

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Not one less</b>
Author(s)	
Source	<i>London Film Festival</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	32
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Yi ge dou bu neg shao (Not one less), Zhang, Yimou, 1999



## Not One Less Yi Ge Duo Bu Neng Shao

China 1999

I believe that more than ever people are looking for a sense of connectedness and for characters with whom they can empathize. [...] Many of my mother's relatives are teachers in the countryside, and I have always felt a real connection to the work they do. Anytime I pass a schoolhouse in the country, I am always tempted to stop and peer in the window at the students having their lessons.

The role of the young teacher was crucial to the film's success. The effort to find the right person was exhaustive and exhausting. Wei Minzhi was actually our second choice. We were concerned [the other candidate] was too old for the part. The story called for a substitute teacher who was more or less the same age as the students she was asked to teach. In order to create the right dramatic impact, the contradiction of the situation had to be immediately obvious.

I refrained from speaking to the 'actors' about their roles as such, and didn't let anyone read the script. I have found that in China people are increasingly influenced by popular culture, particularly television. If I gave them a script, they would be thinking and asking themselves how they should act. The only example they have to model themselves after would be what they see on TV. By trying to imitate that, they'd lose whatever natural expression we were hoping to bring out in them.

We kept the camera and other film equipment hidden as much as possible to allow everyone to feel they were in their natural surroundings. Seeing the results, I think I made the right decision in that respect. – Zhang Yimou

**ZHANG YIMOU** Born 1950 in Xi'an, China. His secondary studies were suspended when the Cultural Revolution erupted, and he was sent to work in the countryside for ten years, first doing farm work then labouring in a spinning mill. Admitted on appeal to the Beijing Film Academy in 1978 (he was officially five years too old), he graduated in Cinematography in 1982, and was assigned to the Guangxi Film Studio. Among films he shot there were Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* and *The Big Parade*, before making his directorial debut with the highly acclaimed, widely distributed *Red Sorghum*. Zhang has subsequently alternated directorial projects (many with actress Gong Li) with production duties on colleagues' features, such as *Tseun Yung* (*Terracotta Warrior*, 1990, by Ching Siu-Tung), *Xi Chu Bawang* (*The Great Conqueror's Concubine*, 1994, by Shin Gei-Yin) and *Long Cheng Zhengyue* (*Dragon Town Story*, 1998, by Yang Fenliang). In 1995 Zhang contributed a short section to the international portmanteau film *Lumière et Compagnie*, and directed the Puccini opera *Turandot* in Florence and Beijing in 1997/8.

### FILMOGRAPHY

**1987** Hong Gaoxiang  
(Red Sorghum)  
**1989** Daihao  
"Meizhoubao" (Code  
Name "Cougar")  
**1990** Ju Dou  
**1991** Dahong Denglong  
Gaogao Gua (Raise The  
Red Lantern)  
**1992** Qiuju Da Guang  
(The Story of Qiu Ju)  
**1994** Hunzhe (To Live)  
**1995** Yao A Yao Yao  
Dao Wei Pe Qiao  
(Shanghai Trud)  
**1997** You Hua Hao Hao  
Shuo (Keep Cool /  
Breaking Up Is Hard  
To Do)  
**1999** Yi Ge Duo Bu  
Neng Shao (Not One  
Less)

### CAST

(non-professionals)  
**Wei Minzhi**  
Wei Minzhi  
**Zhang Huike**  
Zhang Huike  
**Tian Zhenda**  
mayor  
**Gao Enman**  
teacher  
**Sun Zhimei**  
middle school student  
**Feng Yuying**  
TV station receptionist  
**Li Fanfan**  
TV host  
**Xu Zhanqing**  
brick factory owner

### CREDITS

**Director**  
Zhang Yimou  
**Producer**  
Zhao Yu  
**Screenplay**  
Shi Xiangsheng  
**Photography**  
Hou Yong  
**Editor**  
Zhai Hu  
**Production Design**  
Cao Jueping  
**Music**  
San Bao  
**Running Time**  
102 mins

### Production Company

Guangxi Film Studio /  
Beijing New Picture  
Distribution Company  
For Columbia Pictures  
Film Production Asia

### UK Distributor

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