



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

SNOW LEOPARD (12A)

Director: Pema Tsenden

Starring: Jinpa, Ziqi Xiong, Tseten Tashi

China, 2023, 1 hour 49 minutes, Tibetan/Chinese + English subtitles

A family dilemma: a magnificent snow leopard has been trapped by a shepherd. It has killed nine of his sheep and he wants to destroy it, but his father and younger brother, a monk, do everything they can to dissuade him.

The film is a conflict of bare faced, furious capital demanding redress, and the traditional Tibetan view that the snow leopard, as part of the animal kingdom, should be protected.

Pema Tsenden, who unexpectedly died last May, probably from a heart attack brought on by altitude sickness, had been responsible for a new wave in Tibetan cinema. And he believed in working within the system.

'The political complexities of Pema Tsenden's situation were hard for foreigners to fathom. I once shared a panel with him at King's College in London at which he spoke cautiously about the constraints on Tibetan identity in contemporary China; he was challenged by a Chinese student from the mainland who believed every word the communist government had taught her, and he sensibly ended debate by saying they should agree to differ.' (Tony Rayns, BFI Obituary 12th May 2023)

'Pema Tsenden sharply draws a number of fault lines that run through his high-altitude tale. The Tibetan ethnic minority struggling with the rigidity and condescension of Chinese authorities has been a recurring theme in Pema Tsenden's oeuvre, but *Snow Leopard* adds the rural-urban divide within the Tibetan minority itself as well as the friction between farming and nature preservation in precarious natural habitats. The film handles these themes with subtlety through small differences in the way the various characters act, speak, or even how and what they eat...This results in a balanced film where the viewer can see where each character is coming from, and that right and wrong in this situation are fluid...

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Pema Tsenden (1969-2023) The Silent Holy Stones (2002) The Grassland (2004) The Search (2007) Old Dog (2011) Sacred Arrow (2014) Tharlo (2015) My Little Lama (2017) Jinpa (2018) Balloon (2019) Cordyceps & Singer (2020) Eternal Day & Strangers (2022) Seventeen Mile & Snow Leopard (2023)

Preview courtesy of Day for Night

Notes compiled by Matthew Evans