



Chinese Moon Festival Story

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Hou Yi and the Nine Suns, and Chang'e Flies to the Moon

A long time ago an immortal named Hou Yi was sent from heaven to earth. He was sent by the immortals in heaven because the world was becoming unbearably hot. This was because there were ten suns in the sky. The intense heat caused a drought which led to all the crops, animals, water and colour disappearing. All across the world people were dehydrated and without food or nutrition.

Hou Yi was sent by the immortals because he was a very skilled archer. He completed his mission successfully and shot down 9 of the 10 suns in the sky, so now we have just one sun that rises each day. Hou Yi was heralded as a hero across the world.

Soon after this, Hou Yi met a beautiful woman named Chang'e. They fell in love and were married, but she was not an immortal and so she could only live on earth. Hou Yi liked living on the earth with Chang'e but they both wished to live in heaven. Hou Yi went to the western mountains of China because he knew he could find the elixir of life there. He found the elixir easily.

Hou Yi returned home to Chang'e with the elixir. They both decided to drink the elixir together on the night of the 15th day of the 8th Chinese lunar month. On that day Hou Yi went hunting and an evil man named Feng Meng came to Hou Yi and Chang'e's home to steal the elixir. Feng Meng told Chang'e that he had killed Hou Yi whilst he was hunting and demanded she gave him the elixir. However, Chang'e was grief stricken and felt lost without Hou Yi and angry with Feng Meng, so she drank the elixir.

As soon as she had taken the elixir, Hou Yi returned to see Chang'e's feet lifting off the ground. She was flying into the night sky and was unable to return to the earth. Hou Yi watched as she flew to the Moon.

Chang'e now lives on the Moon as she wanted to stay as close as possible to Hou Yi. If you look closely at the moon, when it is at its fullest and brightest, you can sometimes see her playing with a white rabbit. Have a look next time the moon is full.

The 15th day of the 8th lunar month is also known as the Moon Festival or Mid-Autumn Festival in China - zhong qiu jie 中秋节

Suggestion: Celebrate as the Chinese do by eating moon cakes, lighting lanterns and looking for Chang'e on the moon.

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