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# SOUL ON A STRING

(PI SHENG SHANG DE HUN/皮绳上的魂)

A film by Zhang Yang

*"Stunningly shot Tibetan western has a nicely laconic magical-realist flavor." – Sino-Cinema*



**China / 2016 / Drama / Tibetan with English Subtitles  
142 min / 2.35:1 / Stereo 2.0 and 5.1 Surround Sound**

Film Movement Contacts:

Press: Genevieve Villaflor | (212) 941-7744 x215 | [genevieve@filmmovement.com](mailto:genevieve@filmmovement.com)

Theatrical: Clemence Taillandier | (212) 941-7715 | [theatrical@filmmovement.com](mailto:theatrical@filmmovement.com)

Non-Theatrical and Festivals: Maxwell Wolkin | (212) 941-7744 x211 | [maxwell@filmmovement.com](mailto:maxwell@filmmovement.com)

Assets:

Official US Trailer: TBD

Downloadable Hi-res Images:

<http://www.filmmovement.com/filmcatalog/index.asp?MerchandiseID=542>

## **SYNOPSIS**

After discovering a sacred stone in the mouth of a slain deer, Taibei, a young Tibetan cowboy, embarks on a mission to bring it back to the holy mountain of Buddha's handprint. His journey proves to be long and difficult as black market traders seek the priceless artifact for themselves, and two brothers – Kodi and Guori – seek revenge for the murder of their father. An obstinate woman, Joan, and a psychic elf, Pu, soon decide to join him. The trio's earthly conflict is suddenly thrown off course by strange and mystical events.

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

After discovering a sacred stone in the mouth of a slain deer, Taibei, a young Tibetan cowboy, embarks on a mystical mission to bring it back to a holy mountain. His journey proves difficult, especially since he is on the run from two brothers, Kodi and Guori, who are seeking vengeance since their father was killed by Taibei's father.

## **LOGLINE**

A long journey to return a sacred stone to its holy origins forces Taibei, a young Tibetan cowboy, to confront a series of mystical events and earthly adversity.



## SELECT PRESS FOR SOUL ON A STRING

“Blend[s] Buddhist spiritual elements with classic Western motifs.... Chinese director Zhang Yang eschews the thrill of propulsive duels for a discursive allegorical approach, serving up picturesque visuals, highland-dry humor, and karmic plot twists.... the standout of the aesthetically pleasing production is Guo Daming’s widescreen cinematography, which captures Tibet’s stunningly varied terrain of lakes, deserts and mountains with sweeping aerial shots, in dramatic tones of fiery reds and brooding umber.” – Maggie Lee, **Variety**

“In this panoramic masterpiece, Director Zhang Yang weaves a tale of revenge and destiny across the diverse lands of Tibet, creating a Buddhist Western of epic proportions.... Striking widescreen shots of ochre deserts and verdant landscapes help blend the lines between magic realism and classic man-on-the-run format...” – Lauren Terry, **Willamette Week**

“...The film...takes you through a surrealistic world of magical traditions. With breath-taking visuals and landscapes, SOUL ON A STRING is undoubtedly a treat to the eyes.” – Gopika KP, **Manorama Online**

“SOUL ON A STRING is visually stunning...The landscape of Tibet; has rarely looked so striking. It reminds you why the Tibetans are so attached to their land.” – David D'Arcy, **Screen Daily**

“SOUL ON A STRING feels richly textured and credibly drawn.... At nearly two-and-a-half hours in length, SOUL ON A STRING is an epic undertaking in almost every sense, breathtaking in its sweep and beauty but dizzying in its size and scope.... A thoughtful and philosophical adventure feature with a surprising sardonic streak, Soul on a String achieves an impressive balance between Eastern teachings and Western tropes – a veritable middle way, the same nirvana after which Yang’s characters each aspire.” – Steven Neish, **Hey U Guys**

## Credits

### CREW

<b>Directed by</b>	Zhang Yang
<b>Screenplay by</b>	Tashi Dawa Zhang Yang
<b>Director of Photography</b>	Guo Daming
<b>Editor</b>	Yang Hongyu
<b>Sound Supervisors</b>	Zhao Nan Yang Jiang
<b>Sound</b>	Yang Qingyi
<b>Composer</b>	Zhang Jian
<b>Production Designer</b>	Suen Li
<b>Costume &amp; Make-up</b>	Lei Jing
<b>Executive Producers</b>	Li Li Zhang Zhao Gao Fei Yu Rongcai
<b>General Producer</b>	Li Li
<b>Producer</b>	Zhang Yang
<b>Line Producers</b>	Wang Hong Cheng Gong

### CAST

<b>Tai Bei</b>	Kimba
<b>Joan</b>	Quni Ciren
<b>Ge Dan</b>	Siano Dudiom Zahi
<b>Zhan Dui</b>	Solange Nima
<b>Pu</b>	Yixi Danzeng
<b>Older Guo Ri</b>	Gengdeng Pengcuo
<b>Younger Guo Ri</b>	Zerong Dages
<b>Cordy</b>	Lei Chen

## BIOGRAPHY– Zhang Yang: Director



Zhang Yang is a Chinese film director, screenwriter, and occasional actor. He studied Chinese literature in Beijing, where he later moved to the Central Academy of Drama from where he graduated in 1992.

His first film SPICY LOVE SOUP opened in Competition at Tokyo IFF. Followed by SHOWER, a realistic gaze at contemporary Beijing, that achieved great recognition internationally, as well as in China, where it was successfully distributed. In

the film QUITTING, Zhang Yang gets even closer to reality: the film fictionalises and re-enacts the real life of the main actor Jia Hongsheng, his struggle with drug addiction, his parents, fellow inmates in a mental institution.

His next films, SUNFLOWER, GETTING HOME, FULL CIRCLE, were a romantic drama, a road movie comedy, and a powerful drama, respectively, that travelled internationally to many festivals and were distributed with great recognition in China. PATHS OF THE SOUL has been shot over the course of a year in Tibet and has been released in North America, Japan and China after touring in numerous festivals.

SOUL ON A STRING is his latest film.

## FILMOGRAPHY

SOUL ON A STRING (*Pisheng shang de hun*, 2016)

PATHS OF THE SOUL (*Kang Rinpoche*, 2015)

FULL CIRCLE (*Feiyue laorenyuan*, 2012)

DRIVERLESS (*Wuren jiashi*, 2010)

GETTING HOME (*Luoye guigen*, 2007)

SUNFLOWER (*Xiangrikui*, 2005)

QUITTING (*Zuotian*, 2001)

SHOWER (*Xizao*, 1999)

SPICY LOVE SOUP (*Aiqing malatang*, 1997)

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"During the whole year of my stay in Tibet, I shot two films: PATHS OF THE SOUL and SOUL ON A STRING.

PATHS OF THE SOUL is a "documentary-style" fiction film featuring unprofessional actors from Tibet. This film reproduces a thousand kilometers pilgrimage in a loyal way, while SOUL ON A STRING is a magical realist film with a lot of innovative tentative on the narrative structure and the conception of the space and time. The two films are thus exploring two different forms of art.

With these two films, I was researching the possibilities of the cinematographic language.

SOUL ON A STRING is adapted from two novels by Tibetan writer Tashi Dawa: "Tibet, The Soul Tied on a String" and "On the Way to Lhasa." Tashi Dawa is a representative writer of magical realism of China.

The spectacular and unique landscape and variety of landforms of Tibet have naturally a magical power. Then the religion and the local civilization provide a strong ground for the magical realism. Even though the film has been shot in Tibet, it is not an ethnical film. If I take the example of music, this is not like a traditional Tibetan folk song, but a world music piece with Tibetan elements. "Tibet" is the carrier of the film's space.

Its desolation and expansion provide us the possibilities to do a Western on image. At the same time, the Tibetan religion also leads us into the higher level of the research with the complicity of the human nature. Finally, this is not a film of curiosity, or discovery of the Tibetan folk-customs, but a film that speaks a universal language that can be understood by the world. It's about hate and redemption, escape and responsibility, reality and virtual reality, karma and reincarnation. These are the questions that all the humanity faces." – *Zhang Yang*



## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

### AWARDS:

Best Cinematography – 2016 Shanghai International Film Festival

### OFFICIAL SELECTION:

2016 Shanghai International Film Festival, Competition

2016 Toronto International Film Festival, Contemporary World Cinema

2016 Busan International Film Festival, Windows on Asian Cinema

2016 Hong Kong Asian Film Festival, Focus Tibet

2016 Chicago International Film Festival

2016 Hawaii Film Festival

2016 Golden Horse Film Festival

2016 Bosphorus International Film Festival

2016 Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival

2016 Kerala International Film Festival

### **About Film Movement**

Celebrating its 15th year, Film Movement is a North American distributor of award-winning independent and foreign films based in New York City. Film Movement has released more than 250 feature films and shorts culled from prestigious film festivals worldwide, and last year it had its first Academy Award-nominated film, Naji Abu Nowar's THEEB. Film Movement's theatrical distribution strategy has evolved to include promising American independent films, documentaries, and an even stronger slate of foreign art house titles. Its catalog includes titles by directors such as Hirokazu Kore-eda, Maren Ade, Jessica Hausner, Andrei Konchalovsky, Andrzej Wajda, Diane Kurys, Ciro Guerra and Melanie Laurent. In 2015, Film Movement launched its reissue label Film Movement Classics, featuring new restorations released theatrically as well as on Blu-ray and DVD, including films by such noted directors as Eric Rohmer, Peter Greenaway, Bille August, Marleen Gorris, Takeshi Kitano, Arturo Ripstein, and Ettore Scola. For more information, please visit [www.filmmovement.com](http://www.filmmovement.com).