

Rhythmic Vitality: A Study of the Artistic Expressions of Chinese Animation Master Te Wei

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Abstract

The author intends to do a comprehensive analysis and examination of Mr. Te Wei's notable animation works, including "Tadpole Looking for Mother," "Pastoral Flute," "Landscape," "Proud General," and several more. To commence, this analysis will begin by examining the works of Mr. Te Wei and their significance as a foundation for understanding. Subsequently, the locations within Mr. Te Wei's works that hold educational value will be scrutinised, leading to the formulation of the research's objective. This text elucidates the comprehensive process of Mr. Te Wei's creative cognition, effectively conveying a denouement that is both comical and dramatic. In contemporary culture, the intensification of labour and the pace of life have contributed to an increasing burden on individuals. Notably, a considerable number of Chinese animations have excessively emulated Japanese animations, therefore neglecting the distinctive cultural attributes of our own nation. Hence, this article endeavours to systematically expound upon the artistic style and expressive techniques of Mr. Te Wei, a

renowned figure in Chinese animation, by analysing representative works such as "Shepherd's Flute" and "Landscape". The aim is to cultivate the audience's appreciation for Mr. Te Wei's creations and enhance their comprehension of his artistic expression. The artistic expression exhibited by Mr. Te Wei, a prominent figure in Chinese animation, has the potential to evoke inspiration and contemplation among viewers. Specifically, his work prompts reflection on the dearth of humour within contemporary society and the absence of national cultural elements in the realm of animation.

Keywords: Te Wei, Chinese ink animation, artistic expression

1. Introduction

1.1 Biography of Mr. Te Wei

Mr. Te Wei (1915-2010), a prominent figure in the realm of Chinese cinema, hailed from Zhongshan, Guangdong Province. Originally named Sheng Song, he was born in Shanghai in 1915. Mr. Te Wei is widely recognised as a distinguished director, esteemed artist, and accomplished film and television producer. Moreover, he holds the distinction of being the pioneer of the globally recognised "Chinese School" of animated films. The individual in question assumed the first position of director of the Shanghai Art Film Studio. The aforementioned pieces, namely "Tadpole Looking for Mom," "The Pastoral Flute," "Landscape," and "The Proud General," have achieved widespread recognition and are widely known within the general public. The individual in question played a pivotal role in the development of Chinese ink animation, effectively steering it away from the tendency to mimic foreign animation styles. In 1935, the individual in question started his artistic endeavours by directing his attention towards the creation of satirical cartoons that addressed global contemporary events.

Subsequently, in 1941, he embarked on a journey to Hong Kong through Chongqing with the intention of establishing the "New Art Association" as an art organisation. Furthermore, he assumed the role of art editor for the "New Art Weekly," which operated under the auspices of the "Huashang Newspaper." Following the onset of the Pacific War in 1941, the individual in question made his way back to the mainland. In an effort to uplift the spirits and bolster support for the ongoing war, he orchestrated an exhibition entitled "Hong Kong's Passion" at many locations. Following the successful outcome of the war, he assumed a teaching position at a secondary educational institution. In 1947, he took the initiative to establish the "Human Painting Society" in Hong Kong. Additionally, he authored a lengthy satirical cartoon titled "The Great Dictator" during the same year, which served as a form of dissent against the civil war led by the Nationalist government. Subsequently, he founded an art film (animation) collective at the Changchun Film Studio in 1949, which was subsequently relocated to Shanghai and released in the same year. The group was founded in 1949 in the Changchun Film Studio, and afterwards relocated to Shanghai. In 1957, the renowned Shanghai Art Film Studio was built as the new home for the group. The author intends to analyse and examine the creative style exhibited in his representative works, namely the ink animation pieces titled "Pastoral Flute" and "Landscape".

1.2 Characteristics of the Ink Animated Films "Pastoral Flute" and "Landscape"

"The Shepherd's Flute" is a notable ink animation film, created by the esteemed Shanghai Fine Arts Film Studio. It holds the distinction of being the second ink animation film ever produced, following in the footsteps of the renowned "Tadpole Looking for Mother". The video effectively portrays a Chinese landscape painting to the spectator through animated expression, with the narrative of a shepherd kid in quest of a buffalo as the focal point representing the brilliant line, while the music of a flute symbolises the dark line. This artistic approach provides a comprehensive interpretation of the majestic mountains and rivers that define the Chinese landscape.

Chinese ink animation has undeniably emerged as a groundbreaking force in the global cinema industry, both in terms of its portrayal of reality and its historical significance. Chinese ink animation is a significant milestone in the Chinese artists' endeavour to achieve the localization of animation inside the realm of "Western cartoons" at that era. Any artist who is successful and possesses wisdom would strategically use their strengths while consciously avoiding their weaknesses in the process of artistic production. Furthermore, they will actively strive to attain the utmost level of creative freedom within the confines of their artistic constraints.

The bovine creatures seen in the film exhibit a deceptively uncomplicated yet commanding presence, as they are rendered in the artistic manner reminiscent of Li Keran, a highly renowned figure in the realm of Chinese painting. In relation to this film, Li Keran produced a series of fourteen "cowherd drawings" as visual aids for the production team. Additionally, Fang Jizhong, a renowned landscape painter associated with the Chang'an School of Painting during that period, assumed the role of scenic designer for the film. The film showcased various picturesque landscapes, including the charming scenery of Jiangnan with its small bridges, flowing water, green willows, and winding paths, as well as the majestic beauty of lofty mountains and waterfalls. The musical composition by renowned artist Wu Yingzhuo, skillfully performed by flautist Lu Chunling, played a significant role in establishing the narrative rhythm of the film and enhancing its aesthetic appeal. Hence, The Pastoral Flute may be seen as a piece of art that harmoniously integrates elements of poetry, visual imagery, and rhythmic aesthetics. One possible way to rewrite the user's text to be more academic is as follows: The film can be considered a masterpiece of artistic expression.

In 1980, Te Wei travelled to the United States with the intention of delivering lectures. During this visit, he also presented his work titled "Love of Mountains and Waters" to the American audience. Following the screening of this animation, the spectators responded with enthusiastic applause, deeming it a remarkable achievement in the realm of Chinese animation. In 1981, the film "Love of Mountains and Waters" participated in the "Chinese Fine Arts Film Exhibition" hosted in Japan, garnering significant attention and eliciting astonishment among Japanese viewers. According to the testimonial provided by a Japanese animation producer during that period, initial scepticism was expressed upon learning about the purported ability of Chinese ink paintings to exhibit motion. However, upon witnessing the artistic masterpiece known as "Love of Mountains and Waters," it became evident that

such a remarkable creation did indeed exist. The producer further acknowledged the exceptional skill and technique employed by Te Wei, the creator of the aforementioned work. The process of capturing an ink drawing and transforming it into a film and animation art production, which showcases the rich artistic heritage and profound emotional depth of Chinese culture, elicits a sense of awe and admiration from international observers.

1.3 Artistic Expression of Te Wei's Works from the Perspective of "Chinese Painting's Literalism"

The act of writing meaning is the process of conceptualising and generalising the nature of reality via the use of creative language. Chinese painting has long been associated with the theoretical framework known as the "Six Methods", which has been prevalent since ancient times. The Six Methods is a word originating from ancient China that serves as a programmatic document for the art history of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties. It also has significant importance as a fundamental principle within the realm of traditional Chinese painting art. In his book "Ancient Painting Pinnacle Records," Xie He, a renowned painter and Qi theorist during the Southern Dynasty of China (479-502.AD), introduced a proposal that encompassed the social function of painting and outlined six criteria for evaluating paintings. These criteria, referred to as the "Six Methods," were derived from Xie He's comprehensive analysis of figure painting and its creative practises. The six methods are as follows: The concept of vividness The bone technique involving the use of a brush necessitates the use of an item that possesses a form like that of a bone. This object should be accompanied by a certain type of colour and an appropriate operational position. Additionally, a transfer mould writing tool is required for the purpose of transferring mould writing. Qian Zhongshu, a prominent contemporary literary scholar, has succinctly encapsulated the inquiry: "What constitutes the six laws?" Firstly, the use of rhyme is evident, contributing to the creation of a vivid and engaging composition. Secondly, the employment of the bone method, in conjunction with the pen, further enhances the overall quality of the written work. Thirdly, it is imperative to select an appropriate object, such as a shape, to effectively convey the intended message. Fourthly, the inclusion of colour, in conjunction with the class, adds depth and visual appeal to the composition. Fifthly, effective management of the written piece is crucial in order to establish a coherent and well-structured narrative. Lastly, the ability to seamlessly transition and adapt one's writing style is a valuable skill that contributes to the overall effectiveness of the composition.

The six techniques form a cohesive and interrelated entity. The concept of "vividness" is a fundamental criterion in artistic endeavours, particularly in the realm of painting, as it embodies the pinnacle of artistic achievement. The complete expression of the inner soul of the character necessitates the depiction of a vivid image. In order to attain a sense of "vividness," the incorporation of the other components within the "Six Methods" is required. The concept of "vividness" in the Six Methods pertains to the quality of the writing.

When discussing the topic of writing, it is important to acknowledge the significance of Chinese painting art in our country. Chinese painting can be broadly categorized into two main forms: writing and painting, and brush painting. Brush painting has been predominantly

utilized by the aristocrats of the ancient court for portrait painting, as well as for documenting daily life and historical events. It is not closely associated with the lives of ordinary individuals. The creation of a single brush painting typically requires several months to complete. If one were to consider the challenges and time-consuming nature of producing animated content in the realistic style of brush painting, it becomes evident. The magnitude of the challenges posed by the task, including the extensive time, labour, and material resources involved, is beyond comprehension, and so must not be elaborated upon. The primary emphasis lies on the practise of pictorial writing, encompassing many forms such as pictorial bird and flower painting, oriography, landscape painting, and pictorial figure (woman) painting. The term "write-illustration" refers to an artistic form that prioritises the overall composition while disregarding intricate details. In contrast, "brushwork" denotes a similar aesthetic expression seen in Chinese painting. The term "rendering" often pertains to the artistic practise of using water, Chinese paints, and ink for painting purposes.

The variances in pigment shades and the five ink colours - burned, thick, heavy, light, and clear - result in diverse and nuanced outcomes, contributing to a distinctive creative expression that influences the manipulation of things. The user's text is too short to be rewritten academically. Ink painting is commonly acknowledged as a conventional kind of Chinese painting and serves as a prominent exemplification of contemporary Chinese artistic expression. In 1956, Teweï introduced the concept of "exploring the path of national style," referring to the development of a distinct Chinese painting style. In 1956, Te Wei introduced the motto "Exploring the way of national style," advocating for the adoption of a stylized pictorial approach in Chinese painting. He used this slogan to his work, *The Proud General*, whereby he sought to generalise and depict the form of a military leader. The character undergoes a comprehensive transformation, with even the intricacies of his actions being integrated with traditional Chinese cultural components, such as those found in Peking Opera performances. This presentation provided the audience with a novel sensory encounter, including both visual and auditory dimensions. Moreover, it was the inaugural step towards the adoption of a "artistic" trajectory within the realm of Chinese animation. From "*The Proud General*" through "*The Golden Monkey Subdues the Demon*," it is evident that Te Wei consistently employs the Chinese painting technique throughout his series of works. Nevertheless, at this particular period, the Chinese painting style had not yet reached a significant level of development.

As anticipated, Te Wei pioneered the integration of traditional Chinese painting techniques and creative styles, namely ink writing, into the realm of animated films, commencing from the year 1960. The individual in question created the art film titled "*Tadpole's Searching for Mum*," which is widely regarded as a legendary classic. This film is often considered to be the world's first cinematic work to exhibit distinct Chinese cultural characteristics during its time of release. By transforming seemingly impossible concepts into tangible reality, the film garnered significant attention within the international animation community and achieved notable recognition abroad. The user's text is too short to be rewritten in an academic manner. Tevye created the Chinese painting video titled "*Tadpole's Searching for Mum*" as a continuation of the original work by Tadpole. Following the completion of "*Tadpole Looking*

for Mom," Te Wei proceeded to create the Chinese painting film titled "Pastoral Flute." This particular work marked a significant evolution in the artistic style, effectively integrating animation techniques with the written form, resulting in the animation of pictures depicted on the Xuan paper. The number. Every scenario depicted in the artwork may be characterised as a superb ink painting, showcasing delicate and lyrical brushstrokes. It is worth noting that these artistic renderings were exclusively created by the renowned Chinese painter, Li Keran, just for this purpose. For the aforementioned objective, Li Keran produced a total of fourteen paintings. The rationale for Te Wei's collaboration with Li Keran stemmed from the compatibility between Li Keran's artistic style and Te Wei's stylistic writing. Furthermore, the two esteemed artists had a congruent perspective about their respective subjects of admiration. Te Wei breathed life into Li Keran's depictions of tiny creatures, including cows, shepherd boys, birds, bugs, and more. Through his artistic skill, these subjects were imbued with a sense of vitality, as seen by the vivid expressions and dynamic movements portrayed. The primary substance utilized in the production of the animation is ink, which is accompanied by the addition of water to facilitate the blending of various ink states, including but not limited to thick ink, light ink, burnt ink, dry ink, and wet ink. The variation in water usage results in distinct degrees of depth and light, creating a grayscale hierarchy that differs from Western sketching. This unique quality is also observed in Chinese paintings, known as "qiryun". The numerical value provided by the user is 6. In the 1960s, China's technological capabilities in the field of animation production were notably deficient. In the 1960s, China's animation production technology was notably underdeveloped, requiring a labor-intensive process of capturing individual frames using manual photography. For instance, the considerable amount of time and effort invested in producing an ink animation film surpasses that required for many conventional animation films of equivalent duration. Consequently, this endeavour need a collective of talented artists with a strong foundation in artistic talents, as well as exceptional dedication and diligence, in order to craft a masterpiece of global significance.

2. Te Wei's Work from the Perspective of Animation Creation

Several years ago, the author produced an ink animation titled "The Wolf Comes." This animation features a central protagonist, a little shepherd kid, who is seen riding on a cow. The backdrop of the video consists of a landscape painting. To enhance the quality of this short film and accentuate the stylized writing found in Chinese paintings, the author conducted a meticulous examination and study of the artistic works of the esteemed master Li Keran. Li Keran, renowned for his exceptional proficiency in depicting shepherd boys and landscapes, served as a primary reference point for the author's exploration of stylized writing. By adopting the perspective of the master, the author sought to comprehend and appreciate the intricacies of stylized writing in Chinese paintings. Li Keran's landscape paintings prioritise the concentration of significance. The speaker underscored the significance of commencing with a state of absence and progressing towards a state of existence, transitioning from existence back to absence, advancing from a state of simplicity to one of complexity, subsequently reverting from complexity to simplicity, evolving from a state of singularity to one of abundance, and ultimately returning from abundance to singularity. In the context of landscape painting, it is advisable to initially create compositions that are

visually intricate. This approach allows for the gradual development and refinement of fundamental artistic abilities. By repeatedly depicting various scenes within a single composition, artists can effectively enhance their proficiency in rendering elements such as rocks, trees, and houses. This iterative process of painting and practise serves to cultivate and improve these foundational skills. During this first phase, it is not appropriate to discuss the concept of personal style. Naturally, this duration is also quite extensive. Following this period of starting anew, one must establish a firm foundation in fundamental skills before becoming capable of expressing one's own unique style. This process entails transitions from complexity to simplicity, wherein the style of the work reverts back to its original state while retaining its profound and stylized essence.

3. Te Wei's Works from the Perspective of Famous Chinese Painting and Calligraphy Artists

Examining the landscape paintings of the 1940s by prominent masters, one can discern the lingering influence of Dong Qichang, Bada Shanren, and Shitao. These works exhibit a minimalist aesthetic characterised by a sparse composition and a linear arrangement of ink and brushstrokes. The structure in question is a linear composition created with brush and ink. In other words, the majority of their artistic creations mostly include the utilisation of ink brush and hook line techniques, with a lesser emphasis on ink rendering. Upon examining the artistic creations of master artists in the post-1950s era, it becomes evident that a significant number of them employed sketching techniques to generate innovative landscape imagery. This preference for sketching can be attributed to the necessity of conveying stylized representations derived from realism. Notably, the works produced by these masters during this period diverge from those of the 1940s, wherein a shift from a linear brush-and-ink framework to a more concentrated aesthetic of the artworks is characterised by a combination of simplicity and richness. The rocks exhibit a substantial and robust quality, while the pine trees possess a profound and densely packed nature. The aforementioned concept pertains to the transition from a state of nonexistence to existence, followed by a reversal from existence to nonexistence, specifically referring to the progression from singularity to abundance, and subsequently from abundance back to singularity. The artist derived inspiration from esteemed predecessors, both historical and contemporary, including Fan Kuan, Ma Yuan, Dong Yuan, Ju Ran, Li Tang, Gong Xian, and Huang Binhong, in order to cultivate a harmonious fusion of grandeur and aesthetic appeal. However, it is important to note that the artist's approach diverged significantly from these aforementioned figures. In an effort to enhance the artistic quality of stylized Chinese painting, the individual embarked on a journey over the renowned mountains and rivers of Jiangnan and Ba Shu regions. Due to Li Keran's northern background, his artistic style was characterised by simplicity and generosity. Consequently, his depiction of southern landscapes in his paintings seamlessly integrated components of the northern aesthetic, resulting in a harmonious blend of simplicity and mellowness. In the master's artistic oeuvre, the landscapes exhibit a greater degree of stylization and pictorial quality compared to those of the Ming and Qing dynasties. This tendency towards stylization and visual representation results in a reduction of the distinctiveness of the depicted scenes, leading to a more generalised and pictorial

aesthetic. The numerical value provided by the user is. This phenomenon may be seen as an innovative approach and a response to the prevailing inclination towards rigid and mechanical landscapes observed throughout the Ming and Qing periods.

Li Keran dedicated significant efforts to the study of realistic figure painting, employing smooth brushstrokes and capturing dynamic subtleties. As a result, his depictions of herdboys and other figures exhibited a deliberate exaggeration that managed to avoid ugliness, simplicity without appearing archaic, and a palpable childlike fascination with life. These artistic qualities garnered high praise from his esteemed mentor, the renowned master Qi Baishi. Li Keran was a highly skilled artist renowned for his expertise in depicting bovine subjects. The individual expressed an appreciation for the ox's dynamic, diligent, and uncomplicated nature, as well as its readiness to submit and serve as a child's ox. This sentiment is reflected in the choice of the name "Master Cow Hall" for their studio. The individual in question adopts the ox as a mentor, acquiring knowledge of the ox's nature, and devotes their efforts to the pursuit of artistic creativity. Throughout his career, the artist produced a substantial body of renowned bovine-themed artworks, exerting a significant impact on subsequent generations of painters.

4. Discussion

The author has extensively examined the aesthetic expression of renowned Chinese animation master Te Wei during the production of animation works. Te Wei is widely recognised within the Chinese animation industry for his distinctive artistic style and exceptional technical abilities. The author attempts to examine the creative manifestation of chiaroscuro as depicted in the works of Te Wei, employing a comprehensive analysis and research of his oeuvre. The author has been deeply influenced by the significant impact of Te Wei's aesthetic style and expression on the vividness of his works, as observed via research and learning. Te Wei has a proficient command of simplistic lines and dynamic composition, alongside a distinctive utilisation of colour, resulting in artworks that exude vibrancy and vigour. The author endeavours to utilise these attributes, with a particular emphasis on effectively portraying the dynamics and emotions of the characters, as well as effectively communicating the themes and emotions of the works through the fluidity of the lines and the strategic implementation of colours.

5. Conclusion

Nevertheless, the author possesses a keen understanding of the disparity that exists between his own abilities and those of the masters. Consequently, the author acknowledges the necessity of engaging in regular and persistent practise in order to enhance both their technical proficiency in painting and their ability to convey creative ideas effectively. The author attempts to attain optimal visual impact, progressively enhancing their proficiency in drawing and animation production via consistent practise and reflective analysis.

Artistic expression plays a pivotal role in the evolution of Chinese animation. By engaging in a comprehensive examination of the works of esteemed artists and maintaining a consistent regimen of practical application, the author aspires to demonstrate their distinctive artistic

style and creative expression in their graduation design projects. Furthermore, they aim to make a meaningful contribution to the advancement and success of Chinese animation.

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Figure 1. Mr. Te Wei



Figure 2. Stills from "The Pastoral Flute"

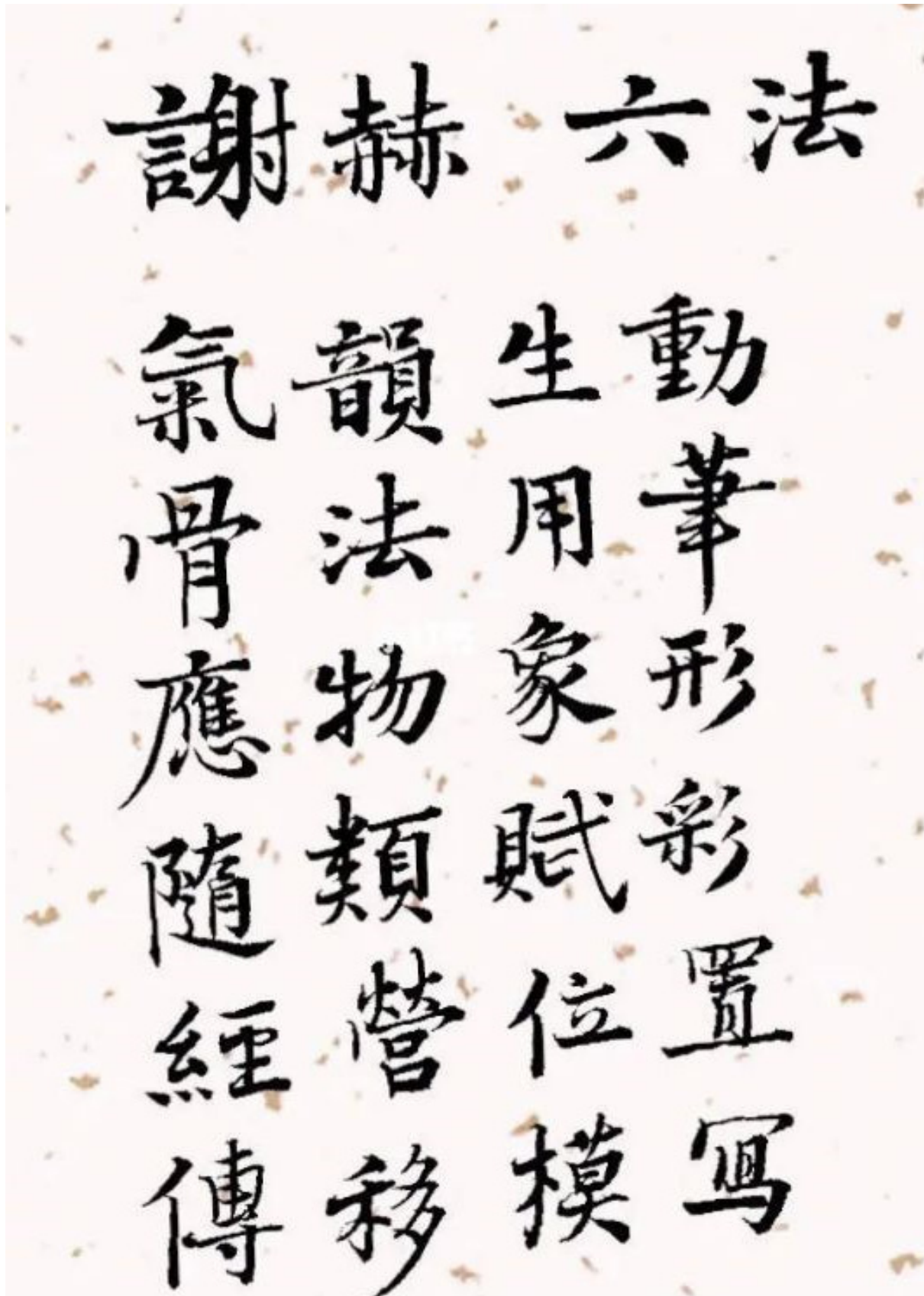


Figure 3. The Six Methods of the Xiehe

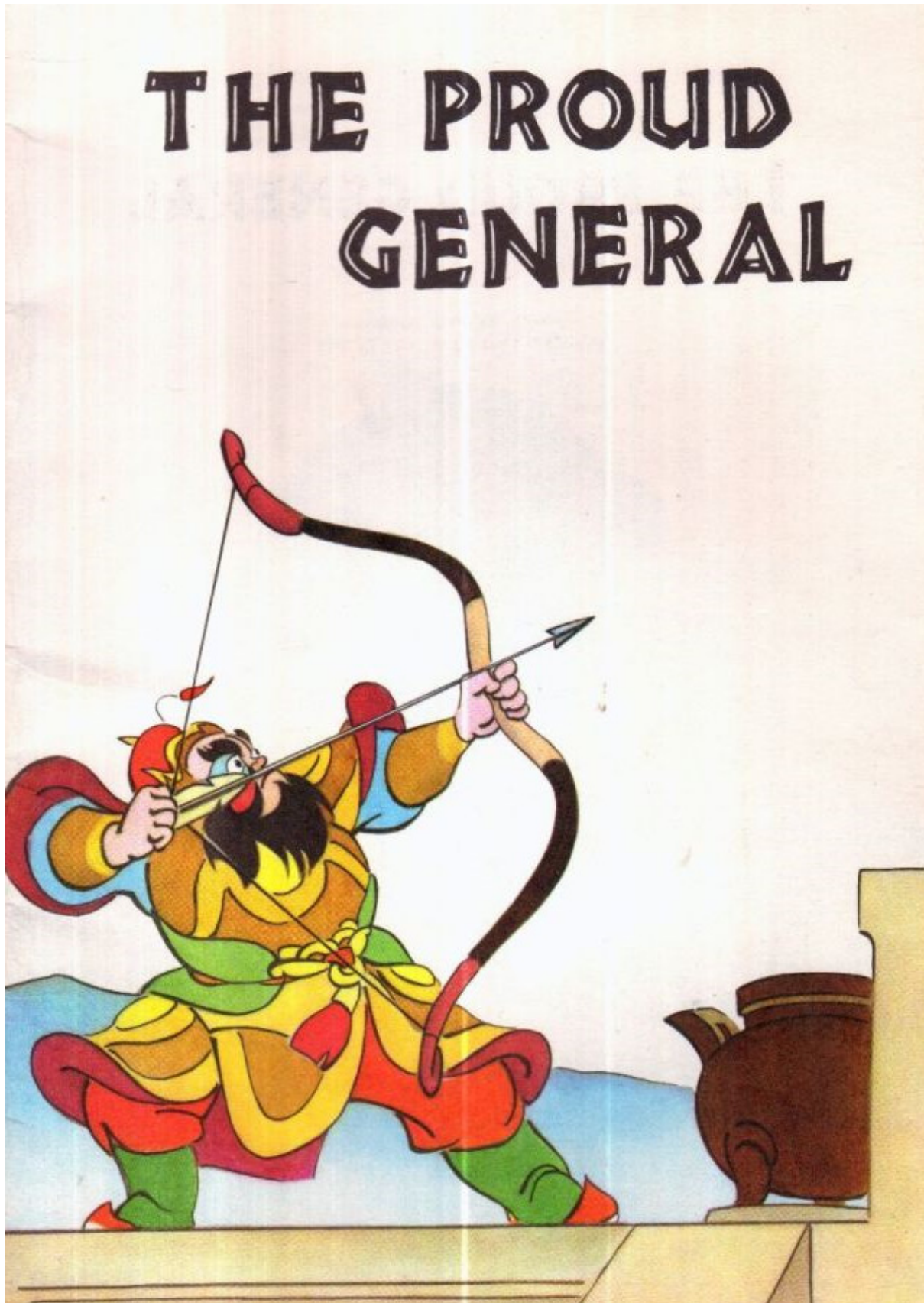


Figure 4. Stills from "The Proud General"

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