

Chinese Films

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress

Dai Si Jie

This 2003 Golden Globe nominee for Best Foreign Film is based on the experience of director Dai Si Jie, who spent four years in a re-education program instigated during Mao Zedong's "Cultural Revolution." Two teenage boys, Ma (Ye Liu) and Luo (Kun Chen), are sent to live on the remote mountain known as Phoenix in the Sky. The boys steal the "subversive" novels of Honore de Balzac, Flaubert, Dostoevsky, and Gogol, and read them to the granddaughter of the local tailor (Xun Zhou). While reading, both boys fall in love with the girl, and, through Balzac, discover awakening desire, passion, impulsive action, love - all the subjects that had, until then, been hidden. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China/France, 2003, 112 mins.

DVD

Beijing Bicycle

Wang Xiaoshuai

In this modern variation of *The Bicycle Thief*, a young delivery man searches for his stolen bike, his story eventually intersecting with that of another man who purchased it on the black market. This moving drama marks a significant departure from director Wang Xiaoshuai's controversial earlier film, *Frozen*. "...both an homage to De Sica and a reinterpretation of his ideas for a vastly different society facing an even more critical moment of change...[a] complex, politically charged tapestry of contemporary Chinese life..." (Bill Gallo, *New Times Los Angeles*). In Mandarin with English subtitles. China/Taiwan, 2001, 113 mins.

DVD

Beijing Rocks

Mabel Cheung

Chinese rock and roll and youth culture takes center stage in this drama about the love-hate relationships among three restless characters standing outside of society's mainstream. Shu Qi (Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Millennium Mambo*), Daniel Wu and Geng Le star. Includes alternate ending, "teaser" and theatrical trailer, "making of" segment, and more. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2001, 105 mins.

DVD

Blue Gate Crossing

Yee Chih-yen

Joys, wonders and questions arise as three teens discover their sexuality in this gentle, coming-of-age comedy. Best friends Meng (Guey Lun-mei) and Lin (Liang Shu-hui) are typical 17-year-old high school girls. But, when Lin reveals her crush on the star of the swim team to her best friend, previously unknown feelings of jealousy and attraction are stirred up in Meng, leading her to question her own sexuality. "Enchanting" (*New York Post*). In Mandarin with English subtitles. Taiwan/France, 2002, 85 mins. **DVD**

The Blue Kite

Tian Zhuangzhuang

Condemned by the Chinese government, *The Blue Kite* provides a unique window into contemporary Chinese life and politics. During the Cultural Revolution in China, a man called Teitou, his family and his friends all experience the political and social upheavals that shook a continent. This scathing indictment of life under Chairman Mao was banned along with the filmmaker. Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1993, 138 mins.

DVD

Breaking the Silence

Zhou Sun

Chinese superstar Gong Li won Best Actress honors at the Montreal World Film Festival for her excellent performance in this drama of domestic struggles in contemporary China. She plays a mother trying to raise and educate her hearing-impaired child after her husband loses his job. When her son's hearing aid is destroyed, the mother must try legal and illegal efforts to earn enough money to purchase a replacement. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1999, 95 mins.

DVD

Chivalrous Legend

Choi Yeung Meng

Set during Japan's invasion of Taiwan, this action feature follows a martial artist and gambler who teams up with a prostitute to form a Robin Hood-type partnership--stealing money from the rich to help the poor. As Japanese authorities close in, they must go into hiding. Cantonese and Mandarin with English subtitles. Taiwan, 1999, 96 mins.

DVD

Country Teachers

He Qun

A dedicated young teacher in a small Chinese village works against all odds for the future of her students in this inspirational story of truth and dedication. In her selfless pursuit, she learns about love, the kindness of country folk and the power of education. Winner of two Chinese Academy Awards. Stars Ju Xue, Li Baotian, Xiu Zongdi and Wang Xueqi. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1993, 90 mins.

DVD

The Day the Sun Turned Cold

Yim Ho

A young welder in Northern China transforms the lives of those closest to him when he goes into a police station to accuse someone of having murdered his long-dead father. At first the police are sceptical, but as they listen they become intrigued and reopen the investigation concerning the dead man. This film's beguiling flashback-laden narrative

magically captures the harsh reality of the Northern provinces of China. Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1994, 99 mins.

Videocassette

Devils on the Doorstep

Wen Jiang

Wen Jiang directs and stars in this sweeping look at life in a Chinese village under Japanese occupation during WWII. Jiang plays a man ordered by Japanese soldiers to house two prisoners. When the soldiers do not return for their captives, the villagers must decide what to do with them. The winner of the Grand Prix at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival, it was an international hit, but created a furor in China, where the government banned the film and exiled Jiang from the Chinese film industry. The DVD is letterboxed, and includes introduction by director Stephen Soderbergh, trailer, interview with Jiang Wen, and Jiang Wen biography and filmography. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2000, 140 mins.

DVD

East Palace, West Palace

Zhang Yuan

A truly daring portrait of gay life and oppression from authorities in China. A young homosexual is arrested for cruising in a park near the grounds of the Forbidden Palace in Beijing. While in custody, his relationship with the interrogating officer mirrors the tension between China's authoritarian regime and its citizens. "Zhang mingles powerful drama and courageous politics..." (Lawrence van Gelder, New York Times). Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1997, 94 mins.

DVD

The Emperor's Shadow

Zhou Xiaowen

A sweeping and sensuous historical drama, following the first emperor of China and his personal conflict with a boyhood friend who refuses an order to compose an anthem to celebrate the unification of the nation. Contrasting the rise of the empire with this private dilemma, the film beautifully illustrates the eternal battle between the artist and the state. "...deliciously nuanced, intelligent and enlightening...a riveting picture of barbaric yet occasionally transcendent life" (Peter Stack, San Francisco Chronicle). Mandarin with English subtitles. Hong Kong/China, 1996, 123 mins.

DVD

Fleeing by Night

Li-Kong Hsu/Chi Yin

Fleeing By Night is a subtle period drama set in 1930's Taiwan that tells the story of a complicated love triangle between a young girl, her cellist boyfriend and the male Chinese opera star that he adores. This lush, moving melodrama wonderfully conveys a universal

tale of unrequited love against a backdrop of history, spectacle and bittersweet grace. "Exquisite! Beautiful! Extraordinary!" (The Los Angeles Times). In Mandarin with English subtitles. Taiwan, 2000, 123 mins.

DVD

Frozen

Wang Xiaoshuai

Banned in China and filmed secretly, without government approval, this bold film offers a glimpse of the repressed, risk-taking artistic spirit of young Chinese filmmakers. The story involves a young performance artist, exhausted by life itself, who decides to make his own suicide his last work of art. Shot in 1994, the film was secretly transported to Amsterdam for editing and has never been shown (at least legally) in its native country. "An amazing film in its power and its daring" (Los Angeles Times). In Mandarin with English subtitles. China/Hong Kong/Netherlands, 1997, 95 mins.

Videocassette

Gada Meilin

Feng Xiaoning

Feng Xiaoning's epic biopic recounts the story of Gada Meilin, a Mongolian tribesman who struggled to protect the Horqin grasslands from desertification in the 1930's. Through his battles with local government officials and his tribe's chieftan Meilin has come to be regarded as a kind of modern day folk hero. Xiaoning's beautifully photographed drama features music by San Bao. Winner for Best Film at the Beijing Film Festival. In Chinese with English subtitles. China, 2001, 109 mins.

DVD

Going to School with Father on My Back

Zhou Youchao

In a poor, rural village, a father must decide which of his two children will be able to attend school. With the spin of a spoon, the younger brother wins the right to an education. Going to school, he finds new worlds opening up to him, but with them comes distance from his family members and others. Director Zhou Youchao served as an assistant to Zhang Yimou on *Ju Dou* and *Red Sorghum*. In Cantonese with English subtitles. China, 1998, 90 mins.

DVD

The Horse Thief

Tian Zhuangzhuang

The setting is the harsh, barren landscape of Tibet, which on film has a stark beauty not unlike the landscapes of American westerns. Here, amidst a series of tribal and Buddhist rituals captured wordlessly and in great detail, unfolds a tribal drama of theft, ostracism, and terrible retribution. A film of mystical dimensions, *The Horse Thief* is a breathtaking 'Scope epic which concentrates on a primitive way of life and manages to capture it with a surprising degree of sophistication. Mandarin with English subtitles. Full-screen letterbox format. China, 1987, 88 mins. **Videocassette**

Journey to the Western Xia Empire

Lu Wei

The co-writer of *Farewell My Concubine* steps behind the camera for an impressive directorial debut. In medieval China, soldiers are dispatched by the emperor to collect male children who will be molded into warriors. The mother of one kidnapped child follows the soldiers' procession to care for her son, earning their respect and admiration in the process. Named Best First Film at China's 17th Golden Rooster Awards. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1997, 110 mins.

DVD

Killing Skill

Ko Fei

A young girl seeks revenge on an assassin after he brutally murders her family and destroys her life. She turns to a famed marksman for aide and training, eventually becoming a killer herself. Loosely based on Robert Rodriguez's 1995 film *Desperado*, this film nevertheless stands on its own as a fine action thriller. In Cantonese and Mandarin with English and Chinese subtitles. China, 2002, 90 mins.

DVD

Legend of the Mountain

King Hu

Famed director King Hu (*A Touch of Zen*, *Sons of Good Earth*) brings a traditional Chinese legend to life in this lavish film. The story centers on Ho, a Sung Dynasty scholar given the task of translating a Buddhist sutra. He ventures to a decrepit, deserted town to work in peace, but instead finds love in the form of two women. He soon discovers that the women are ghosts seeking possession of the sutra. A rather slow, measured film, but worth viewing for its beauty. In Mandarin and Cantonese with English and Chinese subtitles. China, 1979, 110 mins.

DVD

Lover's Grief Over the Yellow River

Feng Xiaoning

An American pilot crash lands in mountainous Chinese terrain near the end of World War II. A squadron of Chinese guerilla fighters finds him, nurse him back to health, and attempt to escort him to liberated territory. The American ends up conquering his own prejudices and fighting with the Chinese soldiers against their Japanese aggressors. An inspiring WWII epic. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1999, 110 mins.

DVD

My Left Eye Sees Ghosts

Johnny To

Johnny To (*Running Out of Time*, *The Mission*) directs this horror comedy starring Lau Ching Wan and Hong Kong pop diva Sammi Cheng. When a widow (Cheng) discovers that she can see ghosts out of her left eye, she starts to receive regular visits from ghosts seeking help in finishing their last wishes. Wan plays a particularly naughty ghost who promises to look for the widow's husband on the other side if she helps him discover his last regret. In Cantonese and Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2002, 97 mins.

DVD

My Schoolmate, the Barbarian

Billy Chung/Wong Jing

Fisticuffs rule in this strange Chinese high school where students settle their differences in underground fights while teachers look the other way. A bit of a cheesy plot emerges in the film, but the energetic and brutal fight sequences choreographed by legendary director Ching Siu-tung (*A Chinese Ghost Story*, *Duel to the Death*) are the real highlight. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2001, 92 mins.

DVD

Never Compromise

Bosco Lam

When two life-long friends and partners-in-crime are released from prison, they murder a family of seven and go on a crime spree across mainland China. Based on true events, this crime thriller makes up in action what it lacks in plot. In Cantonese and Mandarin with multilingual subtitles. China, 1999, 86 mins.

DVD

New Year Sacrifice

Sang Hu

In a mountain hamlet in eastern China, a poor woman faces trial after trial. Sold into marriage as a child, she is left a young widow and enslaved by her mother-in-law, who sells her to a poor peasant. Her second marriage turns out to be happy until fate takes away her husband and son. Now seen as a bearer of bad luck, she becomes a social outcast. When the New Year comes, can this poor woman find any hope in this society? Based on the short story by the prolific Chinese author Lu Xun. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1956, 100 mins.

DVD

Okinawa Rendezvous

Gordon Chan

Okinawa is the setting for this dangerous game of love and robbery. Leslie Cheung (*Farewell My Concubine*) and Tony Leung Kar-fai star as two thieves who rent a house next to a bank they are planning to rob. The house is occupied by Jenny, played by Faye

Wong (Chungking Express), and as the plan proceeds, both men find themselves falling in love with her. In Cantonese and Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2000, 99 mins.
DVD

The Opium War

Xie Jin

Directed by Xie Jin, "the Chinese Spielberg," this historical epic is set in 1830s China, when the Chinese government tried to ban opium. British opium dealers, who had grown wealthy from their trade, persuaded Queen Victoria to go to war for their business. The result was a humiliating defeat for the Chinese, who were forced to surrender Hong Kong to British control as part of the peace settlement. The movie follows two main characters: Lin Zexu, the minister designated by the emperor to wipe out the opium trade; and He Shinzhi, the son of a Chinese opium seller, who survives the anti-drug campaign through his knowledge of English, which allows him to work as an interpreter in Chinese diplomatic business with England. Widescreen DVD with optional English, Korean, or Chinese subtitles. Includes theatrical trailer and director's and cast notes. With Pao Guoan, Su Min, Lang Xiong, and Lin Lian Kun. Cantonese with English subtitles.

DVD

Papa, Can You Hear Me Sing?

Yu Kan-ping

In this sentimental drama, a poor man who makes his living collecting bottles finds an abandoned baby. He raises her as his own and, as she gets older, finds that she has a remarkable singing voice. Her talent eventually takes her away from the hard life and from the adopted father who rescued her from the streets. In Mandarin with English subtitles. Taiwan/Hong Kong, 1983, 90 mins.

DVD

The Personals

Chen Kuo-fu

The modern urban life of material comfort and social discomfort is portrayed in this funny, sad, and truthful look at romance today. Rene Liu stars as an ophthalmologist who quits her job to search for the perfect mate through the newspaper personal ads. As she meets several wholly inappropriate matches and comes face-to-face with overwhelming loneliness, the film moves in an unexpected direction. "...lightly comic and ultimately poignant" (Christopher Bourne, 24 Frames Per Second). In Mandarin with English subtitles. Taiwan, 1998, 104 mins.

DVD

Platform

Je Zhang-Ke

Director Je Zhang-Ke skillfully follows a group of musicians living in a remote section of

China as they adapt to the social and political changes that occurred from 1979-1989 - years that saw the country reinventing itself in the wake of the Cultural Revolution. As modernity and Westernization hits their small village, the four friends see their lives and relationships change for the better and the worse. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China/Hong Kong/Japan/France, 2000, 150 mins.

DVD

Postmen in the Mountains

Huo Jianqi

This gentle, humane drama about a father and son won the People's Choice Award at the 1999 Montreal World Film Festival. In the remote mountain communities of southeastern China, a father shows his son the ropes of his arduous 112 mile-long mail route, preparing him to take over the job. As their long journey over rugged terrain progresses, the son learns more about his father and the people he serves. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1998, 90 mins.

DVD

Purple Butterfly

Lou Ye

Lou Ye's historical drama is set in 1930s Shanghai, right before the start of the Sino-Japanese War. Popular Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi (Hero) plays a young woman deeply in love with a Japanese national (Toru Nakamura) who's about to be sent home for military service. When her brother is killed by a Japanese extremist, Ziyi chooses sides and begins fighting for an anti-Japanese resistance group, even though it pits her against the man she loves. "Mr. Lou synthesizes a wide range of styles and influences - from Casablanca to Wong Kar-wai - resulting in a movie that, for all its haunting strangeness, seems curiously familiar" (A.O. Scott, New York Times). In Mandarin, Japanese, and Vietnamese with English subtitles. China, 2003, 127 mins.

DVD

Purple Sunset

Feng Xiaoning

The final entry in Feng Xianoning's "War and Peace" trilogy is set during the waning days of WWII in China. As Soviet troops pour into China and engage Japanese troops in battle, scattered survivors make their way off of the battlefield. Feng's film follows the unlikely friendship that develops between a Chinese soldier, a Japanese soldier, and a Soviet soldier who band together in order to survive. China, 2001, 102 mins.

DVD

Quitting

Zhang Yang

The follow-up to Zhang Yang's *Shower* stars Jia Hong-Sheng in an autobiographical role. True to life, Hong-Sheng plays an esteemed actor whose professional success is swiftly

accompanied by a downward spiral of drug-use and depression. The situation grows so dire that soon the actor's parents have enlisted their entire community to travel to Beijing and pull him out of his slump. Utilizing a largely non-professional cast (many of whom, including Hong-Sheng's parents, play themselves), Yang creates a fearless picture reminiscent of Iranian films like *Close Up* and *The Apple*. "It further declares its director [...] as a boldly experimental, contemporary stylist with a bright future" (Stephen Rosen, Denver Post). In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2001, 112 mins.

DVD

Rainbow

Gao Xiao-Song

This expressionistic tale of sexual politics follows Rainbow, a mute yet musically gifted girl, whose arranged marriage to an impotent and crippled art teacher causes her eye to wander. Set against the historical background of China's bloody war with Japan in the 1930's, the bold colors and unique stylization of Gao Xiao-Song's film brings to mind both Zhang Yimou and Takashi Miike. With its Surrealistic imagery and classical-meets-heavy metal soundtrack, Rainbow offers a glimpse of a bright new talent on the Chinese cinema scene. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2004, 91 mins.

DVD

Red Cherry

Ye Ying

The Chinese nominee for the Oscar is a horrific tale based on a true story about Chuchu and Luo Xiaoman, two Chinese orphans, and their struggle to survive in Russia during World War II as German prisoners. Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1995, 120 mins.

DVD

Red River Valley

Feng Xiaoning

Feng Xiaoning delves into China and Tibet's rich history in this vigorous, coming-of-age epic set during the 1905 British occupation of Tibet and China's eventual control of the country. A young woman finds new life after being rescued by a Tibetan woman. She later saves the lives of two British officers who have designs on Tibet's future. In English and Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1996, 120 mins.

DVD

Restless

Jule Gilfillan

Jule Gilfillan's story of two Americans that find love in Beijing was the first US-Chinese co-production in history. Restless is the story of Leah and David, two friends who travel to China for self-discovery and familial knowledge, yet end up falling in love with two Chinese nationals. Ken Eisner of Variety calls it "a winning look at cross-cultural romance." China/USA, 1998, 100 mins.

DVD

The Reincarnation of Golden Lotus

Clara Law

Joi Wong stars as the Golden Lotus in this feminist reworking of an erotic 12th century Chinese novel. Lotus has the misfortune of her beauty, and becomes the luckless prey of various abusive men. Through carefully threaded flashbacks to the Sung Dynasty, she comes to the realization that she is the reincarnation of the "number one" courtesan of ancient China. Mandarin with English subtitles. WidescreenDVD with optional English, Chinese, or Japanese subtitles. China, 1989, 99 mins.

DVD

Rhapsody of Spring

Teng Wenji

The career of one of China's most revered composers is dramatized in this sprawling, beautifully constructed, award-winning film. Called Zhao Liming in the film, the character is a thinly veiled portrait of composer Shi Guangnan, who dedicated his life to the preservation of China's musical heritage from the days following the Cultural Revolution up into the modern era. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1998, 120 mins.

DVD

Rickshaw Boy

Ling Zifeng

One of the first films from the modern People's Republic of China to break into American theatres, this coming-of-age drama follows a hard-working peasant as he attempts to succeed in life and love in the city. His trials reveal the often tough rift between ancient rural and modern Chinese cultures. Based on the novel by Lao She. Stars Zhang Fengyi, Siqin Gaowa, Yin Xin, Yan Bide and Li Tang. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1982, 120 mins.

DVD

Roaring Across the Horizon

Chen Guoxing

An odd piece of Chinese Communist Party propaganda that chronicles and celebrates China's development of nuclear weapons. Frightening in its adherence to the party-line, this drama documents the Chinese government's decision to enter the arms race due to a self-proclaimed threat of insecurity after WWII, the Chinese Civil War and the Korean War. They hire a MIT-trained Chinese patriot to head the project, but there is a huge snag - his wife's estranged father is a capitalist. "Chilling" (The Village Voice). In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1999, 120 mins.

DVD

The Savage Land

Ling Ji

This Chinese period piece directed by Ling Ji, the daughter of the Chinese deputy prime minister, is set in 1970s mainland China. The story focuses on China's long-suffering and unfulfilled women, who were victims of China's feudal era. With Yang Tsai-qao, Liu Xiao Qing, and Yeung Joi Bo. Widescreen DVD with optional English or Chinese subtitles. Includes trailers. Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1981, 104 mins.

DVD

Seventeen Years

Zhang Yuan

In Zhang Yuan's moving drama, a pair of teenage stepsisters become bitter rivals in an attempt to win their parents' affection. Xiaoqin (Li Jun) is a strong-willed girl who is proud of her working-class roots, while Xiaolan (Liu Lin) is attractive, academic, and urbane. One day their tense rivalry explodes, and in a moment of shocking violence Xiaolan attacks Xiaoqin and kills her. The duration of Yuan's film is devoted to the 17 years Xiaolin spends behind bars and a New Year's furlough that she spends searching for her family. Winner of the Best Director Prize (Yuan) at the Venice Film Festival. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1999, 85 mins.

DVD

Shower

Zhang Yang

The old and new worlds collide in this charming tale of a family divided, then brought together by a traditional bathhouse. The successful, career-minded son of the bathhouse's owner first sees the establishment as outdated, but as he spends more time with his family and friends, and as the threat of its destruction draws near, he begins to see its worth. "...a delicate, lyrical case for the importance of holding on to small traditions" (Desson Howe, Washington Post). Videocassette and DVD in Mandarin with English subtitles; China, 1999, 94 mins.

DVD

Sleeping with the Dead

Cheng Wai Man

Jordan Chan plays David, a doctor who can see ghosts in this Hong Kong horror film with crime-drama underpinnings. When his childhood friends start turning up dead, David suspects that he might be next. As he investigates the murders with another threatened childhood friend, detective Iron Cheung (played by Simon Lui), they unlock forgotten secrets and crimes that are chilling and unnerving. An interesting, yet slightly uneven, film. In Cantonese and Mandarin with English and Chinese subtitles. China, 2002, 95 mins.

DVD

So Close to Paradise

Wang Xiaoshuai

While not nearly as controversial as his 1998 feature, *Frozen*, Wang Xiaoshuai's *So Close to Paradise* was still held up for several years and re-edited by Chinese censors, wary of the impact of its bleak portrait of urban corruption. It tells the story of two friends who find their lives at the crossroads when they move to the city. As one becomes involved in the criminal underworld, he pulls his friend into a fatal scheme. "...a film that is wise, fatalistic and romantic in just the right proportions - in the best noir tradition" (Kevin Thomas, Los Angeles Times). In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1998, 90 mins.

DVD

Song of China

Lo Ming-yau

A rare film, produced in China during 1936, dealing with a cavalcade of families through three generations. The film is timely in that it deals with the universal problem of the generation gap with great sensitivity. Featuring a native Chinese cast and authentic Chinese music on the soundtrack. With English subtitles. China, 1936, 75 mins.

Videocassette

A Soul Haunted by Painting

Huang Shuqin

Gong Li stars as Chinese painter Pan Yuliang, whose beautiful work was condemned as "depraved" by officials in her own country. The film portrays her dramatic life, including working as a prostitute as a young girl and her studies at the Shanghai Arts Institute, which was later closed for allowing foreign influence and nude modeling. Pan Yuliang finds fame after she becomes her own model and the self-portrait, *Bathing Woman*, wins international acclaim. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China/Taiwan, 1994, 91 mins.

DVD

Suzhou River

Lou Ye

A stylish and seductive film about obsessive love, *Suzhou River* is a dual romance that draws on aspects of film noir, the French New Wave, and Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. "...photographed in the grainy, high-contrast glamour of a Wong Kar-wai romance. Lou Ye lays out a ravishing wasteland of femmes fatales and lovelorn tough guys" (Richard Corliss, Time). In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2000, 83 mins.

DVD

Swordsmen of Double Flag Town

He Ping

A grand drama of honor and revenge plays out in a Chinese version of the American West in this action-packed martial arts number from the director of *Red Firecracker, Green Firecracker*. After learning of his arranged marriage at his father's deathbed, a young

swordsman travels to Double Flag Town to find his promised bride. When ruthless bandits attempt to rape the woman and kill her father, the swordsman faces off against the attackers in a violent confrontation, which provokes the wrath of the Lethal Swordsman. Winner of the Critics Award at the Berlin International Film Festival. Also known as *The Bride of a Young Swordsman*. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1990, 90 mins.

DVD

Unknown Pleasures

Je Zhang-Ke

A harrowing look at disillusioned teens growing up amidst turbulent social changes in contemporary China. Xiao Ji and Bin Bin spend their days looking for anything to break up the monotony of life in the dreary city of Datong. Inspired by American gangster films, particularly *Pulp Fiction*, video games and anime, the duo hatch a robbery scheme to finance an escape. Haunting and often humorous, *Unknown Pleasures* offers a realistic look at teen alienation and desperation. "...a fiction with the force of documentary" (J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*). In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2002, 113 mins.

DVD

Visible Secret

Ann Hui

It was love-at-first sight between Peter and June, a young couple living in Hong Kong. But Peter begins noticing unusual things about his new girlfriend; most notably, that she claims she can see ghosts. Eventually strange things begin happening to Peter as he unravels June's bizarre and unknown past. Directed by Ann Hui (*Ah Kam*, *July Rhapsody*), this character-driven ghost story is creepy, but not scary and even mixes in elements of romance and comedy. The DVD is letterboxed and includes English and Chinese subtitles. Includes 94-page comic book version of film and a behind-the-scenes featurette. In Cantonese and Mandarin with subtitles. China, 2001, 98 mins.

DVD

Warriors of Heaven and Earth

He Ping

This Chinese epic of war, camaraderie, and honor operates in the tradition of Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* and was a trying labor of love for director He Ping. Ostensibly a western set in the Gobi Desert, the film follows the adventures of a Japanese swordsman who seeks to earn his ticket home by killing a ruthless renegade soldier. Stunning visuals and a colorful mish-mash of genre elements bring He Ping's vision to life. Chinese/Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 2004, 119 mins.

DVD

Woman Sesame Oil Maker

Xie Fei

At the center of this moving intergenerational family drama is an old legend about two girls

who drowned themselves in a local lake and were said to have flown away as beautiful birds. A contemporary entrepreneur succeeds in business despite her drunken, abusive husband. Now she faces the chore of putting another woman into an unhappy arranged marriage because her mentally ill son desires a wife. Can this older, wiser woman prevent another drowning? Co-winner of the Golden Bear and the Film Critics' Award at the 1993 Berlin Film Festival. Also released as *Women from the Lake of Scented Souls*. Mandarin with English subtitles. China 1993 106 mins.

DVD

The Wooden Man's Bride

Huang Jianxin

Two lovers are joined in forbidden love in this tempestuous drama. Kui must deliver a beautiful bride to her new family. While she is en route, kidnappers intervene and before she can reach her husband, he dies. Despite this turn of fortune, she must marry him in effigy, forcing her into an illicit affair with the man she really loves. Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1995, 114 mins.

DVD

Yi Yi (A One and a Two)

Edward Yang

Edward Yang's profound and beautiful film conveys the powerful emotional truths of everyday life as it depicts the struggles, hopes and dreams of a middle-class family in Taipei. "...a wonderfully engrossing experience--a lucid, elegant, nuanced, humorous movie that's never nearly as sentimental as it might have been...Yang orchestrates a soap opera season's worth of family crises with virtuoso discretion" (J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*). Yang won Best Director honors at the Cannes Film Festival and *Yi Yi* was named Best Film of 2000 by the National Society of Film Critics and Best Foreign Language Film by the New York Film Critics' Circle. In Mandarin with English subtitles. Taiwan, 2000, 173 mins.

DVD

A Young Prisoner's Revenge

Zhou Puxiong

When a Chinese teenager lands in prison for petty robbery, his impoverished family scrapes together a bribe to offer the judge, but the money mysteriously disappears and the youth is forced to spend three years behind bars. Upon his release, the young ex-con vows to find out what really happened to the money. In Chinese with English subtitles. China, 2004, 90 mins.

DVD

Zhou Yu's Train

Zhou Sun

Gong Li (*Raise the Red Lantern*) gives an electrifying performance as Zhou Yu, a beautiful

artisan enroiled in a love affair with a poet living in the Chinese countryside. But Zhou Yu's idyllic romance is threatened by an obsessive doctor and a mysterious doppelganger. A rich, complex story told in overlapping, non-linear fashion, Zhou Yu's Train also boasts beautiful cinematography of rural China. Chinese/Mandarin with English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish subtitles. China, 2004, 93 mins.

DVD

Chinese Opera and Musicals

Children Peking Opera Singers

Du Min

Seven-year-old Wang follows his father into town while he sells vegetables. One day, Wang sees the performance of a group of Peking opera students. He jumps on stage and asks to join the troupe, and they accept him. Wang is given the role of a clown in the opera San Cha Kou. Wang works hard and becomes well-liked by the other performers as they prepare for opening night in Wang's hometown. With Wang Hao, Ma Chongle, Wang Wenduan, Zhang Ju, and Guo Guan Duona. In Mandarin with English subtitles. The DVD is letterboxed and includes optional English or Chinese (simplified, traditional) subtitles. China, 2002, 85 mins.

DVD

The Peony Pavillion

Chen Shi-Zheng

Chen Shi-Zheng's internationally acclaimed production of the epic Chinese opera dazzled the audience when originally performed and millions more when it was broadcast on PBS. Abridged from the 16th century masterpiece by Tang Xianzu, the production incorporates singing, dancing, acting, acrobatics, stilt-walking, puppetry, pageantry and martial arts to tell the romantic story of a woman who returns from the dead to reunite with her true love. Produced by the Lincoln Center Festival of New York and the Festival d'Automne a Paris. Narrated by Robert Powell. Includes a one-hour behind-the-scenes documentary. 2000, 120 mins.

DVD

Saga of Mulan

Xiao Lang/Qiu Lili

An exquisite Beijing opera, staged for film, re-telling one of China's most famous legends. Expert choreography and martial arts battle sequences and lavish costume and set designs combine for a production that captures the soul of China. Winner of the Best Musical Golden Rooster Award and the Huabiao Award for Best Musical. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1994, 90 mins. **DVD**

Woman Demon Human

Huang Shuqin

A young girl born into the world of the Beijing Opera Company follows her dreams and becomes a professional actress. Submerging herself in her roles to escape a personal life marred by trauma, she longs to play the major "male" roles, but is trapped by a culture that forbids it. The winner of two Chinese Academy Awards, *Woman Demon Human* is a stunning allegory of the struggle between modernity and tradition. In Mandarin with English subtitles. China, 1987, 115 mins.

DVD