

# Pangu



## VIEWING GUIDE

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## about the film

Based on the ancient Chinese creation myth, Pangu is a modern tale about parenthood and the differences between generations. Pangu creates a rigid world of angular shapes, but there's just one problem: his son sees the world as curves.

"Pangu centers around a father who doesn't understand his son and gradually learns to accept his son for who he is. This film is for everyone who felt they weren't good enough, were too different, or weren't accepted. Pangu is inspired by all the people who feel like circles in a square world." - Shaofu Zhang

**Recommended for ages 5 and up.**

**Written, Produced, and Directed by Shaofu Zhang  
(United States 2019) English and Chinese, 6 min.**

## subject areas

**Asian American Studies**

**Social Studies/History**

**Media**

**Visual/Performing Arts**

**Peer/Youth Issues**

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All SFFILM Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy. SFFILM Education welcomes feedback and questions on all printed study materials.

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# discussion questions

## Characters, Setting, and Story

Take note of the beginning of the film. What is the setting? What can you observe about the story world?

At first, the father does not want to accept his son's view of the world. What would the story world look like without his son there to balance his rigid view of things?

What shape is created when the father and son work together? Why is this important to the story?

What happens to the son at the end of the story? How does the story come full circle at the end?

## Creation Myths

What is a Creation Myth? Have you ever come across a different Creation Myth; maybe from a different culture? Why do you think different countries and cultures have different Creation Myths?

Do some research on the original Chinese Creation Myth about Pangu. How does this short film differ from other versions of the Creation Myth?

## Family

What do we learn about the relationship between the father and the son throughout the film?

Why do you think the father was disappointed with his son's round and curvy creations? What makes him change his mind?



"Pan Gu sacrificed his life to create the world and his body to enrich and beautify it. Now the skies are graced with luminous celestial bodies, the Earth, contoured by great mountains and rivers and flora and fauna galore." - Shen Yun Performing Arts

## Culture

What did you learn about Chinese culture from this film? Would you like to learn anything else? Now's the perfect time to do some extra research!

### Here's some places you can start:

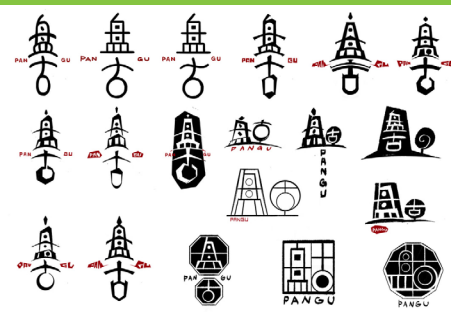
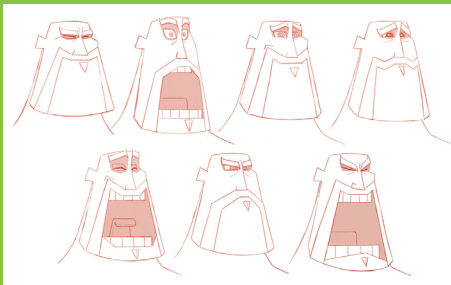
<https://education.asianart.org>  
<https://www.shenyunperformingarts.org/explore/view/all>  
<https://www.washthehate.com/>

"Asia' is a term invented by the Greeks and Romans, and developed by Western geographers to indicate the land mass east of the Ural Mountains and Ural River, together with offshore islands such as Japan and Java. Culturally, no 'Asia' exists, and the peoples who inhabit 'Asia' often have little in common with each other" (SF Asian Art Museum). Did you know this? Why is it a big problem that Asian cultures get lumped together in this way?

# activities

Listen to the Lunar New Year Story, Nian the Beast: <https://education.asianart.org/resources/nian-the-beast-a-lunar-new-year-story/>  
How does this story compare to the story of Pangu?

Draw your own Creation Myth! Take a look at the images below to see how Shaofu and his team developed their characters based on the Chinese Creation Myth of Pangu. If you could tell your own Creation Myth, how would you do it? Would you create a story based on a myth that you've heard before? Or would you make up your own story?



For more resources from Taiko Studios, go to <http://www.taikostudios.com/pangu>.

# what is animation?

Animation is a process used to create motion pictures through the combination of still images (e.g., digital graphics, photographs of drawings, photographs of objects, etc.) which, when played in sequence, create the illusion of movement. All television cartoons, for example, are animations, and are made up

of thousands of still images (drawn by hand or on a computer) that are played sequentially, along with a soundtrack, to tell a story.

# types of animation

- Classic animation (e.g., Disney's *The Lion King*, most TV cartoons)
- Rotoscope (e.g., *Star Wars* lightsabers)
- Flip books
- 3D animation (e.g., Pixar's *Toy Story*, *Wall-E*, *Up*)

- Stereoscopic 3D (e.g., *Avatar*)
- Cut-out / Silhouette animation (e.g., *South Park*)
- Claymation (e.g., Nick Park's *Wallace and Gromit*)
- Puppet animation (e.g., Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Coraline*)

# history of animation

The world's most famous animator, Walt Disney, began making short animated cartoons based on children's stories in 1923. In 1928 he introduced Mickey Mouse in the first animated sound cartoon, **Steamboat Willie**, which became an immediate sensation. Throughout the next decade, Disney would add such elements as carefully synchronized music (**The Skeleton Dance**, 1929), Technicolor (**Flowers and Trees**, 1932), and the illusion of depth with his multi-plane camera (**The Old Mill**, 1937), a device that allowed for animated cells to be photographed against a three-dimensional background. Although not the first animated feature, Disney's **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs** (1937) was the first to use up-to-the-minute

techniques and the first to receive widespread release. The film's success can be attributed in part to Disney's willingness to use animation to create a profound dramatic experience. He strove for photographic realism in films such as **Pinocchio** (1940), **Dumbo** (1941) and **Bambi** (1942).

The success of television cartoons led to the virtual disappearance of animated shorts produced for theatrical release. Animated feature-length films, however, flourished, especially after the release of Disney's **The Little Mermaid** (1989), regarded by many as the studio's best animated feature in decades. Other Disney blockbusters followed, including **Beauty and the Beast** (1991), **Aladdin** (1992), **The Lion King** (1994) and **Lilo & Stitch** (2002).

# history of animation

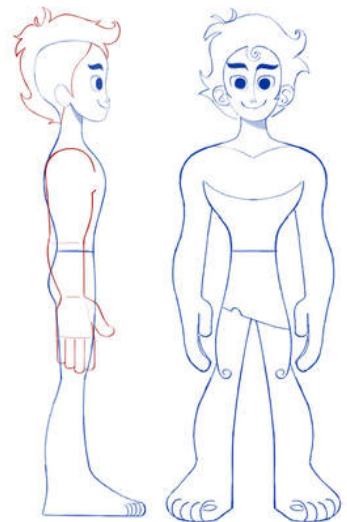
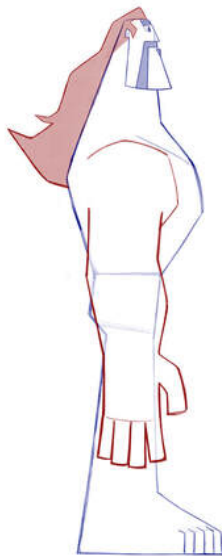
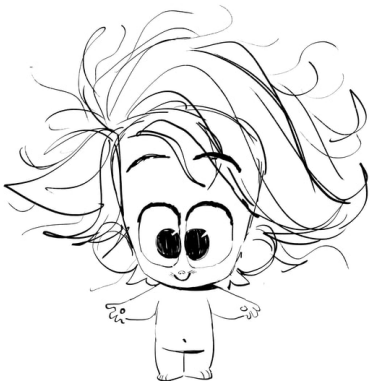
The development of computer animation was another great advancement in the form and resulted in feature films of astounding visual sumptuousness. In 1995, **Toy Story** was the first film to use only computer generated imagery (CGI). In 2001 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences added a new Academy Award for

Best Animated Feature Film. The first recipient of the award was **Shrek** (2001).

# about Taiko Studios

TAIKO is an award-winning animation studio that bridges eastern and western sensibilities. We provide services in content development, storyboarding, character design and animation production.

TAIKO Studios was founded in 2017 by CEO Shaofu Zhang in both Los Angeles, CA and Wuhan, China.





# media literacy resources: screening with meaning

We live in a world where technology mediates a large portion of human interaction and the exchange of information. **Every projected** image, every word published on a page or a website, and every sound from a speaker reaches its audience through the medium, through the language of the device. The ability to parse the vast array of media messages is an essential skill for young people, particularly in a mainstream commercial culture that targets youth as a vulnerable, impressionable segment of the American marketplace. Most students already have a keen understanding of the languages different media use and the techniques they employ to inspire particular emotions or reactions, but they often lack the skill or awareness to fully deconstruct the messages they continuously receive. Analysis of a media message—or any

piece of mass media content—can best be accomplished by first identifying its principal characteristics:

- (1) Medium: the physical means by which it is contained and/or delivered
- (2) Author: the person(s) responsible for its creation and dissemination
- (3) Content: the information, emotions, values or ideas it conveys
- (4) Audience: the target audience to whom it is delivered
- (5) Purpose: the objectives of its authors and the effects of its dissemination.

Students who can readily identify these five core characteristics will be equipped to understand the incentives at work behind media messages, as well as their potential consequences. Media literacy education empowers students to become responsible consumers, active

## common core standards

### MEDIUM

**All Media Is Constructed.**

- What is the message, how is it delivered and in what format?
- What technologies are used to present the message?
- What visual and auditory elements comprise the media content?
- What expectations do you bring to the content, given its medium and format?

### CONTENT

**Media Is A Language For Information.**

- What is the subject of the media message?
- What information, values, emotions or ideas are conveyed by the media content?
- What tools does the author employ to engage the viewer and evoke a response?
- To what extent did the content meet your expectations, given the format/author?

### PURPOSE

**All Media Messages Are Constructed for a Reason.**

- Why was the message constructed?
- Who benefits from dissemination of the message? How?
- To what extent does the message achieve its purpose?
- What effect does the message have on the audience it reaches, if any?

### AUTHOR

**All Media Is Constructed by Someone.**

- Who is delivering the message?
- Who originally constructed the message?
- What expectations do you have of the content, given its author(s)?

### AUDIENCE

**All Media Messages Reach an Audience.**

- Who receives the message?
- For whom is the message intended?
- What is the public reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- What is your reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- How might others perceive this message differently? Why?