

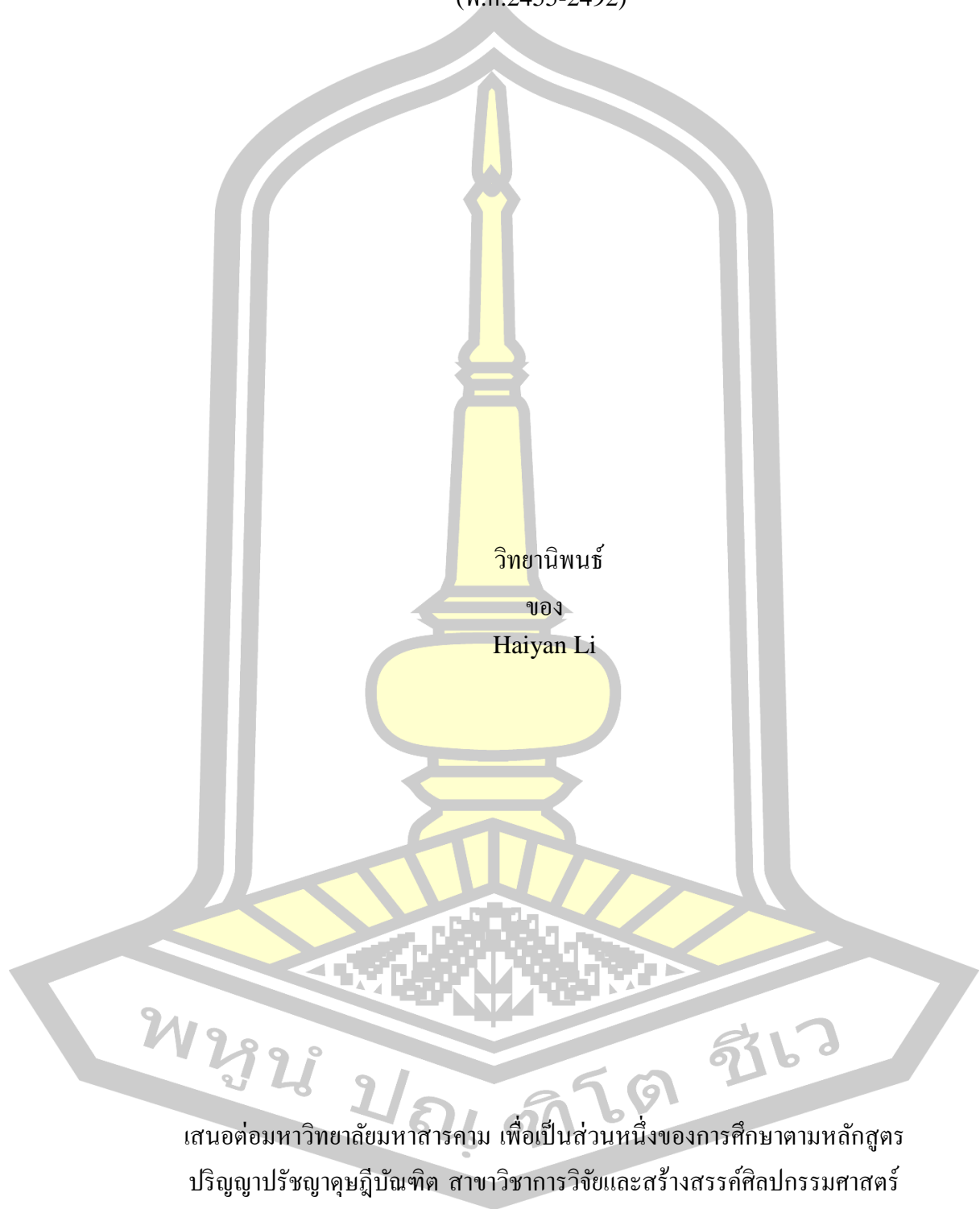
Zhang Yimou films and The Reflections on Chinese society and culture in the context  
of Republic of China (1912-1949)

Haiyan Li

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation  
June 2024

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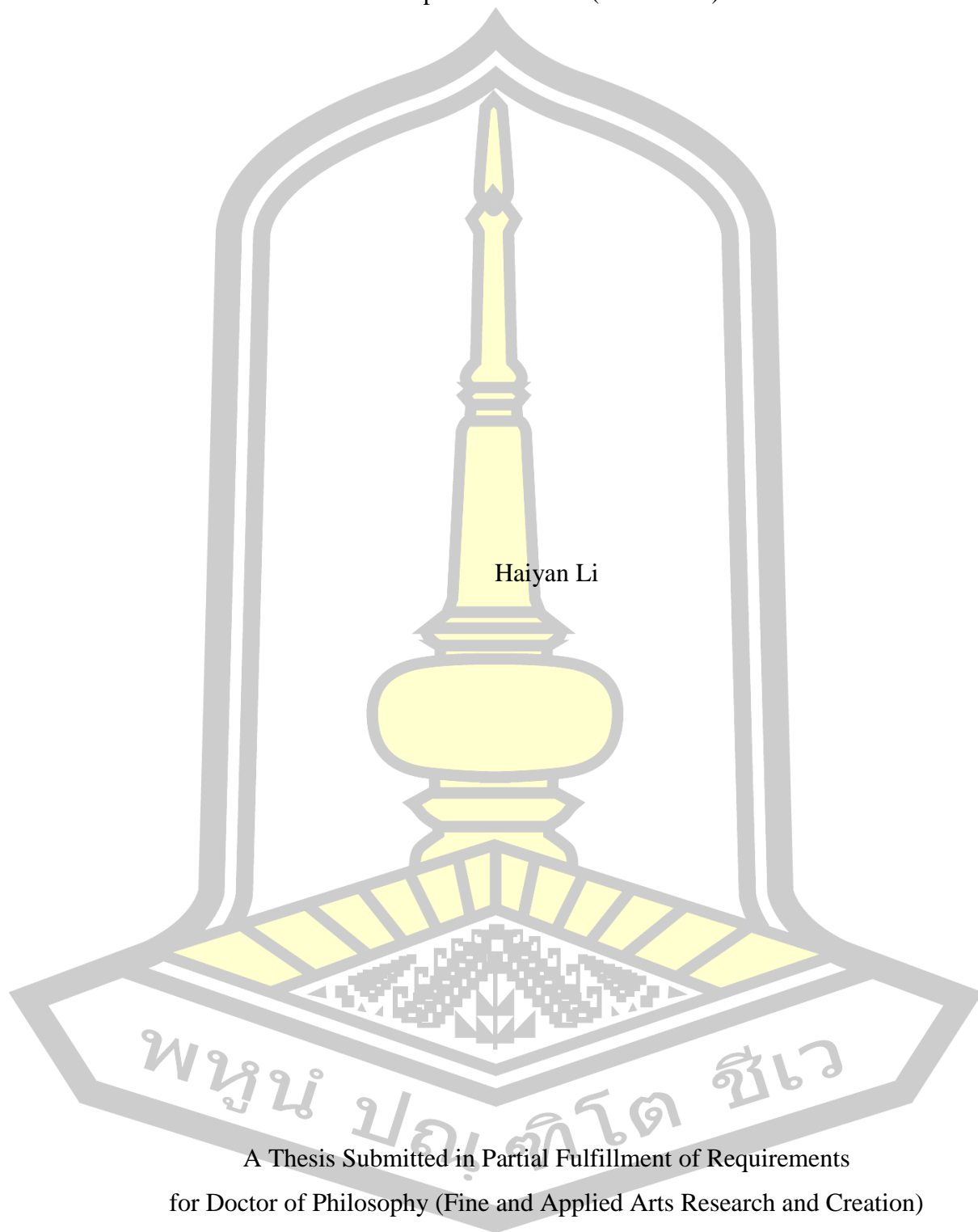
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of Republic of China (1912-1949)

Haiyan Li



A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
for Doctor of Philosophy (Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation)

June 2024

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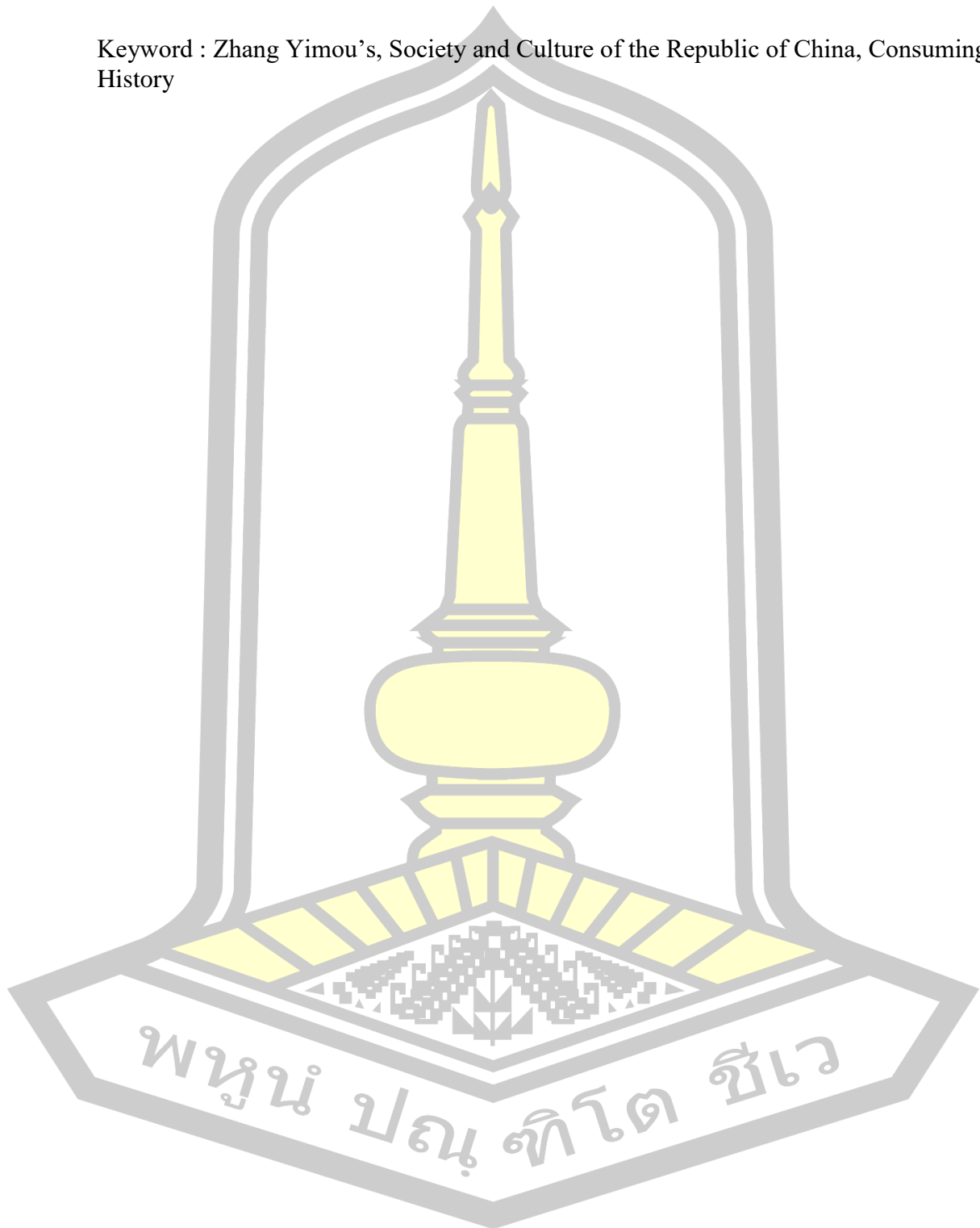
### ABSTRACT

This research is basic research. Using qualitative research methods, study "Zhang Yimou films" on the issue of the reflections on Chinese society and culture in the context of Republic of China (1912-1949). The research texts are three Zhang Yimou films, namely "Red Sorghum", "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern", also known as the Red Trilogy. The main concept used is "Consuming History". There are 3 research objectives: 1) to study Chinese society and culture during the Republic of China (1912-1949); 2) to analyze the Red Trilogy ("Red Sorghum", "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern"); 3) to study the reflection of Chinese sociocultural in the context of Republic of China (1912-1949) in Zhang Yimou's "Red Trilogy" films. The research results found that Zhang Yimou's red trilogy of films reflected the history and social culture of the Republic of China in the form of art. The audience watching these three films consumed history in the form of art. A prominent feature of the Red Trilogy is that it uses history as the stage, selects common social phenomena during the Republic of China, and even creates some cultural rituals, sets up spatial scenes, carries the performances of the characters, advances the plot of the story, and satisfies the audience's expectations of "past" society, Consumer demand for history and culture. In the Red Trilogy movies, the "use" of history is a commonplace phenomenon, and history has become a sought-after cultural commodity. As a kind of cultural capital, it is made into special symbols for human consumption. The process of Zhang Yimou's filmmaking is a process of consuming history.

The process of viewers watching movies is also the process of consuming history. Audiences don't care about the historical complexity presented in Zhang Yimou's films or the way history is explained. What they want most is a powerful emotional "experience." Audiences usually find a balance between fiction and authenticity when appreciating movies, understanding that movies are an art form rather than a mere presentation of facts. By watching the Red Trilogy, the audience understands the social background when the movie story takes place, and understands the social structure, cultural phenomena, family power relations, women's survival plight, etc. during the Republic of China period, thereby generating aesthetic feelings

and triggering questions about social culture and values. Thinking.

Keyword : Zhang Yimou's, Society and Culture of the Republic of China, Consuming History



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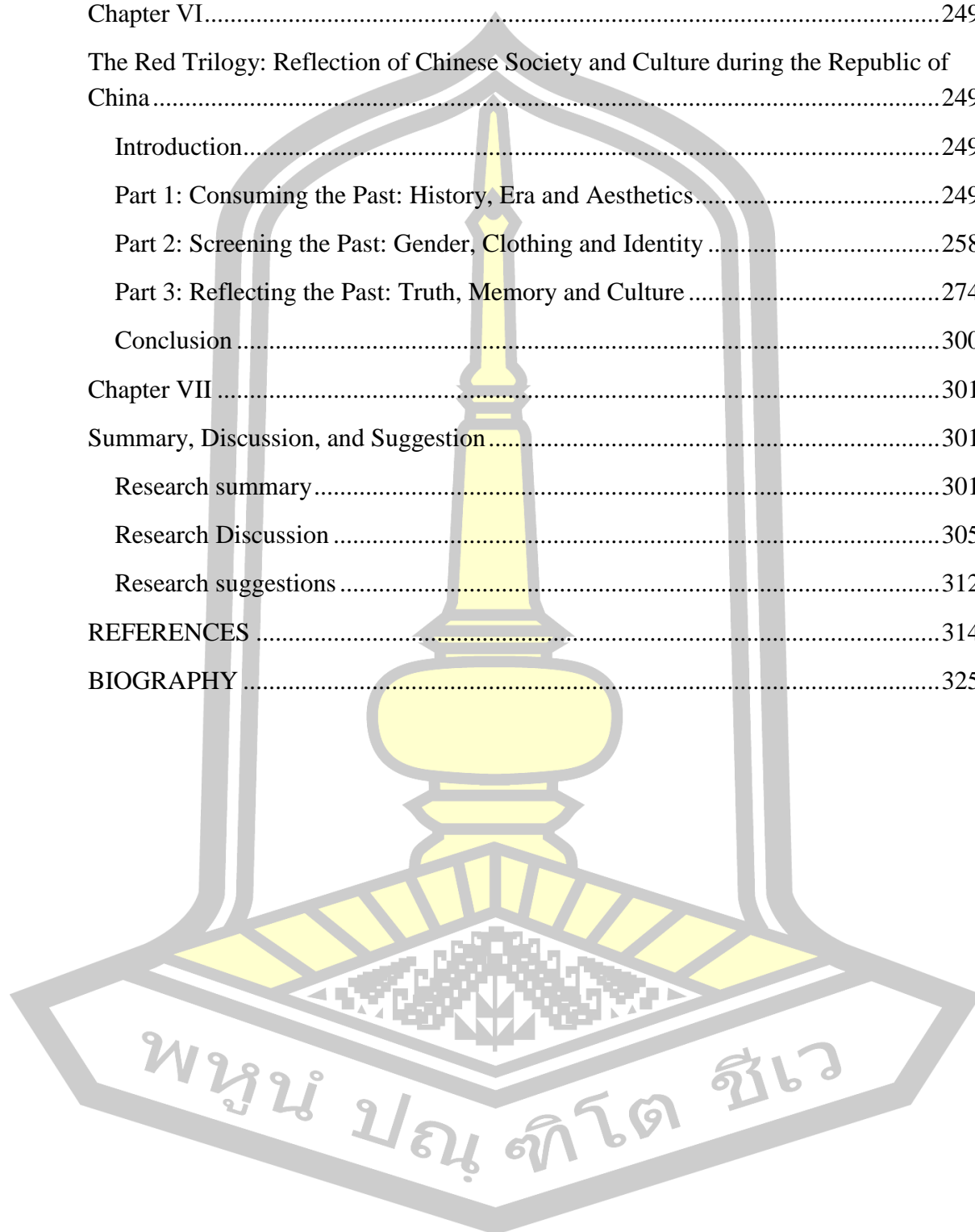
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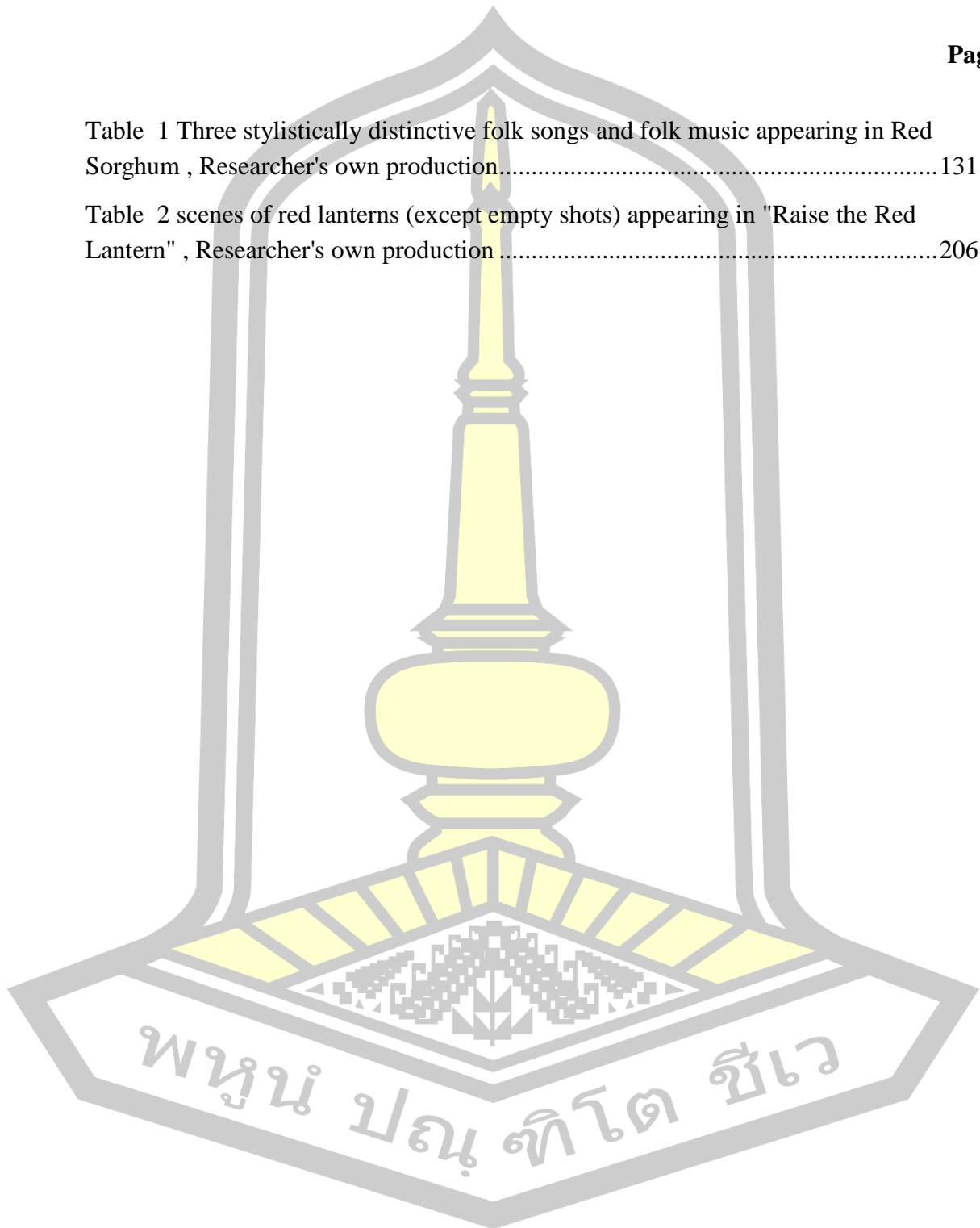
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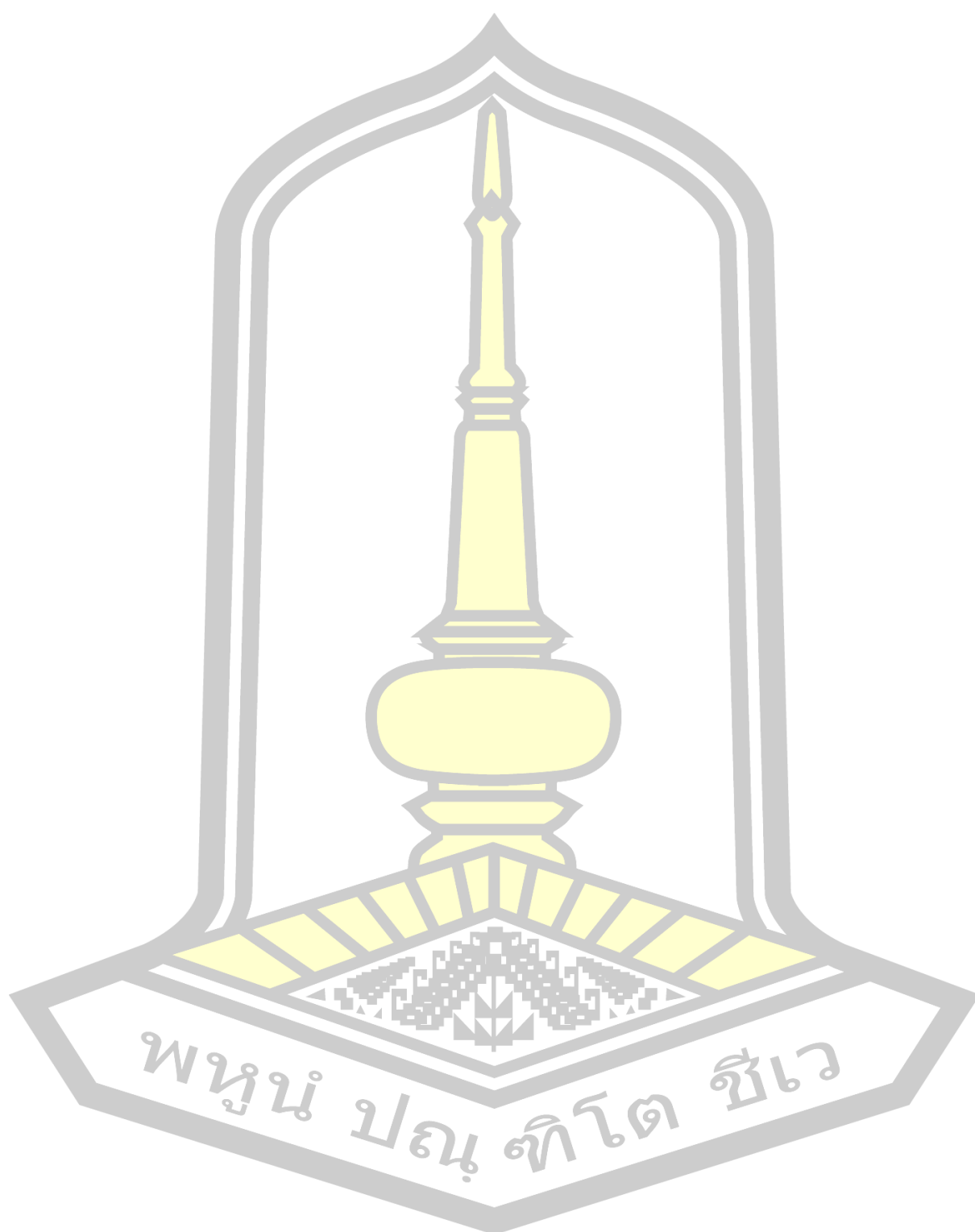
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# Chapter I

## Introduction

### 1. Background of Research

This study takes Zhang Yimou's films as the research text, and selects three films from Zhang Yimou's films that reflect The Chinese society and culture in the Republic of China<sup>1</sup> period, namely Red Sorghum (1987), Ju Dou (1990) and Raise the Red Lantern (1991) as research samples. These three films reflect the history and culture of Chinese rural society in the Republic of China in the form of art, while the audience watches these three films in the form of art for Consuming History. Therefore, the title of this study is "Zhang Yimou films: The Reflections on Chinese society and culture in the context of Republic of China (1912-1949)".

It is the above framework relations that constitute the two large issues of this research: First, film is an art form related to history, which reflects the relationship between art and history, art and society, art and culture, and art and people; Second, Red Sorghum, Ju Dou and Raise the Red Lantern can win various awards (for example, Red Sorghum won the Golden Bear award at the 38th Berlin International Film Festival, Ju Dou was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Award at the 63rd Academy Awards, Raise the Red Lantern was nominated for best Foreign Language Film at the 64th Academy Awards) shows that movies can satisfy audiences' demand for Consuming History. So, what kind of Consuming History and what kind of history did the audience consume? This is exactly the topic that this study will explore and solve.

Based on the above framework and the importance of Zhang Yimou's films in the history of Chinese films, this study will sort out the development history of Chinese films.

The history of Chinese films can be divided from many perspectives, such as time stages and generational changes of directors. In this study, taking the birth of Chinese films<sup>2</sup> (1905), the founding of the People's Republic of China<sup>3</sup> (1949), and the reform and opening up<sup>4</sup> (1978) as the boundaries, the development of Chinese film is divided into three different periods:

---

<sup>1</sup> Republic of China: In this research paper, the Republic of China refers to China from 1912 to 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Chinese movies: Chinese movies in a broad sense include movies from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. But usually when scholars conduct research, they list the films of Hong Kong and Taiwan separately for research, calling them Hong Kong films and Taiwanese films. Since the impact of Macau movies is relatively small, it can almost be ignored. And because Zhang Yimou grew up and lived in mainland China, his film creations are closely related to the social, historical, and cultural environment of mainland China. Zhang Yimou's movies are an important part of mainland Chinese movies. Therefore, the content scope of Chinese films in this study is mainland Chinese films. It is worth mentioning here that since the 21st century, Hong Kong movies have gradually declined, and Taiwanese movies have become increasingly depressed. A large number of Hong Kong and Taiwanese film practitioners have come to mainland China to seek development opportunities. The definition of Chinese movies has become more and more broad. Chinese film.

<sup>3</sup> The People's Republic of China: referred to as "China", was founded on October 1, 1949. The national flag is a five-star red flag. The capital is Beijing. The country's provincial-level administrative divisions are divided into 4 municipalities, 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, and 2 special administrative regions. China is located in eastern Asia and on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean, bordering 14 countries and adjacent to 8 countries by sea. (Website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China: <http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/index.htm>)

<sup>4</sup> Reform and opening up: It is the policy of domestic reform and opening up that China began to implement at the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in December 1978.

### From Dramatic Films to Literary Films (1905-1949)

In 1905, Ren Jingfeng, owner of Fengtai Photo Studio in Beijing, shot the part of Dingjun Mountain, a traditional Peking Opera drama starring Tan Xinpei, a famous Peking Opera actor. This was the first film made by Chinese people, marking the birth of Chinese film.

From 1905 to 1920s, Chinese film was in the stage of trial and exploration. In this period, Chinese film creators, the first generation of directors<sup>5</sup>, hardly understand the characteristics of film art, lack of artistic understanding of film, artistic expression and creation techniques are still immature. They called the film "Theatrical film" and considered the film to be another form of "drama". So the films of this period are called "Dramatic films".

The film creation of this period was divided into two stages. In the early stage, the stage plays such as Peking Opera were recorded, such as Dingjun Mountain and Changbanpo, which were shot by Beijing Fengtai Photography Studio from 1905 to 1908. In the later period, films were mainly created based on stage plays, such as China's first original short story Die for Marriage (Zheng Zhengqiu & Zhang Shichuan, 1913), and long feature film Yan Ruisheng (Ren Pengnian, 1921), Swear By God (Dan Duyu, 1922), and the family ethics film An Orphan Rescues His Grandpa (Zhang Shichuan, 1923), martial arts fantasy film Burning Paradise in Hell (Zhang Shichuan, 1928).

From the 1930s to 1949, Chinese films developed rapidly, forming the first golden age in Chinese film history. During this period, under the influence of left-wing literary movement<sup>6</sup>, Japanese invasion of China, Chinese civil war and other factors, Chinese films began to pay attention to the function of education, with the help of films to reflect the social reality, reveal the suffering of life. With the rapid development of sound films, the combination of sound and painting with exploration and the further use of montage, the narrative ability of films has been strengthened and gradually replaced silent films. Film creators gradually downplay the dramatic factors of films and combine literary means with film characteristics to create films. Therefore, the films of this period are also called "literary films".

The second generation of directors<sup>7</sup> and the first generation of directors active in this period promoted the development of Chinese film aesthetics, and created a large number of excellent films that reflected the spirit of The Times and people's expectations, touched the status quo of social life, concerned about people of different classes, reflected humanistic care, and displayed social responsibility and cultural

<sup>5</sup> First generation directors: refers to film directors during the silent film period, generally active from the early 20th century to the late 1920s. Representatives of this generation of directors include Zheng Zhengqiu, Zhang Shichuan, Dan Duyu, Hong Shen, etc. Among them, Zheng Zhengqiu and Zhang Shichuan have achieved the greatest achievements.

<sup>6</sup> Left-wing literary Movement: it took place in the first half of the 20th century. Its main organization was the League of Chinese Left-wing Literary Writers (abbreviated as "Left Alliance"), and its main sponsors were Lu Xun, Shen Duanxian and Feng Naichao. It advocates the use of Marxist criticism to judge the existing literary phenomena, emphasizes the exposure and criticism of the dark side of society, and emphasizes the writer's world outlook and the authenticity of his works. The main literary activities are: the establishment of marxist literary theory research Society; To strengthen the translation, introduction and research of Marxist theory of literature and art; Efforts to import proletarian literature from the Soviet Union and other countries in the world; They also actively promoted the popular movement of literature and art.

<sup>7</sup> The second generation of directors: Mainly active in the 1930s and 1940s, some directors were still working in the film industry until the 1950s, 1960s, and even the 1980s. Representatives of this generation of directors include: Cheng Bugao, Shen Xiling, Cai Chusheng, Shi Dongshan, Fei Mu, Sun Yu, Yuan Muzhi, etc.

functions. For example, *Raging Waves* (Cheng Bugao, 1933) focuses on social injustice in rural China. *Eight Hundred Heroes* (Ying Yunwei, 1938) is based on the real events of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression in Shanghai, China; *Angels on the Road* (Yuan Muzhi, 1937) tells the story of the underclass in Shanghai during the Japanese invasion of China. *Spring River Flows East* (Cai Chusheng & Zheng Junli, 1947), *Spring in a Small Town* (Fei Mu, 1948) shows the reality of different regions and social classes from the perspective of ordinary People's Daily life.

#### Cultural and Political Films (1949 -- 1978)

During this period, along with the founding of the People's Republic of China and the establishment of a new social system, the creative content of Chinese films changed. A large number of films extol heroes in the Anti-Japanese War and the Revolutionary War, and show the Communist party members and proletariat in the socialist revolutionary construction. While continuing to develop "literariness", Chinese films showed obvious characteristics of political education, so Chinese films in this period are called "cultural and political films".

Films from 1949 to 1966 tried hard to combine entertainment, high production level and ideological education. Various films with revolutionary and construction themes, historical themes, ethnic minorities and comedy themes appeared. The representative works were *The Red Detachment of Women* (Xie Jin, 1960), *Our Youngsters* (Su Li, 1959), *The Naval Battle of 1894* (Lin Nong, 1962), *Five Golden Flowers* (Wang Jiayi, 1959), *Big Li, Little Li and Old Li* (Xie Jin, 1962).

Influenced by political and ideological factors, Chinese films during the Cultural Revolution<sup>8</sup> (1966-1976) experienced a long period of monotonous content, fluctuating quality and isolation from world films, and the film art showed a tendency of formulization and conceptualization. During this period, colleges and universities for cultivating film talents were closed one after another, and political interference in art and culture reached a peak, forming the abnormal film culture phenomenon of "Eight operas for eight hundred million people". Peking Opera "The Taking of Tiger Mountain", "The Red Lantern", "Shajiabang", "A Surprise Attack of A White Tiger Regiment", "The seaport" and ballet "The Red Detachment of Women", "The White-haired Girl" and symphony music "Shajiabang" eight works as a model and example, recorded made into a movie, to promote and spread across the country, for social people from all walks of life to watch and learn.

The third generation of directors<sup>9</sup> flourished during this period. Influenced by the political situation, the development time and space of these film artists were greatly limited. Their creations mainly concentrated from the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, during which the artistic creation was basically in a state of stagnation. "Seek no merit in art,

<sup>8</sup> Cultural Revolution: The full name of the "Proletarian Cultural Revolution" took place from May 1966 to October 1976. It was a civil strife initiated by Mao Zedong and exploited by counter-revolutionary groups, which brought serious disasters to the party, the country and the people of all ethnic groups.

<sup>9</sup> The third generation directors: Directors and artists who entered the film industry after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. They are called the "third generation" of Chinese film directors. Representatives include Cheng Yin, Xie Tieli, Shui Hua, Cui Wei, Ling Zifeng, Xie Jin, Lin Nong wait. Affected by the political situation, the creations of third-generation directors were mainly concentrated before the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, and the creations of some directors continued after the end of the Cultural Revolution.

but seek no fault in politics" (Cheng Yin, 1950) was the common aspiration of film workers in this period.

From 1976 to 1978, although has ended the "Cultural Revolution", the film art also present a new climate in a certain degree, a batch of reflection of the cultural revolution, appeared to reflect major revolutionary history theme movie, but as a result of political factors, the influence of film art one hand tied behind your back, the number of films is not much, the quality is generally not high.

#### Diversity Films (1978-present)

Since the launch of the reform and opening-up policy in December 1978, China has witnessed rapid economic development, great liberation of the mind, flourishing cultural undertakings and a new look of Chinese society.

Chinese film gradually recovered, and began to turn in great strides to artistic exploration, to the world trend, to the entertainment demand, and successfully go out of the country, to the world.

During this period, the fourth generation of directors<sup>10</sup>, the fifth generation of directors<sup>11</sup>, and the new generation of directors<sup>12</sup> appeared in films and on stage in China, they actively innovation film language, pay attention to the subjectivity, symbolic images, allergenicity, and narrativity, rebel, reflections on history, pay close attention to national culture, to reconstruct the national spirit, emphasize the realistic, daily life, to explore the individual spirit, etc., It has written a new chapter in the development of Chinese film, and promoted the formation of a diversified cultural and artistic pattern of Chinese film with diverse types, rich connotations, contention of a hundred schools of thought and flowering of a hundred flowers. Chinese film has entered an unprecedented period of rapid development.

Film in the modern sense began in 1979, and the fourth generation of directors laid the foundation for the development of modern Chinese film. "They are a rare

<sup>10</sup> The fourth generation of directors: refers to a group of people who received film theory study or practice at Beijing Film Academy, Shanghai Theater Academy and some film studios before the "Cultural Revolution", and actively engaged in independent film creation after the "Cultural Revolution". Representatives include Xie Fei, Zheng Dongtian, Wu Yigong, Zhang Nuanxin, Teng Wenji, Huang Jianzhong, Wu Tianming, Yang Yanjin, Guo Baochang, etc. The fourth generation of directors was mainly active in the early 1980s, and some directors still had works published in the early 21st century.

<sup>11</sup> Fifth Generation Directors: refers to the directors who graduated from the Beijing Film Academy A group of young filmmakers graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982, whose works are characterized by strong subjectivity, symbolism and allegory, and whose representatives are Zhang Yimou Zhang Yimou Chen Kaige Mr. Tian Zhuangzhuang Tian Zhuangzhuang , Huang Jianxin, Huo Jianqi, Zhang Junzhao, Wu Ziniu and so on. The fifth generation of directors came out of nowhere in 1984 and quickly became the leading figures of Chinese cinema, and many of them are still active in the Chinese film industry.

<sup>12</sup> New Generation Directors: Before the Fifth Generation Directors, people often divided Chinese film directors of the same period and different periods according to "generation", but with the development of the society, the styles and genres of Chinese films are becoming more and more diversified, and it is difficult to form a unified theme to express the styles of the group of film directors of the same period. Therefore, people in the film industry use the terms "independent film", "underground film", "new generation film" and "sixth generation" to refer to the fifth generation of Chinese film directors. Therefore, people in the film industry use "independent film", "underground film", "new generation film", "sixth generation film", etc. to refer to Chinese film directors after the fifth generation of directors. In this paper, we adopt the term "new generation directors". The new generation of directors refers to those who graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in the mid- to late 1980s. Beijing Film Academy, Central Academy of Drama, Shanghai Theater Academy and other art schools in the mid and late 1980s, and a group of young directors who began to direct films after the 1990s. Representative figures include Jia Zhangke Jia Zhangke Zhang Yuan Wang Xiaoshuai Wang Xiaoshuai Wang Chao, Mr. Lu Mr. Zhang Yuan, Mr. Wang Xiaoshuai, Mr. Lu Zhang Ming. Mr. Zhang Ming, Mr. Wang Xiaoshuai Guan Hu Mr. Guan Hu, He Jianjun Mr. He Jianjun Lou Ye Lou Ye Zhang Yang Zhang Yang Wang Quan'an Lu Chuan Lu Chuan Mr. Lu Chuan Ning Hao , Jiang Wen, Li Yu, Xu Jinglei, etc.

destructive cultural ruins of growth both at home and abroad, in the late 70s at the beginning of the film back to normal production, film creation is still in the art of the stiffness of the old pattern, is their bold attempt, willing to take the blame and misunderstanding, Chinese films have deserted long already close to link up with the world trend. They not only changed the old mode of narrative, what is more important to society, to the life they have found alone, put the camera on the people of the world is seen as the box, including the soul, the life of a person, the people's will, desire, emotion, personality, etc., made a bold interpretation and deep mining, made a great contribution to the development of China's film "(Li Jinmei, 2016, p.29). Representative works are "Little Flower" (Zhang Zheng & Huang Jianzhong, 1979), "Neighbors" (Zheng Dongtian, 1981) and "My Memories of Old Beijing" (Wu Yigong, 1983).

The middle and late 1980s, especially from 1984 to 1987, was an important period for Chinese films. The fifth generation of directors rose as a group during this period and quickly became the leading figures in China's film industry. Up to now, they are still a fresh force in China's film industry. "This batch of films brought a new stage to Chinese films with the maturity of image modeling consciousness; The depth of cultural reflection provides fresh topics for the depth of the film; The performance based on the documentary provides a broader space for the film to break away from the drama "(Zhou Xing, 2005, p.264). Representative works are Yellow Earth (Chen Kaige, 1985) and Red Sorghum (Zhang Yimou, 1987).

Since the 1990s, Chinese films have shown a trend of diversification. The fourth generation of directors still stick to it, the fifth generation of directors continue to make efforts, and the new generation of directors come to the fore. With the active innovation of thematic films, aggressive co-productions, continuous surprises of urban films, strong momentum of comedy and entertainment films, improved appearance of rural films and flourishing costume films, The Chinese film market is full of vitality, showing an unprecedented good development situation. Representative works include The Story of Qiu Ju (Zhang Yimou, 1992), Farewell My Concubine (Chen Kaige, 1993), Xiaowu (Jia Zhangke, 1998), My 1919 (Huang Jianzhong, 1999), Hero (Zhang Yimou, 2002), Crazy Stone (Ning Hao, 2006), Detective Chinatown (Chen Sicheng, 2015), Song of the Phoenix (Wu Tianming, 2016), Hi, Mom (Jia Ling, 2021), The Battle at Lake Changjin (Chen Kaige & Hark Tsui & Dante Lam, 2021).

In the development course of Chinese film, especially the development history of Chinese film since the reform and opening up, Zhang Yimou's film plays an important role in promoting and leading the development of Chinese film. As a local Chinese filmmakers film works, Zhang Yimou films culture with distinct Chinese characteristics, the strong era and nation, contains the local Chinese filmmakers understanding of the Chinese national spirit and cultural traits and understanding, on the background of national life, human nature, nobody's destiny and reflection, It is these that make Zhang Yimou's films radiate different charm, become a banner of Chinese film and occupy an important place in the world film stage.

As of March 25, 2024, a total of 29 Zhang Yimou films have been released. This study selects Zhang Yimou's three films Red Sorghum (1987), Ju Dou (1990) and Raise the Red Lantern (1991), which reflect the social life of rural China in the Republic of China period, as the research samples. Red Sorghum, Ju Dou and

Raise the Red Lantern are also known as Zhang Yimou's "red Trilogy" because of the use of red elements in the three films. These three films have much to do with Chinese culture, Chinese history and Chinese rural social life, reflecting the relationship between art and society, art and culture, art and history, and art and human beings, satisfying the audience's curiosity about the "past" and their demand for consuming history. The three films also show the development process of Chinese films gradually going to the world after the reform and opening up, reflecting Chinese people's reflection on national culture, their worries about the future of traditional culture, and their exploration and attempts to further spread Chinese culture to the world.

Zhang Yimou's films have a unique artistic style and creative ideas due to his distinctive Chinese cultural characteristics, strong humanistic feelings and his attention to Chinese society and history. Therefore, Zhang Yimou's films have become excellent representatives of Chinese films and Chinese culture. Zhang Yimou's films have also represented China in international film festivals and been shown both at home and abroad, enabling people around the world to know and understand Chinese culture and history, and at the same time enabling modern Chinese people to enhance their understanding and understanding of China's "past" society, history and culture.

Zhang Yimou's films stand out among numerous Chinese films and become the representative of Chinese film art and cultural symbol, which is not unrelated to Zhang Yimou's personal growth experience.

Zhang Yimou was born in Xi 'an, Shanxi Province, China in 1950, the year after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Zhang Yimou's childhood and adolescence were marked by social upheaval in China and the decade of the Cultural Revolution. His films Such as "To Live", "Coming Home" and "One Second" have memories of this history.

During the Cultural Revolution, he worked as a laborer in a rural area of Shanxi province before returning to the city and becoming a factory worker in Xianyang, Shanxi province. Zhang Yimou's ups and downs created his strong will and spirit of hard work, which enabled him to have a unique understanding and understanding of the life of different social strata in China, and to pay attention to the fate of the little people under the background of the big era with strong humanistic feelings, which provided good materials for his later artistic creation.

Literature, painting, calligraphy and photography are Zhang Yimou's hobbies. Many of his films have been adapted from novels, such as the Red Trilogy. Thanks to his excellent photography, Zhang Yimou was admitted to the Beijing Film Academy, China's top academy for cultivating film talent, as an "older" college student. Four years of study and training in photography enabled Zhang Yimou to have a deeper understanding of composition, light, color and so on, which laid a solid foundation for his later career as a director.

After graduating from college, Zhang Yimou joined Guangxi Film Studio as a cameraman. In 1983, Zhang Yimou participated in the film One and Eight (Zhang Junzhao, 1984) as a photographer. His dark and asymmetric composition, which was different from traditional Chinese films, brought a huge impact on the Chinese film industry, and Zhang Yimou began to rise to prominence in the Chinese film industry. In 1984, Zhang Yimou took part in the shooting of the film Yellow Earth

(Chen Kaige, 1985) as a cameraman. His perfect use of color, light and composition made the film show profound cultural connotations, profound artistic conception and full charm. *Yellow Earth* won the Best Cinematography award at the Hawaii International Film Festival in the United States, the Three Continents Film Festival in Nantes, France, and the Golden Rooster Award for Chinese film.

From 1987 to 1991, Zhang Yimou directed the Red Trilogy, namely *Red Sorghum* (1987), *Ju Dou* (1990) and *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991). "Because red is expressive and gives a strong impact. I have always attached great importance to the color of the film, because it can immediately evoke people's emotions and give people a visual appeal. "" This has something to do with my shanxi origin. The soil in Shanxi is yellow and red, and the folk in Shanxi is red. In the Qin and Jin dynasties, namely shanxi and shanxi, red was used to do many things. Their custom influenced me to have a preference for red, which I then returned to express." (Luo Xueying, 1998, p.69)

Like most fifth-generation directors, Zhang Yimou's "Red Trilogy" has a zeitgeist at its core and is a concrete manifestation of the rapid development of Chinese films after the reform and opening up. "This generation of directors received formal professional training after the Cultural Revolution, with passion for innovation and desire to enter the film industry, very rational spirit of the main body and rebellious temperament. They focused on the choice of historical theme, committed to the deep of the reconstruction of the history of national culture and national spirit, through strengthening screen visual symbol modelling and freehand brushwork in traditional Chinese painting art gimmick, created the Chinese film successfully strides towards the outside world, the subjectivity of the film, symbolic, implicated, rebel with a strong personality, Represents the peak of the film since the new period "(Li Jinmei, 2016, p.30).

Zhang Yimou has produced 29 films since 1987, when he turned from photographer to director. The 29 films feature a wide range of themes, styles and genres. Due to the diversity of his creation, Zhang Yimou's films can be classified from many angles, such as art film and commercial film, rural film and urban film, historical theme and realistic theme, and some are fantasy, martial arts, comedy and other themes. Among them, the themes related to "history" include ancient costume, the Republic of China, Korean War, and the Cultural Revolution. The three samples in this study are the themes of the Republic of China among the historical themes.

All the 29 Zhang Yimou films tell stories with specific social background, certain historical attributes and reflecting certain social culture. The Red trilogy is undoubtedly an excellent representative of Zhang Yimou's films, which contain elements of red, female and the Republic of China. The Republic of China is a special period in the development of Chinese society. Before this, China has entered the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and the building of the republic of China, the end of the feudal monarchy, but thousands of years of feudal remnants are still retained in all aspects of people's life, nature of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society of China has not changed, is still not fully independent of state sovereignty, face from outside and from the internal war of aggression. After that, the People's Republic of China was founded, China became a sovereign and independent country, and the socialist system was established. The implementation of the reform and opening up policy promoted China's rapid development and stride forward to become a world

power. It can be said that the Republic of China was in a period of struggle and transition of Chinese society, which was an important node of the transformation of Chinese society. Understanding the history and culture of the Republic of China is helpful to better understand the social changes and cultural phenomena in China.

The Red Trilogy is a film with the background of China's rural social life in Zhang Yimou's films themed on the Republic of China. There are two reasons for choosing films of the type of rural social life in the Republic of China as research samples: 1) The countryside is the basic level of Chinese society, and focusing on the countryside can better understand and understand The Chinese society during the Republic of China. 2) The film was shot during the reform and opening-up period, but it tells the story of "the past". When modern people shoot "the past", it is inevitable that modern people reinterpret and interpret the society, culture and history of "the past". In the consumption of "history", the audience enjoys the spiritual pleasure and acquires new knowledge. In addition, the comparison between the old and new times also reveals the social and cultural changes in China.

Although the Red Trilogy tells stories about rural society in China during the Republic of China, the specific social background and cultural phenomena are different.

Red Sorghum (1987) is a story set in the 1930s, when China was facing Japanese aggression and there was a widespread sense of resistance among the Chinese people. In the film, Zhang Yimou tells the story of a "legend" story, created a group of Chinese ordinary people such as "my grandma", "my grandpa" and uncle Luo Han, praised their national spirit of daring to live, die, love and hate, and also made a reflection on the history, character, psychology, culture and way of living of the Chinese nation. The film won the Golden Bear award at the 38th Berlin International Film Festival in 1988, becoming the first Asian film to do so.

The story of Red Sorghum takes place in the countryside of Shandong Province during the Anti-Japanese War. The protagonist of the story belongs to the lower and middle class of the rural society. "my grandmother" Jiu'er and "my grandfather" Yu Zhan'ao run a sorghum distillery together after twists and turns. However, during the Japanese war of aggression, both the heroine and the distillery staff are killed by the Japanese army for participating in the resistance movement.

Jiu'er and Yu Zhan'ao represent the vigorous Chinese people who can break the shackles of the secular world and live a rebellious life. "The meaning of life can only be discussed after a vigorous and lively existence, which is what human nature is designed for. The freedom of life is itself the beauty of life. And love and death are the sublime manifestations of life. Death is cruel, love is tempting. In my heart of hearts, love and death are both worshiped as sacred and beautiful things in life. Therefore, not only 'jolting sedan chair', 'wild marriage', 'sacrifice to the god of wine' and other scenes of life happiness with a strong ceremonial; Finally, after 'my grandma' died, the child shouted 'Mom, mom, go southwest', With the child's cry, rows of subtitles rose, which seemed to be a funeral ceremony. All these plays bear my deep admiration for life "(Luo Xueying, 1988,p.41).

Uncle Luo Han and the workers in the distillery represent the simple, honest, hard-working and kind Chinese people. These people may be cautious and kind to others in daily life, and may even be timid and humble, but they will not hesitate to rebel against The Japanese invasion in front of the big right or wrong. Uncle Luo

Han's tragic death further aroused the national consciousness of Yu Zhan'ao, Jiu'er and the workers of the distillery. Although they knew they were weak, they still actively participated in the battle against the Japanese army.

Tu Sanpao from bandits to the anti-Japanese hero identity conversion, butcher from the Japanese slaves to the anti-Japanese warrior identity conversion, on behalf of the deep national crisis in front of the "bad guys" also inspired bloody, on the road to the anti-Japanese salvation, to save the weak country and the unfortunate nation.

Red sorghum in the film is not only the spiritual representation of the characters' fervent emotions, but also the basis of their "existence". The Sorghum fields was the stage for their fun and singing, as well as the place where they lived and cultivated. But when the Japanese army used the sorghum fields as a slaughterhouse and execution ground for killing people, the owner of the sorghum fields was bound to use it as a battlefield for life and death struggle and a graveyard for burying the enemy.

Red Sorghum tells a story that takes place in the "past", showcases Chinese culture, praises the national spirit, and reflects on history as well as speaking on reality. "The reason why I shot 'Red Sorghum' with vigour and splendor is to show a happy attitude towards life and express the simple truth that 'a person lives a breath, a tree lives a skin'. Only in this way can the people develop vigorously and the national strength remain strong" (Luo Xueying, 1988,p.40).

Ju Dou (1990) tells the story of two men who call themselves nephews and their sexual entanglement with the same woman: in the 1920s, Ju Dou, a young woman, marries Yang Jinshan, the owner of a dyehouse, but is abused by her impotent husband. Yang Tianqing is the nephew of Yang Jinshan, Ju Dou and Yang Tianqing love each other, give birth to a son Yang Tianbai, Yang Tianbai killed his own father Yang Tianqing eventually, lead to human relations tragedy. The film was nominated for the Palme d'Or at the 43rd Cannes International Film Festival in 1990 and for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 63rd Academy Awards in 1991. It was also the first Chinese mainland film to be nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards.

The story of Ju Dou is set in a mountainous village in China. The main characters Ju Dou, Yang Tianqing and Yang Jinshan live together in a cloth producing family, which belongs to the middle and lower class in the rural society of the Republic of China. In the rural society at that time, the male-centered family system was absolutely dominant. From sacrificial rites, weddings and funerals to the names of newborn babies, all of them needed to be "verified" by the family. Men are in the dominant position in society, and women are subordinate to men.

Ju Dou's unhappy marriage epitomized the marriages of women in rural China at the time. Despite being a victim of feudal ethics, Ju Dou did not succumb to her fate. Like Jiu'er in Red Sorghum, Ju Dou is a defiant and self-conscious woman. She doesn't have to sacrifice for the characteristics of virtue, not with negative and conservative attitude for a harmonious interpersonal relationship and social relationship between surface, she is rebellious, rational, and sometimes even some cruel, she load in the history of the special connotation of culture, tradition, towards the feudal patriarchal system, powerful desperate against the patriarchal society.

As a victim of feudal ethics, Yang Tianqing appeared timid and humble, which had a lot to do with his long-term position at the bottom of the society, but under the attraction of "sex", he finally took the step of struggle.

Yang Jinshan in the film is the image of the defender of feudal ethics, he is the spokesman and practitioner of the patriarchal society. He did not regard his wife as a person, beating and insulting his wife at will, desperate to carry on the family line. Instead of finding the reason why he could not give birth to his son, he blamed all the faults on his wife and abused two wives to death successively.

The viewpoint of *Ju Dou* is "human nature"-----Unhealthy psychosexuality and abnormal sexual behavior between men and women are placed in the social environment which are interwoven with ethics, social system, historical background and people's living conditions, presenting a complex scene with tragic color.

The profoundness of *Ju Dou* lies in the fact that it reveals the distortion of human nature caused by ethics, where almost everyone is not spared. It is a tragic song, exposing the great conflict between the pursuit of human nature and the inhuman society and culture. The tragic origin of the characters lies not only in the oppression of external forces, but also in the distortion of human nature. More sadly, as a decadent traditional culture, it has been handed down from generation to generation for a long time.

*Raise the Red Lantern* (1991) revolves around feudal ethics. It tells the story of several concubines of a polygamous family who quarreled with each other and led to a series of tragedies. The film was nominated for the Golden Lion at the 48th Venice International Film Festival in 1991 and won the Silver Lion at the 48th Venice International Film Festival. In 1992, it was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film award at the 64th Academy Awards, becoming the second Chinese film to be nominated for this award after *Ju Dou*.

The story of *Raise the Red Lantern* takes place in a small town in China during the Republic of China. The Chen family, a wealthy family, belongs to the upper class of rural society. At that time, China Rural was a patriarchal society, and the feudal remnants were still very strong. Women were seen as the property of men, as a vehicle for male sexuality and procreation.

Like Jiu'er in *Red Sorghum* and Ju Dou in *Ju Dou*, Song Lian, the heroine of *Raise the Red Lantern*, is also a woman with rebellious spirit. She was a college student educated in new ideas, who was forced to drop out of school due to a family accident and married into the Chen family. She became the concubine, known as Fourth Mistress. She chose to walk to the Chen family compound on her own, "going against the grain" of the bridal sedan chair that greeted her, dismissing traditional marriage ceremonies. She dares to challenge Chen's family rules, pretends to be pregnant, secretly visits the dead man's house, and takes revenge on Second Mistress and Yan'er for exposing her false pregnancy. Although many of her behaviors are obviously childish, they all show Song Lian's strong self-consciousness and rebellious spirit. Of course, in the face of the powerful patriarchal system of traditional society, Song Lian's action was nothing but an egg against a stone, and finally only got a crazy tragic outcome.

The film's other main female characters are also successful. Yu Ru, the wife of the Owner of the Chen family, maintained her authority as the mistress of the house by virtue of silence and compromise; Second Mistress Zhuo Yun lost her ego and blindly inseminated herself to gain favor; Third Mistress Mei Shan gained a foothold in the Chen family by virtue of her exaggerated personality and deliberate hostility.

The master of Chen house, Chen Master, was the follower and maintainer of the patriarchal social system. He does not have any positive shots in the film, and mainly reflects his existence with his voice, but shows a ruthless feudal paternalistic character to the utmost. Master Chen's dialogue is relatively simple, but very effective, as if the master does not exist, but controls the life and death of everyone in the courtyard.

The film's use of color and a series of cultural ceremonies such as hanging lanterns, lighting lanterns, sealing lanterns, washing feet and hammering feet highlight the unreasonable patriarchal society and feudal marriage system. The gist of the film is indirectly conveyed to the audience through Song Lian's conversation with Meishan on the platform: "People are ghosts, ghosts are people... Light the lanterns, put out the lanterns, seal the lanterns... I don't understand. What is a person like in this house? Like a dog, a cat, a rat, anything but a man!"

To sum up, the Red Trilogy has a prominent feature of using history as the stage, selecting the common social phenomena of the Republican period, and even creating some cultural rituals to carry the performances of the characters to satisfy the audience's demand for consumption of the society, history and culture of the "past".

One of the perspectives of this study is to explain the creative concept of Zhang Yimou's films from the point of view of the films and their creators, and to analyze the social-historical and cultural phenomena reflected in Zhang Yimou's films. As Zhang Yimou said, "To make a movie is to entrain culture, culture is entrained out, people watch this movie of yours, and while they are pleasant and touched, they feel the culture that you entrain, and they may not be aware of it themselves, and this is the value of the movie." (Fang Xi, 2012, p.183)

Zhang Yimou's films also use audio-visual language, props, and rituals to increase the authenticity of the movie, so that people can immerse themselves in the society, history, and culture of the past. For example, in *Red Sorghum*, Zhang Yimou uses the wildly dancing sorghum and hissing suona in the wind, as well as the large-scale high-speed movement of the camera and the fast-paced editing techniques to make a kind of cult of the sensual form of human life, which is rare in Chinese traditional art, appear on the screen; the red lantern in *Big Red Lanterns Hanging Tall* is a symbol of amusement, favor, love, and glory in the Chen family compound, which represents all the "happiness", and vice versa. "Happiness", on the contrary, extinguishing and sealing the lanterns means bleakness, darkness and loneliness, which symbolizes all the misfortunes.

Zhang Yimou's movie has not only been a huge success in terms of awards, market, economic benefits and discussion, but more importantly, it has also, to a certain extent, set off a fervor among Chinese and foreigners to learn and understand Chinese culture and Chinese history.

Another perspective of this study is to analyze Zhang Yimou's movies from the viewers' perspective. By watching Zhang Yimou's movies, the audience learns about the social background when the movie stories took place, the social structure, cultural phenomena, and historical events in China in the social context of that time, as well as people's living conditions, spirituality, and values, thus generating aesthetic pleasure and spiritual enjoyment, and emoting feelings about the stories and fates of the characters in the movies. These feelings are generated because of consuming history, not because of watching movies. In today's consumer society, the seriousness

and authority of history is gradually lost, and history has become a sought-after cultural commodity, made into a special symbol for consumption. This kind of history "is not produced from a changing, contradictory, real experience of events, history, culture, ideas, but from the elements of coding rules and the artifacts of media technology manipulation" (Jean Baudrillard, 2014, p. 117), so the audience's consumption of history and the content of the consumed history is the issue that this study discusses.

Zhang Yimou's great achievements in cinema have triggered academic research on Zhang Yimou's films. At present, most of the academic research on Zhang Yimou's films focuses on such perspectives as the development path of Zhang Yimou's films, literary adaptation, film narrative, body culture, female image, creative style, ideological presentation, artistic features, modernity, cultural identity, cultural reflection, folk landscape, vernacular symbols, cultural dissemination, and aesthetic features. Most of the monographs and master's and doctoral dissertations on Zhang Yimou's film studies cover all of Zhang Yimou's works, or a comparative study of some of Zhang Yimou's film works with other famous directors at home and abroad.

Regarding the use of the concept of "consumer history", foreign scholars tend to understand historical consumption from the perspective of "public historiography", while domestic scholars mostly study it from the perspectives of history-themed film and television programs, literary works, cultural and creative products, and historical consumption of video games. Domestic scholars mostly research from the perspective of historical TV programs with historical themes, literary works, cultural and creative products, and historical consumption of video games, and so on.

Few scholars have studied Zhang Yimou's films from the perspective of social and cultural reflection against the background of history, while few scholars have analyzed Zhang Yimou's films from the perspective of consumers engaging in historical consumption. Existing studies of Zhang Yimou's films are mainly from the aspects of art, culture, economic interests, market value, etc. No scholars have yet to provide academic explanations of Zhang Yimou's films from the perspective of cultural anthropology. As a film theory researcher, I am obliged to fill the academic gap in the study of Zhang Yimou's films from the perspectives of the movie creators' use of history and culture and the audience's historical consumption.

This study adopts a qualitative research method and selects the concept of "consumer history" to conduct the research. In addition, the study also analyzes Zhang Yimou's films using film-related theoretical knowledge and knowledge of Chinese history.

This study has 4 implications:

(1) On the academic side, a systematic and in-depth study linking Zhang Yimou's films and the concept of consumer history would enable the results of this study to fill the gaps in this particular academic field, while also expanding the concept of consumer history.

(2) In terms of Chinese cinema, this study's analysis of Zhang Yimou's films can provide some reference for other film creators and inspire them to create more and better works, thus promoting the further development of Chinese cinema.

(3) In terms of social impact, this study analyzes Zhang Yimou's film from the perspectives of audience's consumption of history and the film creator's reflection on Chinese society and culture, which will promote Chinese and foreign audiences to pay

more attention to and understand Chinese culture and Chinese history, and will help the Chinese audience to learn from history, "watch" history and be wise, and to cherish today's hard-won happy life. It will help Chinese audiences to learn from history, "see" history wisely, and cherish today's hard-won happy life more.

(4) In terms of spreading Chinese culture, Zhang Yimou's films, as a kind of cultural commodity with Chinese characteristics, are to a certain extent constrained by the society and culture of the era in which they are created and aesthetized. Through Zhang Yimou's films, one can not only understand the beauty of film art as well as the overview of Chinese society and culture in different periods, but also deeply understand the relationship between art and society, art and culture, art and history, art and people, which is conducive to the dissemination of Chinese film art and the further promotion of Chinese culture.

## **2. Purposes of Research**

There are 3 objectives as follow:

2.1 To study the Chinese society and culture in the context of Republic of China.

2.2 To study "Red Trilogy" in Zhang Yimou's films (Red Sorghum, Ju Dou and Raise the Red Lantern).

2.2.1 Red sorghum

2.2.2 Ju Dou

2.2.3 Raise the red lantern

2.3 To analyze the reflection of Chinese sociocultural in the context of Republic of China in Zhang Yimou's "Red Trilogy" films.

## **3. Research Questions**

3.1 What was Chinese society and culture like during the Republic of China?

3.2 What are the artistic features and functions of Zhang Yimou's "Red Trilogy" films? How does history apply to the Red Trilogy?

3.3 What social culture of the Republic of China is reflected in zhang Yimou's "Red Trilogy"? From the perspective of art and people, art and history, art and society, and art and culture, what inspirations and reflections can we get from zhang Yimou's red trilogy?

#### 4. Definition of Terms

There are three terms used in this study:

##### 4.1 Zhang Yimou's movie

Zhang Yimou's films refer to Zhang Yimou's movie works as a director. It does not include the documentaries directed by Zhang Yimou and the film works he participated in as an actor and photographer, nor does it include the works presented by Zhang Yimou as the general director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games, the cultural performances of international events, and the major domestic celebrations and gala events, and it also does not include the works of the operas and the large-scale landscapes and scenic performances directed by Zhang Yimou.

In this study, red sorghum, chrysanthemum beans, and big red lanterns hanging high in Zhang Yimou's movie were selected as research samples.

##### 4.2 Republic of China

The Republic of China (ROC) in this study refers to China from 1912 to 1949.

##### 4.3 Consumption history

The concept used in this study is "consumer history". It is taken from the book *Consuming History : Heritage and Contemporary Popular Culture* by the British scholar Jerome de Groot.

Jerome de Groot (2009) argues that the consumption of history should be understood in terms of "public history". "Public history" is a complex and dynamic entity that influences the public's understanding of the past on various levels. Whether it is history-related documentaries, reality shows, television series, films, novels, plays, comics, music, performances, antique collecting, games, genealogy, or museums as living theaters, any consumer use of history is a consumption of history. Consumption of history in this study also means historical consumption, as long as the "use" of history is historical consumption, but any consumer use related to history is historical consumption.

Specifically in movies, as long as history enters a movie work, regardless of the size, connotation, structure or deconstruction, and regardless of the past era, customs, characters, events, objects, etc., it enters a state of consuming history. In a sense, "history" and "the past" have something in common.

#### 5. Scopes of Research

##### 5.1 Content Scope

As of March 25, 2024, there are 24 Zhang Yimou movies that have been released. Three movies reflecting the social life of Chinese villages in the Republican period, *Red Sorghum* (1987), *Chrysanthemum Beans* (1990), and *Big Red Lanterns Hanging High* (1991), were selected as the study samples among the many Zhang Yimou movies, mainly based on the following factors:

(1) Films reflecting Chinese rural society during the Republican period are an important part of Zhang Yimou's movies. For Chinese and foreign audiences interested in Chinese society and culture during the Republican period, *Red Sorghum*, *Chrysanthemum Beans*, and *Big Red Lanterns Hanging High* is undoubtedly a good window.

(2) These three films not only have a lot to do with Chinese culture and customs, but also can reflect the modern interpretation of Chinese history and Chinese rural society by local Chinese filmmakers. At the same time, they also show the development course of Chinese films that have gradually gone global after the reform and opening up of China, reflecting the thoughts and interpretations of local Chinese filmmakers on the relationship between art and society, art and culture, art and history, and art and human beings, and reflect the reflection on national culture, worries about the future of traditional culture, and exploration and attempts to further spread Chinese culture to the world. It also reflects Chinese people's reflection on national culture, their worries about the future of traditional culture, and their exploration and attempts to further spread Chinese culture to the world.

(3) From the point of view of movie consumers, the fact that the audience watches Zhang Yimou's movies shows that Zhang Yimou's movies satisfy the audience's consumption demand, and the audience is precisely consuming "history" from these three movies reflecting the rural society of China during the Republican period, obtaining sensual pleasure and spiritual enjoyment, and getting new knowledge, which in turn gives Zhang Yimou's movies a new meaning of life. which in turn gave Zhang Yimou's films a new meaning of life.

## 5.2 Time Scope

The timeframe of this study refers to the time when the stories in the 3 Zhang Yimou films take place, i.e., the Republic of China period (1912-1949). Although they are all set in the context of the Republic of China, the historical scope of the 3 films does not completely overlap and the focus of the films' content is different. *Red Sorghum* takes place during the Anti-Japanese War in the 1930s and shows the life of the lower class in rural Chinese society. *Ju Dou*, which centers on a family that makes a living by weaving cloth, shows the life of the lower middle class in rural China, reflecting the way of life in the mountainous villages of China in the 1920s. *Big Red Lantern* focuses on a wealthy polygamous family and reflects the lifestyle of the upper class in rural China in the 1920s and 1930s.

## 6. Research Methodology

This study belongs to the category of "pure research" or "basic research" and adopts qualitative research methods. Through analyzing three of Zhang Yimou's films, it explores the relationship between art and society, art and people, art and history, and art and culture.

### 6.1 Population Group

#### 6.1.1 The audience of Zhang Yimou's movie

This group refers to the consumers of Zhang Yimou's movies, i.e., the audience. The audience group of Zhang Yimou's movies is very wide, including foreign and Chinese audiences of all those who have watched Zhang Yimou's movies. As far as the Chinese audience is concerned, they are distributed in all walks of life in Chinese society, and even the research and creative groups of Zhang Yimou's films are the audience of Zhang Yimou's films.

Since the Red Trilogy was released at home and abroad in 1987, 1990, and 1991 respectively, new media had not yet appeared in Chinese society at that time, and people discussed Zhang Yimou's films mainly through newspapers, magazines,

and published papers. In the 21st century, with the rapid development of network information technology and the popularization of computers, online platforms have become a new channel for viewers to express their thoughts on the movie, and online platforms and APPs such as Douban, Rotten Tomatoes, Jitterbug, Xiaohongshu, Beili Beili, PostBar, Weibo, and so on, can collect viewers' feelings about watching Zhang Yimou's movie. Among them, Douban website Douban has the highest recognition in the hearts of Chinese people, and Douban's movie scoring mechanism is even more praiseworthy, and is considered to be the most authoritative movie scoring website in China.

Douban is a Chinese community website Douban is a community website in China, founded in 2005. The site started with books and videos, providing information about books movies movies and music and other works of information, both descriptions and comments are provided by users (User-generated content (UGC), is Web 2.0 It is one of the Web 2.0 websites with special features. The site also provides a variety of services such as book and video recommendations, offline activities in the same city, group topic exchanges, etc. It is more like an innovative network service integrating a taste system (reading, movies, music), an expression system (I read, I watch, I listen) and a communication system (in the same city, in a group, in a friend's neighborhood), which is always dedicated to helping urban people discover useful things in their lives.

The age coverage of viewers who post comments on Douban is very broad, including consumers of Zhang Yimou's films from the 1980s to the present, basically anyone who surfs the Internet and dares to leave a comment on Douban is included. This study will mainly analyze the audience's comments on Zhang Yimou's films posted on Douban, which will be used to analyze and interpret Zhang Yimou's films.

#### **6.1.2 The creative community of Zhang Yimou's films**

The creative groups of Zhang Yimou's films include the director's group, actors, production group, drama group, camera group, art group, recording group, editing group, etc.. Each group contains a variety of division of labor, such as the director's group has a director, assistant director, executive director, and field recorders; the camera group has a director of photography, cameraman, assistant cameraman, assistant cameraman, mechanic, lighting technician, and assistant lighting technician; the production group is divided into a director of production, on-set producer, life producer, outreach producer, producer, coordinator, and finances; the crew group is divided into a director of production, assistant production, and crew member; the art group has a chief The production group is divided into production director, life producer, outreach producer, supervisor, coordinator and finance; the production group is divided into production director, production assistant and playwright; the art group is divided into chief artist, assistant artist, art assistant and costume, props and make-up.

Because Zhang Yimou has absolute dominance in the creation of Zhang Yimou's films, and the other creators basically work around Zhang Yimou's creative concepts and cinematic visions, this study will focus the creative community on Zhang Yimou as a director.

### **6.1.3 The research community of Zhang Yimou's films**

This group includes scholars and film critics who study Zhang Yimou's films, who are mainly academic film theory researchers, people involved in the film industry, and film industry peers. Because of the great achievements of Zhang Yimou's films, this group of people studying Zhang Yimou's films is large in number, second only to Zhang Yimou's audience. This group is characterized by a higher level of education, a deeper understanding of Zhang Yimou's films, a greater depth and breadth of published views, and many of the research results can be applied to the practice of Chinese cinema, which plays an important role in promoting the development of Chinese cinema.

This study will focus on the research of academic scholars to expand the depth of Zhang Yimou's film studies based on previous studies.

### **6.1.4 Other clusters**

This group includes distribution organizations, investors, publicity teams, screening organizations, and Chinese film censors of Zhang Yimou's films. This group plays a supporting role in this study and is used relatively sparingly.

## **6.2 Data collection**

### **6.2.1 Imaging and related literature studies**

The collection of video materials focuses on the online platform and the archive of the film studio, in which the online platform has preserved more film materials of various periods in China. The collection of documentary materials focuses on China Knowledge Network materials, published books and library materials.

### **6.2.2 Informants**

The key informants should be experts and scholars who study Zhang Yimou's films or other directors who are engaged in the film industry and have a certain degree of popularity. The interviewee should be on the front line of researching Zhang Yimou's films, or be a film director like Zhang Yimou and have in-depth knowledge and understanding of Zhang Yimou's films and the development of Chinese cinema. Informants in general consist of different members of a wide range of people involved in different professional backgrounds, social groups and economic conditions. Through interviewing them, it is possible to understand and analyze their understanding and knowledge of Zhang Yimou's films.

## **6.3 Data Analysis**

For the analysis of data collected in this study, I adopted qualitative research method. The processing, analysis and interpretation of qualitative empirical data is a process of synthesizing high-tech language and discourse system, which requires mastery of a set of special interpretation conventions and narrative techniques. I used the concepts of "Consuming History" to analyze Zhang Yimou's films.

## 6.4 Research Presentation

### 6.4.1 Paper

Descriptive Analysis and Pictures (full text).

### 6.4.2 Research Papers

Publication of papers in Scopus or other international journals as appropriate.

## 7. Literature Reviews

### 7.1 Society and Culture in the Republican Period (1912-1949)

During the Republic of China period, drastic social changes took place, but the period still belonged to a traditional society in flux. In other words, all the changes that have taken place since the Republic of China have not fundamentally touched traditional Chinese politics and traditional social systems. Although Chinese society has taken on a new dimension in terms of politics, economy, ideology, culture, concepts and ethos, the changes have occurred more in the cities and have had little impact on the vast rural areas.

During the Republic of China period, although the feudal imperial system, which had existed for thousands of years, came to an end, the feudal system and Confucianism still dominated in the rural areas, where the vast majority of the population lived. The family and clan were the basic units of society. The traditional Chinese family is like a miniature kingdom, with the head of the family holding the position of monarch, who has the power to enforce family law and manipulate the lives and deaths of family members. The government acquiesces to this all-powerful role of the family and does not interfere with the relationships between fathers and sons, husbands and wives, and siblings within the family. "Contrary to the common belief that Chinese families are usually large, the average family size is five. That notion of several generations under one roof is only appropriate for some wealthy families; ordinary families do not enjoy such luxuries. Within the family, elders and males are honored, with the older members of the family taking precedence over the younger ones, and men over women. The father was the head of the family, had absolute authority over other family members, and decided all household chores, arranged the marriages of his children, punished the disobedient and unfilial, and could even sell them." (Xu Zhongyue, 2012,p.64)

Chinese society is essentially patriarchal, with men dominating social life and women having a low social status. "A wife is expected to obey her husband; she has no property rights and enjoys no economic independence. Widows were usually considered not to remarry, and a husband could take concubines even while his legal wife was still alive." (Xu Zhongyue, 2012,p.50)

The clan can be seen as an extension and enlargement of the family. Families living within a certain geographical area and coming from the same ancestral line form a clan. Each village is a clan society with ancient customs and values, and emphasizes the importance of Confucianism, with family loyalty, filial piety, chastity, and the Three Principles and Five Rules as the code of conduct. Although the organization of the many clans varies, each clan has clan rules that often correspond to Confucian moral dogma. There is usually a clan leader, and usually an older, prominent clan member. He is assisted by the clan members in the conduct of clan

affairs, in particular, he has to manage the clan's property and ancestral halls, and to reward and punish members of the clan.

During the Republic of China period, Western thought spread further in China, and the concepts of individualism, free thinking, and equality between men and women impacted China's traditional social system and values. During this period, some women from wealthy families, with the support of their enlightened parents, went to school and gained access to education, but the majority of women, especially those in rural areas, had little such luck. They are still bound by the remnants of the feudal idea that "a woman's lack of talent is a virtue", which makes it difficult for them to escape the fate of being arranged by their parents to marry at an early age.

During this period, the handicraft industry in rural China still adopted the traditional mode of operation, and small-scale family workshops were one of the modes of rural handicraft industry. In terms of the business system, most of them adopted the proprietorship system of self-management, and the products manufactured were directly for the consumers. In poorer rural areas, this model requires relatively little capital, which enables the owners of craft workshops to purchase raw materials, produce on their own and sell their products freely.

At that time, the countryside still retained the culture and customs that had been handed down from long ago, especially at weddings, funerals and major events. In different regions, there are obvious differences in social habits and customs, for example, in some places, it is popular to "turn the sedan chair upside down" and "sing folk songs" during the process of picking up the bride in a sedan chair, and there are ceremonies of singing and sacrificing to the god of wine when a batch of good wine is newly brewed, and there are some places that have "stopping the coffin on the road" during the funeral, and there are "stopping the coffin on the road" during the newborn's funeral. In some places, there is a ritual of "blocking the coffin on the road" during the funeral, and after the birth of a newborn child, a respected patriarch of the family will be asked to give the child a name.

In short, due to the special characteristics of the Republican society, the society and culture of the Republican period showed a mixture of the old and the new, and a great difference between urban and rural areas. In rural areas, the traditional social structure and cultural practices prevailed.



## 7.2 Synopsis of Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum Beans, and Big Red Lanterns Hanging High

Although the Red Trilogy reflects the social life in the countryside during the Republican period, the three movies do not have the same specific historical background and content focus.

### 7.2.1 Red sorghumRed sorghum



Figure 1: Red Sorghum movieposter

Source: <https://image.baidu.com/> [Accessed on September 21, 2022]

The story of Red Sorghum takes place in the 1930s during the Anti-Japanese War and represents the lives of the lower and middle classes in rural China. In the rural society at that time, owning a sorghum liquor workshop belonged to the "middle class" in the countryside. Jiu'er used to live at the bottom of the social ladder, but after her husband's death, she inherited the sorghum liquor workshop and realized a class leap, and Yu Zhan'ao, through the combination with Jiu'er, also realized a leap from the lower class to the middle class. Uncle Luohan and the workers of the wine workshop, on the other hand, belong to the lower class of the rural society.

The story of "Red Sorghum" has a "legendary" color, not entirely a true reflection of rural society in China at that time, Zhang Yimou through the "fictional" story will be a group of ordinary people placed in the anti-Japanese war in the context of the times, enthusiastic life and the righteousness of the nation, the national destiny together, thus highlighting the film celebrates life, reflecting on history, reflecting the spirit of the Chinese nation. The passionate lives of the people are linked with the righteousness of the country and the destiny of the nation, thus highlighting the main theme of the movie, which is to glorify life, reflect on history, and reflect the spirit of the Chinese nation.

The process of watching the movie is the process of consuming history. Through Red Sorghum, the audience learns about the history of the Anti-Japanese War, as well as the deep disaster brought to the Chinese people by the Japanese invasion and the courageous resistance of the Chinese people. Folk cultures such as the "upside down sedan chair", "singing folk songs" and "sacrificing to the god of wine" can bring the audience aesthetic pleasure and sensory enjoyment.

The synopsis of Red sorghum is as follows:

The movie is set in Gaomi, Shandong Province, during the war period, and tells the story of "My Grandma" Jiu'er and "My Grandpa" Yu Zhan'ao, who run a sorghum brewery together after many twists and turns, but in the war of Japanese aggression, the heroine and the brewery's staff are both killed by the Japanese army because of their participation in the resistance movement. The heroine and the staff of the brewery are both killed by the Japanese army for their participation in the resistance movement during the war of Japanese aggression.

When Jiu'er was nineteen years old, she was married by her father to Li Dudu, a man in his fifties who owned a soju workshop in Shili Slope. According to the rules of the township, the bride had to be tossed around in a sedan chair, and the sedan chair bearer sang a folk song as he tossed the sedan chair around, but no matter how the bearer tossed the sedan chair around, Jiu'er never said a word.

When Jiu'er arrived at Eighteen Mile Slope, she fell in love with Yu Zhan'ao. Soon after, Big Head Li died, and the staff of the brewery didn't want to work anymore. Jiu'er persuaded all the staff to support the brewery again.

The bandit Bald Three Guns took Jiu'er away, and Uncle Luohan and the fellows gathered money to buy Jiu'er back. However, Yu Zhan'ao was so angry when he saw Jiu'er's messy hair that he ran to Bald Three Guns and put a kitchen knife on his neck until Bald Three Guns assured him with his head that he had not touched Jiu'er, and only then did Yu Zhan'ao give up.

Yu Zhan'ao in the freshly brewed sorghum wine sprinkled with urine, I did not expect the taste of sorghum wine is extraordinarily good, Jiu'er named it eighteen miles red.

Nine children's son was nine years old, the Japanese army came to their hometown, burning and looting. Nine children moved out by the Japanese devils killed Uncle Luohan year brewed eighteen miles red to the fellows to drink, they together to sacrifice to the god of wine, sang a rough and bold song of the wine offering, fighting spirit to go to fight with the Japanese army.

Jiu'er picks a good meal to reward Yu Zhan'ao and the others, but is killed by a machine gun on a Japanese army vehicle. Furious, Yu Zhan'ao and his gang rushed towards the Japanese military vehicle with fire cans and earth mines in their arms. After the battle, Yu Zhan'ao took his son's hand and came to Jiu'er's body. There was a solar eclipse in the sky, and Jiu'er's son sang a nursery rhyme in a loud voice: "Mother, go up to the southwest, wide wide road, long treasure ship .

พหุบัน ปณ จิต ชีเว

.....".

### 7.2.2 Ju Dou



Figure 2: Ju Dou movie poster

Source: <https://image.baidu.com/> [Accessed on September 21, 2023]

The story of Judeou is centered around a family that makes a living by weaving cloth, and represents the life of the lower middle class in rural China, reflecting the lifestyle of a Chinese mountain village in the 1920s. At that time, Yang Jinshan, who owned a cloth-dyeing workshop, belonged to the "middle class" of rural society, and Judou, who married Yang Jinshan, despite her family's low status, made the leap from the bottom to the middle class of rural society. Yang Tianqing is originally an orphan, and although he calls Yang Jinshan his uncle, he is not closely related to him, and is in fact a worker in Yang Jinshan's cloth-dyeing workshop, belonging to the lower class of rural society.

Unlike Red Sorghum, Judea has a strong "reality" and is a true portrayal of Chinese rural society during the Republican period. The patriarchal society, the low status of women, the influence of the patriarchal system on social life, and the constraints on human beings are all evidence of the large number of feudal remnants that existed in the Republican period.

The synopsis of The Daisy Bean follows:

The movie tells the story of a young woman, Judea, who marries Yang Jinshan, the owner of a dye house in the 1920s, but is abused by her sexually impotent husband, Yang Jinshan. Yang Tianqing is Yang Jinshan's nephew. Judea and Yang Tianqing fall in love and have a son, Yang Tianbai, who eventually kills his own father, Yang Tianqing, resulting in a human tragedy.

Yang Jinshan is a physiologically defective owner of the dye house, has married two wives, all of whom he tortured to death, and did not give birth to offspring. In order to continue the flame, Yang Jinshan paid for a beautiful young woman, Judou. During the day, Judou is a worker in Yang Jinshan's dyeing room, and at night, Judou screams in agony under Yang Jinshan's torture. Yang Tianqing, who is nearly forty years old and has yet to marry, sympathizes with Judou, who is being tortured by his uncle Yang Jinshan, and at the same time becomes curious about the opposite sex, so he often peeps at his young aunt Judou to take a bath.

Yang Tianqing is subjugated to feudalism and his uncle's authority, so he dares not do anything about Yang Jinshan's atrocities, and can only force down his resentment. One day, when Yang Jinshan went out, Yang Tianqing and Judou had sex. Soon after, Judou gave birth to her and Yang Tianqing's son, named Yang Tianbai. Yang Jinshan did not know the truth and thought that Yang Tianbai was his son and felt very happy.

One day, Yang Jinshan suffered a stroke that paralyzed his lower body. He finally learned about Judou's affair with Yang Tianqing and wanted to take revenge, but was unable to do so. Yang Jinshan wanted to find a chance to kill Yang Tianbai, but he chose to stop after Yang Tianbai called him "father", and from then on, he deliberately taught Yang Tianbai to recognize himself as his father.

Later, while playing with Yang Tianbai, Yang Jinshan unfortunately fell into the dye pool and drowned. According to the family's rules, Yang Tianqing moved out of the dye house, but he and Judou often went out into the wild for rendezvous. Yang Tianbai heard the rumors spreading in the neighborhood about the relationship between his mother Judou and Yang Tianqing, and knew that Yang Tianqing was his real father, but he still drove Yang Tianqing out of the dye house with hostility and hatred.

When Judou and Yang Tianqing suffocate for lack of air during a private meeting in the cellar, Yang Tianbai throws his unconscious biological father into the dyeing pool and drowns him. Desperate Judou ignites the dyeing room with a fire, and more than ten years of grudges are reduced to ashes in the flames.

#### 7.2.3 Raise the red lantern

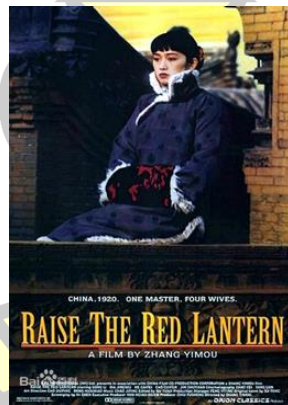


Figure 3: Raise the Red Lantern movie poster

Source: <https://image.baidu.com/> [Accessed on September 21, 2022]

Focusing on an affluent polygamous family in rural China, *The Red Lantern Hangs High* reflects the lifestyle of the upper class in rural China in the 1920s and 1930s. The head of the Chen family, who owns a large mansion, and his many wives and concubines are undoubtedly the upper class of rural society. The absolute authority of Master Chen in the family, the pleasing and attachment of his many wives and concubines to Master Chen, and the ritual of lighting and sealing lanterns are all manifestations of the inequality between men and women in a patriarchal society.

Like "Judeo", "The Red Lantern Hangs High" is also a more realistic reflection of Chinese rural society during the Republican period. Only they reflect the lifestyles of different classes in rural society.

The synopsis of "The Big Red Lantern Hangs High" is as follows:

The film centers on the topic of feudalism, telling the story of several concubines in a polygamous family during the Republican era, who are jealous of each other and cause a series of tragedies.

During the Republican era, there is a castle-like Chen Mansion in a small town in China. The owner of the house, Chen Zuoqian, already has a wife, Yuru, and two concubines, Zhuo Yun and Mei Shan, who are called the second mistress and the third mistress, respectively. 19-year-old college student Songlian, who was forced to drop out of school due to a change in her family's circumstances, marries into the house, and becomes the concubine of the master, who is called the fourth mistress.

According to the rules of the Chen family, lighting the lanterns and hanging up the red lanterns means favor; closing the lanterns and covering them with black cloth means losing favor. At night, Master Chen went to an aunt to rest, the aunt's room will be hung high in front of a large red lantern; but if you make a mistake and offend the master, it will be "closed", with a black cloth cover on the red lantern hung high, to show that the punishment, not to be favored.

As soon as she enters the Chen residence, the young and beautiful Songlian becomes involved in the rivalry between several wives, and the maid Yan'er, who dreams of becoming a concubine, is also hostile to her. Gradually falling out of favor, Songlian pretends to be pregnant and hangs a "long bright lamp" in front of her door day and night in order to compete for favor. However, Yan'er discovers the truth when she washes her clothes and informs her second aunt Zhuo Yun about the incident, and Songlian is "shut down".

Before Yan'er's whistleblowing, Songlian had found out that Yan'er was harboring old lanterns and dreamed of becoming Master Chen's concubine. She originally planned to keep it a secret, but then she uncovered the matter after realizing that it was Yan'er who revealed her fake pregnancy. Yan'er kneels in the snow but never admits her mistake and eventually dies.

The death of Yan'er causes Songlian to be in a trance, and she often drowns her sorrows in alcohol. One time, when she is drunk, she inadvertently reveals the secret of her third concubine Mei Shan's affair with Dr. Gao. Soon after, Mei Shan was hanged by Mr. Chen in the corner house of the Chen Mansion. Songlian suffers a nervous breakdown and becomes insane. The following year, another concubine, Auntie 5, is welcomed into the Chen residence. Already insane, Songlian wanders around the Chen residence in a schoolgirl's uniform.

### 7.3 Zhang Yimou's movie

There are more studies on Zhang Yimou's films, according to incomplete statistics, there are about 20 monographs, about 200 doctoral and master's theses, and countless journal articles. Among them, there is a huge number of journal articles that take one or two or three films of Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy as research samples, few monographs and all of them are written in the 1990s, and there are almost no master's and doctoral dissertations.

This study does a literature review around Zhang Yimou's films and divides Zhang Yimou's film studies into two phases: the 1980s and the 1990s onwards.

In the 1980s, academic discussions of Zhang Yimou's films, using general film theory, were mixed in terms of content and style. Supporters believed that Zhang Yimou's films created strange characteristics different from those of Chinese film tradition, expressed the tenacious vitality of individual life and the national spirit hidden deep in the heart of the Chinese people, and marked the take-off of Chinese cinema, which was a powerful symbol of Chinese cinema's development towards the world; opponents believed that Zhang Yimou's films expressed the backwardness, ignorance, and ugliness of the nation, which was not only a serious degradation of aesthetics but also a disgrace to Chinese cinema; neutrals believed that Zhang Yimou's films, though of some exploratory significance, were more of a Neutral people think that although Zhang Yimou's movie has certain exploratory significance, it has all kinds of defects.

After the 1990s, along with the increasing influence of Zhang Yimou and his films, the research on him showed a colorful situation, with some academics borrowing Western cultural research theories to make a systematic theoretical criticism of Zhang Yimou's films, and some research on the color of Zhang Yimou's film texts as well as the development of Zhang Yimou's film clues, and also some foreign scholars' attention.

Feminist critics, represented by Dai Jinhua (1994), have argued that the closed atmosphere of the mansion, the gray life under the iron house, the gloomy characters' relationships, and the representation of women in the old times are the points of view that Zhang Yimou focuses on. Jiu'er in *Red Sorghum*, Songlian in *Red Lanterns High*, and Judou in *Judou* are women who "resurface in the field of men's desires," and "the vision of male desire finally reappears and designates women as a gender-specific being because of the gaze of male desire. ." In "*High Red Lanterns*", Zhang Yimou intentionally uses the absence of the male protagonist's vision, and chooses a multi-storied courtyard/museum of classical architecture as the location of the story, and the jealousy between a group of wives and concubines as a metaphor for Chinese "internal conflict" and power struggle, loaded with connotations of historical reflection in the context of Chinese culture. However, in the Western cultural perspective, all this has become the suspension of the subject of desire, the emitter of the perspective of desire, and the absence that can be occupied by the Western audience. "The Eastern space, the Eastern story, and the Oriental beauty together serve as a 'spectacle' (spectacle) in the Western perspective. The classic model of 'seeing'/being seen, male/woman, presents the national culture, which is among the margins of Western culture, as a self-consciously 'feminine' role and gesture." (Dai Jinhua, 1994, p. 42)

Postcolonial critics, represented by Zhang Yiwu (2003), have argued that Zhang Yimou's genres, themes, and styles of films have been changing at different times out of an accurate grasp of market trends, but what remains unchanged is that his successes have always been tied to the West's cultural imagery of China, and in this context his submission to and identification with Western cultural hegemony in the era of accelerated globalization. "Zhang Yimou has provided the imaginary of 'China' that is dominated by the cultural logic of globalization and marketization". (Zhang Yiwu, 2003, p. 33)

At the same time, the voices of critics are also unfolding, they believe that Zhang Yimou's film for the Chinese film to the world has made a great achievement, "set up a benchmark for Chinese film genre", a great growth of Chinese cinema's ambition, so that the West knows that China "has a movie!" "The Chinese film industry has been a major contributor to the development of Chinese cinema.

Yan Chunjun (1995) affirms, "Chinese films going global is in itself a great good thing for the expansion of influence and market, for the strengthening of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, and for the further development of Chinese films!"

Xiao Wen (2005) says that "most critics wear traditional cultural robes to show their mantle" and are "tossing out books in their chatter", while Zhang Yimou "resolutely carried the banner of Chinese martial arts films, which have been the pride of the world's cinema for decades", and began to make his way into the world's cinema. Zhang Yimou, on the other hand, "resolutely carried the banner of Chinese martial arts films, which had been the pride of world cinema for decades, and confronted and maneuvered with western genre films with ease, and not only succeeded in holding on to the fertile land of the Chinese cinema market, but also began to strike out to the world cinema market", and he is the "hero" of Chinese cinema. "Zhang Yimou "not only bridged the gap between artistry and commercialism, folklore and globalism in Chinese movies, but also gained the strong support of international public opinion, moviegoers, private capital and institutional culture, and resisted Western movies' encroachment on China's movie market".

Scholars abroad have also expressed concern about Zhang Yimou's movie.

In her book *Primitive Passion: Vision, Gender, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*, Chinese scholar Zhou Lei (2005) of the University of California, USA, describes Chinese cinema as a "postcolonial form of intercultural translation," and argues that Zhang Yimou's films are places where "primitive passions" are staged. "But unlike domestic postcolonial critics who argue that Zhang Yimou presents China in such a way as to please foreigners, Zhou Lei argues that Zhang's mode of representation is designed to show that Chinese cinema has been exoticized in Western societies, and that it is precisely through this kind of undisguised display that he critiques Orientalism. This is a double form of subversion, both of Chinese authoritarianism and of saying to the West 'all abuse comes from you', which means that Zhang Yimou's films are accusing the West rather than pleasing it.

American film critic and historian Nick Brown (2005) argues that although Zhang Yimou's film shows some scenes from China's past, such as some buildings and customs, these issues have precedents in the history of world cinema, such as "Fellini's cinematographic treatment of Italy, Fassbinder's Germany, Bergman's Sweden, and so on. Ferrini's cinematization of Italy, Fassbinder's of Germany, Bergman's of Sweden, and so on." Finally, the reason for Zhang Yimou's success is that "Zhang Yimou is exporting a cultural treasure carefully protected by patriarchal society, namely women in Chinese culture", "radically reconstructing" the traditional image of women in Chinese cinema, and "the desire of women". The "female desire" has abandoned traditional virtues, and such a "blasphemous" display satisfies the

pleasure of Western audiences and the "voyeuristic eyes" of the international community.

Rosen (1998) points out that Zhang Yimou's films are endowed with a style that represents the trend of innovation in world cinema, but at the same time, his films also have distinctive Chinese characteristics.

Corrales (1998) also believes that "never before has China been made as mesmerizing as in Zhang Yimou's films". He called Zhang Yimou "one of the brightest stars of the rising Chinese cinema" and "an international sensation".

Noting Zhang Yimou's international reputation, Berry (1998) claimed that Zhang Yimou has become known in the West as "a movie director with a 'golden touch'."

#### 7.4 Consuming history

There are a few studies on consumer history in domestic academic circles, but most of them focus on analyzing a certain type of cultural phenomenon, such as film and television culture, literature, cultural and creative products, video games, etc. Using the concept of "consumer history", we can see that there are a lot of studies on consumer history in China, but they are mostly focused on the analysis of a certain type of cultural phenomenon.

In his article "Consuming History," Nan Fan (2001) traces the origins of Chinese historical chronicles, comprehends the complex relationship between "literature" and "history," which are inextricably linked and mutually exclusive, and points out that today's "history" has been symbolized and overconsumed. It is pointed out that today's "history" has been symbolized and over-consumed. Between people's happy enjoyment and ambiguous nostalgia, the depth of history has been dissolved. Taking film and television works as examples, he analyzes the reasons for the over-consumption of history and its consequences. "History is becoming a sought-after cultural commodity; the frivolous style of television or movies suggests that the authority of history is being lost in another sense." (Nanfan, 2001, p.11) "People get some kind of psychological satisfaction from laughing or thrilling, and thus completely forget the unfortunate 'history'." (Nanfan, 2001, p.12) Meanwhile, in his book *Double Vision: an Analysis of Contemporary Electronic Culture*, he argues that "history, as an indispensable raw material in the recycling of profits by electronic media of communication, is becoming a sought-after cultural commodity along with the massive acquisitions of television or movies. Today we still recall history, the glory of our ancestors and the great traditions they had, but history no longer provides us with models and norms, no longer provides authoritative ideological resources for the management or organization of society; it has become the talk of the town, a storehouse for people to search for chapter and verse, a quaint story, and a pastime for the people" (Nanfan, 2001). (Nanfan, 2001, p. 242).

In his book *Consumption of History on Screen*, Li Xingliang (2016) analyzes Qing dynasty dramas using the concept of "consumption of history" with historical dramas on the Qing dynasty from 1991 to 2002 as the research text. He argues that "any historical story, even an artistic creation that claims to be the most faithful to the original history, is essentially only an aestheticized and ordered selection, arrangement, and reshaping of history, a kind of artistic fiction. Therefore, it is impossible for any historical story to be equivalent to the original history in time and space, and the historical story in the TV series is not a visual reflection or mirror-like

reproduction of history; it is the wine of history processed and brewed by the subject, a subjectivized deformation of history, and a psychologized refraction of history" (Li Xingliang, 2016, p. 87).

Li Geng (2011) borrows the viewpoints and methods of the cultural studies school to analyze the cultural phenomenon of contemporary TV dramas in his book *Women-History-Consumption-Cultural Criticism of Contemporary TV Dramas*, which analyzes the cultural phenomenon of contemporary TV dramas from the perspectives of feminist culture, new historicist criticism, and consumer culture, and makes rational cultural criticisms of TV dramas with ethical themes about families, TV dramas with ancient historical themes, and TV dramas with youthful idols. From the perspectives of feminist culture, new historicist criticism and consumer culture, he makes rational cultural criticism of family ethical drama, ancient history drama and youth idol drama. He points out that "in some youth idol dramas with historical themes, the urban space of the old times often implies the old dreams of prosperity in the distant past, and when the dramas consume them through images, the past time becomes transparent and nostalgic. The old cities that appear in the images of TV dramas are particularly fond of people, which is essentially a consumption and nostalgia for their historical implied meanings" (Li Geng, 2011, p. 220).

Xiong Jun (2018), in his article "Current Historical Consumerism Thought and Its Evaluation," points out the problems of historical works that make history vulgarized, commercialized, and kitschy, and argues that these problems will bring about a series of value crises. "Historical consumerism takes a playful attitude towards history, randomly distorting and subverting it, unilaterally pursuing its entertainment function and economic benefits, ignoring the national spirit and cultural connotation embedded in history, dissolving people's collective memory of their own country's history, and moreover subverting the meaning of human existence." (Xiong Jun, 2018, p. 1)

Fan Ruiping (2007), in her article "The Phenomenon of History Consumption in TV Pulpit Programs", argues that "on the one hand, history has gained a vigorous vitality in the orgy of collusion between words and images, and has received unprecedented attention; on the other hand, the virtual reality created by the images has replaced the real reality as the scene of people's lives, and history has lost its position of objective observation and connotation of deep reflection, and has been reduced to a stylized aesthetic trend, a commodity catering to the 'nostalgia' mentality of the contemporary public" (Fan Ruiping, 2007). On the other hand, the virtual reality created by images has replaced the real reality as the scene of people's life, in which history has lost its objective position and deep reflection, and has been reduced to a stylized aesthetic trend, a kind of commodity that caters to the 'nostalgia' of the contemporary public" (Fan Ruiping, 2007, p. 13).

Lu Wenbin (2000), in his article "Post-New Historicism and Nostalgia: A Fashion for Consumption of History in the Novels of the Late Twentieth Century," argues that, in a large number of post-New Historicist novels, the ugliness and decay of history, which was once repeatedly portrayed in the New Historicist novels, has been replaced by a sentimental narrative of the "beautiful past"; here, history no longer assumes the core obligation of cognition, but is mainly consumed as an aesthetic object. In a large number of post-New Historicist novels, the ugly and decaying scenes of history that New Historicist novels used to repeatedly portray have

been replaced by a sentimental narrative of "the beautiful past", where history no longer serves as the core of cognition, but is consumed mainly as an aesthetic object. The discourse of history is more recognized than criticized in the post-New Historicist novel Dengli.

Dai Ling (2021) proposed in the article "Research on the Phenomenon of Historical Consumerism in Cultural and Creative Product Design" that the design of cultural and creative products should avoid the phenomenon of disrespecting the original appearance of history and culture, wantonly consuming history, and arbitrarily interpreting history and culture in the design process.

Wang Shu (2005) analyzes the phenomenon of video games adopting historical themes in her article "A Review of the Consumption of History in Video Games in the Postmodern Context," and argues that "the spirit of history that has been transformed into an object is embedded in the plot construction of video games in the form of fragments of historical backgrounds and situations, and they have become the objects of consumption, but they have also changed the act of consumption itself. Instead of harshly denouncing the vulgarized rewriting of the spirit of history, we should let the historical aesthetics in games achieve a new historical inheritance system, so that the public can savor the carnival of the gods of history in games again".

Foreign scholars' interpretation of "consumer history" is a different story. American scholar Hayden White (1988) analyzed the image-oriented turn of history in contemporary times in "Writing and Image Historiography" and coined the term "Historiophoty", arguing that the emergence of modern electronic media, such as film and television, has provided a new way for people to touch history in different ways. It is believed that the emergence of modern electronic media such as film and television provides a new way for people to touch history in a different way, and that people can convey history and their insights into history through visual images or the discourse of films, which is a method different from the traditional written historiography that conveys history through the discourse of words.

In his book *The Consumer Society* (2014), French scholar Jean Baudrillard talks about the consumption of "pseudo-events, pseudo-histories, pseudo-cultures," "i.e., events, histories, cultures, or ideas that are not produced from a shifting, paradoxical, and authentic experience, but rather from a false image manipulated by elements of coding rules and media technologies" (Jean Baudrillard, 2014, p. 117). ideas, but rather a pseudo-image manipulated by elements of coding rules and media technologies" (Jean Baudrillard, 2014, p. 117).

In his book *Consuming History* (2009), Jerome de Groot of the United Kingdom argues that the consumption of history should be understood through the lens of "public historiography". He discusses the often conflicting relationship between "public" history and academic history, examining how society consumes history in terms of antiquities collections, jewelry appraisals, genealogy, community websites, search tools, museums, musical performances, games, television and film, novels, and plays, and how reading about this consumption can help us understand the issues of popular culture and representation. popular culture and issues of representation.

To summarize, despite the huge number of studies on Zhang Yimou's films and the many studies on consumer history, there are very few studies that combine both Zhang Yimou's films and consumer history, and even fewer that combine Zhang Yimou's red trilogy films and "consuming history".

## **8. Concept, Theory and conceptual Framework**

This study takes the history of consumption as the main research concept and uses knowledge related to the art of cinema to support the argument.

### **8.1 Research Concept**

#### **8.1.1 Film art**

Film art is an art that uses film technology as a means to create images, reproduce and reflect life in the time and space moving on the screen, using picture and sound as media.

More than a hundred years ago, when the movie was first introduced, the initial form was only a mechanical reproduction of the phenomenon of life, "moving pictures"; when the pioneers of the movie successively discovered a series of means of expression such as motion photography, stunt photography, close-ups, etc., and in particular created the lens grouping -- montage, a unique narrative form of the screen, the movie found its own artistic method of expressing the world and formed an independent art. -Montage, a unique form of screen narration, the movie has found its own way to express the world of art and form an independent art. The development of modern science and technology has provided new artistic possibilities for movies. Generations of film artists have gradually enriched the form, language, means and techniques of film through various practices and explorations, and in the process of constantly synthesizing and applying the laws of literature, drama, fine arts, music, dance and architecture, etc., they have continuously opened up the field of film expression and improved the expressive ability of the film, which has become the most influential form of popular art since the 20th century.

As an independent art, movies have aesthetic characteristics that distinguish them from other arts.

Movies have a high degree of truthfulness in reflecting the objective world. In the movie, whether it is stating the real history, explaining the scientific phenomenon, or displaying the natural scenery, showing people's behavior, everything is through the clear and tangible image, giving the audience a real feeling as if they were in the objective world; at the same time, fiction, imagination, illusion and human abstract thinking in reality, invisible or invisible things, in the movie are also turned into the corresponding audio-visual image to the audience, these realistic or deformed virtual images in the sense of reproducing the human subjective psychology also brings a sense of realism to the screen. To the audience, these realistic or deformed virtual images also bring a sense of realism to the screen in the sense of reproducing the subjective psychology of human beings. Movies can realistically represent all the actual scenes from the macrocosm to the microcosm and the inner connection between them.

Movies are also hypothetical. Due to the use of special technical means, the movie can create a screen time and space structure that is different from the real time and space. Cinema attracts the audience not with real people but with images on film.

These assumptions constrain the film, making it impossible to be a stereotypical, mechanical replica and simulation of material reality, and giving it a multifaceted artistic function such as recording, taking, revealing, and so on. Film artists are able to draw film material according to specific creative intentions, select and summarize the images in life that are necessary for each work, and excavate the correspondence and interrelationships between these images.

The comprehensiveness of the art form is another aesthetic characteristic of the art of cinema. Cinema can both expand the scene of life within the same time and express the flow of time: that is to say, it displays space through movement in the passage of time and time in the change of space. The comprehensive nature of the art of cinema contributes to its maximum absorption of the means and techniques of literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, theater and other arts, which is not a simple patchwork and mixing, but rather a transformation of the eclecticism, so that the film has a unique, new quality, and has become a kind of audio-visual art combining sound and picture.

The above characteristics of film art in terms of expressive form and art form are revealed by the screen images created by its unique means of expression. These means of expression can generally be divided into four major categories, namely: modeling, sound, performance and montage techniques.

Visual modeling is the basic component of film art form and shape. The modeling means of the film integrates all the means of painting, architecture, sculpture, photography and other plastic arts and the spatial means of dance, drama and other comprehensive arts, and contains various modeling elements such as light, color, composition, movement (scheduling), and forms the unique law of the film space and screen image.

After the sound enters the movie, the modeling image of the screen becomes the image of sound and picture, and the sound means then becomes the same important factor as the modeling means. Sound means include the use of human voice, action sound, environmental sound and music, as well as the combination and coordination of the above elements through mixing recording and lens editing. With the development of movie art, sound means not only combine with modeling means to create a more complete screen image, but also can become an independent means to show time and shape space.

Movie performance means and theater and other stage performance means similar nature, such as by the actor (or art image) of the body, expression and voice directly express the meaning, composed of artistic language; at the same time, but also the film performing art of its own characteristics, such as the lens grouping, composition, sound and picture synthesis, and other laws of the film performance brought about by the discontinuity (non-continuous and non-sequential performances), amplitude (in different scenes of the scene in different performance amplitude), hypothetical (often communicate with the hypothetical object) and disposable, and so on. (different performance amplitude in different scenes), hypothetical (often communicating with the hypothetical object) and disposable. The formation of the character on the screen is greatly conditioned both by the actor's own given conditions and by the actor's composite with other corresponding means - camera orientation, sound and picture combination and editing.

The specificity of the creative process of the movie lies in the combination of montage into a smooth and vivid movie whole. That is to say, what is created through the three artistic means of modeling, sound and performance is ultimately made into a comprehensive screen image by the means of montage. Montage is the most unique means of expression in film art.

Montage brings the time, space and their composites unique to the movie. Movie time can make the same, lengthen, shorten, stagnate, reproduce and other treatments to the real physical time, and can connect the past and the future, the reality and the memories together through different forms such as the order of staggering and inverting, etc. Movie space can not only realistically reproduce the space of the actual life but also transform the space of the reality, but also freely transform and leap in various spaces, so as to create the imaginary space that does not exist in reality. Imaginary space.

Montage forms the rhythm of a movie narrative. The alignment and contrast between shots due to different internal compositions, the rate brought about by shot transitions, and the synchronization and counterpoint of the relationship between the camera images and the sound are all factors in the formation of rhythm.

The art of cinema is still in the process of development. The progress of film technology, the achievements of cinematographic theory, the development of other artistic disciplines and the resulting new pattern of human artistic life are the driving forces behind the development of film characteristics and means. While film artists continue to explore the great potential of the film's expressive function, they also continue to expand the field of film concepts, film thinking and the laws of film creation; new artistic means will gradually be recognized and applied, and the original means and creations of various departments appear to have a tendency to interpenetrate and cross over each other. Therefore, the understanding of film art itself will become more and more diversified.

### **8.1.2 Consuming history**

My research, “Zhang Yimou films and The Reflections on Chinese society and culture in the Republic of China context” is a film that uses historical context to support film content. Therefore, while watching movies, the audience consumes history at the same time. I therefore applied the concept of Consuming History by Jerome de Groot (2009). Jerome de Groot is Lecturer at the University of Manchester. He is the author of *Royalist Identities* (2004) and numerous articles on popular history, manuscript culture and the English Civil War.

Jerome de Groot has present that in recent years, history has been described variously as the new rock'n'roll, the new gardening or the new cookery. There is currently a voracious audience for all things historical: cultural histories, celebrity historians, historical. novels, star studded historical films, TV drama, documentaries and reality shows, as well as cultural events and historical re-enactments. Non-academic history – “public history”---is a complex, dynamic entity which impacts on the popular understanding of the past at all levels. In *Consuming History*, Jerome de Groot examines how society consumes history and how a reading of this consumption can help us understand popular culture and issues of representation.

This book analyses a wide range of cultural entities – from computer games to daytime television, from blockbuster fictional narratives such as *The Da Vinci Code*

to DNA genealogical tools – to consider how history works in contemporary popular culture. Jerome de Groot probes how museums have responded to the heritage debate and the way in which new technologies have brought about a shift in access to history, from online gameplaying to internet genealogy. He discusses the often conflictual relationship between ‘public’ and academic history, and raises important questions about the theory and practice of history as a discipline. *Consuming History* is an important and engaging analysis of the social consumption of history and offers an essential path through the debates for readers interested in history, cultural studies and the media.

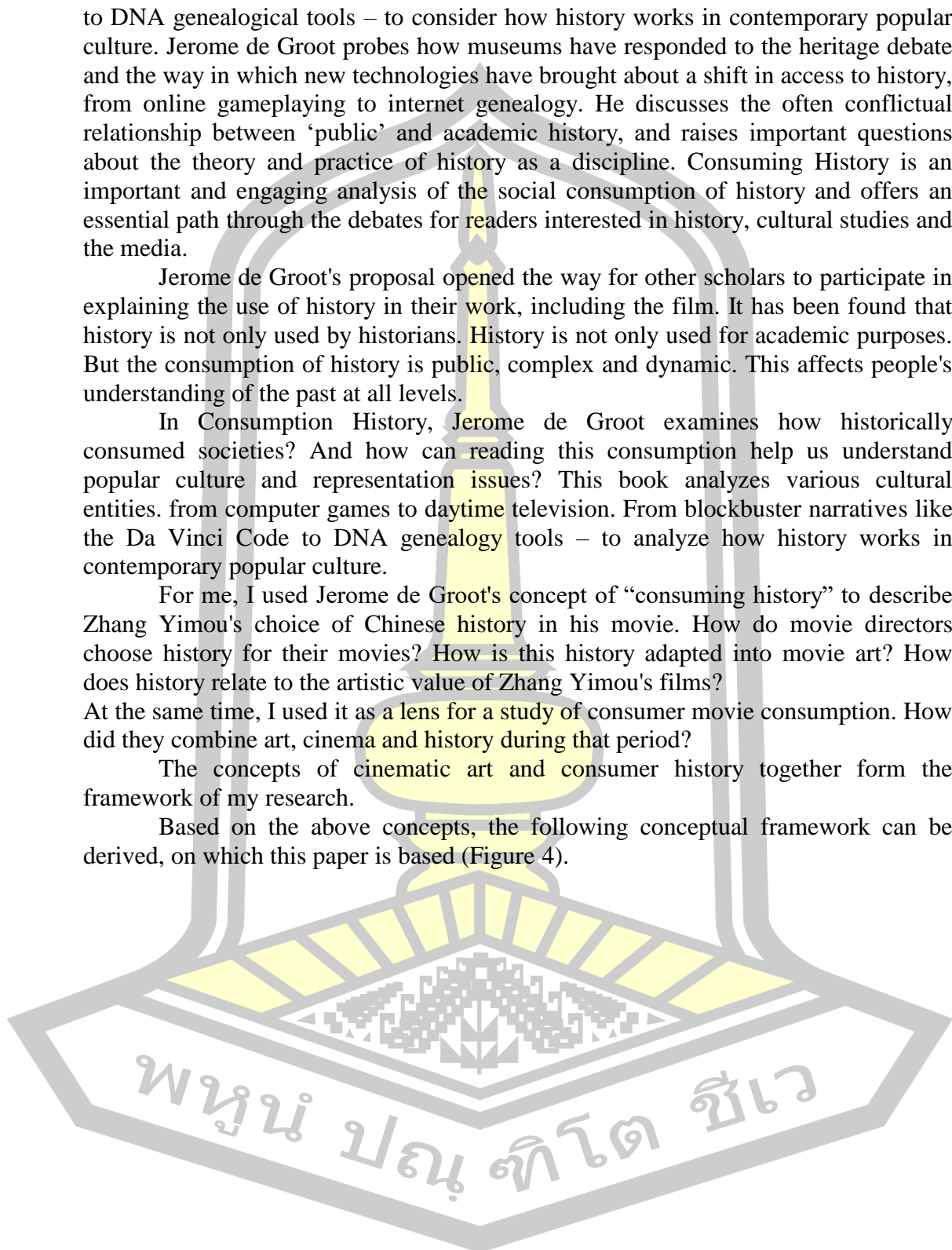
Jerome de Groot's proposal opened the way for other scholars to participate in explaining the use of history in their work, including the film. It has been found that history is not only used by historians. History is not only used for academic purposes. But the consumption of history is public, complex and dynamic. This affects people's understanding of the past at all levels.

In *Consumption History*, Jerome de Groot examines how historically consumed societies? And how can reading this consumption help us understand popular culture and representation issues? This book analyzes various cultural entities. from computer games to daytime television. From blockbuster narratives like the *Da Vinci Code* to DNA genealogy tools – to analyze how history works in contemporary popular culture.

For me, I used Jerome de Groot's concept of “consuming history” to describe Zhang Yimou's choice of Chinese history in his movie. How do movie directors choose history for their movies? How is this history adapted into movie art? How does history relate to the artistic value of Zhang Yimou's films? At the same time, I used it as a lens for a study of consumer movie consumption. How did they combine art, cinema and history during that period?

The concepts of cinematic art and consumer history together form the framework of my research.

Based on the above concepts, the following conceptual framework can be derived, on which this paper is based (Figure 4).



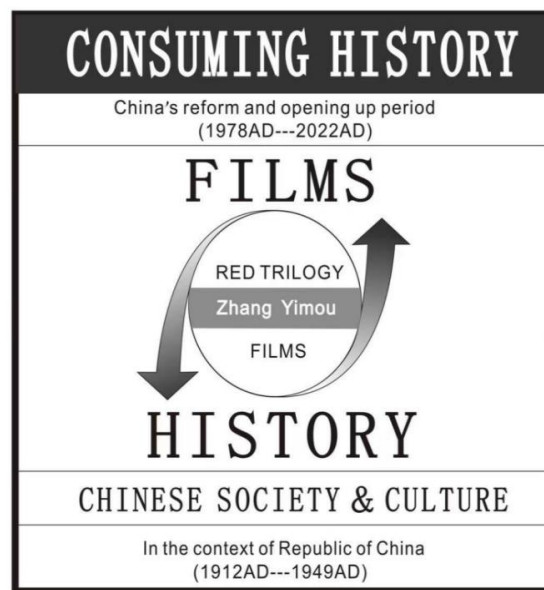


Figure 4 Conceptual research framework  
Source: Researchers

## 9. Benefits of Research

This study has 4 benefits:

9.1 Academically speaking, a systematic and in-depth study linking Zhang Yimou's films and the concept of consumer history would allow the results of this study to fill the gaps in this particular area of scholarship, as well as expanding the concept of consumer history.

9.2 In terms of Chinese cinema, this study's analysis of Zhang Yimou's films can provide some reference for other film creators and inspire them to create more and better works, thus promoting the further development of Chinese cinema.

9.3 In terms of social impact, this study analyzes Zhang Yimou's films from the perspectives of the audience's consumption of history and the creators' reflections on Chinese society and culture, which will promote Chinese and foreign audiences to pay more attention to and learn more about Chinese culture and history, which will help Chinese audiences to learn from history, "watch" history and be wiser, and to cherish more of today's hard-won happy life. It will help Chinese audiences to learn from history, "see" history wisely, and cherish today's hard-won happy life more.

9.4 In terms of spreading Chinese culture, Zhang Yimou's films, as a kind of cultural commodity with Chinese characteristics, are to a certain extent constrained by the society and culture of the times in which they are created and aesthetized. Through Zhang Yimou's films, one can not only understand the beauty of film art as well as the overview of Chinese society and culture in different periods, but also deeply understand the relationship between art and society, art and culture, art and history, art and people, which is conducive to the dissemination of Chinese film art and the further promotion of Chinese culture.

## Chapter II

### Chinese Society and Culture in the Period of Republic of China (1912-1949)

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I have discussed the history and social culture of the Republic of China related to three Zhang Yimou films "Red Sorghum", "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern". It is introduced in four parts: first, the overall characteristics of the society and culture of the Republic of China, including that the social culture of the Republic of China was both innovative and conservative, both Western culture and traditional culture, and its development and transformation were unbalanced; second, the social culture of the Republic of China period Overview, introduces the historical events and cultural phenomena reflected in the three films; third, local folk culture, introduces the important plots and social culture reflected in specific scenes in the three films; fourth, the social status of women during the Republic of China. The content of this chapter provides the necessary background and preparation for subsequent chapters to use the concept of consumer history to analyze the social culture of the Republic of China reflected in the three films.

#### Part 1: The Overall Characteristics Social Culture of the Republic of China

The Republic of China (ROC) from 1912 to 1949 was a special stage in the process of China's social development, and an important period of continuity in Chinese history. Before that, China was at the end of the feudal dynasty, and the decline and incompetence of the Qing government<sup>13</sup> attracted foreign invasion. This was followed by the period of the People's Republic of China, with the establishment of the socialist system and the reform and opening-up policy since 1978, which drove China's rapid economic development and its progress towards becoming a world power.

The Republic of China period saw the end of the feudal imperial system and the establishment of a new type of democratic republican system. China's economy, politics, society and ideology and culture underwent unprecedented and dramatic changes, but the characteristics of feudal society, remnants of feudal thought, traditional culture, folk traditions and customs still existed. In addition, the new regime was incapable of ruling the huge country, and there were constant wars within the country over the right to rule; Western countries coveted China's rich resources and vast market, and Japan launched a war of aggression against China.

##### 1.1 The Social Situation in the War

The period of the Republic of China (ROC) from 1912-1949 was a short but significant period of transition. China was plagued by internal and external wars. Domestic forces struggled with each other, the political situation was unstable, and wars continued. Western countries saw China's weakness, and its close neighbor, Japan, had been planning for a long time to launch a war of aggression against China.

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<sup>13</sup> Qing government: rulers of the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912), the last feudal king in Chinese history.

in 1931. External aggression and internal wars made the Republic of China in a short period of several decades has been in turmoil and struggle.

In 1911, the bourgeois revolutionaries led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen<sup>14</sup> led the great Xinhai Revolution<sup>15</sup>, which overthrew the Qing government and ended more than 2,000 years of feudal empire. The revolutionaries proclaimed 1912 as the first year of the Republic of China (ROC) and established a new type of bourgeois democratic republican state, the Republic of China (ROC). Regarding the beginning of the Republic of China, there are different views in the historical circles, some scholars believe that the Republic of China began with the 1911 Xinhai Revolution, some scholars regard the first year of the Republic of China (1912) as the beginning of the Republic of China, and this paper adopts the statement that "January 1, 1912 is the beginning of the Republic of China (Li Liangyu, 1996, p. 4)".

On January 1, 1912, the Republic of China was proclaimed. Subsequently, the Provisional Government of the Republic of China (ROC) was established in Nanjing, and Dr. Sun Yat-sen was inaugurated as the Provisional President of the ROC. "The birth of the Republic of China was an epoch-making event in Chinese history because it ended the dynastic era that had lasted for more than 2,000 years. China was no longer subordinate to any 'son of heaven' or any dynasty, but to the entire population" (Xu Zhongyao, 2012, p. 355). On February 12 of the same year, under pressure from various forces, Puyi, the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty<sup>16</sup>, announced his abdication in exchange for enjoying generous terms. The reign of the Qing Dynasty came to an end, as did the feudal imperial system that had existed in China for more than 2,000 years.

After the establishment of the Republic of China (ROC), it was faced with a complex situation at home and abroad, with the great powers eyeing the new regime under the banner of "neutrality", and a fierce struggle between the forces of innovation and conservatism in the country, with internal conflicts among the revolutionaries, internal rivalries among the conservatives, and the forces of restoration lying dormant on the one side waiting for the time to make a comeback on the other side.

<sup>14</sup> Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925): formerly known as Sun Wen, also known as Sun Yat-sen, was born in Xiangshan County, Guangdong Province (present-day Zhongshan City), and is considered a great national hero, a great patriot, and a great forerunner of the Chinese Democratic Revolution. He was a member of the Republic of China and Chinese Nationalist Party the founder of the Three Principles of the People the advocate of the Three People's Principles Founded the Five-Power Constitution Author of Founding Strategies The Founding Strategies The Outline of the Founding of the Nation The Three Principles of the People Three Principles of the People The Three Principles of the People" and other writings.

<sup>15</sup> Xinhai Revolution: refers to a revolution that took place in the Chinese lunar year Xinhai, between 1911 and early 1912 AD, aimed at overthrowing the Qing Dynasty and establish a Republican. The Xinhai Revolution in the narrower sense refers to the revolution that began on October 10, 1911, and ended on October 11, 1912. In the narrow sense, the Xinhai Revolution refers to the night of October 10, 1911 (the nineteenth day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar). Wuchang Uprising The Xinhai Revolution in the narrow sense refers to the revolutionary events that took place in China from the outbreak of the Wuchang Uprising on the night of October 10, 1911 (the nineteenth day of the eighth lunar month), to the time before and after Dr. Sun Yat-sen's inauguration as the provisional president of the Republic of China (ROC) on New Year's Day of 1912. The Xinhai Revolution in a broad sense refers to a series of revolutionary movements that emerged in China from the end of the nineteenth century (some scholars believe that it began with the founding of the Chinese League in 1905, while others say that it began with the founding of the Xingzhonghui (Society for the Promotion of China) in 1894) to the year of the Xinhai Revolution when it succeeded in overthrowing the rule of the Qing Dynasty. The Xinhai Revolution in this article refers to the Xinhai Revolution in a narrow sense.

<sup>16</sup> Qing Dynasty: Chinese history The last of the feudal dynasty that existed from 1636 to 1912.

In April 1912, Yuan Shikai<sup>17</sup>, who possessed great military power, replaced Sun Yat-sen as the provisional president of the Republic of China with the support of Britain, the United States, Japan, Russia, Germany, and France. At the same time, he managed to stay in the north, where he was powerful, by using Beijing as the capital, and avoided going to the south, where the revolutionaries were powerful, to take office. Subsequently, Yuan Shikai wantonly trampled on the democratic republican system and tried to restore the imperial system. Revolutionaries and local warlords launched a crusade against Yuan, and China was plunged into a chaotic civil war; in March 1916, amidst national opposition, Yuan, who had been emperor for only 83 days, was forced to proclaim the abolition of the imperial system. After that, although China was still the Republic of China, claiming to be a republican form of government, it was plunged into a long period of localization, warlordism and competition for power, with political instability and several changes of government, and it was only in 1928 that the Republican government basically completed its unification.

The chaos and disorder in China gave Japan an opportunity to take advantage of the situation. In 1931, the Japanese army invaded the northeast of China, and in order to legitimize the invasion, Japan set up "Manchukuo" as a puppet state in 1932, and installed Puyi, the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty, who had long since abdicated, as the ruler. Since 1937, Japan expanded its war of aggression against China, and the war spread to most parts of China. The Chinese army and people put up resistance, and the Japanese army occupied almost half of China. The Japanese army occupied almost half of China. Until 1945, when Japan declared its surrender, China was deeply involved in the war of resistance against Japanese aggression for a long time.

<sup>17</sup> Yuan Shikai (1859-1916): a famous political and military figure in modern Chinese history, the leader of the Beiyang Warlords, who succeeded in forcing Puyi, the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty, to abdicate in 1912 and replaced Sun Yat-sen as the provisional president of the Republic of China (ROC). He was the first president of the Republic of China (ROC) in 1913, and in December 1915, he declared that he had proclaimed himself emperor, changed the name of the country to the Chinese Empire, restored the imperial system, and established the "Hong Xian Imperial System", which is known as the "Hong Xian Imperial System" in history. In December 1915, he declared himself emperor, changed the name of the country to the Chinese Empire, restored the imperial system, and established the Hongxian system. This move was opposed by all sides, triggering the Protectorate Movement, Yuan Shikai had to be 83 days after the emperor announced the abolition of the imperial system. 1916 June 6, died of illness.

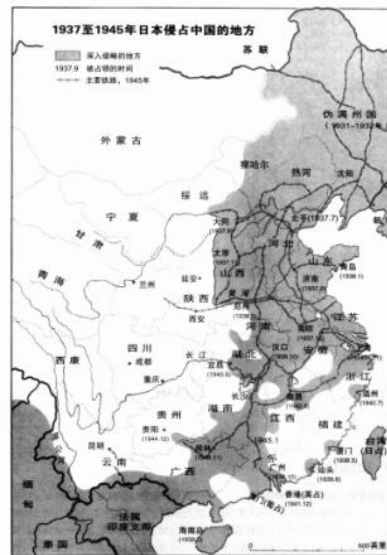


Figure 5 Places Occupied by Japan in China, 1937-1945

Source: Xu Zhongyao.2012.Modern Chinese History: 1600-2000, China's Struggle (Illustrated Reprint 6th Edition).P.449

At the same time, the Communist Party of China (CPC)<sup>18</sup> gradually rose to power, resisting the Japanese invasion together with the military forces of the Republic of China government on the one hand, and actively striving for the right to rule the country on the other. After the surrender of Japan, China was soon plunged into civil war. In 1949, the struggle for dominance within China ended with the victory of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and China entered the era of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which became a sovereign and independent state and established a socialist system. Since 1978, China has implemented reform and opening-up as a basic state policy, and has persisted in promoting it for a long period of time. China's economy has developed rapidly, and the country's comprehensive strength has been steadily improved, completing the transformation of modern China into a modern China, and moving towards becoming a world power.

During the period of the Republic of China (1912-1949), the turbulent domestic situation and prolonged wars had a profound impact on the lives of the Chinese people, especially the Japanese invasion of China, which brought deep disasters to ordinary Chinese people. In the vast rural areas of China, Japan exercised strict control over agricultural products and other important materials, and even engaged in naked raiding and plundering, conscripted and forced a large number of young and strong Chinese laborers to do hard labor, massacred the Chinese people in a massacre, and committed countless crimes, which, together with the conscription by the National Government and the large number of young people in the countryside joining the Communist army, led to the scarcity of laborers in the countryside and the

<sup>18</sup> The Communist Party of China (the Communist Party of China): China's ruling party, founded on July 23, 1921, in October 1949, the establishment of the People's Republic of China, since then the end of modern China's internal troubles, the accumulation of poverty and weakness of the tragic situation, the opening of the Chinese nation's development and progress of a new era.

decline in food production, and the lives of the ordinary people in the countryside were in a state of hardship. The life of the common people in the countryside was in dire straits.



Figure 6 Chinese people under Japanese bayonets

Source:Qinfeng Old Photo Gallery.2009.Image Republic of China (1927-1949).P.78

Since the Japanese invasion of northeastern China in 1931 to the announcement of Japan's unconditional surrender in 1945, China has been engaged in a war of resistance to Japanese aggression for more than a decade, and the Japanese aggression has been a process of gradual advancement. For example, the northeastern region was occupied by the Japanese as early as 1931, and the cities of Peking, Shanghai, and Nanjing fell to the Japanese in 1937, while Qingdao and Wuhan were occupied in 1938. On the other hand, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu and other provinces were not invaded by the Japanese although some cities or towns were bombed, while Tibet, Ningxia, Qinghai and Xinjiang were not bombed or occupied by the Japanese. Constrained by an excessively long front and limited troop strength, the Japanese ruling forces were both strong and weak in the areas they occupied, and their rule over the cities was significantly stronger than that over the countryside.



Figure 7 On New Year's Day, 1935, the Chinese army, equipped with new weapons, marched and practiced on the outskirts of Nanjing.

Source:Qin Feng Old Photo Gallery.2009.Images of the Republic of China (1927-1949).P.57

In the rural areas, which cover a vast area and account for the vast majority of the population, the time of entry of the Japanese aggressor forces was different, and the extent of the war's impact varied markedly. In some mountainous areas with poor transportation and remoteness, the Japanese ruling forces were out of reach and the people's lives were basically unaffected. In some rural areas with convenient transportation, abundant resources and strategically important locations, Japan's wanton plundering and massacres aroused strong national sentiments and patriotic consciousness among the local people, triggering a series of resistance struggles.

Despite the frequent civil wars, social unrest and the Japanese invasion that China faced during the Republican (1912-1949) period, it did not fundamentally change the nature of Chinese society, which remained a traditional society. This social structure is utilized in Zhang Yimou's films and becomes an important background and scene for the story of the Red Trilogy films to take place.

### **1.2 Political Innovations and Economic Development bring about Socio-Cultural Change**

The social and cultural changes during the Republican period were closely related to the political changes and economic development of the Republic. The establishment of the Republic of China (ROC) and a series of initiatives taken by the ROC government contributed to the dramatic changes in ROC society and the development of cultural pluralism.

The new bourgeois republican regime, the Provisional Government of the Republic of China (ROC), carried out a series of reforms in the political, economic, cultural, educational, and ceremonial areas in order to eliminate feudal malpractices and carry forward the spirit of democracy and republicanism, including safeguarding the sovereignty of the state and its territorial integrity, the enjoyment of a series of liberties, rights, and obligations, the protection of all private property, and the emphasis on freedom and equality. private property, emphasizing liberty, equality, fraternity, democracy, and republicanism, protecting human rights, formulating a series of charters, rules, and regulations to protect the development of China's national industries and businesses, implementing a press policy of opening up speech, reforming education, encouraging co-education, setting up girls' schools, and increasing the content of education in industry, natural sciences, and practical knowledge, as well as changing the calendar and the Yuan dynasty, banning opium, reforming titles, implementing the cutting of pigtails, and urging the banning of foot-binding, gambling, and prohibiting gambling, and the banning of gambling. It also changed the calendar and the Yuan dynasty, prohibited opium, reformed titles, introduced pigtail cutting, advised against foot-binding, prohibited gambling, prohibited the keeping of prostitutes, prohibited torture, prohibited corporal punishment, prohibited the buying and selling of human beings, emancipated the untouchables, reformed etiquette, and established a new culture.



Figure 8 Graduation ceremony of Nanjing Jinling Women's University, 1947.  
Source:Qin Feng Old Photo Gallery.2009.Images of the Republic of China (1927-1949).P.145

In terms of changing customs and eliminating bad habits, on the one hand, it was actively promoted by the government, and on the other hand, it was vigorously advocated by knowledgeable people who accepted new ideas and concepts. The Society for Social Improvement launched 36 initiatives, including "no prostitution", "advocating the right to property independence after adulthood", "implementing equality between men and women", "advocating marriage on one's own initiative", and "recognizing the freedom of divorce". In response to the long history of foot-binding in China (i.e., the tight wrapping of women's feet with cloth to make them deformed and smaller), women generally start to wear foot-binding at the age of four or five, and it is not uncommon for women to wear foot-binding. Generally, women began to wrap their feet at the age of four or five, and only after their adult skeleton was shaped would the cloth be unwrapped, and there were also those who had been wrapped for life), on March 13, 1912, Sun Yat-sen, the president of the Nanjing Provisional Government, instructed the Ministry of the Interior to warn all the provinces to advise against foot-wrapping. Since then, the call for women's foot release has become increasingly strong, by more and more attention, in the intellectual world, the concept of the beauty of the sky foot is increasingly deeply rooted in people's minds, female students are almost all the sky foot, male students to "do not marry a foot-bound woman" as a matter of pride.

When Sun Yat-sen was serving as interim president, he exchanged letters with the "China Domestic Products Maintenance Association" to discuss clothing reform issues in order to reverse the unhealthy tendency of dumping foreign goods and squeezing domestic products due to advocating Western products (Republic of China, Institute of Modern History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) History Research Office, 1982, p.53).Huang Xing for the organization, also take the attitude of enthusiastic support. 1912 September, he held in Beijing, the Universal Improvement Association welcome speech, "our country is now socially desirable to improve the point everywhere, but with thousands of years of inherited customs and habits, the accumulation of hard to return. I am glad to hear that your association has taken the trouble to advocate improvement" (Hunan Academy of Social Sciences, 1981, p. 269). A few days later, at the welcome meeting of the Zhengle Yuhua Association, he

declared, "The solution to the present social problems is to start with the customs. However, if we want good customs, we must have many organizations to advocate them. In my humble opinion, those who are capable of improving customs and doing their best to advocate them are all the gentlemen in the art world" (Hunan Academy of Social Sciences, 1981, p. 276).

The Republican period was a period of cultural blossoming, with the emergence of various literary, artistic and ideological schools of thought, reflecting social pluralism and ideological emancipation. As Li Dazhao (1918) said, "The life of the Chinese people today is all a life of contradiction, and the phenomenon of China today is all a phenomenon of contradiction" "A life of contradiction is a life in which the old and the new are not reconciled, a life in which the new and the old, which are separated by tens of millions of miles, come together in one place, a life of opposition and confrontation" (Yanghun, 2014, p. 225).

Some intellectuals advocated educational reform and a modernized educational system, which promoted the spread of some advanced educational concepts. However, in areas with strong traditional attitudes, especially in rural areas, old-fashioned private schooling and national education still exist.

During the Republic of China period, war and turmoil further destroyed China's traditional rural society, providing capital, labor and market for modern urban development, the government took a series of initiatives to encourage the development of industry and commerce, and more people with insights into the ideals of "industrial salvation of the country" have raised funds to build factories, which have greatly promoted the development of China's capitalist. All these greatly promoted the development of Chinese capitalist industry and commerce. At the same time, the Western powers were busy with the First World War<sup>19</sup> and temporarily relaxed the economic aggression against China, the development of Chinese national capitalism has gained a respite, there was a brief "golden period". "There were only 22 flour mills in 1911, but the number increased to 117 in 1921, with a total capital of 15 million yuan" (Yang Dajin, 1940, p. 630).

Economic development provided a solid material foundation for social change and cultural development, and promoted the disintegration of traditional Chinese lifestyles and the rise of modern new lifestyles. During the Republic of China period, in Shenyang, Hangzhou, Nanjing and other cities, Western-style, East-meets-West-style foreign buildings, apartment buildings, lilong, etc. gradually replaced Chinese-style housing as the main style of housing for the upper class and the middle class; Shanghai, Tianjin, Qingdao and other coastal ports are full of foreign houses, and many of them are equipped with small gardens, automobile rooms, swimming pools, sports fields, etc. In terms of transportation, the purchase of brand-name and new cars became the main style of housing for the upper class and the middle class. In terms of transportation, the purchase of brand-name and new cars became a symbol of status and position for the upper class, and the middle class mostly chose to travel by taxi or new rickshaw. In the case of Beijing, by the end of the 1920s, the number of taxi

<sup>19</sup> World War I: referred to as "World War I", took place from 1914-1918. early 20th century. Capitalist countries Toward imperialism In the process of transition, the Asia , and Africa Africa, Latin America Latin America, Oceania of colonies and semi-colonies were basically taken over by Great Powers The old and new colonialism Against the background of intensified conflicts, unbalanced economic development and unequal division of order among imperialist countries, a world-class imperialist war broke out in order to re-divide the world and fight for global hegemony.

companies in the city had reached nearly 60, with more than 200 rental cars (Wu Jianyong, 1997, p. 342).



Figure 9 The city of Qingdao in the 1930s, with its spacious streets, beautiful buildings and thriving businesses.

Source: Qin Feng Old Photo Gallery. 2009. Images of the Republic of China (1927-1949). P.129

Changes in the political system and economic development contributed to the rapid transformation of the Republican society, advancing the changes in the way of life of the people and the social and cultural changes in the Republican period. The way of labor, clothing, food, housing and transportation of the Chinese people, marriage and funeral rituals, folk customs, festival ceremonies, entertainment and leisure, religious beliefs, and social interactions all underwent drastic changes, and the new style of social life and ideology and culture of modern capitalism gradually became a fashion and popularity. Social and cultural changes are also "reappeared" in Zhang Yimou's films, used in the characters' identity, background and interpersonal interactions.

### 1.3 Sociocultural Change is markedly Uneven

The social and cultural development during the Republic of China showed obvious imbalances, which were reflected in regional development, urban-rural differences, social class, educational resource allocation, and traditional cultural concepts. Coastal cities are relatively prosperous, while the development of inland areas lags behind; there are obvious gaps between cities and rural areas, and between the rich and poor classes; educational resources are unevenly distributed, with relatively many schools in cities and a lack of educational resources in rural areas; traditional cultural concepts also limit social development and progress.

In terms of the general trend of historical development, the Republic of China is indeed an important stage in the process of China's historical development, which institutionally cut off the possibility of retrogression in Chinese society, forcefully pushed the transformation of China's traditional society into a modern society, and opened up a pathway for China's modernization process. The establishment of the Republic of China gradually made people understand that democracy was the general trend to replace the imperial system. Although for quite a long time after the

establishment of the Republic of China, the domestic political situation was unstable, the forces of restoration of the imperial system once returned, and there were endless wars between warlords and factions, as well as invasions from the outside and wars for power within the country, no matter how the government was changed, the rulers of the Republic of China period almost always conformed to the tide of historical development and actively promoted changes conducive to the progress of social and cultural development. However, regardless of the changes in government, almost all the rulers of the Republican era followed the trend of historical development and actively promoted changes conducive to the progress of society and culture, and pushed China towards modernization in a staggering manner.

However, due to the vastness of China's territory and the large number of nationalities, as well as the great differences in the geographical environment, living customs, linguistic characteristics, cultural traditions, and aesthetic concepts of people in different regions, the changes in social life and ideology and culture during the Republic of China period demonstrated obvious plurality, complexity, and imbalance. The forces of change were mainly confined to the intellectual and political classes, and the areas of change were mainly confined to the central cities and cities that had undergone the baptism of a new culture. In the majority of towns and villages, traditional Chinese culture still dominates, and coupled with the influence of local folk culture and customs, the general public's acceptance of Western culture is very limited. Take men's hair-cutting and women's foot-binding as an example, in Wanquan County, Hebei Province, until 1934, "although it is common for men to have their hair cut, many people in remote areas and immature people still keep their braids and are unwilling to leave them. There are many women who have already had their feet bound, but there are also many people who have their feet bound as before" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 209).

The imbalance of cultural changes in the Republican society is first manifested in the imbalance between regions. Some of the coastal and riverine areas are more culturally developed, and their social life tends to be modernized, while the vast remote areas as well as the hinterland are more backward, still clinging to the traditional way of life and ideological concepts, with very little change. The differences between cities and villages were also very great. This process is consistent with the spreading path of western civilization from the southeast coastal areas to the inland areas gradually, and from the central cities to the vast countryside. Taking marriage etiquette as an example, the new style of wedding is mainly popular in big cities, while it is rarely practiced in the countryside at large. In places such as Zhangbei County and Xiangshan County in Hebei Province, it was not until the mid-1930s that "the so-called civilized marriage... marriages in cities are mostly imitated, but still not much practiced in the countryside" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 148), and "the new marriage rites set by the Republic of China are now practiced in the big cities and towns, but not yet in the countryside" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 285).

The modernization of urban life has a pioneering and leading role in social and cultural change. During the Republic of China period, national or regional central cities, which were at the forefront of the convergence of Chinese and Western civilizations and had a spreading influence, were more receptive to Western lifestyles and ideological concepts because of their developed economies, prosperous

businesses, frequent population flows, and close interactions between China and foreign countries, and they often led and dominated the trend of social and cultural changes in the Republic of China. For example, perming hair, wearing leather shoes, eating western food, watching movies, riding bicycles, etc. were prevalent in the big cities, and became a fashionable lifestyle popular among the middle and upper classes.



Figure 10 In 1935, the Nanjing Bicycle Race was held in the city streets. At this time, bicycles were not yet popular and cycling was considered a noble fitness activity.  
Source:Qinfeng Old Photo Gallery.2009.Image Republic of China (1927-1949).P.62

The imbalance of social life and ideological and cultural changes in the Republic of China was also reflected in the differences in the social culture of the various classes. The minority of the proletariat were more educated, either owning their own industries and living in the cities for a long time, or owning numerous fields in the townships and traveling frequently between the cities and the townships, or both, and these people were more receptive to new things and new ideas. On the other hand, the urban underclass and rural people, who make up the vast majority of the population, are usually less educated or completely uneducated, and their attitudes towards Western lifestyles and ideologies are often unrecognizable and difficult to accept. Taking women's clothing as an example, while perms, cheongsams, stockings and high-heeled shoes are popular in Shanghai and Nanjing, the clothing in many remote and backward villages is still the same as it was decades ago.

On the whole, During the period of the Republic of China, the changes in Chinese society and culture were mainly concentrated in the coastal cities along the rivers and the elites in these cities, most of whom interacted closely with the West, but at the same time there were some differences in their identification with Western civilization, with one part of them advocating the full acceptance of Western culture, and the other part of them advocating the absorption of some Western civilization elements on the basis of feudal culture. In the vast number of small and medium-sized towns and villages, for the lower classes, who grew up under the feudal way of life and ideology and culture accumulated over thousands of years, and who have long been the guardians and defenders of the feudal moral concepts and value system, despite the challenges to their way of life and customs, they are still clinging to their traditions and stubbornly resisting the invasion of Western civilization. Feudal

traditional ideas are "used" in Zhang Yimou's films and become the cultural traditions of the community and the survival model of the characters in the film.

#### **1.4 The Combination of the Old and the New, and the Mixture of Chinese and Western Elements**

The overall characteristics of the social culture of the Republic of China are the coexistence of the old and the new, and the mixture of Chinese and Western culture. During this period, Chinese society not only inherited traditional cultural heritage, such as Confucianism and Taoism, but also was influenced by Western culture, such as the introduction of concepts such as science and democracy. This blending and coexistence of old and new cultures has led to the diversification of social values and the diversity of cultural forms. The culture of the Republic of China showed the characteristics of a combination of Chinese and Western culture, with both the continuation of traditional culture and the integration of Western culture, forming a unique social and cultural landscape.

Generally speaking, when two different social cultures collide with each other, either one culture completely replaces the other, or the two cultures merge and coexist, the latter being more common. The basic trend of social and cultural change in the Republic of China period was that innovation and conformity went hand in hand at the same time, showing the general characteristics of the old and the new, the East and the West.

The Zhongshan suit and the new cheongsam, known as the "national costume" of the Republic of China, are typical representatives of the fusion of Chinese and Western dress culture and aesthetics. The Zhongshan suit is the most common men's clothing after the Xinhai Revolution, and it was named after Dr. Sun Yat-sen who strongly advocated it. It is wider than a suit, with pockets at the top, bottom, left and right sides of the upper body, a collar that can be buttoned up to the bottom of the neck, and western-style pants at the bottom. Zhongshan suit is a clothing style modeled after Japanese student uniforms and Western military uniforms, but it is also a blend of traditional Chinese cultural elements, elements of the times, and the traditional aesthetic psychology of the Chinese people.

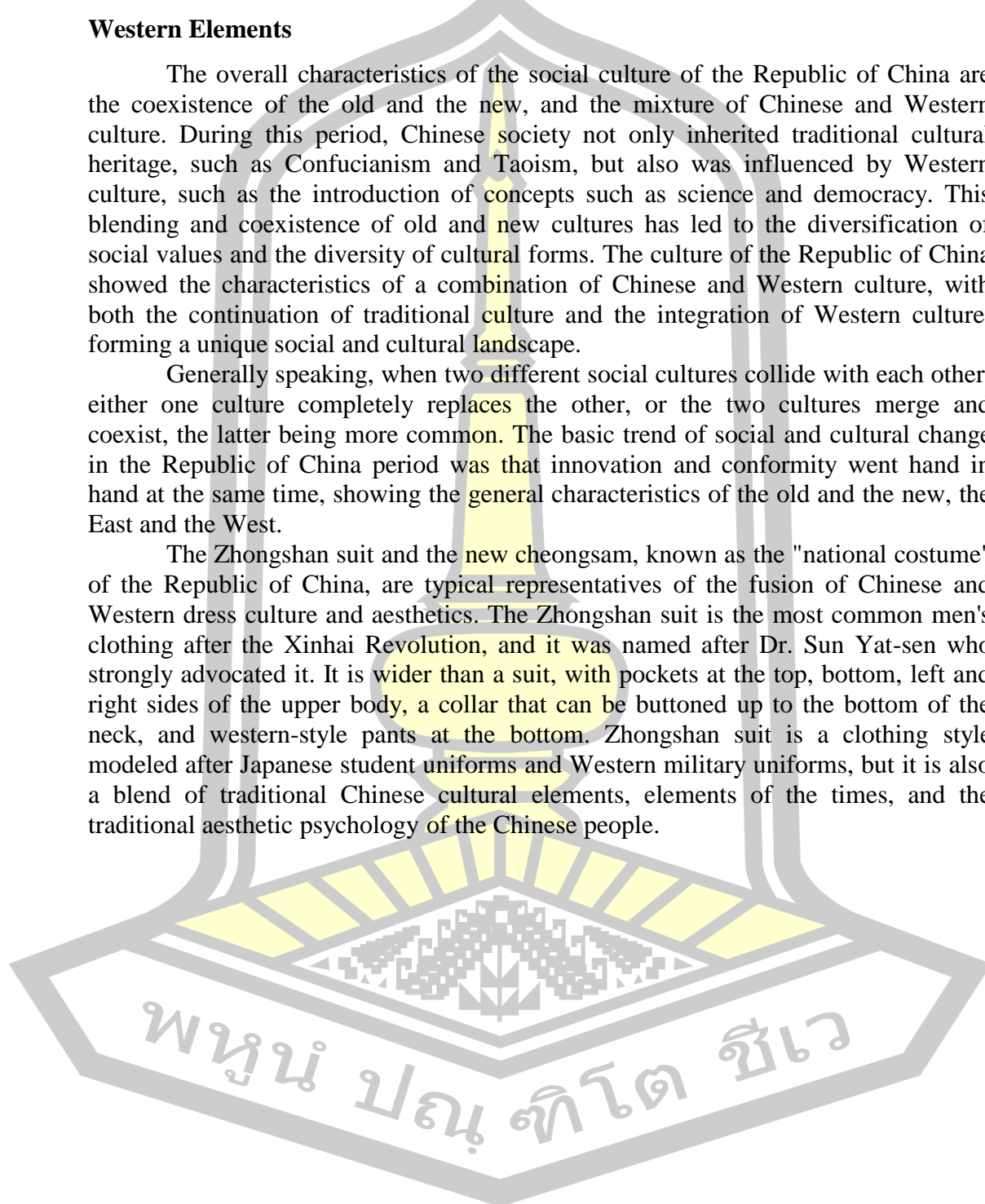




Figure 11 Chinese tunic suit

Source: Zheng Dahua. 2013. History of Chinese Cultural Development-Republic of China Volume. P.54

The social culture of the Republic of China period showed a diversified and complex picture, which was manifested in labor life, clothing, food, housing and transportation, marriage and funeral, entertainment and leisure, religious beliefs and interpersonal interactions. Taking marriage and funeral as an example, on the one hand, various forms of new wedding and funeral rites and customs such as civilized marriage, group marriage, public burial, state funeral, and memorial service appeared and gradually became popular in big cities, and on the other hand, the traditional Chinese wedding and funeral rites and customs prevailed in the vast number of cities, towns and villages, and they still had quite a strong influence and occupied an absolutely dominant position. For example, in Weixian County, Shandong Province, "the funeral begins, and the children pay their respects and burn paper. Wills are rarely written in words and mostly spoken, and there is no definite form. ...The obituary form is mostly old-fashioned. In the etiquette of condolence, more people kneel down and fewer bow. Funeral ceremonies are mostly done in the old style. Drums are used at funerals, and relatives and friends pay homage to the deceased, often with their heads bowed" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 207).

Social and cultural complexity and diversity, mapped to real life, sometimes hilarious effects, such as the wedding in Yixing County, Jiangsu Province, "since the Republic of China, although the political system has changed, grooms still wear hats and boots. However, there are also those who like to be fashionable and wear big dresses and top hats to show that they are particularly enlightened. The most ridiculous thing is that the groom wears a high hat and makes a loud noise when walking. From the front, he looks like a new-style figure, but you don't know that the pigtail is still there behind him, and the red braid thread falls to the ground (the thread of the bridegroom's braid in the local custom is red silk thread). There is also the so-called best man, who is the groom's bodyguard. There are many relatives and friends appointed by him, usually four people. Among these four people, some were in suits,

some were in casual clothes, and some were still wearing Manchu attire" ( Hu Pu'an, 2013, p. 104 ).

This parallel situation of innovation and conformity inevitably creates a contradiction between old-fashioned Chinese living habits and modern Western lifestyles, as well as a clash between traditional Chinese culture and Western ideology. On the one hand, the living traditions and cultural practices of the Chinese people are closely related to their daily lives and come from the accumulation of life experiences of their ancestors, and have been proven by countless practices to be a paradigm that can be operated over and over again, and in the course of time, they have long since become a powerful and enduring force for regulating and restraining moral behaviors and stabilizing the social order; on the other hand, the Republican government's implementation of the "Changing of Customs and Excellence", though initially intended to promote social development and progress, but those in power often neglected the lower class people's recognition and maintenance of traditional customs, this kind of top-down influence exerted by the behavior, from the actual effect, not as satisfactory as it should be, met with the negative resistance of the lower social strata. "In addition to Shanghai, Beiping and other coastal rivers and large and medium-sized cities in the interior, the vast majority of places are still in accordance with the old-fashioned wedding customs, although the occasional adoption of the new style of weddings, but also a very small number of people. And many vices and bad customs under the old-fashioned marriage system and marriage customs, such as child brides, bride kidnapping, transferring marriages, making trouble in the house, taking concubines, and observing festivals, are still relatively common" (Zuo Yuhe, 2019, p. 13).

Generally speaking, the Republic of China period from 1912 to 1949 was a short but important period and an important node in China's social transformation. This important node is full of interactions between innovation and conservatism, Western culture and traditional Chinese culture, war and patriotism. This structure was the main structure of the social culture of the Republic of China and was used for the story background, scenes and characters in Zhang Yimou's red trilogy film. I am fascinated by the social life and cultural phenomena in the context of the Republic of China, just like the director Zhang Yimou who chose this period to shoot the Red Trilogy.

## **Part 2: Social and Cultural of the Republic of China**

The social culture during the Republic of China presented a complex and diverse scene. In the context of political turmoil and social change, Chinese society is facing the conflict and collision of old and new cultures. It has both the inheritance of traditional culture, such as Confucianism, traditional ethics, etc., and the influence of modern Western culture, such as science, democracy, Capitalism etc. At the same time, problems such as uneven regional development, obvious differences between urban and rural areas, social class differentiation and uneven educational resources also exist. In this intersection of multiple cultures, the social culture of the Republic of China presented a colorful and fiercely contradictory situation, which triggered many ideological disputes and social challenges.

During the Republic of China, traditional culture had a profound impact on society. Confucianism remains an important part of society's mainstream values, and traditional ethics play an important role in family and social life. Despite the impact

of modern Western culture, traditional culture still plays an important role in moral norms, family concepts, education models, etc., influencing people's behavior and ways of thinking. At the same time, the values of traditional culture also blended with modern concepts, providing rich soil for the cultural development of the Republic of China society and becoming an important part of Chinese social culture.

### 2.1 Social Class and Working Life

The social classes during the Republic of China showed diversified and complex characteristics. Social class differentiation has intensified. The landlord class is still active and, together with new classes such as commercial capitalists, industrialists, and intellectuals, has a relatively large influence in the economic, political and cultural fields. As the working class, farmers are still the foundation of society, but they face economic difficulties and marginalization of social status.

#### 1) Social class

Since modern times, along with the importation of Western culture, the development of capitalist industry and commerce, the abolition of the imperial examination system, and the founding of new schools, China's traditional social structure has undergone great changes, with the emergence of new social divisions of labor and the gradual and frequent mobility of social classes. During the Republic of China period, the changes in social classes and social division of labor were mainly manifested in the following ways: First, from the point of view of the career choices of the intellectual class, the scholars no longer regarded being an official and a politician as the best career choice as they did in the past; instead, they had more diversified career choices, and gradually shifted to the new social occupations of businessmen, entrepreneurs, teachers, editors, etc.; and civil service system was implemented in the governmental organs. Secondly, from the point of view of occupational structure, on the one hand, there is a huge difference between urban and rural areas, with cities dominated by industry and commerce, with a sharp increase in the number of people engaged in industry and commerce and a sharp increase in the number of industrial workers, while the countryside is dominated by agriculture and handicrafts, and most of the people in the rural areas make their living from agriculture, and do handicrafts, business, and other family sideline jobs in addition to engaging in agriculture; on the other hand, along with the massive importation of foreign cultures, the West has become an increasingly important source of information for the public. On the other hand, along with the massive importation of foreign cultures, the Western medical and health care, legal and journalistic systems were gradually introduced, and new occupational groups such as doctors, lawyers and journalists emerged.

Social stratification has increased, including landowners, commercial capitalists, the emerging middle class, peasants, and laborers. Social unrest has made social class relations more volatile. Landlords remained one of the major socio-economic classes in rural areas. They usually owned large tracts of land and depended on the labor of peasants for their income, while wielding greater power in local politics. Some landlords may also serve as squires and participate directly or indirectly in local politics and social administration. With the rise of modern commerce, commercial capitalists rose in the cities. They gained wealth through commercial activities and became emerging capitalists in the cities. Some intellectuals, professionals and small businessmen in the cities gradually formed the

middle class. This group has a relatively higher status in the social structure and they play a role in the political, cultural and educational fields.

The majority of China's population remains farmers. "Of the total working population of 259.21 million in 1933, 204.91 million or 79 percent were actually engaged in agriculture, and 54.3 million (including male labor units divided from mixed occupations) or 21 percent were engaged in nonagricultural work. Seventy-three percent of the total population lived in households in which agriculture was the principal occupation, and 27 percent were members of nonagricultural households" (Fei, 1993, p. 44). In rural areas, there were many poor peasants who lived in hardship under the exploitation of landlords. Some relatively wealthy peasants may have accumulated some wealth through hard work and business, but their status in the social hierarchy remains relatively low.

With industrialization, industrial workers in cities became an emerging social class. They usually worked in factories and faced poor labor conditions and low wages. Some rural residents flocked to the cities in search of job opportunities and became migrant workers. They often faced problems of low income and labor intensity. "Poor peasants and idle people in the agrarian society went to the city's workshops and newly built factories in search of work. They went to the docks to work as porters, as laborers or to pull foreign carts" (Fei Zhengqing, 1993, p. 843).

The lower strata of society included many poor people who might be unemployed, beggars or other socially marginalized groups. Some social groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, still face certain social pressures and discrimination in the ROC.

During the Republic of China period, mobility among social classes was first manifested in the movement of laborers among regions of the country and between urban and rural areas. On the one hand, along with the growing disintegration of the rural economy, a large number of rural laborers chose to make a living in the cities and became urban workers, and some of them even turned into urban residents. On the other hand, along with economic development, the scale of cities has further expanded, and elite talents and educated talents of all kinds from small and medium-sized cities have moved to large and medium-sized cities, where the occupational structure is well-developed and material goods are more abundant. "Many rural notables were also attracted to live in the provincial towns or the big cities of the region, partly in order to secure a position in the local government or in various autonomous organizations, and partly in an eagerness to secure a new education for their children - the latter being the privilege of urban dwellers" (Fei, 1993, p. 843).

Mobility between social classes is also manifested in inter- and intra-class mobility. Both the upper social elites and the middle and lower classes of the people may leave their original classes and become members of another social class due to certain opportunities, changes, or reasons, and may rise up or fall down in the ranks. In the Republican society, where peasants constituted the majority of the population, peasants were undoubtedly the source of social stratification and social mobility, and became an important force in the transformation of social classes into other social classes, such as workers, merchants, soldiers, and civil servants. For example, in factories and enterprises, laborers from the countryside could use their knowledge and skills to become technicians or middle- and high-level managers, and even some of

those with outstanding abilities could start their own business and rise to become new-style capitalists.

The same applies to intra-class mobility. Taking the identity change and class mobility among farming households as an example, a prosperous family and hard work can improve the economic situation of a poor farming household, and even make it rich by purchasing land and property; family separation and laziness can make a rich farming household's family decline. During the Republic of China period, disasters, banditry, donations and taxes, wars, and political instability were the social problems that all peasant households needed to face, and factors such as marriages, inheritance, and changes of fortune also contributed to a certain extent to the division and mobility among peasant households, affecting their social life. "Large landowners formed the backbone of local upper class power in villages and market towns. They were not, however, permanently privileged groups; their extended families seldom maintained their position in the village community for more than one or two generations before being replaced by other families. Even in villages in southeastern China ruled by a single lineage, wealthy families of a particular surname were eventually replaced by other families of the same surname" (Fei Zhengqing & Fei Weikai, 1993, p. 274).

During the Republic of China period, those in the upper stratum of society were the head of government, senior officials, rich merchants and landlords, etc. Those in the middle stratum of society were small and medium-sized businessmen, civil servants, teachers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, company employees, etc. Those in the lower stratum of society were peasants, laborers, traditional handicraftsmen, hawkers, rickshaw-pullers, porters, cleaners, robbers, beggars, military ruffians, prostitutes, soothsayers and hoboes. etc. Even within the same class, there are huge differences in social status, standard of living and education.

In the villages, where the majority of the population live, farmers are categorized into upper, middle and lower classes based on their living conditions, financial capacity and level of education. "In every village there are upper class people from well-to-do families who own land and play a leading role in village affairs. In some villages, practically all the land may belong to one or two such families. In Xiaoying village in Miyun county, Hebei province, the Wang and Zhou families owned 83 percent of the village's land. In Gao Weizhuang, Cao County, Shandong Province, the Wei family owns 5,700 acres of the village's 6,000 acres. The Ma family in Yangjiagou, Mizhi County, Shaanxi Province, owns 90 percent of the village's land. Chang'an Village in Xiaoxian County, Jiangsu Province, consists of six small villages; one of them is controlled by one family that owns all the land. In the other villages, most of the land probably belonged to the landowner's agent (rent stacks) or to a wealthy family living in another village, or more typically, in a municipality" (Fei Zhengqing & Fei Wei Kai, 1993, p. 272-273).

During the Republic of China, the differentiation and mobility of social classes presented a complex appearance. In rural society, some farmers also have the opportunity to move upward and change their social status through their own efforts or external opportunities (such as marriage). This information is used to change character classes in Zhang Yimou's movies.

## 2) Farmers' labor life

Rural society during the Republic of China showed a multi-level social class structure, including the landlord class, rich peasants, middle peasants and poor peasants. The landlord class and rich peasants occupy land and resources and enjoy high social status and economic benefits. They often rely on the labor of farmers to obtain wealth. In contrast, middle peasants and poor peasants live in a more difficult situation, with difficult working lives, unstable income, and lack of social security and public services. Working life in rural areas is mainly based on agricultural production activities such as planting, farming, and breeding. The working conditions are relatively difficult, there is a lack of modern agricultural technology and facility support, and farmers' living standards are generally low. In addition, rural society was also affected by feudal ethics and local forces. The differences in social status and the imbalance of power made farmers face many challenges and difficulties in their working life during the Republic of China.

During the Republican period, the territory was vast, the countryside was vast, and peasants made up the vast majority of China's population. "The Chinese economy before 1949 can be seen as consisting of two parts: a large agricultural (or rural) part, comprising about 75% of the population, and a small non-agricultural (or urban) part, based mainly in semi-modern ports-of-commerce cities. Rural China produces 65% of the country's agricultural output and also utilizes handicrafts, petty trade, and old-fashioned transportation." "The agricultural sector mainly consists of 60 to 70 million family farms. Of these, roughly 1/2 are homesteaders, 1/4 are semi-homesteaders who rent a number of plots of land, and the remaining 1/4 are sharecroppers. These families live in hundreds of thousands of villages that cover the vast majority of the terrain suitable for the cultivated portion" (Fei, 1993, p. 36).

Agricultural farming is the main form of labor for farmers. "Farming throughout China is characterized by certain procedures and rhythms of labor. In the Northeast, North and Northwest, peasants plow and harrow their fields with ease in late February and March. From April and May until late fall they sow, irrigate, weed, and harvest their crops. A 1926 study of 24 farming families around the town of Yunlodian in Jingyang County, central Shaanxi, states, 'According to the distribution of labor during the year, the months from May to September are the busiest months.' Another 1924 study of farmers in Weixian County, Shandong Province, concluded that 'farming begins at the end of March and ends on December 1'. In central, southeastern and southwestern China, where the climate and soil are suited to planting two seasons a year rather than three seasons in two years as in the north. Rice is planted in April and harvested in late July and August. Farmers then sow wheat, barley, and green manure crops (fava beans, etc.) in late fall and harvest them in late spring" (Fei Zhengqing & Fei Weikai, 1993, p. 268).

During the Republican period, wheat was mainly grown in the north and rice in the south. Other grain crops were planted with barley, corn, soybeans, sorghum, millet, etc., and cash crops were planted with peanuts, sesame, rape, etc., as well as groundnuts (sweet potatoes), potatoes (potatoes), yams, taro, all kinds of vegetables, melons, lotus roots, and so on. In addition, thanks to the development of modern industry, there has been a significant increase in the area planted with cash crops such

as cotton, hemp, medicinal herbs and rushes, which provide raw materials for industry.

In addition to agricultural work, farmers also engage in a variety of sideline production, such as raising pigs, raising chickens, weaving mats, weaving, dyeing cloth, brewing wine, etc. Farmers along the coast and the rivers often fish, and farmers living in mountainous areas are also in the habit of hunting. Side industries are an important supplement to cultivation. The products are both for personal use and sometimes for exchange to subsidize the family. Some peasants will gradually increase the proportion of sideline work in their family work because of the high profitability of sideline work, and some will even become handicraftsmen specializing in sideline work.

During the Republic of China period, the vast majority of families and peasants, who made up the majority of the population, were in the lower stratum of rural society. These peasants basically followed the old pattern of family work, with agriculture as the mainstay and handicrafts as a supplement. These families usually had little or no land and relied on hiring land from landlords and selling their labor to maintain a basic livelihood. "Rural statistics collected by the national government in the mid-1930s showed that as many as 46 percent of farming households owned their own land and made a living from farming; another 24 percent were semi-owner and owner-occupier farmers who relied on other sources of income to make up for their farm income; and the remaining 30 percent were laboring sharecropper households who relied on wage income to make up for the farm income" (Fei Zhengqing & Fei Weikai, 1993, p. 273).

Only a small number of families and a small number of people are in the middle and upper strata of rural society. Those in the upper echelons of rural society were very few in number and were usually large landowners who owned large tracts of land in the countryside and stores in the cities, and also engaged in commercial activities, traveling between the cities and the countryside. According to a 1935 visit by a Chinese scholar to a village in Fuyang County, Anhui Province, "A village a few kilometers from the county town (Fuyang) is inhabited mainly by tenant farmers, whose rice paddies are subdivided into small plots. If we go further, we find that the number of homesteaders is increasing, and according to these tenants, the land closest to the county town belongs to the merchants who live there, each of whom owns several hundred acres of land. When we examined further we found a long wall along the Spring River. We learned that the land around the wall belonged to a large landowner who owned 700 acres, leased out 670 acres, and ran the rest himself. He was also a wine merchant. Away from this long wall are several other villages, dammed, belonging to the Zhou, Liu, Tang and Zhang families of the village of Hefei Xi" (Fei Zhengqing & Fei Weikai, 1993, p. 273).

Families in the upper strata of rural society are generally better educated, emphasize their children's education, and are willing to send their children to study in big cities or abroad if they have the financial means to do so. The number of people in the middle class of rural society is also small, and they usually own their own land, and in addition to farming themselves, they will rent out their excess land to landless farmers or hire landless farmers to work for them, and some of them are engaged in handicrafts in addition to farming, and make a lot of profit from their agricultural and handicraft incomes, so that they live in abundance.

The lives of different classes in rural society are used in Zhang Yimou's films, becoming the background of the film and the life scenes of the characters.

## 2.2 Families and Clans

Influenced by the social environment, clans and families in the Republican period still occupy an important position in terms of social structure and cultural traditions, despite the fact that they have also faced a series of changes and challenges, and that the traditional concept of the family has been subjected to the impact of modern concepts.

### 1) Families

Traditional Chinese society is essentially a family society. Family society emphasizes the family and clan as the basic units of society, often relying on ancient customs and values to maintain its functioning, and has its own set of well-established codes of conduct and moral standards. "Until the late Qing Dynasty, the traditional Chinese family was like a miniature kingdom, with the head of the family having the power of the monarch, who had the right to enforce the family law and manipulate the life and death of family members. The government recognized this all-powerful role of the family and did not interfere with the relationships between fathers and sons, husbands and wives, and siblings within the family" (Xu Zhongyao, 2012, p. 433).

During the Republican period, the traditional extended family structure still existed in some areas, including several generations of parents, children, grandparents, and maternal grandparents living together. "Rural families were composed of as few as four to six people and as many as 30, living in villages of varying sizes" (Fei Zhengqing & Fei Weikai, 1993, p. 271). In cities and some modernized areas, the nuclear family structure is gradually becoming more dominant. In some rural areas, the small family is also the dominant family structure. "Contrary to the common belief that Chinese families are usually large, the average family size is five persons. That concept of several generations living under the same roof is only suitable for some wealthy families; ordinary families do not enjoy such luxury" (Xu Zhongyao, 2012, p. 49). For example, in Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "Nowadays, there are suddenly many small families; men and women get married and set up their own families, with independent property, parents are not allowed to ask questions, and the patriarchs are not allowed to intervene" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 238). In 1923 Li Jinghan conducted a survey of 100 families in Hangjaton, a suburb of Beiping, "Those with lineage and economic ties totaled 406, with an average of 4.06 per family." "In 1922 the Agricultural Section of Jinling University in Nanjing surveyed the 102 farming families near Wuhu, Anhui Province, with an average of 5.4 persons per family. Another 150 farming households were surveyed in Linsan County, Zhili, with an average of 5.35 persons per household" (Li Jinghan, 1933, p. 15-16).

The family continues to play an important role in the education of children and in marriage. The rise of modern education has been accompanied by a gradual increase in children's education and freedom of marriage. However, in some areas, especially in rural areas, traditional parental authority is retained to a certain extent, in a model of the family in which the man has a higher status than the woman and the older person has a higher status than the younger one. The male elder is usually the head of the family and the "defender" of the family's honor, and has absolute authority and say in the family, deciding on all family matters, arranging the marriage of children,

and punishing or even selling family members who are unfilial and degrading to the family. Confucian ideas such as family loyalty, filial piety, chastity, and the Three Principles and Five Rules became the moral code and behavioral norms for family members. In terms of family relations, the sense of identity prompts each member of the family to play his or her role appropriately, with the father being dignified and resolute, the mother stern but kind, the children respectful and humble, the elder brother affectionate to his younger siblings, and the younger siblings respectful and submissive to their elder siblings.

Within the clan and family, women are usually expected to play traditional roles such as wives, mothers and housewives. Social changes have improved the social status of women to some extent, especially in some families in the cities, and some urban women have made some progress in education, work, etc., and have fought for equal rights.

However, in some areas with strong traditional attitudes and clans, especially in rural areas, women still face the shackles of traditional attitudes and the social status of women remains low. A wife must obey her husband and she has no independent property, including herself, which is the private property of her husband. Widows are usually considered not to remarry, while husbands are allowed to have multiple concubines while still having one wife.

## **2) Clans**

The clan is an extension of the traditional family. Families living in a certain geographical area and coming from the same ancestors form a clan. In the early Republican period, the clan system remained a prominent feature of Chinese society. Many families were still organized in clans, and although the organizational structure of many clans varied, there was usually a clan chief and a number of clan elders, who were usually older, prestigious, and prominent members of the clan. Their duties include handling clan affairs, managing family assets and clan temples, and rewarding and punishing clan members. Clan power varies from strong to weak in different regions, with strong clans in southern China, slightly weaker in central China, and weak clans in northern China.

The activities of the clan mainly include compiling and renewing the genealogy of the clan, organizing ancestor worship ceremonies, taking charge of the ancestral shrine, sacrificial fields and ancestral graves, providing relief to the clan members, training the children of the clan, rewarding the virtuous and disciplining the unworthy within the clan, settling lawsuits, and defending the clan.

Ancestor worship is an important cultural activity in clan societies. Family members usually gather regularly to perform rituals to show their respect for their ancestors. For example, in Changli County, Hebei Province, "the scholar-bureaucrats' families built ancestral halls to offer sacrifices in the spring and autumn. They prepared sheep, hogs, and wine, and the whole family gathered together. After the ceremony, everyone returned drunk and full. If there is no ancestral hall, set up a niche in the living room of your home and place a memorial tablet. If you are an ordinary villager, you can cut a red piece of paper at the end of the year and write down the deity of a certain family. On birthdays and anniversaries of death, offerings and sacrifices are made. As for the Qingming Festival, in mid-July (commonly known as the 'Magu Festival') and on the first day of October, sacrifices are made at the side of the tomb" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 231). Laiyang County, Shandong

Province, "officials and common people all have ancestral halls, where they hide the portraits, genealogy and tablets of their ancestors, and offer sacrifices at the right time. The festival of sacrifices is focused on New Year's Day. The portraits or genealogy are hung on the walls, the tablets are placed on the table, and pigs are sacrificed. , sheep, chickens, pheasants, fish, vegetables, fruits. The sacrifices can be rich or not, depending on the wealth of the family" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 237).

Clans usually have a relatively complete set of clan covenants or rules, which are posted in the ancestral hall and recited on appropriate occasions. These clan rules or regulations often correspond to Confucian moral teachings, including filial piety and respect for parents, respect for elders, harmony between clans, teaching of children and grandchildren, honoring one's duties, and refraining from committing acts of impropriety. The clan rules regulate interpersonal relations and ethical order within the family and the clan, requiring sons to be filial to their fathers, wives to obey their husbands, and brothers to love one another.

In addition, the clan rules also warn the clansmen not to engage in bad behaviors such as laziness, wastefulness, violence and gambling. Serious offenses against the clan rules are dealt with publicly in the ancestral hall in front of the entire clan. Depending on the seriousness of the offense (disobedience, filial disobedience, and adultery were considered the most deserving), the offender would be subject to one of the following punishments: moral admonition, verbal reprimand, fine or sacrificial offering, whipping, loss of clan privileges, expulsion from the clan and from the genealogy, death, or self-murder. Although corporal punishment or execution was illegal, the government rarely interfered with clan decisions.

For serious violations of clan rules, the clan chief and clan elders will gather the entire clan to the clan ancestral hall and publicly deal with the offenders, who, depending on the severity of the fault, will be subject to moral exhortation, verbal reprimand, fines or sacrifices, flogging, deprivation of clan privileges, expulsion from the clan and ticking off of the genealogy, and execution or causing oneself to be killed. Although corporal punishment or execution within the clan was illegal, the government rarely intervened. For example, in Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "In the past, people with the same surname lived together in groups, celebrating each other's joys and sorrows, supporting each other in sickness, and caring for each other in poverty. Their rituals were thick and thin, and their clothes were light and heavy, so as to distinguish between relatives and strangers, and to maintain human relations. When you meet an elder, you must get up when you are sitting, get off when you are riding, and avoid fighting. If the person is unworthy, the clan leader may punish him according to the family law at the ancestral hall, or drive him out of the country, or send him to the official for investigation. Some of them were forced to migrate to other places due to poverty, so they used money to support them and worship their ancestors" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 238).



Figure 12 Ancestral Hall. It is a place where ancestors' tablets are set up, where ancestor worship activities are held, and where family affairs are conducted.

Source: Wan Jianzhong & Li Shaobing et al. 2008. History of Chinese Folklore (Republic of China Volume).P.355

Clans form a large social network in society, where members are interrelated and provide mutual aid and support. This is important for individuals to gain status and opportunities for development in society.

During the Republic of China period, social changes and modernization trends gradually altered family structures and social relations. Urbanization, the spread of education and changes in the social system all had a profound impact on clans and families. The traditional society centered on the family and clan was impacted and gradually disintegrated. However, the disintegration of the traditional family system and clan society was a gradual process that took place over a fairly long period of time, and the degree of disintegration of clan society varied in different regions. "Clans and families can no longer provide help and comfort to the unemployed, sick and poor members of their families. Craftsmen and peasants who were deprived of their rice bowls left their hometowns to make a living in the cities, and at the same time were freed from the control of the clan and family over them. Even if they are fortunate enough to start a new life, their meager income is hardly enough to sustain themselves, let alone support their clansmen. The relationship between people like these and the clan is already thin, and the wives and children of such people often have to work in different cities, struggling to make a living. As a result, not only the clan members but even the immediate family members are more uprooted. Undoubtedly, under the influence of foreign economic invasion, the old family relationships disintegrated" (Xu Zhongyao, 2012, p. 319-320).

In the Republic of China period, clans and families were still influenced by traditional culture, and in some areas where feudal forces were strong and traditional thinking was strong, especially in remote and outlying rural areas, clan forces were still very strong, clan rules and discipline were still firmly binding, and the family and clan still played a strong role in people's daily lives. This information was used in Zhang Yimou's film and became the theme expressed in the film - the restraint of feudal ethics on people.

## 2.3 Weddings and Funerals

During the Republic of China, new wedding and funeral rituals became popular in some places, but traditional weddings and funerals remained the mainstream of society. Wedding ceremonies and funerals carry long traditions and profound cultural heritage. At weddings, traditional customs of the family and society are usually followed, such as wedding ceremonies, dowry etiquette, etc., to demonstrate family prestige and social status. Funerals are respected and treated seriously, and often comply with traditional or religious rituals, such as wearing mourning clothes, spreading paper money, carrying coffins, etc., to express grief and respect for the deceased. These rituals are not only important rituals in family life, but also important carriers of social and cultural inheritance, reflecting the social customs, habits and moral concepts of the Republic of China.

### 1) Weddings

During the Republic of China period, weddings were still an important rite of passage in social life, but compared with the previous era, a number of changes had taken place, mainly in four areas: first, the concept of marriage had undergone major changes, with the old-fashioned marriage system and marriage rites, such as arranged marriage, sale and purchase, coercion, concubinage, wife-expulsion, chastity, and early marriages, being severely criticized, and the concepts of freedom of love, autonomy of marriage, marriage abolition, and revolution in marriage being disseminated. Second, the marriage system has undergone major changes, with monogamy gradually replacing polygamy and concubinage as the main marriage system. Thirdly, marriage is becoming increasingly free, and interactions between men and women tend to be more open, with a gradual decline in arranged marriages, an increase in independent marriages, a rise in the proportion of late marriages, and a greater freedom to divorce, with an increase in the number of divorce cases; young people in urban areas, in particular, have a greater opportunity to choose their own partners and are not subjected to the strict arrangements of their families. Fourthly, there are various forms of weddings; in the cities, some trendy young people may choose Western-style weddings, wear Western-style wedding dresses and have church weddings. Weddings tend to be simplified, and new types of weddings, such as civilized marriages and collective weddings, are becoming popular. In the countryside, however, there are still traditional Chinese weddings, including traditional ceremonies such as the cave-in and the crossing of the threshold. For example, in Weixian County, Shandong Province, there are both new-style weddings and old-style weddings, "First marriages often involve a matchmaker. In the old-style marriage contract, the parents made the decision and the matchmaker helped convey the information; in the new-style marriage contract, the engagement certificate and photos were exchanged with the consent of both parties. Betrothal gifts include coins, jewelry, cloth, etc. At the wedding ceremony, the groom's family welcomes him with music. During the wedding ceremony, people pray to heaven and earth and drink cups of wine. If you get married in a new style, you should get married in a new style. There are various etiquettes after marriage, such as meeting parents and relatives. The age of marriage is over fifteen years old and the majority is under twenty-five years old" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 207).



Figure 13 Group Wedding Ceremony

Source: Wan Jianzhong & Li Shaobing et al. 2008. History of Chinese Folklore (Republic of China Volume).P.279

Dowry is still an important tradition in the Republic of China. At the time of the wedding, the bride's family usually provided some gold and silver jewelry, furniture, clothing and other belongings to the groom's family to show the weight of the dowry.

The new style of marriage rites and customs formed a serious impact on the old style of marriage and weddings, prompting great changes in the form of marriage during the Republican period, but such changes showed great imbalance in different regions. The changes in large and medium-sized cities were greater than those in the townships in general, the changes in culturally advanced areas were greater than those in culturally backward areas, the changes in the upper class were greater than those at the grass-roots level, and the changes in the educated and well-educated populace were greater than those in the uneducated or less educated populace.

Generally speaking, old-style marriages were still absolutely dominant in the Republican period, not only in terms of numbers and geographical area, but also in terms of variety of forms and cumbersome ceremonial procedures. In Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, "old-style marriages accounted for seven or eight out of ten, while new-style marriages accounted for only two or three out of ten" (Hangzhou Local Records Compilation Office, 1987, p. 233). Laiyang County, Shandong Province, on the day of welcoming the bride, "when welcoming the bride, the honor guard leads in front and the drumming team follows. The groom is covered in red silk and rides in a colorful sedan to the bride's home. This is called "Xiao Dengke". The bride's family asks two women to wash the bride's face at the scheduled time and direction, which is called "opening the face"; and comb the hair into a bun, which is called "top-up". The woman helps the bride sit on the colorful sedan chair, which is called "sending off the bride", and asks one or two men to see her off, which is called "seeing off the guests". Servants and maidservants accompany them, which is called dowry. ... When entering the groom's house, pastries are placed over the couple's heads, which is called 'topping'. Go to the courtyard, light incense and candles, and hold a ceremony called "worshipping heaven and earth" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 233).



Figure 14 The Bride's Face Opening Ceremony

Source: Wan Jianzhong & Li Shaobing et al. 2008. History of Chinese Folklore (Republic of China Volume).P.285

In addition to marriage by marriage (explicit marriage), there are many forms of marriage, such as marriage by robbery, marriage in the dark, marriage by exchange, child marriage, marriage by marriage, marriage by marriage, marriage by marriage, arbitrary marriage, marriage by service, and so on, and there are also women who comb themselves (during the period of the Republic of China, the unmarried girls all save their braids, and then start to bind the buns after the marriage, and in Guangdong and other places, some young women, by means of a particular ceremony, make their own braids and buns to show that they are determined not to get married, and to be alone in the end of the old age, which is called Some young girls in Guangdong and other places, through a specific ceremony, change their own braids and buns to show their determination not to get married and stay alone for the rest of their lives, which is called "self-combing" or "combing up") and not to fall into their husbands' homes (some young girls in Guangdong and other places, who are forced by their parents to not be able to "self-combing," can only return to their mothers' homes to avoid cohabitation with their husbands. This kind of women are married in name, but in reality they are also alone, and "self-combing" is different in name but the same in reality, known as "not fall into the family") of the peculiar customs.

Room, concubinage, keep the festival and other vices and customs in the old-fashioned marriage prevailed. For example, in Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "a second marriage is called a 'subsequent marriage', and a woman is called a 'continuation wife'. The ceremony was the same as before. If one has no choice but to marry a wife during the mourning period, the man should wear plain clothes and the woman should wear plain clothes after three days. The ceremony should be simple. Those who buy a concubine will have a sedan chair and no one to accompany them.""If the girl's family is poor, she will first send her daughter to the boy's family,

which is called a 'child bride'. When you grow up, choose a good day to get married, and don't sit in a sedan chair, and there will be no discrimination. Ghost marriage, in which a woman's body is carried in a sedan chair and buried together in the man's grave, is not explicitly prohibited by the government" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 234).



Figure 15 Bride and Groom make the exchange of courtesies.

Source: Wan Jianzhong & Li Shaobing et al. 2008. History of Chinese Folklore (Republic of China Volume).P.283

During the Republican period, it was common for men to renew their marriages after the death of their wives. A man's financial situation may have an impact on whether or not to remarry. In some cases, men may consider remarrying to maintain the family, to continue the lineage, or because of family needs. Men from extremely poor and destitute families may not be able to marry, let alone renew, their wives. Women in families deeply influenced by traditional attitudes are asked to keep their wives after the death of their husbands, and the phenomenon of remarriage is more common among women from poor and poor families. For example, in Weixian County, Shandong Province, "according to the custom of remarriage, a man who loses his wife, whether he has children or not, is free to remarry without any restrictions. The custom of women remarriage. When a woman loses her husband, wealthy families require women not to remarry, while poor families do not wait for three years after the husband's death before remarriage. It is mostly managed by the mother's family, and the husband's family just listens to it" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 207).

A wedding during the Republic of China was a solemn and warm family event, full of traditional rituals and cultural connotations. However, in the social structure of the Republic of China, women had a low status, were restricted to the family, and were reduced to reproductive machines. Girls from poor families are even treated as commodities by their parents, sold to elderly rich men, and forced to become the rich man's wife, even if the rich man is disabled, or is a widower, or already has many wives. Zhang Yimou used this information in the film to express "the tragedy of a woman under the feudal system".

## 2) Funerals

Funerals were still solemn ceremonies during the Republic of China, and traditional funerals were the mainstream of society. In traditional funeral activities, the funeral report is very loud, the funeral procedure is cumbersome, the ceremony is grand, there are a lot of burial objects, the mourning time is long, and "thick burial and long mourning" is highly regarded, so that they expect to be able to comfort the spirits of the dead, mourn the deceased, and pray for the protection of the ancestors. Due to China's vast territory and many nationalities, there are huge differences in the disposal of human remains among different regions and nationalities, resulting in a variety of funeral customs. During the Republic of China period, there were five main types of funerary methods popular among ethnic groups throughout the country: earth burial, cremation, water burial, sky burial and tree burial.

Differences in funeral customs in different regions and ethnic groups reflect differences in local and national cultures. The type of burial method adopted is related to the mode of production, living habits, ideology, religious beliefs and natural environment of the ethnic group or region in which the person concerned lives. Different ethnic groups give different meanings to different burial methods, sometimes even completely opposite. In the Han region, earth burial is prevalent, and earth burial is regarded as a noble and decent way of burial, while the behavior of leaving the body in the wilderness and letting wild dogs, eagles and other animals peck at the body is regarded as inauspicious and a great disrespect to the deceased. This is because most Han Chinese work in agriculture and regard the land as the basis of life, thus giving rise to the concept of "entering the Shi for peace". Some ethnic groups believe that cremation, water burial, sky burial, tree burial, bird burial is the most noble and sacred, while earth burial is an inferior way of burial, only suitable for burying those who die a violent death, the death of the dead of the sudden death of disease. The reason why the Tibetans mainly use the four burial methods of earth burial, cremation, water burial and sky burial is because they are deeply influenced by Indian culture, which believes that the human body is composed of the four elements of earth, fire, water and sky, and should therefore adopt the corresponding burial methods to bring the human being back to his or her origin.

During the Republic of China period, traditional funeral rites were still the mainstream, and the procedures were numerous and the ceremonies complex. For example, the traditional funeral rites in Beiping have procedures such as "pouring the head", "receiving the three", "sending the library", "becoming the master", "funeral", etc. Each procedure has a number of steps. "funeral" and other procedures, each program has a number of steps; Jinhua, Zhejiang, the old-style funeral rites, roughly "to send the end" "to move the body and send the changeless" "Report mourning" "buy water bath corpse" "wear life jacket and knock seven" "into the coffin" "stopping the spirit of the funeral" "Entering the Cave" and other ceremonies.

Families usually hire Taoist priests to officiate at the funeral hall and conduct the memorial service. In rural areas, there may also be traditional practices such as hiring a professional mourner to conduct the service. Choosing a cemetery remains an important decision. Some families may choose to be buried in their hometowns or family cemeteries, while some wealthy people may choose to build a tomb in a celebrity's grave or in a place with favorable feng shui. For example, in Zhengyang

County, Henan Province, "in recent funerals, the coffin is fully prepared, the body is placed in the coffin on the same day, and relatives and friends are notified of the death. Write the deceased's name and official title on the paper and stick it on the coffin. Chickens and wine are offered as offerings, and relatives stay beside the coffin. Three days later, relatives and friends came to express their condolences and invited monks and Taoist priests to chant sutras to save the soul of the deceased. Most burial places are ancestors' graveyards, and some are buried in other places with good Feng Shui" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 225).

Family members and close friends usually wear plain clothes to show respect for the deceased. Wealthy families may hire professional mourning teams to express their grief for the deceased. For example, in Xianyang County, Shaanxi Province, "Clothing is determined by blood relationship. Sons and grandsons wear filial piety hats and filial piety clothes, sons-in-law and nephews usually wear white clothes, and others can tie their heads with white cloth" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 12).

During the Republic of China period, the Government and some enlightened people initiated funeral reforms, advocating the correction of extravagance, the promotion of simplicity and frugality, the elimination of feudal superstitions, the reform of the mourning system and the simplification of funeral procedures. During this period, new funeral ceremonies and forms such as state funerals, public burials, memorial services and cemeteries appeared and became popular. However, the reform of funeral and burial customs has faced many difficulties, especially in the vast rural areas, where the old-style funeral and burial customs are absolutely dominant. Funerals during the Republic of China were not only the last rites for the deceased, but also carried reverence for life and respect for traditional culture. This information was used in Zhang Yimou's films and became important scenes and plots.

#### 2.4 Clothing, Food, Shelter and Transportation

During the Republic of China period, due to social upheaval and change, as well as the dual influence of traditional culture and modernization, people's lifestyles underwent some changes in terms of clothing, food, housing and transportation, and there were some discrepancies between urban and rural areas as a result of such changes.

##### 1) Clothing

Clothing not only serves to keep warm and protect from the cold, but also has rich cultural connotations. The changes in dress were particularly notable among the many changes in the social life of the Republic of China. With the support of the government and the strong encouragement of the enlightened people, the people's dress broke away from the shackles of hierarchical concepts and entered an era of freedom and equality. People chose "what to wear" and "how to wear it" according to their own will and financial ability, and thus the phenomenon of people dressing in a variety of ways and in their own way emerged.

Suits and Zhongshan suits dominated the clothing of men in the Republican period. Not only officials, intellectuals like to wear, other classes of people also like to wear; suits, Zhongshan suit is not only popular in the city, some remote counties and villages also have many people wearing. For example, in Xinfeng County, Sichuan Province, "at the beginning of the Republic of China, dress etiquette was formulated and Western styles were adopted. Regular clothes were divided into two

types: A and B: Type A was still in Western style, with a top hat, clothes and shoes. Category B wears the Chinese style, with blue robes, boots, and hats the same as Category A. Women's dresses, knee-length, with skirts underneath. In recent years, civil servants mostly use short suits and Chinese tunic suits, while the elderly still wear Chinese-style clothes" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 71-72).

One of the major changes in women's clothing was the improvement of traditional clothing by adding Western elements. In the early years of the Republic of China, women's clothing still maintains the shape of the top and bottom of the skirt, but a change in the past chest, shoulders, waist, hips, completely straight state of the traditional clothing modeling, will be cut to shorten the length of the clothes, tighten the waist, cuffs, focusing on the display of the human body's curvature. the 1920s, the cheongsam began to popularize. Influenced by European and American clothing, the cheongsam's shape has changed significantly - the length is shortened, the waist is tightened, and the cuffs are narrowed in the mid-1930s, the cheongsam continued to be patterned on the length of the garment, the length of the sleeves, and the length of the slits, and the cheongsam's varieties gradually became more and more abundant: there are cheongsams with a length of the garment reaching the ground, where even the shoes cannot be seen, and cheongsams which have been shortened to the knee, so that the entire calf is exposed to the outside. There are also cheongsams that are shortened to the knees so that the whole lower leg is exposed, as well as cheongsams with long and short slits. The cuffs of the cheongsams got shorter and shorter, from the elbow to the upper arm, and then to two or three inches below the shoulder; the waists got narrower and narrower, and some of them were so narrow that they had to suck in the air before they could be fastened with the group buttons. That period of the cheongsam, new models every season, emphasizing the three circumference, that is, bust, waist, hip circumference, tends to be narrow, taut, the human body curves, convex and concave, exposed and portrayed to the fullest.

In the 1940s, the cheongsam became more westernized, absorbing the characteristics of Western-style women's clothing, and the traditional cheongsam has almost nothing in common, and its style tends to abolish the sleeves, shorten the length and reduce the height of the neckline, and eliminates the cumbersome decorations, so as to make it lighter and more suitable for the body.





Figure 16 Trimmed, short-sleeved, high-necked cheongsam (1930s)  
Source: Hu Ming&Qin Qing.2000.Republic of China Style Atlas (Costume Volume).P.81

In addition to the cheongsam, women in big cities such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, Beijing and Tianjin also wear cloaks, coats, suits, vests and long skirts. The cloak is also called "overcoat". In addition to summer, the rest of the season can be worn. Ru Nan County, Henan Province, "nowadays the custom of the city has been slightly changed, decorated with Western-style, with uniforms, there are purchased foreign silk, foreign satin, foreign tweed, about the majority of imported goods. .... so-called modern women, face more wear all kinds of glasses, feet more high root (heel) shoes, or suits, or robes, this is a new civilization into a kind of consumption to enhance the end of the see also" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 216).

Although it has been fashionable to wear western-style clothes and cheongsams in metropolitan cities such as Shanghai and Beijing since the 1920s, traditional Chinese clothes are still the main wear of the people in the Republic of China. The traditional Chinese dress, with a shirt and jacket with a Chinese collar on top and wide pants underneath, was the most basic clothing style for Han Chinese during the Republic of China. Men's Chinese-style tops were laped, and women's Chinese-style tops had two kinds of slant lapels and lapels. These traditional Chinese-style clothes were not only different for men and women in terms of style and color, but also had all sorts of changes in various periods, and such changes were mainly concentrated in the collars, sleeves, shoulders, plackets, trouser legs, pockets, buttoned parts, as well as the fatness and thinness and length of the tops and pants. In terms of quantity, there were still a lot of people wearing all kinds of long shirts or short clothes. Chinese short clothes were the daily attire of the working people, while long shirts, waistcoats or vests were usually the attire of the upper and intellectual classes. For example, according to the Weixian County Records of Shandong Province in 1941, "Dress habits, city dwellers are mostly in long clothes, and township and village dwellers are mostly in short clothes. Women mostly wore old-fashioned clothes, but - in general - the new ones wore long robes, long skirts, etc., mostly tied with local coarse cloth" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 210).

Runan County, Henan Province, "Rural dress""clothing mostly with coarse cotton, between the preparation of the finer foreign cloth for the microscopic, such as more as a special product of the celebration of the occasion. Rural men and women love to wear blue cloth clothing, the darker the better. Inquiring about the reason, the color does not fade over time and is quite resistant to washing. Until they are tattered, they still cannot bear to abandon them, and they will not dismantle them until they are tattered beyond repair, and use them as linings" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 216).



Figure 17 Chinese jacket with collar

Source: Wan Jianzhong & Li Shaobing et al. 2008. History of Chinese Folklore (Republic of China Volume).P.118

The clothing during the Republic of China showed diversity and uniqueness in the blend of tradition and modernity, East and West, reflecting the style of the times and social changes. Clothing is used to express the character's identity, status, personality, emotions, etc. in Zhang Yimou's movies.

## 2) Diet

Compared with the changes in clothing, the changes in food during the Republican period were relatively slow. Most of the people still had three meals a day, eating mostly in a communal system, important traditional festival food was still prevalent, the basic content of staple food, side dishes and drinks did not change much, still continuing the traditional food culture, and the dishes were rich and varied, and the major regional cuisines exchanged with each other, competing with each other.

On the whole, the dietary habits of the Republican period showed obvious differences between urban and rural areas. With the introduction of Western food culture, the dietary structure of cities gradually changed, and in addition to the traditional local flavor dishes, Western-style diets began to be popular in large and medium-sized cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, which became the fashionable consumption of the society, and the dietary life of the urban people became increasingly rich and luxurious, whereas the dietary habits of the rural areas in China, which accounted for the vast majority of the population, basically remained unchanged. The dietary habits of the majority of the population in rural China remain basically unchanged.

In the Republic of China, the dominant staple foods are still rice, noodles, and rice and noodle products. For example, in Runan County, Henan Province, "rice, flour, oil and salt were the mainstays of the household food. Food supplements include eggs, tofu, and a variety of vegetables, with salted meat, salted chicken, and salted fish, and also fresh meat, fresh chicken, and live fish, each to their own needs, but the only thing they can do is to look at their own strength. Poor and thin households, negative suffering for labor, more than sorghum (sorghum) (commonly known as Panicum), soybeans, mung beans, wheat mixture, ground for flour, called "mixed noodles". Food aid products, useful pickles and cabbage, loppu (Bu), leeks, scallions, mustard, garlic and other greens and a variety of wild vegetables, steamed, fried, boiled and sprouted (stewed), each appropriate, not to be cited all over the place." (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 216)

Changli County, Hebei Province, "common food, to sorghum, millet for the bulk of the corn, followed by corn, millet, tares, rice and the next. In recent years, mountain farmers planted potatoes, a melon, also known as taro, its taste sweet, is the end of the Xianfeng from foreign countries, can be replaced by food grains, but also can be ground flour, is the food can be expanded also. To round-grained rice, wheat flour, only for the payment of guests, for celebration, old age relatives of the ear. Residents of the spring order grinding soybeans and salt for sauce, or Yan soy sauce, is a common thing, and grinding for water, dry tofu two, to eat. Don't use soybeans to squeeze oil, said soybean oil, and sesame seeds, soursop, peanuts squeezed by sesame oil, ghee, peanut oil, the same as boiled vegetables of condiments. And red, green, white beans ground vermicelli, also one of the home cooking species. Cabbage is what the ancients called late autumn woad, which is crisped with salt and radish and mustard greens, all of which are necessary for every meal." (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 233).

People in the south of the Yangtze River, rice-based diet, three meals a day, or porridge or rice, but the daily snacks, inter-food, cakes and cakes, etc., are all flour products. Especially noodles, meat noodles, fried noodles, cold noodles, Yangchun noodles, pasty noodles, etc., the pattern of the many, without equal. Contrary to the south, in the north, people mainly eat flour products, and occasionally eat some rice. For example, in Weixian County, Shandong Province, "Dietary preferences, in addition to common grains, vegetables and other ingredients, no special preferences." (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 210) Flour products in the north have a wide variety of colors and colors, and the common ones include noodles, dumplings, wontons, steamed buns, buns, and so on. In addition to rice and noodles, the staple food of the north and south during the Republican period, there were also many places - especially some remote places - where pumpkin, yam, millet and other miscellaneous grains were used as the staple food. With the introduction of Western food culture, bread, hot dogs, sandwiches and other Western-style staples began to appear and became popular among the elite.

Wine and tea also occupy an important place in Chinese food culture. At that time, Beijing's prevailing beverage was shochu, i.e., white dry, known in Nanjing as "sorghum burnt", "Bengbu burnt", "Niuzhuang burnt", which was welcomed by different classes of people in the upper, middle and lower classes. The second is Shaoxing yellow wine, the name of the color is also a lot of, mostly pass in the middle and upper classes, the daily drinkers are very few. Third, Shandong, Shanxi yellow

wine, only as a home to honor guests. Fourth, the river rice white wine, can be used in medicine. Beijing Tea House, basically monopolized by the Anhui people. There are many teahouses and restaurants in Nanjing.

Western drinks such as foreign wine, coffee and cold drinks gradually spread in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Guangzhou, not only in Western restaurants, bars and cafes, but also in Chinese restaurants and food halls to satisfy customers' needs. In summer, the consumption of beer, soft drinks and ice cream is also large, and even in some small counties, drinking foreign drinks has become a fashion.

The diet during the Republic of China was diverse and rich. There were differences between urban and rural areas, and traditional diet was the mainstream. In rural areas, people still mainly eat traditional farm dishes, focusing on family dinners and holiday food customs, such as farm rice, pasta, vegetables, etc. Food has become an important setting and scene in Zhang Yimou's films.

### 3) Construction and housing

Residential buildings during the Republic of China were diverse and changing, affected by factors such as region, social class, and economic status. In urban areas, due to the advancement of modernization and the influence of foreign culture, various styles of residential buildings have appeared, including Western-style houses, Chinese-style houses and mixed buildings. Western-style buildings often use stone brick structures, European decoration, and multi-story buildings, reflecting the modern urban style and lifestyle of the wealthy class. The Chinese-style houses feature blue bricks, black tiles, and courtyard gardens, reflecting the heritage of traditional culture and the warm atmosphere of the family. In rural areas, due to limitations of economic conditions, people mostly live in simple houses with earthen wood or brick structures. Tile houses or adobe houses are common types of housing with simple basic facilities, but still retain the traditional farmhouse style.

The difference between the north and the south of the residential area is very obvious. The Yangtze River basin, such as the town of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Huizhou residential, built alongside the water, a variety of forms of water streets constitute the backbone of the network of villages and towns. In North China, most of the houses are closed individual courtyards and thus constitute small hutongs at intervals. In terms of internal structure, following the tradition, kang is used for sleeping in the north, while beds are used for staging in the south. In terms of exterior decoration, the south has more black tiles and whitewashed walls, with more carvings on brick, stone and wood. The exterior walls in the north are generally more greenish-gray, with less carvings. In the north, the interior is dominated by pots and pans and large pits, and the main house is oriented north to south. In the south, there is a lot of water, and the foundations of the houses are often built in the water, and boats can be passed under the wall, which makes it extremely convenient to transport grain, firewood, and garbage. In the northern plains, emphasis is placed on laying foundations, digging trenches and tamping them, and then laying masonry. The roof frame is made of solid wood, with five purlins, seven purlins, nine purlins, and at least three purlins, and then add rafters, and the front and back of the grooves and ridges, and pay attention to the five beams and eight pillars.

The Han people live in the most common cottage, with a flat roof and herringbone slanting roof. There are five rooms, one bright and two dark, the center of the hall, the east and west houses have a kang, all under the south window. For example, in Runan County, Henan Province, "the four townships of Chengguan, quite a lot of tile houses, buildings are very few not in sight. Ordinary households live in grass huts, but also with tile Charlotte ridge eaves, walls, commonly known as 'Luohan room'. In the countryside, those who use gray tiles to build the walls are four or five out of ten, so that the quality of the tiles is strong enough to last" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 216).

Changli County, Hebei Province, "In terms of the whole territory, the people live in the majority of bungalows, followed by grass huts, and tiled houses are found in towns and markets, but not much in the countryside. Where the courtyard is narrow and long, facing south, many houses have five rooms, three or two rooms. The rate of wood for the beams and pillars, masonry for the foundation, the four perimeter walls are also taken from the masonry, poor families or woven broomcorn for the fence. Window panes southward, in order to penetrate the light. Its facing the street, said the gatehouse, the patio of the left and right, said the room, and finally said blocking the room. Door has a big door, heavy door, house door, corner door of the difference, but must be in the box dominated evenly, only for the right style" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 233-234). Weixian County, Shandong Province, "living room situation, the county's average grass room in eight out of ten, tile room in two out of ten" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 210).

Residential buildings during the Republic of China reflected the integration of social development levels, social classes, economic conditions and cultural traditions, and were an important part of urban and rural people's lives and cultural features. In Zhang Yimou's films, the house is an important place where the story takes place and where the characters move.

#### **4) Travel and Transportation**

The development of transportation reflects the progress of the times. The change from man-carried sedan chairs and man-drawn foreign carts to motorized trams and automobiles reflects, in one way or another, the process of alternating old and new cultures. By the 1930s, all the important modern forms of public transportation in the modern West had been introduced to Chinese cities. However, in the vast rural areas, especially in some remote areas, the old-fashioned means of transportation were still the main means of travel and transportation.

Livestock such as donkeys, horses, mules, camels, yaks and sheep are often used as transportation in some places. Farmers usually feed donkeys for normal agricultural use and for riding outside, as well as for soliciting passengers in towns and cities to earn money. Because they are light, safe and inexpensive, they are favored by women of the lower middle class in rural areas and towns. Although the horse is fast, but because of the feeding costs, usually government officials and wealthy people's means of transportation. In the northwestern region, camels, yaks, sheep, etc. are the main means of cargo trafficking for long-distance heavy transportation. In the plains of the northern region of the land, but also prevalent to horses, mules, cows, donkeys, etc. pulling the line of the two-wheeled animal-drawn

vehicles, not only can transport goods, but also can carry passengers. Some rich and noble families, like to use the carriage, and the carriage decorated luxury.

Changli County, Hebei Province, "folk transportation, end of the capital car and horse power. Car style, iron wheels and wooden box. Heavy and far-reaching, for the big car, if the wheels are lightweight, to cloth for the enclosure, said the car. Large car is pulling crops, transportation of goods, visit relatives, go to the market more often used. Sedan a small car, the rich celebrate the hanging with, or sell foot line pull the guest seat with. Rickshaw, the road is not repaired, is still rare. Pedal car, towns and cities have more drivers. From Changli station to Leiting, the existing car two, daily round-trip twice, travelers say they, but the summer rain and mud, then stop. Rivers and canals, to the Luan River for the big, its road mouth winter and spring bridge, summer and fall boat crossing, no obstruction" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 234).

Pan Yumei, in her article "A Farmer's Wife in a Village and Township," examines Liuquan Township, Gu'an County, Hebei Province, and mentions the means of transportation for travel in this township, "Ordinary journeys within a few dozen miles were made by large carts or mule carts. The carts were owned by every farmer who had some land, and their purpose was to transport fertilizer to the fields and harvests to the yards. So if someone in the family went out, they would borrow it. If the richer farmers, when someone in the family goes out, they take a sedan instead of a big cart; either they own a mule cart, or they go to the county or a big town to hire one" (Li Wenhui, 2014, p. 444).



Figure 18 Horse-drawn carts as a means of transportation on the Loess Plateau in Shaanxi, 1947.

Source: Qinfeng Old Photo Gallery. 2009. Images of the Republic of China (1927-1949). P.169

Sedan chair in China has a long history of use, prevailing in China's urban and rural areas in the north and south, and a variety of types of passengers, mostly for the middle and upper classes. For example, in Runan County, Henan Province, "the old sedan cars, horse-drawn carriages, two-wheeled oxcarts, four-wheeled paxil cars, yellow carts, and more recently, pedal carts, passengers and goods traveled to and from the four borders" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p.216-217). After the establishment of the Republic of China, with the popularization of the concept of

During the Republic of China period, trams, cars, trains, airplanes and other modern means of transport rapid development, new railroads, highways, road construction, urban traffic management and public transport system established and gradually towards perfection. Such as Ru Nan County, Henan Province, "land west of Zhuhai Zhumadian, Pinghan Railway revitalization, Ru Zhuhai long-distance bus road connecting, travel will be carried out. The waterway has two rivers, the sailboat to and from, the transportation does not suffer from delay" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 216).

In general, travel and transportation during the Republic of China showed huge differences between urban and rural areas. In cities, due to the high degree of modernization, people's travel modes are diversified. Trams, trams, bicycles and walking are the main modes of transport. Some wealthy families owned private carriages or cars, but this was still relatively rare at the time. In addition, there are traditional rickshaws or rickshaws in some areas, which provide convenience for short-distance transportation. In rural areas, due to backward transportation conditions, they mainly rely on traditional transportation such as walking, horseback riding, cycling or ox carts. Road transportation is relatively underdeveloped and traffic channels are not smooth. Rural residents' travel is restricted and often requires more time and energy. Travel and transportation are auxiliary means of expression in Zhang Yimou's films.

## 2.5 Education, Recreation, Faith and Socialization

During the Republican period, education, entertainment, religious beliefs and socializing were all affected by social change and political upheaval, and took on a colorful character.

### 1) Education

Education during the Republic of China experienced the intertwined influence of multiple factors such as tradition and modernity, urban-rural differences, and political turmoil. Influenced by Western culture, modern schools and private schools have emerged in urban areas, showing a diversified trend; while in rural areas, due to limited economic conditions and lack of educational resources, they mostly rely on family education and traditional schools. Although the government has promoted some education reform measures, social unrest, war and other factors have restricted the steady advancement of education development, and the overall education system is unbalanced and imperfect.

The Republic of China (ROC) government took a series of measures in education, actively pursued educational reforms, gradually established a modern education system, and implemented a teaching content dominated by science and literature. In September 1912, the Ministry of Education promulgated the educational objectives of the Republic of China (ROC) - focusing on moral education, supplemented by practical education and military education, and even more so by education in aesthetics, to complete its morality. Since then, the government has introduced a series of decrees and measures to abolish the imperial examination system, introduce a new school system, implement the six-three system (six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school), reform the types of schools, enrollment systems, curricula, adapt textbooks, shorten the number of years of schooling, advocate national education, promote mandatory education, strengthen teacher training, reform higher education, and create social education.

"The Ministry of Education reorganized and merged some public universities, colleges and specialized schools into 13 national universities, 5 colleges and 9 provincial universities, and extended funding support to some higher level private schools for opening new disciplines and purchasing equipment." (Xu Zhongyao, 2012, p. 434) In some major cities, a number of national universities, such as Peking University and National Southeast University, were established to provide a new platform for higher education. In some areas, private schools became important educational institutions, and some religious groups and charitable organizations also ventured into the field of education.

In some townships, education is also becoming popular. For example, in Liuquan Township, Gu'an County, Hebei Province, "This village is not bad when it comes to education. There is a model high elementary school, a night popular school, and private schools. These are all located in the town. The Model Higher Elementary School is run by the government, and the Night Popular School is funded by the village headman's subsidy, and the work is carried out by a committee of local intellectuals who are responsible for the work on a voluntary basis, and the teaching situation is very good. There were 60 to 70 students in the winter and 20 to 30 in the spring. In addition, there is also an elementary school for boys and girls in the center of the town with 20 to 30 students. The funding for the men's and women's

elementary school is taken care of by the Ma Family Church Association, and there is a specially hired instructor who is in charge of teaching" (Li Wenhai, 2014, p. 444). Women's education was greatly developed during the Republic of China period and became a major highlight of the educational reforms of the time. The establishment of educational institutions such as girls' schools and women's universities provided women with opportunities to receive education. In terms of women's education, the new school system stipulated that elementary schools could be co-educational, and above the higher elementary schools, there could be women's higher elementary schools, women's general middle schools, women's middle industrial schools and women's higher teacher training schools, etc. At this time, compared with the late Qing Dynasty, women's education was not as good as that of the late Qing Dynasty. Compared with the late Qing Dynasty, women's education at this time was significantly higher in terms of the number of female students, the scope of women's schools and even the level of women's schools. Take elementary school as an example, in 1909, girls only accounted for 0.93% of the total number of boys and girls, not even 1%; by 1915, junior girls already accounted for 4.4% of the total number of boys and girls, and senior girls also accounted for 4.4% of the total number of boys and girls (Chen, Ching-chi, 2013, p. 687) .

Some private girls' schools had a high reputation in the educational world at that time, such as Jinling Women's University. These schools not only provided women with opportunities for higher education, but also offered more choices for women's career development. During the Republican period, the number of female teachers increased dramatically and many women became important educators in schools. They not only provided education for students, but also became agents of educational reform.





Figure 19 Group photo of the staff of the Zhenjiang Public Education Center, Jiangsu Province, 1934.

Source: Zhao Jianshuang. Library old photos. 2020. P. 527

During the Republic of China, there were obvious gender differences in the rights of men and women to receive education. Some urban areas have begun to attach importance to women's education, and some wealthy families and schools have provided women with educational opportunities. However, the traditional concept of favoring boys over girls generally leads to relatively limited educational opportunities for women, especially in rural areas. Boys are often given priority in receiving education, while girls face lack of educational resources and restrictions from traditional social concepts. There are still obvious inequalities in the realization of educational rights. Education is used in Zhang Yimou's films for the educational background and identity of the protagonist.

## 2) Recreation

During the Republican period, the entertainment life of the people of the country was also subjected to social changes and cultural impacts, presenting a series of diversified features.

Traditional forms of Chinese theater such as Peking Opera are still very popular and are one of the main choices for popular entertainment. During this period, various types of opera genres merged with each other, forming a diversified pattern of Peking Opera. Peking Opera absorbed some elements of northern opera and became richer in performance styles.

Regional operas such as Huangmei Opera, Yueju Opera, Pingju Opera, Yuju Opera, Sichuan Opera, Cantonese Opera, and Min Opera, as well as small local operas such as Flower Drum Opera, Flower Lantern Opera, Tea Catching Opera, and Yangge Opera, have also gained popularity among the public.

In addition to playing an important role in welcoming the gods in rural areas and in daily entertainment, local operas in recent times have also been introduced into some big cities, becoming a favorite art style in the daily life of the urban citizens, such as inviting guests to red and white weddings and entertaining them in their leisure time. In the urban performances of various local operas, there is also a form of singing called "Tanghui", which is mostly held during festivals, weddings, funerals, birthdays and celebrations. This kind of "Tanghui" performance is generally to meet the requirements of the rich and noble families in order to satisfy their own or feast

guests to appreciate the art of opera, at any cost to the famous opera performers invited to their homes to sing, and some also built a more luxurious stage for the actors to perform in their homes.



Figure 20 An ancient theater in Jiangwan Town, Wuyuan County, Jiangxi Province  
Source: Wan Jianzhong & Li Shaobing et al. 2008. History of Chinese Folklore (Republic of China Volume). P.467

In addition to this form, a wider range of urban opera performances are mainly found in theaters, playhouses, theaters, such as Beijing's Kaiming Theatre, Tianjin's China Grand Theatre and other popular for a while, wherever you can get on stage and can be recognized by the local audience of the actors and actresses, from then on, even if it is red. It can be said that in the theater, theater listening to the play almost become the main entertainment of the city people.

Watching movies, listening to music, dancing, playing mahjong, watching sports events, magic, horse racing and gambling were also forms of entertainment. Social venues such as cafes, teahouses, bars and nightclubs sprang up in cities as places for intellectuals, businessmen and social elites to interact.

Temple fairs and traditional festivals remain an important form of entertainment and socialization in some traditional communities in both rural and urban areas. Fireworks, lion dances, rice-planting songs, juggling, stilt walking, riddles, lanterns and dragon boat races are indispensable entertainment at temple fairs and festivals. In addition, there are also kite-flying, shuttlecock playing, cricket fighting, bird fighting, God pay contests, drinking, chess, singing and other rural recreational activities.

However, in the vast rural areas, farmers need to engage in farming, weeding, harvesting and other agricultural production activities, day-long labor, the townspeople's entertainment is very little, especially the entertainment of peasant women is even less. For example, in Liuquan Township, Gu'an County, Hebei Province, "In addition to making clothes and cooking all day long, peasant women have no social activities and entertainment at all. The biggest range of activities is to

go to the neighboring family to talk about the day, this also has to be as a mother-in-law or the older peasant women, only have the right to this kind of every day to the door, others are not. Talking about the day is not entertainment in our opinion, but in the opinion of the old peasant women, smoking dry cigarettes and talking about their parents and their families is the only entertainment. Sometimes a few people get together, some will also play a game of "trivial cards" to play. However, to play Zuo card to the year under the free time to play, usually is absolutely rare. Young daughters-in-law in the year a few people get together, can also come to play; so if we talk about the entertainment of peasant women, I'm afraid that only playing cards - the same, of course, visit the temple to listen to the book is also a kind of entertainment, but this kind of entertainment time is less. The entertainment of ordinary peasant women was probably limited to this" (Li Wenhai, 2014, p. 460).

The entertainment activities during the Republic of China were rich and colorful, reflecting the diversity and changes of social culture. In urban areas, people like to participate in theatrical performances such as operas, movies, and concerts, among which traditional operas such as Peking Opera and Pingju Opera are still the mainstream. In rural areas, people prefer traditional folk activities such as temple fairs and markets, as well as some traditional festival celebrations. Restricted by family, traditional concepts and other factors, women's entertainment activities are very limited. Card games, chatting, and festival celebrations have become their main entertainment methods. Entertainment is an important plot in Zhang Yimou's films that drives the development of the story.

### **3) Beliefs**

During the Republic of China, Chinese social beliefs took on a diverse and complex appearance. Traditional religions, emerging religions, folk beliefs, ancestor worship, and ideological movements were intertwined and together constituted the multi-layered structure of social beliefs at that time.

The Republic of Korea still inherited the beliefs of the society of the previous generation, and the number of objects of worship was incomparable to that of the society of the previous generation. This was a characteristic of the faith folklore of the time. "The turbulence of the Republican society was also reflected in the religious beliefs of the people at that time, and the beliefs were in a state of serious dispersion. At that time, in addition to the four major religions of Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity and Islam, there were also some minority religions, such as Shamanism, Dongbaism, Bishop Ben, etc., and all kinds of folk secret religions and societies were also very popular. In addition, some people living in backward and closed areas believe in primitive religions or religions close to primitiveness with strong colors of nature worship and totem worship. The concept of ghosts and gods still exists widely, and many people offer to gods and worship ghosts and gods, burning incense at every temple and kowtowing when they see a god" (Zhao Yinglan, 2002, p. 54).

Folk beliefs are an important means of religious expression, especially in rural areas and some local communities, where rituals, temple festivals and various folk activities maintain traditional religious elements. In cities and among intellectuals, religious beliefs were weakened, while ordinary citizens and craftsmen in rural areas and towns continued to believe in the gods and worship various deities. At this time, the worship of deities in Han Chinese society was mainly manifested in temple festivals and year-round offerings to deities, and was often closely integrated with the

worship of earth deities, the worship of ancestors in various trades, and the religious activities of Buddhism and Taoism.

It is widely believed that the God of Heaven regulates wind and rain, the God of Stove is in charge of household affairs, the God of Wealth is in charge of financial resources, the God of Fire is in charge of beacon fires, the God of House is in charge of the courtyard, the God of Door is in charge of the door, the God of Well is in charge of the springs and the Land is in charge of the grains, and each one of them is in charge of its own affairs, which has a great influence on human's happiness and life. Therefore, the popularity of the worship of common gods has not diminished, and people worship many gods, including the God of Heaven, the God of Stove, the God of Wealth, the God of Fire, the God of the House, the God of the Fence, the God of the Door, the God of the Well King, the God of the Land, and so on, among which, the God of Heaven, the God of Stove, and the God of Wealth are the highest and the most superior. Sacrifices often in addition to burning incense and prayers, but also often offer fruit and meat. In addition, agricultural tools have agricultural tools of God (such as cars, sets, plows, harrows, stone silicon, etc.), tools have tools of God (such as axes, saws, drills, chisels, etc.), and even the old trees, old kilns, old tombs, huge pits, bridges, etc. also have their own God. Only for these gods of worship rituals are relatively simple, just offer incense and paper or directly ask can be.

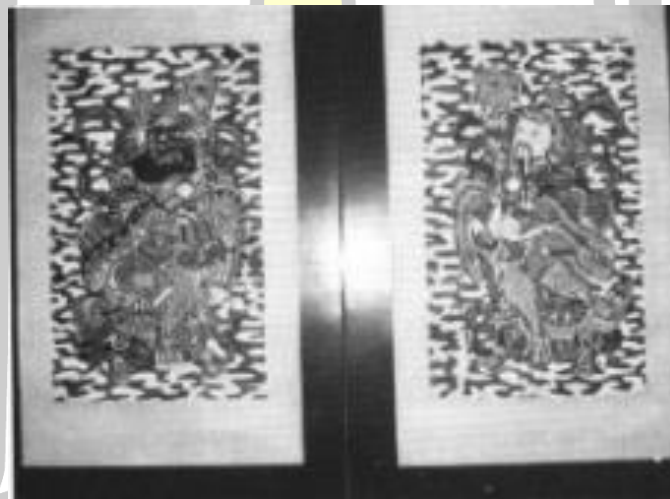


Figure 21 Door gods popularized during the Republican era  
Source: Wan Jianzhong & Li Shaobing et al. 2008. History of Chinese Folklore (Republic of China Volume). P.543

The industrial and commercial households in the Republic of China period, on the other hand, had industry god worship. In addition to worshipping their industry masters in public temples, each household also worshiped them at home. Such as tofu and powder line worship Huainan Xianshi (i.e., Han Huainan Wang), blacksmiths worship Taishang Laojun, paper industry worship Cai Lun, wine industry worship Dukang, clothing industry worship Xuanyuan, engraving and printing book industry worship Wenchang Emperor, boots and shoes industry worship Sun Bin, shaving industry worship Luo Zu (a name of the Anqing Daoyou), printing and dyeing industry worship Ge Weng, umbrella industry worship Luban Mei, brothel industry

worship Mei Gong (i.e., white eyebrow God), wooden plate industry worship Yang Si General (with the ritual Dongting God with the Dongting), tea industry worship Lu Yu, Taoist soil worship Zhang Daoling and so on. At the same time in the worship of the industry masters, sacrificing to the God of Wealth, in order to bless the skills of the fine arts, financial resources. For example, in the town of Qinghe in Beiping, "the gods offered in the stores were Zao Wang, Guan Gong, and the God of Wealth, and there were also those who offered the whole god, a kind of god, on which all kinds of deities were painted, called 'Old Buddha'. In addition, depending on the type of store, there were also those who made offerings to ancestral masters, such as wood stores for Lu Ban, shaving stores for Luo Zu, and iron stores for Laojun" (Li Wenhai, 2014, p. 472).

Sacrificial activities within the family are the most common, and it is one of the most convenient and casual acts of worship. During the Republic of China period, the main objects of worship within the family were common gods and ancestral spirits. In the cities, only some large families still held ancestor-sacrifice activities during the New Year. In the vast countryside, ancestor worship still has a strong vitality. Such as the eastern rural areas of Shandong Province, "ancestor worship according to Confucianism is the meaning of the chase, in fact, in the countryside as early as this original intention of losing. They sacrificed to their ancestors and other gods, as well, exist to pray for blessings to avoid the meaning of disaster. They believe that ancestors have souls after death and often come to visit their homes, and if they offer good sacrifices, they can bless their families, otherwise they will be haunted and make their families uneasy, suffering from vomiting, headaches and other illnesses" (Li Wenhai, 2014, p. 349).

Beliefs during the Republic of China showed diversity and complexity. In urban areas, some intellectuals and urban residents began to turn toward rationalism and materialism, but traditional religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Christianity still maintained their influence to a certain extent. In rural areas, traditional religions still dominate, and folk beliefs and sacrificial activities are common, such as Confucianism, Taoism, industry gods, etc. People still believe in gods and respect their ancestors. Faith is the setting in Zhang Yimou's films and an important scene that drives the development of the story.

#### **4) Socialization**

Social etiquette in the Republican period was largely influenced by traditional and Western cultures, as well as the impact of social change, showing a complex and diversified character.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen established the Nanjing Provisional Government of the Republic of China and sought to apply the political principles of democracy, equality and freedom to the social etiquette of republican politics. In response to his call, there was a change in the social address between the top and bottom of the society, the kneeling ceremony was gradually abolished, and the bowing ceremony became popular. At the beginning of the founding of the Republic of China, the old manners of kneeling, bowing, greeting, and saying "ten thousand blessings" were explicitly abolished, and titles such as "lord" and "senior" were eliminated. On August 17, 1912, the Beijing government formally enacted the "Rules of Etiquette" in the form of a law, stipulating that men's social etiquette was to take off their hats and bow, and women's social etiquette was to bow.

During the Republic of China period, with the increasingly frequent exchanges between China and foreign countries and the continuous progress of society, more complete Western-style daily manners and customs were introduced into China and became popular among the upper class. In the cities and some modernized areas, some intellectuals and wealthy merchants, influenced by Western culture, began to learn Western social etiquette to adapt to the trend of modern society. Western etiquette became the social fashion of the time. There are five most important kinds of western etiquette, i.e., bowing, nodding, raising hands for attention, shaking hands and kissing hands. For example, in Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "nowadays, guests and hosts bow to each other, and there are fewer people who bow to each other. For the rest of Yanxiang, arching hands is all" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 238). In addition to respecting the elders and the elderly, Western etiquette is especially respectful of women, emphasizing the gentlemanly manner of giving priority to ladies. Therefore, in social occasions, men are obliged to respect women not only morally but also in terms of etiquette.

There are also some general etiquette that must be followed in Western etiquette in hospitality and interpersonal communication. These - general etiquette, including grooming, greetings, meeting etiquette, road etiquette, etiquette in the field of communication, telephone etiquette, introduction etiquette, etiquette in public places, Western food etiquette, visiting etiquette and so on.

Traditional etiquette continues. Despite the overthrow of the feudal system by the Xinhai Revolution, the tradition of the order of precedence in social situations is still retained. Elders and those of high status are honored, while juniors and those of low status are expected to show humility. Banquets still follow the traditional etiquette of the table, including the order of seating, ordering food, and persuading people to drink. Feast etiquette is especially important at family gatherings and important occasions. In some old-fashioned families, the order of elders and children, and the superiority of men over women are still practiced, with the head of the family having absolute authority and a clear hierarchy among family members.

Folk etiquette when the guest to the gift of tea is the most influential, such as the marriage process on the engagement tea, recognition of marriage tea, new son-in-law tea, and so on. Superiors and subordinates, friends and relatives also follow a certain etiquette in the exchange of letters. Socializing between families is still dominated by banquets between friends and relatives, which is a continuation of the family concept and traditional social relations. Traditional festival etiquette still plays an important role in family socialization. Traditional festivals such as the Spring Festival and the Ching Ming Festival are important times for family socialization.

Social activities during the Republic of China were diverse and prosperous. In cities, teahouses, restaurants, cinemas, and concert halls have become places for people to gather and communicate. Social activities are not limited to family and friends, but also include business, politics, and other fields. The social circle is extensive and diverse. In rural areas, folk activities such as temple fairs and markets are important ways for people to socialize, and traditional folk festivals have also become places for community residents to gather and communicate. Social interaction for women is relatively limited, especially for women in rural areas. Social activities are mostly carried out within the community and among neighbors, relatives, and

acquaintances near small villages. Social activities become settings and scenes in Zhang Yimou's films.

### **Part 3: Folk Culture**

The local folk culture during the Republic of China was rich and colorful, showing the unique charm of regional culture. Various regions retain rich traditional customs, ancestor worship, folk beliefs, festival celebrations and other activities. These activities are not only occasions for people to gather and celebrate together, but also the inheritance of traditional culture and values. In addition, folk art forms and traditional handicrafts are also important components of local folk culture. These local folk customs demonstrate the cultural diversity and the continuation of the traditional spirit of society during the Republic of China.

#### **3.1 Folklore of Traditional Folk Crafts**

The traditional folk handicraft industry and folk customs during the Republic of China contain exquisite traditional craftsmanship and rich cultural heritage. The folk handicrafts of brewing and dyeing cloth are widely spread and passed down from generation to generation. They carry rich cultural traditions and living customs. They not only enrich people's lives but are also an important part of social culture during the Republic of China. They reflect the exquisiteness of folk craftsmanship and the importance cultural inheritance.

##### **Brewing Crafts**

The craft brewing industry is an industry with a long history. Folk brewing is an important part of rural social culture. Many families have their own unique brewing techniques, using raw materials such as rice, wheat or sorghum to brew a variety of fine wines, such as rice wine, rice wine, etc. Among them, local specialty wines represented by liquor are indispensable at country banquets. Drinks. The brewing process often becomes an important moment for family reunions. Family members work together to participate in it, which not only inherits the family's brewing skills, but also promotes folk culture and social customs.

During the Republic of China period, although there were already some modernized industrial breweries, there were still a certain number of small brewing workshops in many places, especially in the countryside and some small towns, that used traditional handmade methods to brew wine. These breweries are usually run by families or small groups, and use traditional brewing methods and recipes, including fermentation techniques such as the use of natural yeasts and fermentation cellars, as well as the use of locally-specific raw materials such as water, rice, grains and fruits. This characteristic makes the handmade wines of these breweries have unique flavors. For example, in Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "Wine brewed with glutinous rice is called 'silver wine', corn brewed is called 'yellow wine', and high-grain (sorghum) brewed is called 'shochu'" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 241).

The winemaking craft industry usually relies on the passing down of artisanal skills, which are passed down from the older generation of winemakers to the younger generation. This passing on of traditional skills helps to maintain the traditional flavor of the sake.

Most craft breweries are small-scale operations that cater mainly to the needs of the local population. These small workshops usually sell locally and rarely venture into the wider market. Some craft breweries may have developed brands with local

characteristics that are spread through word of mouth. These brands may have some local recognition but are relatively small in scale.

Sorghum wine, for example, is a type of traditional Chinese liquor, also known as "sorghum rice wine" or "sorghum wine," which is a type of Chinese liquor made from sorghum as the main ingredient. Sorghum is a cereal crop that is widely grown for its drought resistance and adaptability. Sorghum liquor is made primarily by traditional handcrafted processes, including fermentation and distillation. During fermentation, the starch in the sorghum rice is converted into alcohol, which is then extracted through distillation.

Sorghum liquor is brewed in Sichuan, Guizhou, Hunan, and Shandong, and exhibits different flavors and characteristics depending on the water quality, climate, and fermentation techniques of each place. Sorghum liquor is an indispensable festive drink in rural communities in some places, and also has a presence in commercial banquets and social occasions in cities. Overall, the Republican period's brewing craft industry was characterized by a traditional, localized and small-scale operation, reflecting the economic structure and technological level of the society at that time. Traditional wine-making folk customs not only enrich the lives of rural people, but are also an important manifestation of social food culture during the Republic of China, showing people's yearning for a better life and the inheritance of traditional craftsmanship. Brewing folklore is an important setting in Zhang Yimou's films and an iconic scene that drives the development of the story.

## **2) Fabric Dyeing Handicrafts**

Cloth dyeing handicraft industry is also an important traditional handicraft industry and one of the important representatives of traditional Chinese handicrafts. Various regions use natural plant dyes such as indigo, madder, etc., and adopt traditional craft techniques such as batik, embroidery, etc. to inject rich colors and patterns into fabrics, which have become important elements of folk clothing and home decoration.

During the Republic of China, the cloth-dyeing handicraft industry relied mainly on handicrafts, including traditional crafts such as hand-weaving and hand-dyeing. Artisans used natural dyes to color raw materials such as cotton, hemp, and silk through traditional dyeing methods. These dyes are derived from plants, minerals, or insects and have unique colors and durability. Natural dyes such as indigo and chypre, as well as chemical pigments such as sulfur dyes and synthetic dyes, are widely used in the fabric dyeing craft industry. Hand-dyed flowers are a common fabric dyeing technique. Patterns are dyed by hand on fabrics to create decorative and artistic fabrics.

During the Republic of China period, some rural areas and towns still used traditional printing and dyeing techniques, and the dyed cloth of the dyeing workshop was divided into three kinds: cape green, dyed blue, and clip flower. "Cape green, the green powder (chemical pigment) will be dissolved in water and heated, and put into the white cloth or white yarn that has been turned dry, stirred repeatedly to make sure that the coloring is even, and then heated again to boiling can be. Indigo is used as a pigment for dyeing blue and flower folder. Indigo production method: the indigo leaves and tops diffuse in the ground pit water, to be rotted after slagging, put people oyster ash, with the 'indigo hit' (stick head mounted cross short wood) repeatedly stirring, to the surface of the water up 'flower'", and slightly violet stop. To be

clarified, drain off the top of the water, below the precipitation part of the sieve to remove impurities that is the pigment for dyeing blue. Dyeing blue, cloth or yarn over water turning dry, into the vat heated (outside the cylinder burning charcoal fire) indigo liquid, repeatedly stirring, make sure that the coloring is uniform. The cloth or yarn is then turned dry and hung in the sun on a rack. The dyeing is done three times in a row, which is commonly known as dyeing three times. Clip flowers, over water twisted dry white cloth taut in the relief of the hardwood board that is commonly known as clip flower plate or flower plate, and then press to flat blood of the hardwood board, so even stacked several layers, tied with a rope, and then iron bar according to the principle of leverage to be compacted, did not have in the indigo liquid. The raised part of the surface of the board can not be colored because of the wooden board, while the concave part is the opposite, so that the white cloth printed on the blue flowers, which is commonly known as clip flowers, also known as printing. This kind of double-yarned, flower-pinching cloth is used for sewing quilt tops in dowries" (Nan Wei-Yuan, 2004, p. 62).

Because of their skill, good management and good management, some craftsmen have gradually made their craftsmen's workshops of a certain scale and have become the middle class in rural society. In addition to the labor of their own family members, they usually hired some staff to work for them in their handicraft workshops. Brewing and dyeing workshops of a certain scale also hold rituals on important occasions such as the start of a new year, festivals, and commemorative days, which include worshipping the masters of the industry (Du Kang for brewing and Ge Weng for printing and dyeing) to pray for mastery of their skills, worshipping the God of Wealth to bless them with a wide range of money, and feasting and singing in harmony with their neighbors to symbolize good fortune and business prosperity.

Along with the process of industrialization, the wine-making and cloth-dyeing handicrafts of the Republican period gradually moved towards mechanization and modernization, and the traditional handmade skills were weakened to a certain extent. However, the traditional craftsmanship and culture of brewing and dyeing cloth are still preserved in the development of Chinese handicrafts, and have been inherited and developed in some places.

The folk customs of cloth dyeing handicrafts enrich people's lives and are also one of the precious heritages of traditional Chinese culture. They reflect people's cherishment and inheritance of good life and traditional crafts. This information becomes an important scene in Zhang Yimou's film that drives the development of the storyline.

### 3.2 Folk Marriage Customs

The folk marriage customs during the Republic of China carry a long tradition and profound cultural heritage. Marriage was regarded as very important at that time, and there were various forms of marriage. The entire mixed wedding process, including before the wedding, on the wedding day, and after the wedding, was often cumbersome and ritualistic, accompanied by a series of traditional customs. Marriage customs are not only an important ritual in family life, but also an important carrier of social and cultural inheritance, reflecting people's importance and respect for marriage and family.

### 1) Sale of Marriage

During the Republic of China period, buying and selling marriages was still a social phenomenon, especially in some rural areas, where marriage was regarded as a kind of economic transaction, with the buyer usually being the man, who owned a small fortune but was physically ill, and the seller usually being the woman, who was mostly a poor farmer, who wished to improve her family's financial situation through marriage. Buying and selling marriages usually involves bride price and bride price, i.e., property or gifts paid by the man to the woman, which is considered a form of compensation to the woman's family.

Sale marriages are also arranged marriages. Influenced by traditional feudal concepts, parents usually play a dominant role in marriage decision-making in buy-sell marriages, choosing the marriage partner for their children rather than the parties themselves. The families of the parties to the marriage pay more attention to their own economic and social status and the benefits they receive, and the feelings and wishes of the individuals entering into the marriage are artificially ignored. "With regard to the pairing of a man and a woman from a poor family, there is no departure from the ancient buy-and-sell marriage, where the man's side had to pay a large amount of bride-price in order to be allowed to marry. This is because the woman's parents had to use the money they received in exchange for the child for their living expenses, so many poor men stopped looking for a wife when their wives died. It is for this reason that there are many young men who remain widowers" (Li Wenhai, 2014, p. 255).

In buy-sell marriages, the position of women is relatively weak and their marriages are often determined by their families and society, with less regard for their individual wishes. This form of marriage often leads to unequal marital relations, and women lack the right to make choices about their own marriages and lives. This information becomes an important background for the development of the main characters' stories in Zhang Yimou's films.

### 2) Sedan Chair Customary Practice

The sedan chair, also known as the sedan chair and the palanquin, is a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony that usually takes place when the bride leaves her parents' home and travels to the groom's home. This ceremony is an important part of the wedding and marks the beginning of a new life for the bride.

When the sedan chair is turned upside down, the bride usually sits on an ornately decorated chair called a "sedan chair" and is carried by a number of people in the wedding procession. The sedan chair is usually red in color and is elaborately decorated with flowers, ribbons and confetti, signifying happiness and good fortune. The bride wears a red cap on her head, a large red wedding dress and red embroidered shoes.



Figure 22 Bride's sedan chair

Source: Wan Jianzhong & Li Shaobing et al. 2008. History of Chinese Folklore (Republic of China Volume).P.292

The bride is accompanied by a festive ceremonial procession. The procession usually includes drummers, suona players, lion and dragon dancers, and wedding flower girls to add color to the wedding. The process of turning the sedan chair upside down is accompanied by musical instruments, chanting of good-luck slogans, and so on, making the atmosphere festive and enthusiastic.

In some areas with an open culture, the bride's arrival at the groom's house may be preceded by entertaining activities such as bride snatching, awards, and playful and witty original folk songs. The groom will have to pass some interesting tests or pay some "tolls" to be "released" by the bride.

Bumping the sedan chair is an ancient and unique tradition in wedding customs. This tradition not only symbolizes the good fortune and happiness of the couple, but is also regarded as a blessing to the bride. The holding of the sedan chair is not only an important part of the wedding celebration, but also a traditional custom for community residents to participate and celebrate together. This information becomes an important scene showing folk culture in Zhang Yimou's film.

### 3) Widowhood Observance and Remarriage

Widowhood is a code of conduct for widows in traditional culture. The concept, which originated in Confucianism and the ethical and moral concepts of feudal society, emphasizes that widows should be faithful and immoral and not marry again as an expression of their loyalty to their deceased husbands. One of the core requirements of widowhood is not to marry again. This ethical concept requires widows to remain loyal to their deceased husbands throughout their lives after their husbands' deaths, including not marrying again, maintaining chastity, honoring their deceased husbands' parents, and raising their deceased husbands' children. In Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "the dead husband's wife emphasizes keeping her

chastity, and although the Jiao Festival is not forbidden, it is despised by the people" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 234).

Widowhood observance involves a series of ritual norms, including rules on dress and grooming and changes in habits. Widows are usually restricted from human interaction and are required to wear light-colored, plain clothing and avoid excessive luxury. Widows may participate in a number of ceremonies to pay homage to their late husbands and ancestors as an expression of respect for their late husbands and their families.

Widowhood observance affects the social status of widows to some extent. Although they may assume important roles in the family, they are subject to some limitations in terms of the concept of marriage. Influenced by traditional Confucian ethical concepts, which emphasize female chastity and fidelity, and where fidelity is regarded as a virtue, widows are usually expected to remain faithful and not remarry. This concept is more deeply rooted in some places and families. Widows who remarry may face criticism and pressure from society, as traditional societies are prejudiced against and may even ostracize widows who remarry. Some families have strict family traditions that require widows to keep their marriage, and remarriage may be considered contrary to family traditions. For example, in Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "If a widow remarries, she is called 'out of the water,' and is often loaded on a donkey or mule in the evening to make her own soup cake and eat it with the man. The contract, even though the marketer is also ashamed of it, the rate of use of false names, so the woman who re-joined the marriage is always despised" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 234).

Despite society's cautious attitude towards widow remarriage, at the individual level, some widows may choose to remarry for a variety of reasons, such as financial needs, emotional needs, and so on. In some areas, particularly in more enlightened cities, attitudes towards widow remarriage may be relatively more tolerant. In some rural areas, however, where clan concepts are deeply rooted and traditional culture has a profound influence, attitudes may be more conservative and traditional. For example, in the town of Qinghe in Beiping, "the remarriage of widows is often criticized by the society, which is a common phenomenon in all parts of China, so the wedding is also very simple. After the betrothal, the man's family gives clothes and jewelry, but the number is very small. Marriage is more in the night, the male family to send a sedan or a car, led by the matchmaker to meet the drummers up to three people, ordinary one, and no relatives to send, cold and very clear. Widow remarried before, more than in her mother's home to live, but to the palanquin, it is more in the village; and must be inverted shoes, walk alone. Cover the local custom, thought the widow on the sedan chair, must be unlucky. To be to the male family, must also get out of the sedan chair, also outside the village, led by the matchmaker to the male family, head a green cloth. If there is a welcome to Mrs., on the sedan chair, especially the bag must be wrapped around the waist for a turn, the proverbial cloud: 'wrapped around the waist, go a turn', meaning that the future does not remarry. Widows into the door, the tree in front of the door must be embraced once. If there is no tree in front of the door, it will be replaced by a flat. The meaning is that the remarriage of the person attached to the ominous death of the gas, after holding, the bad gas that is moved to the embrace of the object, otherwise couples sleep together, the bad gas will be moved to the man, there is a certain risk of death. As for the fire box, step saddle,

as well as worship heaven and earth, are unassisted. Other ceremonies are also completely dispensed with, such as the use of a car when marrying, that is to say, the above simple ceremonies, are also dispensed with, and again, before marrying, the man's family must be the number of gifts agreed upon by both sides one by one by the matchmaker to the woman's family, to be used to buy clothes and ornaments" (Li Wenhai, 2014, p. 457-458).

During the Republic of China, some areas and families deeply influenced by traditional concepts attached great importance to widows' observance of festivals. They believed that widows should be loyal to their deceased husbands and observe the festivals and not marry, in order to express respect and grief for their deceased husbands, and at the same time, they also respected and restrained social morality. This information becomes an important plot in Zhang Yimou's film to promote the development of the story.

### 3.3 Folk Rituals of Birth and Death

During the Republic of China, life and death rituals were an important part of traditional Chinese culture, reflecting people's awe and prayer for life and death. In terms of birth and fertility, the 100-day banquet and the full-moon banquet are common festive rituals to celebrate the arrival of new life and express blessings and joy for the baby; and in terms of death, funeral ceremonies are important ceremonies that involve the family and the community, including funerals, vigils, sacrifices, etc., to express grief and memory for the deceased, and at the same time to respect and pray for the deceased. These life and death rituals are not only important manifestations of social and cultural traditions, but also people's affirmation of life and remembrance of the deceased, reflecting respect and care for life and family.

#### 1) Fertility Folk Customs

Fertility and birth folklore refers to various traditional customs and rituals related to fertility and the birth of babies. These folklore played an important role in the society of the time, involving the blessing of babies, the celebration of families, and the establishment of social relations.

The rituals for the birth of a child begin long before the baby is born, including the custom of praying for a child at a wedding (dates, peanuts, cinnamon, melon seeds, pomegranates, etc. are scattered on the wedding bed to symbolize the birth of a child early), various taboos during pregnancy, preparation of the delivery room, and inviting a midwife to deliver the baby. Three days after the birth of a baby, there is the custom of "washing three". For example, in Ruyang County, Henan Province, "three days after the birth of the child, friends and relatives to congratulate, also known as the 'soup cake feast'. Male said 'big happy', female said 'small happy', friends and relatives presented colorful tents, happy couplets, male book to get Zhangzhang, female book to get tile; hosts feast guests, commonly known as 'drink happy wine', also called "send congee rice", friends and relatives gathered, drinking and other interlaced, there is not drunk without returning to the trend." (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 211)

A full moon feast is often a celebratory ceremony when a baby is one month old. Family and friends gather to wish the baby safe and healthy growth. The full moon feast usually includes sumptuous food, along with rituals such as head shaving and feasting. The 100-day feast is a celebration of the 100th day of the baby's life, a moment often seen as important for the baby's safe passage through the first years of

life. Family and friends will gather once again for a series of wishes and ceremonies. At a full moon or 100 day feast, family and friends will bring a variety of gifts to show their blessings. These gifts may include gold and silver jewelry, red envelopes, baby items, etc., symbolizing the wishes and care for the baby. There are also the rituals of congratulating the first birthday and the ceremony of catching the baby. When a baby reaches its first birthday, the family invites friends and neighbors to come to celebrate, holds a birthday ceremony for the baby, and conducts a weekly catching activity, placing a variety of items for the baby to catch and test his or her ambitions. Some places will be in the baby a little bigger the whole year of feast guests, held a feast for the new year.

Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "when a child is born, it is called 'Timothy'. To three days to cook noodles sent to the township, called 'happy noodles' ..... three days later, prepared gifts to tell the foreign family, called 'Annunciation'. Outside the family feed noodles and cakes, chicken eggs of the genus, neighbors and relatives also rate gifts, more or less unequal, commonly referred to as 'send rice', week-old is new its clothes and shoes, displaying a variety of items, so that they grab, known as '擗 birthday! The first day of the year is the birthday of the son. The book taker is a scholar, the farmer is a farmer, the craftsman is a craftsman, the businessman is a businessman, the official is a nobleman, the silver man is a rich man, the scholar is a young man, and the man who takes the stick is a lowly man. After that, every time on its day to eat noodles, and the old or relatives and friends Bi congratulations, called 'celebration of life'." (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1989, p. 232)

Feasting is an integral part of fertility and birth folklore. Families will prepare sumptuous food and entertain their friends and relatives to show their respect for life and the value of kinship.

The naming of a baby after birth is an important ceremony. Usually the elders of the clan or elders of the family or people with a certain social status are responsible for naming the baby. The choice of name may involve factors such as the eight elements of the five elements, symbolism and family heritage, and large families usually take names based on the characters in their genealogy.

Fertility and birth folklore reflect the importance and celebration of new life that families and society attach to new life, while also carrying the bonds of family traditions and social relationships. Fertility and birth folk traditions remain important rituals in some regions and families. This information is an important set piece in Zhang Yimou's film.

## **2) Crying and Blocking Coffins**

Crying and holding the coffin are important parts of traditional Chinese funeral rituals. Crying means that relatives and friends gather together in front of the coffin of the deceased to express their grief and remembrance of the deceased, often accompanied by the grieving voices of family members and relatives to express their final farewell to the deceased. Coffin blocking refers to a ceremony held during a funeral ceremony in which male relatives and friends carry the coffin and block the coffin along the way to show the final respect and farewell to the deceased.

Funeral rites have always been viewed in Chinese culture as an important ceremony to honor the deceased and to remember loved ones. Funeral ceremonies are usually held in the family of the deceased, where relatives, friends, neighbors, and

other community members come to express their sympathy and condolences for the deceased and the family. Funeral ceremonies are solemn, and those attending are usually dressed in plain clothes, with black being a common color for mourning, and sometimes a white sari is worn to express their feelings of grief.

During the funeral process, family members, relatives and friends will hold a series of farewell ceremonies in front of the deceased's spirit, such as laying flowers, offering sacrifices and crying. If the family of the deceased had religious beliefs, some religious ceremonies, such as offering sacrifices, chanting and reciting sutras, will also be performed in the hope that the deceased will find peace.

Wailing is a funeral ceremony in which family and friends cry to express their grief and longing for the deceased. It is a way of expressing grief and honoring the deceased in traditional Chinese culture. A wailing ceremony involves family and friends collectively mourning and crying to show their remembrance of the deceased. Wailing also helps to release emotions and express grief. For example, in Wuyang Township, Xinjin County, Sichuan Province, "all family members must wear white cloth on their heads and white mourning clothes. After the remains are put into the coffin, the coffin is sealed and a funeral hall is set up in front of the coffin. Neighbors, in-laws, friends, etc. go to offer condolences, send couplets, bundles of paper and other offerings, family members of the younger generation in the spirit of the side of the guests to return the salute kneeling, scattering filial papyrus to pay tribute. The family members burn joss sticks and candles, offer fruits and gourds, and burn paper money in front of the coffin every day, and the relatives kneel down in the morning and evening, while the women cry for a long time once, which is called 'weeping at the coffin'" (Ding, Shiliang & Zhao, 1991, p. 79).

Burial is an important part of the funeral ceremony and is usually handled by a funeral procession made up of family and friends. The funeral procession may include pallbearers, drummers, pipers, etc. Hearses are also used, and paper money is thrown to add to the solemnity of the ceremony.

Coffin blocking is a ritualistic practice in traditional funeral ceremonies in some regions of China, usually occurring during the process of a funeral procession escorting the coffin to its burial site. Typically, the coffin is carried by the coffin bearer, while the coffin blocker stands in front of the coffin, blocking the advance of the hearse, sometimes with specific gestures such as bowing and crying.

The coffin-blocking ceremony is designed to prevent the soul of the deceased from turning back, to show remembrance of the deceased, and to hope that he or she will rest in peace in the underworld. The coffin-blocking ceremony is often accompanied by cries and wails, which reinforce the mournful atmosphere of the funeral. In this ceremony, relatives, friends, family members, or community members stand in front of the coffin to express their respect and remembrance of the deceased. This traditional practice emphasizes community cohesion and mutual support. By participating in the ritual of blocking the coffin, community members express their support for the family and the deceased, and share the grief together.

The custom of blocking coffins is part of traditional Chinese culture and has been passed down from generation to generation. Although the frequency of coffin-blocking may have gradually decreased in some areas in modern times as lifestyles and social attitudes have changed, the custom is still retained in some rural areas or traditional communities.

There are a number of funeral rituals strong local color. For example, Jinan, Shandong Province, "funeral rites quite close to the ancient. At the beginning of the mass, that is, inside and outside the clothes. Beginning to die, the filial son of hair to the heart of the yard, called his pro-face number day 'on the southwest', which is said to point the way. Three weeks later, he was in great pain. It was a gift from the ancients who had risen from their houses and changed their rituals a little. Weeping and dancing after, with a pot of rice juice to go to the temple of the God of the earth, called his relatives and sprinkled all over the, so-called send soup. It is called "sending soup" and stops after three days" (Hu Pu'an, 2011. p. 407). After the death of a family member, the deceased's eldest son (or eldest daughter or son-in-law if there is no son) should shout in the direction of the southeast (or the south), "Mother, mother, you go to the southwest, wide road, long boat; mother, mother, you go to the southwest, bay horse, full of coils; mother, mother, you go to the southwest, you sweet place to settle down, you spend money on your bitter place. " It is said that the origin of this custom is that many families in the Jiaodong area have genealogical records, their ancestors were moved to Shandong from Yunnan in the Ming Dynasty, so called "on the Southwest", through this farewell language, hoping that the deceased rest in peace, leading the soul of the deceased to return to their hometown.

Crying and holding the coffin are not only mourning and respect for the deceased, but also awe and affirmation of life and death. They reflect the Chinese people's emphasis on life and their persistence in traditional etiquette. These rituals become important plots that drive the development of the story in Zhang Yimou's films.

### 3.4 Big Houses and Polygamy

Large houses during the Republic of China were often typical places where the polygamy system existed. In these houses, family members lived together, and parents, children, and multiple wives might all live in the same mansion. This kind of family structure is relatively common in certain areas and social classes. Although it has been impacted by modern social concepts, it still retains certain traditional customs, reflecting the family culture and social customs of the time. At the same time, this also highlights the influence of family power and hierarchy in society during the Republic of China, as well as the status and power of men in the family.

#### 1) The Great Mansion House

The term "mansion" in the Republic of China refers specifically to large mansions, luxurious residences or compounds inhabited by large-scale families. These mansions were often the residences of wealthy or prominent local families, representing the status and wealth of the social class. A large mansion in the Republic of China period is usually grand in scale and covers a vast area, with several courtyards, including the main gate, the courtyard, the main hall, the living room, the sitting room, the garden, the pavilion, the cloister, and many other architectural structures.

Traditional mansions usually consist of several triple or quadrangle courtyards. "The average house in North China is a courtyard, and a complete courtyard consists of an upper room (the upper house), a street, and compartments, with the upper room being slightly higher than the compartments. The upper room, the street is generally three rooms, two of which are outsiders can see the whole picture, the other is based on a wall and the direction of the house door perpendicular to the boundary open, only a

small door, usually hanging a curtain, this house is known as the suite of local people. The one on the left side of the street as a passageway, the end of the extension of the passageway to the street is the door. The upper room is generally good to sit in the north and face the south, it is the owner of the house, that is to say, the elders of the family live, if the children have not yet started a family, they may live with their parents in the upper room. If there were many children, the family might have a compartment, and the older children would be arranged to live in the compartment. If a son got married, the newlyweds lived on the street or in a compartment, while the parents still lived in the upper room. The upper room was where the parents lived, where the family deliberated, and where the family's main activities took place. Not only that, the upper room is directly opposite the door to place a table, the table is often placed on the incense burner, the incense burner is adjacent to the wall with several generations of ancestors of the tablets, which is also the place of worship ancestors." (Wan, Jianzhong & Li, Shaobing, 2008, p. 140-141) In Wuyang Township, Xinjin County, Sichuan Province, "most of the street houses are of the pierced-double-double-double type of civil engineering or brick structure. There are single-room and double-room houses with long depths. The houses of rich people are triple or quadruple houses. The general scale is a small patio after the dragon gate (main door), followed by a hall room, followed by a large patio, with compartments to the left and right, a hall room above, an upper room to the left and right of the hall room, and finally a backyard surrounded by a fence." (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 84)



Figure 23 Qiao Family Residence, Qi County, Shanxi Province  
Source: Hu Pu'an. 2011. China National Customs Journal. P.36

The architectural style of mansions is usually influenced by traditional culture, incorporating traditional Chinese courtyard architecture and garden design. Their interiors are often lavishly decorated, using expensive materials such as mahogany and brickwork. Furniture, wall paintings, carvings and other artifacts highlight the owner's taste and wealth. Large mansions usually have a team of domestic servants of a certain size, including housekeepers, maids, and servants. These people are responsible for taking care of the day-to-day affairs of the mansion and keeping it running. In these mansions, there are often ancestral tablets, family trees, genealogies and other displays of family culture. The mansion is not only a place of residence for the family, but also an important occasion for socializing. Owners often invite guests, friends or relatives to come and hold various banquets, celebrations, weddings and other events.

Owning a mansion is a symbol of social status, reflecting the owner's prominence in the local community. This also makes the mansion a representative building of some families, reflecting the traditions and culture of the extended family. The mansion is an important place for the activities of the main characters in Zhang Yimou's films.

## **2) Polygamy**

Polygamy, or polyandry to be precise, is a marital system in which a man has both a legal wife and a number of informal concubines. "'Concubinage' means marrying a great-aunt or asking for a concubine. Polygamy was considered normal in feudal society, so it was common for some bureaucrats, squires, warlords, and tycoons to take concubines before the founding of the nation (1949). In addition, some slightly wealthy commoners also have concubines. Warlords, bureaucrats, landlords, and gentry took concubines because they wanted to play with women and were fond of the old and the new. Most of the commoners took concubines for the purpose of passing on cigarettes and offspring. There are different ways of taking concubines: there are those who take advantage of their power to dominate, those who buy them with money, those who take the maid into their rooms, and those who beg for matchmaking." (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1991, p. 78)

Under this system, wives usually have legal status, while concubines have no legal marital status but maintain a marriage-like relationship with men. For example, in the town of Qinghe in Beiping, concubinage was "a ceremony whose complexity depended on the situation of the man who was to be married. If the concubine was taken for the purpose of seeking an heir, and if the first wife and other relatives agreed, the ceremony would be slightly more elaborate; otherwise, it was extremely haphazard, with all sorts of different forms, and in a variety of ways" (Li Wenhai, 2014, p. 457). In Muping County, Shandong Province, "when concubines and widows remarry, there are no weddings to speak of" (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 248). In Laiyang County, Shandong Province, "those who bought concubines were given a carriage and no support to send them away." (Ding Shiliang & Zhao Fang, 1995, p. 234)

In feudal China, especially in ancient feudal society, polygamy was more common. Under this system, wealthy men had the right to marry more than one wife, and the social culture was more tolerant of such behavior. Such arrangements were usually related to factors such as social status, wealth and power. Under the system of

monogamy and concubinage, the status of individual women varies widely. Legitimate wives usually enjoy legal rights such as social status and inheritance of family property, while concubines may have a secondary status and their children may be subject to certain legal restrictions.

During the Republic of China period, despite the Government's legal abolition of polygamy, the phenomenon of polygamy still existed in some rural and religious communities. This was mainly influenced by a variety of factors, including geography, culture, religious beliefs and family traditions.

Polygamy is usually regarded as a sign of wealth and prosperity. During the Republic of China period, although women also fought for some equal rights and improved their social status, influenced by traditional concepts, women who had the same rights as men in terms of economy, work and inheritance were after all a minority, and in practice, society preferred to give more opportunities to men, and the economic sources and inheritance rights of most families were still in the hands of men. Having several wives is often compatible with a man's wealth and status, and polygamy is not only a symbol of wealth, but also of status. In both urban and rural areas, only men from wealthy families have the financial means to support multiple wives; men from ordinary families are simply not able to afford to support multiple wives. In rural areas, because of traditional attitudes, men from wealthy families usually marry more than one wife in the hope of having more heirs to carry on the family business.

Polygamy varies from region to region, and there are places where religious and cultural traditions encourage or tacitly approve of polygamy, especially in some ethnic minority areas. For example, Islam permits men to take more than one wife, and polygamy is therefore more common in some Muslim communities.

The polygamy system reflected the family structure and power distribution of the society at that time. Men were usually the leaders of the family, with decision-making and control rights, while women had a low status and were men's vassals. Polygamy is a key factor in the development of the story in Zhang Yimou's films.

#### **Part 4: Women's Social Status in the Republican Period**

In China during the Republican period, the social status of women was influenced by traditional concepts, but also by the impact of social change and modernization trends, and showed a certain degree of complexity.

Although the Xinhai Revolution overthrew the feudal rule of the Qing Dynasty, the influence of traditional attitudes on the status of women still exists. In rural and conservative areas, the notion that men are superior to women is still deeply rooted.

Family expectations of women are centered on marriage and childbearing. Women are usually expected to play the traditional role of marrying as early as possible, becoming housewives and fulfilling their responsibilities as wives and mothers.

Under the influence of traditional concepts such as "a woman's lack of talent is a virtue", women's access to education was relatively limited in the early years of the Republic of China. Most women were deprived of the right to education, and only a small number of women from powerful families and enlightened wealthy families had the opportunity to receive a new-style education. However, with the modernization of society, more and more urban women and women from enlightened gentry families

were given the opportunity to receive education, and gradually they had the chance to receive higher levels of education, including participation in some professional fields such as literature, art and medicine.

In 1932, Pan Yumei examined the education of peasant women in Liuquan Township, Gu'an County, Hebei Province, and found that "according to the results of the survey, only four out of twenty-one peasant women were literate, one of whom had been to elementary school for one year, one of whom had graduated from a high school, and the rest of the two were only marginally literate. 230 peasant women were educated, and of those educated, only four were literate. Among the more than 230 farmers, there are 95 educated people, of which 59 have received elementary school education, 36 have received private pad education, and 26 have not received formal school education, yet they are slightly literate. Compared to men and women, the literacy education of peasant women is less than 1/30th of that of farmers, which shows how low the literacy education of peasant women is. However, it is said that this is still good, some villages can not find a literate woman. Farmer women's education level is so low, really should be attributed to the inequality of educational opportunities. This village and town in the government model higher elementary school, and private private schools, etc., no women's status. The two peasant women who have received elementary school education are still married to this village and town after studying outside. The farmer's wife, who knew a little bit about writing and how to read and write, once told me: 'My father was the teacher of the private school in this village and town, and when he was teaching the male students in the house, I would secretly listen outside the window. When I had nothing to do at noon every day, I didn't like to do needlework, so I ran to the root of their windows to listen. Over time, I came to know a few words. My father saw that I was so good at learning, so when no one else was around, he also taught me one or two, slowly adding up day by day, so now I can read all the ordinary books.' This was the method by which the fewest literate peasant women became literate. If the family is a little busy, the father is a little lazy, and then will not automatically go to seek, although the father is a teacher, I am afraid that can not be literate. About going out to study, that is even more difficult and difficult thing. When peasant women are young and unmarried, if they want to go out to study, I'm afraid it's only a dream. Because the villagers thought that women were 'money-losing goods', sooner or later they would be someone else's family, so they would never spend more money to send her to school. At the same time, the family needs her to help with cooking and sewing and looking after the children, so how can they let her go out to study? It would be good if she could serve her family after her studies, otherwise, if she got married, wouldn't the family lose both of them? The money will be spent and the girl will be lost! When it comes to married daughters, it is difficult for married women in the city to study, and it is even more difficult for peasant women to study. So in addition to the inequality of educational opportunities, the peasant woman's position in society is really a very important reason that prevents her from being educated." (Li Wenhai, 2014, p. 458-459)

While most women play a predominantly domestic role in society, there is a gradual influx of women in some urban areas who are beginning to have some career options in the industrial and service sectors. However, women still face many restrictions and discrimination in the workplace.

Some intellectuals and feminist activists began to call for equal rights for women. Some women have actively participated in social and political movements, such as Song Qingling, wife of President Sun Yat-sen of the Republic of China, Song Meiling, wife of Chiang Kai-shek, as well as the talented women Lin Huiyin and Xiao Hong, who have exerted a certain influence in socio-political and cultural fields.

Some urban women were influenced by Western culture in their dress and lifestyle. Shanghai became the fashion capital of China at the time, and some women began to wear Western-style clothing, participate in social activities and express their pursuit of modernization. However, in some families with traditional attitudes and in the vast rural areas, traditional dress was still the preferred choice for these women.

After the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, some women joined the war and participated in the anti-Japanese salvation movement, contributing to the country and society, which also helped to raise the status of women in society.

Taken as a whole, the social status of women in the Republican period is diverse under the influence of traditional concepts and modernization trends. Although women have made some progress in certain aspects, they still face many limitations under the constraints of traditional concepts.

### **Conclusion**

The Republic of China between 1912 and 1949 was a special period in Chinese history that marked the intersection of dynastic history. and the People's Republic of China During this period, the social and cultural structure fluctuated according to the uncertain situation. political instability Western countries come to take advantage of China. A life that lacks certainty due to the civil war and the war between China and Japan Including World War 2, happened often. Therefore, it was a time of interaction between Western thought and culture. The further introduction of Western modernity into China has had a great impact on China's traditional culture and ideas. It affects the competition among each other. Changes in Chinese society and culture have affected the Chinese concept of family and clan. identity change Class mobility, food, clothing, housing, travel, weddings and funerals, education, entertainment, beliefs, social interaction, etc. However, most of these influence and changes occurred in the middle cities and elites, in the vast cities, mountainous areas, and other places. and farmers, who are the majority of the population Traditional culture, ancient traditions, local traditions Folk beliefs, etc., have affected every aspect of people's lives in a colorful historical way. And it has become an important inspiration in creating films that use historical scenes to present to future generations the ability to experience and consume history through the enjoyment of film art.

พหุ มัณฑน จิต ชีวะ

## Chapter III

### Red Sorghum: Sorghum fields tell a Love Legend of the Rural Community in the Republic of China Period

#### Introduction

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the film information; the second part introduces the "anti-tradition" of the "Red Sorghum" movie; the third part introduces the narrative and aesthetics of the "Red Sorghum" movie; the fourth part introduces the "Red Sorghum" Folk culture in movies. "Red Sorghum" is both a product of the times and a reflection of the past. The film "Red Sorghum" is made using the history and social culture of the Republic of China, such as the Anti-Japanese War, marriage customs, brewing handicraft traditions and Dionysian rituals, widow remarriage, rural social life and class mobility. "Red Sorghum" is the beginning of Zhang Yimou's "red" series of films. Its creation laid a good foundation for the other two "red" films ("Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern") and provided a successful model. The writing of this chapter is helpful for the analysis of the movie "Ju Dou" in the fourth chapter and the analysis of the movie "Raise the Red Lantern" in the fifth chapter. It also lays the foundation for the reflection of the history of the Republic of China by the red trilogy movies in the sixth chapter.

#### Part 1: Movie Information

This part introduces the main content of the film "Red Sorghum" and related information about the film.

##### 1.1 Plot of the Movie

The story takes place in rural China during the Republican era in the 1930s and 1940s. In order to get a black mule, Jiu'er's (Gong Li) father marries her to Li Dudu, a leper in his fifties who owns a liquor factory in Shili Po. On the way to the wedding, the sedan chairmen, in accordance with the rules, upset the sedan chair to toss the bride halfway, passing by a hundred acres of sorghum green kill mouth, a masked bandit with a gun posing as a "bald three guns" robbing money and sex, sedan chairmen Yu Zhanao (Jiang Wen) saved Jiu Er, and the two of them fell in love with each other.

After Jiu'er was safely transported to Eighteen Mile Slope, she stabbed Big Head Li with scissors on her wedding night. According to the custom of her hometown, Jiu'er's father took her back to the door after three days of marriage. On the way home, her father persuaded Jiu'er to return to Li Doudou's house after a few days' temporary stay at her mother's house because of the black mule Li Doudou had given her. Walking in the green sorghum also full of kill the mouth, suddenly appeared a masked man will Jiu Er captive to the sorghum field to go, Jiu Er in the struggle to find that he is to save their own palanquin husband Yu Zhanao, the two people have sex.

Big Head Li was killed, but no one knows who did it, all the fellows think it is too evil do not want to do it, Jiu Er took over the brewery, left the fellows, took the guys to clean the yard, with sorghum wine to the eighteen miles of the slope splashed three times disinfection, in order to prevent the spread of leprosy. Yu Zhan'ao got drunk and came to Jiu'er to get drunk, and was carried away by the fellows and

thrown into the tank. Soon Jiu'er was robbed by the bandit Bald Three Guns, Luohan and the fellows put together the money to ransom Jiu'er back, Yu Zhanao ran to find Bald Three Guns trouble, and each almost took the other's life, in the process Yu Zhanao learned that Bald Three Guns had not raped Jiu'er.

On the ninth day of the ninth month, according to the old rules, the fire was built on the burning pot of the burning wine workshop, and Jiu'er watched the fellows work, honored the god of wine, and drank sorghum wine along with everyone else. While he was happy, Yu Zhanao came and peed in the new wine, and also took the initiative to help with the work, and eventually Jiu'er accepted him. Afterwards the fellows realize the wine is unexpectedly good, and Jiu'er names the wine Eighteen Miles of Red, and after Luohan leaves the wine at the door, he leaves that night.

A flash of nine years, eighteen miles of red fame, nine children and Yu Zhanao's son is nine years old. In July of that year, the Japanese repair highway to the mouth of the Qing kill, burning and looting, no evil, driving the local villagers to step on the sorghum, and even asked the two cattle butcher to peel the two anti-Japanese elements of the human skin, these two people are the former bandit baldy three guns and from the wine shop out of the Luo Han. After Luo Han's death, Jiu'er took out the "Eighteen Mile Red" wine he brewed and drank it with his fellows, determined to fight the Japanese to avenge Luo Han's death. Yu Zhan'ao and his friends ambushed in the sorghum field on both sides of the newly-built highway in Qingkaikou, preparing to ambush the Japanese army and burn their cars. Jiu'er was killed by a Japanese machine gun on her way to bring food to Yu Zhanao and his fellows. Yu Zhanbei and his fellows rushed towards the Japanese army car holding an earth mine, and after the explosion, only Yu Zhanao and his son survived.



Figure 24 Red Sorghum movie poster presented about the movie's heroine Jiu'er (played by Gong Li) and the custom of bumping the sedan chair during the wedding process of the bride.

Source: <https://image.baidu.com/> [Accessed on March 11, 2023]

## 1.2 Other Information

Red Sorghum is Zhang Yimou's directorial debut and the first of his "Red Trilogy" of films, shot in 1987. Prior to that, Zhang Yimou's films *One and Eight* (1984, directed by Zhang Junzhao) and *Yellow Earth* (1984, directed by Chen Kaige), for which he served as cinematographer, were milestones in China's fifth generation of directors. These films ushered in a new generation of films that departed from the traditional dramatic cinema in the history of Chinese cinema, the so-called "Chinese New Cinema", thus establishing the fifth generation of directors as a major school in the historical process of Chinese cinema.

As an outstanding photographer, Zhang Yimou could have continued to engage in cinematography on the basis of his original achievements, but he had the idea of changing his profession to become a director. Talking about why he became a director, Zhang Yimou said: "Now some people want to be a director, is that the director quite 'pie', I'm not the kind of people who take the art of fooling around. I can be an outstanding cinematographer, but I'm not satisfied with that. I am too good at figuring things out, and I have a strong personality. I am usually quite easy-going, but when I pick up the camera, I 'call it like it is', and I often have a sense of artistic compulsion towards people on the set. Once the idea was recognized as good, he would talk about it tirelessly, and he had to let the other party recognize and accept it before he felt comfortable; otherwise, this piece of heart disease would never go away. In the end, the movie is the director's art, only when the director, can more fully in the work to express their own insights into life and the pursuit of art. Therefore, I think I have to change to be a director, and I firmly believe that I will succeed. Because my contribution to "One and Eight" and "Yellow Earth" is not only the exploration of the artistic style and expressiveness of photography, but more importantly, the excavation of the ideological intention and the grasp of the overall conception of ..... I'm now in my prime from the psychological to the physiological, I'm confident that I'll be able to produce superb works, and will certainly go down in history" (Luo Xueying, 1988, p. 27).

Red Sorghum is adapted from the novel *Red Sorghum* (Mo Yan, 1986, p. 4-36), *Sorghum Wine* (Mo Yan, 1986, p. 4-34) by Nobel Prize-winning author Mo Yan (2012). In the spring of 1986, Zhang Yimou read Mo Yan's novel *Red Sorghum* on the recommendation of a friend, and was deeply shocked by the sense of impulse of life in it. The boundless red sorghum's vigor and the love in full swing in the sorghum field depicted in the novel strongly attracted Zhang Yimou, who has always preferred works with a rough and rich style and infused with a strong sense of life, and the temperament of the novel "Red Sorghum" was in line with his preferences. But at the same time, Zhang Yimou felt that a novel is a little thin, want to Mo Yan's another novel "sorghum wine" is also combined, complementing each other. 1986 August, Zhang Yimou and Mo Yan negotiation, access to "red sorghum" "sorghum wine" two novels of the right to adapt the film and the right to shoot.

In 1988, *Red Sorghum* won the Golden Bear at the 38th Berlin International Film Festival, the first Asian film to do so. In October 1988 the film was released in mainland China.

## Part 2: Anti-traditional and Wild Ways

From the point of view of movie art creation and expression of the theme, "Red Sorghum" is anti-traditional, is "wild road". As Zhang Yimou said: "There are no rules for art, no rules for technique, and there are reasons for how to make a movie. Just like 'red sorghum' movie lyrics say 'you go forward, do not look back, through the sky of the road 9,999'. The movie is indeed a bastard, it seems to have a bit of everything, but not enough with either end. From the creative method, it is difficult to say whether it is realism or romanticism, but belongs to the wild way. I think this is also a kind of exploration ..... "Red High Beam" whether in the spiritual connotation, or in the form of the movie, did not want to learn who, is to reflect an authentic national temperament and national style. At the same time, it shows a bit of freedom in how to make a movie" (Zhang Ming, 2004, p. 54-55).

The emergence of the Red Sorghum (1987) movie is closely related to the shift in the concept of cinema in the era of movie-making, the shift in the concept of literature, and the excellence of the original novel.

### 2.1 Changes in the Concept of Movie Creation

Starting from China's reform and opening up (1978), Chinese film creation gradually got rid of the profound influence of politics and embarked on the path of creative diversification. "Red Sorghum" appeared in the mid-to-late 1980s, and its success relied on changes in film creation concepts.

The founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949 changed the history of China as well as the history of Chinese cinema. China's mainstream ideology has had a comprehensive and profound impact on the field of cinema, from the concept of cinema to its form. From the founding of the People's Republic of China to the Cultural Revolution, there was not much difference between the concepts and forms of film creation and the progressive films of the time. The real innovation of New China's films came after the Cultural Revolution, marked by discussions on issues such as "throwing away the crutch of drama", "divorcing film and drama", and "modernization of film language" in 1979, as well as "Little Flower", "Distressed Laughter" and "Life". The emergence of movies such as "The Trill".

Under the influence of China's highly centralized social system and ideology from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s, this period was dominated by a single conception of cinema and film form. The entire cultural atmosphere of China was permeated with revolutionary realism or a combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism. Movie forms were mainly based on revolutionary historical themes and realistic themes of rural change. For example, Iron Warrior, South and North Campaign, Youth in Flames, New Heroes and Daughters, Sons and Daughters of China, The Song of Spring, and The Plains of Lin Hai Xue Yuan, etc., all of these movies constituted the mainstream and benchmark of the new China's movie creations. However, the movies of this period were deeply influenced by politics and traditional moral concepts, and they showed intense war scenes and conflicts between the enemy and the enemy class, and portrayed classic characters who had no personal desires. The revolutionary model theater during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) pushed this phenomenon to a climax. In short, all expressions of personal thoughts, human nature and desires were strictly scrutinized and even vigorously criticized. In the thirty years after 1949, kissing and sex scenes became an unwritten ban on appearing in movies, love was regarded as a bourgeois symbol and

was strictly limited, everything had to be in the service of the revolution and politics, and all cultural phenomena were criticized for the purpose of class struggle and line struggle. line struggle as the purpose of criticism. "Revolution is a mixture of a whole set of grand narratives, to which all propaganda, agitation, laws, decrees, literature and art can be subsumed, and through which it aims to select, discipline, manipulate and so on the body, and thus it is first and foremost a set of discursive systems, and at the same time a set of systems of manipulation" (Ge Hongbing & Song Geng, 2005). p.79).

With the end of the Cultural Revolution in October 1976, China entered a new period of historical development. After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1978<sup>20</sup>, under the background of reform and opening up and the guidance of emancipation of the mind and seeking truth from facts, the relationship between the whole cultural sector and politics was positively adjusted, and the Chinese film industry really entered a brand-new period of historical development. Chinese cinema truly entered a brand new period of historical development. The 1980s was an era of "a gathering and rapid dissemination of knowledge" in which Western thought and culture from many centuries swarmed to China, and a large number of works by Western scholars were translated and published. China's elite intellectuals launched the "New Enlightenment Movement," which re-emphasized the "human narrative" in a major revolt against the highly unified and integrated political authority and sanctity of the Cultural Revolution, and exalted "humanism, individual liberation, the pursuit of reason and freedom, and the pursuit of the right to life. Emancipation of the individual, the pursuit of reason and freedom, and the promotion of subjectivity".

From 1980 to 1986, China's film artists were less disturbed by political factors, and film creation was given an unprecedented free environment, with a large number of excellent films appearing, such as *Night Rain in Bashan*, *Legend of Tianyun Mountain*, *Man in Middle Age*, *Old Stories from the South of the City*, *Camel's Xiangzi*, *The Teahouse*, *The Maiden in Red*, *Garland Under the Mountain*, and *Border Town*. After 1987, Chinese films gradually became more and more entertainment-oriented, with entertainment films accounting for 60% of the total output in 1988 and as much as 75% in 1989. In particular, the works of the fifth generation of directors amazed China and the world with their strong audio-visual modeling, rich expressiveness of images, and unique humanistic connotations. The

<sup>20</sup> The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC): The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held from December 18 to 22, 1978 in Beijing. The plenum broke through the long-standing "left" errors and serious restrictions, thoroughly rejected the erroneous policy of "two truths", highly evaluated the discussion on the question of the truth standard, and re-established the Party's principle of seeking truth from facts. The Plenum highly evaluated the discussion on the question of the standard of truth and re-established the Party's ideological line of seeking truth from facts. The Plenum stopped using the slogan "Class Struggle as the Programme" and decided to shift the focus of the Party's work and the attention of the whole nation to the construction of socialist modernization, and put forward the task of reform and opening up. The Plenum pointed out that the realization of the four modernizations would be a broad and profound revolution, and that it was necessary to adopt a series of new and significant economic measures, to carry out serious reforms of the economic management system and methods of management, and to actively develop, on the basis of self-reliance, equal and mutually advantageous economic cooperation with all countries of the world. The Plenum emphasized the need to give full play to democracy, to improve the democratic centralism of the Party as a whole, to improve Party rules and laws, and to correctly treat the historical status of Mao Zedong and the scientific system of Mao Zedong Thought. The Plenum co-opted members of the central leadership, and Deng Xiaoping actually became the core of the Party's central leadership.

films of this period expressed the concern and exploration of personal consciousness and human desire, especially the content full of real human nature and love desire began to appear in the films, such as: Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth*, Wu Tianming's *The Old Well*, Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* and so on. "Zhang Yimou's movie exploration began in the 1980s when Chinese social thought, culture and art underwent great changes. During this period, Chinese movies' learning and borrowing from Western movie theories, and Chinese movies' thinking and reflecting on themselves, especially the practice of the fifth generation and their fate of interweaving the sublime and the tragic, all influenced Zhang Yimou's creations to a certain degree," said Zhang Yimou. Therefore, *Red High Beam* is not so much a unique artistic creation of Zhang Yimou as an outcome of the social and cultural transformation of the 1980s" (Wu Jinhua, 2006, p.42).

The changes in the concept of film creation in the 1980s paved the way for Zhang Yimou to choose the history and social culture of the Republic of China for creation.

## 2.2 Red Sorghum: the Novel and the Movie

The success of the "Red Sorghum" movie is closely related to the excellence of the original novels "Red Sorghum" and "Sorghum Wine", as well as Zhang Yimou's "creative" film adaptation.

"In terms of time, the new period of literature began in 1976, while in terms of its nature, the real 'new period of literature' began as late as 1985-1986. Before that time, literature was still only a 'weapon of criticism', i.e., a tool to carry the word in the traditional sense, while after that time, the 'criticism of the weapon' began, resulting in a truly 'new and independent literature'" (Lin Shaofeng, 2005, p. 97). Specifically, before 1985, Chinese literature went through three waves of "literature of wounds", "literature of reflection", and "literature of reform", which were characterized by These three waves were characterized by a relatively closed socio-psychological space and time, and the continuation of the traditional conceptual and methodological model, that is, literature exists as a tool of criticism or glorification, and its purpose is to serve politics or society. At that time, people were eager to break into the "forbidden zone" in terms of subject matter (the theme was attached to the traditional ideology), as well as to "innovate" in terms of narrative techniques and methods, such as you write from this angle, I'll write from that angle, and so on, while the concept of its function remained unchanged: to expose the wounds, to reflect, to celebrate, to criticize, to criticize, to criticize, to criticize, and to criticize. The concept of its function remains the same: to expose wounds, to reflect and to celebrate reform.

Around 1985, the literary world's dissatisfaction with the status quo reached its peak, and they coincidentally searched for a new way out and a new breakthrough. At this time, the New Wave was already surging in people's hearts. At this stage, the literary theory and criticism circles held a "Seminar on New Methods of Literary Theory and Criticism" in Fujian, headed by Liu Zaifu and Lin Xingzhu, who advocated the study and research of "system theory," "cybernetics," "information theory," and so on. Liu Zaifu, Lin Xingzhu and others advocated learning and studying "system theory", "cybernetics", "information theory" and other "new methods". It is said to be learning new methods, but in fact, it is a new concept to go. This conference was a sign of ideological change in literary theory. It played a very important role in the self-reliance of literature and the birth of a truly new literature.

In addition, the publication of American writer William Faulkner's novel *Hustle and Bustle* and Colombian writer García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* greatly shook the Chinese literary world and influenced the direction and methods of Chinese writers. Marquez, a Colombian writer - in today's terms, a writer in the "fringe world" - was able to succeed and win awards in the literary world of the mainstream Western world, an example that greatly encouraged Chinese writers. This example greatly encouraged the Chinese people's confidence to "go global". More importantly, Faulkner and Marquez themselves provide enough inspiration for writing concepts and methods. For Chinese writers, the publication of the classic works of these two Nobel Prize winners was like a lost person discovering a signpost, or a thirsty person finding a water source. In 1985, just when Chinese writers did not know where to go and how to write literature, they saw these two books as if they had discovered a new continent: so it is! The original novel can be written in this way, so ..... Faulkner can use the modernist method to write the American countryside, Marquez can use "magic" to modify history and its "realism", Chinese writers practice the "realism". "Some of the literary laws that Chinese writers take as a guideline do not seem to be self-evident truths.

Around 1985, the Chinese literary circles put forward the idea of "root-seeking literature", and writers such as Han Shaogong, Zheng Wanlong, and Li Da took courageous steps to "search for the roots of literature" both theoretically and in terms of creative practice. The real significance of "literature in search of roots" lies in the following: "Firstly, to bypass or avoid the traditional mainstream ideology, and to open up new conceptual and methodological fields; secondly, to search for the origin of the national culture and art, and to 'go to the world' (which is obviously influenced by Marquez). is obviously influenced by Marquez, and also by the common sense that 'the more national, the more worldly'; thirdly, it is to 'search for the roots of literature', or rather to search for the 'growth point of new literature'. The third is 'literary search for roots', or rather the search for 'the growth point of new literature'. It seems that 'root-seeking literature' is the 'fourth wave' of Chinese literature in the new period (i.e., in contrast to 'scar literature', 'reflective literature' and 'reform literature'). ' and 'reform literature'), but because of the above three points, it is not difficult for us to see the essential difference between it and the previous three literary trends. That is to say, this time is not only a change in the content/form and concept/method of literature as a whole, but also a literary exploration without a model. Since it is an exploration, it will be different, developed and pursued according to the personality and talent of the writers" (Chen Mo, 1995, p. 47). Since then, the Chinese literary world has entered a period of "theme-less variations", with newcomers coming out in large numbers, a hundred flowers competing with each other, and many talented people showing off their styles at the same time.

It was against this backdrop that Mo Yan wrote his novels *Red Sorghum* and *Sorghum Wine*. Born in Gaomi County, Shandong Province, in 1956, Mo Yan (formerly known as Guan Muye) was studying at the Department of Literature (Writers' Class) of the People's Liberation Army Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing at the same time. The 1985 literary climate undoubtedly also had a great impact on the young Mo Yan. Between 1985 and 1986, he completed his masterpiece of a middle grade novel *Red Sorghum*, which was published in the *People's Literature Magazine*, Issue 3, 1986, and was published in the *People's Literature Magazine*, Issue 3, 1986. It

was published in People's Literature Magazine, Issue 3, 1986. *Red Sorghum* was so refreshing that it quickly shook the literary world. Novel Selection, Novel Monthly and other magazines immediately reprinted, the reaction of the critics is very enthusiastic. Mo Yan's name has been widely known since then. After that, Mo Yan published "sorghum wine" in "PLA Literature and Art" magazine.

Compared with traditional modern Chinese novels, *Red Sorghum* and *Sorghum Wine* are distinctly different in terms of novel concepts and creative methods, narrative techniques and novel forms. Mo Yan once praised Zhang Yimou's movie *Red Sorghum*, which was adapted from his novel, saying: "This movie is a unique reflection on life, history, and its greatest strength is the mischievous and optimistic approach to dealing with heavy material. Of course, this is not Zhang Yimou's unique creation, it should be Zhang Yimou's discovery. To deal with history in a mischievous way seems subjective, but it is also objective. I think any revolution - be it social or technological - already has a faint flavor of mischief, let alone art. This brings to mind 'my grandfather' peeing in the wine basket to make good wine. Why is that impossible" (Mo Yan, 1988, p. 53).

The above passage is not so much about Zhang Yimou's movie as it is about Mo Yan's self-confession. The novel *Red Sorghum* was written by him, and the right to create and invent was his, a new, mischievous way to deal with history and life, culture and art, a product of the artistic self-awareness and spiritual liberation of the writers of this period.

So, the novel "*Red Sorghum*" skyrocketed, galloped across the board, how to write how to write, what to write what to write. Thus, "red sorghum" "sorghum wine" narrative point of view is very "out of the ordinary", by the first person "I" to speak "my grandfather" "my grandmother" and "my father". Grandma and "my father" story, as for the rules, illogical, others do not care. That's what the author said. Naturally, the chronological order of the novel is very arbitrary. A large number of "flashbacks" in the novel are completely unconventional and random. Where "*Red Sorghum*" breaks the rule is not only in the arbitrariness of its narrative point of view (angle), the arbitrariness of the narrative time-space transition, but also in the author's innovation of the narrative itself: here, the subjective and the objective, the real and the legendary, the historically recorded and the artistically constructed, the narration and the argument, the original conceptualization and the random improvisation" are completely integrated and inseparable.

Simplifying is an important principle of Zhang Yimou's filming of the *Red Sorghum* movie, and it is also an important reason for his final success. Mo Yan's novel is vast and deep, meaningful, rich in information, complex ideas about history, nature, humanities, life, region, life, etc., Zhang Yimou only take the "life commotion" a leaf. Zhang Yimou has made drastic changes to Mo Yan's novel. This kind of drastic deletion, and its "but take a line, not as much as the rest" of the adaptation method, can be called "Zhang Yimou adaptation method" - the original is just a kind of material for him to "re-create". Re-creation of a material, he can be used casually, casually to, can also be changed casually, casually added.

Zhang Yimou has deleted and altered the content, characterization, social background, structural form, thematic significance, and aesthetic style of Mo Yan's novel, including blurring the specific dates of the events, elevating my grandmother, Jiu'er, to the position of the absolute protagonist, deleting many of my grandmother's

"dishonorable" deeds, and many of my grandfather, Yu Zhanao's "bandit" behavior, deleting many characters in the novel, and reducing the anti-Japanese scenes, and so on. "bandit" behaviors of my grandfather Yu Zhanao, deleted many characters in the novel, and reduced the anti-Japanese scenes, and so on.

Of course, it is understandable that the adapted movie "Red Sorghum" is different. Since it is an adaptation, it can naturally be both "edited" and "modified". Because after all, movies and novels are two different art forms, one is language art, and the other is audio-visual comprehensive art. Some things can be said in words, and they can be said vividly or profoundly, but they cannot be expressed in movies. Even the stronger the novel attribute (that is, the stronger the language art), the more difficult it is to adapt it into a movie. For example, in Mo Yan's novel, we can all understand the phrase "the most heroic man is the most bastard", but it cannot be expressed in the movie. Even the language of novels such as "The sorghum is dense and glorious, the sorghum is sad and pleasant, the sorghum is passionate about love" are difficult to present in the movie. In the movie, sorghum is sorghum. Even if the "poetic and picturesque" sorghum is photographed and its "expression" is photographed, it is still sorghum. Similarly, some things in movies, such as intuitive sound and picture, music, sound and other artistic effects, are difficult to describe in novels.

The movie has limited time and space, it can't help but give up something, even if it's something good. Zhang Yimou does not expect to show the novel's ideological connotations and depth, follow nature and strive for simplicity is a feature of Zhang Yimou and his film, his feelings and understanding of the novel "Red Sorghum" "Sorghum Wine" can be simply summarized as "strong sensual life of the commotion" in this sentence, he wanted to do, it is this understanding of the film form expressed, this is Zhang Yimou's "rediscovery" or "rediscovery" or "rediscovery". What he wants to do is to express this understanding in the form of a movie, which is the fundamental core of Zhang Yimou's "rediscovery" or "re-creation". In order to express the theme of "strong sensual life commotion", it is necessary to delete some "unnecessary" or "unsuitable" things in the novel, and keep those necessary things in the novel, The necessary and suitable things in the novel should be retained, and at the same time, some necessary new things should be strengthened or added.

The movie retains the "common" things in the novel, such as the basic story line of "My Grandma" from the time she got married to the time she was killed by the Japanese (which was a subplot in the novel, but Zhang Yimou elevated it to the main plot), as well as details or plot elements such as the sedan chair, riding a donkey, encountering a bandit, having an illicit affair, the killing of the owner, skinning a man, urinating into a wine basket, and fighting the Japanese. Boss was killed, skinned, urinated into the wine basket, beat Japan and other details or plot elements, which are in line with the spiritual principle of "sensual life's commotion" as understood by Zhang Yimou, and can express the characters' dare to love, teach and hate, and "do whatever they want to do". It can show that the characters dare to love, teach and hate, and "do whatever they want", which is irrational and non-ritualized impact of life. For this reason, the movie has turned the song sung by "My Grandfather" to "My Grandmother" in the novel into the theme song, "Hey, sister, you boldly go forward wow/ Go forward, don't turn back/ The great road to heaven, 9,900,999 wow/ Hey, sister, you boldly go forward wow/ Go forward, don't turn back/ The great road to

heaven, 9,900,999 wow/ Hey, sister, you boldly go forward wow/ Go forward, don't turn back Nine wow / hey, sister you boldly go forward wow / go forward, do not turn back / from now on you / build up that red embroidered building wow / throw the red embroidered ball wow / is hitting me in the head wow / with you to drink a pot of wow / red red sorghum wine wow / red red sorghum wine ah, ah hey" - the movie theme song and the novel original There are two changes in the movie theme song and the original novel, one is deleted from the original novel "iron teeth, steel casting of the bones", and added a sentence "through the sky of the road of 9,999"; the second is to repeat "sister you boldly walk forward Secondly, it repeats the phrase "Sister, you go forward boldly" to enhance the sensual effect of recklessness. In the movie, this song is "roared" by the star Jiang Wen himself with a coarse and majestic voice, which adds sensibility and sexiness, and quickly spreads all over the country, from the city to the countryside, the song "Sister, you boldly go forward" is sung everywhere, which shows that it has a strong resonance with the youth's voices of the times, and it has been widely recognized by the public. This shows that it has a strong resonance with the voice of the youth of the times, and has merged into the trend of "Northwest Wind", which is strong and rough, full of life texture and sensual commotion in the contemporary times.

The movie maintains the story line of the novel, but changes the way it is narrated. That is, in the process of storytelling, to strengthen some of the emotional impact of the segment, such as the beginning of the sedan chair, in the novel is only a few lines, to the movie has become a large section of the "wilderness revelry", a full expression of the spirit of that kind of sensibility, and specifically for the addition of a few paragraphs of the playful and wild lyrics. Another example is the making of wine, in which the movie specifically reinforces the "spirit of the god of wine", fictionalizes a complete set of wine rituals, and makes up a "song of the god of wine" as well. In the movie, the few lines of the novel are turned into a big drama, creating a classic scene that is praised by movie connoisseurs, where the so-called "impulse of sensual life" is developed to the extreme. Therefore, some people call the scene of sexual intercourse as the "poetic eye" of the whole movie. Other scenes, such as the skinning of a human being, are the first of their kind to appear in a movie in China, which undoubtedly adds to the sensual effect of the movie.

The film "Red High Beam" wins by the simplicity of its theme and the intensification of its colors and sensual expression. Instead of "dealing with serious issues of history, culture and life in a mischievous way, it is a playful way of creating a myth of vitality or the "spirit of the god of wine" - history, culture and life have become the edges of this myth, history, culture, and life have all become the edges of this myth.

The success of "Red Sorghum" movie lies in the fact that it uses modern movie language to show an ancient mythological story; it uses rich movie techniques to express a simple mythological theme of "sensual life commotion". Its success lies in the complexity of its surface form and the simplicity of its theme; in the excitement of its hot and exciting screen shots and its deep understanding. Not only Chinese audiences understand it, but also Western audiences. Of course, Westerners are also confused, they attribute it to the "mystery" of the "foreign city", while the Chinese audience's excitement is attributed to the "joy and freedom" of the "other time". "joy and freedom".

The movie "Red Sorghum" retains the era in which the story in the original novel takes place - the Republic of China period, as well as local folk culture such as marriage customs, winemaking and handicraft traditions, worship of the god of wine, folk songs and folk music. Among Zhang Yimou's movies, these have become the most outstanding aspects of the film.

### 2.3 Topics on Life and Human Desire

"Red Sorghum" is anti-"traditional", called an original work with a distinctive personality. Its anti-tradition is embodied in the absence of a little "Kongfuzi Qi" (traditional, pedantic, old-fashioned temperament). As we all know, China is affected by the traditional Confucianism (later developed into science), in the mental state tends to be conservative, those who follow, meticulous, shirking, wandering, pretense, and concord, as well as the old-fashioned, holding on to the old, self-esteem and so on the bad habits of impede the progress of the society, corrosion of the vitality of the nation. People tend to feel unaccustomed to the warm and exuberant love, and the middle way is everywhere in the market, of course, this is just a general theory, in fact, the opposite is also very much. "Red Sorghum" is just the right lens on those out of the ordinary characters and events, boldly depicted in the social bottom of the people's nearly "deviant" love life. Zhang Yimou once said, "Our generation can't get rid of the sense of responsibility and the sense of worry. If we are completely out of the world and seek inner introspection and tranquility, then we should go to the mountains to worship Buddha and play Zen. Whenever we want to make a movie, it's always because we have a desire to express and express ourselves to the society and life. It's just that we and the fourth generation have different perspectives and forms of 'worry'. Our generation's reflections on history and speeches on reality are often seen from afar, as in *Yellow Earth*; or more transcendent, which is *Red Sorghum*." (Luo Xueying, 1988, p. 41)

The *Red Sorghum* movie tells the story of what happened in the "past", shows Chinese culture, praises the spirit of the nation, is a reflection on history, but also speaks to reality. Zhang Yimou, when talking about the ideas he wanted to express in the filming of *Red Sorghum*, said, "Praise life, that's my main idea", "Praise the freedom and stretch of life, praise the purity of life, life should be magnificent" (Zhou Youzhao, 1988, p. 11). Life should be just like that, freedom is the life and soul of art, freedom is also the true nature of life and the way of existence, life should be magnificent. What *Red Sorghum* shows is the freedom of human nature and the freedom to flaunt, even to flaunt, for the freedom and flaunting of life, the director Zhang Yimou praises it as much as he can, pointing to the beauty of life, the diversity of life's value, praising the whole of life, and the life's quest for survival, reproduction, and eternity are all the primal forces of life, and all the true nature of life.

"Red Sorghum" tells the story of a man and a woman who run a sorghum wine shop together after many twists and turns, but in the war of Japanese aggression, both the heroine and the shop's fellows are killed by the Japanese because of their participation in the resistance movement. The theme of the movie from the beginning to the end is the vitality of life, a stubborn, straightforward, upwardly mobile, uninhibited, open and honest outlook on life and the attitude to face the value of life. Therefore, what is presented in the work is not a world that has been understood, but a world in which life is supreme, a world in which life must dare to live, dare to die,

dare to love and dare to hate. A modern myth pointing to life is impactfully displayed in front of the audience, satisfying their visual enjoyment and at the same time causing them to think about the way of existence of the nation, the culture of the nation, and the essence and truth of the value of life. Yu Zhanao is the representative of this world, he is a person with unique personality and national spirit, he is a strong personality, there is a kind of roughness and violence in his character, but he is also rich in primitive sense of justice and passion for life. He dares to pursue what he wants to get, and desire is an important and indispensable ingredient in his life. Juier in the film is a symbol of desire, she represents herself, but also on behalf of this yellow land a unique sorghum red, but also carries the imagery of a life itself, as a woman, she is pathetic but also strong, in this land she is unique, she also has the true passion of life, but also strive to exist, and strive to create the value of life. The movie *Red Sorghum* is a salute to life, an ode to the beauty of life, downplaying the basic structure of society, all in the service of this natural life of fanaticism, free-spiritedness and pain, showing the different possibilities of life, expressing the unique beauty of life.

"Red sorghum" in the characters of the state of life, belonging, the pursuit of the director are shown at a glance, Zhang Yimou in his own way to show the Chinese culture, but also to show the Chinese ancient tradition of the existence of the state of the people and dare to break the traditional state of existence shows the value of the song of the beauty of life, praised the value of life of the bombardment. Zhang Yimou's life in this story is a component of human nature and essence, a free life, and the realization of the value of life can be life or death, but it can also be to live a flamboyant, wild, free and easy. While the movie expresses the essence of the true nature of life, it also praises the free life and glorifies the frankness and primitive passion and charm of life.

"Red Sorghum" has been described as China's first truly physical movie. Although there are movies about involving the body in the New Period, they are more often about using the body as a tool to speak about political and social issues; the flesh is veiled, and the body is constrained and lacks a sense of bodily subjectivity in Enlightenment rationality and abstract human nature" (Lulu Xu, 2016, p. 15). In *Red Sorghum*, it is filled with a fervent sense of life and a wildly uninhibited body of desire. There are two reasons why 1987's *Red Sorghum* has been called China's first truly bodily sex film: first, the film's bold portrayal of a free sense of life, and second, its wildly uninhibited appeal to the body of desire. Director Zhang Yimou once described his initial intention for filming *Red Sorghum* in this way: "Praise life, that's my main idea ..... China's long period of closure and heavy pressure has resulted in physical, spiritual distortion of people, who have become debilitated, mediocre, cautious, forward-looking, and wishy-washy, They become weak, mediocre, prudish, backward-looking, obsequious and unsympathetic. If this continues, how can this nation be strong? So in this movie, I just want to praise life through the characterization of personality, praise the life of the kind of gushing inexhaustible vitality, praise the freedom of life, stretch, love is true love, hate is true hate, great life, great death, great hate, great love, I just want to praise the purity of life, the stomach of the United States so much curved road, bandits robbed my woman, I have to look for you to settle the score, the Japanese killed my friends, I also want to kill the Japanese revenge; I also want to kill the Japanese; I also want to kill the Japanese

revenge. I also want to kill the Japanese to take revenge; I just want to praise life's normal desire to live without distortion, without so much morality, etiquette and bondage, hair in nature, in line with the nature, unrestrained, open and honest, life should be magnificent, life is magnificent, death is magnificent, that is called the real smooth, that is called the real flow." (Cao Xiaojing & Zhang Ali, 2018, p. 211) This simple and direct language of Zhang Yimou's speaks out his original intention to praise life and express the normal desire of human beings. Although it is said that the film involves the anti-Japanese plot and national history, Zhang Yimou just takes the anti-Japanese war as an opportunity to use film and television aesthetics and visual modeling to flaunt the sense of free-spirited life that is pursued.

The sense of liberation of the female body in *Red Sorghum* is manifested to the fullest extent in Zhang Yimou's wild camera, and the female body becomes the most basic and powerful "meta-language" of resistance against feudal ethics/bad culture. It is undeniable that Zhang Yimou's film portrays the sad life and destiny of women, which to a certain extent refers to the oppression of women's bodies in the context of China's history and culture, and the women's bodies, which appear in a rebellious posture, strongly criticize the authoritarian culture and feudal power, and the enlightenment of the body comes out in a moment. The movie is full of the liberation of life and the expression of desire. In the lens of *Red Sorghum*, the female body is no longer a passive "commodity", no longer a "capital" to be exchanged, it is a life, a person with self-awareness. Even though Big Head Li, who suffers from leprosy, buys "My Grandma's" body with money, the individuality and desire of My Grandma's body, as well as the reverence and hope for life, flow freely in the following story. The image of "My Grandma" Jiu'er is presented in the eyes of desire as soon as she appears on the scene. The red dress and pants, red shoes, red head, and red sedan chair are Zhang Yimou's favorite colors, and "red" is also a classic reference to desire. On the way to get married, "my grandmother" Jiu'er is surrounded by many bare-chested, athletic male sedan chair bearers, and she sits alone in the sedan chair bouncing up and down for up to five minutes in the "sedan chair bobbing", with the sedan chair bearers' wildly upturned movements and bantering language, and the wildly flirtatious and provocative The language is wildly provocative. The energy of the body, the image of desire, and the audience's gaze of desire all intertwine to form a system of cinematic desire. An important point in the liberation of the female body and the display of desire appears. "My grandmother" begins to peep at the "men" carefully, lifting the curtain of the sedan chair quietly with her feet, peeping at the sedan chair bearer who is full of wild flavors through the cracks, from the feet full of symbolic meanings to the bare robust back, the male sedan chair bearer is full of wild flavors, from the feet full of symbolic meanings to the male sedan chair bearer, from the feet full of symbols to the naked strong back. From the feet full of symbolic meaning to the bare and robust back, the male palanquin bearer is under the gaze of "My Grandma", and the fact that the male is under the "gaze" of the female is a milestone in the emancipation of women's self-consciousness.



Figure 25 "My Grandma" Jiu'er Spies on Men in 'Red Sorghum' Movie

Source: <https://v.qq.com/> [Accessed on March 11, 2023]

The presentation of bodily desires in Red Sorghum is different from the presentation of desires aimed at the consumption of body images in the age of consumption, "The orgy of desires in Red Sorghum is built on the basis of opposing the repression of the body by reason, which fits the needs of the times, guides a healthy body culture, and embodies a sound awareness of life." (Yang Liu, 2011, p. 100) The flaunting of a strong and healthy body full of desire is also a denial of a sick and ugly body. Nineteen-year-old Jiu'er is traded by her father with a mule to a man with leprosy, and Big Head Li is also destined to be the absentee of the textual narrative, never to be seen again on the night of the wedding with Jiu'er's scream. The flaunting of a strong body full of desire naturally leads to resistance against anti-life and anti-body. The Japanese brutalization and killing of the people, especially the horrifying portrayal of the section in which Luo Han was killed, shows the tragic death of the Japanese army, and at the same time reflects the heroism of the Chinese people who fought bravely against the enemy.

Red Sorghum is, on the physical level, a bold expression of a free consciousness of life. The movie's depiction of bodily desire, though without any physical nudity, is much sexier and more poetic than all the skillfully renovated nudity intended to seduce. When "My Grandma" and "My Grandpa" have intercourse in the sorghum field, the female body's desire is manifested in the swinging of the sorghum in a reckless and wild manner. When "my grandmother" and "my grandfather" have intercourse in the sorghum field, the female body is facing the yellow earth and the sky, the male body is kneeling on the ground, the red sorghum is roaring in the wind, the suona is hissing with all its might, and on the round altar, the female body and the male body begin to mingle, and this is the first time that the female body and the male body have ever met. On the round altar, the female body and the male body begin to mingle with each other, which is a worship of life, sex and fertility, and a call for "morality in accordance with human nature". In the movie, the female body is not exposed and the male's private parts are hidden, but the intercourse between the male and the female under the camera is more poetic and more appealing to the audience. Zhang Yimou allows the female body to be liberated under the camera, which is a hissing of the body to the feudal ethical culture!

"Red Sorghum" explores the complex relationship between life and human nature through the depiction of social life, characters, and the Anti-Japanese War in northern rural areas during the Republic of China.

### Part 3: People and Things related to sorghum fields

The sorghum field in "Red Sorghum" is one of the core scenes of the entire story. In the movie, the sorghum field is not only an uncultivated wasteland, but also a spiritual symbol of the residents of Shibalipo. The people living in this area lived freely and happily, and when faced with Japanese aggression, they showed a tenacious spirit of resistance.

#### 3.1 Legends

The movie "Red Sorghum" shows a group of vivid, bloodthirsty people, and the stories that happen to them are full of legend. The identities, thoughts, personalities, words and actions of "My Grandma" Jiu'er and "My Grandpa" Yu Zhanyao, and especially the love story between them, are legendary. Almost all the other men in the movie have the same appearance as "My Grandpa": dark red skin, full of muscles, and many of them are bald. It is this image that reveals the wildness of these men and their love for each other. Only this kind of image can become the characters of the legend. Zhang Yimou once said: "Nowadays, everyone is talking about all kinds of learning about culture, and literature and movies are also competing to show reflection on culture and history. I think the purpose of learning is ultimately to be realized in human beings, or to make people live more and more spiritually. Even if you trample the 5,000 years of Chinese culture under your feet, even if you wrestle it to the sky, even if you re-establish yourself in the critical inheritance, your state of life must first be warmed up, alive, vigorous, daring to hate and love, daring to live and dare to die, and giving birth to children and grandchildren who will be nine and a half kilograms of fat boys; you can't have a bellyful of culture, but you are living a more and more feeble life" (Zhang Ming, 2004, p. 46-47).

#### 1) Born with a Wonderful Woman, Born with a Great Husband

Zhang Yimou said that "Red Sorghum" has three protagonists who are "born with a strange woman, a great husband, and a piece of sorghum land." The "wonderful woman" refers to the heroine of the film, my grandma Jiu'er, and the "great husband" refers to "My grandfather" Yu Zhan'ao. They are some of the most legendary characters in film.

"My Grandma" Jiu'er (Gong Li) is a legendary figure, a woman who rebels against traditional morality and strives to control her own destiny. Jiu'er is the ninth child in her family, and was promised by her father to a leper, Li Dudu, in exchange for a mule. Despite the injustice of her fate, Jiu'er does not go against the grain. She carries scissors in her arms when she marries and stabs Big Head Li with them on her wedding night, and she dares to love and hate Yu Zhanbei after they fall in love, and bravely chooses to commit adultery with "My Grandpa" on her way back to her mother's house. Although "My Grandma" Jiu'er is a woman, she also dares to love and hate, and has the courage of a man. Soon after her wedding, Big Head Li is killed, and she bravely takes on the heavy burden of running the brewery. After the respected Luo Han was brutally killed by the Japanese devils, she encouraged everyone to avenge Luo Han's death and was killed by the Japanese when she was delivering food to everyone. Jiu'er is filled with the rebellious spirit and vitality of boldness and truthfulness, daring to love and hate.



Figure 26 "My Grandmother" Jiu'er (played by Gong Li) in the "Red Sorghum" movie  
Source: <https://v.qq.com/> [Accessed on March 11, 2023]

There are a number of figures related to the "nine" in Jiu'er's name in the movie: she is the ninth in her family, she got married on the ninth day of the seventh month, her birthday is on the ninth day of the ninth month, nine is the same sound as wine, and she makes new wine on the ninth day of the ninth month. From these settings, we can see director Zhang Yimou's preference for the female character of Jiu'er, as well as Jiu'er's fated and entangled relationship with the Soju House.

"My grandfather" Yu Zhanao (Jiang Wen) is a sedan chair bearer, a man who dares to love and hate, an "anti-Japanese hero", but he is also an adulterer and murderer. When Jiu'er got married, he carried the sedan chair for Jiu'er, and when Jiu'er encountered robbers, he came to her rescue, and the two of them became acquainted with each other, and then quickly fell in love. Yu Zhanyao is bold and straightforward in his pursuit of love, and possessive at the same time. After having sex with Jiu'er, Jiu'er's husband, Li Datou, was killed, and there is a high probability that he did it. After learning that Jiu'er was robbed by bandits, he went to the trouble of the bandit Bald Three Guns, full of primitive and wild power, and after the brutal murder of Luo Han's elder brother, he led the wine shop fellows to ambush the Japanese army and blew up the Japanese cars with the earth mines he had made. The love song "Sister, you boldly go forward" sung by "My Grandpa" after his union with "My Grandma", the words and deeds of carrying my grandma into the house upside down, peeing in the new wine, and blowing up the Japanese car with a clay mine are all typical of the legendary storyline. In the movie, "My Grandpa" is full of male strength and beauty, a man who combines beauty, ugliness, goodness and evil. Such a legendary character is completely different from the heroes in traditional literature and art works, and is also far from our life experience.

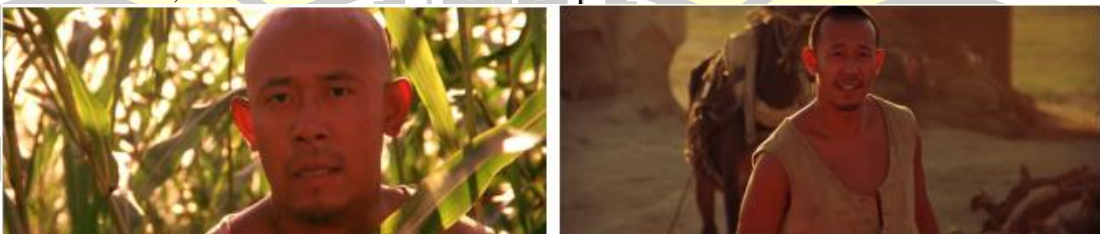


Figure 27 My Grandfather" Yu Zhanao (played by Jiang Wen) in the "Red Sorghum" movie

Source: <https://v.qq.com/> [Accessed on March 11, 2023]

The images of "My Grandpa" and "My Grandma" are an epitome of Zhang Yimou's call for a new life for the Chinese people in the cultural environment of the 1980s, and have become symbolic of the breakthrough of traditional Chinese morality. Both characters are passionate and rugged, living a clear, bright, happy, comfortable and comfortable life, never rubbing the sand of distortion and repression in their eyes. "My grandfather is the offensive type, who can pick the stars and the moon for the woman he loves, and even kill for his life. "My grandma, on the other hand, dares to love and hate, and is very clear. Because of their strong personalities, the two often have opposite relationships with each other. For example, "my grandmother" hit "my grandfather", because he publicly the sorghum field of the matter shook out, "my grandmother" is very strong, feel embarrassed, and then scolded on the fight. As the saying goes, "beating is pain, scolding is love", grandma's action contains a very deep love. Watching the crowd carry Grandpa away, Grandma was also quite upset. The environment in which these two characters live is a field of wild sorghum and a soju workshop located in the middle of nowhere. For the legendary characters in this legendary environment, the film does not analyze the causal relationship between the characters' psychology and actions in a very realistic way, but uses a large chunk of action to show that "a great husband is born, and a strange woman is born". "My grandmother was carrying scissors when she got married and cried loudly in the sedan chair. But when she met the road robber, she felt fine again and even made fun of him, hating to make things as big as possible, and she didn't care if the road robber was beaten to death. She glanced at "my grandfather", gently put the sedan chair curtain a release, and with obvious teasing. After the murder of Big Head Li, the next morning after "My Grandma" returned to the Soju Workshop, she stood in the courtyard with new clothes and shoes, glowing with honor, and gave a lecture to the fellows with her eloquent tongue.

My grandmother Jiu'er in the movie was a particularly feminine person who knew that she was pretty and attracted men's love, so her dress was very pretty for the rural area at that time. By marrying Li Doudou, the owner of the soju factory, and inheriting the factory after Li Doudou's death, Jiu'er realized the class leap from the daughter of a poor family to the owner of the soju factory. As a member of the middle and upper classes of the rural society, Jiu'er's social status, identity, wealth, etc. determined that her dress could not be as "worn out and rotten" as that of the poor women in the countryside, but was always bright and colorful. "Instead, she is always cleaned up in a bright and colorful, clean and sharp way.

Jiu'er and Yu Zhan'ao can be said to be representatives of rural women and men during the Republic of China. They represent a group of people who dare to love, hate, take responsibility, live freely and happily, and have patriotic sentiments.

## **2) Anti-Japanese Heroes and Bandits**

Among the men of 18 Mile Slope, if the bloodthirstiness and wildness of "My Grandfather" are shown through words and deeds for all to see, then the love of Luohan and Bald Three Guns for the nation and their hometowns are hidden deep in their hearts, and are only shown at critical times.

Liu Luohan, a quiet, thin and weak fellow of the Soju House, respects and loves Jiu'er, and is obedient to her, often calling her "shopkeeper". After the death of Big Head Li, Jiu'er was able to support the brewery with his help. After Jiu'er was

kidnapped by the bandit Bald Three Guns, he and the staff of the brewery pooled money together and ransomed Jiu'er back. After Yu Zhanao came to the soju workshop, he left again for the sake of the overall situation. Later, Luo Han joined the Communist Party of China and was assigned to collect various local armed forces to fight against the Japanese, and then he was captured by the Japanese army and flayed by them in the sorghum field of Qingkaikou, Luo Han had no fear and cursed until his death.



Figure 28 Lohan in the "Red Sorghum" Movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

Bald Three Guns was a local bandit leader who often robbed homes in the area of Qing Kill Kou and Eighteen Mile Slope, and once kidnapped Jiu Er. After the arrival of the Japanese army, he stood up to defend his hometown and followed Luohan as an armed civilian force to fight against the Japanese, and was captured by the Japanese army, who wanted to flay him and show him to the public. Bald Three Guns begs the familiar beef store owner - who was coerced by the Japanese to skin Bald Three Guns - to give him a swift death and not to make him suffer so much. The beef preserved owner stabs Bald Three Guns and then rushes towards the Japanese army, where he is killed by the Japanese.



Figure 29 Bandit Bald Three Guns in the Red Sorghum Movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

Every character in "Red Sorghum" has his or her own legendary story. The film focuses on showing the living conditions of the lower class people in the context of the war during the Republic of China, as well as the strong spiritual temperament displayed by ordinary people for their own survival and development.

### 3.2 The Red Element

The color red has a special cultural meaning in China. Since the Zhou Dynasty<sup>21</sup>, red has been the popular color. More importantly, the color red is the same as the color of human blood, especially the "Big Red", which is particularly valued in China, and is linked to the endless flow of blood in the Chinese cultural heritage, and thus red is more of the Chinese people's worship and respect for life itself.

In traditional Chinese culture, it is the sun that has the color of fire, and the sun also symbolizes hope, light and vitality. Because of this, the fiery red hue pervades China with a positive sentiment of entering the world, which coincides with the Confucian orthodoxy revered in feudal China. And this thought has been deeply and long-lastingly influencing Chinese people and society until now. Zhang Yimou is a very good understanding and awareness of this national complex, as a Chinese growing in the yellow earth, he has a natural affinity for the red, and therefore in his first film directed by the "Red Sorghum" has a profound and comprehensive performance.

In the Red Sorghum movie, whether it is the red sorghum field, "my grandmother's" big red cotton jacket, or the scarlet clouds in the sky, or the accidental creation of "daughter red", and finally the blood red after fighting with the Japanese, Zhang Yimou will be "Red" the color brought about by the heavy, tragic atmosphere to get a better show, so that the myth with the meaning of the legend, celebrate the exuberant vitality of the novel to dynamic, real, bright form projected on the screen, to the audience brought a visually excellent experience. However, the fate of Jiu'er, the "red" in this work, always has a grayish hue that does not match her brightness. The family's decline and poverty, so that Jiu Er in the 19-year-old flower-like years but to marry the disease-carrying fifty-year-old Li Da Doudou, although she is reluctant, but the fate of the arrangement so that she can not choose, the status of women and the power of the confinement of the feudal traditional thinking was completely trampled. And after a period of hot and sincere love with Yu Zhanyao, the beginning of the war of resistance against Japan so that this originally beautiful love because of the death of Jiu Er came to an abrupt end, and Jiu Er related to the red sorghum, red head, red sedan chair, red shoes, but also because of which it was eclipsed, just as the last solar eclipse appeared in the sky. Zhang Yimou here let such a should be "shining" always the role of the early death, both for the role of his full affirmation, but also for his fear of the red life - the death of a person will have new life and hope. Here he makes red a color with a tragic meaning, thus giving people a strong visual contrast, which also achieves the "red" classic of this work. "The dual expression of 'red' in 'Red Sorghum' brings the audience a visual double experience. His backlash against red makes the traditional Chinese red have the characteristics of a reflection on tradition since the new period. At the same time, his backlash against

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<sup>21</sup> Zhou Dynasty: Existing from 1046 BC to 256 BC, the Zhou Dynasty was the third slave dynasty in Chinese history, and was the heyday of ancient slavery society. The Zhou Dynasty practiced the feudal system (statehood), with the King of Zhou as the "common lord of the world".

red at the level of consciousness makes Zhang Yimou's 'red' have an inner emotion beyond its form, in his view, red is no longer just warm and happy, the pain and heaviness behind it may be a thousand times more than the happiness it shows. This is what sets him apart from other directors in his unique grasp of cinematic color" (Gong Ge, 2015, p. 16).

As one of the indispensable basic elements of film language, the picture is valued by directors for its intuition, distinctness and visual impact, and the color in the picture is an indispensable and important part of the four elements of film modeling. In the movie *Red Sorghum*, Zhang Yimou used the color red to the extreme. In the beginning of the movie, "my grandmother's" rosy face is like a ray of starlight in the night sky, which contrasts strongly with the desolate yellow land and the difficult living environment, letting people feel that there is still hope in that society which is unstable and filled with death and threat, which catches the audience's attention at once. The movie is then filled with red color, red sedan chair, red head covering, red wedding clothes and red embroidered shoes. At the beginning of the movie, the conflict between red and yellow is used to build up the color style of the main story. The yellow soil, barren and desolate eighteen-mile slope shows the difficulty of the living environment, and at the same time, it also celebrates the resilience of the life on this piece of land: Gong Li wears a big red dress, which lets people feel the most primitive and surging toughness of the life. The red sedan chair bumps and undulates in the yellow soil, the environment of the earthy yellow and the red sedan chair presents a kind of contrast color between, on the one hand, highlighting the visual subject of the sedan chair at the same time, maximizing the characteristics of the environment. The most exciting thing is that a wedding can be performed in such a desolate place in a most primitive way. The next scene is that of a sedan chairman carrying a sedan chair on the dusty yellow ground. This contrast between red and yellow makes the picture have a wild excitement and primitive tension. The red sedan chair moving on the loess land is like a blazing fire that is burning and surrounding the barren land, and the actor's outstanding performance of "upside down sedan chair" is also expressed through the red image. The bright red sedan chair bumping on the barren and desolate loess slope injects vivid vitality into this barren land. The bright red sedan chair bouncing on the barren land also comes from the young Jiu'er in the bright red sedan chair. Jiu'er's red face, red head covering, red wedding dress, and red embroidered shoes all give this barren land a vivid vitality. In this part, the director uses a red filter to set a red tone for the whole movie, using red to represent the vibrant colors of strong vitality and humanity, forming quite a strong contrast with the depressing and barren yellow land.

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"Zhang Yimou uses the bright red color in this scene to deeply express the passion of people in pursuit of survival and love. In the movie, in the bright red sorghum field, "my grandmother" is lying on her back in the open space created for her by "my grandfather" with both hands, not moving, surrounded by fallen sorghum, and "my grandfather" is kneeling on the ground, as if praying to God. "My grandfather was kneeling on the ground, as if praying to God. Here, "my grandfather" and "my grandmother" between the exuberant life and passionate love is shown, even if there is no male and female love passionate scenes, but the performance of the more refreshing, primitive desires in this red sorghum ground to get fully released. Release. The impulse and release of this original desire, on the one hand, from the background of the Northwest folk music of the rude and unrestrained, on the other hand, through a strong sense of visual impact of the red color to be expressed. "My grandfather went to the sorghum field and trampled down a large area of sorghum, spreading out the "bed" for the bride to have wild sex. In this way, in a large bright red sorghum field, sorghum red leaves just set off the bride's red dress lying on her back, but also reflects the kneeling in front of her naked palanquin bearer, the boundless red sorghum spread out, just like human desire, in the endless extension of the yellow land. Wearing a red shirt and red pants "my grandmother" in the red sorghum field set into the eye-catching "big" word, the tension of the red infinite extension, in the heavy red sorghum leaves under the background, bright red piercing red, flaunting unbridled posture and pure primitive impulse and passion, filling the whole picture. Passion, filling the whole picture and creating ripples of red. From the red embroidered shoes in the sedan chair to the red "big" character in the sorghum field, it can be said that, from the image to the mood, the red color, as a kind of carnival artistic effect, constantly impacts on the screen and provokes the audience to release those primitive desires of the rhythmic sense. "Zhang Yimou with eyes full of red to show the most primitive life impulse, nature desire has been completely released and restored. The wildly dancing and excited red sorghum, under the afterglow of a red sun, the sky is full of blood red, lined with the soundtrack of the life force's enthusiastic restlessness and exuberance, which most powerfully embodies the free joy and fearlessness of the love of life" (Wang Mengqi, 2015, p. 15).



Figure 30 Wild Sex" in the "Red Sorghum" Movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

If the land of red sorghum contains the promotion of the consciousness of life and has a "good" aspect, then in the cruel events that take place in the world of red sorghum, the image of "death" nurtured by "red" is also reproduced. In the cruel events in the world of red sorghum, the "death" imagery that "red" nurtures is also reproduced. Revenge" at the end of the movie is also the climax of the whole movie, this part of the red color is almost applied to the extreme by the director of the movie, which is very shocking. In the movie, "my grandmother" was shot by the Japs, blood spread; sorghum wine is also blood-red general spray, spreading the whole picture; the explosion of the car stirred up the smoke, was also covered with a layer of red, covering the whole screen; red sorghum on the ground, reclining is more than three hundred townspeople's corpses, blood stained the entire sorghum field, the black soil cultivated by the years of cultivation. The black soil cultivated over the years has also been soaked into a crimson color pattern. "My father and my grandfather stood in the red sorghum field and looked up at the red sun, which was slowly being swallowed and then gradually revealed itself as a reddish sun, and my father and my grandfather looked up at the red sun. My father" and "my grandfather" are completely integrated into the red color of the sky. And the director in the movie "red sorghum", sorghum in the sluggish autumn wind presents a blood red, heaven and earth in the total eclipse of the sun after the emergence of a piece of red light stained scene, which is Zhang Yimou is good at the use of hyperbole to shoot and get the classic work, with the red rendering of the death of the extraordinary scene, to the death of the other kind of vitality, with the bright red color performance of the national vitality that never disappears. Human beings and nature are fully integrated into a bright red, colorfully portraying a tragic scene of sacrifice.



Figure 31 "Red" Shots in the "Red Sorghum" Movie

Source: <https://v.qq.com/> [Accessed on March 11, 2023]

There is a scene in Red Sorghum in which the old shopkeeper dies, and "my grandmother" lets the workers sterilize the brewed sorghum wine, and the white wine here turns bright red, typical of Zhang's artistic processing. In the traditional impression of the Chinese people, the red color always represents a symbol of exuberance and flamboyant feelings, and behind the splashing of sorghum wine, accompanied by the joy and excitement of "my grandma" as if the wine came out of the cellar, which is also a deep portrayal of the inner personality of the Chinese people, and expresses the theme of the "Red Sorghum" movie for the passionate and exuberant and daring attitude towards life. This is also a deep portrayal of the inner personality of the Chinese people, showing that the theme of the movie "Red Sorghum" has a passionate and exuberant attitude towards life and dares to love and hate. At the end of the movie "Red Sorghum", "my grandmother", who was hit by the Japanese devils, falls in a pool of blood, and "my grandfather" and "my father", who was in his childhood, appear in the picture. The whole picture is covered with a

blood-red color. The whole picture is covered with a layer of blood red. The blood-red sun, the blood-red sky, the blood-red sorghum field dancing wildly in the wind, the whole world is all blood red. There were no words, no actions of grief. At the moment of "my grandmother's" sacrifice, the red color impression rendered by the whole screen profoundly demonstrates the solemnity and martyrdom of her heroic death. Zhang Yimou's use of the color red belongs to the "subjective variation" style, which expresses his antagonistic attitude towards cruelty, revenge and war.

The color red in the movie "Red Sorghum" is a symbol with multiple meanings. Red is not only the bright color of sorghum when it matures, but also symbolizes the passion for life and the spirit of struggle. At the same time, red also implies the blood, tears and suffering of history, and is a symbol of the pain experienced by the people in resisting Japanese aggression.

### 3.3 Sorghum Fields and the Anti-Japanese War

The most important scene in "Red Sorghum" is the huge sorghum field, which is often haunted by thieves and bandits and is left to fend for itself. Sorghum fields and sorghum are the main characters in events, character activities, and plot development. In the movie, the sorghum field and sorghum are the main players in the events, the activities of the characters, and the development of the plot. The movie shows sorghum fields and sorghum in various states: under the sunlight, in the moonlight, on the way to marrying and on the way back to the door, in the wild, on the Japanese road construction site, before and after the death of my grandmother, Jiu'er, and so on. Sorghum field and sorghum are quite heavily represented in the movie, not only as background for the characters, but also in empty shots. Before and after the wild, constantly appear sorghum field and sorghum empty shots, the length of more than three minutes. One of the most praiseworthy shots of the sorghum used to deflate and set the mood during the wild sex is about 30 seconds long. At the end of the movie, the sky turns red after the solar eclipse, and an empty shot of red sorghum swinging in the wind appears for more than two minutes.

Director Zhang Nuanxin praised the film's sorghum footage of wild sex, which is considered to be a stroke of genius, "The man ran swiftly in the sorghum field, and the little daughter-in-law struggled and kicked and shouted, and the camera followed them closely, and the hastily swaying sorghum flashed dramatically in front of the camera, and the audience was met with a piece of rapid sliding across the lens image of the red, green, and black patches, resulting in an emotionally intense After the palanquin bearer pays homage to the young daughter-in-law lying on the sorghum stalks on the ground, a warm, excited, frantically swaying piece of sorghum appears on the screen. Another shot, or sorghum, in a share of red like blood under the sun, swinging more crazy sorghum. After these two close-ups, an overhead panorama appears, still of sorghum swinging almost bent over in the gusty wind. Suddenly, a high-pitched suona rises from the ground " "First, the film shows us neither red nor green sorghum, but black sorghum, shot heavily in backlighting and almost losing its color. Secondly, the film uses the camera to follow the characters in the sorghum field to move quickly, resulting in a strong sense of movement of the sorghum stalks flashing past the camera, and the use of the gale force winds to make the sorghum swing violently and dramatically, forming a kind of mountain and river moving momentum. After such artistic treatment, sorghum became a role in the scene (even more important than the character can be said to participate in the performance of the

role) "" with the film language focus on revealing the character psychology, emotions and feelings, with the film modeling means to create a kind of infected, shocking momentum. The ..... film goes straight to the ultimate point of the strength of film styling without any hesitation, and it is a powerful audio-visual symphony created by using various means such as light, color, momentum, and overlapping of sound and painting, which achieves the same situation as the original novel in terms of the expression of sentiment, heart, momentum and power" ( Zhang Nuanxin, 1988, p. 55-56).



Figure 32 Sorghum fields and sorghum in various states in the "Red Sorghum" movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

Zhang Yimou's setting of the scene represented by the sorghum field is not only a need for artistic creation, but also to express the theme of the movie. The sorghum field is not only the spatial background for the development of the story, but also reflects the regional characteristics of the movie and symbolizes the sanctity and power of life. When "my grandmother" in the movie, with tears on her face, lies on her back on the pile of wild sorghum used as a temporary bed trampled out by "my grandfather", four superimposed shots of wildly dancing sorghum appear on the screen in a row. Here, sorghum is a symbol of exuberant vitality and a testimony of love. And in the footage of the Japanese army forcing the people to trample on the sorghum, the audience will again feel the shock of life being destroyed. At the end of the movie, when "my grandfather" and "my father" stand like statues in the blood-red sunlight, the high-speed flow of sorghum footage in the audience's heart to evoke is a tribute to the life that has been lost. This sorghum field is in fact far more than just a character activity space with obvious regional characteristics; it has become one of the character images of the movie.

When the screen is filled with sorghum fields, it is as a huge natural life giving the audience an aesthetic feeling of free stretching, strong and generous, warm and exuberant. The three mirror depictions and camera portrayals of sorghum in the movie are all meant to present a similarity between human and natural life. This sorghum is personified in the film, and it becomes one of the characters of the film together with the characters in the story.

The setting of the sorghum field scene also satisfies the aesthetic psychological needs of the audience. Movie is an audio-visual plastic art with entertainment as its main function. The natural scenery of unfamiliar regions is one of the basic contents that the audience likes to see, and it is also one of the most basic visual elements for

the movie to satisfy this psychological need of the audience. The endless sorghum fields full of vitality, flat deserts and ancient buildings will not only make foreign audiences feel curious, but also make Chinese audiences feel fresh after a long time.

The actual sorghum fields are located in the northeastern region of Gaomi County, Shandong Province. When planning to shoot the movie, Zhang Yimou wanted to find a large, seemingly endless sorghum fields, but then the countryside, the land was divided into families, each family planted crops are not the same, and sorghum is not very valuable, planted by fewer people, occasionally three and a half acres, but also difficult to connect into a piece. So shoot this movie, Zhang Yimou use filming funds and local farmers signed a contract, so that farmers planted hundreds of acres of sorghum. 1987 April to July, Zhang Yimou round-trip to Shandong several times, measuring, selecting seeds, fertilizer, watering, seedling management, for fear of missing the season or management is not good, sorghum grows out, the film can not be filmed. late July, the whole group pulled to the location, coinciding with the Shandong days of no rain, sorghum Serious stunted, not up to the expected effect, and then in the local county party committee's help, farmers were given 5 tons of fertilizer, the planting of sorghum as a task, which planted the film needs sorghum.

Zhang Yimou's Red Sorghum has a deep humanistic flavor, while conveying a sense of bleakness and longevity. The movie has a paragraph of voice-over about the sorghum field and wild sorghum in Qingkaikou: "From my grandmother's house to the eighteen-mile slope, we have to pass through the Qingkaikou, and the place doesn't know from which year onwards, a hundred or ten acres of sorghum have grown up, and nobody has planted or harvested them, and people in the old family say that it's wild sorghum." Wild sorghum in the green kill the mouth of self-generated, savage growth, with exuberant vitality, but also implies that the people on this land live freely and happily, not willing to be bound. Such a setup perfectly fits the theme of the movie, and lays the groundwork for my grandmother and grandfather's bold and unchallenged "wild lovemaking" in this sorghum field. The Japanese army drove the people of Shibalipo to trample on the wild sorghum in the sorghum field and massacred the locals Luohan and Bald Three Guns, which was also a violation of the people of this land and their free and easy life, and the people's revolt became inevitable.

Zhang Yimou sorghum as a living genie, he said: "to ask me to shoot "red high case" what ideas, why so like this subject matter, I have to talk about the film crew in Shandong planted that hundred acres of sorghum thing. Those days, I turned in the ground every day, to the sorghum weeding and watering. Sorghum this thing nature like water, a rain, you listen to the ground, all around all the messy movement, a sorghum with the birth of a child as if the mouth grunted, all the bones of the body all the crunching, looking at a section of a section of the upward movement. People flooded in the sorghum tree, straight feel as if in a fertility plaza, full of the world is green, full of ears are ringing, full of eyes are alive and well. When I first read Mo Yan's novels, I felt the same as I did in the sorghum field, thinking that the sorghum field in the novels, these divine things, these men and women, bold and cheerful, open-minded and open-minded, alive and dead, wildly releasing their body's heat and vitality, and at will to show the freedom and happiness of being a human being" (Luo Xueying, 1988, p. 27). Mo Yan, one of the original writers and screenwriters, is very satisfied with the filming of sorghum in the movie, believing that Zhang Yimou has

shot the elf-like red sorghum out of the blue, saying, "Those sorghums endowed with spirituality, are they just sorghum? The most upsetting thing for me in the whole movie is that sorghum, which is in the most secretive spiritual communication with me" (Mo Yan, 1988, p. 53).

When mentioning why he gave Red Sorghum to Zhang Yimou to shoot, he said, "As an established cinematographer, he has made films such as One and Eight and The Great Parade, but he is a fledgling director. The reason I gave him Red Sorghum to shoot was that I considered that the sorghum field inside the novel was going to have really great images that only a really great cinematographer could show. Because at the beginning of the construction of the novel, the most exciting and disturbing thing to me is the picture inside the "red sorghum", in my mind constantly showing the endless sorghum field, if the movie can not show it, I think not successful. I am optimistic about Zhang Yimou. Later, the movie was made with an impact beyond expectation" (Mo Yan, 2004, p. 120).

Zhang Yimou once said, "Red Sorghum" has three main characters - born a strange woman, born a great husband, plus a piece of sorghum land. He changed the sorghum field in Mo Yan's novel into a mysterious wild sorghum field, God does not know from which year, so that this green kill the mouth of a hundred acres of wild sorghum, no one God and no one to collect, vitality is vigorous, is living freely in the world of a spirit. He and the photographer Gu Changwei seriously studied how to shoot sorghum, how to make the sorghum shooting picture and the overall style of the film consistent, hoping to be able to shoot casually, spontaneous, in general through a strong, vibrant temperament. As Mo Yan's novel wrote about the red sorghum over the mountains, the audience has seen Zhang Yimou as a cameraman shooting the "yellow earth", may expect to see in the film similar to the "yellow earth" in the Loess Plateau as the endless sorghum picture, small silhouettes walking in it, and the sorghum of the sea of one, but the film did not shoot endless sorghum conditions - - - just planted 100 acres of sorghum, and then the film was shot. -only 100 acres of sorghum were planted. More importantly, Zhang Yimou wants to break the previous shooting method, do not want to repeat the composition of the "yellow earth", that "stretches for miles" can certainly show a grand momentum, the scene is not close to the earth to shoot the sorghum in the wind dance, in a variety of light, angle changes in the flow of the spirit, more can convey its vitality and charm.

In the preparatory stage of the film, the creative team of the film observed the Japanese film "Ghost Woman" and felt that its reed area was not too big, that is, with the help of the blazing sun, moonlight and night, and the change of the atmosphere of the wind and rain, the reeds were filmed as humanized nature. Instead of filming the thousand faces of sorghum in the rain, fog, and night scenes, the movie emphasizes the expression of the riotous and restless sense of life of sorghum as it dances in the wind through light and wind. In terms of shading, it uses a brilliant golden color, not the staid, saucy tone of oil paintings. Photographer Gu Changwei is particularly good at capturing the charm of the picture idea, when shooting sorghum, he always hold the camera to find the sun, regardless of jumping axis, try to bring the sun into the picture. The effect of such shooting is: brilliant sunlight jumping and flickering between the sorghum trees, the dark green of the logs of the sorghum colored into a golden yellow. Backlight in the translucent state of the crystalline sorghum dancing wildly in the wind, so that people feel that it lives so fresh, so stretch!

At the end of the movie, Zhang Yimou set up the picture is: not only require sorghum all red, the sky and the ground should also be red, and is as red as blood. In all the colors, Zhang Yimou most like like fire like blood red, feel it warm, full of vitality. The original novel author, one of the screenwriters Mo Yan also thinks that the last sorghum red up good, both the point of the subject, but also a kind of stone-breaking, extraordinary effect. From the film's main idea and logic, eighteen miles of the slopes of these peasants who are usually free to get used to, see the Japanese stepped on their sorghum, killed their folks, can not swallow this breath, will hold up seven long and eight short of the 'weapons', walking in the red sorghum field, to kill the Japanese. In the face of evil forces for the trampling of life, life finally in the most primitive, the most essential way to resist, even if it seems to be useless. Extending from this, isn't it also a kind of speech for the real society? As for why the sky, the earth and sorghum will be red, need to find a reasonable basis. Movie creative team also had "a thunder or a strange wind caused a fire in the sky, sorghum suddenly burned up, turned red" and other ideas and visions, but ultimately feel that the performance is not strong enough, and later thought and celestial changes combined, once shooting more than the normal state of the big moon, the moon's color for a while, green, for a while, yellow, but the color of the moon, the color of the moon, the color of the moon, the color of the moon, the color of the moon, the color of the moon, the color of the moon, the color of the moon. The color of the moon was green and yellow at the same time, but it looked very strange. Eventually, the creative team of the film thought of shooting a total eclipse of the sun, bought a thick book on the science of the universe, and made a model of a total eclipse of the sun with reference to the color photos of various total eclipses inside, then put it in front of the screen, with the wheels running at a constant speed, and went to shoot in the middle of the night, and experimented four times, failed three times, and succeeded in the last, with the light and the effect almost messing with the truth. With a total solar eclipse this wonderful change of nature, heaven and earth and sorghum red contains a natural and human mystery should be.

The radiant red sorghum in Mo Yan's novel is just a literary depiction rich in romantic colors. After the real sorghum is ripe, the spikes are maroon and not pretty, and the picture is even less of a red ocean. The film's creative team had envisioned that the color of heaven and earth would remain the same, so the sorghum would turn red. Zhang Yimou reference to Akira Kurosawa shot "chaos", a piece of reed sprayed gold, shot in the sunset breathtaking gold picture, so, bought a lot of dyes, want to spray sorghum red, try to spray a few sorghum, due to the dye to the sorghum's respiratory tract all blocked, ten minutes after the dye sprayed sorghum wilted all the sorghum. In the end, the film's creative team chose to add a few color filters, all change the color of heaven and earth and sorghum. The last sorghum scene was shot at high speed with an airplane nose blowing in the wind. Blood-red sun, blood-red sky, blood-red sorghum flying in the sky, children "mother, mother, on the southwest" shouts floating with the wind, accompanied by the rise of the high and exciting suona concert, so that the film's theme of life has been the highest sublimation.

There is a voice-over at the end of the movie: "When I went back home that year, the bridge at the mouth of the green kill was still there, only without the sorghum." This is actually against today's people live a weak, shrinking lament! So, Zhang Yimou just said: "The reason why I shoot "red sorghum" to attack, Zhang Yang Yang, is to show - a kind of pain in the attitude of life, to express 'people live a breath, the

tree said a skin' such a clumsy straight and simple truth. Only in this way will the people's character be stimulated and developed, and the country's strength be strong and unceasing" (Luo Xueying, 1988, p. 40).

There are scenes in the movie about the people's resistance to the Japanese invasion, but they are only used as a backdrop to the story of the movie, and not much space is used. In the original novel, the anti-Japanese war is depicted from beginning to end, the reason for this change is because Zhang Yimou's choice to adapt the novel to film, he was more interested in the content of the novel before the war, he did not want to make *Red Sorghum* into a war movie, did not want to open up the "deep structure" of the war theme, but in 1987, China had just been liberalized, if there was no anti-Japanese political content, it would be criticized by some people as "anti-Japanese. However, in 1987, when China was just liberated, if there was no political content of anti-Japanese resistance, some people would blame "where is the educational significance of the movie", therefore, when the movie was being shot, the anti-Japanese drama was retained, but tried to simplify and narrow it down, so as to free more space to focus on the characters' characters and destinies. As an important event in the movie, the anti-Japanese war scene appears in the second half of the movie to show that the story takes place in the Republican period, there is no specific year, which corresponds to the 1930s and 1940s, and at the same time, this war, like the leprosy-afflicted Big Head Li and the bandit Bald Three Cannons, is a sign and symbol of the evil that ravages, tramples, and humiliates life. The eighteen-mile slope of these usually comfortable and accustomed to the rural croppers, see the Japanese stepped on their sorghum, killed their townspeople, can not swallow the breath, they went to fight. The struggle of these men and women with the Japanese soldiers is not a narrow revenge, but reflects the unyielding spirit of life itself.

The sorghum fields in the movie "*Red Sorghum*" are intertwined with the Anti-Japanese War and become one of the important backgrounds of the storyline. The sorghum field was the battlefield where the people of Shibalipo fought against aggression and defended their homeland. The people of Shibalipo demonstrated their perseverance and unyielding spirit on this land, and jointly wrote the story of the grassroots people's spontaneous organization to resist aggression during the Anti-Japanese War. heroic epic. This emotion for the sorghum fields complements the background of the Anti-Japanese War, enriching the storyline of the film and showing the hardship and tenacity of the Chinese people during the Anti-Japanese War years.

#### **Part 4: Folk Culture in the Movie**

The term "folklore" in the sense of folklore was coined by William John Thomas of England in 1846, and the term "old folklore" had been used until then. Zhong Jingwen, a famous folklorist in China, in his book *Introduction to Folklore*, believes that "folklore, that is, folk customs, refers to the culture of life created, enjoyed and inherited by the general public in a country or nation" (Zhong Jingwen, 1998, p. 1). Other scholars have also made similar explanations, "Folklore, as its name suggests, is a general term for traditional beliefs, superstitions, lifestyles, habits and rituals that have always been preserved by the general public and have not been affected by contemporary knowledge and society, and that continue to exist to the present day in a fragmented, inherited, mutated or relatively stable form" (Yao Erlong, 1998, p. 1), "Folklore, or folk customs, refers to the culture of life created, enjoyed and handed down by the general public in a country or nation" (Zhong

Jingwen, 1998, p. 1). p.1), and "Folklore is a kind of long history and cultural inheritance, something that has been practiced for a long time. In short, it is folk custom" (Tao Lieven, 1987, p. 6). Summarizing these various statements, it can be seen that folklore is generally something opposed to official rituals, and its main characteristics are: first, it is widely spread among ordinary people, i.e., folklore; and second, it is a belief, legend or custom that has been passed down over a long period of time, i.e., tradition.

Zhang Yimou on the "red sorghum" art on the most satisfactory point is that it "does not imitate", is a creation. Zhang Yimou once said: "I believe that the life of art lies in creation. If an artist's highest goal is to be complete, then his creative vigor may be inhibited by the "pursuit of completeness", and going towards completeness means going towards death, because he is rounding up his last circle. Therefore, when I evaluate a movie, I never look at whether it is seamlessly rounded or not, but I pay special attention to and respect the creative vitality that overflows in it. A genius, I think, creates from beginning to end. The most valuable thing he offers to his peers is the touch of creative thinking; the works he leaves to future generations can trigger many creative associations" (Zhang Ming, 2004, p.55). "In order to be truly creative, I think it is important to consider how to make a truly Chinese flavor, no matter whether you are shooting historical or modern subjects" (Luo Xueying, 1988, p.46). Therefore, the movie Red Sorghum combines artistry and spectacle, and uses elements of traditional Chinese culture while making creations; in this sense, Red Sorghum is both anti-traditional and traditional.

In the 1980s, a large number of films like Red Sorghum "transformed the folklore stories of marriage and family of the Chinese villagers, who were far away from the modern civilization, into a kind of folklore legend with all kinds of complex desires through romantic transformation, creating an international film genre - the new folklore film" (Yin Hong, 1998, p.113). Red Sorghum" is a typical representative of this type of film, in which there are many reflections of regional culture, the most important of which are the marriage customs, the custom of sacrificing to the god of wine, and the folk songs and folk music that are characteristic of the region.

#### 4.1 Marriage Customs

The wedding customs in the movie "Red Sorghum" show the traditional wedding style of rural China, reflect the profound heritage of Chinese traditional culture, and also show people's cherish and blessing of marriage and family.

##### 1) Sale of Marriage

The sale of marriage is a phenomenon in which money or other material benefits are offered in exchange for marriage. This phenomenon once existed in ancient Chinese society and culture. During the Republic of China period, the Government enacted laws explicitly prohibiting the buying and selling of marriages, but in some areas, especially remote and backward rural and mountainous areas, traditional social and cultural attitudes still exist, leading to a number of clandestine or illegal marriage transactions.

In some traditional societies and rural areas, the buying and selling of marriages may be the result of a confluence of economic, familial, social status and wealth factors. In such cases, marriage is often not only a choice between two individuals, but also involves family and social considerations. Buying and selling

marriages not only violates an individual's right to free choice, but also tends to lead to inequality and unhappiness in the marriage.

The economic situation in rural societies is relatively poor and families may consider marriage as a means of obtaining certain economic benefits in order to earn a living. Some families may view marriage as an economic transaction out of economic necessity, and trade marriages through bride price and bride price. In *Red Sorghum*, the marriage between Jiu'er and Big Head Li is a marriage of sale. Originally the daughter of a poor family, she was married by her father to Li Doudou, a leprosy-ridden liquor storekeeper, in exchange for a big black mule given to Jiu'er's father. The mule was the bride price for Li's marriage to Jiu'er, and Jiu'er's father forced his daughter to get married out of the temptation of the mule's huge economic benefits, regardless of the fact that Li's infectious disease might be passed on to Jiu'er.

Family social status is often very important in rural societies. By buying and selling marriages, families can raise their social status, find better marriage partners, or consolidate their relationships with other families through trading. In the movie, it is clear that Big Head Li is in the middle and upper class of the rural society, owning a soju workshop and employing a group of fellows to work in the soju workshop, and although he suffers from leprosy, he has a lot of financial resources and easily pays for a mule as a dowry to marry Jiu'er. In the rural society of the Republic of China, the vast majority of families were poor; peasants could not afford to eat or clothe themselves and could not afford to buy a mule, and the families that could afford to own a mule tended to be the middle-class families in the rural society. Through her marriage to Li Doudou, Jiu'er realizes a class leap from the lower class to the upper middle class of the rural society, and Jiu'er's father becomes a middle-class family in the rural society because of that mule. Big Head Li suffered from leprosy, which was an incurable disease in those days, almost announcing Big Head Li's imminent death. Therefore, Jiu'er's father said to Jiu'er, "Look back, all the property of the Li family belongs to you", and the property of the inevitably dead Big Head Li belongs to Jiu'er, which means that Jiu'er and her father will have a further economic and social status in the near future, and will have the opportunity to become a member of the middle class. will have further economic and social advancement.

Despite the fact that the Xinhai Revolution put an end to the feudal imperial system, in some rural areas, traditional feudal attitudes still exist, which include adherence to the concepts of marrying a wife and having children, passing on the family name, and passing on the family name, which is the reason why some families choose to buy and sell marriages. In some places, especially in rural societies, the status of women is relatively low. Because of this unequal status, women may sometimes be regarded as a "burden", and families buy and sell marriages in order to solve the problem of marrying off their daughters. Moreover, by marrying off their daughters, they can also obtain a considerable amount of income, which can improve their own economic conditions and social status, and families with sons can also use this income to marry and have children for their sons, which is a one-two punch for some rural families, so they are happy to engage in this kind of marriage transaction. Big Head Li is in his fifties and has not yet taken a wife. The reason he has not taken a wife is that he suffers from leprosy, but this does not change his insistence on taking a wife. It is clear that Big Head Li's intention in taking a wife is to have an heir, to produce offspring for the Li family, so he is willing to pay the "astronomical price" of

a mule to lure the poor family to marry their daughters to him. Big Head Li's plan did not come to naught, Jiu'er's father is a person who does not treat his daughter as a human being, treats his daughter as private property that can be bought and sold at will, and throws out his daughter as a "money-loser" in exchange for greater benefits. They finally reached a deal, Li big head as expected to marry the nine children, nine children's father as expected to get a black mule, not as expected only nine children, forced to marry a leper.

It should be noted that the phenomenon of sale of marriages is not widespread in all rural societies, nor are all marriages concluded in this way. It is just one of the many forms of marriage in the Republican society, which is undergoing a period of change.

## **2) Bride Combing Her Hair and Returning Home Ceremony**

Rural areas in the Republic of China period are still dominated by old-fashioned weddings, which have complicated processes and cumbersome ceremonies. Due to different customs in different places, there are obvious differences in wedding etiquette, but it is roughly divided into three parts: engagement ceremony, marriage ceremony, and post-wedding ceremony. The engagement ceremony includes the exchange of geng stickers, the marriage ceremony, the exchange of the marriage book, and the book-binding ceremony; the marriage ceremony includes the selection of the auspicious date, the invitation, the welcome, the worship of heaven and earth, and the entrance into the bridal chamber; and the post-wedding ceremony includes the bride's visit to her in-laws, relatives and friends, and the return to the door.

Zhang Yimou downplayed the tedious rituals and complicated processes of wedding etiquette in the Red Sorghum movie, showing the rituals of a traditional rural wedding in which the bride goes up to the comb on the day of the wedding, opens her face, puts on the red head, sits in the sedan chair, etc., and returns to her mother's house (her family) three days after the wedding. On the day of the wedding, the bride's long hair is combed and pulled back into a bun, headpins (flowers or flowers made of metal, silk, silk, etc., worn on the head) are inserted, jewelry is worn, and new clothes are changed, which is called "putting on the comb". Open face, also known as open face, pulling face, stranded face, stranded face, choose the face, rising eyebrows, etc., that is, with chaff shell ash or incense ash on the bride's face, with a twisted double line stranded bride's face sweat, to show that it is no longer a hairy face of the woman, cut all the bride's forehead hair and sideburns, repair the eyebrow make-up rituals. A woman's face only once in her life, as a sign of marriage, said married. The combing and face-opening ceremonies are mostly performed by the so-called full-blessed women who have in-laws, husbands, and children. Red head, also known as head scarf, cover red head, generally five feet square of red satin woven, four corners decorated with coins or other ornaments. The bride before boarding the marriage sedan chair, will be this thing on the head, the four corners of the natural sagging, covering the entire face. This piece of cover to enter the bridal chamber by the groom to open, is one of the folk rituals on the way to meet the bride.



Figure 33 Wedding customs of bride dressing in the movie "Red Sorghum", top row from left to right: pinning flowers on the bride's combed hair, opening her face, wearing bracelets; bottom row from left to right: wearing earrings, putting on the wedding dress, covering the red head.

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

The sedan chair, also known as the wedding sedan chair, is a special sedan chair used in traditional Chinese weddings. Generally ornate decorations, red to show the joy and auspiciousness, so commonly known as the big red sedan chair. Ancient sedan chair types and styles, due to local customs, rich and poor and the master's identity and slightly different. Ordinary people marrying with the general is two people carry the sedan chair, cover the sedan chair of the curtains are selected red colored silk, and embroidered with rich flowers, phoenix and sunrise and hundreds of charts and other auspicious motifs, embellished with gold, silver to set off a lively and festive atmosphere. Families of wealthy households commonly used four people to carry a large sedan chair, sedan chair dress and two people to carry the same difference. Sedan chair has "hard clothes" and "soft clothes" two kinds. Hard clothes refers to the sedan chair is a wooden structure, modeling similar to the four corners of the four corners of the eaves of the pagoda roof shape. In the southern part of China is more popular. Soft clothes sedan chair is popular in the northern part of China, it is in the sedan chair frame around the cover with red damask curtains, these red curtains are called sedan chair.



Figure 34 A four-person, soft-clothed sedan chair in the "Red Sorghum" movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

The wedding is the most important rite of passage in a woman's life, marking a change in her identity - from her parents' daughter to a man's wife. On the day of the wedding, the bride is the most popular character, and the bride dresses up in a series of ceremonies that are grand and elaborate to represent the importance that both families attach to the marriage. The solemnity of the wedding is a reflection of the social status, identity and wealth of both families. In the movie, we can tell from Jiu'er's wedding attire that the wedding was a good one in the countryside at that time, and the sedan chair she rode in was a four-person soft-clothed sedan chair, which on the one hand shows that she lived in northern China, and on the other hand shows that she married a husband with a certain amount of wealth, at least in the middle class of the rural society.

In order to make the film more ornamental, a better performance of wedding customs, Zhang Yimou in the sedan chair to meet the bride, continue to simplify, deliberately pointed out that big head of Li's leprosy, eighteen miles of the slope of the desolate and the green kill mouth of the wild sorghum land haunted, so the film only see the welcome to the bride drums and music all the way to the blowing, only the sedan chair bearer and the musicians, a total of 10 people, not see the matchmaker, the bridegroom, the onlookers crowd of people, and also become "Reasonable".

Quan Fu people in the nine children on the sedan chair before the advice: "sitting in the sedan chair can not cry, crying sedan chair spit sedan chair no good news. The cover can not be lifted, the cover is lifted will have trouble." However, as soon as Jiu'er sat in the sedan chair, she tore off the red cover and couldn't help crying during the process of turning the sedan chair upside down, which on the one hand showed the rebelliousness, stubbornness, and resignation of her character, and on the other hand foreshadowed her ill-fated destiny and the end of her death.

Back to the door, also known as the return to the Ning, that is, "back to the mother's home", the traditional Han Chinese wedding customs, refers to the woman married for the first time after the visit to her mother's home. Newlyweds married on the third day of marriage back to the in-laws, for the bride, is the first time a woman to return to her mother's home. There are also places that return to the bride's home on the second or fifth day after the wedding. Back to the door is generally a couple of pairs of pairs, worship female parents, the groom at this time to see the father-in-law and mother-in-law, should change their mouths for the father, mother, for the entire wedding officially closed, that is, so that the bride's parents to see the marriage of two people full of meaning. Yuejia also hosted a banquet to entertain the new son-in-law, some places female relatives still have to make a son-in-law. Of course, at this time the new son-in-law also want to offer to the parents-in-law "back to the door gift" "back to the door money". Different places, with different gifts, some with a rooster, take "good luck" meaning, some with some meat, eggs, noodles, oranges, apples, bananas, wine and other things, to the woman's home, but also live a few days before returning. Do not return to the door gift for a single, must be an even number, meaning that the couple into a double, good hundred years, the single number is inauspicious.

In the movie, due to the fact that Big Head Li was suffering from leprosy, Jiu'er stabbed Big Head Li with a pair of scissors on the wedding night, so after the wedding, Jiu'er's father took Jiu'er back to his mother's house, and did not see Big Head Li's figure. Zhang Yimou downplayed the cumbersome process of the return

ceremony, and even the entire film from beginning to end are not seen Li Dadu's figure, only to hear his name, know that he was more than fifty years old, suffering from leprosy, gave Jiu'er's father a mule to marry Jiu'er, Jiu'er married him, stabbed him, and he died. Zhang Yimou uses him as a symbol of patriarchy, patriarchal power, and evil, and his death is the temporary downfall of patriarchy, patriarchal power, and evil, and the pavement for a series of stories unfolding in the heroine Jiu'er.

### 3) Sedan Chair Customary Practice

Red Sorghum is based on a novel by Mo Yan. According to the novel, it is a local custom to "turn the sedan chair upside down". Sedan chair bearers carry the sedan chair from the town market, the steps are all eight steps, known as "stepping on the street". When stepping on the street, step is not a good man, hand-held sedan chair pole is not a good man, qualified sedan chairmen are hands on the waist, step in unison, the sedan chair upside down the rhythm to be and on the drummers blowing out the beautiful music. This is on the one hand in order to please the owner's favorite, more reward money; on the other hand, is to show an elegant professional demeanor. Sedan chair to the plains, sedan chairmen will be scattered wild, this is to rush, two is to toss the bride. Sedan chair bride carrying scissors and sad and bitter, but this state of mind and the sedan chairmen have anything to do with? These young and strong men, hard work, sweat and sweat to send the bride to the arms of other men, the heart will be what is the taste? Therefore, they want to flirt outside the sedan chair to toss the bride, to get a kind of venting pleasure.

The screenwriters of this movie are Chen Jianyu, Zhu Wei and Mo Yan. In China, it is the director who dominates in the creation of a movie. In this movie, under the leadership of Zhang Yimou, all the main creators, including the director, screenwriter, cinematographer, artist, sound recordings, make-up, costumes, and actors, basically participated in the screenwriting and contributed their ideas. Zhang Yimou in the movie adaptation, think the sedan chair inside and outside of this psychological and emotional contrast is very interesting, "upside down sedan chair" this scene not only can not be cut off, and must work hard to shoot well. But the sedan chair in the end how to upside down? The author of the novel Mo Yan has not seen. Movie creative team to some rural villages in Shandong to inquire, the locals said that in the early years of this custom, and now no one has seen with their own eyes. So, the scene will have to rely entirely on the creative team to play the imagination of the movie. The dances, lyrics, and music were all made up by the creative team themselves.

The movie often "takes a side of life, excludes the various branches caused by the wide range of life background, and uses a simple story to convey the theme. Therefore, it pays more attention to strengthening the means of modeling to create a kind of emotion, and expresses the author's thinking through emotional infection" (Deng Baochen, 1988, p. 11). The movie "Red High Beam" starts with the marriage of "My Grandma", followed by the sedan chair marriage, in which the sedan chair is turned upside down on the way to welcome the bride, which lasts about three minutes and is accompanied by a two-and-a-half-minute song about turning the sedan chair upside down. As the opening scene of the movie and the first climax of the plot, the sedan chair is used to express a certain emotion through the use of modeling, with

strong visual impact, which both narrates and conveys the theme, leaving an extremely deep impression on the audience.

The movie's "Sedan Chair Bumping Song" is also quite interesting, playful and witty, reflecting the roughness and boldness of the local folk style. The song goes: "The guests have not yet left, the banquet has not yet been dispersed, looking around for the groom, I can't find him. The bridegroom is in a hurry to get into the cave and lift the cover. Aiyaa, my little boy! Look at him, he's got a little bit of marijuana, his nose is collapsed and his mouth is open, and he's rolling his eyes. Chicken neck, five-flower face, half a pea of lice on his head! Oh, my goodness! Ugly bride, my God, her teeth are bared and she's in my arms. She ran away, not daring to look. Two Eggs will sleep in the pigsty tonight! Oh, my good boy!" In fact, the words of the "sedan chair song" could have been written in a more vulgar and dirty way, it is a kind of sexually conscious teasing, similar to the folklore of the new house. However, the movie's creative team restrained themselves from writing the lyrics for the sake of the movie's censorship.

How was the "sedan chair" scene filmed? In what environment? Director Zhang Yimou has his own considerations: if placed in the town, there should be hundreds of people watching the crowd, but then, the "sedan chair" has become a kind of pure professional display, reducing the self-expression of the ingredients. Therefore, the movie creation team decided to put the scene in the deserted wilderness, and the sedan chair-bumping became a purely self-expression, not a performance for others to see. In order to shoot this scene, the movie creative team found an old sedan chair, the actors experience life every day to practice lifting the sedan chair. June and July under the blazing sun, Zhang Yimou and the actors carry the sedan chair, every morning and noon from the residence to the town and back twice, about ten miles. Followed by the dirt band and donkey riding Gong Li followed the practice, a group of people every day blowing, dancing and singing. Zhang Yimou asked the actors to turn the sedan chair upside down must be very happy, very stretch, it is not purely folklore, but the happy dance of life. In order to express the northern farmers rugged, bold mood, he did not use professional singing actors, but with the film crew of actors and actresses a piece of open throat roar singing, and finally the actors not only practiced out of the shoulder, skin tanned, voice also shouted broken. Three days before the shooting of this scene, the movie creative team pulled a dozen trucks of loess, sieve fine, spread on the road, let the sun dry them. In this way, when the actors walk around, they can receive the effect of dust.

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Figure 35 Upside Down Sedan Chair" in "Red Sorghum" Movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]






The "sedan chair" episode in *Red Sorghum* reflects the marriage customs and culture of northern China. This episode not only lets foreign viewers feel the uniqueness of exotic wedding customs, but also lets Chinese viewers understand the traditional customs and culture of the past era, even though such customs and culture were "created" and no longer exist today. As a matter of fact, in rural China, in addition to sedan chair bearers and drummers, there should also be people to see off the bride and carry the dowry, etc., not just a few sedan chair bearers and drummers as in the movie "Sedan Chair Upside Down" scene. "Sedan chair" did not deliberately pursue the real, but the real existence of the traditional customs of artistic expression, the whole shooting smooth and free, rough tone, full-bodied picture, the momentum of the open. Because the core of Zhang Yimou's concern is not the details of reality, but the form and color. "The comical and exaggerated words of 'upsetting the sedan chair', the witty and fun oboe song, together with the visually stunning images, make this passage full of cheerful and humorous comedic atmosphere. The audience is given a multifaceted and all-round comedic aesthetic enjoyment" (Gao Zimin, 2004, p.91). In this episode, the audience, like the characters in the movie, experience a fresh, unique, and painful aesthetic enjoyment in the whole body and mind.

#### 4.2 Folk Songs and Music

There are three unique songs in *Red Sorghum*: "Sedan Chair Song", "Sister You Boldly Go Forward" and "Wine God Song". Zhang Yimou's general requirement for the film's music style is "nationalism", that is, it must be authentic Chinese rural. According to his own experience of living in the countryside, he believed that farmers singing opera is more common than singing - sad, happy, love to hum a piece of opera. So he and the composer Zhao Jiping agreed that the score for the three songs in this movie should be written as an opera, not a song. In order to make the audience feel that this is a story of the past that took place in the rural areas of northern China, the movie intentionally eliminates the regional and period-specific context of the setting. For the same reason, the creators of the movie also tried to remove the regionality of the tunes in the music design, so that people could not hear which place's opera it was, as long as there was a taste of the north, because the northern opera was bold and wild, which was more in line with the overall style of the movie. Nowadays, there is a little bit of Qinqiang, Yu Opera and Lu Opera flavor in the singing. Composer Zhao Jiping once told director Zhang Yimou that "this opera may

sound like nothing", but Zhang Yimou felt that it was exactly what he wanted - "It's fine, as long as it sounds like nothing, it's our movie! This is what I want - "That's fine, as long as it sounds like nothing, it's our movie.

Table 1 Three stylistically distinctive folk songs and folk music appearing in Red Sorghum<sup>22</sup>, Researcher's own production

Song name	The number of occurrences	Appearance time	Picture
Sedan-jumping song	1	From 5 minutes 19 seconds to 8 minutes 05 seconds	
Sister, you go forward boldly	2	From 22 minutes 43 seconds to 24 minutes 34 seconds	
		From 87 minutes 01 seconds to 87 minutes 47 seconds	
A song dedicated to the god of wine	2	From 51 minutes 11 seconds to 52 minutes 11 seconds	
		From 78 minutes 06 seconds to 79 minutes 08 seconds	

Music is an integral part of the sound of a movie, and excellent movie music can present the temperament of the movie in its entirety, deepen the theme of the movie, and strengthen the audience's psychological activities. The soundtrack of Red Sorghum abandons the complexity of singing and chooses to use simple and wild original folk songs to express strong emotions. Zhao Jiping used several songs with elements of local opera interspersed throughout the movie, and also used folk instruments such as suona and Chinese drum percussion.

<sup>22</sup> <https://v.qq.com/x/cover/p7e7pqih1vq65uz/j0015ck8049.html?ptag=11973>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

The original novel does not contain the "Sedan Chair Song" and the "Wine God Song", but the movie's creative team has written these two songs according to the meter and rhyme of the opera text. The former is happy and witty, a dance song of life, while the latter is bold and rugged, overflowing with the stretching sound of life. At the beginning of the movie, during the welcoming of the bride, the "Sedan Chair Song" has a high and bold tune, "the native instruments are just like the sweeping northwestern wind, the deep loess and the rude and bold northwestern men, soaring with a wild tone" (Liao Haibo, 2007, p. 102-103). This kind of music can make the audience feel a kind of shock that penetrates to the marrow of the bones, and it becomes an indispensable content of the movie and promotes the development of the plot. In "Sedan Chair Bumping", Zhao Jiping adapted the folk music "Sedan Chair Bumping" to make the picture of "sedan chair bumping" more vivid, using suona and gongs and drums to reproduce the tradition of people marrying on the Loess Plateau. The Song of the God of Wine, also known as "To the God of Wine", was written by Zhang Yimou and composed by Zhao Jiping and Yang Fengliang. The lyrics of the Song of the God of Wine are easy to understand and are characterized by strong and distinctive self-expression of affirmation and praise. The Song of the God of Wine absorbs elements of Henan Yu Opera and the folk song "Carrying a Sedan Chair", with a high, passionate tune, a homophonic melody, a linear melodic direction, and no large range span, which makes it easy to express one's feelings directly. Coupled with the oboe and other soundtracks, the Song of the God of Wine has a kind of flamboyant momentum, which expresses male masculinity and the spirit of invincibility, and it has been sung twice in the movie.

In the movie, the first appearance of the "Wine God Song" is the first time "my grandmother" Jiu'er saw the brewing, Luo Han and the brewery fellows sang after the brewing of wine, "September 9th, make new wine, good wine is in our hands, good wine! After drinking our wine, you can breathe up and down without coughing. After drinking our wine, you can nourish your yin and strengthen your yang and your mouth will not smell bad. After drinking our wine, no one dares to go out and kill you. After drinking our wine, you will not kowtow to the emperor. Forty-seven, three-sixty-nine, ninety-nine, follow me. Good wine! Good wine! Good wine!" The lyrics are easy to understand and catchy, expressing a happy, bold sentiment, showing the mellow character of 18 Mile Slope sorghum wine and the workers' labor enthusiasm, showing the simplicity and kindness of the farmers in the north.

The second time the song was sung was nine years later, the Japanese brutally killed Luo Han, when everyone was paying tribute to Luo Han, "my grandfather" Yu Zhanao and the douguan, wine shop fellows kneeled down and began to hiss the "Wine God Song", at this time the song became sad and tragic, no longer has a happy meaning, and revealed a kind of defiance, perseverance and emotion. It shows that everyone will be determined to avenge Lohan's death. When the audience listens to it, they will recall the scene of Lohan drinking and singing happily a few years ago, but they can no longer laugh at this moment. The song lingers and echoes long into the night. These simple, powerful and simple lyrics are, firstly, a kind of repetition of the storyline, with a certain degree of coupling with what happened before; and secondly, they slowly ignite the passion of the characters in the play, embolden them, and lay the groundwork for the subsequent fight to the death with the Japanese army.

The music gives the movie its spirit and soul. The movie changed two lines of the original novel "Sister, you boldly go forward" and arranged the music. Sister, you boldly go forward" was originally written in the style of opera, which is more elegant. In order to fit in with the movie's more open and passionate style, it was changed to use the ram song as the material of turbulence, with each accent smashing into the audience's heart, making the audience feel the wind and fire and the roaring emotion. The melody not only adopts the Liuqiang and Maoqiang of Shandong's local opera, but also adds the singing style of Qinqiang's Huaqiang, which is sung without any modification, and even has broken syllables. The words "Hey", "Ah", "Wow", "Ah" and "Er" used in the lyrics are obviously based on the musical elements of folk opera. The ending of the phrase is upward in tune, with a lengthened coda, which is a warm expression of the character's inner feelings. Sister You Boldly Go Forward" refers to the kind of labor call of Shaanxi rammer, the kind of rammer song are temporary words, catchy and strong rhythm, with a strong flavor of northern Shaanxi folk music, it has many links with the northern Shaanxi folk song "Yellow River Boatman Song". However, it has undergone new changes and development, thus forming its own unique flavor. There are many repetitive parts in the song, such as "red sorghum wine", which is repeated in order to strengthen the impression that a love song sung to a sweetheart to express love cannot be too cultured, but must be sincere. It has to fit the character, tie in with the plot, and have life.

The melody of "Sister, you boldly go forward" is simple and the lyrics are straightforward, using the most simple language to directly shout out the heartfelt desire of the bloodthirsty man. "Sister, you boldly go forward, go forward, don't go back, the road to heaven, 9,900, 9,900, 9,900, 9,900, 9,900. Sister, you boldly go forward, go forward, don't go back, from now on, you build that red embroidered building, throw the red embroidered ball, hit my head, drink a pot of red sorghum wine with you, red red sorghum wine, red red sorghum wine. Sister, you boldly go forward ah, go forward, do not turn back ah head, from now on, you set up that red embroidered building ah, throwing red embroidered ball ah, is hitting my head ah, with you to drink a pot ah, red red sorghum wine, red red sorghum wine. Sister, you boldly go forward, go forward, don't go back, don't go back, don't go back, don't go back, don't go back, don't go back, don't go back, don't go back, don't go back, don't go back." The song is full of straightforward, persistent, simple and sincere love. Jiang Wen, who plays the hero of the movie, adopts the form of "shouting and singing" from the character's personality, and even uses spoken words in the middle of the song, revealing a wild and heroic atmosphere in the living.

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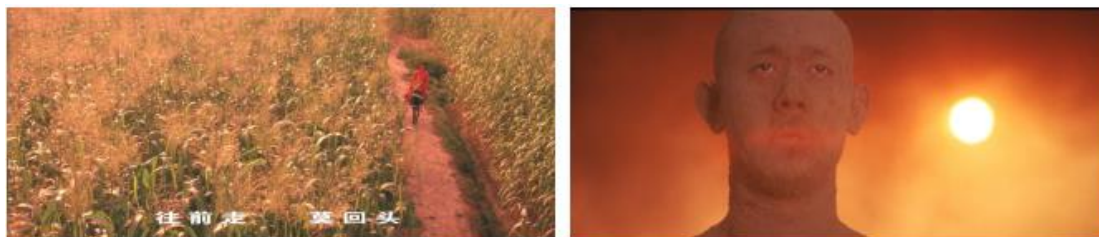


Figure 37 The song "Sister You Go Boldly Forward" appears twice in the "Red Sorghum" movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

In the choice of musical instruments, although Western instruments are very expressive for the brilliant part of the movie, in order to make the music more Chinese, the creative team of the movie decided to use all the ethnic instruments, and asked for the more refined instruments to be used, the better. The two instruments used in the movie were the suona and the Chinese drum. Zhang Yimou asked that the suona be played like a cry of pain in a sorghum field and the drums like a heartbeat. The suona is the most commonly used instrument in Chinese folk music classes, but a suona is not bold enough to play, dozens of suona play in unison, full of energy. Considering the lack of accompaniment in the bass section, the Chinese drum was chosen again. The suona is a strong entry into the tune, and a sound that comes up is all over the place. Although there is no complete melody in this piece, but a few cries, the charm comes out.

Except for the suona song, which was performed by a professional band with suona and drums, the "Wine God Song" and "Sister, You Boldly Go Forward" had no accompaniment, and the "Sedan Chair Upside Down Song" was played by the actors themselves. Several of the songs in the movie are sung by the actors themselves, and all of them are sung at the top of their lungs. Zhang Yimou felt that these sections of the singing must be shouted out to have flavor, if the staccato singing, there is no meaning. The beginning of the actors can not let go of singing, Zhang Yimou encouraged them to shout even if the voice is broken, it does not matter, you can rest for two days, shoot the scene does not speak, and the director himself and the actors a piece of shouting and singing, the results of the voice of everyone shouted, at the same time, the song is also very skillful. Zhang Yimou asked Jiang Wen (playing the leading role of Yu Zhanao) in the sorghum field singing "sister you boldly go forward", sing a hoarse sound, shouting his voice until, he felt that the only way to sing, in order to reflect the northern peasants, strong, high, straight to the heart of the spiritual temperament.

The movie also ends with a nursery rhyme "Mother, mother, you go to the Southwest, wide wide road, long treasure ship; Mother, mother, you go to the Southwest, bay steed, full plate; Mother, mother, you go to the Southwest, you settle in the sweet place, you spend money in the bitter place." . It is said that the origin of this custom is that many families in Jiaodong region genealogy records, their ancestors were moved to Shandong from Yunnan in the Ming Dynasty, after the death of a loved one at home, the deceased's eldest son (there is no son is the eldest daughter or son-in-law inverted son-in-law) to shout in the direction of Southwest (or South), so called "on the Southwest," by this kind of Through this kind of farewell

language, the deceased is expected to rest in peace, and the soul of the deceased is led to return to the homeland. The soundtrack of this nursery rhyme is based on the music elements of local folk ballads. When Douguan sings the nursery rhyme from the beginning to the end, the drum beat continues, and the drums are still beating until the end of the subtitle. The continuous rhythm of the drum beat, together with the sound of dozens of suona playing in unison, gives people a strong shock and impact on their souls.

The folk songs and music in the movie "Red Sorghum" are an important part of its emotional atmosphere. Through melodious folk songs and touching folk music, the film not only creates a strong rural atmosphere, but also deeply demonstrates the cultural heritage and spiritual outlook of rural northern China. Folk songs and folk music are not only background music in movies, but also emotional expression and cultural inheritance, creating a deep and moving movie-watching experience for the audience.

#### 4.3 Brewing Culture and Wine Sacrifice Practices

China has a long history of wine culture, with the history of wine making dating back thousands of years. Wine plays an important role in Chinese society, both as part of everyday life and as an essential element in socializing, celebrations and religious ceremonies. In ancient times, wine was regarded as a medium of communication with the gods, and its presence was indispensable in banquets and rituals. Du Kang was the legendary inventor of winemaking in ancient China. Because Du Kang was good at making wine, he was honored as the god of wine in later times, and the wine industry worshiped Du Kang as the master of the wine industry. In later times, the word "Dukang" was often used to refer to wine.

China's sorghum liquor is an important part of China's liquor culture, and its unique taste and rich cultural connotations make it a calling card for Chinese liquor. Sorghum wine is a traditional Chinese liquor made from sorghum as the main ingredient, with strong Chinese cultural characteristics. The main ingredient of sorghum liquor is sorghum rice, and some may also add wheat, corn and other miscellaneous grains. The brewing process of sorghum liquor is complex, including multiple steps such as distillation and fermentation, and the production process varies slightly from region to region and from distillery to distillery, creating distinctive sorghum liquor brands. Sorghum liquor is rich in aroma and has a unique flavor. Different distilleries and brands may have different aroma profiles, some mellow and strong, others light and refreshing, presenting a unique flavor overall. Sorghum liquor from each region of China has its own regional characteristics. For example, Maotai is a type of sorghum liquor from the Maotai region of Guizhou, known for its unique flavor and long history. Other well-known sorghum liquors include Wuliangye and Jiannanchun.

Sorghum liquor has deep significance in Chinese culture and is often associated with traditional banquets, festivals and important occasions. In some places, sorghum liquor is also used as a unique gift with a cultural tradition of presenting it to honored elders, friends and business associates. Sorghum liquor is consumed in China as a ceremonial drink. It is often consumed at banquets, reunions and celebrations to express respect and friendship through toasts.

The worship of wine is also one of the regional cultures reflected in *Red Sorghum*. Brewing wine is the economic life of the people of Eighteen Mile Slope in the movie, as well as their cultural life. Sorghum wine is a symbol of the culture and spirit of the people of Shiliupo. The sorghum wine here is named "Eighteen Mile Red". As the owner of the wine shop in Shibari-slope, "my grandmother" was nicknamed "Jiu'er" (wine). The character of Shibari Hong is well expressed in the "Song of the God of Wine," which has been sung twice. It is in the spirit of wine that "My Grandfather" spills his love for Jiu'er in the spirit of drunkenness. The power of red sorghum wine is the unbridled strength of the people of Shibalipo; the character of red sorghum wine is the free and unrestrained character of the people of Shibalipo.

The soju workshop is an artificial structure built for the filming of the movie. The style of the workshop fits the rich, rugged and vigorous spirit of the movie, which not only provides the characters with a mysterious, rugged and turbulent living environment, but also gives the movie an inherent openness and openness. However, no one has seen what a folk brewery in the Republic of China was like or how sorghum wine was made, and Mo Yan only wrote about it when he read about it in other books, but he didn't write about it carefully. Mo Yan asked Zhang Yimou to shoot according to his own imagination, as long as he could make people think that it was making wine, not soy sauce, the purpose would be achieved. Zhang Yimou agreed with Mo Yan's point of view, art can be created, folklore can also be created, he and the members of the film crew to give full play to their imagination, in the original novel brewery fellows to make new wine and Yu Zhanao out of the cauldron on the basis of the increase in the singing of wine songs, honoring the god of wine, made up the film of those music, dance and lyrics.



Figure 38 Rituals for the Wine God in the *Red Sorghum* Movie

Source: <https://v.qq.com/> [Accessed on March 11, 2023]

The custom of honoring the God of Wine is undocumented. There are two ceremonies of honoring the God of Wine in the soju brewery, the first one is in the first half of the movie, after brewing new wine, Luohan leads the fellows to sing a song of honoring the God of Wine to celebrate, which is about one minute long; the second ceremony of honoring the God of Wine takes place in the latter part of the movie, which also involves singing and honoring the God of Wine, and this time it is Yu Zhanao, "my grandfather", leading the fellows to offer wine to make clear their will and courage, and to avenge the Japanese by blowing up a car for them. This time, Yu Zhanao, "my grandfather", leads the wine shop to offer wine to make clear his will and courage to blow up the Japanese car to avenge Lohan's death. From the absence of wine sacrifice in the novel to the creation of the ritual of offering wine to the god out of thin air in the film, the main purpose is to strengthen the legendary color and folklore of the film, and to increase the impact of the film in terms of styling and visual impact. At the same time, the hearty and heroic wine offering song also plays

an important role in expressing and emphasizing the atmosphere of the movie, which is full of fire and love.

Zhang Yimou and members of the film crew were drinking sorghum wine in Shandong, said the wine is tragic and violent, and will introduce this state of vision into the film: the brewery fellows to do the wine has been smoked to a slightly drunken state, a large bowl and then full of up, a few mouths, will be hot, a thousand times, people have not been the rules of the day, the whole world is no longer in the eyes, by the nature of the Hu Turbulence. Zhang Yimou also participated in the sacrifice of the wine god song "wine god song" lyrics, "wine god song" lyrics compiled full of bold gas, the actors woo Li wala let go of their voices to sing, strong and straightforward to show the joy of life. At the same time, the smoke, gas, fire and people walking back and forth create a steaming atmosphere of making new wine. In the art design, there is also no constraint on the realism of the reproduction. Since the movie is about the countryside in northern China during the Republican era, the costumes, make-up, and props are all in line with the Republican era, but some things are changed a bit. For example, the god of wine Dukang's image, Zhang Yimou asked for a large picture to hang on the wall; drinking with a large bowl of coarse porcelain, and small pots so big, each several pounds; Sheng boiled wine with a jar, is the film crew's own design, and by the local kiln burned out of the largest jar, each of which can be stuffed into the four or five, a few young people can not lift; Liu Dazhou trumpet blowing the length of the trumpet than the local trumpet is also much more exaggerated. After the audience watched the film, they also recognized it as a bowl, a tank and a horn, and did not think there was anything wrong with it; legends are always exaggerated.



Figure 39 Portrait of Du Kang, the God of Wine, in the "Red Sorghum" movie  
Source: <https://v.qq.com/> [Accessed on March 11, 2023]

"Red Sorghum" flaunts individuality through folkloric spectacle, whether it is a wine festival or a sedan chair upending, which shows the liberation of the spirit and the unrestrained behavior, which is positive from the spiritual point of view, and is proud of everything but never wagging its tail" (Xue Ling, 2004, p.86). Sorghum wine permeates the daily life of the people of Shibalipo. The people of Shibalipo make wine, drink wine, offer wine, use wine to refresh themselves, use wine to drive away epidemics, and use wine to cure diseases. The character of Eighteen Mile Red is the character of the people of Eighteen Mile Slope and the character of the people of

northern China. Sorghum wine symbolizes the blood that flows through the Chinese people and shows the passionate and unrestrained side of the Chinese character.

The wine-making culture of Eighteen Mile Slope is both the content of the movie's narrative and the concrete expression of the movie's aesthetic style.

#### 4.4 Other Folk Cultures in Movies

Other elements of folk and regional culture in Red Sorghum include buildings and artifacts used in the daily lives of the people of Eighteen Mile Slope. Some of the oldest and most symbolic things of the Chinese nation are interspersed seemingly randomly by the movie creative team, such as suona, sedan chair, adobe house, paper cuttings, New Year's paintings, door gods, wine baskets, coarse porcelain bowls, fat cotton pants, bellybuttons, stone bridges, and goat intestinal trails, etc. They are all given some ideological content such as life, reproduction, emotions and dreams. They are given some ideological content such as life, reproduction, emotions and dreams. Jiu Er wear on the body in the middle of the wide upper and lower narrow red jacket and red pants, guys shine with bronze color bare skin, and in the vibration of suona sound in the sunshine cut into countless pieces of fluttering shaking sorghum, etc., all of which highlight the film's regional cultural characteristics, but also very good to play the role of the expression of the meaning.

There are a lot of folk culture and regional culture in Red Sorghum. These folklore and regional culture contents "not only make the Chinese audience revisit the deep memory of the nation's long history and culture in the depth of their hearts, but also provide a kind of other reference for the Western audience in their expectation of exotic cultural horizons" (Zhang, Aly, 2005, p. 119).



Figure 40 Gate God New Year's Paintings, Wine Jars, and Paper Cuts from the "Red Sorghum" Movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on March 11, 2023]

Some scholars have pointed out that the reason for Zhang Yimou's award-winning directorial film Red Sorghum may lie in the fact that the choice of material carries a more distinctive national cultural value, and that the narrative and modeling styles are rich in the rhythm of national culture. And the strong national style and national cultural meaning is the primary value of the West to the Eastern culture (Luo Yijun, 1988, p.35). It can be seen that the success of Red Sorghum is due to folklore. However, there are gains and losses, and one of the major reasons why Zhang Yimou's films have been criticized is that he improperly expressed folklore, or even faked folklore to pander to the West and please the festival jury, in exchange for international awards. In response to Zhang Yimou's practice of showing, or even fictionalizing, mysterious cultural rituals and customs in his films, some people think that he is displaying some of our nation's bad customs and weaknesses, and he has been completely denied and criticized. Some people criticize and criticize, for example, "Zhang Yimou's films, like almost all fifth-generation directors, are keen on fictionalizing and imagining the mysterious 'folklore' of the East. .... Fictionalization in this article is the natural power of any 'author', whether it is a 'story' or a 'folklore' ,

it is not the author's fault to encode it" " In Zhang Yimou's film, 'folklore' has become part of the story, a necessary consumptive function of the story, and an indispensable part of the operation of the canonical reference" "Folklore here is exotic, the precondition and foundation of spectacle." There are also those who refute and counterattack, for example, "Zhang Yimou's 'Fried Folklore' selects mostly remote mountainous areas or rural life subjects, reflecting mostly historical rather than contemporary Chinese squalor, ignorance and barbarism; moreover, in his works, folklore, customs, and habits have often become an organic part of the whole plot chain, and have an important role to play in the narrative. Moreover, in his works, folklore, customs and habits have often become an organic part of the whole plot chain, and have the necessary consumer function and entertainment value for the narrative" " Folklore is essentially a nationalistic thing. In order for Chinese movies to really open up the glacier to the world, they have to show their own unique national cultural charms, which also include some of our remaining backward customs and imperfect historical traces. The depiction of folklore in this way undoubtedly represents a new aesthetic trend, which is sufficient to inspire the audience's rational contemplation after sensory stimulation, and there is really no need to criticize it" (Han, Xiu-feng & Xiaohai, 1996, p. 424).

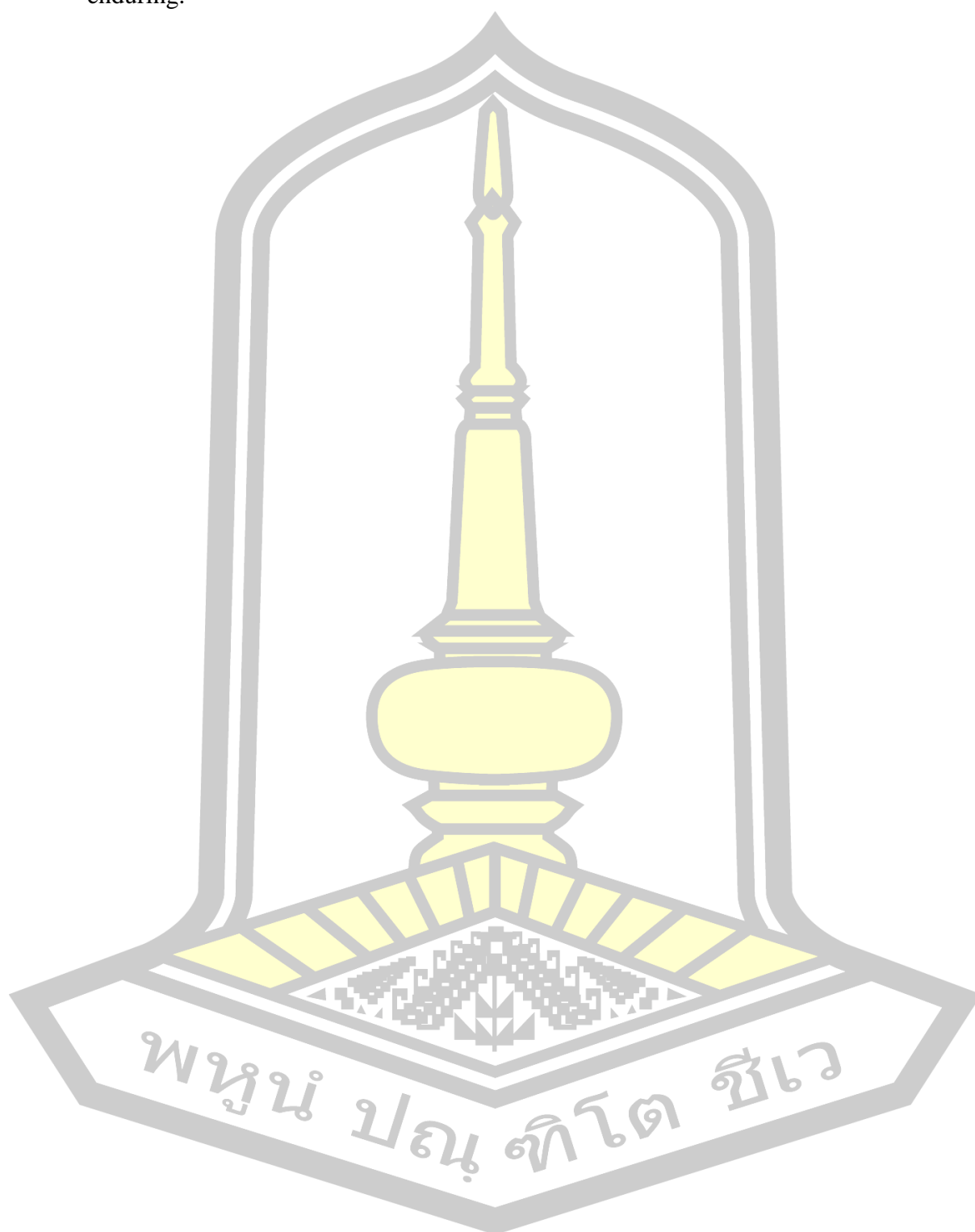
The researcher of this paper believes that we should be tolerant and understand the folklore in Zhang Yimou's film, as long as it is needed for the narrative of the film and has been processed artistically, there is no harm in using some fictional "folklore". As Zhang Yimou himself said, "Some people say that I engage in fake folklore, but I think that things that are really ritualized are also good, not to mention the fact that this film is originally a dream world, and should be allowed to create" (Li Erwei, 2002, p. 53). When movie artists use folklore materials, they have to correctly handle the relationship between art and folklore, and in addition to paying attention to the basic forms of folklore, they also have to grasp the artistic elements in folklore and use folklore materials artistically.

The difference of Zhang Yimou's films lies in the creative understanding and expression of folklore and the search for cinematic expression of its artistic spirit.

#### Conclusion

This chapter uses the concept of "consuming history" to specifically analyze the movie "Red Sorghum". This film tells a legendary story of rural love in the Republic of China, including sorghum fields, sorghum, family life, class mobility, marriage customs, winemaking and handicrafts, worship of the god of wine, folk songs and music, widow remarriage, clothing, food, housing, and transportation in rural society, entertainment, belief, social interaction, and the history and social culture of the Republic of China such as the Anti-Japanese War are consumed. Sorghum fields and sorghum are important scenes in the film. Sorghum fields are where love happens and where resistance to Japanese aggression takes place. The red wedding dress worn by the bride, the red sedan chair she sits in, the grooming process such as combing her hair, opening her face, and wearing jewelry, as well as wedding etiquette such as bumping the sedan chair, returning to the door, and the music and songs to welcome the bride are important plots of the film and promote the story. develop. The culture of wine making and the custom of worshipping the god of wine are daily life in the rural communities in the film. The film "consumed" the history and social culture of the Republic of China and constructed a series of classic scenes,

making this Zhang Yimou film rich in connotation, rich in cultural flavor, and enduring.



## Chapter IV

### Ju Dou: The Dyeing Workshop Tells the Feudal Ethical Order

#### Introduction

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the film information; the second part introduces the original novel and movie of "Ju Dou"; the third part introduces the "world in the dyeing shop" in the movie "Ju Dou"; the fourth part introduces "The feudal ethics and order reflected in the movie 'Ju Dou'". The creation of the movie "Ju Dou" used the form of commercial marriage, men's continued marriage to their wives, the tradition of dyeing and handicrafts, ancestor worship, feudal ethics, feudal etiquette order, family patriarchal system, the custom of crying at funerals and holding coffins, and widows observing festivals. , wars and other history and social culture of the Republic of China. The writing of this chapter will contribute to the analysis of the film "Raise the Red Lantern" in Chapter 5, and also lay the foundation for the reflection of the history of the Republic of China by the Red Trilogy film in Chapter 6.

#### Part 1: Movie Information

This part mainly introduces the main content and related information of the "Ju Dou" movie.

##### 1.1 Plot of the Movie

The story takes place in a mountain village in China in the 1920s. Yang Jinshan (Li Wei) is a physically challenged dyer who has lost two wives in order to have a son, but he doesn't recognize his physical handicap and pays a lot of money to buy a beautiful young woman, Judou (Gong Li). Judou is Yang Jinshan's longtime laborer during the day in the dye house, but at night she is Yang Jinshan's tool for lust. Yang treats her like an animal and ravages her every night.

Yang Tianqing (Li Baotian), a forty-year-old man who has yet to marry, was originally Yang Jinshan's neighbor and was adopted by him after his parents' death, and addresses him as his uncle. Yang Tianqing feels sympathy and curiosity about the opposite sex for Judou, who is in agony because of his uncle's nightly lustful advances, and often spies on his young aunt in the shower, an act that is soon noticed by Judou. Tianqing is afraid of his uncle's brutal behavior and can only suppress his resentment.

One day, when Yang Jinshan went out to take his pack animals to see a doctor, Judou told Yang Tianqing the truth about Yang Jinshan's sexual impotence and took the initiative to seduce Tianqing, who ultimately failed to resist the great attraction of sex, and they broke through the ethical morality and had a sexual relationship. The next year, Judou gave birth to a son, the fruit of her love for Yang Tianqing, and the Yang family elders named the newborn Yang Tianbai in accordance with the genealogical ranking of the characters.

Yang Jinshan did not know what was going on and was overjoyed to think that Yang Tianbai was his son. One day he went out to deliver cloth, rushed the night road accidentally fell off a cliff, the lower half of his body paralyzed. From then on, Judou and Yang Tianqing were no longer afraid of Yang Jinshan, and they slept together every night like a real couple, as if they were in love and inseparable. Yang Jinshan finally knew about the adulterous relationship between Judou and Yang Tianqing, he

still wanted to scold Judou, was pushed back by Judou, at the same time, Judou clearly told Yang Jinshan, Yang Tianbai is Yang Tianqing's son. The half-paralyzed Jinshan is determined to take revenge. He first tries to strangle Yang Tianbai, and then tries to set fire to the Yang family compound, but he is stopped by Judou and Yang Tianqing in time.

Yang Tianbai grew up slowly and never spoke. One day, Judou and Tianqing went out for a rendezvous, and Tianbai ran home alone to play by the dyeing pool. Yang Jinshan had evil thoughts and wanted to push Yang Tianbai into the dyeing pool, but Tianbai suddenly turned around and shouted "Dad" at Jinshan, and Yang Jinshan had mixed feelings in his heart and shed tears. Yang Jinshan eventually gave up the idea of hurting Yang Tianbai and chose to take revenge on Judou and Tianqing in another way. When Judou and Tianqing, who have been searching for Yang Tianbai everywhere, come back, they see Yang Tianbai pulling Yang Jinshan, who is sitting in a big barrel, with a rope down a narrow alleyway in the village, and Yang Jinshan teaches Yang Tianbai to call Judou "mother" and Yang Tianqing "brother". Judou and Tianqing looked at this old and young man with complicated eyes and mixed feelings in their hearts. At Yang Tianbai's third birthday party, Yang Jinshan enjoyed the honor of being his "father" and watched Yang Tianbai call Yang Tianqing "brother", his heart was filled with the pleasure of revenge.

While Judou and Tianqing were busy bleaching cloth, Yang Jinshan teased Tianbai every day, and the old man and the young man were really like father and son. Once, when Yang Jinshan was teasing Tianbai and playing by the dyeing pool, Tianbai inadvertently pulled the rope of the barrel, and Jinshan fell into the dyeing pool and drowned. Under the auspices of the family elders, the clansmen held a grand funeral for Yang Jinshan, and Judou and Tianqing were arranged to block the coffin and cry for the funeral for 79 times. According to the rules of the family, Judou needed to be widowed and could not remarry, and Tianqing had to move out of the dyeing room. Tianqing and Judou had to sneak out to the field for a rendezvous. Tianbai grew up to be thirteen years old. He was eccentric, melancholic and cold. One day, Erlaizi from the same village told the village people a colorful story about Judou and Tianqing hugging each other in the cave behind the village. When Tianbai heard this, he picked up a sharp axe and went after Erlaizi, and when he returned home, he kicked Tianqing to the ground. Judou rushed to the scene at the sound, finally said the words that had been bottled up in her heart for more than ten years, and she told Tianbai in a clear voice: "Yang Tianqing is your real father!" Yang Tianbai still kicks Tianqing out of the dye house with hostility and hatred.

One day, Yang Tianbai came home from school and found no one in the house. It turned out that Judou and Tianqing were making out in the cellar, and due to the lack of oxygen, the two of them, who were hugging each other tightly, had passed out. Tianbai came to the cellar, he first carried Judou back to the house, and then the unconscious biological father Tianqing back out of the cellar, thrown into the dyeing pool, Tianqing came to his senses, tried to climb out of the dyeing pool, but was Tianbai with a stick again beat down the dyeing pool, poor Judou cloaked, howling like a wild animal, climbed down the stairs, trying to save Tianqing, Tianbai turned a blind eye, grimly watched the Tianqing in the pool of water, struggling, drowning. A few days later, the Yang family compound was ablaze. In the firelight, Judou held a torch, without sorrow or joy.



Figure 41 Ju Dou movie poster presented about the movie's heroine Judou

Source: <https://image.baidu.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

## 1.2 Other Information

Ju Dou is the second installment of Zhang Yimou's "Red Trilogy" of films. It was adapted from the novel Fuxi Fuxi by Chinese writer Liu Heng (Liu Heng, 1988, p.4-45). In the process of adapting the script, he elaborately designed the dyeing room of the Yang family, and according to the characteristics of the dyeing room, he also designed the dyeing cloth with rich colors, which made the film more colorful, and all of these things later constituted the characteristics of "Judou".

The theme of the movie "Judou" is complex, it is a review of the history of the Republic of China, an indictment of Chinese feudalism, and at the same time it is a cultural critique, which shows the great differences between the Eastern and Western cultures. Zhang Yimou is the "Chrysanthemum Beans" and "Red Sorghum" compared to see, "Red Sorghum" is written to be open, "Chrysanthemum Beans" is written to be repressed, "Red Sorghum" is shown to have no rules and regulations, "Chrysanthemum Beans" is written to be the rules of the people cornered, put people to death. This kind of rule is produced in the characters themselves, also produced in the external, so its tragedy is produced in the characters themselves, but produced from the social environment at that time. Red Sorghum shows the tension of free life, the wild attitude to life, the kind of human nature without rules and constraints, full of ideal colors, which is rarely seen in Chinese people, even in contemporary Chinese people. Zhang Yimou said about the process of creating the movie: "I see Judea as the sister story of Red Sorghum. Red Sorghum" expresses the passionate and open, expresses the lawlessness of such a state. This kind of state is very rare among Chinese people, and this kind of character is often our ideal state of personality. When we made Judea, we depicted the kind of human beings who have the heart of a thief but not the guts, who take one step and look at three, who are full of rules, who don't dare to break through themselves, who torture themselves, and who express a kind of tragedy of character." (Zhang Huijun, 2010, p.139)

Ju Dou is a historical story, but it is a work of realism. The original novel "Fuxi Fuxi" is an unflinching critique of the Chinese people, and it portrays the human nature of the Chinese people, and it is something that shows the repressed mentality, and it portrays the realistic mentality of the real Chinese people. Zhang Yimou said: "It is the kind of realism in Fuxi Fuxi that deeply moved me. I think the characters in there are Chinese, Yang Tianqing is a typical Chinese. He has the heart of a thief but not the guts to be a thief, sneaking and hiding, the burden is very big; the

mentality is twisted and repressed, but at the same time he can't restrain his instinctive impulses and desires, just like being put on a pancake to fry on both sides, baked on both sides, and as a result he ends up being a man neither on the inside nor on the outside. People like Yang Tianqing best represent the reality of the Chinese mentality. I loved this stuff at the time, I thought it was very powerful. At the same time, from another point of view, I think it showed us the shadow of Yang Tianqing in us." (Li Erwei, 2002, p.42-43)

The film was filmed in Nanping Village, Yixian County, Anhui Province. When selecting locations in Nanping Village, Yixian County, Anhui Province, the film crew found a yard rich in Anhui architectural style and transformed it into an environment with a dyeing room. A very important symbolic location in the film is "Xuzhi Hall", which is divided into upper, middle and lower halls. The lower hall is where drums are played and a stage can be set up for acting; the middle hall is an auditorium where sacrifices can be held. Ceremony; the upper hall is the Xiangtang, and the ancestral tablets of the clan are placed upstairs. The ancestral hall is tall and majestic, and people will feel awe in it. There are strict regulations for participating in sacrifices, including that those attending sacrifices must wear clothes corresponding to their status, etc. By participating in this grand ceremony with numerous rituals, the pride of the tribe can be enhanced. Some families also stipulate that older boys must participate in some etiquette and sacrificial activities within the clan, so that they can master the norms of life from an early age, understand various etiquette, and form a specific thinking mode. It can be seen that the ancestral hall is essentially a temple for family spiritual enlightenment.



Figure 42 Nanping Village, Yixian County, Anhui Province, the setting of the movie "Judou".

Source: Li Haiyan Photoed July 10, 2022

The film was released in Japan in 1990. Due to various reasons, the film was only allowed to be released in foreign markets that year, but not in the Chinese domestic market. Zhang Yimou has always believed that *Chrysanthemum Bean* was first and foremost made for the Chinese mainland audience, because the emotions, ideas, and feelings about life in it were all generated on Chinese soil, and only on this land could they find deep resonance.

In 1991, the film was nominated for "Best Foreign Language Film" at the 63rd Academy Awards, the first film from mainland China to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

## **Part 2: From the Novel Fuxi Fuxi to the Movie Ju Dou**

The story of Judou is adapted from the novel Fuxi Fuxi by Chinese author Liu Heng, and the basis of the story and the essence of the characters is inherited in the process of screenwriting. In the movie "Chrysanthemum Beans", the core of the story is used to reflect deeply on traditional Chinese culture, etiquette, family rules, and precepts, and it is one of the few movies to reflect on China's "Three Principles, Five Rules, Ethics and Morality" and "Feudal Rites". This is one of the few movies that expresses the theme of "Three Principles and Five Rules," "Ethics and Morality," and "Feudal Rites" in China. "Zhang Yimou's transformation of the original story has gone beyond the traditional Chinese method of adapting faithfully to the original; he believes that the novel is for the movie, and that the original story can be drastically deleted or altered if necessary" (Lu Yangyang, 2020, p. 29).

Zhang Yimou is interested in adapting literary works into movies. In his spare time, he reads a variety of literary magazines and novels, hoping to find suitable stories and even materials. Zhang Yimou said, "I have always felt that literature is the matrix, and I still hope to find a point in the novel and then gradually expand it. For a long time, I have been accustomed to this way of creation. I think that a good novel can provide space for imagination and will not give me more constraints. .... It can also be said that I have participated in the screenwriting of every movie, I just don't sign my name. In the creative process of the movie, we are involved from the very beginning and have always had tons of input, even sometimes rewriting the final draft ourselves, which often happens. But, for a long time, I've gotten more used to people giving me a point of stimulation, and I still prefer this way of working and creating. I prefer this way of working and creating because, when I'm left to my own devices, it's easy for me to be theme-first or concept-first, and it's easy for me to develop a sense of what I like to do from this point forward, or that point forward. I would like to be passive in the initial creation, in a state of blindness, casually feel what I expect in literature, and then there is a point that stimulates you, and then the impulse and desire will arise, so it will seem more emotional, more flexible." (Zhang Huijun, 2010, p. 144-145)

Fuxi Fuxi can be briefly summarized as a sexually explicit novel about the shrinking of the human body and mind and its fate. The name of the novel, Fuxi Fuxi, obviously has a deep meaning. Fuxi is a character in ancient Chinese myths and legends. The image of Fuxi in the myth is human head and snake body, and with a female (human head) snake body twisted together, half man half beast, and the beast is connected to the body, of course, is the totem of sex. Legendary Fuxi, or the founder of gossip, gossip based on yin and yang, naturally includes the male yang female yin gender relations metaphor or symbol. Yin and yang and together, then the sky and man Ji like, physical and mental intercourse; yin and yang are not adjusted, then only ask "Fuxi Fuxi Nai Ruoho". There is also a legend that Fuxi and his sister Nuwa married to reproduce offspring, then he is the "incest of the ancestors", which with the novel between Yang Tianqing and his young aunt Wang Judou "incest" relationship, there is a more secretive correlation.



Figure 43 Painted Silk Painting of Fuxi and Nuwa, unearthed in a tomb at Astana, Turpan City, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China, dated to the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The silk painting shows a man and a woman with human heads and snake bodies, their upper bodies embracing each other and their lower bodies intertwined.

On the right side of the picture is Fuxi, and on the left side of the picture is Nüwa. Source: WeChat Public No. "Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum"-Visiting Services-Digital Cultural Relics-Gallery No. 8-Exhibit No. 0297 (Accessed on December 20, 2023)

The content of *Fuxi Fuxi* has three levels. The first level is a story of "incest" and "retribution". Judea and Yang Tianqing's "incest" love, Judea is Yang Jinshan's wife, Yang Tianqing is Yang Jinshan's nephew, they are aunt and nephew relationship. Influenced by his nominal father Yang Jinshan, Judea and Yang Tianqing's incestuous son Yang Tianbai grows up to be hostile and hateful to Yang Tianqing, and when he grows up, he successively kills his nominal father Yang Jinshan (unintentionally) and his real father Yang Tianqing (intentionally), and the shadow of predestination shrouds the shocking truth of human nature and the great sadness of life. The second level of the novel is the display of Yang Jinshan's and Yang Tianqing's psychological activities and behavioral details during the development of the story, and also during the process of each of them moving towards the end of their own lives, and the revelation of their physiological impotence or spiritual anxiety and their perverted mental and behavioral aspects. The third level of the novel is to provoke people to think about the meaning of the novel *Fuxi Fuxi* as a whole. Its significance is obviously not only a story of incest or a vivid display of the characters' psychology, but it inevitably leads readers to think about the relationships and fates of characters such as Yang Jinshan, Yang Tianqing, Wang Judou, and Yang Tianbai. The relationship of these characters is certainly not only a superficial "incest" relationship (that is only the story shell of the novel), and the fate of the characters is not only a

kind of reincarnation, revenge and karma. If we take a deeper look, we will realize that all of this is related to sex, and all of it is related to the environment in which the characters live, the values they live by, and their historical and cultural traditions. As a natural phenomenon of sexual relations, that is, the youthful impulse and mutual attraction between men and women, it is simple, natural, normal and beautiful. Sexual relationship as a humanistic or social-historical phenomenon, on the other hand, has become so complicated, so ambiguous, so ugly, and even full of sins, which is obviously worth pondering. The pain, anxiety, brutality and sin of sex are of course not due to sex itself, but are the products of the synthesis of unhealthy sexual psychology, abnormal sexual behavior, uncivilized sexual concepts, unsound sexual culture and abnormal sexual relations, and abnormal social and historical traditions. The universal significance of the novel is here.

Specifically to the characters in the novel, although Yang Jinshan seems to be the culprit, it is he who makes Wang Judou fall into the abyss of pain, which leads to Wang Judou's resistance and revenge. But at the same time, Yang Jinshan is also an "innocent", firstly, the pressure of the traditional ethic of "no queen is the greatest", secondly, the guidance of the traditional concept of treating a woman as a tool for reproduction, and thirdly, the physiological impotence and mental perversion due to the lack of the necessary common sense of procreation and knowledge of sexuality. All three of these are things he can not do anything about.

The tragedy of Yang Tianqing lies not only in his ignorance and obscurantism, with no one to enlighten him sexually, so he can only grope anxiously in the dark, and this groping in the darkness itself makes him instinctively sinful; at the same time, it also lies in the obvious contradiction and imbalance between his youthful physiological impulses and the obscurantism, cowardice, and atrophy of his spirit. His spiritual atrophy is due to his fear of ethical pressure, but also to his fear of sex, which comes from sexual ignorance. Therefore, his expansion and contraction put him in a kind of spiritual perversion from the very beginning, and his subsequent revolt and revenge, and the joy and pleasure of sexual fulfillment did not fundamentally relieve his deepest fears and perversions, his sense of guilt and the distortion of his soul. So in the end, he could only commit suicide to relieve his soul's uneasiness.

Wang Judou's misfortune lies in the fact that she is betrayed because of her poverty, in the fact that women are treated as tools to carry on the family line rather than as human beings, in the traditional concept of marrying a chicken and following the chicken, and in the fact that those who have been betrayed have no rights and no status to speak of. Her youthful impulses and the pain and hatred in her heart led to her rebellion and pursuit, which plunged her from the status of a tortured animal into another painful situation of being tortured by her own heart and tortured by her fate. It should be said that she is the most innocent and the most sympathetic. However, in the reality of social opinion, she is precisely the person who suffers the most from contempt, denigration and blame. Should we blame Yang Jinshan? But he is already dead, paralyzed before his death, he seems to have suffered enough "retribution"; then, should we blame the ignorant Yang Tianbai - how can a young man who was born and raised "neither green nor white" be blamed for his death? How can this young man, who was born and raised "neither green nor white," be free from social ethics and cultural traditions? Should Yang Tianqing and Wang Judou be blamed? That is obviously even more unreasonable. Fuxi Fuxi, what is the reason? I'm afraid I

can't figure it out with Fuxi's eight trigrams. The cause of the tragedy of the fate of the characters in the novel, we need to retrieve the entire historical and cultural traditions and social and humanistic environment, and then look into the cultural and psychological state of human beings and sexual concepts and behavior patterns. This is the profound meaning and connotation of the novel.

There is no doubt that Zhang Yimou saw the three levels of meaning in Liu Heng's novel *Fuxi Fuxi*. In the movie *Ju Dou*, Zhang Yimou tells a story of incest and karma, revealing the truth and depth of the characters' psychology and human nature, searching for the "cause of the tragedy" from the people themselves, and at the same time placing the incident in a special era--Republican period, from the "inheritance" of the national culture and psychology and the "accumulation" of history. At the same time, the story is set in a special era - the Republic of China period, to find the fundamental source and answer from the "inheritance" of the national culture and psychology and the "accumulation" of its history. In order to make the story more suitable for movie shooting, the content of the novel "Fuxi Fuxi" has been drastically deleted and changed to make the movie's expression more vivid and colorful.

The movie "Judou" has been significantly revised in terms of time, space, the fate of the characters, the focus of the narrative and the title of its movie.

The first is the modification of the time factor. The novel "Fuxi Fuxi" has a clear time line and its related era background, that is, starting from "a day between the cold dew and the frost in the 32nd year of the Republic of China (1943)" until the liberation of the whole country<sup>23</sup>, the land reform<sup>24</sup>, the mutual aid group<sup>25</sup>, the communization<sup>26</sup>,

<sup>23</sup> National Liberation: usually refers to the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. In 1949, the Communist Party of China (CPC) won the war of liberation, overthrew the Kuomintang and established the People's Republic of China. The full liberation of China was a milestone of historical significance, marking the fact that the Chinese people had since risen up and become the masters of the country. The peaceful liberation of Tibet in 1951 marked the final stage of national liberation. This event was of far-reaching historical significance, as it not only enabled the Tibetan people to gain freedom and dignity, but also laid the foundation for the unification and development of China.

<sup>24</sup> Land Reform: Beginning in the winter of 1950, the land reform movement was carried out in phases and in batches across vast areas of the country. The purpose is to abolish the land ownership system of feudal exploitation by the landlord class and implement the land ownership system of farmers. Main content: Preserve the rich peasant economy, remove the land of middle peasants, and limit the scope of confiscation of landlord property. By the end of 1952, except for Tibet and some other ethnic minority areas and Taiwan Province, land reform in the vast newly liberated areas was declared complete.

<sup>25</sup> Mutual-aid groups: the organizational form of the first stage of the socialist transformation of Chinese agriculture (i.e. the agricultural cooperative movement). Agricultural cooperativization is the process of transforming, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and through various forms of mutual assistance and cooperation, an individual agricultural economy based on private ownership of the means of production into an agricultural cooperative economy based on public ownership of the means of production. This process of social change is also called collectivization of agriculture. It started in October 1949 and by the end of 1956, it basically achieved complete socialist transformation and completed the transformation from individual peasant ownership to socialist collective ownership.

<sup>26</sup> Communalization: The people's commune is characterized by "one big and two communes". By large, I mean large in scale. Cooperatives of one or two hundred households were merged into people's communes of four, five or even ten or twenty thousand households, generally one for each township, and in some cases even for several townships. The so-called public means a high degree of public ownership of the means of production. After the merger of dozens or hundreds of cooperatives with different economic conditions and levels of wealth and poverty, all property was handed over to the commune, with no refund for the excess, no compensation for the deficiency, and unified accounting and distribution within the whole commune. The members' own land, livestock, fruit trees, etc. were all returned to the society. The government and the commune also frequently called upon the land, materials, labor and property of the production teams and the peasants without compensation. Within the commune, the rich and the poor were equalized and distributed equally, and certain property of the production teams was adjusted upward at no cost. This kind of "equalization" is the "communist wind", which in fact deprives the peasants and brings catastrophic damage to the productive forces in the countryside.

the "Cultural Revolution", and extending to the end of the "Cultural Revolution", the time span is several decades. The movie "Judeou" begins with the title of the movie, "Judeou", and continues until the end of the "Cultural Revolution", spanning several decades. The beginning of the movie "Ju Dou" indicates that the story takes place in the 1920s, the Republican era, a time of warlords and political darkness. However, in this era, an unprecedented New Culture Movement was launched in the field of ideology, which fiercely attacked feudalism and brought the dawn of liberation to people's minds. However, such liberation was only limited to the cities. In the vast countryside, feudalism still dominated and bound people's spirit. Although the people in the mountainous areas have cut off their physical pigtaileds, they are still spiritually bound by the "pigtaileds". In this movie, which presents the conflict between men and women who have an affair, it reveals the oppression and strangulation of human nature and desires by feudal rites and rituals. The characters in the movie, whether they are Judeou and Tianqing, who are abused by the feudalism, or Yang Jinshan and Yang Tianbai, the representatives of the feudalism, all reflect the distortion and helplessness of human nature under the merciless oppression of the feudalism in the old society. They are like moths trapped in a dye house, surrounded by heavy fabrics while light flickers in the distance. The movie ends when Judeou's son, Yang Tianbai, grows into a teenager, a time span of more than ten years. The movie's alteration about time provides the social environment for the tragedy of the story.

The second is the change of spatial factors. The movie changes the spatial factors in the novel, including the change of the specific living environment of the characters and the change of the mental space of the characters. The most prominent change in the living environment of the characters is that Yang Jinshan, a small landlord, becomes Yang Jinshan, a small dyer, and the environment in which the characters live is changed from a mountain village to a relatively closed dyeing workshop, and from Hongshuiyu Village in the northern foothills of the Taihang Mountains in the north to Nanping Village in Yixian County, Anhui Province, in the south. This change allows the characters' activities to be more concentrated and compact, and makes the shooting schedule more convenient. Dyeing workshop is necessary to dye cloth, dyeing cloth will be colorful, which in the visual effect of the screen is obviously a surprise move. As a matter of fact, the red cloth, yellow cloth, blue cloth and so on in the movie are really a feast for the eyes. The word "dyeing" seems to have a natural symbolic meaning and allegorical nature, giving rise to many associations. The appearance of the dye house also enables the movie to solve the fate of the characters "by the way": Yang Jinshan drowned in the dyeing pool, and Yang Tianbai drowned Yang Tianqing by throwing him into the dyeing pool. The design of the dyeing room can be said to be multi-purpose. The psychological space of the characters and their activities in the movie will inevitably change with the change of their living space.

The third is the change of the fate of the characters. Zhang Yimou is very fond of "intensity", not only the color and composition of the picture, but also the tragedy of the fate of the characters in the film to make a stronger effect. He was very interested in the reincarnation and retribution of the fictional characters, so he painted the end of the characters in the film with strong fatalistic colors. In this way, it also changes the fate of every major character in the original novel. First, there is Yang Jinshan. In the novel, Yang Jinshan dies a normal, mundane death that the author does

not render in any way. The movie made major changes to the way this character died. In the movie *Ju Dou*, Yang Jinshan drowned in a dye pool, which is an unnatural death. At that time, there was only a little boy, Yang Tianbai, present, and the little Yang Tianbai did not yet understand human affairs, so naturally he did not think to save him, and was really incapable of saving him. The movie reinforces the fatalistic color of Yang Jinshan's death, which is in sharp contrast to Yang Tianqing's death later on. Second is the death of Yang Tianqing. In the novel, Yang Tianqing's death is a suicide due to despair and fear. The reason is despair and fear. He told Yang Tianbai that he was his father, but Yang Tianbai not only denied it, but also said that he was "crazy". His fear is: Judea is pregnant again! This time there is no Yang Jinshan as his shield, he does not have the courage to face the public opinion and psychological pressure after Judea gave birth to his "incestuous son", so he can only die. In the movie, Zhang Yimou turned suicide into murder, and let Yang Tianqing's own son Yang Tianbai act as the murderer, and precisely let him die in the dyeing pool where the paralyzed Yang Jinshan had drowned, the reason is that Yang Tianbai found Yang Tianqing and Judea naked in the cellar of his house and dying, and Yang Tianbai saved his mother but executed his father, so that the movie's sense of fatalistic color and reincarnation reaches the ultimate. The movie's fatalistic overtones and sense of reincarnation and retribution are thus maximized. There is a hint of the Oedipus complex in the West, in addition to the fatalism of the East. Once again, there is the change of Judea's fate. In the novel, Judea's ending is commonplace. Judea did not come back to attend the funeral of her nephew, Yang Tianqing, because at almost the same time, she gave birth to Yang Tianqing's second son, Yang Tianhuang, and then she lived peacefully with her two sons. In the movie, Judea sets fire to the dye house because she saw her son kill his biological father. Lastly, there is the change in Yang Tianbai's fate. Although Yang Tianbai suffers from pain and resentment in the novel, the ending is ordinary. In the novel, it is stated that "Yang Tianbai and Yang Tianhuang lived better than their fathers. After marrying his wife, Tianbai became softer, but he refused to hear about his father. He became a father himself, and he loved his son very much."

In the movie, he became a murderer, and killed his biological father, the king's law and moral conscience can not tolerate him, so he destroyed his father's life at the same time, is also equal to the destruction of his own life. Zhang Yimou made the above changes to the fate of several major characters in the novel, making the effect of the movie undoubtedly a lot stronger, one can almost say that there is a kind of shocking eerie power, the invisible hand of fate will undoubtedly make people's bones, and the structure of the meticulous, symmetrical, complete.

Fourth, the change of narrative focus. The novel *Fuxi Fuxi* shows a deep interrogation and revelation of the character's personality and psychological secrecy, and integrates the display of this psychological secrecy into the calm narration of daily life. This kind of calmness has two meanings: no matter how painful the characters are inside, the waves are huge, and the teeth are gnashed, but the surface of the characters and their behaviors are still calm, because the Chinese people want to abide by the rules and love face; the author's narrative attitude is very calm, and the people and events in the novel keep a considerable distance from each other, which seems to be "not strange", thus the narrative characters' inner life is very calm, and it seems to be "not strange". The author's narrative attitude is very calm, keeping quite a

distance from the people and events in the novel, as if he is "not surprised", so when he narrates the extreme ecstasy, grief, anger and sorrow in the heart of the characters, the author's tone is still always calm, cold and "objective". The movie "Judeo" constantly "builds up" and increases the external pressure on the characters, thus increasing the stimulating effect of the movie. The most typical example is that after Yang Jinshan's death, Yang Tianqing and Judeo, a pair of "sinners", are made to stop the coffin for 79 times to show their punishment for their "evil deeds" and their mental torture. Another example is the naming ceremony of Yang Tianbai. In the movie, there are several elders of the Yang family, wearing small hats and robes, solemnly naming the newborn. This is a further rendering of the ethical rules that do not recognize Yang Tianqing's status as essentially a father, thus causing pressure and torment on Judeo and Tianqing. The movie also shows Yang Tianqing being forced to cry in agony at his "brother's" third birthday party. This enhances the effect of Yang Tianqing's "pain" and emphasizes the fact that the real pain and pressure of this character comes from his own heart, from the strong conflict between his inner concepts, values, traditions, and ethics and his instinctive needs such as desire, love, impulse, and craving. This conveys the ideological point of the movie: how the feudal forces of the old society oppressed people, especially women, who were subjected to the double torture of tribal power and husband's power.

Fifth is the change of the title of the movie. Liu Heng's "Fuxi Fuxi" as a novel title, intriguing, but to use it as a movie title may not be very good, the reason is that it is relatively warm, not easy to understand, and therefore no direct attraction, there is no commercial, so Zhang Yimou want to change the title of the film, is completely understandable. Before the movie was titled Ju Dou, the screenplay was titled Moaning in the Dark, Moaning, and Mountain Breeze. All of these names were good, and as movie titles, they were certainly better than the original title of the novel. The final name of the movie is "Judeo", which is the name of the heroine of the movie, which is also very good. It shows that the movie is about a woman, Kikudou, who is the first protagonist, which is both simple and attractive. From the title, we also get a message, that is, "Fuxi Fuxi" this to Yang Jinshan, Yang Tianqing, Yang Tianbai and other three generations of men as the main character of the novel, to the hands of Zhang Yimou, into the main character of the movie to Ju Dou. "If Fuxi is a god, he is a male god, and if he is a man, he is a man. In a sense, the main theme of the novel can be said to be "man, man". In the novel's narrative vision, Wang Judeo is only an important supporting character. Why did Wang Judeo become the main character in the movie? Zhang Yimou likes to put the characters of the movie under strong external pressure to form sharp conflicts and confrontations, and the pressure on women in feudal society is obviously greater than that on men, which makes it easier to express the bondage and suffocation of the feudal order on people.

The film adaptation of "Ju Dou" demonstrates director Zhang Yimou's unique artistic touch. The film retains the core plot and characters of the novel, but also makes necessary deletions and changes to adapt to the film's presentation. Zhang Yimou set the story in the Republic of China period, deepened the theme of the Republic of China society and culture, and skillfully used image language and audio-visual effects to transform the emotional core and ideological depth in the novel into movie scenes. At the same time, through the delicate characters The characterization and scene construction present a vivid and tense picture to the audience. The film and

the novel complement each other, set off each other, and jointly build a rich world about human nature, emotion and destiny, bringing profound thinking and touching to the audience.

### **Part 3: The World in the Dye House**

In the 1920s, when the Xinhai Revolution overthrew feudal autocracy and the New Culture Movement eliminated all the accumulated evils, people in the closed villages still treated the world according to the inherent rules and customs of the countryside and people. The "Three Obediences and Four Virtues," the "rules and ethics," and the "survival of heavenly justice and the destruction of human desires" have been incorporated into the bones of the national culture, and are reflected in every aspect of daily life. The cinematic composition of the Yang family's dye house, a closed building that appears three times in "Judeo" (what is repeated in a movie is always important), is meant to imply that such a strict and fundamental value system is untouchable by individual strength alone, and that the people trapped in the courtyard house and their fated tragedies are inevitable, and that the darkness of feudalism that we think we have seen has already passed. We think that the dark feudal society has passed, but in reality, the feudal rites and family order that have been inherited for thousands of years, as well as their oppression and constraints on people, especially women, still exist. The Chrysanthemum Bean is a sad song that exposes the great conflict between the pursuit of humanity and the impersonal society and culture. The old Yang family, the dyehouse, the people living in the dyehouse, the cellar, and the dye pond are used in Zhang Yimou's movies to express the theme of "the constraints of the feudal ethical order on people."



Figure 44 The village where the movie "Judou" takes place.

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

"Instead of women as protagonists, Zhang Yimou's films are better described as having 'Chinese culture' as protagonists." (Zhang Huijun, 2008, p. 175) What Zhang Yimou shows in Ju Dou is his reflection on Chinese history and his respect for Chinese culture. On the one hand, his hard years of trials and tribulations and his tortuous experiences of going to school and studying have made him have his own independent views on anything, and at the same time, he prefers to know history and do the necessary reading and accumulation. This brings him more freedom in grasping the movie as a whole. On the other hand, he is good at drawing the essence of literature, history, architecture, opera, theater, painting, music, dance and other arts. No matter what kind of movie he is working on, he is always willing to combine the best of it with what can be utilized in it, and express it in a very extreme form of expression.

"In the movie Ju Dou, the story focuses on the complex love vein between three generations and hateful fights and other relationships, this is because Zhang Yimou wants to rely on the story development to show the most deeply rooted human

nature and culture of the Chinese nation, leaving aside the urban prosperity and floundering, where most of the most embodied is the display of emotions deep in the human nature" (Huang Yubin, 2015, p. 65). Zhang Yimou plays what he does best - wandering and stitching between history and reality, setting the story in a more typical environment, and showing the world what is human nature by breaking it up and rubbing it in pieces. He conveyed his artistic understanding of historical reality and national culture from his own subjective perspective, searching for a very formality in his creations, combining it with the content of his creations, leaving a deep visual impression and provoking people to think about history and social culture.

### 3.1 The Lao Yang Family: Mutant and Distorted Ethics

In the 1920s, a time when the new was not new and the old was not old, the Republic of China had already been established for more than ten years, but the outside world was still not peaceful, with warlords and soldiers in turmoil, and the head-to-head battle between the new ideas and the old culture had just begun.

All this is still a very distant thing for the small mountain village surrounded by mountains. Small mountain village continues, is the centuries of consistent simple but quiet life. Here, there is no government, there is no law, instead, is the clan. In a village governed by a clan, the head of the clan is the authority, rituals must be observed, ancestral teachings must not be violated, and ancestral traditions must be inherited and carried forward.

The story takes place in an old Yang family that has been passed down for an unknown number of years in a remote mountain village. In the ancestral hall of the Yang family, there are two couplets. The first one reads, "To be a scholar and to be a scholar from the sacrificial path, and to be a scholar from the book, to be a scholar for the future". Judging from this couplet, the ancestor of the old Yang family should be Mr. Yang Shi, a great scholar of the Northern Song Dynasty<sup>27</sup> and the main character of "Chengmen Lixue"<sup>28</sup>, Mr. Guishan<sup>29</sup>. Mr. Yang Shi was the author of "Explaining Characters".

Under the tutelage of Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, he was one of the four great disciples of the Cheng family. He inherited the two Chengs from above, and inspired Zhu Xi from below, and was the backbone and key figure of the Cheng-Zhu School of Reasoning, which contributed greatly to the spread of reasoning to the south. The core idea of the Cheng-Zhu School of Reasoning is to "preserve the Divine Principle and

<sup>27</sup> Northern Song Dynasty: A feudal dynasty in Chinese history that existed from 960 to 1127 AD. Together with the Southern Song Dynasty, it is called the Song Dynasty, also known as the Two Song Dynasties. Because the royal family's surname is Zhao, it is also called the Zhao Song Dynasty.

<sup>28</sup> Chengmen Lixue: It is a Chinese idiom, which comes from "Er Cheng Quanshu • Suicide Note 12" written by Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi in the Song Dynasty: "You (You Zuo) and Yang (Yang Shi) met Yichuan (Cheng Yi) for the first time, Yichuan sat down with his eyes closed, and the two of them stood there. When he woke up, he said to him, "Is the wise man still here? It's late, so it's time to rest." When he went out, the snow outside the door was a foot deep." Later generations summarized this allusion. The idiom "Cheng Men Li Xue" came out. This idiom means that students respectfully ask for advice, which is a metaphor for respecting teachers and valuing teaching, and studying devoutly.

<sup>29</sup> Yang Shi: Born in 1053 and died in 1135. His courtesy name was Zhongli and his nickname was Guishan. Scholars called him Mr. Guishan. Philosopher, writer and politician in the Northern Song Dynasty. Yang Shi was knowledgeable, talented in running the country and benefiting the world. He had outstanding achievements as an official, was patriotic and caring for the people, and was honest and upright. He studied under Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, and together with You Zuo, Lu Dalin, and Xie Liangzuo, he was known as the four major disciples of Chengmen. He was revered as the "originator of Fujian Studies" by later generations. He laid a solid foundation for the formation of Fujian Studies and its ideological system and contributed to Neo-Confucianism. He made important contributions to the spread of Southern transmission and Chinese culture.

extinguish human desires", emphasizing the establishment of an ideal personality through conscious moral cultivation. However, after a long period of time, the Cheng-Zhu School of Reasoning became a social ideology dictated by the rulers, and the "Divine Principle" was gradually transformed into feudal ethics and morals that strengthened the control of the social ideology, such as the Three Principles and Five Constants, and became a tool for controlling others, while losing the role of self-cultivation.

The second most conspicuous couplet in the ancestral hall is "Accumulating virtue is better than leaving gold, and keeping one's honor is like keeping jade". Accumulating virtue means cultivating one's own virtues, and keeping one's integrity means cherishing one's own reputation, which is precisely the original meaning of Cheng-Zhu Theory and Confucian morality. This is the original meaning of Cheng Zhu's theory, and also the original meaning of Confucian morality. However, after a thousand years of inheritance, it has changed completely, leaving only the shackles on human nature. The comparison of the two couplets is full of irony and warning.



Figure 45 Ancestral hall of Yang Jinshan's family in the movie "Ju Dou".

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

Yang Jinshan, who runs the family industry Old Yang Family Dyeing House, as his name suggests, guards the gold mountain of the Old Yang Family. However, he is as stingy as gold, whether it is Ju Dou or Tian Qing, must work diligently for him, can not eat for nothing, and never want to get his good face.



Figure 46 Old Yang's Dyeing House in the movie Ju Dou

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

The greatest virtue that Yang Jinshan has accumulated in his life is probably that he adopted the orphan Yang Tianqing from his neighbor's family. In fact, it was just to find free labor. He never regarded Tianqing as his son. In order to avoid having another mouth to eat, Tianqing was already 40 years old and refused to marry him a wife.

What good reputation can Yang Jinshan, who cherishes gold like life, treats people like cattle and horses, but values horses more than people, have? The two rascals who came to work called him "old thing", without any respect.

The lesson of "Virtue is better than gold, and keeping one's body is like keeping a jade" is just a memorial tablet erected by feudal ethics for the bloodless act of murder. The people who were murdered by the feudal ethics were all the members of the old Yang family. The scene of the murder is the dye house of the old Yang family.

### 3.2 The Dye House: An Ethical Siege that cannot be Escaped

In the Yang Family Dyeing House, four people live: Yang Jinshan, the owner of the Yang Family Dyeing House, his adopted nephew Yang Tianqing, his purchased daughter-in-law Judou, and Yang Jinshan's nominal son Yang Tianbai (who is actually the illegitimate son of Yang Tianqing and Judou). Each character has his or her own unique personality and story, and their fates are intertwined to form a compelling movie. Judou is tragic, but it's not just the main character, Judou, who is tragic. Yang Tianqing, Yang Tianbai and Yang Jinshan all have tragic fates that they cannot choose, and the root of all this is feudal ethics. The dye house is like a cage and a siege that traps everyone. Ethics and morals are the invisible shackles on everyone, and no one living here can escape.

#### 1) Yang Jinshan

The first thing you see when you push open the door of the Old Yang Family Dyeing Workshop is the dye pool, the scaffolding, and the patio with fabrics of all colors hanging from tall bamboo poles. This is the only place where you can see the sky, surrounded by green-gray tiles, brown-gray wooden doors and windows, and mottled white walls. Behind the colorful dyeing workshop is the decaying and ancient ancestral hall where incense and candles are always burning. On the second floor of the shrine is Yang Jinshan's bedroom.

For a large feudal family, the continuation of the flame is the greatest program. The unfilial is three, and no descendant is greater than the great. However, the old Yang family is facing the crisis of the broken lineage. No one in the Jin generation of the old Yang family had a son, and Yang Jinshan was the youngest in the Jin generation, so the pressure of childbearing was ultimately put on him. But Yang Jinshan is a sexually impotent person, no fertility at all, and in old age, it will be even more impossible.

Yang Jinshan was undoubtedly rich in the era of the Republic of China, he was a landlord, and also opened a dye house, he had the right and enough wealth to choose to marry several wives. From his point of view, he never felt that women had independent personalities; he only felt that women were tools to carry on his family's legacy. The pressure of childbearing makes him psychologically distorted and takes pleasure in abusing women as a way to make up for the shortcomings brought about

by his sexual impotence. Yang Jinshan was unable to have children because of his physical defects, and he blamed his wife for his inability to produce a son. His first two wives were tossed to their deaths by him, and his temperament became even more eccentric and tyrannical. But none of this could allay the fear that the Yang family was about to be cut off from him. He didn't dare to admit his incompetence, nor did he dare to face the future of the Yang family's extinction. So he bought his third wife, Judou.

In the Yang family's dye house, Yang Jinshan is the absolute authority. He was a tyrannical, selfish, and stubborn man who regarded Yang Tianqing as a free laborer, and Judou, just a tool to carry on his family's legacy. In Yang Jinshan's eyes, they were even less important than the livestock in the dye house. Whenever Yang Tianqing returned from a trip, he would not be cared for by Yang Jinshan, but would instead be subjected to bad language. At night, Yang Jinshan put the saddle on Judou, whipped her with a whip, poured wine on her, and slandered her with words - "My Yang family will be ruined in your hands sooner or later, you useless thing." Though he knew very well that it was he himself who really broke the Yang family, and it was also he himself who was really useless. He could not bear the moral pressure brought by the broken lineage, so he had to shift the responsibility to his wife. On the body of a woman who is even weaker than he is, Yang Jinshan finds his dignity as a man through abuse, and relieves the pressure of not being able to have children. The root cause of Yang Jinshan's psychological distortion is the oppression of human nature by feudal ethics. His wife, as the prop "saddle" suggests, is nothing more than a tool for him to work as an ox and to bear children. Yang Jinshan himself is just another component of this tool.



Figure 47 Yang Jinshan's treatment of Yang Tianqing and Judou in the movie Judou

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

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The core of feudal ethics is the husband and wife; parents and children are an extension of the husband and wife relationship, and the relationship between the ruler and the minister is an extension of the relationship between the father and the son. However, the union of man and woman under feudal morality was just "a man should marry when he is old enough, and a woman should marry when she is old enough", for the sake of the continuation of the family name, not because of love. The basis of feudal morality seems to be the family, but in fact there is no human nature at all.

After Judeo gave birth, he didn't suspect that Judeo's child wasn't his. He was just looking forward to the arrival of a child, but it was the saddest thing about those times. If he hadn't been obsessed with all this to go and live a good life with Judeo, his fate couldn't have been so tragic. He was in his fifties and had married a young and beautiful wife, which was already the envy of others. But he was always obsessed with something else, which seemed to be a person's innate sadness, the environment and fate of his upbringing had created such a character. He epitomizes the common man under the influence of the traditional concepts of feudal society; he is the master of his own destiny, and he is also mastering the destiny of others.

He had never looked a woman in the eye, yet he eventually fell into her hands. From the time he learned that Judea was pregnant, he felt infinitely honored. He even invited people over to witness the birth of Judea's child. When Judeo gave birth to her son, he proudly announced it to the crowd, as if this would prove that the lack of children for over fifty years was not his fault. This pride was necessary in his eyes, but in the eyes of others he had been wearing a cuckold for a long time.

In the clan-dominated villages, there is no personal privacy to speak of, and anything that challenges the ethical order is not allowed to exist. Everyone has a defined position and role in the ethical order, and is not allowed to act out of character, or else they will be condemned by the public opinion of the group, or even judged by the clan law. At the naming ceremony of Yang Tianbai, one of the clan elders of the Yang family was questioned, "You are more learned than your ancestors", after he complained about the lack of a good name.

Because of the uncertainty of paternity it brings, it directly jeopardizes the inheritance of a family or even a clan, and has always been regarded as a great challenge to social ethics. Incest, on the other hand, is the harshest challenge to ethics. Under the oppression of such ethics, in reality, no matter whether it was Yang Jinshan or Yang Tianqing, neither of them had the guts. Feudal morality demanded not the brave or the defiant, but the submissive. Everyone has his own place and has to live under the mask of ethics and morality.

Yang Jinshan discovers the adulterous affair between Tianqing and Judou after his disability. He still wants to beat Judou through violence, but with his disability, he is no longer capable of hurting Judou. Judou's excitement reveals the fact that Yang Tianbai is Yang Tianqing's son, but Yang Jinshan doesn't dare to make any announcements. The village people say that he is blessed, but he can only bear it, and only when he returns home can he cry out in front of his ancestors' tablets. Once the fact that Yang Tianbai is not his son is revealed, he will lose all face.

The enraged Yang Jinshan had also been waiting for an opportunity to retaliate. At this time, Yang Tianbai was still very young, and Yang Jinshan had countless thoughts of killing him. He tried to drop Yang Tianbai while Judou and Tianqing were having an affair; he climbed down the stairs while Judou and Tianbai were sleeping, locked the door, tore down the cloths, and set the house on fire, but failed in all of these attempts. The characters' desires swell and are constantly repressed and distorted in the dye house. Tianbai and Judou decide to keep Jinshan well fed and alive in spirit, watching the two of them cheat on each other as a way of getting back at Yang Jinshan for oppressing and abusing them.

Later, Yang Tianbai ran home alone and played in the dyeing pool with dog's tail grass. Yang Jinshan tried to push Tianbai down the dyeing pool, but Yang Tianbai dodged it several times by mistake. Yang Tianbai, who had never been able to speak since he was born, turned around and called him "Dad", which made Yang Jinshan smile. The son shouted others for father, but shouted you for brother, what is more painful than such revenge? Since then, Yang Jinshan treats Yang Tianbai as his own child, and teaches Yang Tianbai that Yang Tianqing is his elder brother, thus destroying the relationship between them. In the thrill of his perverted revenge, he stayed with Yang Tianbai every day, and in the middle of one of his play dates with Yang Tianbai, he was inadvertently ripped out of the dye pool by Yang Tianbai, ending his life. Yang Tianbai watched him drowning in the dye pool with his own eyes and laughed heartily for the first time in his life.

Yang Jinshan lost his life in the dyeing pool because of his "son", an ending full of drama. The goal he pursued all his life became his nightmare. Yang Jinshan's life ended in this way, dying in the dyeing pool of his own dyeing house, and in his lifelong foundation. The one thing he hoped for most was to have a successor, but he never accomplished it until his death. This is a character that people hate, but in the end, it makes people emit endless sorrow.

## **2) Ju Dou**

Judou's miserable fate began when she married Yang Jinshan. Yang Jinshan had married two wives, but he never had any children. As he neared fifty, he was very anxious about not having any children. He took out his anger on his wives, often resorting to violence to vent his anger. In the end, both wives were tortured to death by him. But the matter of succession could not be delayed, and he spent money to buy the young and beautiful Judea. From then on, Judea became his outlet.

During the day, Judou worked silently in the dye house, but at night, she became the object of Yang Jinshan's arbitrary desire. Judou was tortured by him day and night, the physical scars and inner trauma has long made her hate this man. However, in the rural areas of the Republic of China, feudalism and traditional concepts are deeply rooted. Although the laws of the Republic of China stipulate that a woman has the right and freedom to choose to divorce, divorce for women to face the pressure from society, family and other aspects, especially in the rural areas, women are even deprived of the right to take the initiative to divorce, and a small portion of the women who are forced to divorce and remarried are usually even more miserable destinies.



Figure 48 Judou in the movie Jou Dou

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

The fate of Judeo is a poignant one. Judea, the only female character in this movie, carries a deep sense of resistance. Judea, as interpreted by Gong Li, perfectly combines the femininity of the old society with the independence of the new era. Judea is sold to the Lao Yang family. Young and beautiful, she is sold to another man as his wife, which is the first tragedy of her life. Her second tragedy is that she is abused by her incompetent husband. It is a feudal ethic that the father is for the son and the husband is for the wife, but in reality, Judea's family and husband are persecuting her. What is even more pathetic is that although Judea has a strong desire to resist, she subconsciously believes that the only one who can save her is another man. The couple is different, men and women are different, the husband is the wife, and a woman must have something to cling to in order to survive in society. This is again the social morality and social status quo created by feudal ethics.

Judeo is initially devastated when she discovers the small hole in the stable. She has to endure not only Yang Jinshan's abuse, but also Yang Tianqing's voyeurism. Judea subconsciously blocks the hole, revealing her inner shame and embarrassment. While trepidation and fear well up in her heart, she also realizes that she has nowhere to go and no one to tell her grievances to. When the sound of a pig being killed is heard from afar, Judea can't help but complain to Tianqing: "Listen, that pig is crying for its life." How could Judea not be crying for her own life? How can she resist her own fate? The only person around her who can save her is the old bachelor Tianqing. When she perceives from the knife marks on the escalator that Tianqing is full of anger at her uncle's atrocities and sympathizes with her, Yang Tianqing becomes Judeo's lifesaver in her quest for liberation. The blocked hole also becomes a bait for her to seduce Tianqing.

พหุ ประเด็น ชีว



Figure 49 Judou telling her grievances to Tianqing in the movie Ju Dou

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

Judou's pretty face as well as her aggrieved look stirred Yang Tianqing's instinctive desire, and Judou also gave feedback after realizing Tianqing's desire for him. Yang Jinshan's abuse as well as harm to Judou had made her experience inhuman torture at an age when she had not yet experienced love, so Yang Tianqing's adoration for her was blissful for her. Judou is a smart woman, and she realizes that Tianqing has a desire for her from the small hole she peeps through, and that desire is something she can use. A brief conversation at the village entrance reveals that Judeau again finds concern and sympathy for her. After being abused once more, Judeau shows Tianqing the scars on her body through the little hole she peeped through, hoping to arouse Tianqing's sympathy. While working, she tells Tianqing about her fate of being abused by the old man next, and spurs him on with the words "Don't stop him" in hopes that he will come to her aid.

The only thing Judou can give is her body. When Yang Tianqing did not dare to make further action, she took the initiative to seduce Tianqing, while Yang Jinshan went out to the horse to see the doctor, Judou teased Tianqing in words and behavior, the daytime hints to no avail, the night pushed the door is not open, the next day, Judou had to pick the words, "Auntie this number of the body, for you to keep." Two people have sex, the achievement of this forbidden love. The dyed cloth rolled down, and the red dye pool rippled. Sex, the most primitive human desire, is unleashed under the oppression of feudal ethics.

Did Kikudou choose azure because he couldn't help himself? Not really. In the Yang family dyeing house, besides Yang Jinshan, Yang Tianqing is the only man who shows human concern. Judeau's defiance is shown in many details, and her fornication with Yang Tianqing is just one of the steps. In this forbidden love, she releases her long-suppressed primitive desires and experiences the pleasure of taking revenge on Yang Jinshan.

The purpose of sex is to give birth. Sex in exchange for Yang Tianqing's protection, or to give birth to a son to fulfill Yang Jinshan's wish so that he will no longer be abused. In the process of cheating, the two fall in love. Sex aimed at procreation leads to Yang Jinshan's psychological distortion and Judeau's abuse; sex

not aimed at procreation brings love. The affair, which allows Judeau to have a child and be spared from abuse, and gives her love and a true dependence, cannot bring her to escape from the dyke house, let alone the oppression of feudal ethics. The hope she finds, Yang Tianqing, is just another twisted character under the oppression of feudal ethics.

Ju Dou and Yang Tianqing always can only close the door to cheat. When Yang Jinshan was normal, the two of them cheated and got pregnant, Yang Jinshan was at least a blindfold. When Yang Jinshan paralyzed, Judea pregnant will make the two adulterous love will be exposed to the world. Therefore, the unscrupulous in the eyes of Yang Jinshan cheating at the same time, Ju Dou and especially worried about their own pregnancy. Judou secretly finds a nun in a nunnery and gets a way to not get pregnant, but after using it a few times she realizes it's just chili noodles. This is another mockery of ethics and morality. Nuns have to abide by Buddhist rules and regulations, so how could they know about contraceptive methods?

When Yang Jinshan discovers that Judou is cheating on him with Yang Tianqing, Judou is fearless and even calmly tells him that Yang Tianbai's biological father is actually Yang Tianqing. In the movie, Judeau asks Tianqing twice to take her and Tianbai away, but both times she is refused. Despite this, Judeau never gives in to the injustice of fate and the oppression of feudalism. Until the last moment of the movie, she fights against the world with determination. It is her constant struggle that adds a fatalistic helplessness to the tragedy and intensifies the tragic color of the character.

From the moment she was bought and sold, Judou was destined to be on her own, with no maternal family to rely on. So her miserable fate was doomed from the moment she married Yang Jinshan, she had no other way out, even if Yang Jinshan died, she could only end up as a widow. This is that era, as a woman's body can not help, this is also her later choice and Yang Tianqing incestuous love starting point. Even if she hadn't been with Yang Tianqing and she hadn't given birth to her son, Yang Tianbai, her fate wouldn't have changed and she might have been killed by Yang Jinshan's violence long ago.

The unexpected death of Yang Jinshan seems to have brought about a turnaround in the lives of Tianqing and Judou. What they have always wanted to do but did not dare to do has suddenly come true, and the forces oppressing them seem to have disappeared, but the clan members of the old Yang family are still there, and the power of feudal ethics and morality is still there. A few words from the matriarch, the old ancestral rules, decided the next life of Tianqing and Judou: Judou is not allowed to remarry, to fulfill her duties as a woman, to preserve her chastity; Tianqing moves out of the dye house and sleeps at night at the old Wang's house, to avoid suspicion. Whether they want to or not, since they can't leave, they eventually and inevitably give in to the feudal ethical order. Putting on the old navy blue cotton robes, they can only be a secretive underground couple and put up with the gossip of the village people.



Figure 50 Yang Tianqing moves out of the dye house in the movie "Ju Dou" when the elder of the Yang family demands that Judeo be widowed and not allowed to remarry

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

Once again, Judeo said to Tianqing, get out of here, go far away. Once again, Tianqing refused. So many days had been survived, how could the next days not be survived? He could never muster up his courage. The sexually impotent husband who abused him, the cowardly lover Yang Tianqing who loved him but was timid, Yang Tianbai who always harbored hatred for his own biological parents, and the loss of fertility due to cheating. As the years passed, Judeou was completely reduced to a victim of feudal ethics and morality.

The brightly colored cloths in the dye house are no more plentiful and bright, but they can no longer be worn by Judeo. As she grows old, will she remember the time when she used to wear a goose-yellow short coat? No matter how high the brightly colored cloths hung in the dye house, they could not break out of the gray, black and white world around them. Before them, how many youthful men and women had suffocated their lives in this gray and stale world?

Judou's tragedy is a personal sorrow, but also the tragedy of the times. Nothing is left to her choice, she is most helpless, yet brave, she bravely breaks free from the bondage of feudalism and bravely pursues her love. Though it entailed a great deal of punishment, she knew deep down that her fate could not be worse.

After Yang Tianqing's death, Judea burned down the dye house. This dye house framed her whole life, a small dye house, and epitomized the feudal ethics and morality. Perhaps it was at the moment of burning down the dye house that Judea belonged to herself, that she was liberated.

### 3) Yang Tianqing

Yang Tianqing is Yang Jinshan neighbor's child, after the death of his parents, was adopted by Yang Jinshan, with Yang Jinshan living in the old Yang family dyeing workshop, and Yang Jinshan uncle and nephew. He has been working for Yang Jinshan since he was a child, and has not married or had children since he was nearly forty, and he is honest and never knows how to cheat. Although on the surface

they are a family, but actually behind the scenes he is Yang Jinshan's lackey, has been serving Yang Jinshan's cloth dyeing workshop. He has watched Yang Jinshan marry two wives in succession, but when Judou arrives, he develops a different feeling for her. Yang Tianqing's heart is filled with helplessness and anger as he watches Judou being abused. He knows that he, like Judou, is a slave of Yang Jinshan. The feudal rites represented by Yang Jinshan became the shackles that oppressed their freedom.



Figure 51 Yang Tianqing in the movie Ju Dou

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

Yang Tianqing kept a simple goodness in his heart, initially he had more sympathy than desire for Judou, under the impulse of emotion, Yang Tianqing had clutched a pig-killing knife and confronted his uncle Yang Jinshan. In the pressure of life and contradictory entanglements, he moved to kill Yang Jinshan twice. Once at the edge of the cliff, Yang Jinshan accidentally fell unconscious, Yang Tianqing found a long time ago unconscious Yang Jinshan, carrying him over the cliff, at that moment, he had thought of Yang Jinshan thrown from the cliff, from then on, he and Judou between the obstacles, but due to the goodness of the heart, or maybe a trace of conscience, or perhaps is the remembrance of the Yang Jinshan's nurturing grace, he did not finally put into action. He carried Yang Jinshan back home. From then on, Yang Jinshan half paralyzed, he and Judou began a bright life. Originally, they thought it would be good to continue like this, but after Yang Jinshan's death, the village people's suspicion of them was already in the open. Another time, Yang Jinshan learned that Yang Tianbai was not his own son, he attempted to take advantage of the private meeting between Judou and Yang Tianqing to drop Yang Tianbai to death. At that time, Yang Tianqing almost strangled Yang Jinshan, but eventually let go.

In the movie, besides showing his kindness, it highlights his weakness and incompetence. It can be said that the human tragedy of Yang Tianqing and Judou's mother and son stems largely from his incompetence. He does not dare to confront Yang Jinshan's tyranny. His incompetence, like an invisible knife, pierces into their lives silently, pushing them into the abyss of destruction. Judou once asked, "Tianqing, what are you afraid of?" Yang Tianqing was afraid of Yang Jinshan. Since childhood, Tianqing had lived under Yang Jinshan's oppression. This is psychological inertia. When Judou was pregnant, Tianqing only dared to ask a few questions, "Don't let the old thing bump into you." His weakness and incompetence made him retreat again and again, he was afraid that other people see, in the face of Judou's temptation, Yang Tianqing surging inside. But he did not dare to take a step up the stairs, instead, he went back to the house and locked the door. When the sound of the door opening

came from downstairs, he was feisty one moment, and then he was terrified the next moment, while Judou was always calm and self-possessed.

Judou, who suffered from physical pain and fear, had twice pleaded with Yang Tianqing to take her and Tianbai away from here, to go to an open life, or to live openly and let the village people scold them. However, Yang Tianqing refused every time. His words, "It's just a curse. If people know, they won't be able to live." explains his reluctance to leave. "Not being able to live" is exactly how people respond to those who challenge their ethics under the feudal ethical rules. Whether it is to Judeo's agonizing body, the fact that Yang Tianbai calls him "brother", or Yang Tianbai's angry fists, he is indifferent. The first refusal may have been out of fear of the chaos in the outside world, while the second refusal was purely out of interest, in order for Yang Tianbai to inherit the Yang family dye house. The character of Yang Tianqing is both sad and full of resentment. His life is full of helplessness and contradictions, and his choices are heartbreaking.

What is heartbreaking is that Yang Tianqing was not a sold-out worker of the Yang family dyeing house, and was not without the opportunity to leave; he had left the village alone more than once to deliver cloth outside; he had seen the outside world, and could have been free to choose his life. However, for thirty years, he endured the oppression and exploitation of his uncle Yang Jinshan and never left. This not only shows his lack of survival ability, but also reveals Yang Tianqing's helpless acceptance of his fate.

From a practical point of view, the world outside is a chaotic place, and leaving the village will expose him to great risks. From a psychological point of view, Yang Tianqing's experience of losing his parents at a young age has made him extremely insecure, which is also the reason why Yang Tianqing has a strong attachment to Judou, similar to his mother. He also has a strong dependence on the Lao Yang family, which saved him from starving to death on the streets. Yang Tianqing has lived in the Lao Yang family since he was a child, and more than forty years of life under the feudal ethic has worn away all his edges and courage. Moreover, all his means of production and living come from the old Yang family dyeing workshop, leaving here, he will directly lose the dependence of life, the nightmare of losing his parents in his childhood will be awakened again. Even though Yang Jinshan treated him poorly, he was in fact Yang Tianqing's father. Yang Tianqing is deeply mistreated by Jinshan, and has always been worried that he will discover his adulterous relationship with Judou, but it is always difficult to gather the courage to kill the first obstacle of their affair. This is not only because of Yang Tianqing's inner kindness, but also because he cannot bear the charge of "patricide" (matricide). While men and women in love can be killed, parents and elders cannot be killed, which is also required by feudal ethics.

Even though Judou's husband is dead, she is still subject to the criticisms of the feudal society, and she is asked to be widowed and can only live in the Dye House with her son, while Yang Tianqing is asked to move out of the Dye House. The two of them can no longer live as they used to, but he misses Judou and the child very much. He can only ease his longing by stealing quiet meetings.

The character of Yang Tianqing is sad. Nearly forty years old, he has never wanted to live for himself, and has always been a slave. If he had not met the brave Judea, he might still be a person who only labors under Yang Jinshan's hand.

Although he and Judea are in love, this kind of love is not allowed, which also creates the tragic end of his character. His son, who was born out of his affair with Judea, eventually became the one who killed him.

Whether it is the tragedy of personal destiny or the shaping of feudal ethics, Yang Tianqing is almost doomed to become a mentally impotent man who has no courage to leave his current life, let alone take Judou to escape from her tragic destiny, and can only spend his life in a dye house.

#### 4) Yang Tianbai

The story in the dye house continues. The physically impotent and psychopathic Yang Jinshan, the psychologically impotent and cowardly Yang Tianqing, and the daring but uncontrollable Judou together raise a psychologically dark and cold and even more twisted and perverted Yang Tianbai.

Yang Tianbai is the crystallization of the love between Tianqing and Judou, such love on any couple children is a happy thing, but because Yang Tianbai is born of cheating, incest behavior and is socially unacceptable, Tianbai can not feel any happiness from it, only shame, as well as the indifference of his biological parents when they are enjoying their love for him. Tianqing Tianbai is clean and innocent, and everything around him, even his name, seems to mock his birth. All the resentment was pent up inside him, so he never opened his mouth to call out to them.

Yang Tianbai, the child born to Judou and Tianqing, he is both the product of their affair and the source of tragedy for the rest of their lives. Almost all of the evils in the second half of the movie are tied to him. All three male characters in this movie have obvious flaws: Yang Jinshan is physically flawed, Yang Tianqing is characteristically flawed (incompetent), and Yang Tianbai is the source of all their misfortunes. Yang Tianbai, the character, seems to be a distorted mirror image of the personality. Throughout the movie, his lines are pitifully sparse. The only three lines he has are "Father", which he calls out to Yang Jinshan in desperation at the moment of death, "Brother", which he calls Yang Tianqing at the behest of Yang Jinshan, and "Mother", which he calls Judou. The other one is "mother" to Judou. In addition, he is as silent as the deep sea, making him the most gloomy and chilling character in the movie.

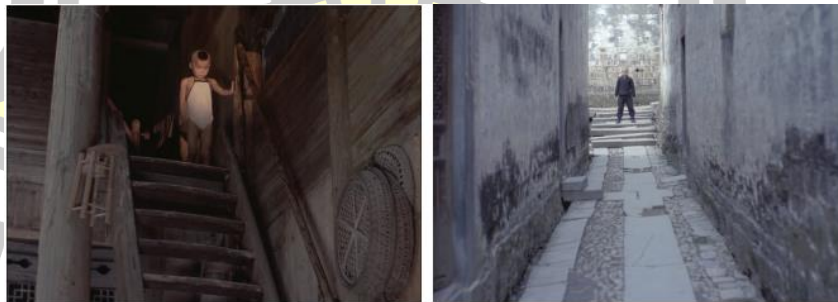


Figure 52 Yang Tianbai in the movie Ju Dou

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

After Yang Jinshan's death, Yang Tianbai, as if pulled by the thread of fate, took over the banner of the Yang family dyeing house and intensified his efforts to suppress the fire of desire between Judou and Tianqing, and the extremity of his behavior seems to have completely obliterated human nature. On the surface, Tian Bai seems to be the one who carries the most sins in the movie, but in reality, he is the most innocent person in the Yang Family Dyeing House, a victim who is bound and oppressed by feudal rites and eventually forced into a desperate situation.

The misery of Yang Tianbai, the child of Judou and Yang Tianqing, began from the moment of his birth. From the moment of his birth, Yang Tianbai's fate was firmly pinned on the stage of tragedy. His life seemed to be a chosen one, as he grew up with two fathers, one was his father, Yang Jinshan, whom everyone knew, and the other was Yang Tianqing, whom he saw every day and who lived with his mother. There were two fathers but none of them were able to fulfill their fatherly duties. What his nominal father, Yang Jinshan, taught him was hatred, while his biological father, Yang Tianqing, because of his own weakness and incompetence, didn't bring any shelter to Tianbai, but instead allowed him to grow up in the midst of his clan's criticism.

His upbringing seemed like a war, a war of hatred and conflict. From his childhood inability to understand Yang Tianqing's closeness to Judou, to the hatred instilled by Yang Jinshan, his childhood was gray, without a trace of family warmth. When he grew up, he even endured the cynicism of his clan towards his mother and his birth.

These experiences seem to be the melting pot for casting Tianbai's deformed personality, and the feudalistic environment in which he is placed is even more oppressive and suffocating. When Tianbai grows up, he doesn't speak, which seems to be another way for the director to show that the relationship between Judou and Yang Tianqing is invisible and can only be quiet and unknown. His silence is no longer a simple silence, but an accusation of the world's cruelty to children. The audience is able to feel a sense of historical reflection and a profound interpretation of feudal rites and order in the Republican era.

The moment Yang Tianbai spoke, he called out "father", which saved his life and discouraged Yang Jinshan from killing him. Until he watched Yang Jinshan drowned in the dyeing pool, he realized that perhaps he could not speak before, but just did not want to speak. He had seen all these things that were not what he should have seen at his age, and his disgust may have been the reason for the delay in speaking.

Although he didn't approve of the behavior between his mother and Yang Tianqing, he didn't cause any actual harm to them. It was just that he was becoming more and more unable to see his mother's backstabbing with Yang Tianqing, so after the two of them tried to retrieve the pleasures of their youth and fainted in the cellar as husband and wife once more, Yang Tianbai couldn't stand it any longer. He threw Yang Tianqing into a dye vat, and Judou could only watch as Yang Tianbai killed his father again.

### 3.3 The Cellar: A Desperate Groan of Fresh Life

The last time Tianqing and Judou were husband and wife was in the cellar of the dye house. The cellar had a flight of steps and a relatively wide abdominal cavity that resembled a woman's vagina and womb. Yang Tianqing had carried out buckets of dye from here countless times, dyeing the crisp, white cloths in all sorts of colors.



Figure 53 The cellar in the movie "Ju Dou".

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

Colors, on the other hand, symbolize different desires for different people. Judeo's initial desire is yellow, which symbolizes carnal desire, and when Yang Jinshan dies, he falls into a pool of red dye, which symbolizes blood and killing. Against them, the world they live in is dull gray, and the navy blue and black that wrap them in layers.

Sex is the most primitive desire of human beings and the root of beauty and art. Sex is also the origin of feudal ethics and morality, but in turn, it has shackled countless living beings. Tianqing and Judou's secret lovemaking is the most thorough revolt against feudal ethics and morality.

Starting from a small hole where they were curious about sex and peeped, and ending with a big hole where they were a couple again, they desperately fought against it, but the space left for them was getting narrower and narrower, and the air that could allow them to breathe freely was getting thinner and thinner.

The cellar, a symbol of the drive for freedom for men and women who eat and drink, is also a symbol of the persecution of feudal ethics and morals. The cellar can also be said to be a small, reinforced version of the dye house. The dye house has a patio that can withstand the sun and rain and hang colorful fabrics. The cellar has only a lid that is covered with an airtight lid.

Tianqing and Judou can walk out of the cellar, but not out of the dye house; out of the dye house, but not out of the old Yang family; out of the old Yang family, but not out of the deep-rooted constraints of feudal ethics and morality. People longing for freedom and escape groaned in despair and lay quietly waiting for death. And the desperate lying equal to death is even impossible, the men and women who pursue freedom will also accept the backlash of feudal ethical reasoning.

The movie demonstrates the power of repetition and the cycle of destiny. Yang Tianbai carries Tianqing out of the cellar, throws him into the pool of red dye that drowned Yang Jinshan, and hits Tianqing with another wooden stick. The red cloth clattered down, the same as when Yang Tianqing and Judou first cheated on each other back then. Judou witnesses Tianbai killing his own father Yang Tianqing, and cries out in horror, climbing down from the second floor but unable to do anything about it. It's exactly the same as when Yang Jinshan climbed down the stairs and set the house on fire back then.



Figure 54 In the movie "Judeo", Yang Tianbai throws Yang Tianqing into a dye bath, and Judeo cries out in terror and climbs down from the second floor

Source:<https://www.iqiyi.com/>[Accessed on June 8, 2023]

The house that Yang Jinshan did not burn at that time was burned by Judou. The dyeing workshop led to the tragedy of Yang Jinshan, the tragedy of Ju Dou, the tragedy of Yang Tianqing, and the tragedy of Yang Tianbai. Once burned, everything will cease to exist, leaving a vast expanse of white and the earth is really clean. But will the persecution of feudal ethics and morality disappear?

If Yang Tianqing knows anything, he wonders if he will think of the nursery rhyme he often sang in his happiest days: Bell bell ringing, walking to Wangjiazhuang in one step, a group of dogs in Wangjiazhuang, scared, we have nowhere to leave, there is nowhere to leave, let's go home and blow our little horn. At the beginning of the movie, along with the sound of bells on the animals, the people living in Lao Yang's dyeing shop gradually came into the audience's field of vision; as they walked, they encountered the pressure and blockade of feudal morality everywhere, and had nowhere to go; In the end, they can only return to the siege of feudal ethics. At the end of the film, accompanied by the soaring flames and the sound of trumpets, a living life's bloody indictment of feudal ethics and morals and the final call for free humanity are heard.

### 3.4 Imagery of Dyeing Workshop and Dyeing Ponds

When Zhang Yimou was working on the movie "Ju Dou", he made a breakthrough adjustment to the original novel, establishing this story at the intersection of history and culture, on the basis of reality and allegory, and highlighting the cultural wonders of his people. At the same time, it is placed in the context of a dyeing workshop. In the depressing space, the erotic breakthrough and realization of human nature is taken as the focus of expression.

The location in the movie "Ju Dou" is a typical Huizhou residence. The patio of the house, which serves as both a breathable window and a sky-watching environment, can either make you feel hopeful or extremely depressing. With the brightness of the sky, the darkness on all sides, the splendor of the colors, and the eeriness of the environment, one seems to be living and struggling in the depths of water, deep in the bottom of the bottomless abyss of the well.

"In the movie, when showing the dyeing workshop, its high green-gray walls are contrasted with the high hanging red and yellow cloths; the former represents the closedness of the space and the heaviness of the atmosphere, while the latter represents Judou's always repressed desires" (Shen Xianshuang & Cheng Haitao, 2017, p. 73). The dyed cloth that hangs high from the top of the dyeing workshop patio descends to become a rope and mantle of infinite bondage for Judou and Yang Tianqing. When the two of them are having an affair in the dyeing workshop, the flying wooden wheel and the bright red dyed cloth rush down from above and fall into the dyeing pool. This not only implies the passion of the two, but also suggests that these two people not only live under the public opinion of the society, but also cannot escape from the suppression of social ethics and traditional family rituals, and also implies that they are under the shadow of Yang Jinshan's invisible parental power and majesty at all times. Judou's life is a bird confined in a birdcage, and it seems to be a man struggling for water at the bottom of a dry well. The repression of people and the environment seem to be carrying out a certain kind of implication. However, these are given form and symbolism, expressed in something so visual that it becomes a stylized embodiment of the film's imagery.



Figure 55 The patio of the Yang family's dyeing factory and the dyed cloth hanging high in the movie "Judou".

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

The main tone and mood of *The Chrysanthemum Bean* demonstrates an atmosphere of ignorance, sadness and depression. Therefore, the overall tone of the film is gloomy, the light of the environment and scenes is depressing. The main night scenes of the dyeing factory are all simply and depressingly lit, with the blackness handled better, and the darkness of the surrounding houses creates a feeling that makes people gasp for breath. And when dealing with some minor scenes, such as the light inside Ju Dou's house, the light is intentionally made cleaner, with a hint of freshness and warmth, which is used to express the inner conflicts of the characters, and creates a stark contrast between the scenes on the screen. As the main scene is a real-life style scene, an extremely realistic approach is taken in its presentation and creation. For example, Zhang Yimou, in the process of designing the main scene of the movie *Ju Dou*, turned the fact that it was impossible to build a dyeing workshop in the patio into a realistic "reality". As a stylistic technique and stylistic means are very much in place, and are effectively and organically integrated into the entire movie, it is very thoughtful.

The dyeing workshop in the movie is an important part of the display narrative and a key place for characterization. In the movie, Zhang Yimou boldly takes the dyeing workshop as a penetrating scene, and such a tall dyeing workshop with a patio, architecturally sets up a reasonable foundation for the existence of various kinds of light, providing a possibility for the design and vision of the movie, and for the sensory expression of the final light, and, moreover, it is dealt with in such a way. Especially in the process of filming, the film is good at expressing emotions through the scenery, and in the passages of the scenes of the dyeing house, the whole objects and details are formed into a kind of suggestion, especially the dyed cloth and the fluctuating dyeing pools are meticulously expressed. For the success of the film, an important foundation was laid. In different events and passages, the dyeing workshop environment is treated with different colors, which gives great help to the narrative and visual basis of the story.

The shooting process fully utilizes the main light of the environment, and makes better use of the part of the highlight area. Utilizing the height difference of the scene, more use of elevation and overhead shooting angles, mainly very good use of the spatial characteristics of the dyeing workshop, to strengthen the effect of light changes, top light, side light, scattered light, there are relatively large changes, at the same time, the use of light and dark relationships formed by the light, suggesting the character of human nature is depressing. The scene of the dyeing workshop is a real-life relationship, there is the light of the outside, and there is a real environment, so it is not possible to be very transparent in the treatment of light, because it is the actual situation of the light source of the upper part of the light, its height, direction, intensity, and contrast, there will be a relatively large number of light side and dark side relationship. At the same time, in the color treatment and design of the environment, the use of warm color relationship, and the theme of the tragedy to produce contrast and illumination of the relationship. This this all constitutes a visual stimulation and distinct, sometimes people feel depressed, sometimes people feel bright and free, using the spatial height of the dyeing workshop and the characteristics of the skylight, using the basis of natural light to create, showing different light and dark and subtle texture changes, in the character of the different modeling of the light to show such a subtle change.

The highlight of the film lies in director Zhang Yimou's exquisite use of composition and color. The title of the film, "Ju Dou", in red letters on a black background in the beginning of the movie, already foretells the tragic color and deep theme of the film. Through color and composition, the director vividly demonstrates the subtle relationship between the environment and the characters. For example, the black, white and gray roofs of the houses are neat, solemn and solemn, like the cold symbols of feudalism. The main scene of the dyeing workshop has a very strict and full compositional design. Various kinds of foregrounds, backdrops, light spots, shadows, imaginary and real, forming a diversified compositional style. Moreover, the effect of using very many overhead and elevated shooting angles expresses the spatial structural relationship of the dyeing workshop very well, and shows the spatial depression of the environment of the dyeing workshop. This treatment of different angles is very much in line with the camera scheduling and the visual treatment of photography, and also creates a very strong point-of-view suggestive effect, so that the characters are alienated and symbolized in a variety of spatial environments, which ultimately results in the heaviness of the narrative, and the repression of human nature. It is worth pointing out that the director and cinematography pay great attention to the camera angle treatment in the process of scheduling and handling the camera position. The camera angle is composed of three elements: distance, direction and height. In the process of specific environmental spatial expression and character expression, the height relationship of the camera is prominently utilized. The great use of upward and downward shooting helps the narrative of the movie very well, and the fact that there are more upward shots than others produces a novel visual effect and also plays a very big role in hinting.

There is an overhead shot that recurs in the second half of the movie. We see a four-square "back" shaped roof, in the middle of which colorful cloths are drying. These colorful pieces of cloth are like mirrors reflecting the four characters in the Yang family's dyeing workshop, revealing their destiny of being trapped by the life of the workshop. Though they are full of contradictions and conflicts among themselves, and each of them has their own taste of life (just like the variegated colors of the dyed cloth), it is undeniable that they are all like prisoners confined in the Yang Family Dyeing Workshop, unable to escape from their destiny under this sky.

Zhang Yimou is adept at visualizing events in his creative process. The overall shadow tone of the film is rather depressing and gray, with a relatively large suggestive function. It expresses the different positions and environments that different people are in, and also expresses different emotions under different plots in the course of the narrative. Such dark tone treatment and shadow treatment do not need to be understood by the audience, but just visually help the story advancement and the acceptance of the fate of the characters. However, there are also cases of extreme contrast with the dark tone. After Yang Jinshan's death, the treatment of the scene showing the funeral adopts a brighter and brighter relationship between the shadows of the outside scene, which contrasts with the dark tone in the front. At Yang Jinshan's funeral, the details of the "blocking of the coffin", which is unique to the folklore tradition, is a double torture of Tianqing and Judou, both physically and mentally, and is very visualized and visualized. Judou and Tianqing are stopped again and again under Yang Jinshan's huge coffin, showing the social and family rituals against their behavior, while Judou and Yang Tianbai, Yang Tianqing's biological

son, sits on the coffin holding Yang Jinshan's tablet, accepting the pilgrimage of Yang Tianqing and Judou and crossing over the two of them, which alludes to the fact that Yang Tianbai inherits Yang Jinshan's identity and becomes another representative of the feudalistic and familial order, overturning the two of them several times and making the two of them look down. The fact that Yang Tianbai has inherited Yang Jinshan's identity and has become another representative of feudal rites and family order, and that he has overturned them many times and pressed them deeply under his feet, foreshadows the sadness of life that will be repeated and played out in the future. Regardless of the historical truth of the custom of "blocking the coffin", the artistic treatment itself represents the traditional majesty and order of feudal society. Moreover, it signifies that the desires of Tianqing and Judou will continue to be suppressed and disallowed, and that the suppression of such social ethics and family traditions will continue to be a tragedy in the lives of both Tianqing and Judou.

The director and cinematographer, in their overall creation, were rather bold. Because the top of the dye house is transparent, so, most of the light source processing is the effect of top light. The characters under such a light effect are not good looking, but, there is a sense of perspective and an ethereal feeling, which adds to the depressing environment and space of the dye house for the characters. In the light, the various cloths are photographed in elevation, the effect is very obvious, and the brightness of the colors undergoes many changes. When shooting panoramic images, the patio is often photographed, and in addition to the effect of the top light, there is always a very bright, even harsh, area of light in the large, dark background, giving great oppression and hope. In the treatment of light, in addition to paying attention to this subtle change in light, great attention is paid to the treatment of contrasts, some very bold, some very weak, in short, all revolving around narrative and modeling.

Due to the specificity of the space, in the actual directorial processing, change of color, change of contrast, change of camera position, and change of shadow tone are used to achieve the requirement of completing the film's narrative. The environmental space of the dyeing workshop has both interior (the scene built in the studio) and real (the scene in the existing building), with the change of natural light, the feeling of the change of sunlight strength, angle and color temperature, and the freedom of using artificial light. The key is how to express the dark details and levels of the scene, especially for the characters in different corners of the light how to adjust the light and dark, angle, cold and ambiguous relationship spent more energy, received better results.

"In the film *Ju Dou*, Zhang Yimou's rendering of color is even more bold and splashy, with red, yellow, and blue becoming the main color scheme of the picture, of which red is again the most prominent. The blood-red cloth dyed in blood-red dye pots, the blood-red coats and turbans of the characters, and the blood-red fire give the illusion of burns" (Zhang Nanling, 2014 fear. 48). *Chrysanthemum Beans* also takes things to extremes throughout its presentation, and in its overall color mood, it is very different from *Red Gaoliang*. Similarly obsessed with shape and use of color on the whole, in addition to the depressing and closed nature of the main scenes in *The Chrysanthemum Beans*, there are also countless pieces of dyed cloth hanging overlappingly over the high patio in a brightly colored atmosphere with color changes, fluttering changes, and up and down changes, giving the effect of instability.

The red and yellow dyed cloth hanging densely like a spider's web in the Yang Family Dyeing House, above the patio is bright but gives a suffocating feeling.

The incestuous love between Judeo and Yang Tianqing is a rather sensitive topic in any era and social situation. Of course, Zhang Yimou gave this story a specific era and setting - the Republican period - to deeply expose the repression and distortion of human nature in the society at that time. The plot of patricide as a theme is deepened through various methods. The first time Judeo and Yang Tianqing have sex is by the dyeing pool in Yang's dyeing house. Zhang Yimou uses symbolic techniques, the depressing patio, the dyeing cloth hanging up high, is an invisible bondage to the sinful love of Judeo and Yang Tianqing, and at the same time, the use of the red dyeing cloth dipping into the pool at high speed, expresses the passion of two people in their amorous and secretive lovemaking.

This movie is like a mirror that maps out the living conditions and inner struggles of people in that era. It makes us think about how human nature was suppressed and how desires were bound under those circumstances. The story of Judeo and Tianqing is the epitome of countless people in that era, and their pain, struggle and despair are the true portrayal of that era. In the profound second half of the movie, a ghostly image appears repeatedly. Especially in those scenes depicting the feudal rites represented by Yang Tianbai pressing on Judeo and Tianqing step by step, the shadow of the roof frequently crosses the screen. On that heart-wrenching night, Tianbai turns on Tianqing, and Judeo sits alone in a dark room. At this point, the camera gently moves to the darkness outside the window, showing the silence of the roof at night. No matter how the world changes, the roof tiles are always silently covered there. Surrounded by deep darkness, only Judeo's window leaks out warm yellow light, a faint light that seems to speak of the environment's repression of the deep desires and struggles of human nature.

Yang family dyeing room panoramic aerial footage appeared 6 times, these 6 aerial footage, although in the patio hanging high, are red and yellow dyed cloth, but is divided into two cases, the first 3 aerial footage hanging high in the dyed cloth, the color is bright, like a new cloth, after the 3, the color of the cloth is dark, such as the old cloth. This is because the tone of the movie has changed, from the excitement of pleasure and joy of love in the front to the distress of contraception and the pain of the son's rebellion in the back, and the tone has changed to a dark tone of depression and sorrow, while the front is a bright tone. The empty shots of the cylindrical red lanterns hanging on both sides of the Yang family's ancestral tablet in front of the dye house also appeared twice, with the words "children" and "grandchildren" written on the lanterns respectively. These two empty shots express a strong sense of patriarchal power and patriarchal power: there are three unfilial things, and having no descendants is a great thing (Yang Jinshan tortured Judeo so that he could have a son).

The Dye House was like a giant cage that trapped all of them. Whether they go against the grain or fight back, their end seems to be predestined. That is why in the end, Judeo chooses to burn down the dye house with a fire when there is no way back. This is not only a rebellion against feudalism, but also a desperate struggle against fate.

In discussing the national characteristics of Chinese art and aesthetics, Li Zehou points out, "In any art department, Chinese aesthetics emphasizes the laws of form, focuses on traditional conventions and templates, pursues programatization and typology, and focuses on the orderly and repeated consolidation of formal structures. All these are aimed at refining the pure form of beauty in order to directly hammer and mold human emotions." (Li Zehou, 1999, p.37) The film's excellent use of cinematic language is also manifested in the creation of a mysterious atmosphere, a fatalistic atmosphere through the dye pool. At the beginning of the movie, Yang Tianqing mixes red pigment into the dyeing pool, and the first close-up shot of the dyeing pool appears. The red dyeing pool, flooded with bubbles, is just like a bleeding wound, which seems to imply that it is an abyss of death. Judea seduces Yang Tianqing and they have sex for the first time. The red dyed cloth quickly falls into the dyeing pool. Yang Jinshan realizes that Yang Tianbai is Yang Tianqing's son, and wants to push the less than three-year-old Tianbai into the dyeing pool and drown him. Once again, there is a close-up of the dyeing pool, but the tender voice of Tianbai, who earnestly calls out "Dad", makes Yang Jinshan, who has other ideas, give up the murder. Yang Tianbai brings Yang Jinshan into the dyeing pool by magic, watching the paralyzed Jinshan struggling in the dyeing pool, Tianbai laughs happily, and this plot and image make people suspect that Tianbai, like a genie, is taking revenge on Yang Jinshan, who wants to kill him three times. Yang Tianbai carries out the unconscious Yang Tianqing from the cellar and throws him directly into the dyeing pool. When Tianqing is awakened by the water and struggles to climb out of the pool, he is unable to withstand the blow from Tianbai's head, and finally drowns in the dyeing pool. In this way, the two men of Judou and the two fathers of Tianbai died in the dyeing pool. It can be said that these episodes are all visual or emotional content suitable for expression in the language of film.



Figure 56 Dyeing Pond in the movie Kikuto

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

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In addition to highlighting visuals, there is emotional film language in the film. Emotional film language is the sound in the film. In the case of *Ju Dou*, it is the nursery rhyme "Little Trumpet," which appears four times in the movie. The first time is when Yang Jinshan is carrying two cylindrical red lanterns with the words "son" and "grandson" written on them on his way home, and encounters a few children playing with small red lanterns in their hands singing the song, which is an ironic and mocking reference to Yang Jinshan; the second time is when the proud Judou and Tianqing are hugging Tianbai and singing the song "Little Trumpet". Tianbai sings "Little Trumpet", which is the happiest time for Judou and Yang Tianbai. The third time is after Yang Tianbai's third birthday banquet, in the evening, when Yang Tianbai smashes the door of Judou's and Yang Tianqing's room with a small stone and Yang Jinshan sings it triumphantly. This time, the happy one is Yang Jinshan, who has succeeded in cultivating Yang Tianbai as a hater of Yang Tianqing, and is ashamed and resentful of the pair's secret love affair. The fourth time is when a chorus of children's voices sings "Little Trumpet" in the midst of the rushing fire lit by Judeo that burns down the Yang family's dyeing house, which signifies the end of everything, the end of this big dream about an heir, and the end of every single one of them without a good ending.

In short, in the movie "Ju Dou", Zhang Yimou showed the traditional handicraft industry of dyeing during the Republic of China, and used family workshops, dyehouses, cellars, dye pools, etc. related to dyeing to express the theme of the film criticizing the feudal ethical order.

#### **Part 4: Ritual and Order**

*Ju Dou* demonstrates the feudal rites and order of a backward mountain village during the Republican period, constructing a social system based on hierarchy, family, lineage and traditional values. This social order maintains the social stability of the mountain village society in the movie, but it also restricts the development of the society and the freedom of individuals. There are many ritualized images in the film that express Zhang Yimou's understanding, interpretation, and respect for life, and on the level of cultural values, a visual presentation of the rites of Confucianism.

##### **4.1 Women and Maternity**

During the Republic of China, although women had some of the same rights as men in education, work, etc., they still carried the heavy pressure and expectations of society and family. At the time, women's values centered around traditional notions of marriage and childbirth, and they were expected to be obedient wives and loving mothers in order to continue the family lineage and carry on family responsibilities. When facing childbirth, women not only have to bear physical pressure, but also face social and cultural expectations and constraints on their roles.

In his film *Ju Dou*, Zhang Yimou criticizes the mental destruction of women by the old concepts of China during the Republican era. The first part of the movie has a set of scenes showing the hero's (Yang Tianqing) uncle, Yang Jinshan, torturing his newly purchased wife, Judou. Yang Jinshan, needing an heir but unable to solve his own symptoms of infertility, turns to punishing, torturing, and abusing his wife, and has tortured two wives to death before this. One of the scenes shown is when Yang Jinshan yells at night while torturing Ruo Judou: "You can't even give the Yang

family a child, you piece of shit!" Here we can see that the value of Chinese women is only directly related to their ability to produce a male heir. The view of the time was that having a girl meant the loss of the family line and the breakup of the family.

Women are on the same footing as livestock. Livestock were raised for a period of time and then slaughtered for their meat. Judeo is just a piece of flesh to Jinshan. Just like the night in the previous set of shots, Jinshan tied Judou to his chair and said: "I spent money, you have to listen to me, I bought the livestock, you have to kick and beat as I like, what do you count, the same (said while pouring some liquid residual juice on Judou's body). Listen to me, and I'll give you a son to work for you. If you don't obey, I'll whip you to death." It is surprising to see in this scene that the men have no respect for the women. Here, as mentioned earlier, it also emphasizes the old family concept of marrying only to pass on the family name, which Zhang Yimou criticizes. One notices through the movie the situation of women in traditional society during the Republican period, where they were discriminated against by other members of the family even before they were born. Society discriminated against girls because they were physically attached to men and could not carry on the family line. So before a woman is born, she is already victimized.

Zhang Yimou is good at presenting women's state of being through spatial expression, and at the same time showing the double oppression of women's living space and psychological space by male power and patriarchal consciousness. In the movie *Judea*, the heroine Judea suffers from the abuse of Yang Jinshan, the owner of the dye house, in a closed room because she failed to give birth to a son for him, and at this time Judea is in a dark and invisible space. When Judea falls in love with Yang Jinshan's adopted son, Yang Tianqing, and gives birth to a son, the space in which Judea becomes a mother suddenly changes. One of the episodes in the movie is when Yang Tianqing sneaks into Judea's room to visit Judea and her son while her adopted father is out of the house, and the room at that time is open and bright. "The same space will take on different states in different contexts of a woman's identity, and the dividing point between the two states is whether or not the woman has become a mother. In the pre-motherhood stage, the movie director puts women in a dark, closed space, while when women become mothers, both the physical and psychological spaces they are in become bright and open." (Jiang Suzhen, 2015, p.39)

Zhang Yimou similarly criticizes the male-controlled society by showing that women do not have a say in the matter of their children. This is specifically reflected in the incident of naming a newborn boy. The clan elders of the Yang family - all male - get together, and one elder says, "There aren't many good words left for the Tian character generation, so think of one now." Another clan elder said, "Bullshit, this is passed down from our ancestors, are you more learned than our ancestors? This is the only descendant of the Yang family, if we pick a crooked character, the feng shui of our Yang family will be over." After some arguments, the male elders named the child Yang Tianbai. Here, "what has been handed down from the ancestors" cannot be changed, which also means that the feudal rites and family rules remain unchanged. The mother of the child is completely excluded from the whole process. Zhang Yimou draws attention to the fact that mothers, because of their status and role in society, are not allowed to be part of the process, and that it is only when they are pregnant and give birth that they can be recognized as useful to society, and perhaps express the value of women. Zhang Yimou depicts this process from the side in his

film, in which the audience sees a small-town "doctor" diagnose Judou's pregnancy in one scene, followed by another scene in which a midwife congratulates Yang Jinshan on the birth of a boy with a newborn baby's cry. Zhang Yimou explicitly alludes to the prejudice against women in rural China during the Republican era, who were merely tools used by men to carry on the family line.



Figure 57 Yang Tianbai's naming ceremony in the movie Ju Dou

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

The idea that women are subordinate to men is clearly portrayed in the movie Judeou. First of all, Judou is the third wife bought by Yang Jinshan. He has tossed his first two wives to death, and it is puzzling that Yang Jinshan is still recognized by society. The family concept of succession is so alarming that they are willing to accept the fact that two women were murdered. The social acceptance of women's inferior status is fully reflected in Yang Tianbai's third birthday banquet. The whole village feasts and drinks at the celebration of the Yang family's having a queen, just like celebrating a folk festival. At this time, Yang Tianqing was asked to pick up the wine cup to say a few auspicious words for Yang Tianbai, Yang Tianqing because he could not reveal the fact that he is Yang Tianbai's father and suffered a blow, but also because of the inability to express a father's congratulations, lost his voice and wept bitterly. The people in the village laugh at Yang Tianqing, assuming that he is drunk in such a manner, and then we see in this scene one of the most shocking episodes of Chinese society in the 1920s. Another woman - one of only a few women, besides Judea, to appear in the movie - says to Tianqing in front of the crowd: "Tianqing, you're looking forward to having a son, aren't you? Tomorrow, your uncle will spend more money to marry you a daughter-in-law who is more beautiful than your aunt, and that's it!" The glowing accent caused the rest of the village to follow her and laugh heartily. The laughter, especially that of the woman, demonstrated the fact that these stereotypical social concepts are deeply embedded not only in men's consciousness, but also in women's. The inferiority of women is one of the most important factors in the 20th century.

The inferior status of women was a widely accepted concept in Chinese society in the 1920s, and Zhang Yimou demonstrates this in the film.

#### 4.2 Forbidden Love

Ju Dou is undoubtedly Zhang Yimou's most controversial work. In this work, he boldly touched on a sensitive theme - incestuous love between aunt and nephew. This taboo theme, coupled with Zhang Yimou's unique cinematic language, prevented the film from being released domestically in the first place. Although the ban was later lifted, Zhang Yimou has been criticized by domestic audiences because of the characterization and content of the film. This made the movie, which should have become a classic, not get the evaluation it deserved for a long time.

However, if we put aside our misconceptions about the film and appreciate it from the movie itself, we will find that it is actually very classic. Whether it's the characterization, the in-depth exploration of human nature, or Zhang Yimou's unique aesthetics of composition and color, it all makes this film a monumental work.

##### 1) Voyeurism

There are two kinds of voyeurism in *The Chrysanthemum Bean*. One is called covert voyeurism, in which the perpetrator hides in the dark to spy on others in the dark, and the other is called explicit voyeurism, in which the perpetrator is in the open, in plain sight, at the time of the voyeurism. There are four instances of voyeurism in the movie. The first voyeurism occurs shortly after the beginning of the film, when Yang Tianqing spies on Judou scrubbing next door through a gap in the plank wall of the livestock house. The appearance of this covert voyeurism instantly attracts the audience's attention, making them pay attention to how this act of voyeurism develops. The second peeping is an explicit peeping. Tianqing takes advantage of the time when he is working on the wooden wheel in the dyeing workshop, stops shaking the wooden wheel halfway, and peeps at Judeou, who is hanging and drying the dyed fabrics on the wooden platform in the patio, through the gap of the spokes of the wooden wheel. At this time, Judea hangs pink and yellow dyed cloths in the morning light, and in the warm and bright tones of the screen image, Judea, standing high, is as bright and holy as a goddess, and Tianqing, standing low, looks up, worships, and peeps at his goddess in this way until Judea discovers it, and then Tianqing continues to work in a state of panic.

The third time is still dark peeping, Tianqing in the livestock room peeping at the next door scrubbing Judou, this time peeping was found by Judou, Judou suddenly walked into the livestock room, the sickle is being used to dig slits in the plank walls of the Tianqing scared to the face of the blood, Judou saw the wall of the newly dug out of the holes, she looked into the next door from the small holes to see is directly across from the place where he usually scrubs his body, but also shocked and ashamed, and immediately with hay to plug the hole, and moved to the sundries Covered, this peeping is a small culmination. The fourth peeping is still dark peeping, jujoudou into the livestock room to see the plug on the small hole was peeled open, it instinctively go to plug again, but a little thought, and then all move away, and then the real peeping began, jujoudou heard tianqing into the livestock room, intentionally stripped off the blouse, peeping tom yang tianqing first to see a woman's bruised back, and then jujoudou turn around, to peeping tom to show the front half of the bruised body. This voyeuristic scene is intriguing, no longer essentially voyeurism, but rather watching and performing, hunting and pandering. Here, the voyeurism in the movie reaches its climax and peak, as both the watcher and the watched are aware

of each other's existence, the watched performs for the watcher, the watcher cooperates with the watched's performance, and both parties pander to each other to complete the final "voyeurism". The fourth voyeurism is the first climax of the movie, and then comes one of the highest climaxes of the movie, the affair between Tianqing and Judou.



Figure 58 Four Voyeurisms of Yang Tianqing in the Movie Ju Dou

Source:<https://www.iqiyi.com/>[Accessed on June 8, 2023]

## 2) Affair

The movie's buildup to the affair first appeared in Tianqing's second peep at Judou, was walking down the stairs Judou found, but the two reacted differently, Tianqing panicked so much that he couldn't hold on to the wooden wheel, and Judou saw Tianqing's dilemma and pursed his lips in secret laughter. It is this smile that foreshadows the possibility and occurrence of the affair below. This is the only time in the film's four voyeurism, because the object being watched discovered, so the explicit voyeurism appeared once on the termination, just as the fourth voyeurism into a performance and watch, the voyeurism behavior on the complete end. It can be said that before the climax of the voyeurism occurs, all the previous episodes are padding for the voyeurism, therefore, all the four voyeurisms are padding for the voyeurism. In addition to these four voyeurisms, there are two other important face-to-face direct exchanges between the two, which directly pave the way for the affair. The first exchange occurs when Tianqing returns from a delivery and encounters Judou outside the village, who is returning to the village to make arrangements, and the two have a conversation, this time at eye level, with Tianqing concerned about the injuries on Judou's face and body; Judou is concerned about Tianqing's thinness, and the two show concern for each other. The second direct exchange occurs when Tianqing is standing on the wooden platform of the patio hanging purple and red dyed cloth, and Judou is standing at the bottom looking up and crying to Tianqing, saying that sooner or later she will be killed by the old thing, so that Tianqing will not stop. The implied meaning of the words is to beg for Tianqing's protection and to let Tianqing axe the old thing. The reason why Judeou is so bold is because one night before, Jinshan tortured Judeou, and Tianqing could no longer listen to Judeou's screams, axe-chopping the stairs and alerting Jinshan, who paused to torture Judeou that night. The next day, Judeau saw the axe marks on the stairs before she took the initiative to let Tianqing peek in. Judeou goes on to remind Tianqing that the old thing is sick and can't do it, it's just torture.

In Tianqing's second peek at Judeou, Tianqing looks up at Judeou, who is on the wooden platform of the patio, like a goddess. In their first direct exchange outside the village, the two men look up at each other, a metaphor for the fact that they are both weak relative to Yang Jinshan. In the second direct communication, compared

with the second peeping, the positions of Judea and Tianqing are reversed, and Judea looks up at Tianqing from below. The axe that Tianqing cuts on the staircase makes him the savior of Judea's heart, and Judea bravely and resolutely grabs the straw that saves her life. Utilizing the change in the characters' positions, the film powerfully illustrates the change in the status of the two through figurative film language.

Judea so directly hints at, and even understandably resorts to, Tianqing, but Tianqing's bloodlust is not aroused, as the movie again shows in graphic cinematic language. After Judea finishes crying, she covers her face and weeps bitterly, but Tianqing doesn't say anything, just mechanically continues to work, slowly lifting a red cloth to hang it up. Tianqing's slow movements and the soggy red cloth are a metaphor for the fact that Tianqing's revolutionary fervor is not sufficiently mobilized for a fierce conflict. However, Ju Dou did not give up on this life-saving straw.

Soon, Jinshan went out to treat his precious mule and could not return home overnight. When eating dinner, Judou stood and said, "The old thing is gone, what are you afraid of!" Tianqing cupped the bowl and squatted without saying anything, the woman is higher than the man, the woman has become a goddess again, and the position and role of the two of them have changed again. Hints are useless, the woman blamed Tianqing: "You are a wood!" That night, Ju Dou went downstairs and pushed Tianqing's door, which was plugged from the inside. After this desire to slow down the pace a bit, the climax of the movie, the cheating, finally happens.

According to de Beauvoir, due to the suppression of a traditionally patriarchal society, "a woman has an unquenchable interest in the adventures of the heart, the flesh, and the mind, so that she understands that this is all she has gained on earth, and is willing to indulge her feelings, to chew on her feelings, and to elucidate the meaning of them." (Simone de Beauvoir, 2011, p. 255) On the wooden platform in the patio, in the middle of the red and purple cloths that the sunlight reflected brightly and colorfully, Judou sat on the wooden planks that were supported, and Tianqing squatted next to her, and the two of them each ate their own meals. The woman wryly asked Tianqing: "What are you afraid of?" Tianqing skeptically asked, "What am I afraid of?" The woman said: "I'm not afraid, what door to close?" She put down the bowl and said, "You are also a five-foot-tall man," while walking to Tianqing and squatted down beside him, grabbed the radish Tianqing was eating, and stroked Tianqing's naked upper body while saying, "Do you see that Auntie looks like a wolf?" The woman took a bite of Tianqing's radish, pulled Tianqing's face and said with a smile, "Are you afraid I'll eat you?" Tianqing said with a nervous face: "My uncle he ....." The woman rubbed her head against Tianqing while saying: "Don't mention him, let the old thing die. How are you not afraid of people when you peek at me?" Tianqing put down the bowl and stood up, said nervously: "Then you two back how not to plug the hole?" The woman also stood up and patted Tianqing from the back, saying while crying: "Tianqing, this body of auntie is reserved for you." Under the woman's touch, Tianqing violently turned around and threw the woman down on the wooden platform.



Figure 59 The first and last affair of Judeo and Yang Tianqing in the movie Judeo  
Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

What makes Tianqing finally break through the psychological barrier and boldly have an affair with Judou is precisely the padding made by the fourth peeping in the front. Here, the woman first pointed out that Tianqing spied on her, Tianqing was shocked, and then defended herself, blaming Judou for not plugging the hole again. In fact, they have no secrets to tell each other, and the obstacles are lifted, which is why Tianqing finally rises up and boldly pounces on Judou. In the movie, voyeurism is the prelude to lovemaking. In the movie, not only do both of them know about the voyeurism, but it is the voyeurism that makes both of them finally lift their guard and psychological burden, and boldly have sex with each other. Voyeurism and lovemaking are organically linked in the movie and become a complete plot series.

"Zhang Yimou's story of illegal, unconventional sexual themes may seem very 'anti-conventional' and controversial, but in fact the creator is quite serious about using the most traditional methods to deal with the 'sexual' representation. Representation, the film always focuses on the conflict between sex and morality, which ultimately leads to compassion, sympathy and respect for the fate of women." (Tian Xing, 2015, p.8) Judou, who is pounced upon by Tianqing, stirs the mechanism in her excitement, and the red cloth falls from the sky and falls back into the red dye pool, which is accompanied by the woman's excited head movements, a metaphor for the two of them reaching a sexual, emotional peak. It seems that the falling red cloth is not enough to express the cathartic emotion. Next, in the sound of melodious music, the camera pans upward from the dyeing pool where the red cloth fell, and the main part of the picture is full of bright red dyeing cloth under the sunlight, and the angle of backlighting and backlighting makes the picture present a warm red color. "Meaning is gained in viewing, and the image is an invitation, which itself does not say much, but through 'viewing', invites the viewer to join in the production of meaning." (Xie Hongsheng, 2012, p.169)

From the entire plot of the movie, Zhang Yimou's setting of the location of Judeo's first affair with Tianqing was not chosen arbitrarily, but had its arrangement and implication. "The wooden platform in the patio is a tower in the air, suggesting that the emotional relationship between the two is not firmly rooted and has no positive results. At the same time, the red dyed cloth falling into the dyeing pool and the woman's soaked red corset, which is a large amount of red, on the one hand, is a

metaphor for the eruption of the long suppressed feelings of the two at that time, and on the other hand, it also hints to the audience in the language of the movie that the result of this cheating will be bloody, which to a certain extent implies the plot that will come later on" (Ching Hui-chieh, 2010, p. 14). This is a very interesting arrangement. Because in the ending part of the movie, Judeo and Tianqing have their last affair in their life course. The two people who eat on the wooden platform of the patio and discuss to be a couple again, but instead of doing it right there on the wooden platform of the patio, they hide in the cellar to make out. If the elevated wooden platform in the patio is heaven, on which the two begin the joyous song of life, then the cellar symbolizes hell, where the love of the two actually ends. Yang Tianbai carries his unconscious mother out of the cellar and puts her back to bed, but throws Tianqing, his biological father, who is also unconscious, into the dyeing pool, and with a blow to the head causes Tianqing to eventually drown in the pool. This analogy between the high platform and the cellar, heaven and hell, is expressed through the movie with intuitive clarity, giving the audience a strong, contrasting visual stimulus.

The "incest" story of Ju Dou and Yang Tianqing is used in Zhang Yimou's film to reveal the unreasonable feudal ethical order that still existed during the Republic of China.

#### 4.3 Rites and Fame

Although Jude Beans talks about the topic of incest, it is at least subjective and radical to consider Jude Beans merely as incest. Zhang Yimou seems to have had the foresight to set up a reasonably solid defense: Yang Jinshan, the owner of the dye house, and Yang Tianqing, the hero, are not really uncle and nephew; Yang Tianqing is only Yang Jinshan's adopted neighbor, who is oppressed and exploited as a free laborer in the Yang family's dye house. To regard the love between Yang Tianqing and Judou as incest merely on the basis of this relationship is to misinterpret the work.

Yang Tianqing is a pedantic and honest man, and even though he has done such "disobedient" things as falling in love with his aunt Judou, it is still difficult for him to break out of the circle of "propriety" in terms of thinking and psychology. Judea is a reflection of rural women in the Republican period. Although she has made some resistance, she still has to rely on a man in the end, only that she has changed from a "bad old man" to another man. Yang Jinshan represents a kind of power, which is supreme, even if he is paralyzed, but also can make you afraid of the existence, even if he is dead, his influence is also everywhere, and immediately there will be a new agent (Yang Tianbai) to take over his position. Zhang Yimou didn't have Yang Jinshan killed by Yang Tianqing or Ju Dou, so he designed Yang Tianbai to unintentionally pull the rope by the dye pool. The character of Yang Tianbai is even more interesting, he is not a pure person, he is more like a synthesis of "the world's murmur", people say that he is Yang Jinshan's child, he called Yang Jinshan "father", people say that his mother Judou stole a man, he absorbed this emotion and slowly grew, and when he grew up, he became a man of the world. He absorbed this emotion and slowly grew into an emotional puppet when he grew up. In the "world of dyeing" formed by these four people, there are amplified desires, female "wounds" that have been given shape, and the white sky that symbolizes the world. In the world of the dyeing workshop, everything will grow old and die, but only the hanging cloth

is the unchanging master here, the cloth is always looked up to, and the cloth still dances madly in the fire. ....

From being betrayed and ravaged, to the pursuit of love and finally destroyed, Judeo's fate has completed a tragic circle. If the first half of the movie doesn't make us feel very "fresh", the second half of the movie can't help but shock us. After Yang Jinshan's death, both the protagonist and the audience will breathe a sigh of relief, and we will think that Tianqing and Judou's lives will turn around. But the opposite is true: the oppression of the name of propriety has become more intense and harsh. And the main enforcers of this ritualistic name are not only the clan eunuchs and others, but also Yang Tianbai, the biological son of Yang Tianqing and Judou. Yang Tianbai not only denied his own father, but also killed and forced his own parents to death, which can not be said to be a shocking human tragedy.

Tianqing is pedantic and honest, even if he did something "disobedient" like falling in love with his aunt Judou, it is still difficult for him to jump out of the circle of "etiquette" in his mind and psychology; Judou is a reflection of women in the same period of time, although she has made a certain amount of resistance, but in the end she still relies on a man; Yang Jinshan represents a kind of power/force, which is supreme, even if it is paralyzed, it can still make you feel like a man. The old mastermind also knew that he could not be killed by Tianqing or Judou, so the pull of Tianbai became a helpless move; the character of Tianbai is even more interesting, he is not a pure and simple man, he is not a man of the world. More interesting, he is not a pure person, he is more like "the world of noise" complex, people say he is the child of Yang Jinshan, he called Yang Jinshan "father"; others say his mother Judea steal a man, he absorbed this emotion slowly grows, to be grown up to become a puppet of emotion. When he grows up, he becomes a puppet of his emotions. Tianqing must die, and the dye house must be burned, because "everyone" is always on the side of victory; in the "world of the dye house" formed by these four people, there are enlarged desires, and there are women who are endowed with "wounds" and "pains". In the "world of dyeing" formed by these four people, there are amplified desires, female "wounds" that have been given shape, and the white of the sky that symbolizes the world; in the world of dyeing, everything grows old and dies, and the only unchanging master of this place is the cloth that hangs up high, which is always looked up to, and which dances crazily in the fire. ....

Yang Tianqing in Yang Jinshan long-term domestication and enslavement, become timid and cowardly, the yoke of feudal society "rituals" imprisoned all his, Judou's initiative to "sacrifice", so that he broke free from the "bondage! The "bondage" was broken by the active "sacrifice" of Judea. Perhaps it is the same disease, or perhaps because of sex love, they are together, Judea soon became pregnant, and gave birth to a boy named "Yang Tianbai", the unknown truth of Yang Jinshan ecstatic. In that feudal era, men were the "sky" and women were just the "tools" for succession, and in the movie, the family meeting of the Yang family appeared several times, basically discussing the "succession" of the Yang family, so it can be imagined that the Yang family's "succession" is a very important issue. "It can be imagined how low the status of women is.

Not long after Judea gave birth to her child, Yang Jinshan was paralyzed. Those were probably the happiest days of her life, but she still wasn't free under Yang Jinshan's watchful eye. She wanted Yang Tianqing to take her and the baby far away,

but Yang Tianqing didn't dare. Why don't you dare? Because he is still cowardly in his bones, so he never dared to take Judea and the child to escape, he always had the opportunity to kill Yang Jinshan, but he did not dare (also on account of raising him, he could not do it).

There is a scene in the movie where Yang Tianqing is forced to call Judou "aunt" and his son "brother" at the children's New Year's Eve banquet, and he is humiliated, but he doesn't dare to tell the truth. His oppressive upbringing has left him with no courage to resist his fate.



Figure 60 Yang Tianbai's third birthday party in the movie Ju Dou

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

As for Yang Jinshan, when he knew that Judea and Yang Tianqing's affair, for the sake of the family "ritual" face, he swallowed his anger, secretly determined to revenge. The best revenge is to kill Yang Tianbai, the child of Judea and Yang Tianqing. The first time he tried to kill Yang Tianbai, the second time he tried to kill him by setting fire, but he failed. The third time he had a chance, but he lost to the word "father". He figured it out and decided to change his strategy. He did not want to kill Yang Tianbai, killing someone who called him "father" would not do him any good, but he wanted to use Yang Tianbai to transfer his many years of grudges and hatred to this child.

Yang Jinshan planted a seed of hatred in Yang Tianbai's heart, making him hate his own parents. Yang Tianbai, born in such a deformed environment, is destined to be a "victim" of the times. He was never close to his real parents, and never called Yang Tianqing "dad", but he took the initiative to recognize Yang Jinshan as his father, as if he was taking revenge on Yang Tianqing and Judou, but in his heart, he was full of hatred for these two dads. He witnessed his mother cheating on him with Yang Tianqing since he was a child, and he was ashamed and resentful. He grew up in the midst of gossip, and the feudal society's "etiquette" was an invisible shackle.

Judea's persistence and stubbornness, and Tianqing's warmth and affection, all lose their power in front of the tiny Tianbai. Tianqing never dared to recognize Tianbai as his son, nor did he dare to flee to another country with Judou. After the death of Yang Jinshan, Judou also dared not openly marry Tianqing, but could only hide the secret meeting with Tianqing from Tianbai. The name of the ritual is like a big mountain in front of them, no one can overcome this huge obstacle. The magic of ritual makes Judea and Tianqing weak and insignificant, but on the contrary, it makes Tianbai cruel and powerful. Tianbai's power to kill his own parents comes from thousands of years of patriarchal society.

In the movie, Yang Tianbai unintentionally "pushed" Yang Jinshan into the water, but he laughed out loud when he saw Yang Jinshan struggling in the water. He had never felt his father's love, and for a "father" who abetted hatred since childhood,

Yang Jinshan's death was his first rebellion against fate. His mother's love for him, since childhood, was divided by Yang Tianqing half, he was unwilling, more resentment, because he wanted to get all the love of his mother. Resentment piles up little by little, will eventually explode, he killed his biological father Yang Tianqing, is his complete rebellion against fate. Because he does not have to be entangled in whose son, from now on he has only one identity "Ju Dou's son".

The tragedy of human nature under the oppression of feudalism, everyone is pitiful. Judea was bought as a daughter-in-law and is not free; Yang Jinshan is not free because he has no posterity; Yang Tianqing is not free because of the world; Yang Tianbai is not free because of gossip. Everyone is a victim, but no one asks what went wrong. Judea, who came from the dye house, knows best, because of her "cowardice". Judea has the courage to resist, but in the end can not escape this era, her fate or only rely on another man. All the tragedies still stem from the feudal shackles, and the narrow-mindedness of the world's concepts will eventually destroy all.

The profundity of *The Chrysanthemum Bean* lies in its revelation of the distortion of human nature by the name of propriety. Here, almost everyone is not spared. Although Judeou is stubborn, he cannot help but fall at its feet; although Tianqing is affectionate, he can only collect his love for Judeou; although Yang Jinshan has long lost his humanity, Tianbai's cry of "father" makes him "tolerate" Judeou and Tianqing; the young Tianbai can heartlessly beat his own father to death! Tianbai, at a young age, was able to beat his own father to death! Ritual itself is illusory and hypocritical, but it is a steel knife that kills.

Therefore, *The Chrysanthemum Bean* is a sad song which exposes the great conflict between the pursuit of humanity and the impersonal society and culture. The root of the characters' tragedy lies in the oppression of rites and fame, and the distortion of human nature under the oppression of rites and fame. What is even sadder is that, as a kind of corrupt traditional culture, it can be stereotyped and passed on from generation to generation.

#### 4.4 Elder Rule and the Patriarchal Order

It is Fei Xiaotong's conclusion from his comprehensive examination of Chinese society that the rule of elders is the main structural feature of the power structure of traditional Chinese vernacular society. Fei Xiaotong suggests in his book *"Vernacular China"* that the rule of elders is "neither tyrannical nor consensual in nature; it occurs neither in social conflict nor in social cooperation; it occurs in the process of social succession, and it is an indoctrination type of power, or a fatherly type" (Fei Xiaotong, 2007, p.69). He further explains that in the vernacular society, "every older person holds the power of indoctrination to force the younger ones, 'to come out as a brotherly friend', and to be respectful and submissive to this power in the presence of the older ones" (Fei Xiaotong, 2007, p. 73). What we usually call elders can be understood as elders and old men, and the emergence of the power of elders is closely related to the Chinese culture of filial piety, and the prevalence of filial piety culture cannot be separated from the characteristics of the agricultural economic production, so the rule of elders is vernacular in origin. The emergence and consolidation of the power of the elders originated from the sprouting of moral concepts with the development of human civilization, and also reflected the objective and practical demand for the knowledge and experience of the elderly and elders in the stable and cyclical agricultural production, coupled with the promotion and

propagation of the ruling class, the culture of filial piety was gradually transformed into the official mainstream of the traditional Chinese society, and filial piety became an important standard of measurement for the moral and cultural cultivation of the Chinese people, and gradually took over the countryside. Elders also gradually occupied the top of the power structure of the vernacular society.

The movie "Ju Dou" shows the two-way interaction or intense collision between individual characters and the power of the elders, and artistically depicts the inherent power order of clan power, father's power and husband's power dominated by male authority in traditional Chinese society. The movie demonstrates the great power of the elders' rule in the vernacular society, whose omnipresent coercive binding force and insidious influence make the individuals who aspire to love and happiness fall into pitiful and pathetic sacrifices. Yang Jinshan is Judou's husband, Yang Tianqing's elder, and Yang Tianbai's nominal father. Yang Jinshan's monotonous and mundane appearance in the movie, his not-so-noble personality traits, his stingy and calculating behavior, his incapacity to bear children, and his harshness and cruelty towards his nephew, all these shortcomings have not prevented him from gaining dominance and power over the family and the dye house in the capacity of a husband, elder, and a "father". dominance of the family and the dye house as a husband, elder, and "father". This setting touches on the essence of power acquisition in traditional vernacular societies: the possession of power can have nothing to do with morality, quality, knowledge, or physical fitness, and vernacular power can just be a natural and logical derivative of the position of the elders and the blood-marriage relationship. In the eyes of modern people, this way of acquiring power may not be rational, but in the traditional vernacular context, this way is not only rational and legal, but also unquestionable.

The image of the elders in Ju Dou transcends their individuality and "has a strong symbolic and emblematic meaning; the elders as individuals can disappear and die, but the power of the elders behind them has always existed in a deep-rooted and ghostly manner" (Wang Xuwen, 2014, p. 11). Taking the image of Yang Jinshan as an example, his weak physical body absolutely cannot support his violent character; rather, it is the clan power, father's power and husband's power that he carries that accomplishes his toughness and superiority. Even though Yang Jinshan has later become seriously ill and weak, from an ethical point of view, he will always be Judou's husband and Yang Tianbai's father, and the rules and system behind him are not only deep-rooted but also unbreakable. The relationship between Yang Tianqing and Judou cannot be recognized and supported by the people around them, nor can it be permitted by the ethical, moral and legal systems. The gap between the two men's identities is present throughout the film, and the impulse of their feelings and desires to go against the norms of morality, in the face of the strong systemic pressure formed by the rule of the Elders, has been completely reduced to a kind of tragic destiny, which they are trying to get rid of, but are unable to avoid. The strength and firmness of the Elders' rule magnifies the cowardice and weakness of Yang Tianqing's character, and makes his thoughts and actions to break through the established system around him cowering and powerless. Until the end of the movie, when Judou witnesses Yang Tianbai's tyrannical abuse of his biological father, and finally reveals the whole truth, Tianqing still responds with a cry of "Auntie", which contains a sense of helplessness, cowardice, and inability to adapt. The helplessness, timidity and

inability to do anything are obvious. Under the influence of traditional ethical and moral concepts, Yang Tianqing's psychological state and behavior are obviously contradictory, on the one hand pointing to the individual's desire and lust, and on the other hand to the deep-rooted concepts of loyalty and filial piety, which is the root cause of the tragedy of her fate.

In the movie, the highest power is often not a specific person, but the abstract "rules", it is the power of the elders hidden behind the curtain and the traditional ethical and moral concepts, manipulate and control the life and death of the characters in the scene, forming a kind of nothing formation, let the characters left and right, but still have no way to go, no place to go. In Judeou, the "elders" of the Yang family prohibit Judeou from remarrying in the name of "old rules," and in order to avoid gossip, they ask Yang Tianqing to move out of the Yang family's dye house. In front of the old rules, Judea and Yang Tianqing have no room to argue but to obey them unconditionally, and the relationship between the two of them is further defined and consolidated, and Yang Tianqing's status as Yang Tianbai's brother is lost.

Although Yang Jinshan is old, physically weak and "incapable", Yang Jinshan, who has already lost the ability to bear children, still demonstrates his possession of Judeou through the venting of desire and physical violence in the name of marriage ethics, and does his best to maintain the dignity of his husband's right. At the same time, Yang Jinshan is supported by a series of family rules. Therefore, the symbolization and significance that Yang Jinshan possesses gives him a long-lasting spiritual vitality. The death of his physical body does not mean the disappearance of his power, and the father's power, husband's power, and the clan's power behind him are still acting stubbornly in reality.

The insidious presence of the elders' rule creates the tragic fate of the movie characters while inflicting heavy spiritual depression on individuals. With the power of the elders behind him and the support of the local rules and system, Yang Jinshan, the husband who has lost the ability to bear children and the nominal father of Tianbai, realizes the solid moral possession of Judou and gains an unbreakable authority and dominance over the whole family, which is very different from Yang Tianqing's position and situation. As an individual "born and raised" in a rural society, Yang Tianqing is unable to break free from the prescriptive nature of the thousands of years of cultural traditions of the rural society. In his logic, obedience and filial piety to his father's authority is a reasonable and natural thing. Yang Tianqing never forgets his status as a junior and Yang Jinshan's kindness in raising him; he willingly serves as an ox, silently endures Yang Jinshan's harshness and exploitation, and at the same time habitually accepts or is compelled to accept and abide by the traditional morals and ethics, as well as to bear the misfortunes and sufferings inflicted on him by the rule of the elders. Yang Jinshan's possession of Judou is backed by a strong enough moral support, while Yang Tianqing's relationship with Judou can only be defined as treacherous incest in the spectrum of traditional morality. The conflict between the moral order and power of the elders in the rural society and Yang Tianqing's inner emotions and desires leads to the split and contradiction of his character and actions, and this contradiction and inaction will eventually lead him and Judou to an unavoidable tragic end.

"Since the birth of mankind, desire has sprung up with it. People's rational contemplation of themselves is, to a considerable extent, the pursuit and purging of their own desires. As a result of the depth of self-examination, desire also takes on a completely different defective form that refracts the obscurity of human nature, and takes on a complex cultural significance." (Chen Linman, 2007, p.40) Judeo paints a profound picture of male power and the order brought by such power, expressing the sadness and joy of the characters' destinies under the action of various complicated "power fields".

"It is undeniable that thousands of years of feudal traditions have made the corners of China closed under the strict rule of patriarchy for thousands of years, and because of the long-term stagnation of the patriarchal society, the people are in an isolated and barren and closed environment, and they have retained, to a greater or lesser extent, the ancient and simple factors and historical traces inherited from the past thousands of years, in terms of their customs, religious rituals, living rules and psychological beliefs, etc. " (Chai Ying, 2011, p. 129). Ju Dou uses almost deformed customs and traditional rituals to describe the ignorance and backwardness of the rural people under the patriarchal system of male supremacy and the consequent confinement of people's spirit and body, and at the same time, we are also able to see from the portrayal of the male head of the family in the movie that a strong sense of male power in fact controls the patriarchal rural areas.

The so-called power is not political power in the narrow sense, but dominance and control in the broader sense. The patriarchal order of male power is still the main relationship that dominates the operation of rural society during the Republican period, and it has become a theme that is difficult to bypass in the discourse of power. The characters in Judea live in a remote and isolated mountain village in a deep house, which epitomizes the rural family in old China. People's lives are unchanging and almost stagnant, and the confinement of male power exerts a suffocating pressure on people's minds and bodies. Yang Jinshan in Judea is the representative of male power in the feudal society, and all the people and objects in the movie are enveloped in his power. His appearances in the movie extremely emphasize this social status. When Yang Jinshan appears in the movie, drinking and eating at the four-sided table in the high walled courtyard, his nephew Yang Tianqing, who has been going out for business for several months, comes back home and asks him with a blank face why he has just come back, and Yang Tianqing smiles and says: "The soldiers are in a state of chaos." Yang Jinshan said viciously: "How did not die outside." The timid and indecent Yang Tianqing carefully handed over the money earned to Yang Jinshan, but Yang Jinshan did not smile, but complained that he came back too late, and starved the livestock thin.

Throughout the first half of the film, Yang Jinshan's nephew Yang Tianqing and his wife Judou's every move in their daily lives are all under Yang Jinshan's control, and Yang Jinshan's curses and yells are always echoing in the dyeing workshop of the compound, making him the absolute ruler of the family. The movie highlights and strongly accuses the idea of male power, but as the controller of male power, he is omnipresent and omnipotent, but also erratic and untouchable, with a certain degree of disability. His unquestionable mastery of power makes him the spokesman and absolute ruler in a patriarchal society, but Zhang Yimou has

intentionally made him with certain deficiencies: Yang Jinshan becomes paralyzed and unable to take care of himself after one-third of the story because of an accidental fall from a cliff, and has to be humiliatingly cared for by his enemies Yang Tianqing and Judou, and finally even simply drowned in a dyeing pool by his nominal son, Yang Tianbai. accidentally drowned in the dye pool.

"The tragedy of the movie is also demonstrated through that symbolic funeral shot: Tianbai sits high on the coffin and becomes an agent of Yang Jinshan, constituting a kind of regeneration ritual" (Yin Han, 2016, p. 96). The funeral in Ju Dou "can be found in northwestern Fujian with similar traditional customs" "Zhang Yimou's advantage over others lies in his ability to sublimate oriental culture from folklore and use it as a means of making a profound statement about humanism and the current state of existence in an ambiguous era, and the artistic connotations of his films are more inclined to a 'metaphorical China'" (Yin Han, 2016, p. 96). The artistic connotation of his movie is more inclined to the exploration of 'metaphorical China', so the folklore is not dealt with purely as an 'exotic flavor', but dissolved in the movie story as a part of the plot" (Zhou Jing, 2014, p. 46). The most classic ritual in Judeo is the "blocking of the coffin", which can be regarded as the boundary between Judeo's and Tianqing's lives, from freedom to repression. After Yang Jinshan's death, the Yang clan decided to let Judou and Tianqing block the coffin. "According to the rules of our ancestors, when Jinshan's brothers have their funeral tomorrow, Tianqing and Judou should block the coffin to show their filial piety. The village had some rumors about the two of them, tomorrow we Yang family young and old men are in, filial piety or not, is black or white, they all see clearly. So, at the funeral, the son of Judea and Yang Tianqing, Yang Tianbai, dressed in mourning clothes and expressionless, sat high above Yang Jinshan's coffin, literally the embodiment of Yang Jinshan, overlooking or monitoring Judea and Tianqing to complete the torture of their mental and physical seven seventy-four-nine times to block the coffin ceremony, Judea and Tianqing in order to show their innocence, end of the best efforts to complete the blocking of the coffin ceremony. When Judou and Tianqing pounce on the coffin with all their strength, when the coffin is lifted over them, when they run to the coffin again with all their strength and repeat this behavior again and again, we have to sigh that although Yang Jinshan is dead, the male authority of patriarchy is not dead, it is like the coffin that presses on their bodies, which makes the life of the two of them so heavy and difficult, and they live their whole life not like human beings. people.



Figure 61 Yang Jinshan's funeral and the "coffin blocking" ceremony in the movie "Judou".

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

This patriarchal system of male supremacy has been passed down from generation to generation, and it is not Yang Jinshan's patent, nor can it be ended in him. In this regard, Yang Jinshan is also a member of the patriarchal male society that is being disciplined, only that they are disciplined in a different direction from the rest of the people. Yang Jinshan is dead, but he is always like a ghost wandering in the corners of this deep house, lingering, his "absence" precisely shows his "presence", and also shows the power of his strong and deep-rooted, patriarchal patriarchal ideology in the The patriarchal idea of male power exists everywhere in the Yang Family Dyeing House, like high walls and tiles, disciplining the men (Yang Jinshan, Yang Tianqing, Yang Tianbai, etc.) and, more importantly, the women. Whether Yang Jinshan is dead or alive, Judea and Tianqing will always be in secret, unable to see the light of day. Yang Jinshan's death does not loosen their shackles, but rather makes them heavier, and even causes Judea to lose all the people she loves the most, and she ultimately chooses to resist the patriarchal system by destroying herself and everything else, but the power of her resistance is so insignificant that it will not make a difference.

#### 4.5 The Tragedy of Patricide

Yang Tianqing, the patricide in Ju Dou, is unfortunately bound to the closed Yang family courtyard, as well as to the village Hongshuiyu, which consists of a number of such courtyards. This closed courtyard is the very symbol of the strict traditional order of fatherhood. From the first time Yang Tianqing leads his donkey into the iron house-like courtyard in the overhead shot, he is doomed to never leave this strict web of patriarchal authority. Yang Tianqing's patricide action towards his father, Yang Jinshan, is only manifested in the fact that he cheats on his father with Judou in the dye house, and out of remorse for his own unfilial behavior and sins, he continues to serve Yang Jinshan after he becomes paralyzed, which can only be a limited patricide that is both subordinate to his father and patricidal. In contrast to Yang Tianqing's limited patricide, Yang Jinshan's suppression and punishment of him is unlimited - this is the deep family power at work. Yang Jinshan not only manages to put Yang Tianqing and Judou to death many times, but also has an invisible and omnipresent deterrent power over them even after their deaths. In the name of ancestral rules, the patriarch of the family kicks Yang Tianqing out of the Yang family and separates him from Judea, thus shattering their illusions. At the same time, the two are made to stop the coffin and cry seventy-fourty-nine times to show their filial piety. The audience sees that in the voluminous funeral procession, Tianqing and Judou, dressed in mourning clothes, cry at the top of their voices and against their will: "(His father), you can't go, you can't go ", while in the low-camera shot, the huge and heavy coffin head slowly and heavily Moving, seems to be to crush Yang Tianqing and Ju Dou under or engulfed in one fell swoop. The two of them get up, go after it and stop it again, and so on and so forth for a total of forty-nine times. The "slow motion" images under the high-speed photography make this process fully ritualized, and the cruelty of this ritual is rendered so heartfelt that it cannot be repeated. Yang Tianqing, who is harboring an attempt to kill his father, if he had the courage to resist a series of feudal dogmas and rules imposed on him and Judou before, he was so shaken down that his spiritual defenses were collapsed, and his

impulse to kill his father had to be drowned in the huge wave of his father's impulse. After this two-minute-long narrative segment, the camera soars high into the sky, allowing the audience, like an omniscient narrator, to witness from above the desolate scene of Yang Tianqing and Judou sitting on the ground in solitude, numbness and despair in a world of paper money fluttering in the sky.

Yang Tianqing's fate is indeed unfortunate enough, and the intervention of his son with Judea, his nominal brother Yang Tianbai, is undoubtedly an added burden. When he managed to survive the great mental torture of stopping the coffin and crying for Yang Jinshan, thinking that he could enjoy the happiness with Judou and his son, Yang Tianbai, he found himself facing a new and seemingly irreconcilable enemy, his son, Yang Tianbai, on the one hand, in the role of a "surrogate father" to monitor and prevent his Judou's intimate behavior. On the other hand, his son, Yang Tianbai, in the role of a "surrogate father", monitors and prevents his Judou's intimate behavior, while on the other hand, in the role of a son, his eyes are flickering with the same patricidal flames as those of Yang Tianqing's when he is facing Yang Jinshan. In terms of determination and boldness in patricide, this son is indeed far superior to his real father. If Yang Tianbai childhood in the dyeing game accidentally killed the incompetent legal and nominal father Yang Jinshan, is still the original implicit patricide move, then, after he grew up in the big dye pool ferociously will be the nominal brother and biological father Yang Tianqing down the dye pool, resulting in Yang Tianqing drowning and death, is the unprecedented bold clear patricide "feat". It is true that his patricide of his legal father made him confident that he could replace his father, which not only won him sympathy and praise from Yang Tianqing and Judou, but also from the audience; however, his ferocious killing of his biological father (the real killing) not only forced him to look at his mother with complex disappointment and despair in the years to come, but also destroyed in the audience's heart the legal father who had been constructed through the removal of the sin. father, Yang Jinshan, by removing the criminal law. His mother's gut-wrenching cry, "He is your own father", is destined to accompany and torment him for the rest of his life, thus causing him to repeat Oedipus' act of patricide. Yang Tianqing, who also follows his father and kills his father, is killed by his son, which finally declares the tragedy of his patricide action; and Yang Tianbai, who boldly kills his father, finally falls into the horrible ethical trap of irredeemable death by successively eliminating his two fathers. Thus, he still cannot escape the tragic destiny of the Yang family elders.



Figure 62 Yang Tianbai killed two fathers in the movie "Ju Dou"

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on June 8, 2023]

Thus, through the repetition of the tragic fates of the two generations of patricides, a traditional fatherly authority and family order are also shown. The naming ceremony of Yang Tianbai, the funeral arrangement of Yang Jinshan, and the expulsion of Yang Tianqing from the Yang family's dyeing house, and the widowhood of Judeou, who is not allowed to remarry, have already demonstrated that the family power has penetrated into the entire structure of the family relationship. As symbolized by the closed pattern of the Yang family courtyard, the authority of the traditional father and the family order is so tight and powerful that it overflows the whole space, generating a great deterrent power, firmly trapping the rebellious souls of the two generations of patricides, and forcing them to suffer from the destruction of their bodies (e.g., Yang Tianqing) or their minds (e.g., Yang Tianbai) in the end. More importantly, this authority of the traditional father and the family order "is so deep, broad and impregnable that it seems to have predetermined, permanently, the inescapable destiny of defeat for any patricide" (Wang Yichuan, 1998, p. 102).

During the Republic of China, the feudal ethical order was still one of the leading norms of social life. This feudal ethical order was deeply rooted in social culture and had a profound impact on family, marriage, education, etc. Zhang Yimou in the movie "Ju Dou" This point of view is used and expressed in the book, criticizing the restraint and harm of the feudal ethical order on people, especially women.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter uses the concept of "consuming history" to specifically analyze the movie "Ju Dou". This film tells the story of "incest" that happened in a middle-class rural family who made a living by dyeing cloth. The history and culture of the Republic of China, such as commercial marriages, men's remarriage, traditions of dyeing and handicrafts, ancestor worship, feudal ethics, feudal etiquette, family patriarchal systems, funeral customs, widows' observances, and wars, were consumed. The dyeing workshop is the place where the story takes place, and it is also a symbol of the feudal ethical order. The dyeing cloth, dyeing ponds, ancestral halls, cellars, etc. related to the dyeing workshop are important settings in the film. Fertility customs such as birth, naming, and birthday celebrations, as well as customs such as worshipping ancestors, weeping spirits, blocking coffins, and not allowing widows to remarry, not only convey profound cultural connotations, but also strengthen the film's focus on the impact of the feudal ethical order on people, especially women, the theme of bondage.

## Chapter V

### Raise the Red Lantern: The red lantern tells a story of family

#### intrigues

#### Introduction

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the film information; the second part introduces the original novel and film of "Raise the Red Lantern"; the third part introduces "Signs and Symbols: Lantern Ceremony"; the fourth part introduces "The Ultimate Art Form: Audiovisual Shape". The film "Raise the Red Lantern" used the history and social culture of the Republic of China, such as the polygamous marriage system, red lanterns, Peking opera, large mansions, patriarchal society, and feudal ethical order. The writing of this chapter will contribute to the analysis of Chapter 6 "Red Trilogy: Reflection of Chinese Social Culture during the Republic of China".

#### Part 1: Movie Information

This part introduces the main content and related information of the movie "Raise the Red Lantern".

##### 1.1 Plot of the Movie

During the Republican era, a castle-like Chen Mansion is located in a certain town. Chen Zuoqian (Ma Jingwu), the owner of the house, has a wife, Yuru (Kim Suk-won), a second aunt, Zhuo Yun, and a third aunt, Mei Shan (Ho Sai Fei), a 19-year-old university student, Songlian (Gong Li), who, due to a change in her family's fortunes, is forced by her stepmother to drop out of school and marry into the house, becoming the Fourth Aunt of the Chen Master.

Everyone in the Chen family had to follow the rules left behind by their ancestors, and everything had to be done according to the rules. There is a special rule in the Chen family, every evening, the wives of each house must come out and stand in front of the door of their own courtyard, like commodities waiting to be picked, and when Master Chen decides which aunt he wants to spend the night with, a large red lantern will be hung high in front of the door of that aunt's room. This not only signified that auntie's favor, but also meant that she would enjoy a series of privileges, such as foot pounding at night, special meals and a la carte treatment. However, if she made a mistake or offended the master, she would be "sealed off", i.e., the red lantern would be wrapped in a black cloth cover and hung up high, symbolizing her loss of favor and coldness.

As soon as she enters the Chen residence, the young and beautiful Songlian is caught in the middle of the rivalry between the wives of several houses, and the maid Yan'er, who dreams of becoming a concubine, is also hostile to her.

Gradually losing favor, Songlian pretends to be pregnant in order to turn the situation around and hangs a "long bright lamp" in front of her door day and night. However, Yan'er discovers the truth when she washes her clothes and informs her second aunt Zhuo Yun about it, and Songlian is "shut down". Before Yan'er told the truth, Songlian had discovered that Yan'er had hidden the old lanterns, and she had originally planned to keep it a secret, but when she realized that it was Yan'er who

had told the truth, she revealed it to the public. Yan'er kneels in the snow but never admits her mistake and eventually dies.

The deaths of Fengdeng and Yan'er have left Songlian in a trance and depressed, and she often drowns her sorrows in alcohol. After a drunken stupor, she inadvertently reveals the secret of her third concubine Mei Shan's affair with Dr. Gao. Mui Shan was hanged to death in the corner house of the Chen Mansion. Songlian suffers a nervous breakdown and becomes insane.

In the spring of the following year, the Chen residence welcomes a fifth aunt, the already insane Songlian, who wanders around the Chen residence in a schoolgirl outfit.



Figure 63 Raise the Red Lantern movie poster

Source: <https://image.baidu.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

## 1.2 Other Information

"Raise the Red Lantern" released in 1991 is the last part of Zhang Yimou's "Red Trilogy". Like "Red Sorghum" and "Ju Dou", it is adapted from novels by contemporary Chinese writers. "Raise the Red Lantern" is adapted from Su Tong's novel "Wives and Concubines" (Su Tong, 1989, p. 4-27). Different from the original author of "Red Sorghum" and "Ju Dou" who is also the screenwriter of the film, the screenwriter of this film is not the original author Su Tong, but Ni Zhen. Zhang Yimou said that the film adaptations were approved by the original author.

In 1991, the film won the Silver Lion at the 48th Venice International Film Festival, and in 1992, it was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, becoming the second Chinese film to be nominated for this award after Judeo.

Zhang Yimou was in the flamboyant period of his artistic creation when he made the films Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum, and Big Red Lanterns Hanging High. As a director in the critical stage of social transformation and his personal creative exuberance, Zhang Yimou's film works at this stage have a strong personal subjective initiative, extremely distinctive visual colors, and rich and even exaggerated stylistic symbols and camera close-ups. Through these symbols of strong and flamboyant imagery, Zhang Yimou demonstrated his thinking about the value of life for the general public, his rebellion against the old feudal ethics and his desire for the power

of vivid life. These strong personality traits made him an outstanding representative of the "fifth generation" of directors. Former French ambassador Maarten once said, "The whole world knows Zhang Yimou and his films ..... 'Big Red Lanterns' and 'Qiu Ju's Lawsuit' have had a strong impact in France, where these two films have been playing for a year in record time." (Wang Bin, 1998, p. 77).

## **Part 2: From the novel "Wives and Concubines" to the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"**

The movie "The Big Red Lantern Hangs High" is based on the Chinese writer Su Tong's middle grade novel "Wives and Concubines". Concubines and Wives is both historical (a story from the past) and women's themes, which happens to be something Zhang Yimou is interested in and specializes in.

The story of the novel "Wives and Concubines" is as follows: when Songlian, a college girl, was just entering her first year of college, her father's tea factory closed down, and then her father committed suicide, Songlian dropped out of school, and was asked by her stepmother to choose between working as a laborer and marrying a man, which Songlian chose to do. When her stepmother asked her to choose between marrying a poor man as a wife and a rich man as a concubine, Songlian chose to be a concubine. Thus, at the age of 19, Songlian became the fourth concubine of the rich man Chen Zuoqian, together with his wife Yuru, the second concubine Zhuo Yun, the third concubine Mei Shan, became the "mistress" of the Chen family compound, and from then on, she got involved in the jealousy, gossip, family disputes and secret wars between the women in the compound. War". Even the young maid Yan'er, whom Chen Zuoqian had occasionally kissed, was also involved in the struggle between the mistresses.

Chen Zuoqian concubines, night and day, and finally the opposite of what is extreme, extreme sadness, the face of the heart of the beautiful but not enough. This achievement of the first wife with no desire Yuru and the second concubine Zhuo Yun, and make the beauty of the third concubine Mei Shan and youthful four concubine Songlian boudoir cold, the status of a drop in the ocean. In the midst of boredom, there are more rights and wrongs. First of all, Yan'er cursed and then cursed Songlian, Songlian forced her to eat the grass paper, and soon fell ill and died. Then Mei Shan is caught by Zhuo Yun in an illicit affair with Dr. Gao, which leads to Mei Shan's execution by the Chen family. Finally, Songlian, seeing Mei Shan's death, is severely stimulated and falls into a state of insanity, from which she cannot extricate herself.

Su Tong's Concubines and Liu Heng's Fuxi Fuxi are very different in terms of their creative methods, forms of work, and artistic styles, but there is one thing that is similar, that is, the perception and manifestation of the "yin-sheng-yang decline" - the physiological impotence of Chen Zuoqian and the mental impotence of his son Chen Feipu in Su Tong's novel are very similar to the physiological impotence of Yang Jinshan and the mental impotence of Yang Tianqing in Liu Heng's novel! Chen Zuoqian's physiological impotence and his son Chen Feipu's spiritual impotence in Su Tong's novel are very similar to Yang Jinshan's physiological impotence and Yang Tianqing's spiritual impotence in Liu Heng's novel! The only difference is that Liu Heng focuses on the revelation of "Yang Decay", while Su Tong depicts the scenario of "Yin Abundance". In fact, the two sides of the same coin are cause and effect, Yin

flourishes and Yang declines, Yang declines and Yin flourishes, which are essentially the same. It is only that the two authors adopt different ways and focus on different aspects of the same phenomenon of human civilization.

In response to a question from a reporter as to why he chose Su Tong's novel *Concubines and Wives* for adaptation, Zhang Yimou said, "What struck me most about *Concubines and Wives* was 'new wine in old bottles', i.e., the difference in the way the young people wrote the historical story. That was my initial feeling after seeing the novel. For many years, there have been many works in China showing the big feudal families, and many novels, plays and movies have been very successful in reflecting the tragedies of the big families. But Su Tong used a new modern perspective on this ancient subject to view the story. He did not write about how a good person becomes corrupt and how a chaotic soul is awakened, as is usually the case in May Fourth literature (which has formed a pattern of depicting the lives of big families and the old society). Su Tong does not write about people in this way at all. I appreciate this. What you see in his works is the atmosphere of life like *Bajin's Home*, *Spring and Autumn*, but what is valuable in Su Tong's works is that he writes about the innate hostility and hatred between people, and the intentional or unintentional self-inflicted damage and mutual destruction. .... Instead of structuring the story from a strictly realist perspective like the older writers, he shows a lot of new things from a young person's point of view. It is this that I appreciate. .... The movies we make now are for modern young people, so we have to provide the audience with an alternative understanding of life in that era." (Lin Shaofeng, 2005, p.9-10)

From this passage, we can see that Zhang Yimou was attracted to Su Tong's novel *Concubines and Wives* because of its new perspective, which provided a new perspective on the past life, a new feeling and a new way of understanding the life of history. For Zhang Yimou, the new perspective of the novel provides a good foundation, a good basis for Zhang Yimou's innovation. The feeling world of Su Tong's novel is colorful, which is of course a treasure for a film director like Zhang Yimou who pursues visual art effects. In the novel, the appearance of black, white, gray, pink, red, purple, blue, green, green, yellow and so on, is colorful and eye-catching. This provides a great convenience for movies, especially Zhang Yimou's movies. Su Tong's preference for purple, pink, red, and Zhang Yimou's favor of red, pink, purple also have the same thing. This kind of "like", no matter how different the reason and the substance, but always a kind of fate, always a common characteristic.

Su Tong's novels are narrated by women. In a sense, the name of the book "*Concubines in Groups*" is more appropriate, because the hidden protagonist of "*Concubines in Groups*" is obviously a man, while the actual protagonists of the novel are women, concubines, or concubines in groups, and "who" is the male protagonist and "concubines in groups" is not important here, mainly because it is not valued by the author. The question of "who" is the male protagonist and "concubines" is not important here, mainly because it is not emphasized by the author. This is a point that has "resonance" for Zhang Yimou.

And "red sorghum", "chrysanthemum beans" choose the original author as the movie screenwriter is different, in the movie "*big red lanterns hanging high*" recreation process, zhang yimou did not choose and the original author su tong cooperation, which gives the movie greater creative freedom.

The biggest change in "The Big Red Lantern Hangs High" compared to the novel "Concubines" is the presence of the "big red lantern" and all the plot and details that come with it. There are no such details in the novel. There are only two inadvertent references to lanterns: red lanterns were hung on the auspicious occasion of Chen Zuoqian's fiftieth birthday and his fiftieth birthday, "Lanterns were hung at the entrance of the Chen Mansion on the seventh day of the twelfth month, the day of Chen Zuoqian's fiftieth birthday." As well, "At night, two maids went to the door to take away the birthday lanterns, and one said, "Guess to whom the master is going this night? The other one thought for a while and said, "I can't guess, this kind of thing doesn't depend on his pleasure, who can guess?" Moreover, the lantern for Chen Zuoqian's 50th birthday was only hung at the gate, which had nothing to do with the heroine. In the movie, however, the "big red lantern" made a big fuss. Zhang Yimou explains: "I added these stylistic things when I adapted the novel into a movie, in order to visualize the image as much as possible. If you can't do visualization, then you can't make a movie at all." (Lin Shaofeng, 2005, p.12) And the title of the movie was changed to "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High" in order to adapt to the characteristics of the movie and make the movie have a kind of visual impact. Compared with the dyeing workshop in Judeo, the role and significance of the red lantern in Hanging High the Red Lantern is different. While the dyeing workshop in Judeo is only a background, the red lantern is not only a backdrop, but also a dramatic factor that relates to the development of the story. It is closely related to the fate of several women and the development of the story. For Zhang Yimou, the story of the movie cannot be completed without the red lantern. The red lantern and the imagery, symbols, and signs it represents are the form and cultural connotation that Zhang Yimou wanted for his movie. What Zhang Yimou wanted was a very strong visual effect and a new form of movie. Even "form for form's sake" was not an option.

Zhang Yimou shows as many as 22 red lantern shots and images in the film, plus 8 red lanterns that appear in empty shots, totaling 30. In these red lantern shots, Zhang Yimou plays the visual language of this image to the extreme, creating a series of rituals such as lifting lanterns, lighting lanterns, hanging lanterns, announcing lanterns, sealing lanterns (lifting lanterns, lighting lanterns, hanging lanterns, announcing which yard the lanterns will be hung in, blowing out the lanterns, and covering the lanterns) and other ceremonies and deriving rituals related to this such as hammering the feet, pointing out the privilege of food, and listening to the summoning of people, which vividly expresses the role of the red lanterns and their symbolic meaning, which is not only not found in novels, but also unattainable in the language of novels.

Because of the addition of red lanterns and the Hammerfoot ceremony to the movie, the fates of the characters and the way the story unfolds in the novel have changed.

The first is the story of the heroine, Songlian, which has been added to the movie. She hasn't lit a lantern for a long time because of a minor offense, but she has an addiction to pounding her feet and asks her maid Yan'er to do it. First, Yan'er is reluctant, second, even if she is willing, she doesn't have the experience, and third, even if she is willing and has the experience, her name is not right and she doesn't deserve to be told. Plus, Songlian knows that if she doesn't give birth to a son or daughter, it will be difficult to protect her status in the future, so it's best to get

pregnant. But as Chen Zuoqian doesn't seem to care about her anymore, Songlian comes up with a solution, which is to pretend to be pregnant. This way, she can light a lamp (and a long-lasting one at that), pound her feet, gain great pleasure from Master Chen, and even get Zhuo Yun to come and massage her ..... This series of things are not in the novel. The addition of these elements in the movie can, on the one hand, show Songlian's dual character of shrewdness and stupidity; on the other hand, it can make the plot of the movie have more dramatic ups and downs, so that the fate of the characters can go from the peak to the trough; on the third hand, it can also show the rituals of lighting and sealing the lanterns, which can further enrich the concrete visual form of the "Big Red Lanterns". The third is to show the ceremony of lighting and closing the lanterns, further enriching the specific visual form of the "big red lantern".

Secondly, the story of the maid Yan'er has changed. In the novel, she first cursed Songlian by sticking a small cloth with a needle, which was discovered by Songlian (this detail was kept in the movie), and then she used her menstrual blood to write a curse against Songlian on a piece of straw paper and threw it in the toilet, which was again discovered by Songlian, who couldn't stand it any longer, and forced her to swallow the straw paper soaked with menstrual blood and feces with the curse written on it, and Yan'er, who was shocked and cold, and of course even more shocked and strongly humiliated by the curse, soon fell ill and died. She fell ill and died soon after. The movie deleted the details of the "straw paper spell" and replaced it with the fact that Yan'er secretly hung a red lantern in her room, which was discovered by Songlian, who later, in retaliation for her leakage of information (the secret of not being pregnant), ripped off the red lantern from her room and threw it in the yard to publicly humiliate and punish Yan'er, who knelt down in the snow and did not get up for the whole night, and finally died. Yan'er kneels in the snow all night and finally dies. This plot design links Yan'er's story with the red lantern, making the film's structure more rigorous and complete, while also making Yan'er's "obsessive dream" of replacing Songlian even more public and visual, making Yan'er's story even more intense and thrilling.

In short, all the storylines and details are centered around the red lanterns, and Zhang Yimou has made the "drama" of the red lanterns sufficient and thorough, to an unparalleled extent, so that the film's sense of form has reached its extreme. *Big Red Lantern High Hanging* inherits the style of the original, not a strictly realistic work, it is from the conception to the whole image are imagery, symbols, symbols. There are a lot of gorgeous things in the movie, besides the red lanterns, the gorgeous costumes that look like modeling shows, and the Peking Opera faces, the beautiful images, all of which make people feel good to look at, but still give the whole feeling of being cold. Stylistically, *"Big Red Lanterns Hanging Tall"* is one of the fifth generation of Chinese directors who have taken their style to the extreme, it has very deep modeling, strong ideas, strong symbols and atmosphere, as well as reflections and criticisms of history and culture.

*The Red Lantern Hangs High* is a film that seeks the ultimate, and in addition to the extreme pursuit of stylization and its visual effects, the pursuit of symbolic meaning has also reached its extreme.

In the movie, the red lantern is the first, the female figure is the second, and the male figure is the third. Zhang Yimou simply does not give the hero a close-up of his face, making him a "man without a face" or a "ghostly man", thus achieving a kind of extreme symbolism.

In the movie, four segments of time are delineated in red letters on a black background, i.e., "Summer", "Autumn", "Winter", and "Summer of the following year". "Spring" is deliberately avoided to create an extreme symbolic effect. This is also to create a kind of extreme symbolic effect, to make people understand that there is no spring in this place. The chronology of the novel is also summer, fall, and winter, turning the season of Songlian's meeting with Chen Zuoqian (the season of continuous spring rains) into an interlude. However, at the end of the novel, it is clearly written that "In the spring of the following year, Mr. Chen Zuoqian married his fifth wife, Wenzhu", instead of "in the summer of the following year" in the movie. That is to say, the author of the novel's "no spring" narrative idea is very subtle, seemingly intentional or unintentional, whereas the movie is open and explicit to the extreme, deliberately so.

This deliberate pursuit of symbolic form is not only manifested in the treatment of time, but also in the treatment of space, i.e., to shoot a morose, closed and gloomy spatial environment. Zhang Yimou chose the Qiao family compound in Qixian County, Shanxi Province, as the base of photography, and intentionally photographed the compound with high walls and big tiles, eerie and terrifying. For this reason, the movie made a series of corresponding changes and modifications to the scenes of the novel. Because the geographical background of the novel is the south, while the movie chose Shanxi.

Interestingly, the background of Liu Heng's novel "Fuxi Fuxi" is clearly the mountainous and rocky Taihang Mountain area in the north, while Zhang Yimou's "Ju Dou" chooses the mountainous and green mountains of southern Anhui Province. The background of Su Tong's novel is clearly the rainy south, and Zhang Yimou chose the dry and cold Shanxi. It seems to be a small thing, the movie's selection of the scene where it is possible, as long as you think it is appropriate. But China's vast territory, the south and north, southeast and northwest, different regions, climate, environment caused by different customs, personality, temperament, but not a small matter. Furthermore, in the novels of Liu Heng and Su Tong, the environment itself is also an important factor, or even a kind of "role", which participates in and influences the creation of the characters' personalities and destinies.

The story in the novel takes place in the south, and the climate of the south has an impact on the personality and temperament of the people in the story, as well as their psychological state and lifestyle and even their destiny choices. As described in the novel, "It was raining outside that day, and Chen Zuoqian watched the drizzling street through the window, in a new and cozy mood, which he had never experienced in his three previous marriages. When Songlian came slowly with a fine-flowered silk umbrella, Chen Zuoqian smiled happily." "There are many times like this in the fall, when the sky outside the window is cloudy, and the fine rain falls endlessly in the garden, splashing like broken jade from the branches and leaves of the zinnia and pomegranate trees. At such times, Songlian sat withered by the window, looking at a rain-soaked silk silk on the clothesline outside, her mind troubled and complicated,

some thoughts even secret." "Songlian just doesn't understand why she remembers bedlam every time it's cloudy and rainy. Chen Zuoqian would never notice the effect of the weather on Songlian's physiology." Such a climatic environment not only has a mysterious effect on one's physiology, but also has a more important effect on one's psyche, which in turn has an impact on one's way of life, which of course has to do with the mood of the novel, and hints at the tone and atmosphere of the novel—deadly, melancholic, and gloomy. The rainy, wet and damp environment of the novel has a complex flavor of desire, impulse, obscurity, depression, mold, decay, boredom, loneliness, despondency and low spirits. This is exactly the flavor of "life" in "Concubines and Wives", and it is also the author's accurate aesthetic grasp of the relationship between the characters' state of mind and the environment in the novel.

The original "concubines" describes the story of Jiangnan, but Zhang Yimou finally set in Shanxi Qiao family compound. Zhang Yimou said, the Qiao family compound has a similar design of the second floor platform, he sat on the second floor to look down, want to how to shoot, how to compose, and suddenly saw the square perspective line, especially rigorous, just to reflect the theme he wanted to express - "rules". Zhang Yimou chose the Qiao family compound in Shanxi as the location, which is located in the north of China, the climate is dry and cold, and it used to be the ruling center of the feudal dynasty, which emphasized on etiquette and rules. People in the north do things in a clean-cut manner and do bad things in a clear-cut manner. Thus, the Chen family compound in the movie shows a different flavor: it is closed, the rules are bigger than the sky, the hierarchy is very strict, and the fights between wives and concubines are blatant.

The description of the "dead man's well" - the well of the South - in the novel demonstrates a unique situation, a unique shade of fatalism and the author's aesthetic interest: "There was a rack of wisteria there in the corner of the back garden, and the wisteria blossomed heavily from summer to fall. From her window, Songlian saw those purple flocculent flowers swaying in the fall breeze, growing lighter by the day. She notices that there is a well under the wisteria stand and that there are stone tables and benches, a quite leisurely place to go yet no one is seen, and the canal leading there is overgrown with weeds. Butterflies flew past, cicadas also sang on the wisteria branches and leaves, Songlian remembered that last year at this time, she was sitting under the wisteria frame of the school to read, everything is like a dream, Songlian slowly walked over, she raised her skirt, careful not to let the weeds and insects touch and rub, and slowly lifted the leaves of a few branches of the vine and saw that the stone table and stone benches accumulated a layer of dust, and walked to the edge of the well, the well platform stone walls covered with moss, Songlian stooped down to look at the well, and the well water was Blue-black, the water is also floating on the surface of the old leaves, Songlian saw her face shimmering, heard her own gasp was sucked into the well amplified, dull and weak, a gust of wind blew over, Songlian skirt blowing like a bird, Songlian then felt a hard coolness, like a stone slowly knocked her body, Songlian began to walk back, walking back very fast, back to the south room of the porch, she exhaled a breath, turning back to look at that wisteria shelf again, two or three bunches of flowers fell abruptly from the shelf, very suddenly, Songlian thought this was also very strange." Su Tong's novels are very visual, and Su Tong himself recognizes and is proud of this. In this description, although the character of Songlian appears, it is in Songlian's line of sight, where

Songlian's eyes are like camera lenses. First, there is a distant view of a rack of wisteria in the corner of the wall, full of flocculent flowers, which is losing its way in the autumn wind; then the camera pans down to a close-up of a well under the rack; the camera slowly pulls away, and stone tables and benches scattered near the well appear in the frame; the camera pulls in further, and it is the canal leading to the well and the wisteria rack, which is covered with weeds. This narrative is a shot of Songlian's life, a display of her living environment and atmosphere, an externalization of her psychological loneliness, and a mysterious perception of the shadow of fate. She later learns that several people, women, and ancestral aunts have died in this well because of their offenses. She later witnesses her third aunt, Mei Shan, being thrown alive into this well and drowned (how could Songlian not have a mysterious fear and curiosity when her window is facing it). Later on in the novel, there are many more descriptions of Songlian and the well, which become more and more mysterious and frightening, until, after she goes mad, Wenzhu, the new aunt in Chen's house, "often saw a woman sitting under the wisteria frame, sometimes circling around the ruined well and talking to the mouth of the well. .... people would repeat Songlian's words, 'I'm not jumping, I'm not jumping,' she said, 'She's not going to jump down the well. The last sentence of the novel is 'Songlian said she would not jump'. 'Songlian and the well' is a key imagery clue and symbolic factor in the novel, as well as a typical situation of southern life.

In the movie, Zhang Yimou transforms the hellishly gloomy "Dead Man's Well" into a towering "Dead Man's House" (a symbol of the "dark room"), where Mei Shan died on the night of her death. On the night of Mei Shan's death, perhaps because of the guilt of unintentionally revealing Dr. Gao's affair with Mei Shan, Songlian wakes up in the middle of the night, walks through the snow and wind, and goes up to the roof of the house to witness Mei Shan's death. The "house of the dead" is also a symbol of the oppression of male supremacy and patriarchal authority, which overrides everything, and every woman living in the Chen family compound cannot break free.

Su Tong's original work is natural and clear, full of spirituality, with curiosity and concern for the state of life of Songlian and others, describing their living scenes. Zhang Yimou, with Su Tong's consent, adapted the film to his own cinematic requirements, using red lanterns and other symbols to expose the destruction of people, especially women, by the feudal forces, turning "Hanging the Red Lanterns High" into a work with a strong sense of formality that pushes Zhang Yimou's aesthetic style to the extreme.

When Zhang Yimou adapted the original novel, he retained the background of the Republic of China period to tell the story. The context of the Republic of China forms the basis of this film.

### Part 3: Signs and Symbols: Lantern Rituals

The time segments of "High-Red Lanterns" are set from summer, fall, winter to the following summer, deliberately avoiding "spring". As the movie shows, the Chen family compound is a theater without spring. In this theater, the actresses engage in a series of power plots and struggles around the red lanterns and the power implied by the red lanterns. The marginalization of women's status and their existential dilemmas dictate that no matter how much they calculate and fight, they are ultimately portrayed as a kind of human being - the vassal of the family, the adornment of the man, the woman who suffers from oppression and control, and the root cause of all of this is male power. The root cause of all this is none other than the traditional society of male supremacy.

#### 3.1 Red Lanterns and Ritualization

The red lantern in "Raise the Red Lantern" symbolizes identity, power and status, presenting a ritualized social and cultural phenomenon. These red lanterns are hung in houses and houses, attracting attention day or night. Through the visual effects of red lanterns and the ritualized hanging method, the film interprets the imagery and connotation of traditional Chinese culture, shows the symbols of power and wealth in traditional Chinese society, and presents the audience with a unique and ritualistic cultural landscape.

In the Red Trilogy, Zhang Yimou strives to tell the audience classic stories about traditional Chinese culture in order to "fully demonstrate the charm of Chinese culture and fully explore the charm of the audiovisual art of cinema and its fusion of the two" (China Filmmakers Association, 2003, p. 123). Zhang Yimou's film presents the external norms and internal rules of traditional Chinese culture in a specific way, in a ritualized manner, and fully expresses his profound thoughts on the cultural memory of the community, the aesthetic ideals of the nation, and the pursuit of social values. Zhang Yimou points out: "The influence of Chinese culture on me, including the spirit and emotion of Chinese people, is the most fundamental. Because I am 100 percent Chinese, my movies are the same." (Burt Cardullo, 2015, p. 243) Meanwhile, he also said, "When I make a movie, I first want to tell a story from a popular point of view. So that the audience likes to watch it, so that the audience understands it and can read it." (Zhang Huijun & Sun Xin, 2009, p.26) Zhang Yimou creatively applies his understanding and knowledge of traditional Chinese culture to his movie creation, using symbolic historical elements, together with a series of symbolic actions, to create various rituals "for the audience to like to watch," thus artistically presenting the "Chinese spirit and emotion".

Zhang Yimou's creation and design of the red lanterns and their set of rituals in his film *Big Red Lanterns Hang High* was to some extent influenced and inspired by the original novel, expanding what was originally only a two-sentence description of the red lanterns on Chen Zuoqian's birthday into imagery and symbols that run through the entire film. Other possible sources of inspiration for the film's ritualized red lanterns are *The Chrysanthemum Bean*. The red lanterns appear three times in the movie *Ju Dou*, all of which are cylindrical. In the first, Yang Jinshan carries two large red lanterns with the words "son" and "grandson" written on them home, and encounters a few children carrying small cylindrical red lanterns on a village lane, playing games and singing nursery rhymes. In the second and third scenes, which are

almost identical, large cylindrical red lanterns with the words "son" and "grandson" are hung on top of the two sides of the table of offerings for the Yang family's ancestors, and the red lanterns in each of these two scenes, which last about five seconds each, are ceremonialized. , are Yang Jinshan praying to his ancestral spirits to bless him with the ability to raise a son or daughter to carry on the Yang family's legacy. In Liu Heng's original novel *Fuxi Fuxi*, there are actually no lanterns, so the red lanterns in *Ju Dou* can only be Zhang Yimou's own creations, except that they are small-scale, not prominent, and don't give people a particularly strong impression, and few people associate them with the red lanterns and related rituals that have a very strong visual impact in *Big Red Lanterns Hanging High*. The red lanterns and related rituals in "*High Red Lanterns*" are rarely associated with them. This is because compared with the 30 red lanterns (of which 8 appear simultaneously in empty shots) that are shown with great fanfare in "*A Red Lantern Highly Hung*", the three unobtrusive red lanterns in "*Judeo*" are indeed unnoticeable.

In addition to the 8 red lanterns in the empty shots, there are 22 red lanterns prominently displayed in "*Big Red Lanterns Hanging Tall*". Zhang Yimou mobilized a variety of film language, audio-visual means to show, highlighting the red lanterns, in the first 17 minutes of the film, arranged to appear in 10 red lantern footage and images, and there are lights, hanging lanterns, lanterns, rituals, lanterns, close-ups, and shouting "light the lanterns," the sound of sound reinforcement. With such a high density and intensity of visual and auditory stimulation and impact of the red lanterns, it is impossible for the audience not to have a distinct and strong impression of the red lanterns.

The first red lantern that appears in the movie is what Songlian sees when she enters the house, the hall of the four courtyards assigned to her, in which more than a dozen red lanterns of different shapes and sizes are placed or hung, Songlian cannot help but ask curiously, "Why are there so many red lanterns hanging in this house?" Here, not only the film language and images are used directly to show, but also the heroine speaks to emphasize, both audio and visual means are used. The red lanterns appear in the 2nd place of the movie, where several servants carry six large red lanterns to the fourth courtyard amidst the background music of drums and music. In scene 3, an old servant lights up the red lanterns, and here there is a close-up of the lanterns being lit. Here is a close-up of the lanterns being lit. In the fourth place, an old servant hangs the red lanterns on the eaves of the courtyard, which is the real "big red lanterns hanging high". In the fifth red lantern, back in the hall where Songlian lives, the old servant lights up the red lanterns in the house, and finally lights up the combination of red lanterns hanging on the bed, which makes the house bright and red, covered with warm and bright colors. Although she is a concubine, Songlian also experiences the richness and superiority brought about by her choice of marrying a rich man. These five red lanterns, always in an atmosphere of novelty and joy, express Songlian's mood in the language of the movie. However, these five red lanterns are the only ones in the whole movie that express complete joy. The red lanterns that appear many times later are often associated with unhappiness, even hatred and death.




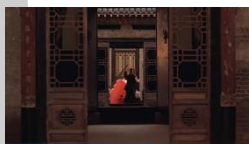





Figure 64 Red Lanterns from the movie "The Red Lanterns Hang High

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]


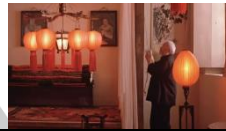






The sixth red lantern in the movie appears in a "colorful" way. Chen Zuoqian, the owner of the Chen family compound, asks Songlian to hold up a red lantern on the table so that he can take a good look at the newcomer, and Songlian reluctantly holds up the lantern. At this moment, Songlian is holding a red lantern in front of her chest, another red lantern behind her, and her whole upper body is between the two red lanterns glowing with orange-red light. In the whole picture, although the lanterns are on both sides of the human body, but the area occupied by more than the human body, the human body and the lanterns appeared in the "peach blossom face to face" effect, the human and the lights complement each other, together to give the audience a strong visual stimulation. Not only visual, but also auditory stimulation, Chen Zuoqian twice talked about the red lanterns, which is equal to the language, voice repeated to emphasize the existence of the red lanterns. With such strong visual and auditory stimulation, the red lanterns are further burned into the hearts of the audience.






The 7th place in the movie where the red lanterns appear is a close-up of the red lanterns inside the bed through the gauze. In the 8th scene, there are 6 red lanterns hanging inside the bed, but this time it is a close-up of the red lanterns without the screen. In the 9th place, when Chen Zuoqian can't stand Mei Shan's nonsense and gets up to go to the third courtyard, the housekeeper shouts "Light the lanterns in the third courtyard", again emphasizing the presence of the red lanterns with his voice. In the 10th scene, after Chen Zuoqian leaves for the third courtyard on Songlian's wedding night, Songlian wakes up and looks in the mirror with a red lantern in her hand, and the mirror reflects Songlian crying with the lantern in her hand. In this way, in less than 10 minutes, the drama of red lanterns is fully realized through 10 red lanterns appearing one after another in different forms. For example, the first one appears as a small-sized lantern inside the house, the second to fourth are large-sized lanterns hanging in the courtyard, and the fifth to tenth are small-sized lanterns inside the house. This is a change in shape and size. The lighting and hanging of lanterns in places 3 and 4 are dynamic red lanterns. In places 1 and 6, the red lanterns are emphasized in the form of speech, while in place 9, the lanterns are emphasized by shouting "Light the lanterns in the three courtyards", which is an auditory lantern. The 7th and 8th places are close-ups of the red lanterns.









Table 2 scenes of red lanterns (except empty shots) appearing in "Raise the Red Lantern"<sup>30</sup>, Researcher's own production


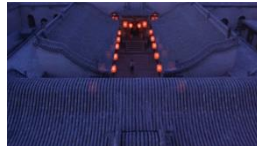
Serial number	Appearance time	Scenes	Picture
1	From 6 minutes 16 seconds to 6 minutes 25 seconds	After Songlian entered the house, she saw that in the main room of the four courtyards allocated to her, more than ten red lanterns of different shapes and sizes were placed or hung. Songlian couldn't help but curiously asked: "Why are there so many red lanterns hanging in this house?"	
2	From 6 minutes 37 seconds to 7 minutes 06 seconds	With the background music of drums, several servants carried six large red lanterns to the fourth courtyard.	 
3	From 7 minutes 07 seconds to 7 minutes 24 seconds	An old servant lights a red lantern, close-up of a lit lantern, close-up of a red lantern.	  
4	From 7 minutes 25 seconds to 8 minutes 02 seconds	An old servant hangs a lantern on the eaves of the courtyard.	

<sup>30</sup> [https://vip.1905.com/play/672194.shtml?\\_\\_hz=1aa48fc4880bb0c9&fr=baidu\\_aladdin\\_vip\\_add](https://vip.1905.com/play/672194.shtml?__hz=1aa48fc4880bb0c9&fr=baidu_aladdin_vip_add)[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

5	From 8 minutes 55 seconds to 10 minutes 25 seconds	In the main room where Songlian lived, the old servant lit up the red lanterns in the room, and finally lit up the red lantern combination hanging on the bed.	 
6	From 12 minutes 10 seconds to 12 minutes 25 seconds	Chen Zuoqian, the owner of the Chen family compound, asked Songlian to lift a red lantern on the table. He wanted to take a good look at the new man. Songlian reluctantly raised the lantern.	
7	From 12 minutes 25 seconds to 12 minutes 35 seconds	Close-up of the red lantern inside the bed behind the gauze curtain.	
8	From 13 minutes 05 seconds to 13 minutes 10 seconds	6 red lanterns hanging inside the bed	
9	14 minutes 40 seconds	Chen Zuoqian couldn't help Mei Shan's mischief. He got up and went to the third hospital. The housekeeper shouted "Light up the lights in the third hospital".	
10	From 15 minutes 15 seconds to 16 minutes 05 seconds	After Chen Zuoqian moves to the third hospital on Songlian's wedding night, Songlian wakes up holding a red lantern and looks in the mirror, which reflects Songlian holding up the lantern and crying.	
11	From 22 minutes 48 seconds to 23 minutes 44 seconds	To turn off the lights, there is a direct lens to turn off the lights, and there is a sound of blowing out the lights.	

12	From 29 minutes 15 seconds to 30 minutes 00 seconds	On the 10th day after Songlian entered Chen's house, she followed the old rules and went to answer the call. The main thing was to announce which wife Chen Zuoqian would stay with at night and light a lamp in that courtyard. The announcement was made immediately, which was called announcing the lantern. The first time Songlian answered the call, Chen Zuoqian still took good care of her. The servant shouted "Lighting up the lanterns in the four courtyards". Songlian witnessed the activities of answering the call and announcing the lanterns.	
13	From 30 minutes 05 seconds to 30 minutes 30 seconds	In the red light of the lantern, Songlian enjoyed Aunt Cao's foot-beating service intoxicatedly.	
14	From 37 minutes 15 seconds to 37 minutes 45 seconds	Another call to announce the lanterns, this time for the Third Courtyard, the servants shouted "Lights for the Third Courtyard"	
15	From 49 minutes 53 seconds to 50 minutes 18 seconds	Songlian was asked by Mei Shan to play mahjong. Mr. Chen did not see Songlian when he came back. He blamed Songlian for running around, and then lit the lamp in the second courtyard and went to the residence of his second wife Zhuo Yun.	
16	From 59 minutes 42 seconds to 63 minutes 24 seconds	Song Lian discovers that the maid Yan'er stole some lanterns	

17	From 76 minutes 36 seconds to 78 minutes 22 seconds	Songlian was "pregnant", and everlasting lanterns were lit in the courtyard and house of her fourth courtyard.	 
18	From 86 minutes 31 seconds to 87 minutes 35 seconds	Turn off the lights. When Songlian's false pregnancy was exposed, Chen Zuoqian was furious and announced that the lights in the fourth courtyard would be blocked. That is, all the red lanterns inside and outside the house would be covered with black shades and no more lights would be lit.	
19	From 88 minutes 11 seconds to 90 minutes 10 seconds	Song Lian exposed Yan'er's stealing of the lanterns and burned the lanterns that Yan'er stole in public. Yan'er was forced to kneel down and admit her mistake.	 
20	From 115 minutes 54 seconds to 119 minutes 22 seconds	After Mei Shan's death, the three courtyards were haunted. In fact, Songlian lit the red lanterns in Mei Shan's room and played Mei Shan's Peking Opera arias on the gramophone.	 
21	From 119 minutes 44 seconds to 122 minutes 32 seconds	Mr. Chen newly married his fifth wife, Wenzhu. On their wedding night, the fifth wife hammered her feet in a room filled with red lanterns.	

22	From minutes seconds to minutes seconds	122 33 124 40	Songlian, who has gone crazy, wanders around the yard with red lanterns lit.	 
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The first 10 appearances of the red lantern in *Big Red Lanterns High* are in a variety of forms, but do not exhaust the number of ways in which the red lantern can appear and be presented. The 11th red lantern in the movie is the extinguishing of the lights. In this sequence, there is a direct shot of the extinguishing of the lanterns and the sound of blowing to extinguish the lanterns, which is also audio-visual. In the 12th scene, Songlian, on the 10th day of her entry into the Chen residence, goes to hear the summoning according to the old rules, which mainly means announcing which wife Chen Zuoqian is going to stay with at night, and in which courtyard the lamps will be lit, and the announcement is made immediately, which can be described as the announcement of the lamps. The first time Songlian answered the summons, Chen Zuoqian still took good care of her, and her family shouted "Light the lanterns in the four courtyards", and Songlian saw the activities of hearing the summons and announcing the lanterns. In the 13th scene, in the red light of the lanterns, Songlian is intoxicated by Auntie Cao's foot-pumping service.

The 14th to 16th red lanterns in the film, which are the lighting of the lanterns in the third house, the lighting of the lanterns in the second house, and the stealing of the lanterns by Songlian's maid, Yan'er, once again reinforce the theme of the film through the repetition of the red lanterns and their rituals, and express the discursive and patriarchal order that lies behind the red lanterns. There are also a number of empty shots of red lanterns in the movie, as well as red lanterns used as house decoration and to advance the storyline. The red lanterns appear at the 17th and 18th scenes, which are in the second half of the movie. The red lanterns appear at these two points in order to continue the other rituals of the red lanterns that were not mentioned before, namely the lighting of the lanterns and the sealing of the lanterns. When Songlian is "pregnant", Master Chen is overjoyed and immediately asks his servants to hang the lanterns on the four courtyards and enjoy a series of privileges. When Songlian's false pregnancy is revealed, Chen Zuoqian is furious and announces that the lanterns in the four courtyards will be sealed, that is, all the red lanterns inside and outside the house will be covered with black shades and will no longer be lit.

The sealing of the lanterns in Songlian's four courtyards is triggered by the revelation of the false pregnancy by the maid Yan'er's denunciation. In a fit of anger, Songlian exposes Yan'er's stealing of the lanterns and burns the lanterns that Yan'er had stolen and lit in public, which is the concentration of the lanterns at place 19. The film ends with the red lanterns at 22, which are emphasized extremely prominently one more time. First, there is about 30 seconds of superimposed, defocused red lanterns, and superimposed, defocused figures of Songlian. Next, there is another

normal scene, a panoramic view of a small courtyard lit with red lanterns at night, and the figure of Song-ryun constantly walking, and this last scene of the red lanterns is the last scene of the movie until the cast list has finished appearing in order and the movie has come to an end.

From a series of red lantern shots and images, it can be seen that Zhang Yimou has completed the imagination and fictionalization of the red lantern in his movie. The "red lantern" in the movie becomes the indicator for the male and female protagonists to have sex, like the "red light district" in the West, which is obvious to people - wherever it is hung, there is a male protagonist having sex with the female protagonist. hero and heroine are having sex together. The "red lantern" is seductive and stimulating.

Zhang Yimou made a further derivation, where the red lantern hangs, where the mistress of the house will be "favored", the status of the Chen family will be high, and dinner time can be randomly ordered a few dishes they like to eat. This further links the relationship between wives, concubines and prostitutes, i.e., to accompany the master of the house (sex) - red lanterns - can order food (necessary for survival).

Further, the red lantern has also become a status symbol and an external ornament of the heroine's position in the hero's mind. Newly married aunts can be a few consecutive days to light the lantern, pregnant to give birth to children for the male master, succession can point "long bright light" (that is, the lantern lit day and night without extinguishing, the general point of the lantern is the evening point, blowing out in the morning, pointing and blowing out the lantern have a set of rituals); on the contrary, made a mistake or cheated the male master is to be "seal lantern" (with a black cloth cover will be wrapped up red lanterns, said "never employed", the hostess into the "cold palace"). Because the red lantern became a symbol of status and position, the mistresses in the Chen family compound struggled and fought to "light the lanterns". Thus, the lighting, blowing and sealing of lanterns became a set of rituals and a unique set of "rules of the game" in the Chen Family Compound.

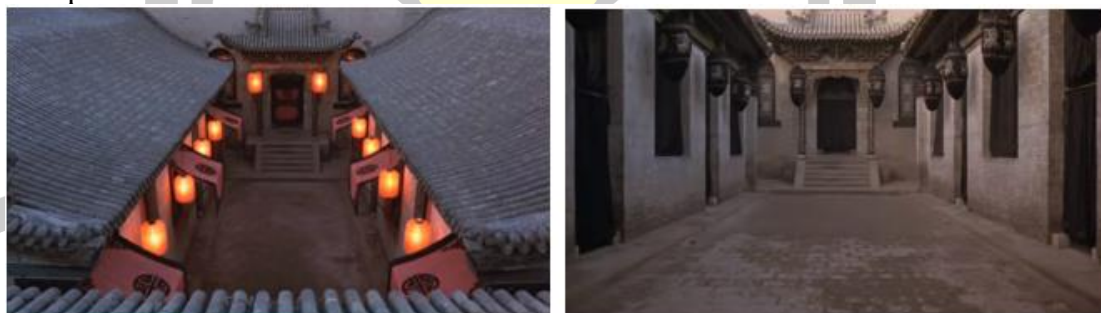


Figure 65 The "Long Lantern" Ceremony and the "Sealing of the Lantern" Ceremony in the Movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

When the master wants to go to which woman's room to spend the night, the housekeeper will shout: "X courtyard light the lamp --", so, "X courtyard" will light the lamp. To this end, Zhang Yimou also fictionalized a "call" ceremony, that is, the hostess of each house every evening to a place, waiting for the master commanded "into the light". This kind of behavior reminds people of the imperial palace and the emperor's relationship with concubines and courtesans, except that the emperor could not be as flamboyant as Chen Zuoqian, announcing nakedly on a public occasion with whom he would have sexual relations that night. The ceremony of "hearing the summons" in the movie is perhaps more like the emperor's daily "morning court", announcing the praise of one minister and the neglect or punishment of another. In this sense, the "summoning" and "lighting of lanterns" in "Raise the Red Lantern" is a kind of irony or symbol of the emperor's politics.



Figure 66 The "Hearing the Call" and "Declaring the Lantern" Ceremonies in the Movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

In the movie, "listening to the call" and "lighting the lamp" are a kind of sexual instruction. Since where to light the lamp, the man has to go where, the hero and heroine have to have sex that night, and the movie can't show the sex life nakedly, Zhang Yimou created the "foot pounding" ceremony to allude to the sexual relationship. The woman who is to accompany the male host that night can enjoy the treatment of an experienced servant's foot-pounding. It is said that the foot pounding can not only be a relief to the body, but also addictive, and at the same time there is about to stimulate or satisfy part of the sexual desire of the efficacy. So, where the red lanterns are lit, where the sound of foot pounding is heard. This has also become a set of rituals.

"Zhang Yimou created these rituals to enhance the expression of the 'hyper-simulated' traditional Chinese culture in these films, or, more precisely, to give these films a Chinese package, while at the same time enhancing the films' contemporary cinematic effects." (Lin Yong, 2005, p.124) The combination of lighting lanterns and pounding feet can cause both visual and auditory effects, and the combination of audio and visual makes the movie's expression more perfect. Lighting lanterns, hammering feet and ordering food, these three powers are the power of speech in the high walled compound. Meanwhile, the sexual innuendo of hammering feet is particularly obvious. In this high walled compound, the way for women to gain power is to provide sexual services that satisfy the lords. The hammering of the feet and the lighting of the lamps are both sexual instructions and sexual cover-ups at the same time, avoiding the appearance of naked scenes on the screen while not losing the subtlety of generating stronger stimulation and seduction. From the perspective of audio-visual effects, the rhythmic and provocative sound of foot pounding makes one's heart flutter and attracts the audience's imagination, which also makes the female characters in the movie have one more goal to strive for: lighting lamps and foot pounding. The lighting of the lamp and the pounding of the feet are not only the rituals of the movie, but also the content of the characters' lives, not only the goal of the heroines' lives - even though this goal shows how pitiful and pathetic the women are - but also their mode of life, and of course, the "cinematographic" life situation. and, of course, the "cinematized" situations of their lives.

There are many empty shots in the movie "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High", as many as 24. The first empty shot, a large panoramic view of the Four Courts with five pairs of large red lanterns hanging at night, shows the rectangular courtyard and the ridges of the chambers. The fourth courtyard is Songlian's residence, and this is her first night in the Chen residence. Then there are three consecutive empty shots of the four courtyards, all of which are small panoramas, i.e., rectangular courtyards and the eaves of the compartments appear in the frame, and the last two times the four courtyards do not have red lanterns hanging on them. The fifth empty shot is a large center shot of the four courtyards, i.e., only the courtyards and the large red lanterns hanging in front of the houses appear in the frame, and the eaves of the compartments hardly appear. It is no accident that the first five empty shots of the movie are all about the four courtyards where Songlian lives. First, it delivers the living environment and space of the main character Songlian. Secondly, in the first 32 minutes of the film, Songlian, who has just married into the Chen family, is only the fourth wife, the youngest wife, but she is a 19-year old college student who has attended college for half a year, and she is very much in the favor of her master, Chen Zuoqian, so the four courtyards are the main place where the plot takes place. Thirdly, red lanterns appear in three of the five empty shots, which are closely related to the plot. It is in this opening part of the film, through the eyes of Songlian, a newcomer, that a series of ritualized acts concerning red lanterns, such as lighting, hanging, extinguishing, and listening to the call to declare the lanterns, are introduced. Fourthly, of the five empty shots, the first, second and fifth, red lanterns appear, while the other two do not, foreshadowing that Songlian's fate in the Chen Mansion is not a smooth and red-hot one. Fifthly, these five empty shots, from the large panorama to three small panoramas, and then to the large medium-sized scene, signify that Songlian, from a newcomer who is pampered and an outsider who does not get

involved in worldly chores, is going to enter into the reality of the struggle between the women of the Chen Mansion step by step.



Figure 67 Empty shot from the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The 6th empty shot of the film is an empty shot of the entire Chen family compound, and appearing at the same time as the scene is the sound of the Third Mistress Mei Shan singing. This foreshadows that it is the third wife, Mei Shan, who first has a relationship, or encounter, with Songlian. The seventh empty shot is the third courtyard where Mei Shan lives, except that this empty shot is only half of the courtyard, shot at an oblique angle, which is the only empty shot in the movie that is only half of a small courtyard, which makes people think that Mei Shan is the only one in the movie who perished in middle age and did not have a good death. This is because thereafter the empty shot of the three courtyards where Meishan lived appeared twice more, both complete with one courtyard, namely, the 23rd empty shot and the 24th empty shot of the film's last empty shot, the two empty town heads of the snowy night courtyards, which are complete with courtyards. The first empty shot of the film is the fourth courtyard where Songlian lives, on a summer night; the last empty shot of the film is the third courtyard where Meishan lives, on a snowy night. The first and the last empty shots are of the courtyard at night, both with red lanterns, one happy and the other sad; the first is Songlian's wedding night, and the last is Songlian's lantern-lighting tribute to Meishan. This arrangement also metaphorically refers to the Chen family compound as a dark place in cinematic language, as the two women with character in the Noh film, one hanged and the other declared insane.

Of the 24 empty shots in the film "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High," the remaining 13 empty shots are from the fourth courtyard where Songlian lives, in addition to three shots of Meishan's third courtyard, six shots of the entire compound, and one shot each of Yan'er's room and the act of sealing the lanterns. In addition, the film is divided into four periods by subtitles: summer, fall, winter, and the following summer. The beginning of the two "summer" segments is actually the marriage of the fourth wife, Songlian, and the fifth wife, Wenzhu, and the beginning of the middle "autumn" segment is the rainy courtyard with red lanterns, which foreshadows the transitional period of the stormy period, as the focus of the film is on the "summer" and the "autumn" segments. "Summer" and "Winter", in which Songlian and Meishan both prosper and wither. At the beginning of "Winter", the four courtyards look red-hot with long-lighted lanterns due to Songlian's fake pregnancy, but in reality it is a flashback because in this part, Mei Shan dies and Songlian goes mad in a real and fake way. In short, Lotus and Plum, the two flowers that can remind people of high purity and temperament, have both failed. Therefore, the empty shots in "The Red Lantern Hangs High" play more of a role in setting the tone and creating the atmosphere.

Zhang Yimou used the traditional cultural symbol of the red lantern and applied it in the film. He developed a story around the red lantern to reveal the social nature of the Republic of China, the marriages and traditions of wealthy families, as well as the conditions of food, clothing, housing, transportation, interpersonal interactions, beliefs, etc.

### 3.2 Theater without A Spring: In Fact, There is Only One Woman

Zhang Yimou utilizes his own unique style to interpret the history of the Republic of China, using images to present the story of a large family with many wives and concubines in the 1920s and 1930s. In the grand theater of the Chen family, all women are required to play a role - the vassal of men. They fight around the red lantern. The essence of the fight is the male master and the series of rights that the male master brings. Just as the film does not have a "spring" section, spring will never come for these women.

In the film, the Chen family compound is like a miniature kingdom, in which the head of the family, Chen Zuoqian, is the "king" of the kingdom, and his wives and concubines can be regarded as his subordinates, thus creating a specific power structure. The relationship between the monolithic master (Chen Zuoqian) and the pluralistic subjects (wives and concubines) is that of ruler and ruled, but the real conflict is not between the two, but between the ruled "plurality", i.e., between the wives and concubines. The reason is that they have the same horizon, in order to keep their position and fight for more rights and interests, they must protect themselves by fighting others. It is impossible for them to take on Chen Zuoqian, just as it is impossible for a courtier to become an emperor. But for their own kind, fellow servants can do whatever they want in order to expand their sphere of influence and strive to gain the exclusive favor of men, masters, emperors, and monarchs. In this sense, *Hanging the Red Lantern* can be interpreted as a "parable" of the power structure and its conflicts in ancient China.

The fights between Chen Zuoqian's wives and concubines also conformed to the law of "repulsion of the same sex". "Same sex repulsion" is not only a law in physics, but also in humanities and sociology: the "competition" between colleagues, classmates, peers, hometowns, and ranks is much more intense than between different hierarchies. Struggles between genders, especially female-to-female conflicts and animosities, can be triggered by conflicts of power or interests. It is for this reason that people refer to the same sex as "rivals".

The war between the women in "The Big Red Lantern" has a special background in the fact that they live in a state of extreme boredom. When there is nothing to do, there is even more to do. They have made it their business to marry, and it is natural for them to fight and struggle a little for that business. Their state of idleness leaves their young libido, passion, longing, impulses, and energy with nowhere to vent, thus creating a unique kind of repression. In such a relatively closed world, the contradictions, conflicts and wars between them are inevitable. Mei Shan "red apricot wall", paid the price of life, is the best proof. Therefore, the conflicts and wars between homosexuals in this closed world have become their way of life, allowing them to escape loneliness, isolation, melancholy, and thus pass the time of leisure and boredom.

In the special closed world of the Chen family compound, each of the four wives has a different status, a different character, and different identities and their different "occupational characteristics". The first wife, Yuru, believes in Buddhism, and we might as well call her a "religious person"; her honorary position in the Chen family is unshakeable, and she also balances her "worldly" mentality with her "out-of-world" attachment. The Second Mistress is a scheming woman. The Second Mistress is a scheming lady, a lady of the house, and we might as well call her a "professional (family) politician", who relies on political means, i.e., the use of magic, techniques, and power to secure her position: she smiles at her master and shows infinite loyalty and docility, but she is duplicitous to her own kind, and she does almost everything she can. The third wife Mei Shan is an opera singer, can be said to be "artists", singing opera should know the most fake drama, deep understanding of the way to charm the master, but she could not help her "art wood family temper" so that she is to the feelings of the nature, abandon the fake on the real, and therefore not good and ultimately can not stand the loneliness of a tragedy! She is not well-liked and ends up in tragedy because she cannot stand the loneliness. The fourth wife, Songlian, is a university student, although she has only attended university for one year, she is also a true "intellectual". What Chen Zuoqian sees in her is precisely this - a foreign student flavor, which can be said to be her advantage. However, her "intellectual characteristics" eventually became her defects - she was flirtatious, loved to fantasize, didn't care about the end of things, was practical but immature, thought she was great but didn't have the experience and strategy to fight, was emotional but fragile, self-centered and tried to protect herself, but she also had a strong sense of responsibility. centered and trying to preserve her own dignity, she had enthusiastic participation and active, but eventually declared out of favor because she could not completely put down the intellectual frame, and could not be indifferent to the "killing" and went crazy. .... If we arrange the identities of the four wives of the Chen family, we may be able to conclude that the four wives of the Chen family are the same as the other wives. If we arrange the identities of the four wives of the Chen family, we may be able to arrive at the truth about the status structure of the Chen family: first, a religious family, second, a professional political power player, third, an artist, and fourth, an intellectual (a small intellectual).

Several women in the Chen family have their own "capital": Mrs. Yuru, although old and yellow, but she is the first wife, and a son and a daughter have grown up and become the backbone of the Chen family, and thus according to the rules, according to the strength of the position, she is solid. Second Aunt Zhuo Yun's capital, one is a lady's style, the second is the ability to flatter, the third is the immovable mind, these three are enough to make up for her age, color fading shortcomings. Third Aunt Mei Shan's capital is her beauty, so she can be proud of her favor. Fourth Aunt Songlian's capital is young, enthusiastic and charming because she went to college. Yan Er's capital is the occasional touch of her master, Chen Zuoqian. The characters of these women are also different: Yuru is as old as time, heavy and heavy; Zhuo Yun is scheming and hiding a knife in her smile; Meishan is capricious and arrogant, and loves to go on the wrong side of the road; Songlian is simple and realistic, and loves to be petty and unforgiving; Yan'er is more stupid, and is obsessed with replacing Songlian, and she is not even aware of it when she is being taken advantage of by Zhuo Yun.

The film is very successful in its portrayal of women and has distinctive characters with their own characteristics. Songlian, as the absolute protagonist, has the most shots and images, followed by Mei Shan, the third aunt, Zhuo Yun, the second aunt, Yan Er, the maid, and Yuru, the first wife. The women of the Chen family compound, centered around the "red lantern", compete with each other, and are full of power and wisdom.

The role of the maid Yan'er, her dreams and aspirations represent almost every fantasy and unwillingness of the bottom of the family living in the old times, wanting to make a comeback from the maid to become the master, only that some people succeeded, and some could not put themselves in the right position, do not recognize the realization, and finally returned home in defeat. Yan'er belonged to this category of failure. When she saw Songlian rolling up her sleeves and washing her hands, Yan'er felt that this new girl was so similar to herself, equally young and seemingly of the same family background. For a moment there was even the possibility that they might become friends. But when the cry of "Fourth Mistress" rang out, she cut her off almost in self-defense. Her pity and sadness lies in the fact that she feels that her fate is caused by one new wife after another, and that her illusion of "becoming a concubine" is broken by these new wives over and over again. She feels that this new wife is so similar to her that she doesn't understand why she can't replace her. When she saw Songlian entering the house during her affair with Master Chen, her eyes did not even show fear, and she looked straight into her heart as if she was doing something righteous. Her dreams and desires were so real that even when she was publicly disposed of for lighting the lamp, she still had no remorse and stubbornly knelt in the snow, never admitting her mistake. Becoming Chen Zuoqian's concubine was her ideal and desire. She felt justified in her longing and had no shame. Lighting lanterns by herself, she imagined the feeling of pounding feet. As the sound of the wives' pounding feet resounded in the courtyard, she imagined herself in ecstasy. She was really too young and so easily drawn in and victimized by Zhuo Yun. She was denied because of her longing, and then she turned her resentment on Songlian. To her death, she didn't know who she should blame. If she was to be blamed, it would be the "old rules of the house for many years". Even to her death, she did not understand that the long door was closed to Ajiao, and that there was no north or south in her life without fulfillment.



Figure 68 Yan'er, the maid in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

When Songlian first appeared, she was tied with two big thick twisted braids and wore a martyr's expression on her face. She was a person who had a plan in her heart, and when she could not have autonomy in marriage, and had to choose between working and marrying, marrying an ordinary man or a rich man, she chose to marry a rich man, even if it was just to be a concubine. She married into a large and elegant mansion as she wished. When she enters the mansion, her eyes are full of pride and disdain. But the camera shows her squeezed against a wall, showing how small she is. She avoids the palanquin that is going to pick her up and doesn't let the butler help her carry her things, she resents it all. She was young and beautiful, and the deep mansion was so deep that she made her way through it, with no one in sight but the sound of footsteps. She passed through door after door in it, and these were the paths she would walk for the rest of her life. At the beginning of entering the Chen family compound, she was clueless and confused, not even knowing how to fit in. Carrying the lamp into the courtyard, lighting the fire, burning the lamp, hanging it, a cadre of people with expressionless faces, the echo of every action resounding in the empty courtyard. A few women came in, into the house, said "according to the rules of the house. Wash your feet, pound your feet, comb your hair, change your clothes. It was a complete ceremony. The man of the house was nowhere to be seen, only the red lantern of the man of the house. Her face with trepidation. The whole courtyard was illuminated by the red lanterns, like a cave of hidden killers. She felt that the master was very gentle, whether it was to ask if the foot pounding was comfortable or to ask her to come over and take a closer look all in a warm and gentle voice, only a smart person could peek behind the killing machine - it was the force that slowly eroded a person's edges away. And she was still young, compared to this mansion. It was as if she saw her long loneliness, like her own tears in the mirror, with only the lantern for her own enjoyment. Space and people are so closed. Even if you have read books, those studies can not be used here, intelligence and learning are not proportional. She thought she was smart, but she didn't know that she was not worldly-wise, and just went with her intuition, accepting preconceived notions that Zhuo Yun rejected Meishan, and didn't hide her dissatisfaction when she was frustrated. She was unable to gain insight into the philosophy of the place; all she knew was that she had suddenly become a wife, and it seemed that she should be the master, or at least superior to a maid, without realizing that her position was far from stable and could collapse at any time. She also couldn't accept the master and Yan'er's clandestine sex, she was still wandering, not knowing who she really was, she didn't know that since she could have four wives, it wasn't an intolerable big mistake to have clandestine sex with a maid. It wasn't until the sound of pounding feet rang through the compound like a sieve that she realized that she was beginning to need this thing. She even realized that she couldn't light the lamp and eat what she wanted. She finally had some understanding. So when asked again why she didn't finish college, Songlian's answer was no longer, "My father is sick and can't afford it," but "What's the use of studying, it's still just a piece of clothing on the master's body. When she discovers her name on the muppet, and that it is in Zhuoyun's handwriting, she finally realizes that her survival is so much a matter of struggle. She slowly begins to metamorphose. False pregnancy is a tactic she is not very clever at. But when the long light was lit, she was still mesmerized with self-appreciation. She finally began to appreciate the

strife. She buried Yan'er and Meishan's lives without realizing it. She did not secretly rejoice like Zhuo Yun; she was sad. Her remaining conscience dictated that even if she hadn't been sealed off from the lamp, she would never be able to be in cahoots with this filthy mansion.



Figure 69 The Fourth Mistress, Songlian, in the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

Mei Shan is a mole in the Chen Mansion, growing in the most sensitive part of the house. Mei Shan's resistance is not a Zhuo Yun-style exhaustion of means, but rather a refusal to succumb to the position of a feudal aunt. As the third aunt who entered the Chen family earlier, Mei Shan has survived the Songlian style of wandering and is strong in surviving in the Chen family in an exclusive way. Whether she is self-absorbed singing to herself in the courtyard or cheating on her husband with Dr. Gao, she is as flamboyant and harsh and sharp-edged as one of the colorful dresses she wears. Because she still had capital, the Master still maintained a stronger interest in her, so she didn't have to go through the trouble of losing it for fear of losing it like Zhuo Yun did. Mei Shan was beautiful, the ambiguous smile at the corner of her mouth carried a subtle flavor of sexual desire, she had a life of her own, and she had given birth to a son for Chen Zuoqian, which was her basic security. Mei Shan was smart and was the one who knew the rules and the true nature of the Chen House the best, because of this, she would not exhaust her strength to fight it. She also retained as much of her innocence as possible, her sincerity and meanness showing through. Her resistance is too superficial; she calls the master away on Songlian's wedding night, sings loudly in the courtyard in the early morning when she can't call him away, makes no effort to hide when she doesn't want to be polite, and doesn't even bother to greet him, nor does she maintain a false harmony at the dinner table by pinching Songlian in front of the master like the First Mistress and Zhuo Yun do. Nor would she smile attentively like Zhuo Yun when lighting the lamp. She did not love the Master, and she did not lack love. Her resistance was not a necessity of her own; it had simply become a necessary habit for her in the Chen residence. She did not hide her loneliness, nor did she hide her amazing beauty. She was the truest person in the compound, singing opera on the empty platform, not stopping because Songlian came up to provoke, resounding and soaring. After the opera, the face of grief and helplessness is also exposed. She doesn't stop talking politely, and neither does the play. "You want to hear it, but I don't want to sing it" - this is her attitude to life. This is Meishan, fighting against her own position, and she still has the strength to fight. She is within the rules and outside of them. She's not a stickler for the rules, she's just walking carefully along the edge of them. She saw most clearly, the play can be done well to deceive others, do not do well can only lie to themselves, and even their own can not deceive when they can only lie to the ghosts. She originally wanted to always

be able to cheat others, at least can also cheat themselves, but in the end really can not even cheat the ghost, the result of resistance is, the death of incense.



Figure 70 Third wife Mei Shan in the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

Zhuo Yun is a submissive to the rules of the Chen Mansion. She has great desires and is in constant struggle, but this active struggle is actually a form of submission, submission to her status as an aunt, which she indulges in and cannot extricate herself from, and which is her life's work. Compared to the First Mistress, she was more like a house wife. She knew the philosophy of the house, enlisting newcomers and isolating and ostracizing. What she lived outside was a façade. She was the only one who knew how to smile humbly at the other yard's lamps when they were lit. But she was the only one with a truly hard heart. She was the one who most genuinely cared about the master; she would give Songlian food in front of Master Chen because the master said that everyone should take good care of her. She would go to Songlian for a haircut with a bit of braggadocio because Master said she would look younger with shorter hair. But caring doesn't mean she loves, she doesn't know how to love, it's that she needs to, she has nothing beyond that. But she understands that which house lights the lamps which house can order the food, the wife who lights the lamps will even look high on the subordinates, and lighting the lamps means that she can get a real position in the Chen family. She was the most persistent one. She submits to her position as a man's dress and makes every effort to be the ideal. She not only preserved herself like the First Mistress, but fought for more. She solves all obstacles in silence. Who is really smart, anyway? Songlian? Meishan? If we're talking about skill in fighting, we can only say that the Taoist is a good fighter. Only she didn't know that she would soon be dying of old age, and that no matter how much she struggled, the best she could do was just to become the First Mistress.



Figure 71 Zhuo Yun, the second wife in the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The eldest lady may have experienced Song Lian's youth, Mei Shan's resistance, and Zhuo Yun's surrender, and finally gave up and became the mascot of the Chen family - of no practical use, but cannot be easily shaken. She didn't even have a name, and there was no sparkle in her eyes. She was the only lady whose expression didn't change at all when she heard which courtyard was lighting the lights, because she knew it couldn't be her. She had survived to such an old age in the

Chen family without any injuries, and her heart had already been hardened. No one knows how old she is, maybe she is really old, maybe she has lost hope. The wrinkles on her face can only vaguely remind people of her age. She spoke very little and expressed very little. Her deepest reaction was simply to admit that she had long been an antique, predicting that the Chen family would be defeated by this generation sooner or later. What's interesting is that while she was slowly talking to Songlian word by word, the two girls in the background were also slowly wiping the objects in the room. Although they were young girls, it seemed like they were in slow motion. What is also interesting is the inquiry about Songlian's identity as a college student. Maybe she is concerned. Between the lines, the sentence "sin, sin" makes her more like a mother. In this condensed kingdom of China's feudal era, which lags behind the times and where time has almost stagnated, if Chen Zuoqian is the emperor, the eldest wife is struggling to take care of the world. Now let's think about it. In fact, why the queen is always so dignified and sacred is because she blocks people's normal desires. She went from Songlian-style wandering to Mei Shan-style resistance. After Zhuo Yun-style surrender, her desire has been eroded. When she cannot possess her husband, the best mentality is to treat him as her son. Then the desire disappeared and she was able to preserve herself. When Songlian was disgusted with her old-fashioned attitude, she didn't know that in this yard, the best way to survive was to die.



Figure 72 The First Mistress in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The Fifth Mistress makes the latest appearance in the film, and is almost identical to Songlian when she marries into the Chen residence. With red lanterns hanging all over the courtyard and the house, and the Hammerfoot Ceremony going on, with cluelessness and confusion, she sees the mad Songlian wandering around, and asks, "Who is that woman?", unbeknownst to her, that woman could possibly be herself in the future.



Figure 73 The Fifth Mistress in the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

Like summer, autumn, winter and the next summer, from desire to enter, from wandering and resistance to submission and heart death, and a new cycle, the Chen family compound is a theater without spring. In fact, there is only one woman, and this woman has to follow the many rules of the male-dominated society, not to challenge the majesty of the male master, or else she will end up in a miserable situation, she has to live her life as the vassal of the family, as the man's clothes or decorations, to be oppressed and controlled, and to engage in power calculations around the man, and of course, they have the spoils of war - the male master's patronage, occasional verbal attentions, actual money, little privileges in the family, and so on. The only thing she doesn't have is herself. Zhang Yimou expressed the low status of women in the patriarchal society during the Republic of China through the creation of the image of women living in the Chen family compound.

### 3.3 Chenfu Rules: Male Supremacy and Patriarchal Order

The "old rules of the house" mentioned several times in "The Red Lantern Hangs High" are not only the traditional rules and regulations of a large family like the Chen family in the Republican era, but also the ethical and moral rituals and order passed down from feudal society. The core of these feudal rituals is the Three Principles and Five Rules, which are essentially the establishment of male supremacy and patriarchal order. The "rules" of the Chen family are the materialization of feudal ethics and morals and are usually formulated and enforced by the elders or authority figures of the family, with the purpose of preserving the dignity of the family, traditional values, and the social hierarchy. These rules contain codes of conduct for members of the family, etiquette, and the preservation of the family's honor.

In the film, Zhang Yimou's "sexuality" is power, and the story of four women competing for a man is presented through red lanterns and other rituals. The red lantern becomes a symbol of legitimate sex, and acquires the substantive power of Chenfu, such as "hammering feet" and "ordering food". The male power establishes the order for sex through the lanterns, and the female power to complete the realization of the sexual order through the right to own the lanterns. The Third Mistress Meishan's affair with Dr. Gao, the Fourth Mistress Songlian's longing for Feipu, and the maid Yan'er's longing to become the Fourth Mistress are all challenges and subversions of the established "sexual order" of the Chen Mansion, and they ultimately either seal the lanterns, or burn the lanterns to express their deaths or madness in the ceremony. In the end, their tragic fates of death or madness are expressed either by sealing the lamps or by burning the lamps. Obviously, this omnipresent "sexual order" that dominates the concubines and the young maids is a

materialization of traditional patriarchal power, which constitutes the reality of women's existence in Zhang Yimou's film.

Once the rituals are created, they constantly render the sanctity of the order through symbols, and form the implication of the existence of the order in people's psychology. In this symbolic implication and the existing cultural inheritance, the rituals have the factual authority, which in turn will regulate and constrain people's lives and behaviors. In *Hanging the Red Lantern*, women's lives are always carried out in the order regulated by men, and the Chen family compound confines the women of the Chen family who have been living there for generations. The alienation and symbolization of the time and space of life ultimately create a heavy sense of narrative and historical depth, highlighting the repression and distortion of human nature in the society at that time in the ritualized display.

Throughout China's long feudal society, women have always lived and thought in accordance with socially defined gender roles, and this is especially true in movie productions. The patriarchal system has had a long-lasting influence on the development of history, creating a social order in which men are superior to women and women's dependence is deeply rooted. It is not easy for women to give up their traditions, including Songlian, who is a new thinker in the movie. Before she studied, she was dependent on her father, and after his death, she began to choose to be dependent on Chen Zuoqian, as if Songlian's whole life could only survive by being dependent on men. Not only Songlian, but also the other three wives of the Chen family live under the authority of men. The meaning of the women's daily life lies in the competition for the red lantern, which is decided by the male representative, Master Chen, which is in fact a symbol of the large family under male domination and control. The underlying male shadow behind the women is firstly reflected in the male control over the women and the unconscious attachment of the women to the men. In addition to this, the male authority is also reflected in the transformation of the female character. At the beginning, Songlian is a university student who accepts new knowledge, a rebellious girl who refuses to welcome the sedan chair with her luggage, but gradually, for the sake of the red lantern hanging high, she also begins to fall into degradation, in fact, in other words, she gradually begins to accept and emulate the rules of the male authority laid down by Chen's masters. Songlian began to lie about her pregnancy, used her status as a wife to expose Yan'er's private hanging of the red lantern, until she persecuted Yan'er to death, and competed with other wives for jealousy. All these changes have turned a brand new intellectual woman into a prisoner of the feudal marriage system.

In the film, Chen Zuoqian is the representative, defender and beneficiary of the rules of the Chen family, and through his control over the members of the family and the servants, he fulfills the role of the "king" of the Chen family, a miniature kingdom, and establishes the majesty of male supremacy and patriarchal order. Chen Zuoqian's appearance is not as straightforward as that of Yang Jinshan in *Ju Dou*, and it is only twelve minutes into the movie that we see the back of Chen's master in the dim light; he is not as stern and imposing, and is even a bit pleasant, but the words he says when he comes out of the scene are very meaningful: "How's it going? The foot is still comfortable, right? A woman's feet are the most important thing, comfortable feet, everything will be adjusted smoothly, and will be more able to serve men." Before Master Chen's appearance, we see Songlian become a bride after entering the

door, almost simultaneously with the lighting and foot pounding ceremony, Zhang Yimou in this paragraph took great pains to describe the servants in the house to hang the lamps, light the lamps, foot pounding before the preparation, with the rhythm of the foot pounding and other cumbersome process, in fact, these are in the padding of the grand meaning of the appearance of the Master Chen and his position in the compound, the woman's foot A woman's feet need to be served, and a woman serves a man. All the acts of serving Songlian are actually serving Master Chen. Lighting the lamp, hammering the feet, and ordering the food power is gained not only by providing good sexual service, but also by absolute obedience. Master Chen says, "I hate it when women give me a face." Not being able to put on a face means absolute obedience. Therefore, in the Chen family compound, in addition to the master, and the future master - the young master Fei Pu, these aunts, whether it is a "house battle" in the winner or loser, are just objects, can not be counted as a person.

Master Chen did not suffer the same misfortune as Yang Jinshan, but the director used the language of the camera to compulsorily make him never appear in front of the camera, he has the right to speak, the voice constantly appearing in the film, but can not make his face clear, either only an arm and a half of the body, or a large distant view, the audience only saw his light under the light is not a tall figure, the whole movie he is blurred, the face is not clear! What does he look like? What does he do? The audience knows nothing. "The lord of the movie never appears to have a proper face, as if he doesn't exist, but the dark forces behind him come into play when something goes wrong." (Mordor, 2008, p.110)



Figure 74 Blurred" Master Chen in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The reason why Zhang Yimou does this is that he wants to use ritualized customs to strengthen and exaggerate the social reality of patriarchy, which is shrouded by the sense of male power. The sense of male power is omnipresent and omnipresent, and creates an irresistible confinement force on the human body and spirit, however, this order of male power is by no means established and enforced by a specific person (therefore, the specific person representing the male power is invisible and unobtrusive), but it is historically and socially constructed. However, this patriarchal order is never established and enforced by a specific person (and thus the specific person representing masculinity is invisible), but is historically and socially constructed, and he uses traditional rituals to illustrate the inviolability of the patriarchal order by arguing that: "In the middle of a deep house, in the middle of an impenetrable ritual, the human being is very insignificant in the middle of the house. This compound is lifeless, and what remains constant is the daily ritual." (Zhang Ming, 2004, p.145) Although Master Chen is never given a close-up of his front face throughout, as if he is intentionally avoiding it, none of this changes the fact that he is the master of everyone's destiny in the extended family. Not a single close-up of the

lord's face is given, not even a medium shot. The faces of the aunts are scrutinized countless times. The male is the subject of the gaze. Women are the objects of the gaze. To a large extent, the movie pays great attention to the plight of women's existence. Women may only be able to truly gain their dignity and value by completely escaping from the shadow of men. However, Master Chen is the highest position in the Chen family, deciding whether the lanterns will be lit or extinguished, reflecting the supreme "male culture".



Figure 75 Lighting", "Extinguishing", "Hammering" and "Ordering" Ceremonies in the Movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The symbolism of the rituals in "The Big Red Lantern Hangs High" - the lighting of the lantern and the hammering of the feet - is very clear. Songlian is obviously not a disciplinarian of the established patriarchal order before she enters the house. She comes from a scholarly family, is a female university student educated in anti-feudal and anti-men's rights, and is forced to marry Master Chen for a living, so she walks towards the Chen family's mansion just as the welcoming procession is "running in the opposite direction", and the reverse treatment of the scene dispatch obviously implies that the protagonist has turned her back on a traditional marriage ceremony. This reverse treatment of the scene clearly implies the protagonist's rejection of a traditional marriage ceremony. When Songlian enters the Chen family, the butler takes her to pay her respects to her ancestors, and only the butler kneels alone, without seeing (or showing) Songlian kneeling. However, the first instruction she receives is the lighting ceremony, with lanterns all over the house and outside the house. When Master Chen enters the room filled with red light, his first request to Songlian is to raise the lamp and lift her face, a series of actions that show the absolute power of the one who gives the order. While the face of the viewed in the light of the red lantern is young, graceful, soft and tame, the viewer is always able to feel the pair of eyes outside the camera, and the sense of the power pointing of the shot is particularly clear. Once they have gone to bed, absolute power is once again on display, as Songlian, wrapped up in her blankets, makes a request to extinguish the light, to which the master responds by lighting the lamp just to see clearly. With the line between the power to see and to be seen so clearly defined, the difference in social status between men and women is clear, and the symbolism of the lantern becomes clear - a tool for viewing and scrutinizing the object. The next day, when Songlian goes to pay her respects to the wives as she is supposed to, the camera follows her to see lanterns hanging high in the courtyard of the Third Mistress, where only the Master lives. When Master Chen eats with the wives, Songlian says she doesn't like meat, and the master says, "According to the rules of the house, you can order food when the lanterns are lit." So Songlian is allowed to order a few vegetarian

dishes that she loves to eat, and this time it is Master Chen himself who explains the profound meaning of lighting the lanterns, so that Songlian, who has just entered the Chen Mansion, can recognize and familiarize herself with the rules of the game in the compound one by one.



Figure 76 Songlian (female) being gazed at by Master Chen (male) in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The most explicit or obligatory point of power is the scene in which the wives of each house wait to announce the lighting of the lanterns in the evening; the four women stand at the entrance of their respective houses, and the ruler, who holds the power of life and death, establishes his own order by using the imagery of the lighting of the lanterns; the red color of the lanterns hanging high in front of the doors of each house is visually significant in announcing the ubiquitousness of the rules, and the ritualization of them implies that male power is mysterious and insurmountable. The ritual of foot-pounding serves the same function. In addition to Master Chen's colorful and detailed description of foot-pounding before his appearance, the Second Mistress further explains the significance of foot-pounding; when Songlian goes to greet the Second Mistress Zhuo Yun on her second day, the Second Mistress enthusiastically asks Songlian, who has no knowledge of the ritual, whether foot-pounding is comfortable, explaining, "In the future, if you can pound your feet, you can do whatever you want to do in the Chen family. You can do whatever you want in the Chen family." The premise of "being able to pound feet" is that only the house in which the master lives will be able to pound feet, and the house in which he lives means that the wife of the house is favored and supported by the master, who is the one in power, so she can do whatever she wants in the family, and also becomes the disciplinarian and owner of power. Of course, these rituals were not invented by Master Chen himself, as Butler Chen says in "Big Red Lanterns High", "The rules of the Chen family are all passed down from the old ancestors, and the old rules are not to be sloppily followed in the future." This kind of male supremacy patriarchal system of all kinds of statutes are passed down from generation to generation, is not the patent of the Chen masters, and is not likely to end in them, in this regard, the Chen masters are also patriarchal patriarchal society is a member of the disciplined, only they and other people are being disciplined by a different direction only. Master Chen's face is not clear, but he is like a ghost hovering in the corners of the compound, lingering, his "absence" just shows his "presence", and also shows the

power and deep-rootedness of male power, the patriarchal ideology is as strong as a high wall in these compounds, as well as the patriarchal society. The patriarchal ideology of male power exists everywhere in these courtyards, just like the high walls and tiles. Who are they disciplining and what effect do they have?

The four wives and the maid Yan'er in "The Red Lantern Hangs High" are all women under male domination, they are at the end of the hierarchical order, and their fate is in the hands of the men represented by the master, in order to survive, they have to submit to male domination, and those who don't can't escape from the fate of being disciplined, rebelling and ultimately being punished. The First and Second Mistresses are considered to be the submissive ones. The First Mistress is always an expressionless antique-like person who has a solid position in the Chen family because she has given birth to the youngest son, Fei Pu. Her old age and lack of desire makes her detached from the other mistresses' competition for favors and rivalries, and she is a person who has been completely disciplined by the patriarchal system. Zhuo Yun, the second wife, is also one of the people that the movie focuses more on. Her identity is very interesting, although she is an aunt and undoubtedly at the end of the ruling order, she is the faithful defender and accomplice of the patriarchal system; on the one hand, she is obedient to the master and extremely flattering; on the other hand, in order to preserve her position in the Chen family, she treats every aunt as her enemy, warm on the surface, but treacherous and insidious in the heart. tries every means to eliminate her rivals. Under her direct action the Third Mistress Mei Shan is executed and the Fourth Mistress Song Lian is driven mad. She becomes the victor of this war at the behest of men, but the film ends ironically enough with the appearance of the even younger and more beautiful Fifth Mistress. The Second Mrs. Cheuk Wan can eliminate the constant stream of threats from the same sex over and over again, but she cannot shake the stability of the order of power, and it is her sad, inescapable destiny that she will eventually be defeated when she grows old.

"In Big Red Lanterns Hanging High, the iron house-like Chen family compound, the lord with many concubines, and the symbolic lamp-lighting ceremony and old rules, etc., seem to 'symbolize the closed and inhuman characteristics of the Chinese feudal family culture'. However, in terms of characterization, what both the main character, Songlian, and the third wife, Meishan, do fundamentally challenge and subvert feudal ethics and traditional morality." (Chen Hui, 2009, p.76) Both the Third and Fourth Mistresses are severely punished for not accepting the rules and regulations. The Third Mistress, Mei Shan, who was a famous Peking Opera actress, could not resist the loneliness of lighting and sealing the lamp and cheated on her with Dr. Gao, who had admired her for a long time. In a patriarchal society, a woman's infidelity is the most deviant of all behaviors and is punished most severely. When the Third Mistress's affair is discovered, she is killed by a servant in the House of the Dead on the roof of the Chen family home at the behest of the Master. The "house of the dead" is a symbol, and the eyes of the Fourth Mistress, Songlian, are used in the first part of the film to emphasize the horror of the house of the dead, a forbidden area in the open space that symbolizes the inviolability of the patriarchal order and the "cannibalistic nature" of the male order. The Fourth Mistress's deviation and resistance to the patriarchal order is also punished. In the film, the master comes out of her house several times and walks to other aunts, and if this is only a small

punishment, the final punishment is the devastating and symbolic sealing off of the lanterns, and the subsequent revocation of all privileges. On the surface, her madness seems to be due to Mei Shan's death, but in reality, it is still the fear and pressure brought by the patriarchal system of male power that drives her mad.

In the movie, Chen Zuoqian scolds Songlian, "What did you see? You didn't see anything! You're crazy." "Crazy" is constructed, as long as it does not conform to the order, it is crazy. The movie repeatedly mentions "follow the old rules" and "this is out of order." The "rules" in this family are the self-contained rationality itself. The "rules" are a way of consolidating Mr. Chen's male authority. Any attempt to question/accuse/overstep the "rules" can be considered "crazy". Master Chen is the representative of the highest authority in the Chen family, and thus can "dictate what is crazy and what is normal".

The tragedy of Yan'er is another force of male power. Yan'er was originally an even lower status subordinate who dreamed of becoming an aunt because of the master's favor and secretly lit red lanterns in the house, and became a victim of the struggle between the Second and Fourth Mistresses in their rivalry for favor. Yan'er's death seems to be directly caused by Songlian, but in essence, it is the result of the desire caused by the lighting of the lanterns and the inaccessibility of the desire, and the male order both activates and buries desire. In short, through the display of red lanterns and related rituals, characters, and rules, marriage forms, Peking opera art forms, and life scenes such as clothing, food, housing, and social interactions of wealthy rural families during the Republic of China were consumed.

#### **Part 4: The Ultimate Art Form**

With characteristic colors, compositions, music, and space, Tall Red Lanterns shows the audience the distinctive aspects of director Zhang Yimou's video aesthetics, and the film indicts the tragedy of women and the little people in a deformed feudal social environment. Through its superb presentation of the history of the Republic of China and traditional Chinese culture, as well as the director's unique artistic treatment, the movie is regarded as one of the films with the ultimate art form. Its handling of the film's aesthetics, cultural expression and emotional depth provides the audience with an extremely powerful and thought-provoking cinematic experience.

As a mature film artist, Zhang Yimou's use of audiovisual modeling can be described as self-contained, with its own unique strategy. Zhang Yimou "is good at choosing the form of visual representation that is suitable for the subject matter, events and characters involved in the film, so that the narrative form and process of the film language and its narrative object (content) together form a highly visualized 'film story'" (Jia Leilei, 2009, p.61).

##### **4.1 Color**

For a film to tell a complete and moving story content, not only do you need a great script and a smooth narrative, but also how well you use color is an important part of the story. "The film "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High" also uses red as its main tone (which can be seen from the title of this film), which is a twisted kind of red, with big red lanterns that are so strikingly red and blinding red swaying in the gray and black courtyard of the Chen family's mansion, while everything seems so dead. But the film also uses a large area of gray, white and red contrast: gray and black sky, gray and black walls, gray and white ground and red lanterns form a stark

contrast, the three colors of red, gray and black constitute the Chen family mansion, this cold and suffocating space, so that the whole film shows a kind of heavy, cold and silent, anxious, suffocating and depressing atmosphere. The red color in the film is no longer flamboyant and reckless, but is suppressed by gray and black, thus accurately expressing the theme of the film one the suppression and bondage of human nature by feudal rites and the feudal marriage system." (Lou Hai Zhen, 2012, p.34)

The most conspicuous thing in the movie is the big red lanterns, which corresponds to the name of the movie - "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High". The red color is the main color of the movie. Red represents happiness, desire and hope in traditional Chinese culture, but it is also the color of blood and killing. "The big red lanterns in the movie represent an image symbol, and the metaphor of image symbols is a process of representation from concrete to abstract. The main linguistic symbol in the film is the 'big red lantern', which symbolizes new hope, and because of its elliptical shape, it symbolizes 'reunion' in traditional Chinese culture, but the film gives it a completely new meaning on the contrary." (Zhang Yongmei, 2015, p. 37)

The big red lanterns are supposed to be a symbol of festivity, however, the red lanterns with black and gray as the background present a battle between black and red, as if it is a fierce fight between fate and feudal bad habits, and its background is eerie, closed and suffocating. The rows of red lanterns in the movie lose their joyfulness, and the rows of red lanterns look like streams made of blood, with a horrible and suffocating feeling. Red lanterns are the symbols of women's competition for favor in the Chen family's courtyard. When Master Chen goes to which courtyard, red lanterns will be lit in that courtyard, and red lanterns become the flag of competition for favor and victory; if you own a red lantern in the Chen family, you own the supreme honor and power. With the red lanterns lit, extinguished, women's fate is also subject to the red lanterns. When the red lantern is lit, the women's hope is ignited; however, when the red lantern is extinguished, the Chen family compound shows a dead silence, the empty courtyard has no popularity, leaving only the farce of the women's rivalry. The red lanterns are the blood shed by the women of the Chen family in the battlefield of women, and we can't see any joy, well-being, or happiness in the red lanterns, but rather the cruelty of the struggle between the women. The women in the Chen family compound all look up to and look forward to the scarlet lanterns, which are full of helplessness. The large amount of red color in the film is actually a kind of naked irony, giving people a cautionary attitude and visually striking red shots. For the whole film, "red" has become a symbol that serves the main idea, symbolizing fear and death, and pushing the characters' psychology to the extreme destruction.

The spatial composition of the lighted lanterns in the movie indirectly expresses the complex and contradictory relationship between the characters involved in the "big red lantern". The courtyard of the four wives is spread out in the character "口", and the four wives live in it, which means "囍", which fulfills Songlian's words: "The people in the courtyard are like anything, but not like human beings. The main conflict in the movie comes from the Second Mistress. The main conflict in the movie comes from the Second, Third and Fourth Wives. They are positioned in a triangle, forming a triad. But their relationship starts out as complementary, with Songlian becoming confidant with the bodhisattva-faced, scorpion-hearted Second Mistress and

working together against the Third Mistress. Later, she discovers that the Third Mistress is actually not too bad-hearted and has many similar character traits to herself, and the conflict between the Second Mistress and Songlian and the Third Mistress becomes a conflict between the three of them. The three of them are both antagonistic and complementary.

In the film, the warm red color symbolizing hope and the black color symbolizing confinement, death and repression are interlaced, and the contrast between the warm and cold tones strengthens the connotation of repression that the film wants to express. The overall color of the film is gray and black, and the horrible and desolate family compound symbolizes the suppression and constraints of feudalism. The houses and roofs we see in the movie are shown in panoramic or large panoramic views, accurately depicting the deep-rootedness of this large feudal family. Against the gray and black tiles of the house, the red lanterns appear to give a strong visual contrast, highlighting the meaning of the theme, but also an obvious symbol. The lantern is an important object throughout the film, and the entire film revolves around the big red lantern. On Songlian's wedding night, there is a close-up of a large red lantern, and we see that the scene is almost entirely dominated by the color red, warning the people of the feudal family that feudal rites and the authority of the master are insurmountable, and in Songlian's close-up composition, we see that the same red color fills up the entire room, highlighting her facial expression to its fullest extent.



Figure 77 Close-up of a red lantern and Songlian under the red lantern in the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The most common colors used in the film, besides red, are white and black. White is also a frequent color in the film. In the first long shot of the movie, Song-ryun and her stepmother have a few short conversations. We can only see Song-ryun in white, not her stepmother, and the image of her stepmother is conceptualized at this point, although Song-ryun apparently gives in to her stepmother and says, "Marry a man, marry a man, and what kind of man is it up to me to marry? You keep mentioning money, so marry a rich man!" . But we can see through Songlian's desperate but determined expression and cold, hard tone that she is rebelling in her heart. At this time, Songlian is at home, she is wearing white clothes, the window behind her is also glued with white paper, and the window is right behind Songlian, the space she is in is very narrow and confined, and she can't retreat if she wants to. Songlian's eyes are dull and she says, "Woman, it's not like that," she can only take the stubbornness of not admitting defeat and rise to the challenge. The white color in the film breaks through the usual meaning of the use of color in film, white no longer only symbolizes purity and beauty, the white color here is more with sentimental colors, pale resistance and weak struggle will eventually be eliminated in the boundless darkness and symbol of destiny in the dark red. After the end of the first

shot, the screen shows a black color, which carries a strong sense of mystery, Songlian's future is unknown; with the black background as the background, the center of the screen shows a big red character "Xia", the red character here does not represent joy and happiness, but a kind of evil omen with the meaning of bloodshed; The word "summer" indicates the season; summer is hot and suffocating, and for Songlian, this marriage is a compromise that she has no choice but to make, which is her misfortune.

Color can not only render the environment realistically, but also create a certain atmosphere. In the film, the blinding red lanterns, the gray-black sky, the gray-black high courtyard wall, and the gray-white ground all illustrate that the Chen family mansion is a suffocating environment under the feudal system, rendering a solemn, claustrophobic, and gloomy atmosphere. When the Fourth Mistress Songlian's courtyard is sealed off from the lights, the colors immediately turn gray and the whole compound appears dead and horrible. When the third wife, Mei Shan, is brutally executed, the color of the film becomes gray, the sky is gray and snowy, creating a cold and sad scene and atmosphere. The film uses the colors of black, gray, white and red to create a tragic atmosphere of coldness, agitation and suffocation. Zhang Yimou uses the unique language of color to narrate the tragic story and intensify its tragedy. The role of color is played to a great extent here.

White in the movie means more lonesome, suggesting the tragic fate of women long set under the feudal society, the white mantle, the snowflakes burying the sins, the white scarf carried around the neck of the young master. The strong contrast between the pure white and the horrifyingly stark black signifies that the women can never escape the bondage and constraints of the black and white world. When the Third Mistress Meishan is carried up to the roof for execution by a servant after her affair with Dr. Gao is discovered, the group is also treading on a field of white snow.

In addition to the red lanterns, black and gray houses and white snow in the movie, the clothes of different characters also represent different meanings. The first is the representative character of the feudal power that has been running through the film, the Master. Although he appears in the film, there is not a close-up shot for him, and the audience can't see his face, but only knows that he wears a black tunic, which puts a layer of strong feudal color on his family status, which is unshakable black. Secondly, most of the subordinates' clothes are in dark shades of black and gray, represented by the housekeeper and the foot-pounding old lady, who are also deeply oppressed by the feudal forces, and the "old rules" are like their lives to be guarded to the death. After the discovery of the Third Mistress's affair, a group of servants dressed in black pants and holding the Third Mistress in a white nightgown hurriedly walk on the snow-covered roof, which forms a strong visual impact. Strong black and white confrontation, the Third Mistress ultimately did not escape punishment, she was forever bound in the dark and cold roof house. The house locks up the soul of the Third Mistress, which in fact symbolizes that women at that time were unable to fight against the feudal forces at all, and that women became objects dependent on men, losing their own dignity. The First Mistress is purple. Although she is a woman, she has long been accustomed to the "rules" and "etiquette" of the feudal family, and in her opinion, the master is the rule. Meishan's clothes in the film are red costumes and red, black, blue and green cheongsams, dark colors in the bleak courtyard, dark and

lightless, showing their inner darkness and depression. The last thing is that everyone's lining is white, setting off the pallor and senselessness of the extended family.

The film's protagonist Songlian's clothing changes also has a profound meaning, Songlian's most of the footage is wearing a white cheongsam, at the very beginning of a student dress intellectual Songlian tied two big twisted braids, white student dress to wear up to look extraordinarily innocent, which is before she has not yet set foot in the Chen family before the dress. After becoming the Fourth Mistress, her cheongsam was initially in a green and light color, and after a period of hooking and calculating, the color of her clothes changed to a big red and purple, which shows that she was assimilated into the feudal family and her mindset transformed in an inexorable way. At the end of the movie, Songlian puts on her student clothes again. People say that the Fourth Mistress is crazy, is she really crazy? Perhaps it is her mind that has been freed and liberated.



Figure 78 Changes in Songlian's Costume in the Movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The only thing that is missing in the movie is spring, which may be the director's intention to implicitly tell the audience through the omission of this season that there is no spring for women in the feudal family at that time. Green is the representative of spring, and there are some shots in the movie. At the beginning of the movie, when Songlian walks in the opposite direction of the welcoming team, there is a blur of green on both sides of her, and as Songlian walks into the Chen family step by step, the green color is getting farther and farther away from her, which seems to be a metaphor for the spring full of bright future does not belong to Songlian, and vaguely hints at Songlian's irreversible and tragic future destiny.

The color in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern" is an important part of its unique charm, with red being the most prominent representative color. The film also uses rich color contrast and saturation, such as black, gray, etc., to create a visual impact and emotional tension, strengthening the film's theme of feudal ethics. The feudal ethical culture of the Republic of China was consumed in this part.

#### 4.2 Composition

Movie screen composition is the starting point for completing a movie work, an important link for the progress of the movie plot, and also an important means for the director to express his shooting ideas. In film art, composition means the composition of images, "Composition deals with the relationships and combinations between images in the picture, and more explicitly refers to the positional relationships of people, scenery, and objects, as well as the configuration relationships of shape, light, and color." (Yin Hong, 2007, p.56) The purpose of composition is to highlight the image of the subject and reflect the external form and internal nature of the subject. Composition has an important position in movie creation that cannot be ignored, and it reflects the artistic craftsmanship of the creator.

Zhang Yimou focuses on picture composition to enhance the visual beauty of the film; at the same time, he also focuses on using picture composition to convey the inner meaning of the theme. According to his own preference and conception, he often creates a kind of emotional atmosphere in line with the theme of the film through the change of light, color, angle and a large number of compositional settings, so that the composition of the film has a meaning outside of the picture under the surface image, and realizes the conveyance of the meaning, which prompts the audience to think about the content of the film. Therefore, in director Zhang Yimou's film works, the picture composition not only has the formal beauty of visual art, but also fits the theme of the film and the textual connotation of the film, so that the form and the content are unified.

In "The Red Lantern Hangs High", when Songlian first arrives at the Chen Mansion, she surveys the courtyard in front of her with curiosity, and when the butler of the Chen Mansion asks her who she is, Songlian looks up, and what appears to the viewer at this point is the fact that the entire picture highlights the Chen Mansion, which takes up most of the space in the picture, while Songlian, who is standing in front of it, looks like nothing more than a kind of decoration under the surroundings of the mansion. This composition also symbolizes Songlian's destiny and position in the Chen family, showing how strong the power of feudal tradition is. There is also a recurring image composition in the film: a narrow rectangular patio surrounded by gray overlapping and interlocking high-rise buildings, this airtight place is the living space of the Chen family's wives and concubines. The director's setting up of this image composition and its recurring appearances have a strong symbolic meaning. It implies that the feudal system of husband's right, marriage and the concept of superiority and inferiority have heavily imprisoned and killed women's youth and freedom.



Figure 79 Songlian, who first arrives at the Chen residence in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

Zhang Yimou's films often use composition to explain the scene and render the atmosphere. The strictly symmetrical Chen family compound is the most important scene in the movie, giving people a closed and dull feeling and rendering a heavy and depressing atmosphere. In order to show the panoramic view of this courtyard house, the movie has repeatedly taken high angle shots of the Chen Family Compound, creating a kind of staring effect; and it also adopts closed rules for composition, which also gives people a feeling of being suppressed or even suffocated in the movie. The Chen family compound is a courtyard, with regular rooms and compartments, the whole courtyard looks strict and neat. The red lanterns hanging

under the eaves, each door hangs a few, left and right sides hang a few are very neat and consistent; indoor lanterns are also very concerned about the rules and symmetry, hanging a large one in the center, surrounded by a few small ones, is also very neat. This kind of picture composition of the landlord's mansion presents the closure, rule, and stereotypes of Chen's mansion to the fullest extent, which not only conveys the fact that it is a cage that imprisons human nature, but also colors the mysterious, eerie, depressing, and dreary atmosphere, which even makes people feel that they can't breathe. In addition, the composition of several overlapping doors appears repeatedly in the film, which renders a deep and gloomy atmosphere, letting the audience know that the wives and concubines of Chen's family are imprisoned in this deep mansion.

At the beginning of the movie, music accompanied by Peking Opera plays, setting the emotional tone of the entire movie. What follows is a close-up shot of Songlian, the female lead played by Gong Li, with the frame of the painting holding the person's face in place, the person in the center of the frame, and the windowpaper of the era in the background. The windowpaper is latticed, giving the impression of bondage. The scene is a conversation between Songlian and her stepmother, who only has a voice but never appears in the frame, and the two-minute close-up shot of her face illustrates the environment Songlian lives in and the pain she suffers from the suppression of her feudal family. The composition of the square frame creates a sense of visual impact and sets the tone of the movie - depressing. Meanwhile, in contrast to this frame, at the end of the movie, Song Lien, who is only 20 years old, goes crazy due to the suppression of the feudal family, and we can see that there is also a latticework of windows in the picture, which frames the main character. But the only difference between the two is that Song Lien's center in the picture is shifted to the right symmetrically. Although Song Lien is still bound by feudalism, her mind has been freed at this time, so the picture is no longer symmetrically shaped.

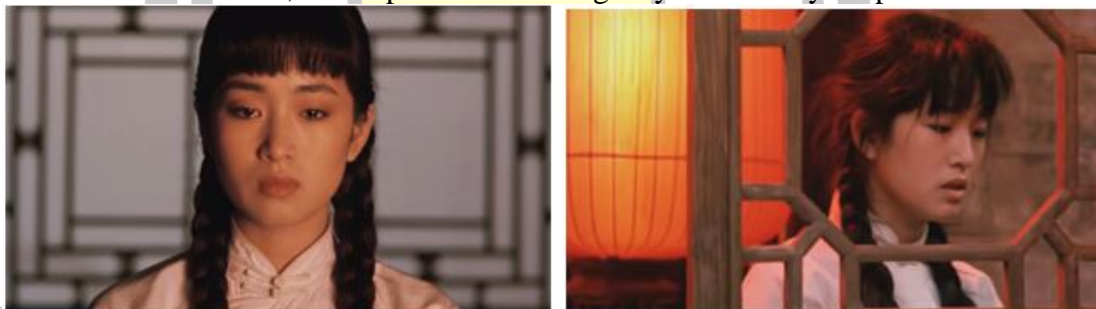


Figure 80 Songlian at the beginning and Songlian at the end of the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

In the film, the red cursive characters "Summer", "Autumn", "Winter" and "Summer of the Second Year" occupy the entire screen, indicating the duration of the film and dividing it into four chapters. "This not only indicates the length of the film, but also divides the film into four chapters, each focusing on a different season, and suggests that there is no "spring" in this deep house, which is a multi-purpose move. "As a kind of 'literal' ideogram, subtitle has a considerable power of temporal and spatial generalization and naming of things and places, which is precisely what the image itself can hardly generalize or explain." (Li Xianjie, 2000, p.249) In terms of seasons, the film only has three seasons, summer, fall and winter, starting with

summer and ending with winter, while at the end of the film year after year it is summer again. This is a deliberate arrangement of the director. Spring gives people hope and everything recovers, but there is no hope in this big family filled with the smell of feudalism, everything is dead, such as the sultry heat of summer, the bleakness of autumn, the coldness of winter, and the human heart is also like this. The three compositions of the summer, fall and winter seasons in the film have the same place and the same structure, but the different seasons and environments express a strong contrast. The three compositions are all square and symmetrical, with a depressing visual impact, symbolizing power and suggesting the irreversible and tragic fate of women.



Figure 81 The courtyard where Songlian lives in the summer, fall and winter seasons of the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The most prominent and meaningful picture composition in the film "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High" is the symmetrical composition. Throughout the film, almost the whole picture composition is shown by the symmetrical composition. Symmetrical graphics give people a sense of neatness and squareness, organized and regular, often representing a kind of power force, with a strong sense of solemnity and oppressive colors. When Songlian first comes to Chen's house, the arched door in the square frame of the camera is a major feature, which foretells that when Songlian, an intellectual, enters this door, she is entering an irrevocable feudal family dyke, and from then on, her life, her destiny, and her thoughts will be confined and destroyed. Songlian is in the center of the frame, symmetrically placed on the left and right, adding to the sense of ceremony and the tragic fate of being squeezed by the power. In the film's summoning ceremony, the characters are usually in the center of the frame, symmetrically placed, and this composition mainly signifies the lord's authority and insurmountable position in the family.



Figure 82 Symmetrical Composition in the Movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The movie also features many representative compositions. Songlian and the young master met for the first time, in this scene did not use symmetrical composition, this is back to the nature of the characters, from the composition of the expression, show a real character inner activities, Songlian to the young master has feelings of love, but by the family's suppression, can not do as you wish, here, the director did not arrange symmetrical composition, as a way to express the main character's true heart, but this feeling fleeting, because both Songlian and the young

master Feipu they are bound by the feudal compound, blocked for too long by their own breath, and so on, and so on. Because both Songlian and Feipu, the young master, have been bound by feudalism and locked up in the compound for too long, unable to catch their breath.



Figure 83 Characteristic Representative Composition in the Movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The composition of the film "Raise the Red Lantern" is carefully designed, adding more dramatic tension and emotional expression to the storyline, and strengthening the theme of the film of feudal ethics. The feudal ethics of the Republic of China were consumed in this part.

#### 4.3 Music

Film is a combination of audio-visual art, sound has become an important part of modern film art means of expression, which together with the visual image to construct the screen space, promote the narrative, complete the shaping of the artistic image.

"Film music is one of the organic components of the movie, an extremely active factor in the movie, the time direction of space art, the product of emotional rendering and condensation in the storyline, and an independent chapter in the aesthetics of the movie." (Zhong Yunregui, 1985, p.296) "The most important change that has occurred since music entered the movie is that its receptive object is no longer the listener but the viewer. This turnover of the aesthetic subject determines that movie music must be to enrich and strengthen the visual image, and should not become an independent, artistic expression system outside the movie. Excellent movie music is not aimed at pursuing the aesthetic value of the music itself alone, but is closely connected with the characterization of the characters in the film, the expression of their emotions and the development of the film's plot." (Jia Leilei, 2005, p.226) From this, it can be seen that film music plays a special role in highlighting the lyricism, drama and atmosphere of the film, "It becomes a mandatory means of strengthening or determining the film's emotional tone and even the value judgment system." (Dai Jinhua, 2004, p.17)

Zhang Yimou's films often include a large number of auditory elements to enhance the overall narrative effect of the film, especially the use of music. In the movie, traditional Chinese music blends in with the storyline and plays a positive role in enhancing the atmosphere of the movie and expressing the inner feelings of the characters. The movie is full of reverence for traditional Chinese music, including Peking Opera, folk songs, suona solos, folk percussion, and many other elements of

traditional Chinese music. The movie opens with the percussion of Peking Opera, with the sound of gongs and drums slowly kicking off the movie. The music comes to an abrupt end with the appearance of the main character, Songlian, whose face is grave and indifferent. The Peking Opera percussion in the movie's opening seems to imply that a story about Songlian in the dark is about to unfold. Songlian's words to her stepmother, "Isn't that what women are all about, being a little wife." This is a stark contrast to the lively and festive Peking Opera percussion in the opening scene, which is perhaps the director's intention to use the most lively and joyful to set off the unspeakable pain. This kind of Peking Opera percussion is not only in the beginning, but is also played every time the lights are lit and extinguished in the movie. The lively Peking Opera percussion creates a second strong contrast with the cold and empty courtyard.

Peking Opera is China's national treasure and traditional Chinese music. In *Big Red Lantern High Hanging*, the main background music is Peking Opera. As the Chen family compound is a traditional house of poetry and etiquette, it is more appropriate to use Peking Opera to match the Chen family compound. First of all, the Chen family is a feudal and traditional family that emphasizes rules and regulations, and Peking Opera is precisely a Chinese tradition, which sets the tone of traditional Chinese culture for the whole movie by rendering tradition with tradition. Secondly, the characters in the film abide by the rules at the same time, the fate of the big ups and downs, the film's main scenes of the accompaniment and chapter transition at the transition of the soundtrack, but also all the use of Peking Opera "martial arts field", with the rapid Peking Opera as the background of the film, Peking Opera in the Chen family compound in the sky, more can flow out of a kind of cool, a kind of sadness, A kind of helplessness.

In the movie, when the fate of the characters takes a drastic turn, Peking Opera is often played in a hurry. The one that impresses the audience the most is the "Rapid Wind", which is a kind of percussion music in opera, with a very fast tempo, mostly used to match the tense and rapid movements. This kind of music gives people a sense of sadness and melancholy, and at the same time, the rapid beating of the drums creates a tense atmosphere, which makes the audience always pinch a cold sweat for the characters in the movie. The filmmaker links the Peking Opera closely to the twists and turns of the characters' destinies, and as a result, the Peking Opera is more of an ambient atmosphere. When the servant carries the lantern into Songlian's compound for the first time, the Peking Opera is played in a hurry, the music is so urgent, and the drum beat is so dense that the audience's heart beats faster, which indicates that Songlian has completely finished her student days, and she has to start another new journey of her own, and on her new journey, what is waiting for her is thorns and bumps all over the place, the urgent music makes the audience start to envision Songlian's miserable life in the Chen family, and they can't help but feel that Songlian's life in the Chen family is a miserable life. The rapid music makes the audience begin to envision Songlian's miserable life in the Chen family, and they can't help but worry and fret about it. When the maid, Yan'er, is punished for kneeling on the snowy ground, the rapid music also plays. As Yan'er falls to the ground, the music comes to an abrupt end, and her dream of being a wife is completely shattered. This is not only a twist of fate for Yan'er personally, but also a twist of character change for Songlian. Songlian thus becomes no different from the First Mistress and the Second

Mistress, and becomes an aunt of the Chen family who uses the rules to kill people; this is a twist of Songlian's twist, full of tragedy, which makes the viewer sigh and feel helpless.

The role of music can be said to be multifaceted, it can portray the inner world of the characters, express and deepen the connotation of the theme, reveal the connotation of the story, render the atmosphere of the picture and so on. "The greatest strength of music is that it can highly summarize the innermost psychological experience and subtle and rich emotional state of human beings." (Zhang Hong, 2009, p.129) In *Big Red Lanterns Hanging High*, the appearance of the third wife Mei Shan is always accompanied by a melodious and melodious Peking Opera singing. Those few singing parts of Mei Shan, the gorgeous and slightly mournful tunes, set off the environment, but also reveal the inner world of the character, showing Mei Shan's reminiscence of the past and the sadness of the reality in the best possible way.

As an important element of the movie that cannot be ignored, Peking Opera runs through the beginning, middle, and end of the movie and appears in roughly two ways. The first is the three times the Third Mistress Meishan herself sings Peking Opera. The first time she sings it is early in the morning on the second day of Master Chen's stay in Songlian's room, in order to express her dissatisfaction with Master Chen's marriage to the Fourth Mistress. This time, she sings "The Red Maiden": "Seeing that the young lady has made a lot of mistakes, the Red Maiden is using clever and flowery language. Originally is a thousand gold body everyone style, the most pitiful back of the red tears steal bullet. I am looking forward to a good time to count the dusk and dawn, and there is a kind of infatuation to waste sleep and food. It is not that I am willing to pass on a letter to my son, and I am not envious of the gods when lovers become lovers. The second time, Songlian was annoyed with the master, Master Chen went to the third courtyard Meishan, Songlian walked alone on the roof, Meishan courtyard singing and the master's applause. Meishan sang in front of Master Chen, first singing an excerpt from *The Red Queen*: "Tell Zhang Sheng to hide under the chessboard, I step by step, you step by step crawl. I'm not afraid to put up with it, but I've been so disturbed by it. This is a good story of romance, listen to the orders and don't disturb her". Then he sang a famous excerpt from the traditional Chinese Peking Opera, "Su San Rises to Solve a Problem": "Su San left Hongdong County, and came to the street in front of him. I have not opened my mouth yet, but my heart is bleak, and all the gentlemen who have passed by have listened to me". This has a strong metaphorical role in the movie, hinting at Meishan's affair with Dr. Gao and foreshadowing the tragic fate to come. The third time is when Songlian is blocked from the lanterns due to her fake pregnancy. She punishes Yan'er for leaking information by exposing her for lighting lanterns in the house, and after Yan'er is punished, the second courtyard is lit up, and Mei Shan sings "Peach Blossom Village" on the roof of the building: "It's not that I'm instructing you to tell me the words, but I only blame you for being so dumb and panicky. Tonight is not like the West Wing where you wait for the moon, so be on your guard and don't be reckless. The relationship between you and the lovebirds in trouble will always be in the pond. You have already made a mistake, how can you be so careless and absurd? Don't be at a loss at the entrance of the peach blossom village. Don't raise your voice and don't yell, you have to look around and listen. The three Peking Opera excerpts, sung with a purpose that changes as the plot develops, highlight the plight of women in the Chen

family compound and their long-standing disrespect. Mei Shan's Peking Opera is more like a narrator without words, using music instead of words to express her emotions while deepening the theme.

The second is played on a phonograph. The first time was when the third wife, Mei Shan, invited Song Lian to play mahjong in Mei Shan's room, and Dr. Gao played the recording of Mei Shan's performance of the year, "The Royal Stele Pavilion": "It was like a knife twisting at the sight of the letter of repudiation, just for the sake of returning home that one night. In the middle of the journey, the wind and rain stormed, and the Pavilion of Monuments was a refuge from the rain, causing trouble. The year was short there again, and the two parties sat without words for a night." As the gongs and drums of the Peking Opera play in response to each other in a lively and tense manner, Songlian also discovers the unknown affair between the Third Mistress and Dr. Gao, and this time the Peking Opera not only caters to the tense atmosphere of the secret being discovered, but also reinforces the tension of the storyline. Interestingly, The Royal Pavilion sings of innocence, but the Third Aunt herself is not innocent. Therefore, there is a line in the back of the song, "I'm innocent of my chastity", which is not sung. The second time is after Mei Shan's death, the Third House is "haunted", which is actually Songlian playing Mei Shan's recording on the gramophone. This time, it was still a clip from "The Royal Pavilion": "Since I was a child, my parents were pampered, and I was married to Wang Chang at fifteen years of age. You don't think twice about reading poetry and books, but I'm not a willow wadding in the wind. The wind and rain are hard to measure, why should the sun and moon shine in a dark room? The letter of repudiation is like a killing field. Touching his hand to his chest and thinking about it, the righteous Wang Kui is better than you." This is when Songlian witnesses Meishan's murder and death, and goes to Meishan's room to light up the lamp and play music to pay tribute to her, which is actually a resonance and indictment of the fantasies of love in the lives of Songlian and Auntie 3. The music at this point even hints at the tragic fate of the women in the Chen family compound who cannot escape. The music at this point seems to become the pathetic cries of all the women in the compound - audible but powerless. In a time when contraception was not developed, male control over women was established by limiting the uniqueness of the object of sexual intercourse, the legendary "chastity". The "Imperial Monument Pavilion" sings of the grievances of a woman who has been wrongly accused of chastity. Even if it is chastity, the husband wants to suspect his wife also suspected, repudiated on the repudiation, admit fault and good is. On the back of this line of thought, if one does not keep one's chastity, one is not worthy of sympathy and can be casually repudiated or even put to death.

"The film's closing sequence mimics the subjective vision of the maddened Songlian with camera movements and a hand-held set of shaky images that make the otherwise sturdy, closed, and heavy Chen family compound look shaky. At this point, subjective music with a rapid tempo plays, reinforcing Songlian's physical state of extreme panic and on the verge of collapse." (Li Qiang, 2015, p.42) The combination of images and music powerfully illuminates the theme of the movie, reinforcing the killing and maiming of people by feudal rites, the irrationality of the polygamous marriage system, and the plight of women's survival in the feudal and traditional family, and also metaphorically illustrates the shaky nature of the Chen family, a large feudal family that is lagging behind the times.

The use of music in Zhang Yimou's films strengthens the dramatic tension and emotional expression of the story, and is more conducive to Zhang Yimou's presentation of the feudal ethical order of the Republic of China.

#### 4.4 Space

The storyline and thematic ideas of the film are ultimately expressed on the screen by intuitive visualization, in other words, in the specific scene space, so the choice of scene space becomes particularly important for the narrative of the film. When choosing the narrative space, Zhang Yimou favors the space with regional characteristics and cultural connotations, which can carry the thematic ideas that the director wants to express in the film. In the movie "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High", Zhang Yimou changed the southern region in the novel to the Qiao family compound in Shanxi Province in the north, and the greenish-gray deep house, as well as the thick walls, bright red lanterns, the greenish-gray deep house and the mysterious little black house on the roof, combine to form a complete "cannibalism machine", which profoundly expresses the women's bondage in such a depressing bad situation. It deeply expresses the bondage of women in such a depressing environment.

Space in a movie is one of the important means for the director to express emotion and narration. Through the skillful use of space, films are able to convey emotions, present stories and portray characters in a more profound way, creating a colorful audio-visual experience for the audience. "When creating or choosing a suitable narrative space for their films, movie creators do not just use the space as a place for narrative, but more importantly, go beyond the material meaning of the space itself to carry more inner spiritual and humanistic connotations." (Yang Qianwen, 2019, p. 107) Zhang Yimou is good at using space and has a unique style of creating and choosing space. In his films, space becomes a means to convey the main idea of the film as well as the narrative, with symbolic and metaphorical functions.

#### 1) The Chen Family Compound and the Yards of the Chen Family Women

The first visual impression of the Chen family compound in the movie "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High" is that it is closed and strict, and the whole is a large rectangular quadrangle composed of one small rectangular quadrangle. The architecture of the houses is angular and symmetrical on the left and right, its pattern is regular, and the construction of the houses is in line with the traditional Chinese way of mediocrity. Every detail is constructed in strict accordance with the Confucian ritual of filial piety and the main body of the house, and both the design and the materials are beautifully elaborate. In the film screen, the door is an axis of symmetry, the door is flanked by windows and compartments, the height and length of the left and right house buildings are equal, even the color design is symmetrical between the left and right. Through such a house building style, we can know that the house owner is deeply influenced by the traditional culture of Confucianism, and at the same time, it is not difficult for us to imagine how much the house owner is in charge of rules, in the Chen family compound, people are humble, rules are supreme, in front of the rules, people lose the right to speak, and at the same time, they have no status to speak of. Especially the women in the Chen family, women do not have a subject position in the eyes of the master. The master in the film is always a black shadow, which symbolizes the epitome of the feudal patriarchal system, rather than a specific individual. The Chen family compound is actually a narrow and closed space

surrounded by several symmetrical mansions, in which people must act according to the rules, which can also be seen as the laws of the Chen family compound. In the Chen family compound, do not worry about food, worry about drinking, worry about clothing, in the Chen family compound, people need to survive everything is available, survival is not a problem. However, this kind of survival is just living, it is meaningless. Chen family's closure is simply to the extreme, even if you do not go out of the house will not starve to death, freeze to death, Chen family compound seems extremely safe, in fact, is a large-scale cage, in which the people living with no freedom to speak of, unless the death of this large-scale cage can be out. People in the closed mansion, the same poor people, but they themselves do not realize this problem, in order to guard the rules, in order to have the right to enforce the rules, they are jealous of each other, crushing, for the original no vitality and vigor of the mansion added a suffocating sense of depression.

The main color of the Chen family's house is grey, which gives people a hazy and eerie feeling, and grey always gives people a sense of depression, uncertainty, and low spirits. Although it is summer when Songlian first arrives at the Chen family's house, if we do not look at the characters' costumes, we cannot tell that it is summer at that time. If we only look at the design and color of the Chen family's house, we will also feel a slight coolness, which runs through the film from the beginning to the end. The layout and house construction of the Chen family compound has the flavor of Confucian culture, and there is a culture of "rules" throughout. The rules of the Chen family compound can be learned not only from the mouths of the Chen masters, wives and servants, but also from the construction of the Chen family houses. In a compound with such rules as the Chen family, the people living there must be regular, and those who are not regular are bound to be oppressed and brutalized.



Figure 84 The Chen Family Compound in the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

In the film, the courtyard of the four wives closely surrounds the corridor of the Chen family compound, just as the four wives surround Master Chen all day long, and with Master Chen as the center, all the people in the Chen family compound have to look at Master Chen's face to be careful in what they say and what they do. In the Chen family compound, people's dignity and status were bestowed by Master Chen, if they did not have Master Chen's favor, they would be looked down upon by the people in the Chen family compound. Especially the wives of the Chen family, they have to keep their minds on Master Chen at all times, the wives' minds gather together and collide with each other, which also becomes the battlefield of the women of the Chen family, in this war, although there is no account of the sword and gun, dancing with a gun, but there are intrigues, calculations and blood that can not be seen, which is even more chilling than the battlefield of a short fight.

When the fourth wife Songlian first arrived at the Chen family compound, a group of servants were waiting in and out of her room. In Songlian's bedroom, the eye-catching thing was the big red lanterns, and when Songlian entered her room for the first time, she asked, "Why are there so many red lanterns hanging in this room?" Yan'er replied coldly behind her, "Isn't it because you're here?" Through this simple question and answer, we know that Songlian has a special connection with the red lanterns in the Chen family, and this connection not only involves Songlian, but also other wives in the Chen family have a connection with the red lanterns that is related to life and death interests. When Songlian first enters the Chen family compound, she still has the stubbornness of a female college student, she is still rebellious in her heart, and she is puzzled by the red lantern in her room, even disdainful of it. At that time, Songlian has her own personality, and she is different from other wives of the Chen family. However, with the process of lighting, extinguishing and sealing the lanterns, Songlian gradually identifies herself as an aunt, competes with other wives, and falls into the battlefield of the Chen family's women, and she gradually loses her original personality. As the camera switches from Songlian's room to her courtyard, in the next long shot, several servants carry two rows of red lanterns into Songlian's courtyard to light the lanterns, and at the beginning of the shot, the tune of Peking Opera plays along with the servant's steps, symbolizing that life here is "all about the play," and that the life of Songlian and the other women is played out on the small and closed stage of life. The tragedy of alienation of human nature is performed by Songlian and other women in this small and closed stage of life.

Except for the First Mistress, every wife in the Chen family compound has a red lantern in her room. The red lantern signifies the absolute authority and lust of men in a patriarchal society, and the identity and hope for certainty that women wait for in the midst of humiliation. When the master leaves, the lanterns go out, and their fate is left to flounder in uncertainty. Although there is no red lantern in the First Mistress's room, the red candle is lit. The red lantern is lit and extinguished depending on Master Chen's coming and going, but the red candle in the First Mistress's room can be lit and extinguished at any time, which is entirely dependent on the First Mistress's own will; she has already become a symbol of power, and like Master Chen, she has taken the rules of the Chen family to control the women of the Chen family. As the original wife of Master Chen, the First Mistress had a son, and her position in the Chen family compound could not be shaken by anyone, so the red

lantern was dispensable to the First Mistress, but for the other wives who had no substantial power, the red lantern could be said to be their lives, so when Songlian was blocked the lanterns, the four courtyards revealed the despair and death in the darkness, and even the breathlessness was dispersed. away.

The second wife Zhuo Yun room has no characteristics, a bed, a table and chairs, a few paintings, a few red lanterns, although she smiles, but sheepishly, deep heart, her so-called mind all used in the matter of the struggle for favor, the second wife scrupulously abide by the rules of the Chen family, and use the rules as a weapon to plot against others, in fact, she is also a pitiful person, in the first place, when she is suppressed by the rules of the others, first of all, she herself first by the rules of the stiffening In fact, she is also a poor person, in her rules to suppress others, first of all, she herself first by the rules of rigidity, she is no longer a living person.

The third wife Mei Shan's room is more unique, in addition to the red lanterns, the room is displayed in the Peking Opera face paintings and costumes, it can be seen that Mei Shan is not forgetting her past life, her heart is yearning for a free life in the past, it can also be seen from her behavior and demeanor, she is one of the more individualistic of the wives of the Chen family, happy to sing the opera, unhappy to sing the opera, no reverence for the master of the Chen family, and even disregard for the Chen family's rules. In Songlian's room, naturally, there is no shortage of red lanterns. In addition to the red lanterns, there are also many paintings and calligraphy, which is more in line with her status as a student, and it is evident that the director of the movie made good intentions in making this movie.



Figure 85 The rooms of the four wives in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

Yan'er is the maid of the Chen family who owns Mistress Dream, her room is rather simple, according to the rules, there can't be any lanterns in the maid's room, and even more so, she can't light them privately. But her selfishness makes her break the rules, and Yan'er's room is full of lighted red lanterns. Yan'er offended Songlian, and her act of lighting lanterns privately was discovered by Songlian, who used the Chen family's rules to punish Yan'er. When Yan'er is confronted with the burning lanterns and kneels in the snow, Songlian, who was originally defiant, uses the rules like the First Mistress and the Second Mistress. Yan'er can stop kneeling if she says "I am wrong", but she is so stubborn that in her heart, she has long believed that she is

an aunt and that it is right to light the lanterns. In this scene, the music is urgent, hitting the heart, let a person's heart chills, Yan'er and Songlian are the same as the fate of the bitter people, in the same predicament, why fight with each other.



Figure 86 The maid Yan'er stealing lanterns in her own room and being punished for doing so in the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on January 12, 2024]

The status of the wives of the Chen family was closely related to the number of times the red lanterns were lit. Whichever house Master Chen went to more often, the red lanterns in that house would be lit more often, and at the same time, the status of the wives in that house would be higher, if Master Chen went to Yan'er's room, then Yan'er, the maid, would have her status improved, and would even surpass the status of the unfavored wives. If any of the wives were cold-shouldered by Master Chen, she would be looked down upon and would even look at the faces of her subordinates. Men had the absolute power of disposition over women, and women had to earn their place in the family by gaining men's favor. Master Chen is the mobile power, and each wife's room is a space where the power goes to whichever house the wife's status is high, and this status is extremely unstable. This is actually a form of oppression of women by patriarchal culture, but the scary thing is that for women, patriarchal culture is not only an ideological and cultural form, or an ethical norm, but is often internalized into women's social unconscious. Like the First Mistress and the Second Mistress, they help Master Chen to consolidate the rules of the Chen family, and have lost their selves, their individuality, and are in the form of lowly creatures with no thoughts, but they themselves are not aware of it. Master Chen, who possesses the symbol of power, is endowed with a kind of power in whichever space he goes to. For the sake of this unstable power, the wives of the Chen family are turning against each other, and they are all roaming in the illusion, where there is no up and down, in the space of the Chen family compound, the up becomes down, and the down becomes up only depends on Master Chen's words or a look, the wives of the Chen family are driven by this kind of nothingness, and it is extremely pathetic.

## **2) Roofs and dead houses**

The roof of the Chen family compound and the House of the Dead are also important spaces, revealing the complex relationships and power struggles within the family, presenting the audience with a story full of suspense and emotional tension.

In the film, when Songlian was first married into the Chen family, she was subjected to a rivalry between the brash Third Mistress Mei Shan and the Chen master. One morning, the sleeping Songlian is woken up by the sound of the Third

Mistress Meishan's singing, and in her anger, Songlian follows the sound to the roof of the Chen family compound, where the image that is presented to the audience is of an empty sky, which, although it does not possess the blue color that symbolizes freedom, in contrast to the overall pattern of the Chen family compound, allows one to have a slight respite from the depressing atmosphere of being inside the compound, suffocating. On the rooftop, one can hear the sound of birds chirping, which is the sound of nature and the sound of freedom. We cannot see the word "freedom" in the Chen Family Compound, but on the rooftop of the Chen Family, the audience seems to see hope. The Peking Opera lyrics of "lovers are not envious of the gods" is Mei Shan's wish for a good marriage. However, there is another line in Mei Shan's rooftop opera, which reads, "I hope for a good time, I can't stop counting the dusk and the dawn, and there is still an infatuated man who sleeps and eats". The three words "hope for a good time" are in fact looking forward to the arrival of the hammer and foot, the lighting of the lanterns, and the arrival of Master Chen. Although Mei Shan in the movie is untamed and brave in her pursuit of freedom, she is not yet able to break away from the rules of the Chen family completely. In this space, freedom clashes with bondage, which is not only the tragedy of the Third Mistress Meishan, but also the sorrow of all the women in the Chen family compound. Songlian is supposed to be the defiant female college student who does not want to passively wait to be received into the Chen family, but instead walks alone to the Chen family on her own and takes the initiative to face her upcoming life. However, after facing the lords and ladies of the Chen family, she gradually identifies with her status as an aunt. And the life of an aunt is a life full of suspicion, watchfulness, calculations, and struggles, a life of pandering to the lord to gain favor to ensure that she has a place in the family; in fact, the struggle begins as soon as Songlian enters the door of the Chen family. She is very angry when she hears Meishan singing and positions Meishan as the object of her own rivalry for favor, and she ascends to the roof of the Chen family home in order to have a showdown with Meishan. At this moment, all she can think of is the struggle for favor, and she has completely fallen into the struggle of the women of the Chen family.



*Figure 87 The roof of the Chen family compound in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"*

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]

When Songlian ascended to the roof of the Chen family for the second time, the sky was gray, just like her mood. At that time, Master Chen was in Third Mistress Meishan's room, Songlian was walking on the roof alone and lost, it was an empty space, in which the sound of Meishan's singing and Master Chen's shouts of applause constantly came from, at this moment, Songlian was for the first time out of favor by Master Chen's coldness. The third time she ascended to the roof was in winter, the sky and the snow-covered roof of the Chen family were the same color of white, at that

time, Songlian was blocked by Master Chen's lamp and completely fell out of favor due to her false pregnancy being exposed. She watched a few servants carry the adulterous Third Mistress Mei Shan into the dead man's room on the roof, and as a result, she lost her mind and her sanity. On the surface, Songlian's insanity is a tragedy, but on the other hand, such an ending is not a good thing for Songlian. She does not have to compete with others anymore. Although her body has lost its freedom, her spirit is liberated, and she lives in her own world, which is completely different from that of the Chen family. In the Chen family compound, she lost her freedom and individuality, but in her own spiritual world, she gained freedom, and thus for Songlian, madness might not be a kind of liberation. Her state at that time was actually the easiest and most down-to-earth way to live her life in her own way, without having to think about hammering her feet to light a lamp, without having to think about giving birth to a son to consolidate her position, without having to think about competing with the women who were beasts of nature to tear each other down in order to compete for favors, and she became her original self. The roof of Chen's house is open, facing the empty environment, people either feel their own insignificance and sadness, or open-minded and leave their worries behind, Songlian faced with this empty space, she experienced spiritual fall, pain and eventual liberation.

In the thick walls of the Chen family compound, the only sky to be seen is that narrow rectangle, only when Songlian walks to the roof can we see the open gray-white sky; only on the roof can we hear the sound of freedom, and if the women of the Chen family want to be free, they still have to start from the roof. Songlian's life in the Chen family compound is not really happy, but rather very depressing, and this depressiveness even spreads to the power over the dinner table, which courtyard lights the lamps and which courtyard only has a bit of food. Then look at the environment in which the lords and wives of the Chen family eat, a wooden table on one side, the walls around it are full of portraits of dead predecessors, these predecessors may be the ancestors of the Chen family, during meals everyone is quiet, with stony expressions, in such a space there is not a trace of vitality and vigor to speak of, making one feel stuffy and suffocated in the chest. The rules were set by their predecessors, and hanging portraits of their predecessors all over the walls meant that the Chen family did not forget their forefathers and the rules set by their forefathers. Both the Chen family's wives and the Chen family's masters lived under the rules set by their forefathers, and it could also be said that they lived under the shadows of their forefathers, and their own personalities were being sapped away.



Figure 88 The dining room of the Chen family in the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on January 12, 2024]



the rules of the rules of the dead man's house can not be escaped. The house of the dead is not just a hut, it is the grave of a woman who pursues her own happiness, and it is the place where the dark side of feudal society is manifested to the fullest extent. Mei Shan's private meeting with her lover is a violation of the Chen family's rules, and in the end, Mei Shan's burial in the Chen family's rules, and her death in the house of the dead are also in line with the feelings and reasoning of the movie. Mei Shan's pursuit of freedom and persecution seems to be a tragedy, but for Mei Shan, such an ending is not a bad thing. The dead Mei Shan no longer has to live in the Chen family's compound, completely free from the constraints and oppression of the rules, and she leaves the suffocating Chen family's mansion, ending her life as a walking corpse. When Songlian sees this scene, she has a nervous breakdown and goes crazy, lighting up red lanterns in Mei Shan's room to help Mei Shan take revenge on the Chen family in the form of a haunting, as well as to avenge herself. The mad Songlian is free from the cruel struggle of the Chen family's wives, and she no longer has to be counted, while her life of laboring in the Chen family is considered to be over. Songlian's life in the Chen family is either sober and painful, or confused and happy. In comparison, the latter is an easy and disappointing way to live, and Songlian lives in the Chen family in such a state of mind, pursuing the principle of pure happiness.

The film shows three seasons, summer, fall and winter, but only spring is missing. That is to say, there is no life in the Chen family compound, and spring will not come to the Chen family, which is supposed to abide by the "rules". It is hard to imagine, in the Chen family this gloomy, closed mansion, when will spring really come? As far as the eye could see from the narrow courtyard, it was a scene of total desolation, and anything that possessed vitality and vigor would gradually wither in the Chen family compound. When Master Chen married his fifth wife, it was also summer, and the fifth wife happened to be one of Songlian's reincarnations. In the Chen family compound, everyone wears a cold face and follows the rules, and as long as the rules remain intact, tragedy is in constant reincarnation.

In short, Zhang Yimou strengthened the complex relationships and power struggles of the Chen family, a feudal family, through the audio-visual styling of the film. The life, interpersonal relationships, clothing, food, housing and transportation of feudal families during the Republic of China are used in this part.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter uses the concept of "consumption history" to specifically analyze the movie "Raise the Red Lantern". During the Republic of China, social culture such as the polygamous marriage system, red lanterns, Peking opera, large mansions, the patriarchal system, and the feudal ethical order were consumed. "Raise the Red Lantern" tells the story of a traditional polygamous feudal family during the Republic of China, revealing the constraints of feudal ethics on people, the low social status of women, and their survival dilemma in a patriarchal society. The red lantern is an important set piece in the film, and it is also a symbol of the power of the Chen family compound. The layout of the Chen family's mansion, the courtyards of several wives and concubines, the ancestral hall, and the dead room show the majesty of the patriarchal society and the order of feudal ethics. Zhang Yimou created a series of rituals such as listening to calls, announcing lanterns, lighting lanterns, hammering feet, ordering dishes, keeping the lanterns on, and closing the lanterns, etc., to strengthen the film's theme of "the tragedy of women under the feudal system."

## Chapter VI

### The Red Trilogy: Reflection of Chinese Society and Culture during the Republic of China

#### Introduction

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part introduces the creation era, use of history, and aesthetic changes of three Zhang Yimou films from the perspective of consuming the "past". The second part explores the female images in the three films from the perspective of filming the "past", the metaphor of clothing, and the metaphor of space on society, history, culture, and power structure. The third part explores the three films from the perspective of reflecting the "past". They are artistic expressions of historical truth, contain rich elements of cultural memory, and reshape "history". The creation of the Red Trilogy used the history and social culture of the Republic of China, such as weddings and funeral customs, food, clothing, housing and transportation, women's social status, social class mobility, beliefs, education, and social interaction. The content of this chapter echoes the previous article.

#### Part 1: Consuming the Past: History, Era and Aesthetics

Art is a spiritual channel to approach the past, and film is an art form that visualizes the imaginary and constructed "past". As a form of culture and art, film constantly absorbs new culture and audience needs, and provides audiences with richer and more diversified audiovisual enjoyment with constant innovation and development. At the same time, movies also reflect and shape people's aesthetic concepts and cultural atmosphere, and become an important representative and expression of the spirit of the times. Movie art can not only reflect and record the history, society and culture of the "past" era, but also reflect the spirit of the era and cultural atmosphere of the "then" era, and at the same time, it can also provide the basis for the movie creation of the "now" era. At the same time, it can also provide references and lessons for the creation of movies in the "present" era.

Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy (Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum Beans, and Big Red Lanterns Hanging High) movies are set against the backdrop of the history of the Republic of China, and show many dimensions of social change, war, people's lives, and cultural practices. By telling the stories of ordinary people in the Republican period, the movie recreates historical events, displays social customs and people's lives, and deeply reflects and reflects on culture and values. Zhang Yimou's movies are known for his unique aesthetic style, which perfectly combines the emotions and aesthetics of the historical era through exquisite images, aesthetic symbols and narrative techniques, so that the audience can deeply feel the unique aesthetics of history while enjoying the movies. The Red Trilogy shows the spirit of the whole era through the fate of the main characters. Through their experiences, the movie presents the character, psychological changes and survival status of that era, and this attention to the fate of the characters makes the movie more contemporary and socially caring.

##### 1.1 Expression of Time

Movies can reflect the spirit of the times, the social environment, and the cultural atmosphere of "those times" - the time when movies were created. Red

Sorghum (1987), Chrysanthemum (1990), and Big Red Lantern (1991) were created in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when China was in the midst of a new period of reform and opening up, and when Chinese society was undergoing great changes, with vibrant economic development and a thriving cultural scene. During this period, Chinese film creators actively followed the world trend, and under the influence of Enlightenment, Humanism, Humanism, Humanism, Democracy, Western Marxism, New Leftism, Existentialism, Philosophy of Life, Freud, Feminism and other Western ideological doctrines, they discarded the previous period's (1949-1976) style of creation, which was characterized by strong political propaganda and a significant function of indoctrination. , devoted to reflecting contemporary social and cultural phenomena, demonstrating the plurality, diversity and complexity of contemporary society, expressing views and attitudes on social, political and cultural issues through creative works, and pursuing strong visual expression, deep emotional conveyance, and unique aesthetic pursuits in film creation, and linking them with a sense of mission of social critique, ideological enlightenment, and cultural vanguard.

The 1980s and 1990s were an important stage in the development of China's film industry, a time when China's "fifth generation" of film directors came into their own. Zhang Yimou, an outstanding representative of the "fifth generation" of filmmakers, used Red Sorghum (1987), Chrysanthemum (1990), and High Hanging of the Red Lantern (1991) to explore the relationship between art and history, society, culture, and people, analyzing the relationship between gender and power through the context of the Republic of China. Zhang Yimou, an outstanding representative of the "fifth generation" filmmakers, used Red Sorghum (1987), Chrysanthemum Beans (1990), and Big Red Lanterns Hanging Tall (1991) to explore the relationship between art, history, society, culture, and human beings, to analyze the relationship between gender and power with the help of the Republic of China context, to reflect on the country through history, and to look at the past and the present. Therefore, we can see that whether it is Jiu'er in Red Sorghum, or Judou in Judou, or Songlian in Big Red Lanterns Hanging High, they all have the consciousness of awakening and the spirit of rebellion, and appear to be "out of step" with the old times in which they are living, which is, in essence, the spirit of the times and culture of the reform and opening-up period in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In essence, this is the spirit of the times and the cultural core of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the period of reform and opening up. Chinese film theory researcher Lin Yan (interviewed on November 11, 2022) recalled the scene when the Red Trilogy (Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum Beans, and Big Red Lanterns Hanging High) was released, saying, "Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy films presented a new weather in China at that time, with the significance of a new trend, which was related to the spirit of the times, the social environment, and the literary and artistic development of China in the 1980s and 1990s. This is not unrelated to the spirit of the times, the social environment, and the innovation and progress of the concept of literature and art in China in the 1980s and 1990s. The three films show a kind of narrative characterized by the visual characteristics of Chinese images, which is not a traditional narrative but a new one. When the characters, stories and scenes in the movies appear in front of the audience, they suddenly realize that stories can still be told in this way, history can still be written in this way, characters can be expressed in this way, and images can still be presented in this way, which gives people a shocking feeling!"

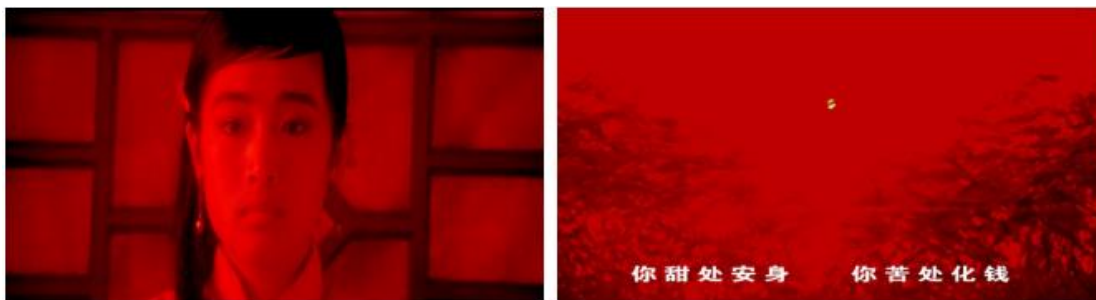


Figure 90 "Red Sorghum" Movie Footage

Source: <https://v.qq.com/> [Accessed on February 19, 2024]

Chinese cinema in the late 1980s and early 1990s was also deeply influenced by globalization. Chinese film creations in this period showed a trend of diversification and globalization, with film creators expressing their views and ideas more freely, applying them to film creations, and disseminating their works to audiences around the globe, stimulating their imagination and thinking, and arousing their emotional resonance and empathy. In the "Red Sorghum", "Chrysanthemum Beans", "Big Red Lantern Hanging High" three movies, what makes people deeply impressed and unforgettable is not only the local customs and folk culture of China, but also the "red" element - red sedan chair, which Zhang Yimou used to the extreme, Red head, red paper-cutting, red cloth, red lanterns, as well as the patriarchal, husband's right, patriarchal system of the Republic of China on women's constraints, stereotypes on the killing and maiming of people, as well as women's low social status. With the release of Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum Beans, and Big Red Lanterns Hanging High three films at home and abroad, as well as Red Sorghum winning the Golden Bear at the 38th Berlin International Film Festival (1988), Chrysanthemum Beans being nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Award at the 63rd Academy Awards (1991), and Big Red Lanterns Hanging High being nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Award at the 64th Academy Awards (1992), the Zhang Yimou's films became a flagship of Chinese cinema, and director Zhang Yimou and the beautiful film actress Gong Li rose to fame with it. The popularity of Chinese cinema around the world was greatly enhanced, and Chinese films and Chinese culture were shown to the world audience.

At the same time, the study of Zhang Yimou's films has gradually become a trend. Praisers believe that the three Zhang Yimou films are of exploratory significance, demonstrating the charm of the Oriental nation, successfully portraying the image of women with the spirit of resistance, and powerfully promoting Chinese cinema's access to the world and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. Critics believe that the films show the ugly, backward and ignorant side of China, present the display and scrutiny of women under the vision of male desires, and are imaginations about China created under the domination of the cultural logic of globalization and marketization. The many controversies over the films Red Sorghum, Ju Dou, and Big Red Lantern High Hanging boil down to the discrepancy between the subjective creation and conceptualization of the film producers, who "use" the historical and socio-cultural processes of the Republic of China, and the subjective interpretations of the consumers, as Pam Cook argues, "consumers have disassembled and reassembled them, producing new configurations and interpretations that emerge

from localised sites often far removed from the source texts and their producers. This has resulted in a startling proliferation of discursive intertexts and textual commentaries, whose origins and validity are not always clear, which have the potential to transform the way history is traditionally written and perceived” (Pam Cook, 2005, p. 1).

### 1.2 The "Use" of History

The three Zhang Yimou films, *Red Sorghum* (1987), *The Chrysanthemum Bean* (1990), and *The Big Red Lantern Hangs High* (1991), all tell the story of the Republican period (1912-1949). *Red Sorghum* takes place in the 1930s and 1940s during the War of Resistance against Japan, and shows the lifestyle of the lower and middle classes in rural Chinese society. The story of *The Chrysanthemum Bean*, which centers around a family that makes a living by dyeing cloth, shows the lifestyle of the middle and lower classes in the mountainous villages of China in the 1920s. Focusing on an affluent polygamous family, *Big Red Lantern High Hanging* reflects the lifestyle of the upper class in rural China in the 1920s and 1930s.

Three movies reflect the background of the times ---- The Republic of China (ROC) is an important stage in the process of China's historical development: on the one hand, the ROC institutionally cut off the possibility of retrogression in Chinese society, and powerfully pushed the transformation of China's traditional society into a modern society, with modern Western culture and its way of life rapidly spreading in important cities; on the other hand, in essence, the ROC society is still a traditional society. On the other hand, in essence, Republican society remained a traditional society. In the vast rural areas, the traditional social structure and cultural practices still dominate, with the prevalence of patriarchy and the strong power of the family, which preserves the ancient customs and rituals handed down by their ancestors, even if some of them have been proved to be stereotypes in the new era, they still strictly observe them and do not allow others to destroy them. Men's power, patriarchal power, and husband's power make men dominant in social life, and women's social status is very low. There are some women from well-to-do families who, with the support of their enlightened parents, have had the opportunity for education and work, but most women, especially in rural areas, have had little such luck. "The notion that a woman's lack of talent is a virtue is so prevalent that most women have difficulty escaping the fate of being arranged by their parents to marry at an early age. Men are allowed to have one wife and many concubines, while women are required to remain faithful to their husbands even after they have died and are not allowed to remarry.

The history of the Republic of China is used in movies and is made into commodities presented in the marketplace, which are often imbued with dramatic elements to increase appeal in order to satisfy the public's curiosity and interest in the past. History becomes a resource for entertainment and diversion, turning into a cultural code adapted to the demands of entertainment in a consumer society. Through storyline, scene depiction and characterization, the movie skillfully incorporates the social elements of the Republican era so that the audience can feel the history, culture, social customs and interpersonal relationships that characterized that era.

The Red Trilogy shows the war and social changes in the Republican period, and explores the social structure, family structure and power relations in the Republican period. For example, *Red Sorghum* takes the Anti-Japanese War as the story background of the movie, as well as from the identity of Songlian's female

university student in *Big Red Lantern High Hanging*, we can know that during the Republican period, women also had the opportunity to receive higher education. The family in the movie is a clan system, the family is the basic unit of society, and the family concept plays an important role in the story. The movie shows the family concept, the strict hierarchy and the domination of the family over the individual's life, while the plot of the movie, such as the power plot, the fight and the marriage arrangement, reflects the complex and strict family structure and power relationship within the big feudal family. In *Judea*, although Judea has deep feelings for Yang Tianqing, she still cannot remarry him after the death of her husband, Yang Jinshan. The important reason for this lies in the traditional concepts and the constraints of the patriarchal system, in which the family has the power to dominate the widow's personal emotional life. *The Big Red Lantern Hangs High* presents a typical family structure of feudal society. The family structure of the rich family compound shows the family relationships in the society at that time, and the manipulation of the wives and concubines by the master of the Chen family, as well as the fights and power struggles between the wives and concubines reveal the complexity of the family relationships.

The three movies show the concept of marriage and the form of marriage in the society at that time, reflecting the restricted position of women in the society at that time. Marriage in the movies was an exchange of family ties, social status and wealth. Marriage is not only an individual emotional affair, but also a means of passing on family honor and wealth. The marriages of the female protagonists of the three movies are not voluntary, let alone love for each other, but are subject to the arrangement of the family. The story of *Red Sorghum* and *Judea* begins with a marriage for sale, a form of marriage that still exists in the countryside during the Republican era, in which a beautiful young woman is sold as a commodity to a widowed man who is seriously ill or disabled, and who usually possesses a certain amount of wealth. *The Big Red Lantern Hangs High* shows another form of marriage - polygamy, or to be more precise, "one husband, one wife, many concubines". In this type of marriage, a man from a wealthy family could have a wife and several concubines. In terms of national law, the marriage system in the Republic of China was monogamous, and both buying and selling marriages and polygamy were explicitly prohibited by law. In fact, however, most of those who actually practiced monogamous marriages were educated intellectuals, enlightened people, and the underclass who did not have the financial means to marry more than one wife. "Monogamous and polygamous" marriages are common among the powerful and wealthy families, and buy-and-sell marriages are also a common form of marriage in remote and isolated rural areas.

The film shows the way of life in the rural society, such as farmland labor, peasants' daily life, village customs and festivals, revealing the division and mobility of social classes at that time. The drastic social differences between the poor tenants and the rich landlords reflect the class dilemma of the Republican society. By marrying Li Doudou, Jiu'er in *Red Sorghum* leaps from the bottom of the troubled rural society to become a member of the middle class of the rural society. After the death of Big Head Li, Jiu'er officially becomes the owner of the sorghum wine workshop and continues to employ her poor neighbors to work for her. The movie contains depictions of scenes of the wine-making crafts. In *Judea*, Judea goes from

being the daughter of a poor rural family to being part of a middle-class rural family through marriage. Judou's husband, Yang Jinshan, the owner of the dye house, uses his nephew Yang Tianqing as free labor for a long time, and Yang Tianqing hires other farmers to work in the dye house for a short period of time when he goes out to make deliveries or collect payments. The movie contains a large number of dyeing scenes. Songlian in "The Red Lantern Hangs High" goes through the transition from being born into a middle-class rural family with thin assets and a college student with a higher education, to being the daughter of a poor family whose father died in bankruptcy, to marrying the master of a wealthy upper-class rural family as his fourth concubine. The Chen family compound has a strict hierarchical system, with many etiquettes and rules between the Chen masters and their servants, between the Chen masters and their wives and concubines, between the wives and their concubines, between the housekeepers and their servants, and so on.

The movie depicts traditional culture and rituals such as folk customs, religious beliefs, architecture, dress and socializing. The image of Yu Zhanao in *Red Sorghum* is representative of the pugnacious folkways of the rural areas of northern China, which set the stage for him to lead his townspeople in resisting the Japanese invasion later on. The grand funeral ceremony in "Judeo", the luxurious courtyard house, the first wife's year-round fasting and meditation, Songlian's clothes that are different from other women, and the social etiquette of the third aunt Meishan and Dr. Gao in "The Red Lanterns Hang Tall", all these elements highlight the cultural characteristics of the society at that time, and present the cultural style of the society at that time.

In conclusion, the use of history in movies allows people to experience history and the culture and lifestyle of the past by watching the movie.

### 1.3 Aesthetic changes

Movie aesthetics are also influenced by the times, and changes in the context of the times and the needs of the audience will also have a profound impact on movie art and aesthetics. In different periods, the aesthetics of film creators will be different, and the audience's aesthetic demand for films is also changing, becoming more and more diversified and personalized, which in turn affects the production and development of films, making film artists and producers need to constantly innovate and pursue artistic breakthroughs in order to cater to the needs of the audience in different eras.

The creation of *Red Sorghum* (1987), *Chrysanthemum* (1990), and *Big Red Lanterns Hanging High* (1991) can be viewed to a certain extent as a reflection on and correction of the previous period of film creation (from the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to the beginning of reform and opening up of China in 1978). The creation of films in China from 1949 to 1978 was constrained by the social environment of the time. The content was mostly in the service of political propaganda, and almost all subject matter could be associated with ideological education, of which revolutionary and construction themes were the mainstream of films at the time. After 1978, along with the deepening of reform and opening up, people broke free from the ideological constraints of the previous period, and film creators reflected on Chinese film culture and produced a large number of excellent works. "This generation of directors received formal professional training after the Cultural Revolution, and came to the movie world with a passion and desire to

innovate, with a highly subjective spirit of rationality and rebellious temperament. They focused their attention on the choice of historical themes, devoted themselves to deep reflection on national culture and history and the reconstruction of the national spirit, and created the great achievement of Chinese cinema's success in going out of the country to the world by strengthening the screen's visual modeling and symbolic-writing artistic techniques, and the subjectivity, symbolism, allegory, and rebelliousness of their films carried strong individual characteristics, representing the highest peak of cinema since the new era " (Li Jinmei, 2016, p. 30). Moviegoers in this period were also no longer satisfied with the single and dull aesthetics of the previous period, and paid more attention to the visual effects of the movies and the innovation of the storyline, which also strongly promoted the development of China's film industry and the advancement of the art of cinema.

The demands of Chinese moviegoers in the 1980s and 1990s were diverse and complex. During this period, the needs of Chinese moviegoers were influenced by many factors, including social change, cultural openness, economic reform, and international exchanges, etc. At the beginning of the 1980s, Chinese society entered a period of reform and opening up, and ideological concepts were gradually emancipated. Audiences began to be interested in diversified and open cultural expressions, and there was a growing demand to learn about the past and society, especially for films that broke through traditional limitations, had novel themes and distinctive styles, and bravely explored social issues and historical events. Audiences want to see movies that show characters' emotional experiences, family relationships, friendships, and love, and that resonate with their emotions rather than being purely didactic or propagandistic. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the gradual rise of commercial movies in China, and a number of movies aiming at commercial success began to attract the attention of the audience. At the same time, some excellent literary films were also popular, satisfying the audience's demand for high-quality, deep-thinking movies. During this period, Chinese cinema also went through a process of development from closed to open, from restricted to diversified. The film industry gradually integrated into the international perspective, interacted with social changes, and created many classic works.

Take the movie *Red Sorghum* as an example. *Red Sorghum* won 40 million in box office receipts with an investment of 600,000 RMB, and the number of moviegoers in the year of the movie's release, in the mainland alone, exceeded 400 million. The movie won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival, the first Chinese movie to win an international award. The movie's song "Sister, you boldly go forward, go forward, do not look back" became popular in the streets. As a newcomer director, Zhang Yimou gained fame and fortune, the male lead Jiang Wen became famous, and the female lead Gong Li became famous in one fell swoop. The reason why "*Red Sorghum*" is so hot, in addition to the excellent movie creation itself, but also related to the era in which it was made. At that time, China was in the era of reform and opening up, ideological liberation, people's long-suppressed emotions and feelings need to be cathartic and release. *Red Sorghum* played the role of a floodgate. People in this movie, both men and women, dared to say and do things, dared to love and hate, and this kind of reckless and fearless spirit greatly satisfied people's inner needs. What people miss, perhaps, is that boiling era.

Movies are also a bridge between the past and the present, capable of connecting the past era with the present era. Through appreciating and studying film works, we can better understand the change of times, cultural phenomena and social development, as well as the course and development of human civilization. In terms of the films themselves, the three films *Red Sorghum*, *Chrysanthemum Beans*, and *Big Red Lanterns Hanging High* demonstrate director Zhang Yimou's unique understanding of the aesthetics of cinema, and through the use of images, compositions, colors, music, and performances of the actors and actresses, they lead the audience to learn about and understand the historical events of the Republican period, the social life of the people, and the local culture and customs. Beyond the movie, we can also get a glimpse of director Zhang Yimou's reflection and scrutiny on the history, culture and social problems of the Republic of China, as well as his reflection on the social life, cultural phenomena and the spirit of the times in China during the new period of reform and opening up. Through watching the movie, the audience learns about the history, society, culture and customs of the Republican era, and compares them with the era they live in, so that they can better understand the difficulty of living a happy life today. In this sense, movie works can not only record the stories of the past era, trigger the audience's empathy and thinking, and influence the audience's thoughts, feelings and cultural identity, but also reflect the spirit of the times and cultural phenomena, bringing us more aesthetic feelings and insights, and at the same time, promoting the progress and change of society and culture.

Classic movies, whether they were made in the past or reflect the past, can not only have a profound impact on the creation of movies in the "present" era, but also stimulate modern people to think about the social culture of the past and the present. When we look back at the past in the new era of the 1920s, "*Red Sorghum*," "*Chrysanthemum*," and "*Hanging the Red Lantern High*" have long been cultural products of the "past" era, reflecting the history, society, and culture of the Republican period (1912-1949), and showing the cultural and artistic achievements of China in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the early years of China's reform and opening up. They reflect the history, society and culture of the Republican period (1912-1949), and show the cultural and artistic achievements of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the beginning of China's reform and opening up. At the same time, these three films have transcended the times and the limitations of time, and have become classics in the history of Chinese cinema, and are still influencing and inspiring a number of filmmakers, film theoreticians, modern artists, and cultural enthusiasts today. Through these three films, Zhang Yimou also tries to convey a consensus - to capture the past, to reflect on history, to record the classics, to reminisce about the good things, to disseminate Chinese culture, and even to "reproduce" stereotypes, to tease and ridicule the irrational old system and the old order.

Movies connect people from different countries, regions and times, who may come from different industries, have no interactions in their lives and have never met each other, but they can communicate and exchange smoothly through the same movie, sharing their own experiences and insights about the movie. This kind of communication across time and space, in the past, when technology was relatively backward and the network was not developed, mainly relied on newspapers, books, television, movie theaters, etc., and this kind of communication was unidirectional, which mainly manifested itself as the cultural output of movie creators, movie theory

researchers, movie critics, etc. to the audience, including the unidirectional communication between people in the same geographical area at the same time, as well as the one-way communication between people in different geographical areas at the same time, and also the unidirectional communication between people in different times. It includes one-way communication between contemporaries in the same region, as well as one-way communication between contemporaries in different regions, and one-way communication between people in different regions in different times.

Along with the advancement of technology and the rapid development of the Internet, social media platforms have become an important place for sharing historical content and exchanging historical views. People share historical pictures and articles and participate in the discussion of historical topics through social media platforms, further promoting the consumerization of history. Two-way interactions emerged with the popularity of sites and platforms such as Douban, Rotten Tomatoes, Jitterbug, Xiaohongshu, B-station, Weibo, and WeChat. This two-way interaction is no longer confined to interactions between words as before, but is paired with more visual forms of interaction such as pictures and videos. We can call the people who use these websites and platforms "viewers", they may be from foreign countries or China, they may be film industry practitioners, academics, civil servants, or delivery workers, cleaners, or the unemployed, etc. Of course, these viewers are all anonymous. Through these websites and platforms, people from different times, countries, and regions come together - not necessarily online at the same time - to discuss their views and opinions about a particular film, talk about its color, composition, entertainment, cultural significance, etc., leave messages what they think is good and what they think is not, viewers can see each other's comments and refute each other's remarks, and this exchange can go on endlessly until one side is laid to rest.

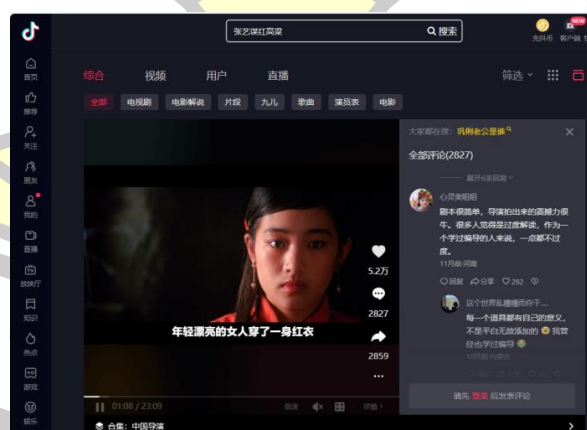


Figure 91 Tik Tok App Audience Comments and Interaction

Source: <https://www.douyin.com/> [Accessed on February 19, 2024]

In short, Zhang Yimou's red trilogy movies organically integrate history, era and aesthetics through unique movie language. The movie creation is both a profound reflection on history and an expression of the spirit of the times, while showing the creator's unique pursuit of beauty and aesthetic concept. In the process of consuming history, the audience recognizes that Zhang Yimou's films are not only works of art, but also a profound exploration of history and human nature.

## **Part 2: Screening the Past: Gender, Clothing and Identity**

Movies usually "recreate" the past in various forms. Consumption of the past is one of the consumer tastes of the commodity society, which uses a group of exquisite image symbols to reproduce the history of the past. The popularity of films reflecting the past is a sign of people's desire to understand the past, representing a nostalgia for the good things of the past, a reflection on history, or a return to a certain kind of cultural criticism, as well as a mockery of stereotypes and irrational order.

As a cultural commodity, the films *Red Sorghum*, *Chrysanthemum Beans*, and *Big Red Lanterns Hanging High* showcase the Republican Period (1912-1949), a period of upheaval and change in Chinese history. During this period, the further spread of Western thought and culture greatly promoted the process of transforming China's traditional society into a modern one, and great changes occurred in China's political, economic, ideological, and cultural spheres. However, such changes showed an obvious imbalance across China's vast territory - big changes in the cities and fewer changes in the countryside; The three films show the history and social culture of the Republic of China, the rural communities of the old times and the survival of women in them, covering many aspects of the social life and cultural customs of the Republic of China people, not only the unique local customs, folk customs and regional culture of the Republic of China period, but also a glimpse of the past era of Quzhou and the countryside, as well as the history and culture of the Republic of China. It not only displays the unique local customs, folk customs and regional culture of the Republican period, but also reflects on and criticizes the humiliating history and unreasonable feudal order of the past era.

### **2.1 Image of Women**

In the feudal society of China, which has lasted for more than 2,000 years, the social status of women has been extremely low. The social constraints on women were extremely harsh, whether it was male superiority or female inferiority, the three obediences and four virtues<sup>31</sup>, or the biographies of the listed women, the "seven outs"<sup>32</sup>, and so on, all of which were not a form of oppression of women. Since

<sup>31</sup> Three Obediences and Four Virtues: It is a moral code in ancient China, mainly aimed at women. "Three obediences" means that when you are unmarried, you must obey your father, after you get married, you must obey your husband, and if your husband dies, you must obey your son. The "Four Virtues" refer to women's virtues, women's words, women's appearance, and women's merits, which respectively correspond to moral character, speech, manners, and women's work. These regulations are based on the principles of "difference between inside and outside" and "men are superior to women" and Confucian etiquette requirements for women in terms of morality, behavior, and cultivation throughout their lives.

<sup>32</sup> Seven outs: These are the seven conditions that couples need to meet when divorcing under ancient Chinese law. These conditions reflect the society's idea of male superiority and female inferiority and the strict requirements for women at that time. Specific contents include: disobedience to parents (referring to the wife's disobedience to the parents-in-law, which was regarded as a great disloyalty and unfilial piety in ancient times), childlessness (referring to the wife's failure to give birth to a boy, which is a serious problem in traditional China, which values family inheritance). A serious flaw), lewdness (referring to the wife having inappropriate sexual relations with

modern times, the social status of women has improved. The government of the Republic of China established the principle of equality between men and women, stipulating that women enjoy the same rights as men, including rights in politics, education, marriage and work. However, the accumulation of thousands of years of feudal ideology still affects many places and groups of people, especially in rural areas, where society has moved forward but people still retain outdated ideas and follow ancient customs.

Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum, and Big Red Lanterns are linked to the history and social culture of a bygone era, both in terms of the restoration of "real" historical events, and in terms of the impression of a bygone society and the reconstruction of its culture, which leads to a more nuanced understanding of the patterns of the past that people love and consume. Together, the 3 films present a male-dominated and culturally rich rural society of the Republican era. Despite the fact that the entire society was undergoing radical changes during the Republican era, however, contrary to the mainstream of the society, the penetration of the forces of social change in the relatively closed rural society was almost negligible; the influence of ideological concepts such as democracy, human rights, equality between men and women, freedom of marriage, and women's right to education was negligible, and males were still dominant in the social life; a man could legally have Men still dominate social life, and men can legally have one wife and a number of concubines. Women are usually regarded as subordinate to men, and are even bought and sold as commodities, with a low social status. Ancient cultural practices are preserved in rural communities, and these cultural practices are usually strong and generally accepted by the people living in these communities. Some of these cultural practices have a positive effect on the healthy development of the society, and are full of charm and mystery, while others have been mercilessly proved by history to be stereotypes, which have long since been out of place and should be discarded.

In the history of Chinese cinema, women have always been the main characters written by directors, and women have always been the objects of "seeing" and "being seen" in movies. In mainstream movies, Chinese women are usually portrayed as gentle, patient, kind, selfless, and sacrificial, "a standard image of the old-fashioned woman made up of qualities such as suppleness and kindness" (Liu Hanming, 1986, p. 75). They are usually "simple, kind, gentle and understanding women who comfort men with their warmth and love and act as a harbor for men's hearts when they are in trouble" (Zhao Xiaoqing, 2003, p. 44). Even though life has given these women misfortunes, they still show their kindness, patience, and willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the family and the collective interests. "They have always been confined to the male culture, and under the male gaze, they have either become 'iron women' who have lost their natural gender, or they have become sexy desires, but at the same time, they have become the artist's ideological strategy to adapt to the times. However, in Zhang Yimou's films, 'they'

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others, which was considered at the time to lead to impurity in the family lineage), jealousy (referring to the wife showing excessive jealousy of her husband's behavior, which Such emotions are considered to affect the harmony of the family), have serious illnesses (refers to the wife suffering from serious diseases, which may bring inconvenience to the family, especially in participating in family sacrifices, etc.), talkative (refers to the wife talking too much) Talking to others or spreading gossip, this behavior is considered to be a sign of alienation in traditional families), theft (referring to the wife's theft, which was regarded as extremely dishonorable behavior in the values of the time).

appear in front of the world as an image different from that of traditional women, neither as a skilful woman in the traditional sense of the word, nor as a mere instrument of procreation, but more of a concern for women as human beings in their own right" (Li Jinmei, 2008, p. 54). These women who are either beautiful, mysterious, or tough constitute the theme of Zhang Yimou's film, "recognizing women who are not wives, gynecologists, and so on, in the sense of 'those who are subordinate to people' and their behaviors" (Mengyue & Dai Jinhua, 2004, p. 25), and they are in Zhang Yimou's mind. In Zhang Yimou's mind, they have the holiness of "God".

In Zhang Yimou's red trilogy of films, the image of rebellious women is the center of gravity in his portrayal. They do not possess the virtues characterized by self-sacrifice, they will not exchange the negative and conservative human attitude for the harmony of interpersonal and social relations on the surface, they are rebellious, anti-rational, and even sometimes a bit ferocious, they are loaded with the special historical connotations of counter-culture and anti-tradition, they fight desperately against the feudal patriarchal system, the powerful male-dominated society, and do not hesitate to pay the price of their lives, they are passionate, bold, rebellious and desperate. They all have the spirit of rebellion, but are always willing to yield to the men they love; they all believe that there is an isolated peach blossom in the world; they are sexually open and seek to enjoy the pleasure of sex; and their sexual behaviors that are not in line with propriety, or even unethical and illegal, are always exonerated because of the unfairness they have suffered. In turn, this unfair social phenomenon becomes the best excuse for rebellion, anti-tradition, sexual liberation and even incest.

Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy reflects deeply on the questions "Should we live like this?" (Red Sorghum), "Why are we still living in such a depressing way?" (Judea) and "Can we still change our lives?" ("The Big Red Lantern Hangs High").

Due to his long experience of living in the countryside, and perhaps even for personal family reasons, Zhang Yimou has a deep hatred for the phenomenon of women being oppressed by feudalism in rural China (including mountain villages), and strongly calls for a change in the status quo. Zhang Yimou's films have always given people a feeling that he favors and is good at expressing the theme of "the tragedy of a woman under the oppression of feudal culture".

The image of women in Zhang Yimou's red trilogy of films changes the stereotypical image of women who are oppressed, bullied, and dare not resist in films of similar themes, and responds to it by introducing realism, sexuality, fragmented narratives, and moral complexity. Jiu'er, Judou and Songlian are not the traditional images of women of the old times, not the weak women that the public thought of in the past, but rather, they are positive women who are full of passion, dare to fight back, dare to fight for their own happiness, and even show some "viciousness, tactics, and paranoia" at certain times. This at the time of Chinese society can be said to be "alien" and rebels, and the actress who played them Gong Li has a beautiful oriental face, this face is unruly and unyielding, can be perfectly interpreted in the film stubborn, unconvincing, contempt for the three from the four virtues, and dared to challenge the world's authority of the image of the female. "Director Zhang Yimou in the analysis of these women's image, not a desire to gain sympathy, but in letting the audience see the hope of their resistance, with their soul distortion and bitterness to

show that the subjective consciousness of women is gradually increasing, they are not willing to be their own destiny that way, so even if it is the resistance, and the resulting rights and happiness is extremely short-lived, but also to fight. They are not willing to accept their fate as it is, so even though their resistance and the rights and happiness they get from it are extremely short-lived, they still have to fight for it; he does not seek to make the movie converge to the level accepted by the public, but tries to change the inherent pattern of the public's way of perceiving the movie because of the traditional and mainstream culture. He wants to bring a shock to the public's mind, and to slowly awaken and stimulate the audience's long-silent independent consciousness from the process of watching the movie. Flying the banner of humanity without seeking idealistic eulogies, and devoting himself to the vivid display of true personality without moral judgment" (Liu Yingying, 2017, p. 30).

The Red Trilogy, in terms of its theme, story composition, actors and actresses, and filming techniques, is inclined to women, portraying women who are beautiful in appearance, independent and strong in character, and who rely on non-stop resistance to assert themselves in the patriarchal society in which they live. "My grandmother Jiu'er and Judou both married into rich families when they were in their prime due to the poverty of their families, and these "powers that be" were not only physically disabled, but also mentally unsound. The heroines of Red Sorghum and Judea never succumb to the status quo and boldly pursue their own love: Jiu'er, "my grandmother," boldly has an affair with my grandfather in the sorghum field, and Judea cheats on her nephew in the dyeing factory. Moreover, in these behaviors, women are also in a proactive position, "my grandmother" in the sedan chair to "my grandfather" to take the initiative to stretch out the foot, Judea initiative to provoke the lust of Yang Tianqing. In addition, not only in the concept of love women prevailed, "my grandmother" first proposed to blow up the Japanese car to avenge Grandpa Luohan, Judea repeatedly asked to kill Yang Jinshan but were stopped by the cowardly Yang Tianqing. Zhang Yimou's inclination towards women is thus evident. Later, in "The Red Lantern Hangs High", as the momentum of the red lantern's modeling is played to the extreme, the bias towards women also reaches an unparalleled degree. In terms of image composition, the hero is either at the edge of the frame or given a large blurred panorama, and one never sees his face clearly. The heroine, Song-ryun, on the other hand, is always framed head-on in medium and close-up shots of her face. In terms of plot, the main line is how Songlian gets involved in the rivalry of her concubines step by step after she enters the Chen residence. However, the Songlian we see in the film is more stupid than scheming. She will cut off the ears of the Second Mistress out of a moment of anger, she will cheat the Master's favor by pretending to be pregnant, and she will let slip the Third Mistress's affair due to drunkenness, all of which are so stupid! However, she is the only one in the Chen residence who shouts out the truth about "murder", and all these arrangements are made to beautify the image of this woman.

Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum Beans The heroines of "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High" are young, beautiful and wonderful women who are forced to be sold or married to landlords or wealthy men who are dozens of years older than they are, and the unequal marital relationship determines their humble family status, forcing them to live in dependence on their husbands. However, unlike the majority of women at that time who were resigned to their fate, they never stopped fighting

against the injustice of life and yearning for a better life. In all three movies, there are women who "cheat" on their husbands: Jiu'er in *Red Sorghum*, Judou in *Judou*, and Meishan, the Third Aunt in *Big Red Lanterns Hanging High*, which was not allowed in the rural society of the Republic of China (R.O.C.). As a matter of fact, the Republic of China still inherited many rules passed down from the ancient society, and the "status" of men and women were restricted to fixed social patterns. For example, it was regarded as a normal phenomenon for a man to have a concubine or to visit prostitutes, and it was even regarded as "flirting", which was a manifestation of male power; while having a concubine or visiting a prostitute was considered as "flirting". This is the embodiment of male power; while married women who have feelings for other men are considered to have broken the custom, and will even be lynched for punishment - "piggy bank immersion"<sup>33</sup>. Obviously, director Zhang Yimou's interpretation of these female characters is a revolt and satire against the solidified "identity" of the old society.

In *Red Sorghum*, because of a donkey, the nineteen-year-old Jiu'er is married off by her money-grubbing father to Li Dudu, a 50-year-old leper-afflicted soju brewery owner in the 18-mile slope. Her own daughter is bought and sold as a commodity, and is even less valuable than a donkey, which was the norm in the old society, where male labor was the main source of labor. The young and beautiful nine children naturally unwilling to their life is so cut off, on the way to meet the bride, and the palanquin driver Yu Zhanao produced feelings. From the time she knew that she was going to marry into the family of Li Doudou of the eighteen-mile slope, Jiu'er was ready to resist, carrying scissors to protect herself, and encountering robbers on the way, she did not panic, but dared to face the robbers head-on, casting her eyes on the sedan chair bearers, inspiring them to fight back, and succeeding in rescuing herself. After three days of marriage, Jiu'er is reluctant to return to her husband's house, and quarrels with her father, who only wants her possessions and urges her to go back to the 18-mile slopes as soon as possible, eager to rebel against the arranged life and want to break free from the constraints. Jiu'er has an affair with "my grandfather" in the sorghum field, knowing full well the consequences of such an act, but she still has no regrets and is determined in her pursuit of happiness. In the time of crisis, Jiu'er bravely stood up to take charge of the situation, and her sincere words from the bottom of her heart made her get the support of the people, and became the convincing new owner of Shochuzhuang. When the Japanese invaded the village, Jiu'er stood up and called on the men of the village to unite in resistance to avenge Grandpa Luohan's death. All these behaviors are contrary to the traditional ethics of feudal society. Jiu'er completely subverts the image of the traditional Chinese woman as a gentle and submissive woman, challenging the world and authority, and is a protester and rebel against the unfair social system.

Judeau, in *Judeau*, is a wife bought by Yang Jinshan to carry on his family's legacy. Yang Jinshan is a physically defective old man who tortured his first two wives to death, and Judou naturally suffers from Yang Jinshan's abuse. Judou's marriage is desperate, and she even feels hopeless for a while, but she has never

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<sup>33</sup> Pig cage dipping: A type of lynching in ancient China, which involves putting the prisoner into a pig cage, tying a rope around the opening, hanging him up, and submerging him in a river. For minor offenders, his head is exposed to the water and immersed for a certain period of time; Those who commit serious crimes can be drowned or drowned to death, which is usually a punishment for those who commit adultery.

succumbed to Yang Jinshan, and even when she is abused in an inhuman way, she does not relent and give in. Yang Tianqing's appearance gives her hope for life. She complains to him and, after discovering that he is spying on her, she turns from anger and helplessness to self-redemption in disguise, which, in the eyes of the world, is incest between an aunt and a nephew, but it is Judea's defiance and struggle. Judea's verbal teasing, bold confession and dedication to Yang Tianqing, as well as encouraging Yang Tianqing to kill Yang Jinshan and begging him to take her and their illegitimate son, Yang Tianbai, far away from home, etc., were not in line with the ethics of the society at that time. However, Judea, because of her long-time oppression by Yang Jinshan, once she revolted, it was like a flood that quickly broke through the prison of feudal ethics and morals, appearing to be merciless and decisive. These acts against ethics and morals do not make people feel shameless in the plot of Zhang Yimou's movie, but rather accentuate the sadness of women in the old times and their desire to break through the shackles of the cage. As a woman who is imprisoned and tortured, Judea's alternative and resistance lies in the fact that in the unfair society, she cannot resist with her own rationality, but can only obey the instinctive desires of her own body, arousing the most instinctive passion of her body after suffering from injustice, and obtaining temporary liberation.

Songlian, from "The Red Lantern", was once a rich girl, and thanks to the support of her enlightened father, she became one of the few women of her time who had the opportunity to receive a higher education. The death of her father and the failure of his business changed Songlian's fate. She was forced to stop her university studies and was forced by her stepmother to marry. Of course, Songlian is not willing to submit to the reality, so she fights to win at every turn. The mysterious and disturbing mansion witnesses Songlian's sorrows and joys, from the initial high and arrogant, and the maids to argue about the superiority and inferiority of the maid, to the aunts and jealousy, fighting in the dark, playing the trick of false pregnancy to compete for favors, and then after the false pregnancy was revealed to be the resentment of the maid on the maid's body resulting in the death of the maid, and then to the vengeance of the Second Aunt, and finally know the truth of the Third Aunt's suicide! And crazy, Songlian's life is a sympathetic tragedy of life. But after all, Songlian has received higher education, the identity of female university students, so that even if she had a brief period of confusion, once obsessed with the "light lantern" to fall into the privileges brought by the status of the family, but the conscience of the conscience so that she can not be sober and continue to be complicit in the world, she has become a madman. This is a silent struggle against the status quo of life and a strong indictment of the social system. Although the tragic fate of Songlian is doomed from the very beginning when she says, "That's what women are all about," Songlian's refusal to get into the sedan chair and go to the Chen Mansion with her luggage alone, and her refusal to kneel to the Chen family's ancestor tablets, etc., also show that Songlian has a very strong sense of rebellion and self-consciousness.

In short, the women in the Red Trilogy movies are not the traditional image of Chinese women, they are never the typical submissive ones, they show their resistance to social injustice, their accusation to the irrationality of the system, their disdain to the stereotypes, and even though the result of the resistance may be a tragedy, they have worked hard, tried to save themselves, and thought of a different way of life, they have ever lived enthusiastically. They have lived passionately.

## 2.2 Metaphors of Dress

Costume has the function of props in the movie, which can testify to the time, metaphorically express the meaning and reveal the human nature. Costume not only reflects the character's personality, identity and status, but also expresses the character's emotion and conveys non-audio language and thoughts. Clothing is often a symbol of social status, identity, gender, wealth and other factors, there is a certain order and norms. Clothing is not only an external decoration, but also an expression of social roles and identities.

Costume can not only reflect the background of the era in which the movie takes place, but also reflect the emotional state and psychological changes of the characters, as well as having ideological function, creating atmosphere and revealing the theme. As a part of visual art, costumes can add color to a movie. Well-designed costumes not only make the characters more attractive, but also help create aesthetic pleasure and enhance the visual appeal of the movie. "Color in Zhang Yimou's film creation has become an important means of expressing thoughts and emotions and shaping characters, showing the symbols and symbolism of color from different sides and levels, conveying the aesthetic orientation of Zhang Yimou's traditional aesthetics and different understandings of the value of life, and the characters in the film are not only shaped by appearance, lines, body language, etc., but the color plays an important role in the expression of the characters' character, fate trends and other aspects also have an important role" (Li Jingjing, 2017, p. 52). Most of the many characters in *Red Sorghum* wear Chinese short clothes, which is the daily attire of the working people, and the Japanese soldiers in military uniforms indicate the era in which the story takes place. On the way to Jiu'er's marriage, the red shades of red clothes and red sedan chair are blindingly red, and with the high-pitched singing, the bride's sedan chair surfaces in front of the audience's eyes from afar on the yellow soil-flecked path, and a group of bare-chested, boorish barbarians vigorously shakes the big red sedan chair. The contrast between the bright red bride's costume in the palanquin and the yellow dust outside the palanquin stimulates the audience's senses and conveys the director's subjective aesthetic sense - red is not only a symbol of celebration, but also symbolizes youth, life and freedom. At the end of the movie, Jiu'er's red cotton jacket is dipped into bright red by blood under the enemy's machine gun fire, the rolling red sorghum sways with the wind, and the bloodstained sun turns Jiu'er's cotton jacket almost white against the original bright red, symbolizing the end of life.

Jiu'er's costumes at different times express her emotions and psychological state at different times. The opening scene of *Red Sorghum* is Jiu'er's marriage, and the bride, Jiu'er, is dressed in a festive red color, with red wedding clothes, red hair ornaments, red head cover, joyful suona and gongs outside the house, and words of blessing and admonition inside the house, making the atmosphere joyful and peaceful. However, Jiu'er's expressionless, numb and cold face, and the stubbornness in her eyes expressed her dissatisfaction with the marriage. The narrator explains the reason: it is an arranged marriage, where the father sells his daughter for money and marries her to a dying leper. The color red here represents resistance and defiance, setting the stage for the rest of the play.

After the death of her husband, Li Doudou, the widowed Jiu'er should have worn plain or dark-colored clothes, but Jiu'er changed into a pink blouse, which is the

outspoken Jiu'er's revolt against the feudal rites. She does not want to disguise her sadness and sorrow, but instead shows relief at ending her old life, with a quiet smile and a beautiful vision of love, renewed vigor, and active integration into the new life. With sincerity and intelligence, she retains the staff of the brewery, and with hard work and competence, she makes the brewery flourish.

After giving birth to her son Douguan, Jiu'er wore a green-colored blouse. She has shed the childishness and fantasies of her maidenhood and grown into a mature woman and qualified mother, showing calmness and composure, strength and fortitude everywhere. After Luo Han was killed, her face calmly in herself and Dou Guan kneeling after Luo Han brewed eighteen miles of red, to Yu Zhan'ao and other fellows of the brewery, said: "It is a man to drink this wine, and at dawn to beat the Japanese car, to give Luo Han big brother vengeance."

While waiting for Yu Zhanao guys ambush to fight the Japanese army, Jiu Er wore a clean white blouse, which is the mourning of the sentimental Jiu Er to Luohan, but also for the Japanese invaders to ring the death knell. She picks a stretcher walking on the road for the warriors to send food, white figure in the wind swaying sorghum field shuttle, without any retreat, fear, face is a confident smile.



Figure 92 Jiu'er's Costume in the "Red Sorghum" Movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on February 19, 2024]

The transformation of Jiu'er's costume is a reflection of her state of mind at different stages of her life, and it is also a demonstration of her noble character as an ordinary Chinese woman who is frank as a human being, passionate as a lover, courageous in the pursuit of happiness, defending her homeland, and fighting with the enemy as if she were at home in the face of death.

Costume design is closely related to the storyline of a movie, and can even be a key factor in driving the plot. The contrast of costume colors can reveal deeper symbolism. In "Judea", the change of Judea's costume color signifies the change of her relationship with Yang Tianqing. Initially yellow, pink and blue, it turns into bright red, and finally turns into dark color, which corresponds to the change of color and the rise and fall of Judea's lust with Tianqing. When she first enters the Yang family, Judeau wears yellow, pink and blue, representing the ignorance and

helplessness of a first-time woman. When Yang Jinshan is paralyzed in bed, the color of Judeau's costume is a big red, representing Judeau's inner joy and elation. As Yang Tianbai slowly grows up and hates Yang Tianqing, Judeou's costume becomes a darker color, signifying that the happy life is slowly disappearing. After Yang Jinshan's death, Judeou's dark-colored costume, on the one hand, matches Judeou's identity as a widow. On the other hand, because of Yang Jinshan's death, Judea can no longer live with Yang Tianqing, and her communication with Yang Tianqing can no longer be as convenient as before. The dark-colored clothing symbolizes the destruction of Judea's inner happiness. Compared to Judeau's change in clothing, Yang Jinshan is always dressed in black. The black color here not only symbolizes Yang Jinshan as a "physically impotent old man", but also symbolizes the "representative of power" under the feudal patriarchal system. The elders of the Yang family, dressed in black robes, are typical symbols of "feudal guardians".



Figure 93 Costumes of Judeo and Yang Jinshan in "Judou" movie

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on February 19, 2024]

The design of costumes can be used to convey the symbolism of a particular culture and society, to emphasize a film's theme or to express a particular cultural point of view. Through costumes, movies can convey complex messages about identity, gender, class, and so on. "Zhang Yimou is not talking about costumes in relation to costumes, but rather, he gives the canonical meaning of costumes a profound ideological and cultural life meaning. Specific characters cooperate with specific costumes, specific costumes show and extend the destiny of the film characters, profoundly express the understanding and feeling of the personified costumes, and express the realization of the bitterness and joy of life and the deep sympathy and sigh of the underlying characters" (Cao Wei, 2015, p. 14). Songlian's costume in *Big Red Lantern* goes through four stages of change, corresponding to the transformation of Songlian's roles as a rebel of the original order, a defender of feudal rites, an accuser of the cannibalistic system, and a victim of the patriarchal culture.

Songlian starts out as a rebel of the original order, and as a "rebel" Songlian is contradictory and complex, her ignorance of the world, her unwillingness to be part of it, her position of indecision, and the goodness of her heart doomed her to an end. 19 year old Songlian is dressed in the standard attire of a female college student of her time, with a white dress, black skirt, and white stockings, and two twisted braids. In her white dress, black skirt, white socks and two twisted braids, she was walking alone with her suitcase on her way to get married. On the opposite side of the road came a pair of welcoming procession, blowing and beating, drums and gongs, she knew that it was the sedan chair to receive her. Songlian stood and let to the side of the road for a moment to watch, then continued on her way. She introduces herself to the butler, saying "I am Songlian" instead of "I am the Fourth Mistress". When the housekeeper asks her to pay respect to the ancestral tablets, she shows disdain, and when she pays respect to the First Mistress, she stands up straight and just calls out "Big Sister" without being overbearing. All these behaviors show us that she is noble, stubborn, defiant and rebellious. For a long time after her arrival at the Chen residence, Songlian mostly wore plain clothes with white color as the main theme. Although she had married a woman, she still kept her dissatisfaction and resistance to fate. However, Songlian thinks that "being a concubine is just like being a concubine, women are just like that", "what's the use of studying, it's not a piece of clothing on the master, you can wear it if you want to wear it, you can take it off if you want to take it off", which is the powerlessness in front of the destiny and the self-abandonment, which is similar to the rebellion reflected in the external dress. This is the helplessness and self-abandonment in front of fate, which is in contradiction with the rebellion embodied in the external costume, which also destines Songlian to be different from the First Mistress who has a good face and a bad heart, and of course, it is impossible for Songlian to love and hate like the Third Mistress, and it also lays down the ambush for the later struggle when she is integrated into the Chen Mansion, and without the First Mistress's stoicism and authority, the Second Mistress's insidiousness and venomousness and the Third Mistress's intelligence and shrewdness, Songlian, who is not well-versed in worldly affairs, is doomed to be wounded to the bone in the struggle. The first wife's intolerance and majesty.

As Songlian's clothing becomes more and more gaudy and luxurious, she also begins to enjoy a series of privileges such as ordering food brought by Master Chen's lighted lamps, eating in her own room, and the comforts brought by foot massages, which are very different from the Songlian who struggled to emphasize herself at the beginning. At this point, Songlian has already been successfully disciplined by feudal rituals and, in order to protect her own vested interests, she becomes involved in the big mansion's rivalry and struggle for favor and love: she cuts off the Second Mistress's ear, deceives everyone with a fake pregnancy, and kills a chicken for a monkey's eye by oppressing the maid, Yan'er. At this time, Songlian learns to calculate and plot, assimilating and degenerating into a defender of feudal rites.

After the false pregnancy is dismantled, Songlian has her lights sealed, and she wears a blue cotton gown, abandoning her delusions and becoming sober and rational. "Lighting the lamp, extinguishing the lamp, sealing the lamp, it really doesn't matter to me, I just don't understand what a human being is in this institution, like a dog, like a cat, like a rat, like everything, just not like a human being, and I'm standing here always thinking that I might as well be hanged in that house of the dead." . At this

time, Songlian came to a great realization that if a person lives without dignity and value, he might as well use death to gain liberation.

When Master Chen marries his fifth wife, Songlian puts on the white dress and black skirt she wore when she was a college girl, but her two black twisted braids are disheveled, her eyes are empty, and the "former Fourth Mistress is sick in the head." In just one year, all her hopes and rebellions fail, with the ups and downs of her life, and the hooks in the Chen residence, The "cannibalistic" feudalism has completely destroyed her into a mentally deranged lunatic. After waking up from her dream, Songlian uses the "reincarnation" of her clothes to make her last humble struggle.

In Zhang Yimou's movies, movie costumes not only have the function of general movie language, but also often assume the function of illustrating the creator's creative ideas. In "The Red Lantern", the first wife's costume is purple, indicating her noble status. The second wife's costume is yellow, which is a metaphor for her wit and cunning. The Third Mistress is red, reflecting her boldness and shrewdness. The Fourth Mistress is a young girl, and her light, plain colors point to her youthfulness. In strong contrast to the women, Master Chen, who is in charge of the women's destiny, is always dressed in black, demonstrating the majesty of his words. And this strong contrast naturally reflects the depressing life of the women and the tragic outcome. In addition, Third Aunt Mei Shan's identity is a playwright, so huge face decorations and splendid Peking Opera costumes are hung in her room, and the characters' identities and costumes reach an agreement. It is worth noting that the facial decorations and Peking Opera costumes in the movie are realistic at a cursory glance, but exaggerated at a closer look. It is this exaggerated realism that conveys a strong visual impact to the audience.



Figure 94 Facial decorations and Peking Opera costumes from the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on February 19, 2024]

In conclusion, the choice of costumes in movies is not only limited to providing clothing for the characters, but also involves the comprehensive expression of characters, plots, times and cultures on many levels, which provides the audience with a richer visual and emotional experience. The function of costumes in movies is not only a symbol of the social status, identity, gender, wealth and other factors of the movie characters, but also a symbol and metaphor of the character's personality, identity transformation, plot advancement, etc., and there exists a certain order and norm.

### 2.3 Order in Space

The space in the movie is not only a background, but also an important means for the director to express his political views, social system, power relations and so on. The politics embodied in this space is not only a visual presentation, but also a profound interpretation of society, history, culture and power structure.

Cinema is characterized by the fact that "the sense of space is always stronger than the sense of time" (Zong Baihua, 1981, p.172). Zhang Yimou's films create a unique cinematic space through images, compositions, editing, and narration, which expresses people's pursuit of freedom of desires and their resistance against the order of power, and reflects the rich connotation of Chinese history and culture. The composition of Zhang Yimou's films is strongly subjective, often designing or selecting certain elements that can best express the theme, and then expanding the expressive power of this element to the extreme with simple and distinctive compositions and scene scheduling, so as to attract the audience to always pay attention to the central element. Zhang Yimou's movie composition and scene scheduling in the creation of formal beauty at the same time, but also to create a "potential", that is, a situation, the atmosphere, rendering and conveying a strong emotion, through the momentum to convey feelings and meanings, to construct a wonderful spatial effect. Zhang Yimou is good at fully applying the sense of space to the film, transitioning from physical objects and scenes to the emotional mood of the characters, from the portrayal of women's image, extending to the social context, the general environment, and then sublimated to the political aspirations of the social context.

The film "red sorghum" in the sorghum field "wild" climax paragraph, the director of the lens taken by the scene scheduling is a classic special case. Regardless of how the lens and camera position scheduling, the sun is in the center of the screen, so that the formation of a full range of lens changes, the orientation of the scene and the scene background changes, while the position of the sun is fixed. This kind of scene scheduling violates the basic principles and is not in line with the reality of the scene, however, the movie uses this to create a unique concept of environment and scene effects, declaring enthusiasm and momentum. In this constructed movie space, the sun in the sky, the wild sorghum in the ground, the warm wind, and a pair of lovers in the sorghum field are perfectly and harmoniously fused together, the lust is passionate, the life is free and unrestrained, and everything is beautiful.

พหุ ประเด็น สื่อ



Figure 95 "Wild Sex" in the "Red Sorghum" Movie  
Source: <https://v.qq.com/> [Accessed on February 19, 2024]

The last shot of Red Sorghum creates a space that seems both real and unreal. In Douguan's cry of "mother", Jiu'er was shot down by the Japanese army, and after a puff of smoke, Yu Zhanyao silently led Douguan to Jiu'er's body, at this time, the red sun and Yu Zhanyao's face reflect each other, coupled with Douguan's "mother, mother, on the south-west" child's voice, the whole picture turned red, as if the time and space had changed, symbolizing the tragic battle, the loss of life. In addition to Douguan's childish voice "Mother, Mother, Go to the Southwest", the whole picture turns red, as if the time and space are changing, symbolizing the tragedy of the battle, the loss of life, and the grief of loved ones, which is a tribute to the tragic life, and also signifies the power of life and the endlessness of the national spirit.

The sorghum workshop in Red Sorghum was used in the movie not only to present an aesthetic image, but also to highlight the family's position in society and the living conditions of the peasant class in the society of the time through this space that was the backbone of the family's economy. This use of space allows the audience to gain a deeper understanding of the social, familial, and political issues that the movie reveals. The sorghum distillery in the movie is not only a space within the family, but also a symbol of the family's position and power in society. By showing the workshop, the audience learns that the family is the "middle class" in rural society. The sorghum distillery is also a place of labor and production, highlighting the importance of labor and livelihood in rural society. The use of this space shows the hard work and hardship of the peasant class in the society by showing the characters' efforts and hard work in production. The liquor shop fellows come from poor families in the countryside and wear rags and tatters, and even Jiu'er is a child of a poor family, except that Jiu'er realizes a class leap through marriage and the inheritance of the liquor shop after her husband's death. The sorghum distillery is also a place where the fates of many characters intertwine. The characters' interactions in the distillery express complex emotions, and elements such as marriage, love, and family conflicts are presented through this space.

Movie space can be used to set the setting and era in which the story takes place. Through elements such as architectural styles, props, and street scenes, the audience can quickly understand the location and era in which the story takes place. In Red Sorghum, the presence of the Japanese army, the Japanese army driving the people to trample on the sorghum, and the Japanese army brutally killing anti-Japanese elements in the sorghum field are presented in a space that lets the audience know that this is the period of the Anti-Japanese War. In the beginning of Judeo, when Yang Tianqing returns to the dye house, Yang Jinshan's words, "I've only just come back, it's so chaotic, how come I didn't die out there" and Yang Tianqing's

words to Erlai Zi, "It's so chaotic out there, I can't come back if I want to" are combined with the subtitle, "A place in China in the 1920s. Combined with the subtitle "A mountainous region in China in the 1920s", it can be seen that China in the 1920s was characterized by political turmoil and constant wars.

Shrines and religious places in movies often reflect the belief systems and power structures of a society. These places may be symbols of authority for ancestor worship and religious leaders, or they may become sites of conflict between faith and political power. In *Red Sorghum*, the wine brewery enshrines the god of wine, and every time new wine is brewed, the people in the brewery must worship the god of wine and sing the "Song of the God of Wine," a primitive, simple, and joyful scene. This ritual of praying to the gods of the industry to bless the skillfulness of the movie increases the viewability of the movie, and the atmosphere of folk culture comes to the forefront. When Judeo is pregnant in *Judeo*, Yang Jinshan prays in front of the ancestral tablets enshrined in his house, "Ancestor, ancestor, bless the birth of a son, to carry on the family line for my Yang family, and the incense will continue to burn, Ancestor", and when naming the newborn child, the elders of the family are seated in the main hall, and the camera is facing the Yang family's ancestor tablets. This kind of space is often a male-dominated solemn occasion, ancestor worship is based on the patriarchal bloodline as a criterion, which is essentially a kind of male supremacy, patriarchal worship, and the situation of women surviving under the oppression of male power can be imagined, which symbolizes the tragic end of the *Judou*.



Figure 96 Yang Family Elders Name Newborns in 'Judeo' Movie

Source: <https://www.iqiyi.com/> [Accessed on February 19, 2024]

Cinematic space is a multifunctional tool in filmmaking. Through its skillful use, the director is able to better convey the story, express the emotions, and guide the audience's understanding of the film. The story of "Judeo" and "The Red Lantern Hangs High" both take place in relatively closed courtyards, which symbolizes that the general environment of the society at that time was old-fashioned, closed, and feudalistic in thought. The whole story of "Chrysanthemum Beans" mainly takes place in the limited space of the dyeing workshop. The dyeing workshop epitomizes the fate of the characters, and its small, crowded space expresses the protagonist's helplessness and desire to escape from the constraints of the feudal society. This space

also emphasizes the protagonist's close relationship with society and family. The space constructed by Zhang Yimou's use of images, compositions, and editing in *Jude Beans* sets the tone for the entire story, demonstrates the ups and downs of the characters' emotions, and advances the development of the storyline. The dyeing workshop in "*Jude Beans*" has a layout of two quadrangle courtyards. The camera is repeatedly given from the air outside the dyeing workshop, bringing the whole quadrangle courtyard into the picture, and the brightly colored dyed cloths that rise and fall from time to time also foreshadow the sorrows and joys of the characters in the quadrangle courtyard dyeing workshop. In the movie, Yang Jinshan is trying to hurt Yang Tianbai in his own house, while in another house, Judea and Yang Tianqing are cheating on each other openly. The two events happening at the same time and in different spaces are fused together through editing, which strengthens the audience's association and makes the audience's heart follow the ups and downs of the plot.

The spatial layout in a movie often reflects the class differences in society. The scene where Master Chen and his concubines are eating reflects the hierarchy and class differences in this feudal family. Master Chen and his wives and concubines are the masters of the family, sitting around the dinner table and eating, while a group of servants stand beside them, serving Master Chen and his wives and concubines, so the difference in status is obvious. There was also a hierarchical order among the masters. In the etiquette of eating in ancient Chinese society, the position of the dining table facing the door is the most honorable, the top position, and the left and right positions are honored by the left position. The viewer sees that the rectangular dining table facing the doorway is the top position where Master Chen and the First Mistress sit side by side, Master Chen is on the left, the First Mistress is on the right, on the left side of the table is the Second Aunt, on the right side of the table is the Third Aunt, and Sung-lien enters the doorway at the latest, and sits at the bottom of the table with her back to the doorway.



Figure 97 Eating scene from the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"  
Source: <https://vip.1905.com/> [Accessed on February 19, 2024]

Audiences use movie spaces to build emotional empathy with the characters in the film and deepen their engagement with the story. Specific spatial design and decoration can reflect the psychological state and emotions of the characters. Changes and use of movie space can drive the development of the storyline. Specific scenes and spatial elements may become key nodes in the plot, guiding character behavior and plot twists. Well-designed space can enhance the visual appeal of a movie, with photography, lighting, sets and other factors working together to create a visually pleasing experience and enhance the artistic quality of the movie. The scene in *Big Red Lantern High Hanging* where the maddened Songlian puts back on her schoolgirl's attire and wanders mindlessly in the Chen family compound makes people move with regret and bemoan her misfortune. The Third Aunt's room is full of Peking Opera faces and costumes, and she likes to appear in front of everyone in a red cheongsam, with bold words and a spirited personality. The end of such a vivid life is a tragic death on the roof of the house of the dead, which triggers people to think about the social culture of the Republic of China. Through the multi-faceted combination of picture, camera and sound, the film vividly shows the audience the complex and changing inner world of Songlian and other characters. For example, when Songlian first entered the house, she encountered Yan'er, a maid who washes clothes in the small courtyard, and Yan'er showed impatience and spoke in a bad mood; at the same time, when filming Songlian's unwillingness to go into the dining hall to eat with the other wives and letting her subordinates send her food to her room, and the attitude of the First Mistress as well as the other two aunts who heard about it, the movie is shot in two different spaces, with a different atmosphere, with a different atmosphere. The cross-presentation of the two different spaces creates a tense and intense atmosphere and strengthens the conflict between Songlian and the First Mistress, the Second Aunt and the Third Aunt.

The setting of the movie space can also reflect the social and cultural context in which the movie is set. Different buildings, interiors, street scenes and other elements can present the social class, values and style of the times. In the panoramic view of the courtyard in "*The Red Lantern Hangs High*", tall and solid houses fill the screen, leaving only a gap for the sky, and this spatial presentation shows the heavy living environment of human beings, and the weak power of human beings to fight against the fateful environment. The whole courtyard is strict and neat, with regular main houses and compartments, even the red lanterns hanging under the eaves and the lanterns carried by the servants are all neatly arranged; the lanterns hanging indoors also pay attention to the rules and symmetry, with a big one hanging in the center and several small ones around. This kind of picture composition is closed and regular, which is closely related to the movie's intention of highlighting the sense of order. The cascading mansion, seemingly vast, is surrounded by layers, like a walled city, from which one cannot escape once inside, just like all the women in the mansion, who are bound by multiple ethical systems and imprisoned by the rules and regulations of a male-dominated society for their entire lives.



Figure 98 The Courtyard in the “Raise the Red Lantern” Movie

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on February 19, 2024]

In conclusion, the Red Trilogy films successfully create a complex and large picture of the Republican society that blends family, faith, politics and social change through the careful design and use of space. The use of space helps the audience to understand more deeply the political, social and cultural issues revealed in the movies.

### **Part 3: Reflecting the Past: Truth, Memory and Culture**

Although the "constructed" nature of cinema dictates that it is always a creative treatment of history, the history presented in cinema still has a huge impact, subtly influencing the way people look at the past.

Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy films are known for their visual artistic expression and deep portrayal of character emotions. All three films have mesmerizing narratives and a history that captivates the audience, but instead of pursuing documentary realism, these films focus more on the artistic interpretation of truth. The three films create artistic and dramatic plots through the language of the camera and the structure of the plot, and some fictionalization in the creation of characters, but the history and social culture of the Republic of China as reflected in the films have real elements, and the audience can feel a deep sense of reality from the fictional stories in the process of watching the films.

Movies are not history, but they can reflect history; they are memories of history. The three films deal with the depiction of the history and social culture of the Republic of China, and by telling the stories of a specific era, they evoke the audience's memories and reflections on history. "By building out a culture of memory, society constructs a self-image in the imagination and perpetuates identity as it is passed down through the ages. Whoever hopes for 'tomorrow' while he is still 'today' has to protect 'yesterday' from disappearing, he has to keep it by remembering it, and the past is reconstructed in memory!" (Aleida Assmann, 2015, p. 145).

Cultural elements play an important role in the Red Trilogy movies. Zhang Yimou expresses the diversity of Chinese culture by presenting characters and stories from different regions and social backgrounds. The movies often present local and folk cultures, giving the audience a fuller understanding of the underpinnings of Chinese culture. The film also explores the conflict and integration between

traditional Chinese culture and modern civilization through the delicate portrayal of customary culture. Reflection on traditional culture is also an important theme. Through the fate of the characters, the social structure, and the customs, the movie profoundly contemplates the rationality and adaptability of traditional culture in modern society.

### 3.1 Authentic Artistic Expression

The authenticity of a movie is a relative concept that depends on the genre of the movie, the intention of the creator, and the expectation of the audience. Historians have always criticized films for their superficiality, arguing that it is always a simplistic treatment and distorted use of historical knowledge that fails to present the complexity of history. However, those who are interested in the authenticity of historical truths focus their attention on the issue of mistakes and interpretations, and the real history should be left to the professionals. The audience does not care about the complexity of history or the way it is interpreted in the movie, what they want most is a powerful emotional "experience", so the history in the movie does not have to be as top-notch as popular history. They want a powerful emotional "experience", so history in the movies does not have to be as professional and serious as popular history. Audiences usually find a balance between fiction and authenticity when enjoying a movie, understanding that cinema is an art form, not a mere presentation of facts.

"History" has become a commonplace phenomenon in contemporary culture. Although "history" in the cinema often faces the fate of being challenged and subverted, the "truth" of history is the key, and history in the cinema strives to achieve a high degree of authenticity, a kind of silent acknowledgement of unreality, and tries to obtain a certain legitimacy and orthodoxy through authenticity. In this sense, it is not the same as history. In this sense, history-related movies are trying to present the "reality" of the past in an authentic way, and connect these "realities" with the past in people's memories, forming a kind of historical and cultural symbols, so as to better reflect the cultural value of movie products and the "cultural value" of consumer movies. value of movie products and the significance of consuming "history" in movies. "The 'historical' text is self-consciously theatrical in its historicity, but simultaneously 'authentic' in its presentation of the past and performing that past as if it can ignore its status as something in the present. This kind of paradox argues a constant state of flux in such a text. It is the same as the frisson found in re-enactment or Reality History – the modern subject performing pastness and somehow able to inhabit their contemporariness as well as their performed historicity." (Jerome de Groot, 2009, p. 183)

Zhang Yimou's red trilogy of films are all narrated from the experiences and perspectives of "ordinary people", using special visual effects and eye-catching red elements to place the fictional protagonists in the history of the Republic of China, reconstructing the theater of the past, and inviting the audience to participate in the experience of historical events and cultural practices of the Republic of China period. Red Sorghum highlights the process of reconstructing history and cultural practices, creating a fusion of past and present. Ju Dou and Big Red Lantern High Hanging each conceptualize a story around a family, recreating the past as theater. Both Red Sorghum, through its "I" narrative, which places the audience in the position of eyewitnesses, and The Chrysanthemum Bean The Big Red Lantern based on an

omniscient perspective, rely on empathy and cultural identity to create memories, which are not based on first-hand experience, but still have a powerful emotional impact. Through memory, we learn about history through the richness of imagination, and the audience may lament ancient cultural practices (the sedan chair song and wine ceremony in *Red Sorghum*, the "blocking of coffins" at funerals in *Judea*), regret the end of characters (Jiu'er and Uncle Luohan in *Red Sorghum*, *Judea* and Yang Tianqing in *Judea*), and the end of the characters in *Big Red Lanterns High*, *Big Red Lanterns High*, *Big Red Lanterns High*, *Big Red Lanterns High*, *Big Red Lanterns High*. in "*Red Sorghum*," Songlian, Meishan, Yan'er, etc.), deplore the cruelty of war (the War of Resistance Against Japan in "*Red Sorghum*"), and mock the evil stereotypes of all evils (Jiu'er's buy-and-sell marriage in "*Red Sorghum*," Judou's widowhood in "*Judou*," and polygamy in "*Red Sorghum*," etc.), but at the same time will be sobered by the reconstruction of the past and the reshaping of history, and will come to the realization that "The past can never come back" and "Authenticity is strictly irreproducible". What the audience sees as "real" is actually a kind of personal and social memory of the real, it is the stories and scenes of the past that are recreated through images, presenting history as a dramatic scene, and we cannot be sure of the authenticity of those memorized scenes or of their relationship with the real, but the nostalgic audience is still happy to take part in the process of recreating the past, and is also interested in the limitations of history, memory, and the past, as well as in the past. and to explore and question the limits of history and the authenticity of memory. "Where authentic histories claim to educate us about the past itself, imposing narrative order on chaotic reality, these modern-day reconstructions tell us more about our relationship to the past, about the connections between past and present, and our affective responses. They can also inspire viewers to seek further knowledge and understanding." (Pam Cook, 2005, p. 2)

"History" in cinema is self-consciously dramatic in its historicity, visualizing history and showing "authenticity" in its presentation of the past. The films of the Red Trilogy tell stories that take place within the framework of real historical reenactments. The films have achieved the status of "high quality" through a "careful reconstruction of the past". In many ways, the love of cinema is driven by the need for authenticity. While audiences realize that these stories are fictional, they accept the limited nature of cinematic representations of the past. As a result, the visual aesthetics of the films seep into the authentic construction of the past. In choosing their locations, the three films focus on a high degree of compatibility with the films' storylines and on live-action filming, striving to recreate the real Republic of China and the real rural community life of that period.

The main location for the movie *Red Sorghum* is located in Zhenbei Fort Film and Television City in the western part of Yinchuan City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. This film city is built on the foundation of an ancient fortress, and is known for its unique geography, majestic style, and bleak, mournful atmosphere. Zhenbei Fort Film and TV City perfectly represents the solitude and desolation of the 18-mile slopes in the movie, providing a unique backdrop for the movie, and is especially important for showing the unique sense of history and regional characteristics of the movie.



Figure 99 Zhenbeibao Film and TV City, Yinchuan City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the setting for the movie “Red Sorghum”  
Source: Li Haiyan Photoed August 11, 2022

In addition, some of the filming took place in the northeastern part of Gaomi City, Shandong Province. The "Northeast Township of Gaomi City, Shandong Province" mentioned in the original novel *Red Sorghum* is a literary concept, not a real place name, but a world full of almost utopian idealism constructed by Nobel Prize-winning author Mo Yan (2012), who used his hometown as a prototype for the world he built with his words, and is the main locale in which many of his characters grow up and move. It is the main place where many characters in Mo Yan's novels grow up and move around, and its corresponding real-life territory is roughly the northeastern area of Gaomi City in Shandong Province. For the film, large-scale sorghum cultivation was carried out in order to create the "real" landscapes needed for the movie.

The setting of "Judea" is in Nanping Village under Nanping Mountain about 4 kilometers southwest of Yixian County, Huangshan City, Anhui Province, which is an ancient village with a thousand-year history and a grand scale of Huizhou merchants' settlement. The ancient architectural complex of Nanping Village is mainly built in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The dry streams on the east and west sides of the village flow eastward into the Xigua River in the north of the village. The village has preserved 300 ancient houses, including 8 ancestral halls and many ancient residential buildings, as well as 36 ancient wells and 72 ancient streets and lanes. The main buildings include Xuchitang, Ye Kuguang Hall, Xiaosilou, Dunmutang, Shenshitang, Yinan Villa, Ye Jiangsheng Mansion, Bingling Pavilion, and Half Spring Garden, etc. In 1989, when Zhang Yimou was shooting the movie "Judeo", he converted "Xuchitang" into

"Old Yang Family Dyeing Workshop". To this day, "Xuchitang" still retains the scenes from the filming of "Ju Dou", with the plaque of "Old Yang Family Dyeing Workshop" and the props used in the filming of the movie placed inside the ancestral hall, high cloths hanging at the patio, and stills from the movie hanging on the wall.

"Concubines and Wives" novel tells a story of Jiangnan, Zhang Yimou will be adapted into the "Red Lanterns Hanging High" movie, the story will be transplanted to the Qiao family compound in Qijian Town, Qixian County, Shanxi Province, the Qiao family village of the Fort. Qiao family compound was built in 1756, the whole compound was double "hi" shape, divided into 6 large courtyard, set 20 small courtyard, 313 houses, building area of 4175 square meters, three sides of the street, surrounded by up to 10 meters of the closed brick wall, the gate for the city gate type hole, is a traditional northern residential architectural style of the It is an ancient mansion with the traditional folk architecture style in the north.



Figure 100 The Qiao Family Residence in Qixian, Shanxi Province, the setting of the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

Source: Li Haiyan Photoed July 22, 2022

The use of real locations increases the degree of "reality" of the history of the Republic of China. These ancient castles, villages, and buildings all experienced the Republic of China period, and after decorating and arranging them according to the storyline of the movie, the audience can easily "experience" the cultural atmosphere and living scenes of the Republic of China era.

The great success of the movie, as well as Zhang Yimou's growing popularity, has also increased the popularity of the three filming locations, which have now become famous local tourism resources and sightseeing spots, with an endless stream of tourists visiting these places every year.

The Red Trilogy movies are largely fictionalized, but they are also based on historical backgrounds and deal with some historical events and social cultures of the Republican Period and the Anti-Japanese War. All three movies show the existential dilemmas faced by rural women during the Republican period, as well as the lifestyles and cultural practices of rural communities. Red Sorghum takes place during the Anti-Japanese War. The film includes scenes in which the Japanese army kills anti-Japanese Luohan and Bald Three Guns, as well as scenes in which the people of Eighteen Mile Slope spontaneously organize an ambush against the Japanese army. Judeou shows how the patriarchal system affects and binds people's lives. Judeou is

asked by the clan elders not to remarry after the death of her husband. Yang Tianqing is asked to move out of the old Yang family dyeing workshop to live outside. In "The Red Lantern Hangs High", the "rules of the house" rule everything in the Chen family compound, which is a reflection of the patriarchal society and the rigid hierarchy.

Zhang Yimou favors the color red, large contrasting shades, and a "deep, rich" style. Red is the "theme color" of Zhang Yimou's films. It is distinct, strong and heavy. However, red sorghum, red cloth, red lanterns, these visual modeling elements into the film narrative body is not as a simple color code, they are not isolated from the story of the film outside of the symbol of the thing. In the red trilogy of films, Zhang Yimou has made extreme artistic expression of sorghum, cloth and lanterns with the help of the camera.

In "Red Sorghum", Zhang Yimou, with the help of the wildly dancing sorghum and hissing suona in the wind, as well as a large number of high-speed movement of the camera, fast-paced editing techniques to make the screen emerges as a kind of worship of the sensual form of human life, rare in Chinese traditional art. Red sorghum is not only the spiritual representation of the characters' passionate emotions, but also the basis of their lives on which they "exist". The sorghum field is a stage for them to entertain and sing, as well as a place for them to live and farm. Therefore, when the Japanese invaders trampled the sorghum field as a slaughterhouse and torture chamber to kill the people, the owner of the sorghum field must take it as a battlefield to fight for life and death and a cemetery to bury the enemy!

The symbolic role of the red dyed cloth flying in the wind in "Judea" is also dependent on the specific context in which the story takes place. When Yang Tianqing and Judou are indulging in the sensual joy of life in the dyeing room, the red cloth suddenly slides down from a height! The unstoppable and rapid descent of the red cloth undoubtedly becomes a direct metaphor for sexuality.

If the wild and reckless image movement is the aesthetic attribute of the movie "Red Sorghum", the static camera ideology constitutes the rules of the movie grammar of "The Red Lantern Hangs High". The entire film of "Hanging High the Red Lantern" (except for the opening scene where the "new wife" is greeted) is shot in a closed and cold space - the Chen family's mansion, and the extreme closure of the narrative space makes the story of the concubine, which is contrary to the contemporary historical reading of the situation, enveloped in an aesthetic of "Red Sorghum". The extreme confinement of the narrative space makes the story of the concubines, which is against the contemporary historical reading, enveloped in an alternative historical rational situation. No matter what kind of things happen in this closed and confined courtyard: whether it is a joyous day with red lanterns hanging high on the four walls, or a bleak night with snow and wind and black cloths sealing the lanterns, the camera always expresses everything here in a static and heavy manner. The lantern, as the "theme prop" of the movie, exists in the "history", it is an object in the Chen family house, and at the same time, it is "injected" into the fate of the characters. The red lantern is the emblem of entertainment, favor, love, and glory in the Chen family house, and it represents all the "happiness". On the other hand, the extinguishing and closing of the lanterns means desolation, darkness and loneliness, and it symbolizes all the misfortunes.

The meaning of "Raise the Red Lantern" had been indirectly relayed to the audience through the conversation between Songlian and Meishan on the terrace: "A man is a ghost and a ghost is a man. Lighting the lanterns, extinguishing the lanterns, sealing up the lanterns. I just don't get it, a man in this courtyard Like what kind of thing? Like a dog, like a cat, like a rat, like everything, just not like a person!" People, in this seemingly elegant and civilized ceremony, are actually shrinking, struggling and hissing! While the movie shows the rituals of lighting, hanging, extinguishing and sealing the lights again and again, it also shows a scene of tragedy that deceives, forces, harms and kills people! And the mechanism of confinement and repression of people symbolized by objects continues. This intention is realized in the images respectively, and there appear two different representations of people and objects: lanterns and foot hammers are always in close-up, while people are mostly in medium and close-up, including the master of the Chen family's mansion, the central figure in the closed feudal system, Chen Zuoqian ("Master Including the master of the Chen family house, Chen Zuoqian ("Master"), the central figure in the closed feudal system, the camera remains calmly watching him as if it were watching the dark mansion during the course of the narrative. As a substitute for the viewer's gaze, the camera only sees the character in the background, in the distance, in profile, as he appears and disappears like a ghost in the courtyard, and sometimes only hears the butler say, "Is the master back?" Then a low, off-screen voice, "Uh-huh," echoes through the dark, locked walls of the courtyard. The still point of view of the camera and the relatively fixed scene, as well as the distance between the character and the audience in the visual space, strengthen the character itself has the kind of inaccessible and difficult to recognize the mysterious face.

The movie "Red Sorghum" is a bold expression of a passionate attitude towards life that dares to love and hate, a state of passionate exuberance and lawlessness. This state is very rare among Chinese people, and this kind of character is often our ideal personality state. Very few Chinese people can have the kind of character shown in the movie "Red High Beam", so wild and unrestrained, lawless. That kind of state is our ideal, but in reality it is difficult to realize. And "Chrysanthemum beans" can be seen as "red sorghum" sister, is "red sorghum" of the opposite, depicting the kind of human thieves have the heart but not the guts, take a step to look at the three steps, full of rules, do not dare to break through their own, tormented by their own expression of a kind of character tragedy. The moral of The Bean is that "if we don't transcend ourselves, we will go to the opposite side of us". Tragedy always arouses the audience's sympathy and thinking. The movie cleverly invites the audience to judge the history and social culture of the Republican period, and while the audience laments the fate of the characters in the movie, they will also think about why that era is prone to such tragedy, and that if they were to live in a more civilized and developed era nowadays, the story would be a different story, and they would treasure the present happy life more! --This is the educational effect of the movie.

Movies can enhance the understanding of history, allowing people to better understand the story and the cultural connotations it conveys, and to gain some kind of emotional resonance and empathy from this further understanding. Zhang Yimou revisits traditional Chinese culture, ethics and morality, and Chinese tragedy in "Big Red Lantern High Hanging" to provoke the audience's associations and thoughts. He has moved the Jiangnan courtyard written in the novel to the northern mansion,

showing the shackles and pressure caused by the high walls and big tiles, unchanging and solid things on people, and added various rituals such as lighting the lanterns, sealing the lanterns, blowing out the lanterns, extinguishing the lanterns, and hammering the feet, etc. This comes from the fact that our lives are just like our lives. This comes from the fact that our lives are like rituals that are repeated every day, including our social and political activities, which sometimes feel like rituals. In a deep house, in the midst of an insurmountable ritual, people are very small. The compound is lifeless, and what remains constant are the daily rituals. Zhang Yimou does not depict life in a very realistic way, but uses subtraction for artistic treatment. In the film, it is unrealistic to see a wife with only one maid, walking in the patio, alone and miserable. But these formalities constitute a kind of symbolism, which implies the director's sense of apprehension in those days.

In short, movies express the truth in a unique and complex way through the comprehensive use of lens, color, composition, music, script, actor's acting, director's perspective and other artistic means. This expression is not only a restoration of objective facts, but also a deep excavation and presentation of subjective emotions, thoughts and opinions.

### 3.2 Cultural Memory

The past is not naturally occurring, but is culturally created. The past is a social construct, and the need for meaning in the present and its frames of reference determine the nature of the "past". By creating a sacred site of the past, we use its memory to build a sense of collective identity and belonging in order to establish a sense of national and ethnic legitimacy, authority and trust. According to the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, "A person raised in total isolation has no memory; it is in the process of his socialization that a person develops a memory. Although it is still the individual who possesses memory, that memory is collectively influenced, so the expression 'collective memory' is not a metaphor. Although the collective cannot possess 'memory', it determines the recollections of its members, and even the most personal recollections can only arise from exchanges and interactions within the social group" (Jan Assmann, 2015, p. 28).

Zhang Yimou uses an astonishing and unique image style and a series of audio-visual languages in his Red Trilogy films to strengthen the functions of symbolism, metaphor, and ritualization of the film screen shape, and to express his thoughts on the deeper connotations of cultural traditions, human feelings and humanity, social history, and so on.

Through the epic depiction of the simple and wild life of a group of peasants in the 1920s and 1930s in China, and the whole process of their bloody battle with the Japanese invaders, especially the rendering of the love legend, *Red Sorghum* eulogizes a kind of sensational and open life state: to love is to really love, to hate is to really hate, to love and hate, to live and die, and to live in a bold and expansive way.

The story is about Yang Jinshan, the owner of a dyeing factory in a rural area in Jiangnan, who married a young woman named Judou for the sake of family succession. Due to her age and the fact that she suffers from a dark disease that makes her infertile, coupled with her insults and cruelty, Judou gradually develops a monstrous love for her honest nephew, Yang Tianqing, and gives birth to Yang Tianbai. When Yang Tianbai grows up, he kills his father in the dyeing pool under the

pressure of public opinion from the townspeople, Judeau feels disillusioned with his life and burns down the Dye House, which represents the feudal system of ethics and morals.

In "Raise the Red Lantern", Songlian, who is still a student at the university, is married off by her stepmother to become the fourth concubine in the family of a rich man, Mr. Chen Zuqian. In the Chen family compound, Songlian witnesses the rivalries between the wives and their respective destructions, and eventually becomes insane herself. The following year, the red lanterns are hung high again, and the fifth concubine is married again. The so-called ceremonial elements in the movie, the so-called ancestral "rules" of hanging, lighting, extinguishing, sealing, foot-pounding, etc., constitute a world of unquestionable authority, as if it has been the case since the beginning of time.

It is not difficult to see from these films, Zhang Yimou film in the most important Chinese cultural symbols: red lanterns, yellow earth, deep house, sorghum wine, dyeing workshop. these elements overflowing with the most primitive Chinese smell, undoubtedly reflects the breath of Zhang Yimou film cultural memory, "upside down sedan chair", "blocking the coffin", "foot pounding", "red lanterns" these folklore or after artistic exaggeration, transformation of folklore is his film content, form ", "blocking the coffin", "foot pounding", "red lanterns" these folklore or artistic exaggeration, transformed folklore is the content of his movie, the form of a characterize the content and form of his films.

Zhang Yimou uses his own unique form of visual expression in the red trilogy, whether from the use of photography skills or visual effects on the theme of the display, are carrying through the picture to show the cultural implications of traditional culture, folk customs. In Judea, the director, in order to show the shackles attached to the feudal system, deliberately chose to use the huge, heavy and dull building of the cloth-dyeing workshop, where the long strips of cloth hanging high in the air, crisscrossing across and around, manipulate people's destinies just like the feudal rules and regulations. The story of Judeo and Tianqing also always takes place in the courtyard with its strict gateways, which further demonstrates the predicament they find themselves in. In the cinematography, the colorful visual impact method fully used in Red Sorghum is once again brought into play to give people a strong impression, especially the use of red tones: the long, hot, red dyed cloth comes down with a crash when Judou and Tianqing are having an affair, and the blood-red dyepool becomes the burial place of Yang Jinshan and Yang Tianqing's two fresh lives.

พหุ ม ประทีป ชีวะ



*Figure 101 Dyed cloth hanging in the air in the movie "Judou".*

Source:<https://www.iqiyi.com/>[Accessed on February 19, 2024]

Red Sorghum, which came out in 1987, tells an uncomplicated but fascinating story about the sensational love between "My Grandpa" and "My Grandma". Several scenes that are considered classics in the history of Chinese cinema offer a glimpse of life in all its splendor. After witnessing a series of visual spectacles such as the frenzied sedan chair, the sacred wild love, the restless sorghum, and the bloody sorghum wine, the audience is completely shocked by the vitality of life conveyed by the overwhelming visual images. Zhang Yimou on the original novel load of connotations to simplify, highlighting the expression of "hymn to life" the main theme of the picture dancing sorghum is the director's heart of the externalization of the debut film on the strong performance of the pursuit of visual modeling, through the modeling of human strength, human vitality, national temperament, the film's intuitive visual impact! The intuitive visual impact of the movie is unstoppable, and the celebration of life resounds in the hearts of the people.

In the eulogy of the life of the "Red sorghum", Zhang Yimou came to a big turn, "Ju Dou" through a period of incestuous love, a profound revelation of human nature, repression, distortion, patricide plot, these themes are still by the means of the visualization to deepen. The dyed cloth hanging from the sky is an infinite constraint on Judeou and Yang Tianqing, and when the two of them are having an affair, the bright red dyed cloth is dipped into the dyeing pool at a rapid speed and becomes a visual metaphor for their passionate relationship. These two people not only live under the shadow of Yang Jinshan, but also cannot escape the suppression of social ethics and family traditions. The overall color of the film is gloomy and the background environment is depressing. In an overhead shot of a night scene in a dyeing factory, the surrounding houses are so dark that people can't breathe, and only Judou's house has a slight warmth, so that the characters' inner desires and the repression of the environment are distinctly presented on the screen through the scenery. After Yang Jinshan's death, their biological son Yang Tianbai inherits Yang Jinshan's identity, which is visualized in the scene "Blocking the Coffin": Judea and Yang Tianqing are stopped again and again under Yang Jinshan's huge coffin, and it is Yang Tianbai who sits on top of the coffin, and it is Yang Jinshan's and his son

Yang Tianbai's who are the most influential people in the world. The pressure from the world, from Yang Jinshan, and from his son, Yang Tianbai, are all transformed into this huge coffin, which presses the two of them deeply underfoot and foreshadows the destiny that this tragedy of life will be played out from generation to generation.

"Raise the Red Lantern" follows the style of "Ju Dou", and is a work that really maximizes the cultural connotations expressed by the shapes and ideas. This time, the story is told in an absolutely closed environment, and the heroine, Songlian, has never stepped out of the doorway of the Chen residence since she entered it, completely assimilated and swallowed up in the man-eating mansion. It is believed that the movie leaves the deepest impression on people with those big red lanterns and the series of ritualized process of lighting, blowing and sealing the lanterns. In comparison, the role of the red lanterns in "The Red Lanterns Hang High" is not quite the same as that of the dye house in "Judou". Here the red lanterns drive the development of the story and the fate of the characters, unlike the dye house, which appears only as a background. The wives and concubines are at war over the lighting of the lanterns; the men are the initiators of the war, but they enjoy the pleasure of the lanterns, and even the maids are caught up in the vortex of the lanterns. The lanterns maximize the visual effect, and the lantern ceremony becomes a metaphor for the male-dominated society, traditional culture, and stereotypes that bind women. The hero keeps saying "the rules, the rules left by our ancestors", and these rules are visualized in the eerie overhead scene of the compound, the extreme rules of the composition highlights the stability and strength of this corrupting force, the feudal traditions are suffocating and inescapable. The Chen family compound has become a symbol and epitome of the old feudal ethics and morality, presenting a dead atmosphere.

History is not only the history of society, but also the history of the mind and the present. History is not only the record of historical facts, but also the history of one's own spiritual experience. The Red Trilogy is entirely adapted from novels: Red Sorghum is adapted from the novel of the same name by Nobel Prize-winning author Mo Yan (2012), Judeo is adapted from Liu Heng's novel Fuxi Fuxi, and Big Red Lanterns Hang High is adapted from Su Tong's novel Wives and Concubines. The three Chinese writers were born in the 1950s and 1960s and, like director Zhang Yimou, had the opportunity to study in China's institutions of higher learning after the end of the Cultural Revolution. They all participated in the movie adaptations of their respective books and were among the screenwriters. Having experienced both the Cultural Revolution period and the Reform and Opening-up period, they had the pain of the history of the Cultural Revolution, as well as the joy of the Reform and Opening-up and the liberation of ideas. During this period, the writers' creations turned to reflections on the history of the Republic of China, and on issues such as primitive desires, free will, and ethical precepts. Therefore, the creation of the movie inherits the creative ideas of the three novels, and the female protagonists are all alternative, "rebels" of the Republican era in which they live. This kind of rebellion comes from the era of the novels and the era of the movie - the zeitgeist of the 1980s and 1990s, which is manifested in the fact that after ten years of repression and frustration during the Cultural Revolution, the times suddenly reversed - the era of reform and opening up came, and everything became tolerant and open. Literature and

art realized the freedom of creation, and the people in the movie and the audience in reality were given "reality" again, and people were restored to human beings, their lives were vivid and their emotions were free. Novels began to create boldly, movie creation broadened the "boundaries", adding "alternative" elements gradually become commonplace, the audience also do not have to suppress their preferences, can freely express their love for the "foreign" movies. Audiences no longer have to suppress their preferences and are free to express their love for "different" movies.

Hanging the Red Lantern High" expresses the stubborn and old-fashioned side of Chinese rural society during the Republican era, which is contrary to the times, and tries to arouse people's sympathy for the fate of women who are trapped under the old-fashioned ethics and morals. Director Zhang Yimou uses the famous Qiao Family Residence as the setting for his story, an ancient mansion in the traditional northern residential architectural style that began in the Qing Dynasty and was still being vigorously expanded during the Republican period, and which conforms to the standards of a well-to-do family of the upper class in the countryside during the Republican period. The solemn and dignified mansion, the high hanging lanterns, the costumes that emphasize the status, the appropriate soundtrack, the entertainment that embellishes the life, the tone of the movie is melancholic and sad, something bitter and indescribable. Part of those imperceptible hints of nostalgia come from the movie's Peking Opera sequences. Master Chen is staying in Fourth Aunt Songlian's room, and early the next morning, Third Aunt Mei Shan sings a Peking Opera clip from the roof of a building called "The Red Bride," the lyrics of which correspond to Mei Shan's sour, lost state of mind, and mirror Songlian's favor. Another fragment of The Red Lady occurs when the Fourth Aunt Songlian, annoyed with the Master, walks alone on the roof of a building, while the Third Aunt Mei Shan sings from her courtyard and Master Chen applauds. The lyrics of the song express a state of mind that is just the opposite of the same two characters - Songlian's disillusionment and Mei Shan's triumph. Third Aunt Mei Shan organizes a game of mahjong in her room, and Dr. Gao plays a recording of Mei Shan's Peking Opera performance of the same year, "The Royal Steeple Pavilion," suggesting that Mei Shan and Dr. Gao had an affair. After Mei Shan's death, her courtyard is "haunted", but it is actually Songlian playing Mei Shan's Peking Opera performance recording "The Royal Pavilion" on the phonograph. This part of the lyrics expresses the pitifulness and sadness of Mei Shan's life, and it is also a summary of Mei Shan's miserable life as a woman in the old times, whose destiny could not be mastered in her own hands, and who was ultimately persecuted by the male-dominated society and feudalistic rites and customs. It also summarizes the miserable life of Mei Shan.

Movies are an art. Most movies are fictional, telling a fictional story through the creative work of writers, directors and actors. Even films based on true events are often created and adapted to fit the language and drama of the movie. Directors and filmmaking teams use a variety of devices to create emotion, convey themes, and produce visual effects. This may include special effects, fictionalized scenes, and the acting style of the actors, all in service of the overall artistic effect of the film, without necessarily striving for absolute authenticity. Zhang Yimou's films often use close-ups to shape characters and enhance dramatic tension, and the choice of actors is crucial, as their natural faces can reveal their characters' personalities, passions, states of mind and even their destinies. As the world-renowned "Girlfriend of Mou", Gong Li's face

is easy to recognize and remember, revealing a stubbornness and sincerity that carries the "scarred beauty" of rebellion against a patriarchal society. The stylization of Gong Li's face contains a sense of tension, that is, a fierce clash between the formal strictness and orderliness of the exterior and the inner emotions revealed in the face, creating a deep impression on the audience.

At the beginning of *Red Sorghum*, along with the voice-over "This is my grandmother, the ninth day of the seventh month of that year was the day my grandmother got married", the face of Jiu'er (played by Gong Li) appeared in the picture, which was a typical oriental female face with original life and youthfulness, and a pair of bright eyes lit up the whole screen, and the face made the young Gong Li start her screen legend gently and skillfully. The young Gong Li gently and skillfully opened her screen legend, and Zhang Yimou also unveiled his own brilliant movie life. This opening scene is one of the classic "appearances" in the history of Chinese cinema, and it has the beauty of the Peking Opera art of "appearance". Starting with a close-up of the first large head, the scene proceeds with close-ups of the ears and chignon, the traditional "open-face" technique, the silver bracelet, the big red cotton jacket, the buckles, the earlobes and the silver earrings, the ears and chignon, as well as the red head, with symbols representing traditional Chinese culture, balanced and echoed, and arranged in an artistically pleasing manner.

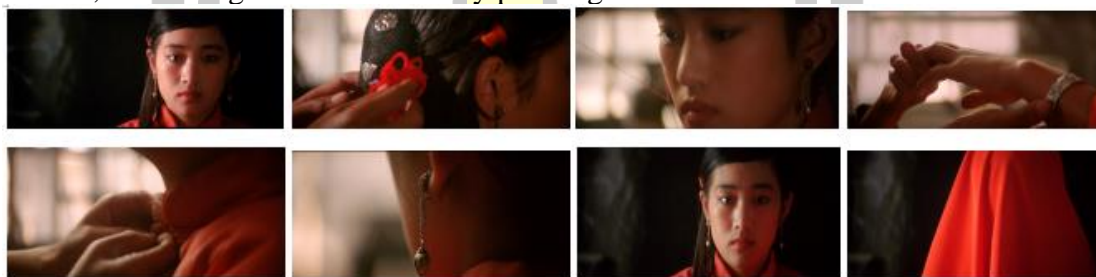


Figure 102 Beginning of the "Red Sorghum" Movie

Source:<https://v.qq.com/>[Accessed on February 19, 2024]

In this opening scene, a succession of frame transitions completes the ritual appearance of the Oriental woman. Gong Li is not only introduced as the main character of the story, but also portrayed as an imaginary and symbolic representation of the East. The contrast between light and shadow created by the large light ratio in the frame makes Gong Li's still face more imaginative, and achieves an extremely shocking effect in terms of emotion. Without the need for a montage, one can see from Gong Li's face an indictment of the real world, and its fascination lies precisely in the overflowing non-reality and spirituality.

In the movie *Ju Dou*, the head of Ju Dou (played by Gong Li) is divided into two parts, pitch-black hair and fair face, with five striking and unusual features, rich in formal beauty, creating a sense of roundness and harmony in the whole.

Like *Red Sorghum*, the first shot of *Big Red Lantern High Hanging* is a close-up of the face of the female protagonist, Songlian (played by Gong Li), which is used to show her stubborn character and sense of resistance. The difference is that this face leaves behind tears, foreshadowing her tragic end. Song-ryun's appearance is deliberately designed as a neat structure of counterpoint: bangs, two thick black braids, and a white school uniform neatly buttoned up with two coils. Songlian's head

is placed in the middle of a window pane in the background, and the horizontal and vertical lines of the black window frame seem to symbolize the omnipresence of rules and constraints of feudalism, a composition that reinforces the main idea of the film.



Figure 103 Beginning shot from the movie “Raise the Red Lantern”

Source:<https://vip.1905.com/>[Accessed on February 19, 2024]

Zhang Yimou often sets up a whole set of typical cultural symbols with distinctive visual effects in a closed space. In *Red Sorghum* and *Judea*, traditional cultural symbols such as couplets, pagodas, incense burners, incense burners, and ancestral tablets not only participate in the plot narrative, but also generate specific symbolism. The typical visual symbol "invented" in *Big Red Lantern High Hanging* is the red lantern, which is one of the most important means of realizing the novel's cinematization. In the movie, "sex" is represented as a symbol of power. "Lighting the lantern" means to obtain the power of sexual intercourse, as well as "hammering feet" and "ordering food", which have been passed down from ancestors. The power to "order food" is also passed down from our ancestors. The eye-catching red lanterns are hung high, publicizing Chen Zuoqian's male power and female bodily desires. The action of hanging the lanterns over and over again, constantly rendering repetition, has different meanings at different stages of the plot, allowing the camera to capture the characters' emotional changes and situations at different times with the same symbol. The "red lantern" is a concentrated conflict, a tool of the feudal patriarchy to control women, and all the struggles of the women are focused on how to "hang the

lantern", the abstract dramatic conflict is externalized, and the camera and the picture are given life. Even the maid Yan'er secretly lights the lanterns in the house, showing that the temptation of sex (power) is everywhere.

The women portrayed by Gong Li in Zhang Yimou's three films are hard and gentle, dissatisfied with the unfair treatment of life, and courageous in their resistance. However, the course of their resistance and struggle for self is not smooth, in addition to the constraints of the social environment, there are all kinds of people surrounding them. The emergence of these people is an inevitable product of historical development, and they are the victims of the feudal system of the society. They succumb to the deformed social and ethical forms, and even enjoy such a morbid living environment, which creates obstacles for those who want to revolt and realize self-redemption.

In the social environment of the War of Resistance against Japan in which the movie *Red Sorghum* is set, Big Head Li represents the sickly forces of feudal society, and even though Big Head Li does not appear from beginning to end, his name is always mentioned, which is synonymous with a sickly society, and it is always present throughout the entire era. Jiu'er's father is a product of a patriarchal society, a sinker dependent on feudal forces, who sacrifices his own daughter's happiness for a mule. The patriarchal blood in his bones can't help his daughter from rebelling against him, but at the same time, he is also the representative of the poor people, he is forced by his livelihood to sell his own daughter, and regardless of whether he actually sheds and does not shed, we can see his helplessness from his words. In the movie, the two bandits, Bald Three Guns and Butcher, who are unyielding to the Japanese and rob the common people, are a kind of people who are sinking and rebelling, which can be regarded as an inevitable stage of realizing self-salvation - i.e., rebelling against themselves while being continuously suppressed.

In the film "*Judeo*", Yang Jinshan clearly represents the male ruler. Although Yang Tianqing no longer submits to Yang Jinshan after he learns that Judeo has been abused and gets Judeo's favor, he still can't get rid of his thoughts that have been bound for a long time, and after he finds the unconscious Yang Jinshan in the deserted mountain, he doesn't have the heart to abandon him but fights to carry him back to his

home to save his life. When Yang Jinshan learns that Yang Tianbai is not his own son and wants to kill him, and sets fire to the house, Yang Tianqing does not even kill Yang Jinshan. When Judeau repeatedly pleads with Yang Tianqing to take himself and Yang Tianbai far away from home, Yang Tianqing cowers and is unwilling to do so. All these show that Yang Tianqing has long been subjected to the oppression of feudalism, and even though he has an unethical relationship with his aunt, he is still unable to get rid of the influence of the old thinking, which is exactly where Judeau's tragedy lies. If Yang Jinshan represents the sick social pattern, then Yang Tianqing represents a class of people who are eager to change but unable to break through themselves. They are blinded by the long-standing social system to change themselves, and even though they have the ability to change their life status quo, they still choose to succumb to the pressure of the long-standing old-fashioned ideology.

In the patriarchal family depicted in the movie "The Red Lantern", the man is in charge of the whole family and everyone needs to be dependent on him. The aunts, on the surface, are easy-going and harmonious, but in reality, they are all rivals and unsuspecting, taking pride in lighting the lanterns and being domineering. The maid in Songlian's house, Yan'er, who has been having an affair with the master, is so noble-minded that she does not take Songlian, the fourth aunt who has just entered the house, into consideration and dreams that she will become an aunt one day. These people are the sinking victims of the feudal system, they never want to change, and they are all trying to kill each other in order to get the "bright light", and they live for the master, which is extremely sad.

In conclusion, the Red Trilogy movies contain rich elements of cultural memory. Zhang Yimou presents a deep cultural heritage through his portrayal of traditional Chinese culture, historical traditions and folk culture, making the movie works not only entertainment and artistic expression, but also a profound reflection on Chinese cultural traditions and historical memories, which provides the audience with an understanding of and reflection on China's multi-layered culture.

### 3.3 Reinventing History

Zhang Yimou's red trilogy of films not only reflects the history and social culture of the Republic of China, but also reshapes "history."

The Red Trilogy is a "creative" representation of the history and culture of the Republic of China. The outstanding feature of the Red Trilogy is that it uses history as the stage, selects common social phenomena during the Republic of China, and even creates some cultural rituals, designs life scenes, carries the performances of characters, advances the storyline, and satisfies the audience's expectations of "past" society, history, and cultural consumption needs. From "Red Sorghum" to "Ju Dou" to "Raise the Red Lantern", Zhang Yimou, a photographer, has used color, composition, space and other elements to the extreme to "create" sedan chairs, sorghum wine brewing, and sacrifices. A series of rituals such as wine gods, coffins, and red lanterns "reproduce" the lifestyles of different classes of rural society during the Republic of China, as well as folk culture such as weddings and funerals, food, clothing, housing, education, entertainment, belief, and social interaction.

Zhang Yimou's film is a social issue, cultural phenomenon and academic topic. The Red Trilogy was created in the 1980s and 1990s. At that time, China had a strong cultural and artistic creation atmosphere under the background of reform and opening up and the guidance of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts. With the further introduction of Western thought and culture, China has entered an era of "collection and rapid dissemination of knowledge", and a large number of excellent literary and artistic works have appeared. Looking back at the history of Chinese film development, the 1980s and 1990s were an era when excellent directors emerged in large numbers and excellent films were produced frequently. Chinese films began to enjoy a high reputation in the world. Zhang Yimou's films are a banner of Chinese films and have milestone significance for the development of Chinese films. The achievements achieved by director Zhang Yimou and starring Gong Li of the Red Trilogy film have not been surpassed to this day. In the 1980s and 1990s, when the Red Trilogy was released, audiences across the country rushed to see these films, film researchers couldn't wait to discuss these films, and film practitioners rushed to study these films. Nowadays, China produces countless movies every year, but no one can surpass the achievements of Zhang Yimou's movies. Zhang Yimou continues to create new films and remains a benchmark figure in Chinese cinema. Each of his films will arouse strong public opinion, whether it is praise or criticism. It will also trigger a new round of discussion about his early Red Trilogy films, a discussion that often stems from comparisons of Zhang Yimou's films from different periods. Today, there are still a steady stream of audiences discussing and studying the Red Trilogy films with film researchers and film practitioners. Many of them have watched the Red Trilogy movies multiple times. They review history, reflect on culture, comprehend life, study film theory, and learn about film. Creation etc. Zhang Yimou's films have influenced generations of people. From the past to the present, the discussion of the Red Trilogy movies has never stopped. Zhang Yimou's movies have long become a social issue, cultural phenomenon and academic topic.

3) Zhang Yimou's red trilogy of films established the transformation relationship of "culture-commodity-culture". The Red Trilogy is adapted from excellent literary works. Zhang Yimou placed the story in the context of the Republic of China,

reproduced the wars and social changes during the Republic of China, explored the social structure, family structure and power relations during the Republic of China, and demonstrated the society at that time. Folk culture such as marriage etiquette and funeral customs reflect the restricted status of women in a patriarchal society. As a medium of cultural expression, the Red Trilogy film conveys emotions, thoughts and values to the audience through images and stories. Although the Red Trilogy was not created as a commercial film, with the development of commercialization, the film The industry has gradually become a product of commoditization, and movies have become commodities that are produced, sold and consumed in order to seek profits and market share. The Red Trilogy eventually became a commodity, and viewers had to pay a certain fee to watch it on various online platforms. Therefore, the process of the Red Trilogy from creation to release is the process of consuming history by film creators and audiences, and it is also the process of transforming history and culture into commodities. From the past to the present, the discussion of the Red Trilogy has never stopped. With the advancement of technology and the rapid development of the Internet, social media such as Douban, Rotten Tomatoes, Douyin, Little Red Book, Bilibili, and Weibo have become important places to share the content of Zhang Yimou's films and exchange views on Zhang Yimou's films. These places will be different People from different countries, different regions, and different eras are connected together. These people may come from different industries, have no intersection in their lives, and have never met. People share the scenes and compositions of Zhang Yimou's films through social media platforms, participate in topic discussions, and analyze cultural connotations, further promoting the consumerization of history. These social media constitute imaginary communities. In the community of "Zhang Yimou Movies", people express their opinions, discuss and argue around Zhang Yimou's movies. This community is an imagined cultural community, and Zhang Yimou's movies are the culture of this community. issues and cultural phenomena. Therefore, the "commodity" Zhang Yimou movies have been transformed into "cultural" Zhang Yimou movies. As a result, Zhang Yimou's films have completed the transformation process from culture to commodity to culture. These are topics that have not been discovered in previous studies of Zhang Yimou's films.

All history is contemporary history. As Hayden White argues: what we usually call objective historical facts, due to the impossibility of reproducing historical events, are in fact only the understanding and conjecture of posterity, or a subjective construction, even for the people involved, the eyewitnesses. Since history is considered uncertain and no one can figure out the truth of history, the dissolution of history and its reconstruction is only a way for people to try to understand history, and for the audience, the movie is one of the most convenient ways for them to understand history and their own culture.

As for movie creation, Zhang Yimou once said, "I have only one purpose: to make Chinese people understand what I shoot. I have two tricks: first, to penetrate into the subtle emotional world between people; second, to maintain my own personality, to achieve I have what no one has, and what no one has is special to me", "Chinese mainland movies have insisted on a consistent humanistic personality for many years, and the audience also has this desire, we should not underestimate the people!" ( Zhang Huijun, 2010,p.32 ). Zhang Yimou's aesthetics of film is "modern",

and this "modernity" is "a kind of awareness of the times that is closely related to the ancient past", which is specifically manifested in the fact that Zhang Yimou's film creations have a progressive vision and a cultural and artistic approach. This "modernity" is "an awareness of the times in relation to the past of antiquity", which specifically shows that Zhang Yimou's movie creations have a progressive vision and a cultural and national sentiment.

Zhang Yimou's film production began in the 1980s, a period of innovation in China, when the gradual relaxation of politics led to a period of exploration in Chinese literature and art. In the world of literature and art, stream-of-consciousness novels and hazy poems came to the fore, a large number of Western social science works were translated and introduced, and the theoretical world showed great enthusiasm for methodology, etc. All of these transformative trends influenced and spread to the fields of fine arts, theater, music, and film. The high enthusiasm for literature and art, and the frequency of artistic trends contributed to a vanguard movement characterized by imitating and following Western modernism, which quickly spread across the Chinese art world, and amidst the clamor and commotion, Chinese art underwent profound changes. The "fifth generation" of Chinese directors, including Zhang Yimou, grew up in such a cultural environment, and were profoundly affected and infected by the innovative and pioneering consciousness of this romantic era. They want to quickly get rid of the "Cultural Revolution thinking", showing strong self-consciousness, skepticism and rebellion against the established political and cultural traditions, which is manifested as a conscious and unstoppable creative consciousness in their artistic methods.

In the cultural atmosphere of the 1980s, Zhang Yimou's exploration of film form was anti-traditional and rebellious, reflecting his thinking about Chinese cinema after the Cultural Revolution. He did not attempt to solve the real social contradictions at that time with his films, but rather hoped to prove his own creativity and concern for society with such methods and peculiar image effects. Rather, he hoped to prove his creative ability and concern for society through such methods and peculiar image effects, and to express his thoughts on Chinese cinema, i.e., to express the richness of his inner world with his rebellious actions and innovative art forms. Zhang Yimou's film creations show a different understanding of traditional film concepts and modern cultural consciousness, in which he expresses traditional culture as well as selectively criticizes it, and actually shoulders the heavy responsibility of reflecting on history and cultural inheritance. Through the Red Trilogy movies, we begin to re-examine our tradition and culture. The Red Trilogy movies made by Zhang Yimou have left us with a lot of thoughts about history and the nation. In his films, he expressed with respect and artistic imagination, depicted with admiration, and reinterpreted some very precious cultural deposits of the past - mansions, houses, marriages, life, sedan chairs, brewing, dyeing cloth, lighting lamps, funerals, coffin blocking, sacrifices to the gods, Peking Opera, customs, and other kinds of states, and gave Chinese characteristics to the films. And the movie is endowed with Chinese characteristics and emotions.

Taking Red Sorghum, adapted from Mo Yan's novel, as an example, the whole movie is filled with a kind of worship of primitive vitality. Among them, Zhang Yimou colorfully expresses the custom of "upside down sedan chair", and the molestation of the young and beautiful bride Jiu'er by the rough and tall strong man is

permeated with a kind of sexual orgy type of catharsis, and then the hero and heroine's wild sex in the sorghum field is even more as if they are driven by some kind of divine will to the primitive life force. Although the story of "Red Sorghum" is set in the 1930s of the 20th century, these eighteen mile slopes are in the extremely backward poor countryside, but Zhang Yimou apparently accurately grasped the aesthetic principle of Mo Yan's original celebration of life and the eternal beauty contained in the countryside. Whether it's the sedan chair or drinking red sorghum wine and other behaviors, for the director is not a bad habit that needs to be criticized, but a kind of modern people in the hustle and bustle of the city can not be appreciated in the magnificent beauty, which is in sharp contrast to modern civilization to bring the frustration of human beings and depressing obviously.

The counter-example is "Ju Dou", based on Liu Heng's "Fuxi Fuxi", which itself has the meaning of "root literature", and there are many traditional folklore in the movie, such as Yang Jinshan's moon worship and his funeral in order to seek for a son, etc., but all of these serve to make the movie a cold and damp, even shameful and despairing atmosphere. The urgency of Yang Jinshan's quest for a son leads him to torture Judou after torturing his two wives to death, and his funeral does not mean the end of Judou's tragedy; on the contrary, it strengthens the ethical relationship between Tianqing and Judou from the patriarchal point of view, and the presentation of the tedious rituals will only make the viewer feel the difficulty of Judou's cries even more. The movie shows concern for the fate of women and their sexual psychology, and criticizes feudal ethics.

Zhang Yimou is well versed in the techniques and aesthetics of cinematography, and he has used both historical and local traditional ethnic elements in his creations, making most of his films have a strong "Chinese flavor", which makes Chinese audiences feel friendly and satisfies the curiosity of foreign audiences at the same time, "Chinese films began to recover in the 1980s and even some of them began to go to the world through various film festivals. In the 1980s, Chinese movies began to recover and revitalize, and even some of them began to go to the world through various film festivals. Those things that impressed foreign audiences were actually not the politics in the movies, but the Chinese culture shown in the movies. As these movies were defined by the West as China's new culture and new movies, what their movies showed greatly satisfied the West's curiosity about China and their imagination about China's culture. It is in the images of the movies that they understand the richness, vividness and complexity of Chinese history and culture" (Zhang Huijun, 2010, p. 19).

He has also artistically processed some folklore or cultural imagery, so that the traditional ethnic elements and the story themes or spatial background of the movie are integrated and work together to serve the narrative of the movie, giving the audience a certain amount of space to imagine the Chinese culture behind these traditional ethnic elements.

Zhang Yimou's films express a certain kind of positive criticism and reflection when showing traditional, old-fashioned and ancient things, which makes Zhang Yimou's films have distinctive features: adherence to tradition and seeking for innovation coexist, expression of history and interpretation of culture go hand in hand, the extreme form and the fine elements are in place, the cultural haziness and the power of thinking are intertwined, the symbols of tradition are reflected in the visual

presentation, and the juxtaposition of historical reenactment and folk culture is made. Zhang Yimou's movies are "allegory" of the problems we can think of in a variety of visual and auditory forms, leaving us with a lot of movie thinking and cultural heritage.

Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum Beans, and Big Red Lantern High Hanging all reflect a rewriting of history. The Republican period reflected in the three movies was a time of turbulent times and frequent wars. Red Sorghum tries to restore the historical event of China's anti-Japanese war, with scenes of Japanese invasion of China and the massacre of Chinese people by Japanese soldiers, but in the end this narrative thread serves to shape the characterization of the film's main characters and to highlight the film's theme of the Chinese people's vigorous vitality and unyielding national spirit. From the level of historical authenticity, Chinese people who understand historical knowledge know the history of the Anti-Japanese War, which is also real and is the common memory of the Chinese people, while the historical scenes of the Anti-Japanese War in the movie are constructed by the movie creative team, a large swath of wild sorghum is planted by the director Zhang Yimou using the movie shooting funds, and the killing and resistance in the sorghum field come from Zhang Yimou's skillful ideas and elaborate design. and carefully designed, in this sense, the film constructed the audience's collective memory of the war of resistance and sorghum, simplified the complex political life of the Republic of China, the real history of the Republic of China will be diluted into the background of the film, deprived of it in addition to the narrative value and some kind of material authenticity of anything other than the story of the plot and the characters do not match with the real history. The director is not trying to tell a true story, but to explore the vigorous vitality and unyielding national spirit that a group of ordinary Chinese people possess. The movie is more of a salute to life than a depiction of what actually happened. The movie is not real at all, but an ideal representation. It is a legendary story that portrays a group of ordinary Chinese people, presents the vigorous state of mind of the Chinese peasants, glorifies their national spirit that dares to live, dare to die, dare to love and dare to hate, and also reflects on the history, character, mentality, culture, and way of existence of the Chinese nation.

Folk culture runs through the whole movie "Red Sorghum", which itself shows the strong vitality of local customs in social life. This kind of folk culture may have been inherited for thousands of years, and is still circulating today, or may have disappeared today, and we can only get a glimpse of it through the records of ancient books or images of the past, and we can't even see a full picture of it. The film shows the nostalgia for the local folklore of Northwest China and the sadness of not being able to go back to the past, using historical nostalgia to render an atmosphere and criticize a certain kind of loss. The "Sedan Chair Song" that appears in the movie is a folk song that has been handed down to this day in northern Shaanxi Province, and at the end of the movie, when Jiu'er passes away, Douguan yells, "Niang, Niang, you're going up to the southwest," which is a local custom at funerals in south-central Shandong Province. Some rituals and customs are even created by the movie creators processing, not necessarily completely real, such as "red sorghum" in the "upside down sedan chair" custom, there are records in history, but in the end how to upside down, how to operate has been unavailable, although "upside down sedan chair" is a real existence, but the movie in the "upside down sedan chair" is a real existence, but

the movie in the "upside down sedan chair" is a real existence, but the movie is a real existence. is real, but the movie "upside down sedan chair" method of operation is created, "red sorghum" movie "sister you boldly go forward" "wine god song" two songs is the masterpiece of the movie creative team. The hammered feet and lantern ceremony in "The Red Lantern Hangs High" were created by the movie's creative team to better emphasize the theme.

The achievement and charm of Zhang Yimou's movie art lies in the fact that they can always trigger rich associations among the audience as well as many topics that can be disputed. In the 1980s and 1990s, the films Red Sorghum, Chrysanthemum, and Hanging the Red Lantern High all dealt with the topic of sex: wild sex in a sorghum field, aunts and nephews having fun in a dye house, and wherever the red lantern hangs in the compound of concubines and wives, that's where men and women have sex. At that time in China, in the early days of ideological liberation, such topics were sensitive and carried a certain element of taboo, which led to the three films quickly becoming the object of controversy, and it took a few years before "Chrysanthemum Beans" and "Big Red Lanterns Hanging High" could even be performed in China.

The controversy aroused by the topic of sex centers on the contradictory conflict between sex and morality. Especially, what these films show, again, are abnormal, anti-conventional, illegal and against morality sexual relations, or even can be said to be deformed sexual relations, which makes the moral worries of the sex topic even heavier and more complicated. And of course it makes the movie more attractive and exciting. At the same time, it makes the topic richer and more profound.

Red Sorghum demonstrates the romantic passion of sexuality; Judea demonstrates the conflicts of sexual atrophy, perversion, repression and longing; and Big Red Lantern High Hanging demonstrates the mystique of sexuality and the utilitarian disputes that arise from it. Zhang Yimou discusses an anti-conventional topic, but the way he expresses it is serious and traditional. The audience does not see any large-scale frontal nudity of the actors. The sex between Jiu'er and Yu Zhan'ao is replaced by the sorghum dancing wildly in the wind, the sex between Judou and Yang Tianqing is replaced by the red cloth sliding down the dyeing pool in a hurry, and the sex between Songlian and Chen Laoshi is replaced by the strict rules and regulations of the courtyard under the cover of the red lanterns.

The topic of sex, however, is only one level of the movie. The higher level of the movie's expression is the concern and display of women's destiny, as well as the unique introspection and profound criticism of Chinese history and culture. Jiu'er marries (sells to) an old leper, Judou marries (sells to) a sexually incapable and psychopathic old man, and Songlian, a young and free schoolgirl - a new woman - reverts back to the old order traditions and is forced to be a man's Fourth Aunt. Here is a collection of almost all the misfortunes of the Chinese woman: to be a tool for sex, a plaything for love, a medium of succession, and a servant for life. The theme of the three films is not to show the misfortune of Chinese women, but to use it as a starting point to create an "anti-traditional" image of women, which is not a new woman but combines the desire for sex, the awakening of human nature, and the resistance of women, who do not give in to the environment, destiny, traditions, and order. The three films not only show the plight of women in the conservative, traditional, and poor rural communities of the Republican era, and do not limit

themselves to depicting personal suffering and pain, but also criticize the dark side of society, the constraints of traditional morality and ethics, and the rigid class system that hindered progress.

The three movies reduce people to real, flesh-and-blood people who are simultaneously multi-faceted and complex human beings. The bald three guns in "Red High Beam" are vicious bandits in the front, robbing and killing people for money, and then they become anti-Japanese heroes in the back. The owner of the butcher store is still a lackey under the hooves of the Japanese, but at the same time he becomes a warrior who wields a sword to fight against the Japanese. Yang Tianqing in *Judou*, although he enters *Judou*'s life in a cowardly way at the beginning, when he realizes that Yang Jinshan wants to hurt his son Yang Tianbai, he jumps on him without any hesitation. However, after Yang Jinshan's death, Tianqing becomes weak and shriveled up, and can only reminisce with *Judou* about their love in the dimly lit cellar.

Songlian in "The Red Lantern Hangs High" walks towards the Chen family's residence in the exact opposite direction of the procession welcoming the bride. This reversal of the scene clearly suggests the protagonist's rejection of the traditional marriage ceremony. When Songlian enters the Chen family's house, the butler takes her to pay her respects to her ancestors, and only the butler kneels alone, without seeing (or showing) Songlian kneeling, all of these actions clearly show that Songlian is destined to be a rebel against the original order of things. However, as Songlian officially becomes the "Fourth Mistress" of the Chen family under the light of a red lantern, her rebellion turns to the opposite side, as she turns from a rebel of the feudal marriage system in action (not in words) to a guardian of the system. She pretends to be pregnant and fights for favor until she asks the butler to bring food to the house (a "rule" that never existed in the Chen residence). Although this is only to make herself more powerful at the center of the Chen family, she has actually become a more powerful defender of the existing order. In particular, in the conflict between Songlian and Yan'er (the maid), she sees the lantern hanging in Yan'er's house and threatens Yan'er: "If you dare to light the lantern secretly, do you still want to live?" Later, when Yan'er denounces her false pregnancy to the Second Mistress, she is outraged to expose Yan'er's secret lighting of the lanterns and demands that the family law be applied to Yan'er, which ultimately leads to Yan'er's death with hatred. Songlian acts as a stubborn defender of individual rights and the existing system. Until she indirectly causes and witnesses the death of the Third Mistress, Songlian, who has an unsettled conscience, cries out, "Murder! You kill!" At this point, Song-ryun becomes an accuser and a victim of the feudal order. The complexity and versatility of Songlian reflects the assimilation mechanism of the feudal cultural system on human beings and emphasizes the essence of the integration and closure of the cultural order. As far as Songlian is concerned, no matter how strong her original desire for rebellion is, as soon as she enters the center of this feudal family, her survival is predicated on self-preservation according to its inherent law of competition. Therefore, she is at the same time the receiver of this culture and at the same time its victim.

The meaning structure of the Red Trilogy films presents two levels of meaning, i.e., the obvious and the potential, and as the narrative progresses, the two levels of meaning are quietly interchanged, with the original obvious and tantalizing things becoming more and more obscure and the original potential things becoming more

and more obvious. The surface story of all three films is tantalizing, but the real meaning of their films does not remain on the external level of the story, nor is it directly presented to the audience in the images. Taking "The Red Lantern Hangs High" as an example, from the point of view of the story subject matter involved in the movie, the sexual content is the main driving force of the movie, but Zhang Yimou's filming does not focus on the sex scenes between Chen Zuoqian and the four women, but rather, it expresses deeper cultural connotations with the help of the background of such a story about sex. The entire movie does not directly express the sex scene, that is, Chen Zuoqian entered the "newly married" fourth wife Songlian's boudoir, but also still sits far away from Songlian at the table, calmly asked: "How is it? How's the foot hammering? Once your feet are comfortable, everything will be fine-tuned." The sexual "content" is deleted from the visual text. The second time he went to Songlian's room, he first asked, "How is it? Lighting the lamp and hammering the feet, now you realize the meaning of it, don't you?" Zhang Yimou still does not focus the narrative on the characters' lust, but on the cultural rituals (systems) that support this unequal and abnormal erotic relationship: lighting the lamps, hanging the lamps, washing the feet, and hammering the feet. The performance of the process of the cultural rituals surrounding lust is far more important in the film than the direct results of such rituals, and the film does not play up how the men make use of the irrational feudal marital system to satisfy their individual sexual desires, but rather emphasizes the importance of this ritual. personal sexual desires, but rather emphasizes the determining role that such a system plays in maintaining unequal gender relations. Chen Zuoqian himself is, in fact, both the practitioner and the inheritor of this system in the story.

In terms of artistic creation, the Red Trilogy films are anti-traditional, but in terms of content, they are traditional, and traditional culture is an indispensable element of Zhang Yimou's films. Zhang Yimou himself was born and grew up in Shaanxi Province in the northwest of China, so in his film narratives, the folk culture of northern China has always been an indispensable theme and visual expression, and even an important part of the visual characteristics of his films. A lot of tangible material folklore appears in the three movies - door notes on the lintel, door god paintings, window paintings, door year paintings, hangings, and furnishings. Red Sorghum shows the rituals and procedures of a wedding: the bride's marriage, the opening of the face, the putting on of the head, the covering of the red head, the admonition before going to the sedan chair, the blowing and beating of the wedding ceremony, the upheaval of the sedan chair that catches the bride on her way to pick up the newlyweds, and the bride's return to the door three days after the wedding. There are also rituals for worshipping the god of wine after new wine is made, and the "soul-inducing song" for the death of a loved one ("Niang, Niang, on the Southwest ....." sung by the douguan), etc. The Judeo shows a woman's pregnancy, and a woman's death. The Judeo shows fertility folklore, such as pregnancy, childbirth and menstruation, the naming of a newborn child, the third birthday feast, and the full set of funeral rituals: the wrestling of the basin, the holding of the spiritual tablet, the burial, and the blocking of the coffin.

The Red Trilogy can be said to be Zhang Yimou's personal expression of the history and social culture of the Republic of China," he himself has said on several occasions that the film should emphasize and express the "image" and "strength" of

the things, to express the personal will. He also said on many occasions that the movie should emphasize and express "images" and "strength" and express his personal will. On many occasions, he said that in his films, he wanted to express the state of 'people living with energy, people living with a breath', and that he wanted to show a kind of power" (Zhang Huijun, 2010, p. 43). Zhang Yimou's film creation is actually a process of personal feelings and experiences of culture, he always tries to express traditional Chinese culture in the visual form of film, to make a sorting out of the vernacular culture and national customs, to condense the reflections and realizations carried out on the history, and to use the art form of film to give more to the visual content of the form of thinking of things that are not easy to be expressed in the form of thinking.

The Red Trilogy "transforms the folklore stories of marriage and family of the Chinese villagers, who are far away from the modern civilization, into a kind of folklore legend with all kinds of complex desires through romantic transformation, creating an international film genre - the new folklore film" (Yin Hong, 1998, p.113). 1998, p. 113). The three films contain artistic depictions of traditional folklore forms, formal exaggerations, and unverifiable details of folklore content that serve to express the theme and serve the narrative. *Red Sorghum* in the "upside down sedan chair", "sacrifice to the god of wine" and other episodes are all customs that no longer exist, the specific sedan chair how to turn upside down, how to make sorghum wine, nowadays people have never seen. We can't prove the specific process of the local sedan chair and the specific details of the custom of sacrificing to the God of Wine. However, Zhang Yimou will be "created" out of the lively, boisterous, greatly enhancing the film's artistic and ornamental. In *Judea*, Yang Jinshan lights red lanterns and kneels down to the moon to beg for a son, emphasizing and rendering his eagerness to seek a son. In fact, the Mid-Autumn Festival moon worship is a traditional folk custom, the ancient custom that the moon is the essence of Taiyin, is the protection of women, and therefore in the Mid-Autumn Festival worship, begging the moon god to bless the husband and wife to be harmonious, and later, there is a worship of the moon to seek a son, worshipers for women, folk traditionally have "men do not worship the moon, women do not sacrifice the stove," the argument that the Mid-Autumn Festival lighting custom in the Song Dynasty has been prevalent, initially, the red lanterns on the moon to seek a child, and then, in the Mid-Autumn Festival, he knelt down to pray for a son. The custom of burning lanterns on Mid-Autumn Day was already prevalent in the Song Dynasty, initially for the pleasure of the river god, and later on, the people were happy to drink under the lanterns, and the burning of lanterns had no intention of seeking children. In *"The Red Lantern Hangs High"*, the foot-pounding, lamp-lighting, lamp extinguishing, lamp sealing, etc. are in fact rituals created by Zhang Yimou, and the closed Chen Family Residence is an allegory of the hierarchical system of the feudal society, the rigidity of the way of life, and the implausibility of the feudal society.

The process of watching a movie is actually a process of decoding existing information. "The specific situation in which the audience watches a movie makes the audience become a kind of voyeur who peeps into other people's secrets in the darkness, and the desire to peep becomes an important constituent of the movie viewing mechanism" (China Film Press, China Film Art Editorial Office, 1994, p. 31). In Zhang Yimou's films *Red Sorghum*, *Chrysanthemum*, and *Red Lanterns*

Hanging High, there are different forms of voyeuristic situations, i.e., all of them appear to be separated and hidden in reality, especially in the narrative sequence of *Chrysanthemum*, where Yang Tianqing plays the role of a voyeur-voyeur-possessor. -possessor. He repeatedly peeps into Judea's naked bath through holes in the walls and doors. When the camera induces the viewer to aim directly at the holes in the wall panel, the voyeur becomes the object of the viewer's projection of his or her own desires. In the movie, Judea's way of accepting Tianqing is, again, to first remove the firewood covering the hole in the wall and voluntarily bear the gaze of the lust-filled voyeur. This mechanism of operation of the language of the movie naturally constitutes an effective control over the audience.

Sex, especially sexual relations between men and women outside of marriage is the basic narrative theme of the three films, but in the field of mass communication, the expression of this theme to be recognized by the audience, the premise of which is to be consistent with the public common moral code. In the depths of red sorghum, the female protagonist lies on her back and the male protagonist kneels in front of her, staging what is undoubtedly a "bedtime drama" of male and female love in the sorghum field. In "Judea", Yang Tianqing and Judea reproduce the same "visual spectacle" under the illumination of the slipping red cloth and the blazing fire of jealousy. However, the representations of sex in both films stem from a common premise, which is aimed at the irrational, deformed, and pathological marital relationship. Jiu'er and Judou, in the legal marriage relationship, are faced with a husband who is either a leper or a pervert, and a man who has taken possession of her through the most irrational and immoral way in the life of both sexes, that is, through the purchase and sale of money. In this particular narrative context, sex in the red sorghum field and in the dye house acquires a particular rationality. Because a so-called "immoral" gender relationship is given a context that is compatible with higher morality, its viewers are given psychosocial comfort in the process of watching it.

The audience's purpose of watching a movie is very simple, they just want to see a relatively complete story and plot with some characters and results in the movie. They do not just want to be stimulated by the eyeballs, but also need more psychological satisfaction and emotional comfort. Chinese people have a special complex for movies. They hope that movies can load history, culture, politics and so on, so that they can understand history, realize life and pursue the meaning of life.

The Red Trilogy films reinterpret and reshape history, presenting historical events, social changes and cultural practices from a unique perspective through the films' narrative, artistic expression and characterization. The three films are not only a simple reproduction of the history of the Republic of China, but also a unique interpretation and re-examination of the Republic of China's society and culture. This kind of expression is both literary and artistic, and can trigger the audience's deep thinking about history and social culture.

In short, in the Red Trilogy, Zhang Yimou reflected the history and social culture of the Republic of China through a series of image symbols and the cultural connotations behind these symbols, while also reshaping the social culture of the Republic of China to a certain extent. Zhang Yimou's films have become a social issue, cultural phenomenon, and academic topic, reflecting the transformation relationship of "culture-commodity-culture" and, to a certain extent, reshaping the "history" of Zhang Yimou's films and even Chinese films.

## Conclusion

This chapter uses the concept of "consumer history" to explore the reflection of three Zhang Yimou films ("Red Sorghum," "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern") on Chinese social culture in the context of the Republic of China. Historical and social culture such as wedding and funeral customs, sedan chair ceremonies, clothing, women's social status, social class mobility, beliefs, education, and social interaction during the Republic of China were consumed. Zhang Yimou made a personal expression of the history and culture of the Republic of China. Through the depiction of Chinese traditional culture, historical traditions and folk culture, the film is not only an expression of entertainment and art, but also a reflection of Chinese cultural traditions and historical memory. The profound reflection provides the audience with a multi-level understanding and thinking about Chinese history and culture.



## Chapter VII

### Summary, Discussion, and Suggestion

#### Research summary

This study is basic research, using qualitative research methods. The research population includes the audience group, creative group, research group, and other groups of Zhang Yimou's movies. The research texts are three Zhang Yimou films ("Red Sorghum", "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern", also known as the "Red Trilogy"). These three films reflect the history and culture of Chinese society during the Republic of China in the form of art, and the audience watching these three films consumes history in the form of art. Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy film has academic issues that reflect the social history and culture of the Republic of China. Therefore, this study takes "Consuming History" as the main concept, analyzes the research data of image data and related literature, and presents the research results through descriptive analysis combined with pictures. The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

#### 1.1 To study Chinese Society and Culture during the Republic of China (1912-1949)

"Chinese Social Culture during the Republic of China" explores the overall characteristics of the social culture of the Republic of China, discusses the history, social culture, and local folk culture of the Republic of China related to three Zhang Yimou films ("Red Sorghum", "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern"), and discusses the social status of women during the Republic of China. The Republic of China from 1912 to 1949 was a special period in Chinese history where the history of the feudal dynasty and the history of the People's Republic of China converged. During this period, socio-cultural structures fluctuated due to uncertain situations. Political instability and Western countries began to invade China. Lack of certainty in life often occurred due to the Civil War, the Sino-Japanese War, and World War II. Therefore, this is an era of interaction between Western thought and Chinese culture. Western modernity was further introduced into China, which had a great impact on China's traditional culture and thought, and affected competition between them. Social and cultural changes have changed China's social structure, promoted mobility between and within social classes, and affected Chinese people's family and clan concepts, food, clothing, housing, transportation, weddings and funerals, education, entertainment, beliefs, and social interactions. However, The scope of this influence and change is limited. In rural areas, which are vast and account for the vast majority of the population, traditional culture, ancient customs, folk traditions, rituals, beliefs, etc. affect all aspects of people's lives. During the Republic of China, women had opportunities to receive education and work, but the status of the vast majority of women did not improve and they were still under pressure from tradition, society, family, etc. These have become important inspirations for Zhang Yimou's film creation, using historical scenes to show future generations the ability to experience and consume history through the enjoyment of film art.

### 1.2 To Analyze the Film “Red Sorghum”

This chapter uses the concept of “consuming history” to specifically analyze the movie “Red Sorghum”. This film tells a legendary story of rural love in the Republic of China, including sorghum fields, sorghum, family life, class mobility, marriage customs, winemaking and handicrafts, worship of the god of wine, folk songs and music, widow remarriage, clothing, food, housing, and transportation in rural society, entertainment, belief, social interaction, and the history and social culture of the Republic of China such as the Anti-Japanese War are consumed.

Sorghum fields and sorghum are important scenes in the film. Sorghum fields are where love happens and where resistance to Japanese aggression takes place. The red wedding dress worn by the bride, the red sedan chair she sits in, the grooming process such as combing her hair, opening her face, and wearing jewelry, as well as wedding etiquette such as bumping the sedan chair, returning to the door, and the music and songs to welcome the bride are important plots of the film and promote the story. develop. The culture of wine making and the custom of worshipping the god of wine are daily life in the rural communities in the film.

The film “consumed” the history and social culture of the Republic of China and constructed a series of classic scenes, making this Zhang Yimou film rich in connotation, rich in cultural flavor, and enduring.

As the first film in the Red Trilogy, “Red Sorghum” is both a product of the times and a reflection of the past era. It is both iconoclastic and traditional. The “Red Sorghum” film is anti-traditional in terms of creative methods, forms of expression, and theme content. It is also a “wild path” creation that does not follow rules and regulations. This is in line with the concepts of Chinese film creation and literary creation in the mid-to-late 1980s. It is related to the transformation of the novel, and also benefits from the excellence of the original novels “Red Sorghum” and “Sorghum Wine”.

The film expresses a tribute to life and touches on topics such as sex and human desires that were still taboo in that era. The narrative method is “magical”, the characters are complex and diverse, the use of “red” is at its peak, and the scene design is original. This is a film with Zhang Yimou's style and label.

On the basis of traditional Chinese culture and the history and culture of the Republic of China, Zhang Yimou reproduced or “created” the bad customs of buying and selling marriages, wedding etiquette such as the bride's getting married, combing her hair, opening her face, bumping the sedan chair, and returning to the door, folk song and folk music culture, winemaking culture, and wine sacrificial wine. God customs, etc., as well as folk culture with strong regional colors such as suona, sedan chair, adobe house, paper-cutting, New Year pictures, door gods, wine baskets, etc. “Red Sorghum” is the beginning of Zhang Yimou's “red” series of films. Its creation laid a good foundation for the other two “red” films (“Ju Dou” and “Raise the Red Lantern”) and provided a successful model.

### 1.3 To Analyze the Film “Ju Dou”

This chapter uses the concept of “consuming history” to specifically analyze the movie “Ju Dou”. This film tells the story of “incest” that happened in a middle-class rural family who made a living by dyeing cloth. The history and culture of the Republic of China, such as commercial marriages, men's remarriage, traditions of

dyeing and handicrafts, ancestor worship, feudal ethics, feudal etiquette, family patriarchal systems, funeral customs, widows' observances, and wars, were consumed. The dyeing workshop is the place where the story takes place, and it is also a symbol of the feudal ethical order. The dyeing cloth, dyeing ponds, ancestral halls, cellars, etc. related to the dyeing workshop are important settings in the film. Fertility customs such as birth, naming, and birthday celebrations, as well as customs such as worshiping ancestors, weeping spirits, blocking coffins, and not allowing widows to remarry, not only convey profound cultural connotations, but also strengthen the film's focus on the impact of the feudal ethical order on people, especially women, the theme of bondage.

"Ju Dou" tells the story of a love tragedy that occurred in a dyeing family during the Republic of China. It reveals the huge conflict between the pursuit of human nature and the inhuman society and culture. It is not only an indictment of the feudal ethical order, but also a reflection on traditional culture. The closed community presented in "Ju Dou" can almost be regarded as a specimen of China's rural society during the Republic of China. No matter how the outside world changes, in this community, rural conventions, family inheritance, and ancient customs have strong stability. These are the basis of life. The rules of thought and behavior of people in the community.

Like "Red Sorghum", Zhang Yimou inherited and modified the content of the original novel suitable for film shooting, continued to use a large number of "red" elements and folk culture, and designed dyeing workshops, dyeing ponds, dyeing cloth, ancestral halls, cellars, etc. to impress the audience. While visually stunning, these scenes are also used to convey profound cultural connotations.

"Ju Dou" explores the constraints imposed by the feudal ethical order on people, especially the strict norms and restrictions on women. Women are required to play a role in the family, the most important of which is childbearing. After the death of her husband, the wife was required not to remarry, and was not allowed to have "incest" with her nephew. Etiquette and status bind everyone in rural society. The community is essentially a patriarchal society, governed by elders. Behind this story of "incest" and "patricide" are complex ideological roots, historical traditions, family inheritance, humanities, social environment and other factors.

"Ju Dou" is the second film in the Red Trilogy. Its topics about feudal ethics and artistic expression provide a broad idea and good reference for "Raise the Red Lantern".

#### **1.4 To analyze the film "Raise the Red Lantern"**

This chapter uses the concept of "consumption history" to specifically analyze the movie "Raise the Red Lantern". During the Republic of China, social culture such as the polygamous marriage system, red lanterns, Peking opera, large mansions, the patriarchal system, and the feudal ethical order were consumed.

"Raise the Red Lantern" tells the story of a traditional polygamous feudal family during the Republic of China, revealing the constraints of feudal ethics on people, the low social status of women, and their survival dilemma in a patriarchal society.

The red lantern is an important set piece in the film, and it is also a symbol of the power of the Chen family compound. The layout of the Chen family's mansion, the courtyards of several wives and concubines, the ancestral hall, and the dead room

show the majesty of the patriarchal society and the order of feudal ethics. Zhang Yimou created a series of rituals such as listening to calls, announcing lanterns, lighting lanterns, hammering feet, ordering dishes, keeping the lanterns on, and closing the lanterns, etc., to strengthen the film's theme of "the tragedy of women under the feudal system."

"Raise the Red Lantern" is the last film in Zhang Yimou's red trilogy. The film tells the story of a polygamous traditional feudal family during the Republic of China, where several aunts and wives were jealous and plotted against each other, triggering a series of tragedies.

Zhang Yimou made a "creative" adaptation of the original novel, maximizing the cultural connotation and artistic expression of red lanterns and their rituals. The red lantern is a symbol and symbol of the power of the Chen family compound. Lighting the lantern, hammering the feet, and ordering food are not only indicators of sexual intercourse, but also represent the voice of the women of the Chen family in the high-walled compound. The women in the Chen Family Courtyard are required to play the role of "men's vassals" and must absolutely obey the male master of the Chen Family and the rules of the Chen family. The majesty of male power and patriarchal order are above all else in the Chen Family Courtyard.

"Raise the Red Lantern" pursues the ultimate form of artistic expression in the use of color, composition, music, and space, continuing Zhang Yimou's consistent aesthetic style, giving the film a unique visual identity, and also conveying the appreciation of traditional Chinese culture. Understand and think.

The specific analysis of "Raise the Red Lantern", "Red Sorghum" and "Ju Dou" paved the way for an overall analysis of the "Red Trilogy"'s reflection on the social culture of the Republic of China.

1.5 To analyze the reflection of Chinese sociocultural in the context of Republic of China in Zhang Yimou's "Red Trilogy" films(Using the concept of "Consuming History" )

This chapter uses the concept of "consumer history" to explore the reflection of three Zhang Yimou films ("Red Sorghum," "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern") on Chinese social culture in the context of the Republic of China. Historical and social culture such as wedding and funeral customs, sedan chair ceremonies, clothing, women's social status, social class mobility, beliefs, education, and social interaction during the Republic of China were consumed.

The Red Trilogy ("Red Sorghum", "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern") interprets the deep meaning of consumption history from the perspectives of using history, reflecting history and reshaping history. The three films focused on real human nature, created rebellious and alternative female images, explored taboo topics about sex, changed the film creation and aesthetics of the previous period, and reflected anti-"traditional" characteristics. The film has the connotation of traditional Chinese culture in terms of color and composition, and uses elements such as clothing and space to express the feudal hierarchical order.

Zhang Yimou made a personal expression of the history and culture of the Republic of China. Through the depiction of Chinese traditional culture, historical traditions and folk culture, the film is not only an expression of entertainment and art, but also a reflection of Chinese cultural traditions and historical memory. The

profound reflection provides the audience with a multi-level understanding and thinking about Chinese history and culture.

### **Research Discussion**

The research title is "Zhang Yimou films: The Reflections on Chinese society and culture in the context of Republic of China (1912-1949)". The research text is Zhang Yimou's red trilogy of films ("Red Sorghum", "Ju Dou" and "Raise the Red Lantern"). Academic issues: Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy movie is a movie that uses historical background to support the content of the movie. The process of film creation is Zhang Yimou's process of using (consuming) history to create art. While watching a movie, the audience is also consuming history. Therefore, the concept of this study is "consuming history", which comes from the book "Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture" by British scholar Jerome de Groot.

Jerome de Groot examines the rise and popularity of history as a cultural consumer product. He noted that people in contemporary society increasingly tend to consume history through various forms of media and entertainment, rather than simply being exposed to history in academic research or educational settings. The reappearance of history in popular cultural works such as movies, TV series, documentaries, and reality shows has become one of the important ways for people to understand the past.

Jerome de Groot believes that historical movies, historical TV series, historical documentaries, and historical reality shows on TV play an important role in contemporary popular culture and are one of the main ways for the public to understand history. These art forms differ in their pursuit of historical truth and objectivity, as well as in-depth excavation and analysis of historical events and characters, but they are unable to reconstruct the real past, and there is the problem of being neither completely fictional nor completely real. To varying degrees, they all suffer from problems such as the sacrifice of historical authenticity, the exaggeration or exaggeration of storylines, and the misunderstanding or simplification of historical figures and events. But history has both educational and recreational functions, something to be consumed in "precious leisure time," and to some extent an interest in "how the past helped make us who we are" is a spare time activity.

Combined with my research topic "Zhang Yimou films: The Reflections on Chinese society and culture in the context of Republic of China (1912-1949)", my understanding of "consumption history" is as follows:

"History" no longer refers to real experienced events, processes, cultures or ideas, but an element or symbol that represents the former, such as cultural customs, ritual traditions, clothing styles, architectural styles, language norms, etc., and In the pseudo-historical scene created by the organic combination of these elements, "history" is equated with "the past".

"History" has become a commodity and a kind of cultural capital. The virtual reality created by the movie has replaced the real reality, and the subjective reality has replaced the objective reality. This constructed "history" has lost its objective perspective and the pursuit of authenticity, and has become a stylized aesthetic trend. A thing that can be bought and sold, a commodity that caters to the "nostalgic" psychology of the contemporary public. The use of history enhances the cultural quality and artistic value of the film. By showing the rich connotations of historical

culture, the complexity of characters, and the importance of historical events in movies, you can win the recognition and praise of the audience and enhance your own cultural capital.

"Consuming" is connected with production, while highlighting its original meaning of "use" at the literal level. Specifically, consumption activities in this article refer to the use and re-creation of historical facts or culture, the reconstruction of historical materials, and the inheritance and expression of historical spirit.

The meaning of "consuming history" is determined by the position of history in the cultural context of the nation. What "consuming history" consumes is a kind of cultural identity, national emotion and collective memory. Even those behaviors that make fun of history and ridicule certain stereotypes show a different kind of historical value judgment under the regulation of the true principle of art. Even for audiences with different cultural backgrounds, what they want to consume is cultural values that are different from their own nation or group.

Jerome de Groot's concept of Consuming History helped researcher study the phenomenon of "Zhang Yimou's films reflect the social culture of the Republic of China", and saw new academic discoveries in the research text and academic issues in related concepts as follows:

#### 2.1 The art of reflecting on social and cultural issues during the Republic of China

"Red Sorghum", "Ju Dou" and "Raising the Red Lantern" (also known as the "Red Trilogy") are three films by Zhang Yimou that reflect social and cultural issues during the Republic of China. All three films are set in the Republic of China period. It reflects the history and social culture of the Republic of China through depicting various aspects. Concerning the politics, economy, culture, and social life of Chinese society during the Republic of China period.

All three films deal with some important historical events such as the Anti-Japanese War and the Civil War. and explores social issues of the Republic of China, such as the limits of feudal ethics, complicated family relationships and the low status of women. By repeating these historical events and social issues. It shows the historical background of society at that time, people's living conditions social style and cultural traditions.

"Red Sorghum" tells a legendary love story that took place during the Anti-Japanese War, showing the folk customs, traditional concepts, and social turmoil of northern rural society during the Republic of China.

"Ju Dou" focuses on a family that makes a living by dyeing cloth. Through the tragic life of the heroine Ju Dou, it shows the constraints of feudal ethics on people, especially women, during the Republic of China, and the struggle and pursuit of human nature in a complex social environment. and family power relations in rural society.

"Raise the Red Lantern" tells the story around a polygamous feudal family, revealing the distortion and alienation of human nature by feudal ethics, which has led to a series of tragedies.

The Red trilogy shows the rural social structure, social life, family life, class mobility, family power relations, weddings, funerals, food, clothing, housing, education, entertainment, faith, social interaction, folk handicrafts, reproductive traditions, and women's social status in the Republic of China.

The protagonists of the three films are all women, played by Gong Li. They live in rural areas, and the rural social class consists of upper, middle and lower groups. By marrying a rich man, they achieved a class leap from the lower class in the countryside (from a middle-income family) to the middle and upper class in the countryside.

In rural society during the Republic of China, women were usually given the role of childbearing and expected to play a role in the family. The three women played by Gong Li are all "rebellious" female images. Despite this, in the patriarchal society, their struggles suffered tremendous pressure, and the feudal ethical order was the source of the pressure.

"Red Sorghum" shows the form of commercial marriage through Jiuer's marriage, as well as a series of wedding customs such as combing the bride's hair, opening her face, sitting in a sedan, playing drums to welcome the bride, bumping the sedan, and returning home during the wedding process; through Jiuer's family life It displays the lifestyles of different classes in the countryside and farmers' clothing, food, housing, transportation, entertainment, beliefs, social interactions, as well as customs such as winemaking and handicrafts, worshipping the god of wine, folk songs, and widow remarriage.

Through Ju Dou's marriage, "Ju Dou" shows the wedding and funeral customs such as men marrying new wives after their wives die, commercial marriages, crying at funerals and holding coffins; it also shows the rural social structure through Ju Dou's family life. , as well as folk traditions such as dyeing handicrafts, birth customs, newborn naming, third birthday celebrations, family elders' rule, and widows' festivals. The film depicts the restraint and oppression of women by the feudal ethical order, and shows the reality of women's low status and bullying. The heroine Ju Dou experienced a series of ups and downs under the constraints of feudal ethics, reflecting the traditional feudal society. The tragic and helpless fate of women.

"Raise the Red Lantern" uses Songlian's marriage to show polygamy, red lanterns, cheongsams, food, big houses, women's education, playing mahjong, singing Peking opera, ancestor worship, Buddhist beliefs, and interpersonal interactions, revealing the feudal system The power struggle within traditional families, the constraints imposed by feudal ethics on people, and the survival dilemma of women in a patriarchal society.

## **2.2 Historical films affect the consumption of virtual reality images**

Film is an art form related to history. Reflecting history in the form of art Movies reflect history by narrating historical events. Creating a character or plot This reflection is not merely a repetition of historical events. But it also presents history to viewers in the form of movies. Makes the audience understand history more intuitively Viewers can feel the social patterns and cultural atmosphere of the time through the details in the film.

The Red Trilogy is a presentation "Creativity" of the history and culture of the Republic of China A distinctive feature of the Red Trilogy is that it uses history as a stage. Select common social phenomena among the Republic of China. and even create cultural rituals Design life scenes, show characters, advance the story. and satisfy needs Audience expectations regarding society's consumption needs History and culture "in the past".

No historical story can be equated with authentic history in terms of time and space. The use of "history" in Zhang Yimou's films has become a common phenomenon, although the "constructive" nature of the film and Zhang Yimou's pursuit and grasp of film quality determine that the Red Trilogy always uses "creative" treatment of history. but the history presented in Zhang Yimou's films still has a huge influence, and it subtly affects the way people look at the past.

Film theory researchers and historians have always criticized the superficiality of Zhang Yimou's films, believing that they always simplify and distort historical knowledge, which is pseudo-folk culture, showing the ugly side of the Chinese people to foreigners, and making it impossible to Presenting the reality and complexity of history. In the opinion of the researcher of this article, the "truth" of Zhang Yimou's films is a kind of artistic truth. Those who are interested in the authenticity of historical truth focus on issues of error and interpretation. The real history should be left to professionals. The audience does not care about the historical complexity shown in the movie or the way history is explained. What they want most is a powerful emotional "experience", so the history in the movie does not have to maintain the top professional level and absoluteness like popular history. of seriousness. Audiences usually find a balance between fiction and authenticity when appreciating movies, understanding that movies are an art form rather than a mere presentation of facts.

From "Red Sorghum" to "Ju Dou" to "Raise the Red Lantern", Zhang Yimou, a photographer, has used color, composition, space and other elements to the extreme to "create" sedan chairs, sorghum wine brewing, and sacrifices. A series of rituals such as wine gods, coffins, and red lanterns "reproduce" the lifestyles of different classes of rural society during the Republic of China, as well as folk culture such as weddings and funerals, food, clothing, housing, education, entertainment, belief, and social interaction.

"Red Sorghum" tells the audience that this is a story that took place during the Japanese invasion of China during the Republic of China through the display of scenes of people's resistance against Japan. "Ju Dou" tells us that the story takes place during the Republic of China through the subtitles of "1920s" and the mention of "war and chaos outside" mentioned by Yang Jinshan and Yang Tianqing in the film. "Raise the Red Lantern" can be inferred that the background of the story is the Republic of China through the identity of the heroine Songlian, a female college student, polygamy, and the characters' costumes.

The Red Trilogy reproduces the historical situations and life scenes of the Republic of China through the film's sets, costumes, props and other elements. The audience can feel the cultural features, lifestyle and social customs of the society at that time from the movie, and more intuitively understand the social life and cultural atmosphere of the Republic of China.

The clothes of Jiu'er in "Red Sorghum" are consistent with her identity as the proprietress of a sorghum winery. The clothes of the workers in the sorghum winery show that they are farmers and are in the lower class of rural society. The black clothes of Yang Jinshan and the elder of the Yang family in "Ju Dou" indicate that they are the protectors of the feudal ethical order. The costumes of Mr. Chen and his four wives in "Raise the Red Lantern" indicate that they are the masters of the Chen

family, and the costumes of the housekeeper, Yan'er, and Aunt Cao indicate that they are servants of the Chen family.

The Red Trilogy reflects the values and spiritual pursuits in social culture during the Republic of China through cultural symbols related to red, such as red sorghum, red cloth, and red lanterns. By depicting the complex relationships and power struggles within families, these three films reflect the influence of feudal ethics and family concepts in society during the Republic of China.

The Red Trilogy movies involve many social issues during the Republic of China, such as feudal ethics, family relationships, women's status, etc. The three films reflect the low status of women in the family and society during the Republic of China by depicting the tragic fate of women.

The Red Trilogy movies create a series of different types of characters. Through the fate and experiences of these characters, they show the living conditions and emotional experiences of people of different classes, genders, and regions in society during the Republic of China.

### **2.3 Films not only consume history but also "reshape" history**

The Red Trilogy takes the history and social culture of the Republic of China as the background, and presents the charm of history and culture through carefully constructed plots and characters, as well as high-level audio-visual styling, thereby attracting audiences to watch and enjoy the cultural entertainment brought by the film, or Reflect on history and social culture.

The history of film consumption is valuable in many ways.

In terms of educational significance, presenting historical events and social culture through movies can allow the audience to understand historical and social cultural knowledge while being entertained, and stimulate interest and love for history and social culture. This has important educational significance for the audience to learn history and understand historical culture.

In terms of cultural inheritance, Zhang Yimou's red trilogy film, as a cultural product, can present history and social culture to the audience in a vivid way, helping to inherit and promote national culture, and promote the national spirit and national integrity.

In terms of inspiring thinking, Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy movies involve major historical events and cultural issues. Watching the movies can trigger the audience's thinking about historical events and traditional culture, and help people think about the inspiration and influence of history and social culture on today's society.

In terms of emotional resonance, the Red Trilogy movie can touch the audience's emotions by showing historical events and the emotions and fate of the characters in the story, enhance the audience's historical experience and resonance, and enable the audience to have a deeper understanding of history and social culture.

There is a clear difference between watching movies and reading history. Both watching movies and reading history can help people understand history, but there are obvious differences in their presentation, objectivity, depth and breadth, and emotional expression.

In terms of form of expression, film is an audio-visual medium that presents storylines and characters through various methods such as pictures, music and

dialogue, while reading history is to obtain historical information through text, which needs to be constructed through reading and understanding text. Images of historical events and figures.

In terms of objectivity, movies are often created based on the subjective wishes of directors and screenwriters, and historical events and social culture may be deleted, adapted, or exaggerated to increase drama and attract audiences. Reading history, on the other hand, pays more attention to objectivity and authenticity, and strives to restore historical facts and real scenes.

In terms of depth and breadth, movies usually present a storyline within a limited time and cannot cover all historical details and events, so they often can only show a certain aspect or angle of history. By reading history, you can obtain more historical information through rich materials and documents, and understand the background, causes and consequences of historical events.

In terms of emotional expression, movies often touch the audience's emotions through the characters' emotions and performances, making the audience more involved in the storyline. Reading history is more of a rational thinking and analysis process, which requires observing and understanding the development and evolution of historical events.

The "reshaping" of history in Zhang Yimou's Red Trilogy is reflected in:

1) Zhang Yimou's film is a social issue, cultural phenomenon and academic topic.

The Red Trilogy was created in the 1980s and 1990s. At that time, China had a strong cultural and artistic creation atmosphere under the background of reform and opening up and the guidance of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts. With the further introduction of Western thought and culture, China has entered an era of "collection and rapid dissemination of knowledge", and a large number of excellent literary and artistic works have appeared.

Looking back at the history of Chinese film development, the 1980s and 1990s were an era when a large number of outstanding directors emerged and excellent films were produced frequently. The success of the Red Trilogy made Chinese films begin to enjoy a high reputation in the world. Zhang Yimou and starring Gong Li quickly rose to fame, and Zhang Yimou's films have since become a banner of Chinese cinema.

In the 1980s and 1990s, when the Red Trilogy was released, audiences across the country rushed to see these films, film researchers couldn't wait to discuss these films, and film practitioners rushed to study these films. Nowadays, China produces countless movies every year, but no one can surpass the achievements of Zhang Yimou's movies.

Zhang Yimou continues to create new films and remains a benchmark figure in Chinese cinema. Each of his new film works will arouse strong public opinion, whether it is praise or criticism. It will also trigger a new round of discussion about his early Red Trilogy films, a discussion that often stems from comparisons of Zhang Yimou's films from different periods.

Today, there are still a steady stream of audiences discussing and studying the Red Trilogy films with film researchers and film practitioners. Many of them have watched the Red Trilogy movies multiple times. They review history, reflect on culture, comprehend life, study film theory, and learn about film. Creation etc. Zhang

Yimou's films have influenced generations of people. From the past to the present, the discussion of the Red Trilogy movies has never stopped, and Zhang Yimou's movies have become a social issue, cultural phenomenon and academic topic.

2) Zhang Yimou's red trilogy of films established the transformation relationship of "culture-commodity-culture".

The Red Trilogy is adapted from excellent literary works. Zhang Yimou placed the story in the context of the Republic of China, reproduced the wars and social changes during the Republic of China, explored the social structure, family structure and power relations during the Republic of China, and demonstrated the society at that time. Folk culture such as marriage etiquette and funeral customs reflect the restricted status of women in a patriarchal society.

As a medium of cultural expression, the Red Trilogy film conveys emotions, thoughts and values to the audience through images and stories. Although the Red Trilogy was not created as a commercial film, with the development of commercialization, the film industry has gradually become a product of commoditization, and movies have become commodities that are produced, sold and consumed in order to seek profits and market share. The Red Trilogy eventually became a commodity, and viewers had to pay a certain fee to watch it on various online platforms. Therefore, the process of the Red Trilogy from creation to release is the process of consuming history by film creators and audiences, and it is also the process of transforming history and culture into commodities.

Now, with the advancement of technology and the rapid development of the Internet, social media such as Douban, Rotten Tomatoes, Douyin, Little Red Book, Bilibili, and Weibo have become important places to share the content of Zhang Yimou's films and exchange views on Zhang Yimou's films. These places will be different. People from different countries, different regions, and different eras are connected together. These people may come from different industries, have no intersection in their lives, and have never met.

People share the scenes and compositions of Zhang Yimou's films through social media platforms, participate in topic discussions, and analyze cultural connotations, further promoting the consumerization of history. These social media constitute imaginary communities. In the community of "Zhang Yimou Movies", people express their opinions, discuss and argue around Zhang Yimou's movies.

This community is an imagined cultural community, and Zhang Yimou's films are cultural issues and cultural phenomena in this community. Therefore, the "commodity" Zhang Yimou movies have been transformed into "cultural" Zhang Yimou movies.

As a result, Zhang Yimou's films have completed the transformation process from culture to commodity to culture. In this sense, Zhang Yimou's films have reshaped the history of film art consumption. These are topics that have not been discovered in previous studies of Zhang Yimou's films.

## Research suggestions

### 3.1 The Suggestion for Academic Circle

First of all, Zhang Yimou's films are a business card of Chinese films. Their rich artistic expression and cultural connotation have great academic research value. At present, many scholars have discussed the artistic creation concepts, cultural connotations, aesthetic characteristics, narrative logic, modernity and other aspects of Zhang Yimou's films, and a lot of accumulation has been made. Most of the existing research texts for monographs and master's and doctoral theses are relatively broad. This study selects three films to explore their reflections on the social culture of the Republic of China. In terms of research text selection, research horizons, research depth, etc., it provides a solid foundation for Zhang Yimou's film research and Other film studies provide a model that I hope will inspire subsequent researchers. Secondly, this study connects the Red Trilogy film and the concept of consumer history for a systematic and in-depth study, which provides a new research perspective for the study of Zhang Yimou's films, fills the gap in the related fields of Zhang Yimou's film research, and further enriches The connotation of the concept of consumption history.

### 3.2 The Suggestions to Society

From the perspective of social impact, this study analyzes Zhang Yimou's films from the perspective of the audience's consumption history and the film creator's reflection on Chinese society and culture, which will help Chinese audiences learn from history, "see" history wisely, and cherish today's hard-won happy life. From the perspective of Chinese film development, this study's analysis of Zhang Yimou's films can provide some good suggestions for other film creators and encourage them to create more and better works, thus promoting the further development of Chinese films. From the perspective of Chinese cultural communication, Zhang Yimou's films, as a cultural commodity with Chinese characteristics, have won many international awards and are shown all over the world. Through Zhang Yimou's films, domestic and foreign audiences can not only understand the development of Chinese films but also Pay more attention to and understand Chinese culture and Chinese history will be conducive to the further spread of Chinese culture.

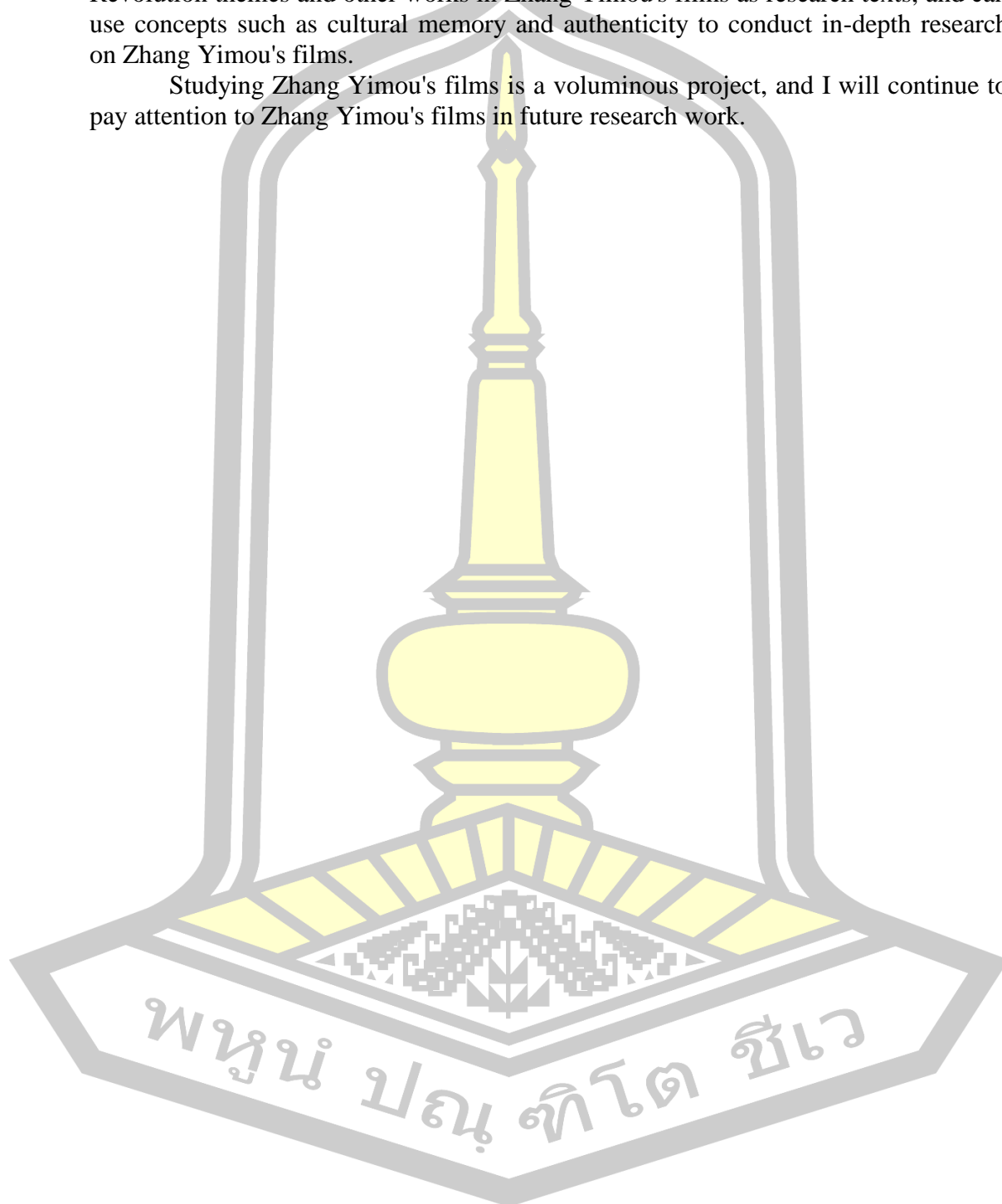
### 3.3 Other suggestions

#### Limitations of the study and recommendations for other researchers

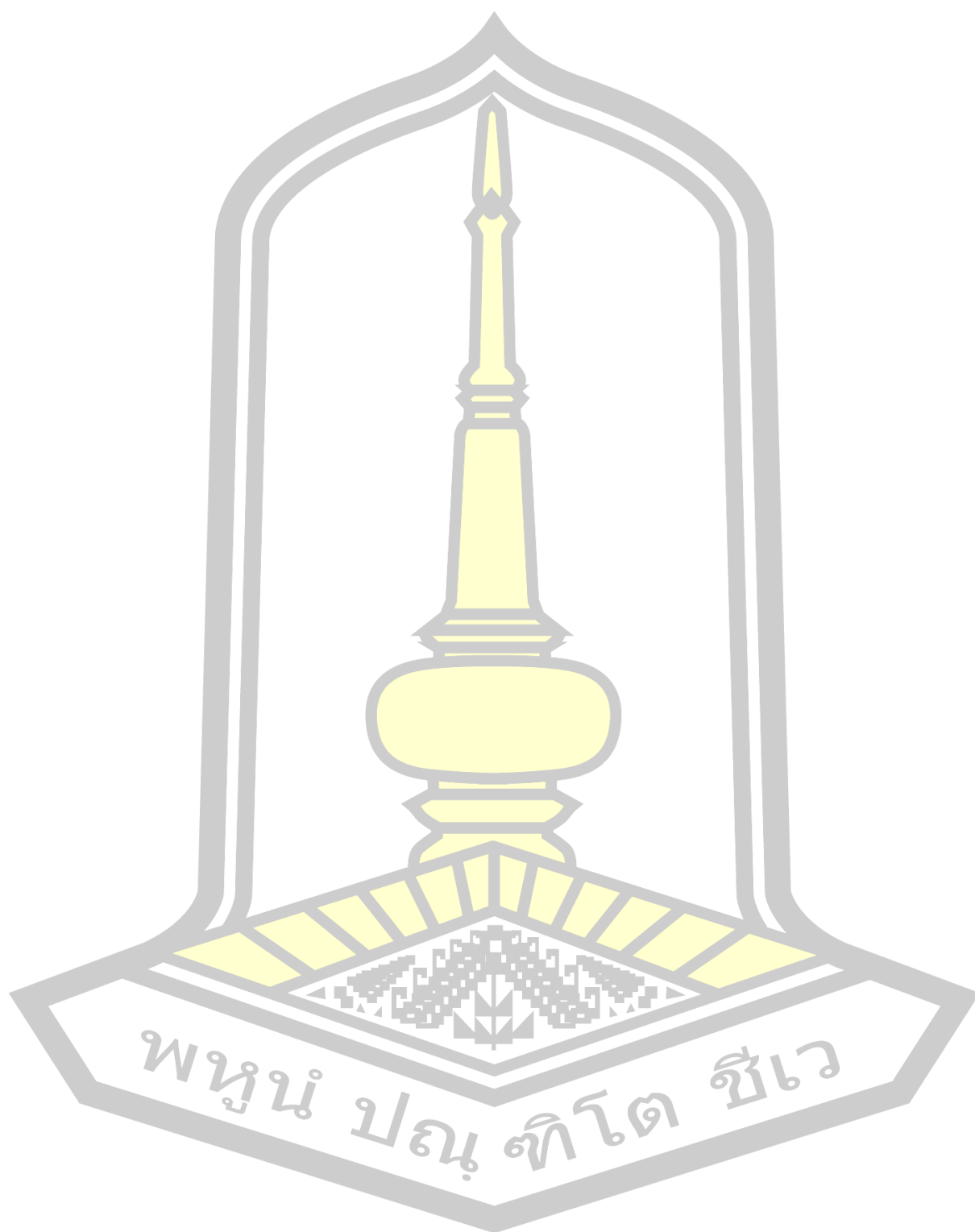
The research value of Zhang Yimou's films is very huge. Each researcher has a different vision and methods, and the conclusions drawn are different. The research of this article is also based on the research of a large number of experts and scholars, but the methods used Research methods, concepts and research content are not enough to cover the entire study of Zhang Yimou's films. In addition, because Zhang Yimou's film works are numerous and limited by time and space, when selecting research texts, the researcher of this article only selected three film works that reflected the social culture of the Republic of China, and did not cover all Zhang Yimou's film works.

I hope that my research can provide an idea for other researchers to study texts and concepts. Other researchers can choose love themes, reality themes, Cultural Revolution themes and other works in Zhang Yimou's films as research texts, and can use concepts such as cultural memory and authenticity to conduct in-depth research on Zhang Yimou's films.

Studying Zhang Yimou's films is a voluminous project, and I will continue to pay attention to Zhang Yimou's films in future research work.



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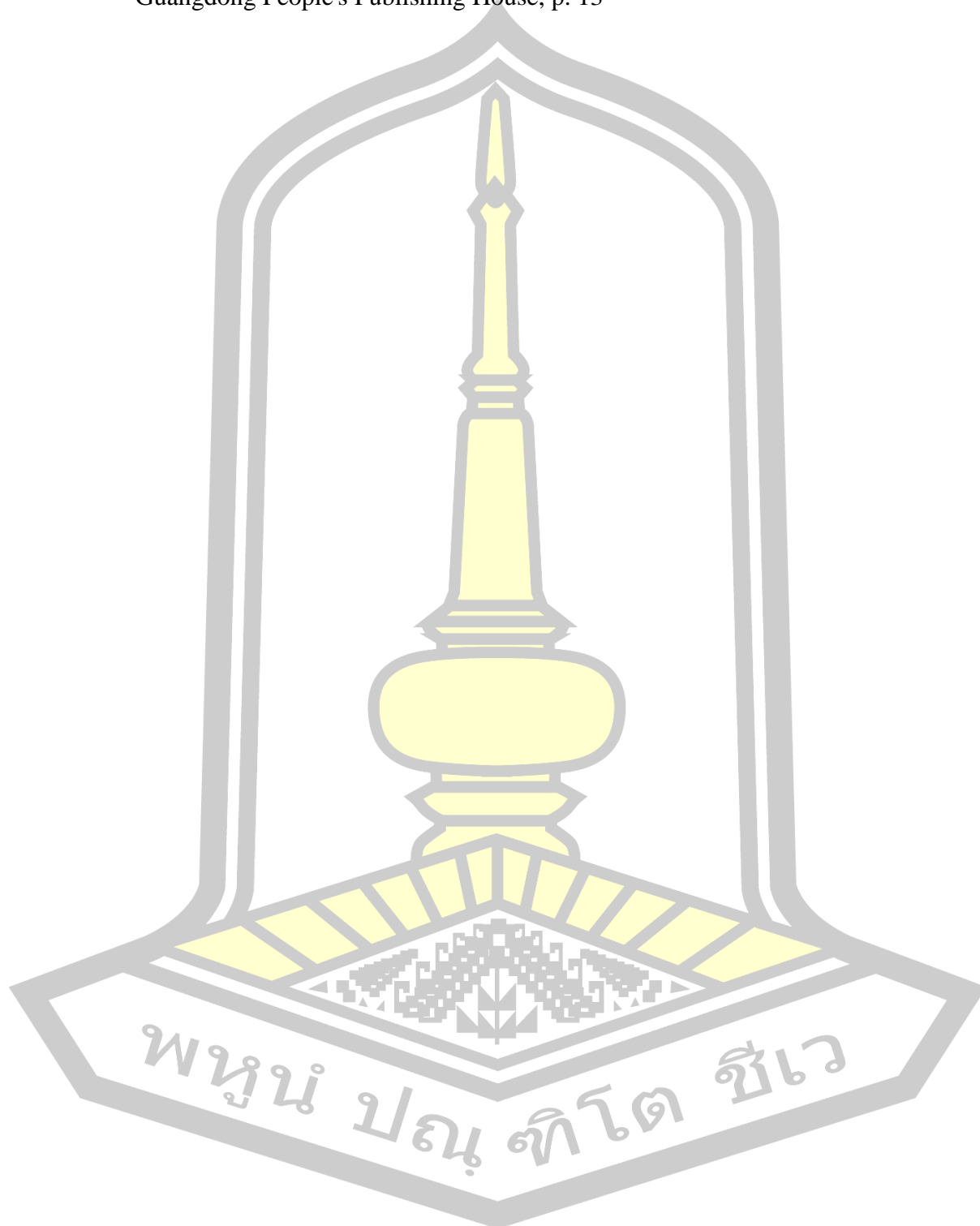
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