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*Mulan* Movie Assignment Honors

In order to dive into Ancient Chinese history, legend, and culture, we will be viewing the 1998 Disney film, *Mulan*, based upon the Chinese tale of Hua Mulan. The purpose of this assignment is to pull the film apart to discover its factual elements that illustrate Chinese culture and history. This assignment will be completed in four parts:

1. Reading the primary source material reading: “The Ballad of Mulan,” written by Anonymous.
2. Viewing the film, *Mulan*.
3. Filling out the film questionnaire.
4. Completing the reflection.

“The Ballad of Mulan”

*Written by Anonymous*

5 A.D.

Tsiek tsiek and again tsiek tsiek, Mu-lan weaves, facing the door.

You don’t hear the shuttle’s sound,

You only hear Daughter’s sighs.

They ask Daughter who’s in her heart,

They ask Daughter who’s on her mind.

“No one is on Daughter’s heart, No one is on Daughter’s mind.

Last night I saw the draft posters,

The Khan is calling many troops,

The army list is in twelve scrolls,

On every scroll there’s Father’s name.

Father has no grown-up son,

Mu-lan has no elder brother.

I want to buy a saddle and horse,

And serve in the army in Father’s place.”

In the East Market she buys a spirited horse,

In the West Market she buys a saddle,

In the South Market she buys a bridle,

In the North Market she buys a long whip.

At dawn she takes leave of Father and Mother,

In the evening camps on the Yellow River’s bank.

She doesn’t hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,

She only hears the Yellow River’s flowing water cry tsien tsien.

At dawn she takes leave of the Yellow River,

In the evening she arrives at Black Mountain.

She doesn’t hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,

She only hears Mount Yen’s nomad horses cry tsiu tsiu.

She goes ten thousand miles on the business of war,

She crosses passes and mountains like flying.

Northern gusts carry the rattle of army pots,

Chilly light shines of iron armor.

General die in a hundred battles,

Stout soldiers return after ten years.

On her return she sees the Son of Heaven,

The Son of Heaven sits in the Splendid Hall.

He gives out promotions in twelve ranks

And prizes of a hundred thousand and more.

The Khan asks her what she desires.

“Mu-lan has no use for a minister’s post.

I wish to ride a swift mount

To take me back to my home.”

When Father and Mother hear Daughter is coming

They go outside the wall to meet her, leaning on each other.

When Elder Sister hears Younger Sister is coming

She fixes her rouge, facing the door.

When Little Brother hears Elder Sister is coming

He whets the knife, quick quick, for pig and sheep.

“I open the door to my east chamber,

I sit on my couch in the west room,

I take off my wartime gown

And put on my old-time clothes.”

Facing the window she fixes her cloudlike hair,

Hanging up a mirror she dabs on yellow flower powder

She goes out the door and sees her comrades.

Her comrades are all amazed and perplexed.

Traveling together for twelve years

They didn’t know Mu-lan was a girl.

“The he-hare’s feet go hop and skip,

The she-hare’s eyes are muddled and fuddled.

Two hares running side by side close to the ground,

How can they tell if I am he or she?”

*Mulan* Questionnaire

As you are watching the film, fill out the following questionnaire.

Throughout the film, write down the similarities between “The Ballad of Mulan” and the Disney film, *Mulan.*

Throughout the film, list specific examples of Chinese culture and superstitions.

1. Identify 5 examples of Mulan’s filial piety.

2. List 5 examples of Mulan’s gender expectations.

3. Why is Mulan concerned about pleasing her father?

4. Explain the role of ancestors throughout the movie.

5. Why was Mushu demoted from being a guardian?

6. What does the film tell you about the lives of women in Ancient China?

7. What does the film tell you about the live of men in Ancient China?

8. Why did Mulan take her father’s place?

9. Why is honor so important to Mulan?

10. List 5 examples of Captain Li Shang’s filial piety.

11. What are 2 ways that Mulan (as Ping) earns Captain Li Shang’s respect?

12. How do the soldiers view women? How is this evidenced?

13. What does Captain Li Shang mean when he says, “If we die, we die with honor”?

14. Why is it “treason” and “ultimate dishonor” for Mulan to be serving in the army?

15. Why does Captain Li Shang spare Mulan’s life after he discovers her identity?

16. Why won’t people listen to Mulan as a woman?

17. How does being a woman save China?

18. What honor did Mulan bring to China? Her family?

19. Why is Mushu allowed to become a guardian again?

20. Identify specific scenes or examples of the film that represent the three major Chinese religions/philosophies that we have studied in our unit on China:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Daoism | Legalism | Confucianism |

*Mulan* Reflection

The answers to the following questions must be typed and double-spaced and each question must be answered in 2-3 paragraphs with complete sentences.

1. Compare and contrast the “Ballad of Mulan” and the Disney film, *Mulan*. How are the two versions of the story alike? How are they different? What does each source tell you about Ancient Chinese history and culture?
2. Describe how the film portrays the role of women, ideas of filial piety and tradition, and the major Chinese religions/philosophies (including Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism).
3. Did you like the movie? Why or why not? Did the film increase your understanding of Ancient Chinese history? Why or why not?