story is about, or supposed to be. If it is Wing Chun, you also would think that the illustrations would look a little more like the style. So in summary, a beautiful "adult-style" book, but written from the viewpoint of someone with no martial arts background, lacking the depth of knowledge that the book was trying to express.

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