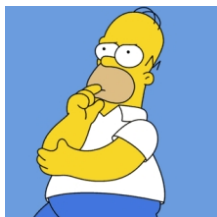


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By: Elena Gorgan, Entertainment News Editor



China Puts a Ban on 'The Simpsons'

Foreign cartoons are to stop airing prime-time from September 1st

An official ban for all foreign cartoons has been issued by the Chinese government, in an attempt to protect the domestic animation studios which, otherwise, cannot face the competition. Series like the American 'The Simpsons' and 'Mickey Mouse', and the Japanese 'Pokemon' will no longer be cast in the interval 5-8 P.M. China has more than 250 million children and a recent poll showed that more than 80 per cent of them would rather watch the above mentioned cartoons than those produced by Chinese studios. Consequently, the communist leaders have taken the drastic measure of banning them, in order to offer more support to the national struggling animation studios. By Sunday, many local newspapers had already taken to criticizing the ban, by saying that, quote, 'This is a worrying, shortsighted policy and will not solve the fundamental problems in China's cartoon industry. The viewing masses, whether adults or children, will have no choice but to passively support Chinese products'. The ban comes in a larger context of political measures meant to strengthen the position of Chinese products on the market and to discourage the use of foreign (and especially American) ones. At the beginning of the year, all TV stations were announced that they are to limit air-time for foreign shows and that their hosts must abide to a stricter dress-code while using as fewer English words as possible. Other series believed to suffer the consequences of the ban, besides those already named, will be those that feature a mixture of animation and live characters, like 'Blue's Clues' (United States) and the popular 'Teletubbies' (United Kingdom).