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### To live is better than to die = 好死不如賴活著

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# To Live Is Better Than To Die



好死不如  
賴活着

## Film and Director's

*To Live Is Better Than To Die* was released in 2003. The duration is 86 minutes.

The Director is Chen Weijun who is a Chinese documentary director and producer. He is graduating from the journalism program at Sichuan University in 1992 and his famous films include *My Life Is My Philosophy*, *Please Vote For Me* and *The Biggest Chinese Restaurant In The World*.

## Documentary Mode

The film draws mostly on the observational documentary mode, but with elements of the participatory documentary. The observational mode emerged in the 1960s as a result of technological innovation. The observational mode involves the filmmaker simply observing events, and is also associated with the fly-on-the-wall style.<sup>1</sup> This mode rules out commentary, narration, staging and re-enactment. Viewers are as a result left to make sense of the issues themselves. The film does on occasion involve a participatory mode, for the filmmaker does interact with Ma's family through interviews, and, having spent a lot of time with the family, the filmmaker is very attached to the family. The director interviews Ma Ningning about Aids.

## Synopsis

The camera focuses on the first Aids village in Mainland China. For Ma Shen-yi and his family, life has taken an unexpected turn. There are five members of Ma's family; four of them have been infected with HIV and can expect to die. This documentary follows the family, with its four of five sick members, to explore how Ma's family faces death.

## Editing

Chen Weijun used Solar terms—terms linked to the 12 major solar terms and 12 minor solar terms that together make up the traditional Chinese lunisolar calendar. In the film, Chen Weijun made use of eight major solar terms: summer solstice, great heat, mid-autumn, autumnal equinox, frost, start of winter, winter solstice and start of spring. His reason for using those eight major solar terms is that they echo different stages of Leimei's life. For example, the solar term, frost, echoes the time when Leimei died. According to traditional Chinese understanding, frost is the period when every herb dies.

## AIDS In China

Ma shenyi and his family is only one of cases of 10500 AIDS patients in China in 2009<sup>2</sup>. According to International HIV & AIDS charity's research in 2007, around 13,000 people died from AIDS in China<sup>3</sup>. AIDS infection can be the result of injecting drugs, sex between carriers, blood donations and transfusions. Since there is high demand for blood products in China, many illegal donation sites were set up across China. They offered around 50 Yuan for plasma and 200 Yuan for blood. Therefore, many rural framers and rural migrant workers sold their blood as their average salary per year is less than 500 Yuan. "We all sold our blood to make money. We sold blood to pay the local taxes, to support our kids through school and to make a living", women from Henan Province said.

## Reception

"Chen is one of China's few independent documentary filmmakers...Unsurprisingly it is the kind of film that makes the Chinese authorities squirm" (Time Magazine)

British Documentary Award 2004  
Int'l Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam 2004  
Sundance Film Festival 2003  
The George Foster Peabody Awards 2004

Hong Kong Asian Film Festival 2006  
The 8th Hong Kong Social Movement Film Festival

## Questions

- 1) Wenlou Village in Shangcai County of Henan Province has a serious AIDS problem. Has the Chinese government given it sufficient attention?
- 2) Has the government provided enough AIDS treatment measures for Wenlou Village?
- 3) Has the government promoted sufficient AIDS education and awareness?
- 4) If the government failed to take appropriate measures, should it be held responsible for the crisis in Wenlou Village?

<sup>1</sup> Nichols B., 2001, Introduction to Documentary, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

<sup>2</sup> UNGASS, 2010, 'China 2010 UNGASS Country Progress Report (2008-2009)', Joint United Nation Programme On HIV/AIDS.

<sup>3</sup> UNAIDS, 2008, 'Report on the global AIDS epidemic', Joint United Nation Programme On HIV/AIDS.

# To Live Is Better Than

## 好死不如 賴活着

### 背景及導演簡歷

《好死不如賴活着》在2003年上映，全片總長為86分鐘。本片是一名中國導演陳為軍所執導的。1992年，他畢業於四川大學新聞系。及後，他加入武漢電視台紀錄片制作部。為人熟悉的作品有《我的生活我的哲學》，《請為我投票》和《世界最大的中餐館》。

### 紀錄片類型

本片兼容了觀察型紀錄片和參與型紀錄片的特徵，特別是前者的比重較多。兩種類型出現的時間約於20世紀60年代。觀察型紀錄片的技術基礎可歸根於攜帶型攝影機和磁帶攝像機的出現。特徵是觀察現實世界的真實，換言之，這類電影不主張將故事戲劇化、並加插敘述、解說、背景音樂和視覺效果。所以，學者亦將這類紀錄片的導演比喻為「牆壁上的蒼蠅」<sup>1</sup>。

這是關於中國一個愛滋病家庭的故事，地點是中國第一條「愛滋村」- 河南上蔡縣文樓村。馬深義一家五口中，四人都感染了愛滋病毒，只有大女兒馬寧寧是健康的。生命從此變得灰暗，絕望和痛苦瀰漫整個屋子。由始至終，鏡頭都緊貼着他們的日常生活，紀錄馬深義一家如何面對突如其來的黑暗，還有對生命的態度和愛滋病的看法。

### 內容概要

影片的結構是以中國傳統節氣來劃分，剛好紀錄了導演和馬深義一家渡過的春夏秋冬。最巧合是節氣所對應的正是人的生老病死。夏至：馬深義的妻子- 雷妹心情焦躁不已，一時向地灶王哭喊，一時回憶當年。立秋：雷妹病情加重，已經不能起床。霜降：草木植物大限的節氣，雷妹去世了。春節：馬深義和三個小孩暫時忘記雷妹去世的悲傷。

### 結構與節氣

### 中國的愛滋病問題

據國際艾滋病慈善機構的研究，在2009年中國愛滋病患者數目估計有10500人<sup>2</sup>。而在2007年，中國約有13000人死於愛滋病<sup>3</sup>。愛滋病毒在中國蔓延的原因可以歸納為一；因濫用藥物而被不潔的針筒注射後而感染愛滋病毒；二，與愛滋病毒帶菌者發生性行為；三，賣血，也是當中最嚴重的問題。中國對於血製品有很大的需求，因此，公營機構自1980，90年期間鼓勵賣血，賣血者卻因器具消毒不合格而遭感染，令愛滋疫情擴大。另外，非法的地下抽血站更是不計其數，他們會以混合血球輸回賣血者，造成賣血者感染愛滋。以農民工平均工資每年不超過500元人民幣來說，他們賣血能夠賺取到50至200元人民幣等較容易而高的收入，因此，許多農民工都擁去賣血。“我們都以賣血來賺錢。所得的錢可以用來繳付地方稅，支持我們的孩子到學校讀書和生活”，一位來自河南的婦女說。

獲得獎項  
• 2004年英國國家最佳紀錄片獎

- 2004阿姆斯特丹紀錄片電影節最高競賽單元提名
- 2003年辛丹斯電影節世界紀錄
- 2004美國廣播電視文化成就獎（金喬治·福斯特·皮博迪獎）

香港放映紀錄  
• 2006香港亞洲電影節  
• 第八屆香港社會運動電影節

### 金獎

1) 河南上蔡縣文樓村的愛滋病問題十分嚴重，政府有沒有給予足夠的照顧給愛滋病患者呢？

2) 政府有否提供愛滋病的治療方法予愛滋病患者呢？

3) 政府有否向民眾推廣預防愛滋病的方法和教訓他們何為愛滋病呢？

4) 如果政府沒有為愛滋病問題實行過適當的措施，政府是否應該為文樓村面對嚴重的愛滋病問題負上責任呢？

### 討論問題

1 Nichols B., Introduction to Documentary

2 UNGASS (2010) 'China 2010 UNGASS Country Progress Report (2008-2009)'

3 UNAIDS (2008) 'Report on the global AIDS epidemic'