



(THE SHAN GONG ZHU)

PRINCESS IRON-FAN

【中国第一部长篇
有声立体卡通】

铁扇公主

编剧 王乾白
主绘 万籁鸣 万古蟾

The Princess of Iron Fan

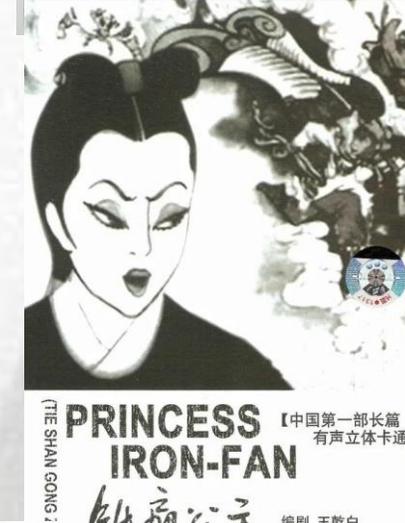
(19 November 1941, China)

Directed by Wan Guchan, Wan Laiming

Jia Wei 20014098

What inspired *Princess Iron Fan*?

- In 1938, Disney released an animated film called *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which took three years to produce. It was the first animated feature film produced in the United States and the first cel animated feature film. After its release, it earned widespread praise and attracted international attention. The film was praised for its exquisite animation, lifelike characters, and its adaptation of the European Grimm Brothers' fairy tale version of *Snow White*.
- When *Snow White* was screened in Shanghai, it deeply inspired Wan Laiming, Wan Guchan, Wan Chaochen, and Wan Dihuan. Motivated by its success, they decided to create a Chinese animated film that could also make a global impact. After consideration, they chose the story of Sun Wukong borrowing the Magic Fan from *Journey to the West* as the basis for their film. The production involved over 100 people and took one year and a half to complete, finally premiering in 1941.



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Characters

Film Introduction

Summary

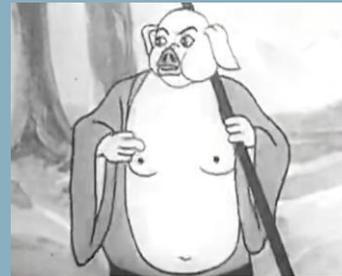
- The story of **Princess Iron Fan** is based on a segment from *Journey to the West*. It tells the tale of the four disciples, including Tang Seng, Sun WuKong, Zhu Bajie, Sha WuJing, who are on their journey to the Western Paradise to retrieve sacred scriptures. They are blocked by intense flames on Flame Mountain and they are unable to proceed. Then Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie travel to Bajiao Cave in Cui Ping Mountain, to ask Princess Iron Fan, the wife of the Bull Demon King, for the magic fan that can put out the fire. However, Princess Iron Fan refuses to lend it to them.
- Then, Sun Wukong, using his shape-shifting ability, turns into a tiny insect and sneaks into Princess Iron Fan's belly to cause a disturbance, tricking her into giving him a fake fan. Zhu Bajie then transforms into the Bull Demon King's likeness and steals the real fan from her. Upon learning this, the Bull Demon King disguises himself as Sun Wukong and tricks Zhu Bajie into handing over the fan. After several rounds of magical combat between Wukong, Bajie, the Princess, and the Bull Demon King, They finally obtain the magic fan, extinguish the fire on Flame Mountain, and continue on their journey to retrieve the scriptures.



Sun WuKong



Tang Seng



Zhu Bajie



Sha WuJing



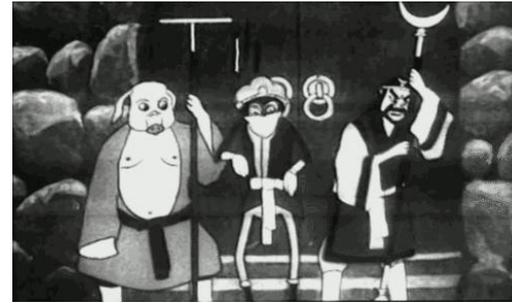
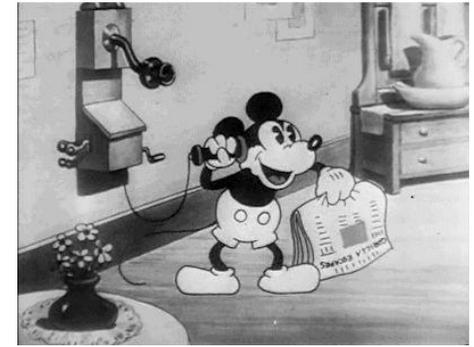
Princess of Iron Fan



Bull Demon King

Aesthetic Features

- In terms of animation style, the director was inspired by *Snow White*, and this influence can be seen in the character design, animation movements, and storyboard of *Princess Iron Fan*. For example, the design and actions of Sun Wukong in *Princess Iron Fan* had some similar place with the early black and white Mickey Mouse. But, at the same time, *Princess Iron Fan* integrates a rich blend of Chinese culture, including Chinese landscape painting, traditional clothing, architecture, and Chinese opera. This fusion led to the creation of a new style, paving the way for the development of a distinct 'Chinese national style' in animation.
- In the character design, aside from the unique appearances of the characters, the use of lines plays a significant role. The delicate, graceful lines depicting the Eastern beauty create a contrast with characters like Sun Wukong, making the femininity more pronounced. This film is filled with the charm of traditional Chinese art.
- In both the character design and the fight scenes, many elements of ancient Chinese theatrical culture were referenced, marking a bold attempt and innovation in the field of animation.



The Historical Context and the Message Behind the Film

- It is immediately clear that this is a work that embodies the spirit of resistance. As the Japanese military brutally oppressed China, the united Chinese people launched a fierce counterattack. The film's message is unmistakable. In it, Sun Wukong calls upon the masses to rise up against the Bull Demon King, which serves as a satirical reflection of the Japanese invasion of China. This is how **Osamu Tezuka** assessed *Princess Iron Fan*.
- The production of *Princess Iron Fan* coincided with a period when the Chinese people were enduring the hardships of war. Therefore, in the film's conclusion, "Tang Seng and his three disciples, along with the people of Flame Mountain, unite to defeat the Bull Demon King and his family. They manage to obtain the Magic Fan to extinguish the flames, also allowing the people of Flame Mountain to no longer suffer from the intense heat." This adaptation, considering the historical context, reflects the original intention of Wan Laiming and Wan Guchan to use animation to promote the anti-war cause. Like many works of the time, this film also carries an anti-war message. The war had brought great suffering to China, leaving a deep and lasting impact. This scene subtly alludes to the broader national call for unity and resistance against the invading forces, as well as the hope for victory and peace. Through this animation, not only was Chinese mythology promoted, but the directors' patriotic and anti-war sentiments were also clearly expressed.



The Impact of Princess Iron Fan

- First of all, *Princess Iron Fan* is not only China's first animated film, but also the fourth animated film in the history of world cinema, following *Snow White*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Pinocchio*.
- This film had a significant impact on people around the world, especially in terms of animation style. **Osamu Tezuka**, the creator of *Astro Boy*, was inspired by *Princess Iron Fan* to abandon his medical career and pursue drawing manga.
- The unique animation style and engaging storyline of this film paved the way for excellent Chinese animation and influenced many animators.



Discoveries and Inspiration

- A statement by Wan Laiming deeply inspired me. After the success of Princess Iron Fan, he said, "For Chinese animation to have lasting vitality, it must be deeply rooted in the traditions of its own culture." This made me reflect on how truly vibrant and soulful animated works are built on the creator's deep love for their own creations. This love could be a passion for animation itself, an affection for the story's background, or a connection with the characters. Only when the creator has a genuine love for their work can they meticulously craft every detail and make the characters come alive. When a creator infuses their work with love, it becomes something that can be passed on and felt by the audience. Just as Wan Laiming's love for Princess Iron Fan was passed on to Osamu Tezuka.
- Furthermore, Wan Laiming's idea reflects his profound love for Chinese culture and animation. He believed that in order to advance Chinese animation, one must truly understand and embrace Chinese traditional culture. Only by being closely connected to one's cultural roots can make a work maintain its vitality and continue to be appreciated in the future. The patriotism expressed in his films still resonates with people today.
- This also made me realize that an excellent animated film requires more than just outstanding artistry. What Wan Laiming referred to as "national traditions" is something we must each explore and understand. It's not only about traditions, but also about the vast amount of knowledge needed to create a meaningful animation. Through reflection, I've come to understand the importance of knowledge. Before creating an animation, one must understand what they want to express, the cultural background of the story, and many other factors. This process has made me realize that only through continuous learning and accumulating knowledge can we create truly valuable works.

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