

“The Road Home” starring Chinese actors, 2000, G, 89 minutes

Background notes:

The film is set in a village in North China called Sanhetun (similar latitude to Minnesota).

It is likely that the flashback portion of the film is set during the Anti-Rightist Campaign and that the character was recalled for investigation and questioning. The Anti-Rightist Movement of the People's Republic of China in the 1950s and early 1960s consisted of a series of campaigns to purge alleged "rightists" within the Communist Party of China and abroad. The definition of "rightists" officially referred to those intellectuals who appeared to favor capitalism and class divisions and against collectivization. The campaigns were instigated by Chairman Mao Zedong and saw the political persecution of an estimated 550,000.

Arranged marriages were still the norm in China in the 1950s, so a courtship and romance between an 18-year old resident and a 20-year old newcomer was significant and became a story that everyone in the village knew well.

In September 2011 the currency exchange rate is 6.4 yuan per U.S. dollar. This means that the 4000 – 5000 yuan which the mayor wanted to raise in order to hire coffin bearers is approximately \$600 - \$800 – this gives us an idea of the economic condition of the village as the movie begins in present day China.

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Major themes:

- Grief
- Customs
- Waiting
- Submission
- Love
- Honor
- Community

Scriptures:

Romans 12:15 (NLT) – *“Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.”*

Proverbs 15:13 (NASB) – *“A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.”*

Luke 2:42 (NIV) – *“When he [Jesus] was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.”*

Psalms 27:14 (NLT) – *“Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.”*

Romans 13:1 (NIV) – *“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.”*

1 Corinthians 13:4 – 7 (NLT) – *“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.”*

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Romans 13:7 (NIV) – *“Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.”*

Romans 12:4 – 5 (NLT) – *“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.”*

Major characters:

- Zhao Di (the main character, a young woman)
- Luo Changyu (the school teacher)
- Luo Yusheng (the narrator, son of Changyu & Di)
- Grandmother (Zhao Di’s mother)

Discussion points:

1. How do the culture and customs of this remote Chinese village impact you?
2. Discuss these selected school children’s chants:
 - a. *“In life, follow me. In life, you must make goals.”*
 - b. *“One must learn to write. One must learn arithmetic. Keep a journal faithfully. Know the present, know the past.”*
 - c. *“Know respect for your elders.”*
 - d. *“Spring is here. It melts the snow. The grass turns green. The farmers sow. The oxen plow the field. The wild geese return. The frogs begin to hop. Swallows start to sing. Spring is the season to sow. All starts to grow again. The world is full of life again.”*
 - e. *“Spring, summer, fall, winter. Four seasons in a year. East, West, South, North. In everything there is a purpose.”*
3. For 40 years, Di loved to listen to the teacher’s voice. What are some lessons we can learn from this?
4. *“The road is part of their love story”* - How do each of the roads and journeys in our lives become part of our stories?