



ZHANG YIMOU

Fifth Generation Chinese Filmmaker

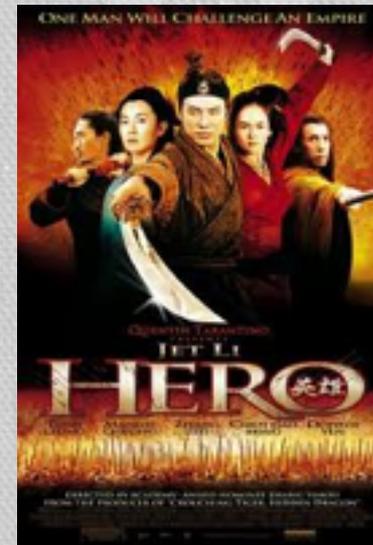
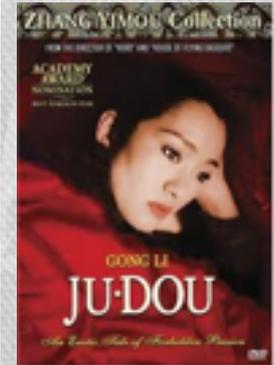
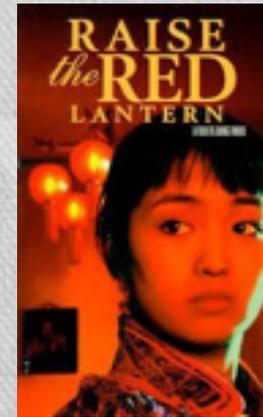
Zhang Yimou

- Born in 1951 in Shaanxi Province
- His father served under Chiang Kai-shek in the Chinese Civil War
- During the Cultural Revolution, Z.Y. worked as a farm worker and a cotton mill hand
- Attended Beijing Film Academy, studying photography, entering in 1978 when the school was re-opened after the Cultural Revolution
- The most well-known member of the “Fifth Generation” of Chinese filmmakers, who emerged after the Cultural Revolution
- He co-directed the opening and closing ceremonies for the 2008 Beijing Olympics
- His films are noted for:
 - Lush photography
 - Sensuality, eroticism
 - Often with a viewpoint from a female leading character
 - Personal stories, in a culture that so often emphasizes collectivism



Zhang Yimou: Significant film types

- His early “Red Trilogy” (historical dramas with personal foci):
 - Red Sorghum (1987)
 - Ju Dou (1990)
 - Raise the Red Lantern (1991)
- Wuxia films, e.g.:
 - Hero (2002)
 - House of Flying Daggers (2004)
- Attempts at international cross-overs:
 - Segment in Lumiere & Co. (1995)
 - The Flowers of War (2011) (with Christian Bale)
 - received mixed critical reviews
 - Interview with Z.Y. on The Flowers of War



Scene Titles

- 1. Nameless
- 2. Sky
- 3. Calligraphy
- 4. Swords and Arrows
- 5. Jealous Fools
- 6. Falling Leaves
- 7. Advance Ten Paces
- 8. Flying Snow
- 9. Underestimated
- 10. Spare the King
- 11. Our Land
- 12. Draw Your Sword
- 13. Execution
- 14. Credits

Multiple Versions

"Hero" tells and retells one story three times

- Nameless as a story teller
- Sky parallels General Fan in *The Emperor and the Assassin* and offers his sacrifice for a lofty goal;
- Broken Sword holds the key in leading the whole event towards a dramatic turn;
- Flying Snow has been living in hatred
- until she fatally hurt her love Broken Sword;

Rashomon Effect (film)

- **Rashomon** 羅生門 is a 1950 Japanese crime mystery film directed by Akira Kurosawa. The film is based on two stories by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa — ("Rashomon" provides the setting, while "In a Grove" provides the characters and plot).



Who Tells the Truth?

- The film won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, and also received an Academy Honorary Award at the 24th Academy Awards.
- The film depicts the rape of a woman and the apparent murder of her samurai husband, through the widely differing accounts of four witnesses, including the bandit/rapist, the wife, the dead man speaking through a medium (Fumiko Honma), and lastly the narrator, the one witness that seems the most objective and least biased.

Flashbacks within Flashbacks

- The stories are mutually contradictory, leaving the viewer to determine which, if any, is the truth. The story unfolds in flashback as the four characters—the bandit Tajōmaru (Toshirō Mifune), the samurai's wife (Machiko Kyō), the murdered samurai (Masayuki Mori), and the nameless woodcutter (Takashi Shimura)—recount the events of one afternoon in a grove. But it is also a flashback within a flashback, because the accounts of the witnesses are being retold by a woodcutter and a priest (Minoru Chiaki) to a ribald commoner (Kichijiro Ueda) as they wait out a rainstorm in a ruined gatehouse identified by a sign as Rashōmon.

Color Scheme

Aesthetic vs. Symbolic

- **Cracking the Color Code of 'Hero'** -New York Times. August 2004

By Robert Mackey

- http://www.helloziyi.us/Articles/Hero_Color_Code.htm
- Mr. Zhang's plan was to divide "Hero" into five sections, each dominated by a single color.

An unlikely collaboration

- The martial-arts epic "Hero," which opens on Aug. 27, is the product of an unlikely collaboration between two dazzling visual stylists: the Chinese director Zhang Yimou and the Australian cinematographer Christopher Doyle.

ZHANG YIMOU



Christopher Doyle



**Switched from Fuji to Kodak
It is a Kodak Red,
a much more saturated solid red
The red color frames the first story, a love story
between Broken Sword and Flying Snow**



**The Blue Color frames the second story
(between Broken Sword and Nameless)
the lack of contrast between
characters and setting was intentional**



**The white color frames the third section
white against a dramatic backdrop of cliffs
that look like old walls falling apart**



Green is used for all flashbacks



Calligraphy and Swordsmanship

- The essence of calligraphy is from the soul. Swordsmanship is the same. Both aspire to truth and simplicity
- Gradually I recognized a greater cause.
- She asked why I had abandoned the mission. I told her the King must not be killed. That is what calligraphy taught me.

Yearning for Unification

- All under Heaven...
- Our Land

swordsmanship's ultimate ideal.

- It's just dawned on me! This scroll of Broken Sword's isn't about swordsmen's technique, but about swordsmanship's ultimate ideal.
- Swordsmanship's first achievement is the unity of man and sword. Once this unity is attained, even a blade of grass can be a weapon.
- The second achievement is when the sword exists in one's heart but absent from one's hand. One can strike an enemy at 100 paces even with bare hands.
- The swordsmanship's ultimate achievement is the absence of the sword from both hand and heart. The swordsman is at peace with the rest of the world.
- He vows not to kill and to bring peace to mankind.

Confucius' Teaching

- “Harmony is the most valuable”
 - 1.12
 - *The Analects*
 - Translated by D. C. Lau
 - Page 7
- hé wéi guì
 - 和 为 贵