

Xiran They Zhao, Chinese History Meowmer @XiranJayZhao Tue Nov 03 01:39:15 +0000 2020
i literally have multiple mentions every day asking me to dissect this movie so HERE WE GO: All the cultural details in Netflix's Over the Moon, the thread!

Will feature plenty of juicy details on life in modern China, 'cause that's where this takes place in -
<https://t.co/aYHsfGzOfz>



The moon-eating sky dog is a real thing in Chinese myth, called tiangou ■■. It probably also inspired the kanji for tengu in Japanese myth, but tengu are VERY different <https://t.co/O76s2MkcsN>



But they can't tell us
about the space dog!



I haven't heard of Chang'e making the sky dog spit out the moon though, so this might've been invented for the movie

Note: this movie was made in association with an actual Chinese studio so there's no such thing as being culturally right or wrong. This is not a critique thread. <https://t.co/xkxrbn8qtQ>



That's when the Moon Goddess Chang'e makes him spit it out.

Yes, there IS a double standard for Chinese-culture-inspired movies made by Chinese people vs non-Chinese people, because when it comes to non-Chinese people...it's not their culture to play around with??

I don't think they explained Yi / Houyi's own myth in this movie but here's a tweet I did on it! Chang'e and Houyi are the ultimate legendary couple in Chinese myth lol

<https://t.co/sEDtEEuvnf> <https://t.co/wDmyAfaogD>



♪ Beautiful and kind Chang'e ♪



♪ And a handsome man named Houyi
Were in love ♪

TECHNICALLY his name is Yi instead of Houyi but the confusion has been going on for so long it no longer matters. He's Houyi in this movie so I'm calling him Houyi in this thread.

<https://t.co/St60uu2tND>

After Houyi took down the 9 extra suns, he was given two immortality elixirs for him and Chang'e, but because of ~reasons~ (theories differ, as referenced in this movie), Chang'e took them both and ascended so high she shot right past the Heavenly Court and got stuck on the moon <https://t.co/1SUXdKDaoD>



♪ Giving immortality ♪

The town Fei Fei lives in is clearly modeled after one in the Jiangnan region, meaning "South of the Yangtze River." It's the region I'm from, actually. Lots of pretty waterways and stone bridges and artsy folk. But no, most cities in modern China don't look like this - <https://t.co/GX4qoRoSfF>



[Fei Fei] Bunny rocket comin' through!



Most towns that look like this are protected heritage sites / tourist traps. You can tell by the family mooncake stall's emphasis on how they're a Time-Honored Brand ■■■■, meaning this business was established before 1956 <https://t.co/ZLOxQR9hAo>



Look at my rocket ship!

you can tell this movie was made by Chinese people because LOOK HOW FAMILIAR EVERYTHING LOOKS!! DAMN!!

The bright-colored plastic bin! The random garlic hanging on the wall! The communal pastry making! The weathered equipment and tiles in the restaurant kitchen!! (LOL) <https://t.co/SL58oSs76E>



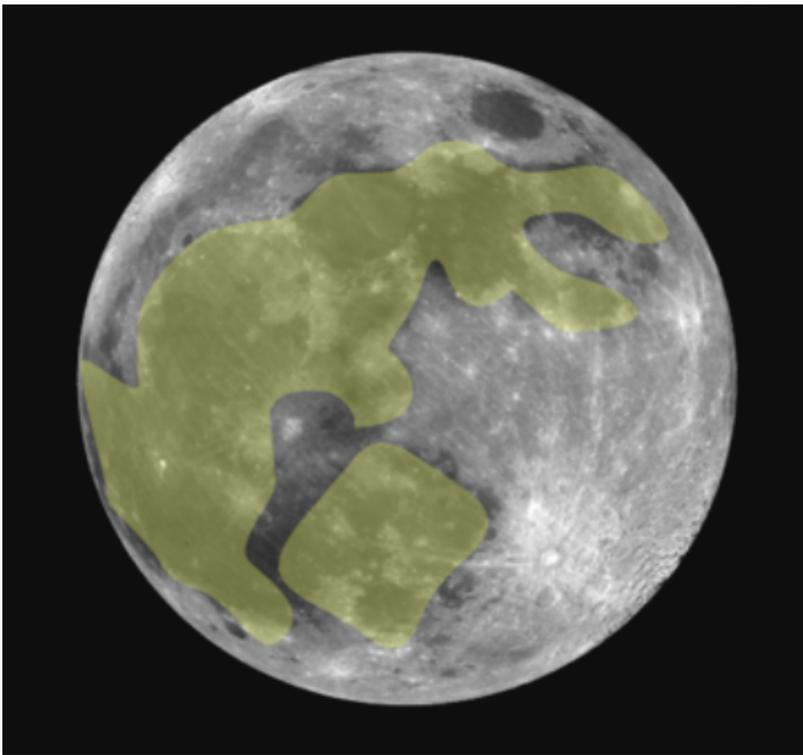
It's no wonder that Fei Fei's parents tell her so much about Chang'e bc they've clearly been in the artisanal mooncake business for several generations. Chang'e and the full moon are associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival, basically Chinese Thanksgiving

<https://t.co/nbHctkRyeg> <https://t.co/9So2U27n41>



Even their mooncake boxes say "traditional handmade"

Rabbit is here bc in Chinese myth there's a rabbit on the moon and the parents refuse to be off brand even when the mom is dying <https://t.co/2kuUDLQUux>



Alas the mom has passed away from her mysterious illness ■

You might've heard that in Chinese culture, white is the color of mourning instead of black, but in modern China, people often wear black to mourn too because western influence <https://t.co/FVXvKaXVUc>



side note: funeral practices can get REALLY WILD in some parts of China, lol <https://t.co/HbaAjRfJjo>

New York Post  @nypost

China cracks down on funeral strippers
nyp.st/2EK1wnh



2/22/18, 5:28 PM

 6qubed

man we've been doing funerals all wrong over here

 hokuto-ju-no-ken

My friends, weeping at my funeral as they shove 5s and 10s between the biggest titties they've ever seen: it's what he would've wanted

I'm not sure if cutting your hair all messed up like this is a common trauma thing or just something subliminal in Chinese culture? I remember doing this to myself the day before we were to fly for Canada <https://t.co/e5kzT9iPHB>



In Chinese families that have experienced a loss, it's common to have an altar like this dedicated to the loved one, with a picture of them and offerings of fruit <https://t.co/KZZeJzol2O>

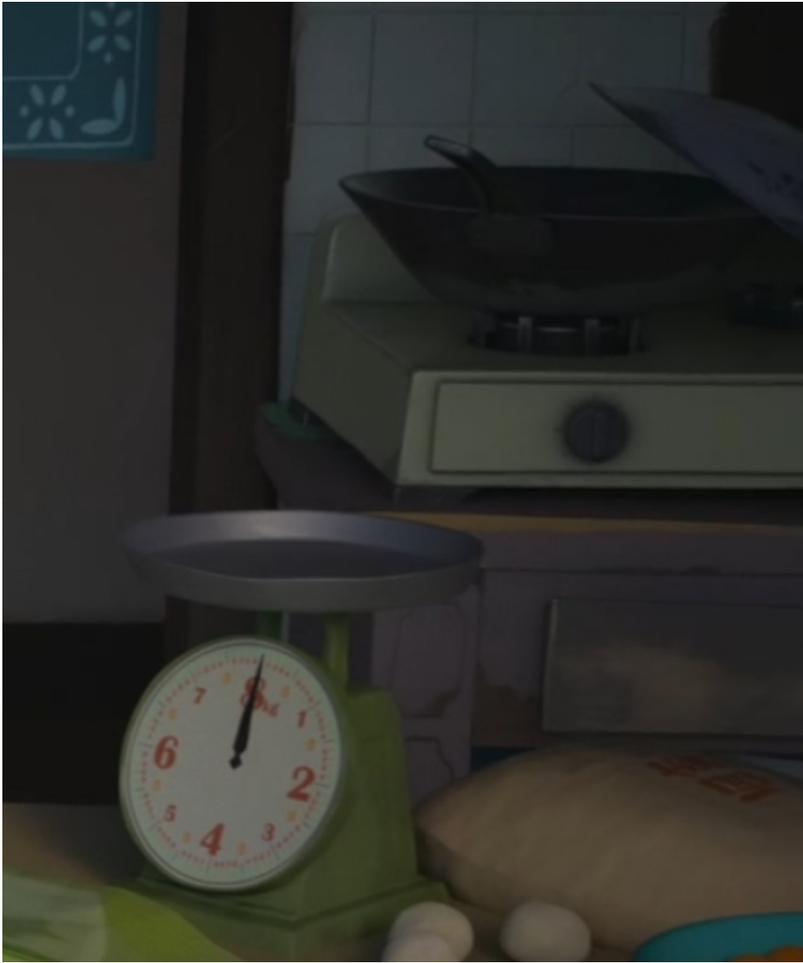


[Fei Fei] ♪ And there are memories
In these Mooncakes ♪

BRUUUHH the bright plastic thermoses in the background are also SUCH a thing in China. People generally don't like to drink cold water bc of the belief that it's bad for your health so most families just have a bunch of these standing around with boiled water in them <https://t.co/91byvIL0Aj>



also the stove and scale here...they're...they're just very Chinese, LOL. Like made in the 80s looking stuff... <https://t.co/CYm2CniZs7>



and how could i forget the multiple greasy bottles of soy sauce, vinegar, and cooking wine beside the stove!!!!
<https://t.co/kIdA9u4pOj>



Qie zi, literally meaning "eggplant," is the Chinese equivalent of saying "cheese" when taking a photo

where are the peace signs or finger hearts tho <https://t.co/9gaOu7rKWg>



-Qie zi!
-[family] Qie zi!

DFSA;JSDFS THIS RANDOM CROWD OF PEOPLE DANCING IN A TOWN SQUARE IS A COMMON THING IN CHINA TOO

this is called ■■■■, or Square / Plaza Dancing. There's a stereotype that only aunties do it but it's for all ages lol
<https://t.co/UzchU1hdb8>



[upbeat song in Mandarin
playing on speakers]

also a common sight is just...construction crews...construction crews everywhere. those traditional buildings in Fei Fei's town? unless it's a tourist sight, most are getting torn down to make way for high-rises and skyscrapers.

<https://t.co/Qx1NGvvevL>



dried fish!! and traditional hearth!!! <https://t.co/PFisTKdbLw>



When you go visit Chinese relatives, you're generally expected to bring some food or presents. It's bad manners to walk in empty-handed, basically

also very accurate that the wives are considerably better looking than the husbands <https://t.co/NEWn8q0zqu>



if u don't hear this from ur chinese relatives who you haven't seen or spoken to in a year are they even ur chinese relatives that u haven't seen or spoken to in a year <https://t.co/qOwifMlwV>

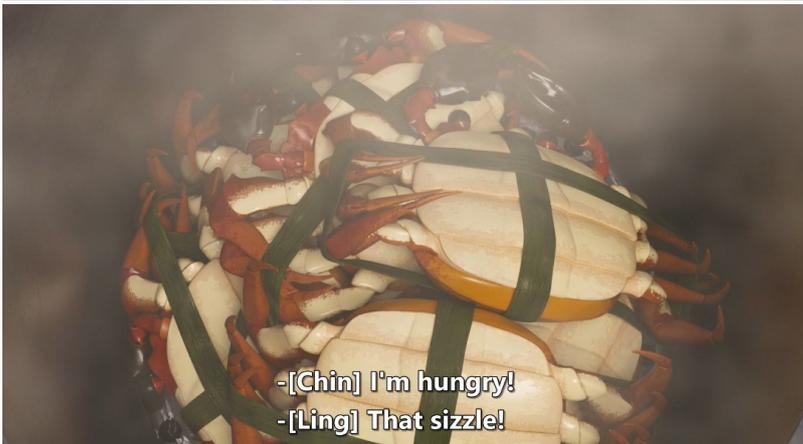


Oh, Fei Fei, you've gotten so big!

IF YOU DON'T BRING IN YOUR CRABS ALIVE AND SQUIRMING THEN GET OUT OF THIS CHINESE FAMILY REUNION <https://t.co/c0kQjPEY1c>



[Fei Fei] Oh, yeah, my favorite!



-[Chin] I'm hungry!
-[Ling] That sizzle!

i used to eat these dishes all the time wtf

(now i try to be vegan)

the big meatballs are called Lion Heads <https://t.co/i7avPaAIYH>





here they're acknowledging the many different versions of Chang'e's story. Some say she was selfish and just couldn't wait for Houyi to come back before taking the pills, others say she was forced to take both so Houyi's jealous apprentice wouldn't get them <https://t.co/siZx0BU8S4>



That's why she took both immortality pills instead of saving one for Houyi!

This sounds really dramatic when Houyi lived like 3k years ago but it's not THAT big of a stretch if your family is one that kept genealogical records really carefully lol

I personally am related to the Li clan of the Tang dynasty. it's not as impressive as it sounds. <https://t.co/X83ai9FUtt>



Actually, according to my mother, I might be related to Houyi.

peak chinese auntie energy <https://t.co/CoWhbih5Mb>

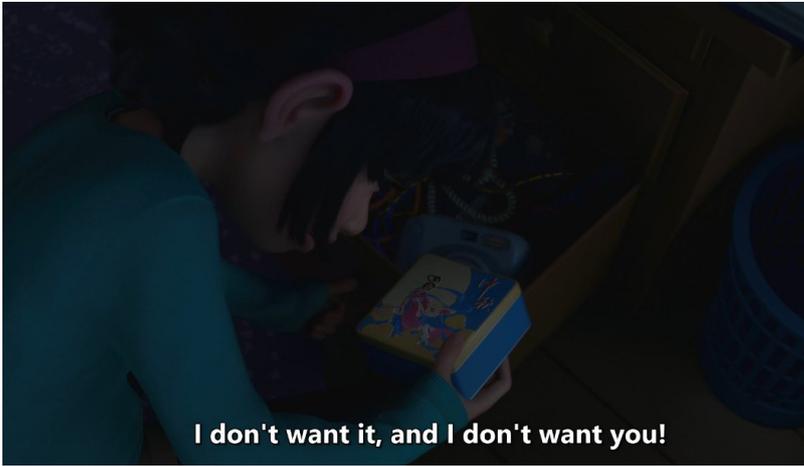


that jello looking dish is red-braised pork belly, made with stuff like dark soy sauce, sugar, ginger, and star anise
<https://t.co/EZoyAylD8x>



Fei Fei's upcoming stepmom gives her a mooncake in a tin that LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE THE TINS I USED TO STORE MY STATIONARY IN WHEN I WENT TO SCHOOL IN CHINA ASDFLKJAS;

stationary cases can get WILD, i made airport security gasp once when they opened mine and 3 tiers sprung out
<https://t.co/wpxhBGP6D1>



I don't want it, and I don't want you!

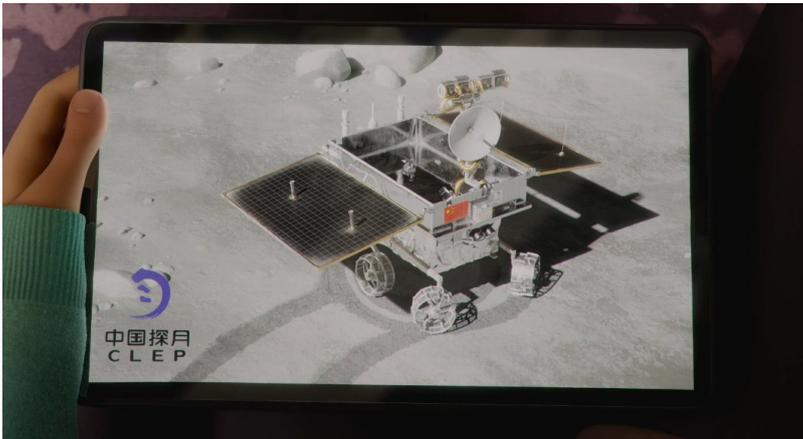
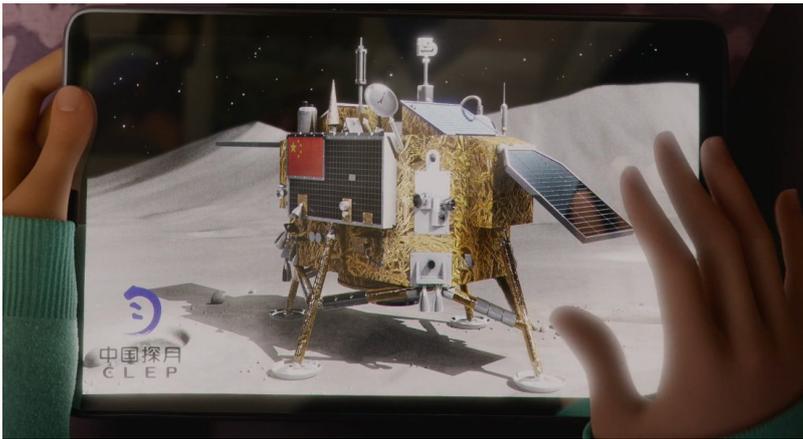


it's implied that this crane is Fei Fei's mother's spirit trying to get her to move on. cranes are seen as very spiritual animals in Chinese myth. <https://t.co/60E6GZVKvJ>





oh fun fact about China's space program! A lot of their stuff is named after myths, so you have the Chang'e lander (left), the Yutu / Jade Rabbit rover (depicted on the right), a planned Heavenly Court space station, and more <https://t.co/u8hapjVPJq>



THE WHOLE ONLINE SHOPPING SEQUENCE IS REPRESENTATION OF CHINA'S VERY VERY ROBUST E-COMMERCE INDUSTRY LOL

well maybe it's robust in America too but here in Canada I have to wait at least a week for anything to be delivered...while in China everything comes in 2-3 days <https://t.co/Qx9ulamLzx>



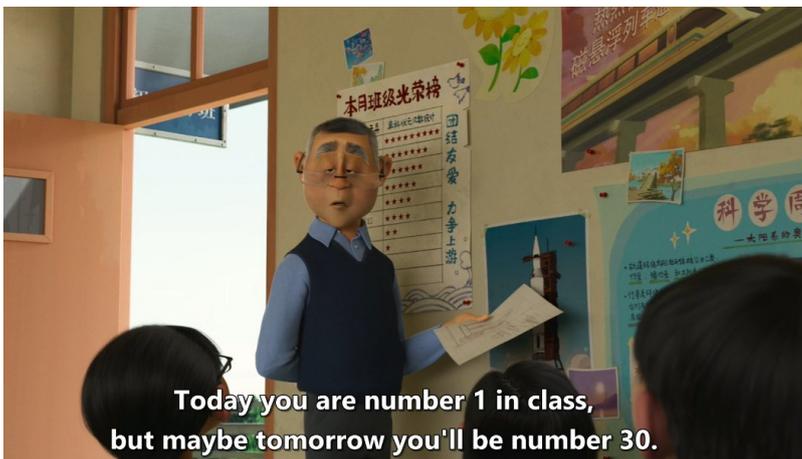
here comes the ugly Chinese winter school uniforms...they basically only come in red or blue...how i suffered aesthetically....

also in China you stick with a single class and classroom for every subject! the teachers are the ones who have to move around <https://t.co/8A1ZCLGjwK>



...by one of the most famous poets
in the Tang and Song dynasties.

and it's totally true that the classes have a ranking poster somewhere to praise all the best-scoring students while the kids with the worst grades are constantly shamed <https://t.co/JRWSNT4exm>



Today you are number 1 in class,
but maybe tomorrow you'll be number 30.

the poem written on the board is that famous Mid-Autumn Festival poem by Song dynasty poet Su Shi / Su Dongpo

<https://t.co/YqsNlu2MqM> <https://t.co/MbZMu1sibK>



English translation

Water Melody

Mid-autumn of the Bing Chen year

Having been drinking happily over night
I'm drunk

So I write this poem
Remembering my brother, Zi You

When will the moon be clear and bright?

With a cup of wine in my hand, I ask the clear sky.
In the heavens on this night,
I wonder what season it would be?

I'd like to ride the wind to fly home.

Yet I fear the crystal and jade mansions
are much too high and cold for me.
Dancing with my moonlit shadow,
It does not seem like the human world.

The moon rounds the red mansion,

Stoops to silk-pad doors,
Shines upon the sleepless,
Bearing no grudge,

Why does the moon tend to be full when people are apart?

People experience sorrow, joy, separation and reunion,

The moon may be dim or bright, round or crescent shaped,
This imperfection has been going on since the beginning of time.

May we all be blessed with longevity,

Though thousands of miles apart, we are still able to share the beauty of the moon together.

they actually had her build a functioning rocket as;dlkjf

This is big "anything you can do, some 12-year-old Asian child out there does it better than you" energy
<https://t.co/Ptd9LSKFf4>





look it's the GAY MOON LIONS

well the movie calls them lions, but if they're winged then they're probably also inspired by pixiu, a myth creature that looks like a winged lion with short antlers <https://t.co/v1b4iKhifX>



Lunaria in this movie is a completely original design, but in myth, Chang'e lived in the Guanghan Palace, with only Jade Rabbit as company

also some dude Wu Gang who got banished to the moon to try and cut down a tree that continuously heals itself. so like Chinese Sisyphus. <https://t.co/ZuIZZET6YC>



and then look it's Chang'e!

Or 3D cartoon me, apparently! <https://t.co/N49rAeOTa8>



i've seen some mainland Chinese complaints about this Chang'e being "too Western" and "different from Eastern beauty standards" but honestly...i love her idgaf

let Chang'e be fierce 2k20 <https://t.co/KWNzItlxQj>



-Improved.
-So much better!



You may now give me the gift.

in one version of the Chang'e story she turns into a toad the moment she arrives on the moon as a punishment for her greed so this is probably a reference ■ <https://t.co/uJb1QCI3UN>



-[croaks]
-[audience gasps]

i don't know why the angry birds are here tho <https://t.co/UrcmANRvm1>



Ping Pong is here because Chinese people dominate the sport and they're proud of it loooooool

like at the Olympics the top contenders are usually Chinese vs Chinese. there is no suspense. <https://t.co/RgNw0j6D4K>



Chang'e is all i want to be tbh

I NEED THESE OUTFITS <https://t.co/n3FlqQExXm>



LOOK AT THIS GODDEEEEEESS

(i mean she lost the match but we don't care) <https://t.co/GdkS2f9yTe>



ken jeong is here but did...did they name his character after the Gobi Desert?

i switched it to Chinese subs and he's named Jello there instead lol <https://t.co/f18uExKoPx>

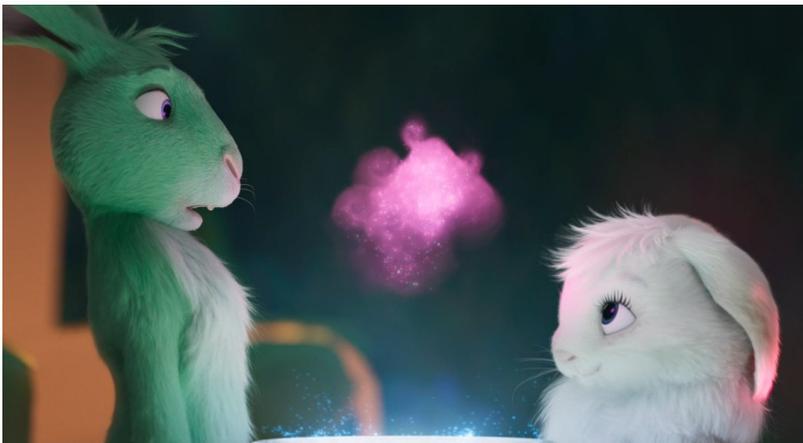


also in English the Jade Rabbit is making a "potion," but in Chinese he's making "medicine," as he does in Chinese myth
<https://t.co/Ja8exEbBU5>



it's implied that the final missing ingredient for the potion is love, which Bunjee managed to give

damn what is this instalove going on here <https://t.co/EpnGcqWZdM>



The two lines of Mandarin that Chang'e sings aren't translated in the English subs, but I switched to Chinese and they mean "I wish you everlasting love in every lifetime" <https://t.co/CZ13Hy1S3T>



it's telling that the first thing Gobi assumes after Fei Fei says her dad is remarrying is that her mom passed away instead of "they got a divorce." Unfortunately, there's still a lot of stigma associated with divorce in China. Parents are pressured to "stay together for the kid" <https://t.co/mTLoEsdcpw>



Jade pendants worked as contracts in ancient Chinese law!! The terms were carved onto it, then the pendant was broken in half, with each party carrying a piece. This pendant probably held Chang'e and Houyi's promises to each other. <https://t.co/uruagdJLg>



it's not explained why this is the last time Chang'e and Houyi can see each other, but they're singing "Thoughts of missing you are hard to bear; I wish I could be with you" <https://t.co/hgZtzq2HPd>



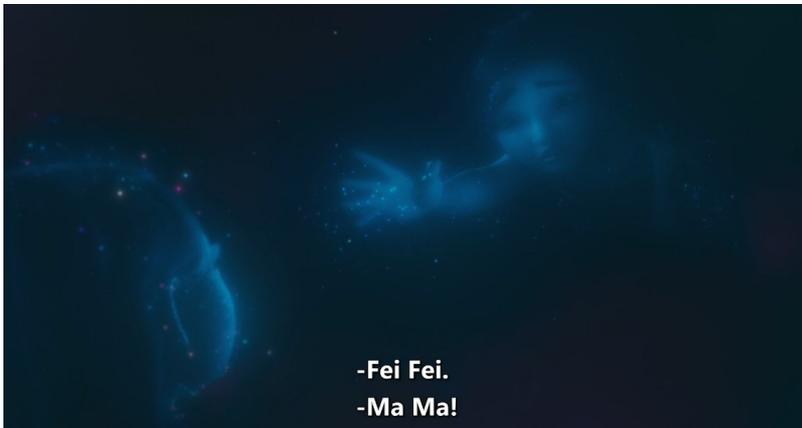
Chang'e is depicted in Tang-dynasty-style makeup a lot because that's the era where women looked most...spiritual and heavenly (how do i translate the connotations of ■ lol)

also plug for my thread on this style of makeup

<https://t.co/lgwngcFZ56> <https://t.co/zbMReaCR9P>



Chang'e and Fei Fei's shared grief is what connects them, i wasn't ready for this ■ <https://t.co/yQkvm2BGCP>



Chang'e looking so pretty while Fei Fei's out here dressed like the Michelin man tho

(but i will say, this style of coat is very common in China) <https://t.co/SSztMZlpM6>

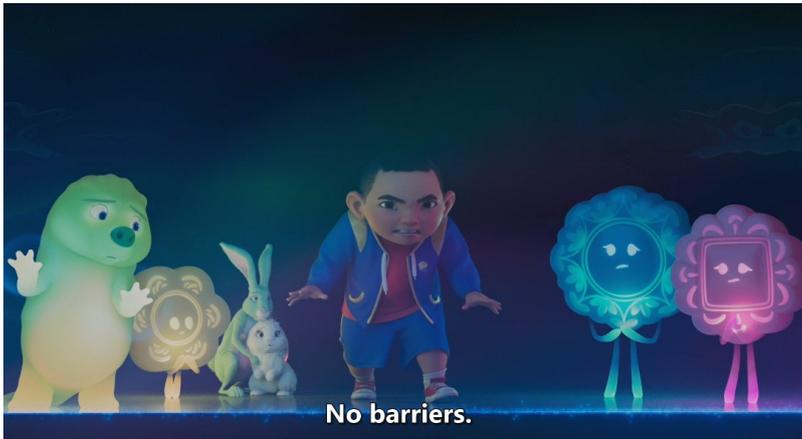




♪ And though it hurts to miss her ♪

see, getting a little brother is actually very terrifying for an Eldest Daughter in an Asian Family because u nEVER KNOW IF YOUR FAMILY IS GONNA FAVOR HIM IN ALL CASES

but i assume this is gonna work out for them <https://t.co/wSriXc6nkm>



No barriers.



[chuckling]

BUNGEE YOU MET HIM 20 MINUTES AGO!!!!

but i understand the desire to leave Earth, carry on <https://t.co/QzP7yOldfY>



Goodbye, Bungee.



Fei Fei does not get to keep the picture to flex about how she met Chang'e after all : (<https://t.co/4knVXb89Vw>



DOUBLE SMOOTH BALLS

I TOLD YOU THESE LIONS WERE GAY <https://t.co/dpuruzpfyv>



LMAO @ the passive aggressive way the medal is positioned

Fei Fei's dad and Chin's mom have a pic in Western style wedding wear here, but they probably have more in an album

in a whole range of outfits. That's a thing to do when you get married in modern China lol. <https://t.co/HhQd75zjQn>



WAIT SHE BROUGHT THE SPACE DOG HOME AS A PET?? THE POWER..... <https://t.co/nRdxvJy6SR>



Out of the way, Space Dog!

this is true!! because Circle (Yuan ■) sounds like Reunion (Tuanyuan ■■) <https://t.co/TTuyukbIRm>



the circle of a Mooncake
is the symbol of a family coming together.

oh i forgot to mention but having a meal in the courtyard is also pretty common if you live in a traditional house and there are lots of people over <https://t.co/OagnPHBXAL>



after Fei Fei shows she has moved on the crane flies to join other cranes ■ <https://t.co/iFii5dLadV>



AND THAT IS IT

WHEEEE

I definitely recommend this movie if you want a magical experience and don't mind crying loool <https://t.co/mjllA383IH>



More tweet threads on Chinese history and culture! <https://t.co/aATtiwc0EP>

My book, a Pacific Rim x The Handmaid's Tale reimagining of China's only female emperor, out Fall 2021:
<https://t.co/0maa4qQFgc>

My YouTube channel: <https://t.co/8JeskHF439> <https://t.co/nd9CuWISVw>

General Chinese History Tweets
Chinese Myth Tweets
MDZS/The Untamed Cultural Annotation Tweet Threads
Hardcore Chinese Women Tweets
Chinese/Asian Diaspora History Tweets
Chinese LGBT History Tweets
Ancient Chinese Science and Technology Tweets
Hilarious Chinese Poetry / Language Stuff
Tweets About How Ancient Chinese People Lived