



CHINESE SHADOWS and WIL PRODUCTIONS

present

# TA'ANG

A FILM BY WANG BING

*Hong Kong – France / 2016 / 147 min. / Color / Documentary*



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## SYNOPSIS

The TA'ANG, a Burmese ethnic minority, are caught between a civil war and the Chinese border. Since early 2015, heavy fights have forced thousands of children, women and older people on an exodus across the border, into China. TA'ANG follows the daily life of these refugees, forced to leave their home but hoping to return there soon.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

This film was shot in China's Yunnan Province near the border with the Kokang region of neighbouring Myanmar. Following civil war in Kokang province, around 100,000 ethnic Ta Ang, Han, Dai and Burmese took refuge in the small river valleys of the Sino-Myanmar border region. These refugees have been surviving on the meagre food supplies they brought with them, gifts from civil society groups, or food bought from local Chinese merchants with whatever cash they still have.

We filmed life in the two refugee camps of Maidihe and Chachang, which were sheltering around 4000 and 2000 refugees respectively. Living conditions and camp locations are constantly changing due to overcrowding, with many people camping by the roadside. Many refugees are staying with relatives or friends in the small villages along the border. Most of them are doing odd jobs for local Chinese farmers, to make enough money to get by, usually helping with the sugar-cane harvest. We filmed several Ta Ang and Dai women living in Chachang camp, including Jin Xiaoman and Jin Xiaoda who had come across the border into China with their children and old folk from their villages.

The refugees in the camp are constantly being moved from one place to another, so the women push further into Chinese territory to the village of Baiyan, provisionally making camp on the outskirts. During the day they go into the village to look for work. At night there is not enough room in the tent, so they pass the time talking by the fire while the children sleep inside.

One day those refugees described in extended fireside conversations what many ordinary citizens went through in the Kokang conflict, their own experience of the terrors of the war, their escape, how they witnessed fellow villagers or relatives being beaten up, massacred, or forcibly enrolled as combatants.

For Xiaoman, this life as a refugee with her two children is one of constant fear and stress. She despairs of her future and thinks about suicide, but keeps going regardless, looking after her own two children, as well as the other young and old people with her, while constantly thinking about her husband and their friends who have stayed behind.

She wants to make life better for her children, but can't earn enough to give them a regular square meal. Some of the women's husbands are in the army back in Burma, others have to stay to take care of the old people who can't travel, and to guard the family's home and property. But many families have been robbed of all they had, and their livestock have died for lack of care.

Chaheba is the area nearest to the Sino-Burmese border where around 700 refugees are now living scattered among different villages only about two kilometres from the war zone. Between 20-23 April 2015, fighting was particularly fierce. The sound of guns and explosions coming steadily closer to Chaheba caused growing anxiety among the refugees, who began to move deeper into the mountains, carrying their children and a few belongings. Now night is falling. The women and children have found a recently-built shelter. They make a fire and stop for the night.

*Wang Bing*

## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China, in 1967, Wang Bing studied photography at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Art (1992) and cinematography at Beijing Film Academy (1995). He began his independent filmmaking career in 1999.

## FILMOGRAPHY

### **2016 TA'ANG (DEANG)**

Documentary, 147 minutes.  
Berlinale, official selection Forum

### **2014 TRACES (YIZHI)**

Documentary, 25 minutes.

### **2014 FATHER AND SON (FU YU ZI)**

Documentary, 40 minutes.

### **2013 'TIL MADNESS DO US PART (FENG AI)**

Documentary, 227 minutes.  
Venice Film Festival Out of Competition, Toronto IFF

### **2012 ALONE (GUDU)**

Documentary, 90 minutes.  
Critic Award in Black Movie Festival  
Rotterdam IFF

### **2012 THREE SISTERS (SAN ZIMEI)**

Documentary, 153 minutes.  
Orizzonti Best Film in Venice Film Festival  
Best Film in Doc Lisboa  
Best Film Award, Audience Award in Festival des 3 Continents  
Best Documentary Asia Africa Award in Dubai IFF  
Grand prix, Ecumenical jury Award, E-changer Award, Don Quijote Award in Fribourg FIFF

### **2010 THE DITCH (JIA BIAN GOU)**

Feature Film, 113 minutes  
Venice Film Festival, Official Competition

### **2008 COAL MONEY (TONG DAO)**

Documentary, 52 minutes.  
International competition, Cinema Du Reel, Paris, France,

### **2008 CRUDE OIL (YUAN YOU)**

Documentary film installation, 14 hours.

Supported by Hubert Bals Fund Rotterdam.

Premiered at Rotterdam International Film Festival, 2008.

Hong Kong Film Festival, 2008.

### **2007 FENGMING, A CHINESE MEMOIR (HE FENGMING)**

Documentary, 184 minutes.

Cannes Film Festival, 2007 - Official Selection.

Toronto International Film Festival, 2007.

Rotterdam International Film Festival, 2008.

### **2007 BRUTALITY FACTORY (BAOLI GONGCHANG)**

Short in the anthology STATE OF THE WORLD.

Cannes Film Festival, 2007 - Directors' Fortnight.

### **1999 - 2003 WEST OF THE TRACKS (TIE XI QU)**

Documentary in three parts, 554 minutes.

Part 1: RUST (*244 minutes*)

Part 2: REMNANTS (*178 minutes*)

Part 3: RAILS (*132 minutes*)

Lisbon International Documentary Festival, 2002 (*Grand Prize*)

Marseille Festival of Documentary Film, 2003 (*Grand Prize*)

Three Continents Nantes Film Festival, 2003 (*Golden Balloon, documentary section*)

Yamagata International Documentary Festival, 2003 (*Robert and Frances Flaherty Prize*)

## CREDITS

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