



## Bodhi Tree • Tao Hua

**Feature** 35mm 120min.

**Budget**

US\$1,923,000  
(HK\$15,000,000)

**Funds Secured**

US\$256,000  
(HK\$2,000,000)

**Producer**

NAI An

**Production Company**

Dream Factory

**HAF Goals**

Co-producers, Sales agents, Funds

### ■ Introduction ■

One of the first 6th generation directors to receive world attention, Lou Ye made his mark on New Chinese Cinema with *Suzhou River* and *Purple Butterfly*. Adapting the novel of well-known Hong Kong novelist Lillian Lee (also the author of *Rouge* and *Farewell My Concubine*), Lou Ye's *Bodhi Tree* is a tale of taboo love, homoerotic desire and bloody revenge that blends local flavor with magic realism. Flowers evoke a supernatural presence of seductive beauty and evil. Set in an orchard in Hong Kong's New Territories, and spanning two decades, it is told from the viewpoint of a socially autistic young man who witnesses his mother's adultery with the gardener, and its horrific consequences. However, he is not as innocent as he seems...

### ■ Director ■

LOU Ye was born in Shanghai, China in 1965. He graduated from Shanghai Art School in 1983, majoring in Cartoon Production. In 1985, he enrolled in the Beijing Film Academy, majoring in Film Direction. There, he began to make experimental shorts. His debut feature *Weekend Lover* (1993) won the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Prize for Best Director at Mannheim-Heidelberg IFF. In 1997, he independently produced a 5-episode TV film series entitled *Super City*, featuring works by emerging Chinese directors.

*Suzhou River* (2000) established Lou as one of the stars of the New Chinese Cinema. The film won the VPRO Tiger Award at Rotterdam, Grand Prix and Best Actress in the International Film Festival in Paris, the Fipresci prize at Viennale and the Grand Prix at Tokyo Filmex. It was selected by *Time Magazine* (Asia) as one of the best movies of 2000. His project *Summer Palace* was a Pusan Promotion Plan 2000 script awardwinner. In 2001, he was commissioned by Rotterdam to direct the DV short film *In Shanghai*. *Purple Butterfly* (2003) won more accolades, and was in Competition at Cannes 2003.

### ■ Producer ■

NAI An was born in Shanghai in 1965, and graduated from

the Central Theater Academy in 1991, majoring in Direction. Her production credits include all of Lou Ye's feature films: *Weekend Lover*, *Super City*, *Suzhou River* and *Purple Butterfly*.

### ■ Production Company ■

**Dream Factory** is a confederation of young Chinese filmmakers founded by Nai An in early 1998. In 1993, Nai An began to make films as an independent producer. Dream Factory is dedicated to discovering, cultivating and helping promising young Chinese directors, and to helping them promote and seek funding from domestic and overseas markets, through production and co-productions.

The company's most well-known productions are *Weekend Lover* (1993), *Suzhou River* (2000) and *Purple Butterfly* (2003). Its current projects in production and development are: *Summer Palace* (directed and co-written by Lou Ye), *Marilyn and Molly* (directed by Li Jixian and Li Wei) and *Bodhi Tree*.

### ■ Synopsis ■

The peach blossom, a seasonal flower that adorns almost every Chinese household during the Spring Festival, traditionally symbolizes good fortune and romance. However, not all peach blossoms are considered proper and fortuitous. In Chinese literature and folklore, metaphors or imageries associated with this luscious flower have sometimes had lascivious or evil connotations. The expression "reverse-adjointed peach blossom" forebodes disaster, even unexpected death. After all, fate is decided by heaven, and not by mere mortals.

Eight-year-old Zhouyan has not uttered a word in seven months. He saw his mother hang herself right in front of him. She was only 29. If a woman does not live past 30, she is according to proverbial expression, 'fragile as a flower'.

Many years later, Zhouyan lies tucked up in a warm bed. He feels a twitching, an arousal in his heart. Born in the Year of the Hare, which makes him 24 now, Zhou Yan is the youngest and most upright horticulturist in the New Territories. Girls

flock to his orchard, ostensibly to admire the peach blossoms, but actually to catch a glimpse of the strapping young man. But Zhouyan nurses a secret – a secret which he cannot hold back for too long. With Xiaotao (“Little Peach Blossom”) lying next to him, he is seized by an impulse to confess.

What happened was very simple, yet very complicated.

Zhou Yan’s father was an overbearing, retired policeman in his fifties. He had killed before and had since suffered from insomnia. Fate decreed that he would marry Lanxiang, a young woman who got herself in trouble. Every night, he had to hold her hand to fall asleep. The peach blossoms he planted were known far and wide for their extraordinary beauty. His orchard provided many Hong Kong households with splendid seasonal decorations.

Desheng was a driver and hired hand in the orchard. He was tall and sturdy, and wore overalls throughout the year. He had dexterous fingers. Whenever it got too hot, he rolled up his shirt and revealed a full set of well-toned pecs and abs. He was little Zhouyan’s hero. The boy’s favorite pastime was flicking and fondling his torso, which looked like “a chocolate bar.”

It was the last month before Chinese New Year. The chilly wind blew hard. As Desheng drove the truck to Kowloon to deliver some peach blossom trees, his eyes became blurred by the dust. His agile hands felt tender and soft as they ran up the nape of Mother’s neck – a neck so fine and graceful, and irresistible to any man. But time was running out...

Zhouyan opened his sleepy eyes and saw the most important man and woman in his life having an affair.

He was jealous...

Two days later, a heated fight broke out in the orchard.

Father chopped off Desheng’s hands. Blood stains strewn all over the ground formed a deep scarlet, even the peach blossoms paled in comparison.

Sixteen years later, Zhouyan grows up. He inherits the orchard, yet it is no sanctuary, but an evil paradise...

## ■ Director’s Statement ■

I want to make a “Hong Kong” film with both local color and Chinese characteristics. As the story of *Bodhi Tree* unfolds,

you will feel that everything from the orchard, the truck, scenes of Kowloon are realistic and comprehensible. Yet, at the same, it also feels elusive, just like the illusion of the fabled Peach Blossom Land in classical poetry. There is a touch of effulgence, a touch of sentiment, a touch of fatalism and a touch of powerlessness. All these moods will together create an atmosphere beyond verbal description. This atmosphere will leave you at a loss.

This is how I intend the film to be.

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## Contact: Dream Factory

D4-201, Jinqiu Zhichun, Zhichun Rd, Haidian Dist, Beijing, China  
 Postal Code: 100088  
 Tel: +86-10-82356188 Fax: +86-10-82356388  
 E-mail: info@dreamfactory.cn