

## 炸神明 The Gangster's God

### 影片簡介

在台東，有一群人，每到元宵節就赤裸上身，只穿著紅短褲，站上神轎，讓人用鞭炮炸自己，炸到皮開肉綻，這些人被稱作肉身寒單爺。炸寒單爺的活動，近年來已成為東台灣的一大盛事，參與儀式的成員，一直被蒙上一層神秘的色彩，傳聞中他們是黑道中人。紀錄片「炸神明」進入寒單爺核心人物的世界，紀錄他們戲劇化的人生。

本片深入台東的地方黑道，拍攝過程歷經一年十個月，追蹤到四個兄弟，分別是儀式的組織者，以及三個不同世代的兄弟。這三個兄弟各是五、六、七年級的年紀，都想在第二年的元宵節當寒單爺。他們的生活起伏不定，有人在拍攝過程中入獄，有人要進入精神病房。他們可以順利的站上轎子當寒單爺嗎？

這三個道上兄弟，扮演肉身寒單爺，為的是服侍真正的天上神明。他們有的想脫離道上生活，有的正在學習如何進入道上。有的曾經當過殺手，有的現在還在做討債的行當。他們都有入獄的紀錄，也曾經為非作歹，透過這個儀式，可以看到一個道上小社會裡的法理人情，也能看到不同世代對於民間信仰的價值觀。本片企圖處理的問題是，通過這個儀式，參與者可以得到什麼？這個民間信仰和台東道上兄弟的社會組織，有什麼關聯？他們站在神轎上當肉身神明的時候，代表的是神聖，還是邪惡？是英雄，還是混混？

導演賀照緹表示，她多年前曾經去台東看過炸寒單爺的活動，發現肉身寒單爺們自成一個小社會，當時就對這個特殊的團體產生濃厚的興趣。在紀錄的過程中，她發現被稱為流氓的他們，平常或許不見容於主流社會，一旦站上寒單爺的神轎，卻成為眾人矚目的焦點。賀照緹說，「炸寒單爺的儀式，是他們社會化的必經之路，站得越挺，耐得越久，表示這個人越有擔當。上轎幾十分鐘的時間，透過身體的殘虐和疼痛，將他們從被人看不起的小人物，轉換成贖罪的英雄，這是非常戲劇化的反差。」

本片的音樂別具特色，由好客樂隊的團長陳冠宇擔任配樂。音樂大量採取閩南音樂的元素，以嗩吶，二胡，鼓等真實樂器錄製而成，使本片的節奏更為緊湊，在情緒的表現上也十分精準。在炸寒單的現場，陳冠宇也帶著錄音組的工作人員，穿梭在炮陣中，收取各種聲音元素。

和其他關於炸寒單爺的影片比較起來，「炸神明」成功的打開一個視窗，讓觀眾看到這個不為外界所知的世界。以前有關寒單爺的影片，大多著墨在民俗採

風的炮炸現場，突顯儀式裡的聲光效果；但是「炸神明」以一個接近文化人類學的拍攝角度，探索片中人物的生存脈絡，它所觸及的深度，以及拍攝的困難度，已經超越了其他相關的影視產品。

#### About the film

Every Lantern Festival in eastern Taiwan, a group of men strips bare above the waist, and wearing nothing but red shorts, stands on a sacred palanquin, allowing people to pound their bodies with bottlerockets, singeing their skin. They are believed to be human incarnations of the god Handan. The “Scorching of Handan” has in recent years become a major event in eastern Taiwan – Taidong. Those who take part in the ritual have always been shrouded in mystery, and rumored to be members of the gangster underworld. The documentary “The Gangster’s God” enters the heart of these men’s universe, recording their dramatic lives.

The film delves deeply into the local underworld community of Taidong. Filmed over the course of a year and ten months, it follows four “brothers”: an organizer of the Handan ritual, and three participants of different ages – born in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s – who all want to stand as a Handan the following year. Their lives are often unstable – during the film, one goes to jail, and another is committed to a psychiatric clinic. Can they successfully stand on the palanquin and serve as human incarnations of the god Handan?

The reason these three underworld members play the role of “living Handans” is to serve the true god in heaven. Some hope to extricate themselves from the life of the Taiwanese underworld; others are learning how to enter into it. Some have worked as hit men. Some still work as strongmen collecting debts. They have all served time in prison, and have committed various crimes. Through this ritual, we can witness the rules and relationships within this small underworld community, as well as the different values that different generations hold toward popular religious beliefs. The questions this film attempts to address are: What do the participants in this ritual gain from it? What is the relationship between popular religious faith and the social structure of this underworld community in Taidong? When they stand on the palanquin as incarnations of Handan, do they represent divinity, or evil? Are they heroes, or rascallions?

Director Ho Chao-ti relates that when she witnessed the “Scorching of Handan” in Taidong several years ago, she discovered that the “human Handans” formed their own small community. At that time, she developed a strong interest in this special group of people. During the process of making this documentary, she discovered that these men, who have the reputation of being gangsters, often have a hard time fitting into mainstream society, but as soon as they stand on the Handan palanquin, they become the focal point of public attention. Ho Chao-ti says, “The ritual of the Scorching of Handan is an essential part of their socialization. The straighter a man stands and the longer he withstands the pain, the more worthy he shows himself to be. During the half hour or more that they stand on the palanquin, through the torment inflicted on their bodies, they are transformed from disdained, insignificant figures into redeemed heroes. This is an extremely dramatic contrast.”

The film’s music is also quite unique. Performed by Chen Guan-yu, leader of the Hohak Band, it is largely based on elements of Minnan (“ethnic Taiwanese”) music, recorded with such authentic instruments as the suona, the erhu and traditional drums. This makes the film tightly paced and extremely precise in its expression of emotions. On the day of the Scorching of Handan, Chen Guan-yu and a recording crew moved among the crowd firing bottlerockets, collecting a variety of sounds.

Unlike other films about the Scorching of Handan, “The Gangster’s God” successfully opens a window allowing the viewer to witness a world hitherto unglimped by outsiders. In the past, most films regarding “living Handans” focused on the colorful folk culture of the bombastic ritual itself, emphasizing its dazzling visual effects. “The Gangster’s God” films from a perspective approaching cultural anthropology, exploring how these people live. Its depth of treatment and the difficulty of its subject matter surpass previous films dealing with similar themes.

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