

Hsiao-Ch'eng Ku-Shih

("The Story of a Small Town")

Taiwan : 1979 : dir. Li Hsing : Tachung

: 97 min

prod: Ch'en Ju-lin : scr: Chang Yung-hsiang : dir.ph.: Ch'en K'un-hou

Ou Ti

Chung Chen-t'ao; Lin Feng-chiao; Ko Hsiang-t'ing; Chiang Ming; Li Lieh

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ ∅ Z ∞	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5578	2½	1	2	761	- - - - -	No	Unseen



Ou Ti and Lin Feng-chiao

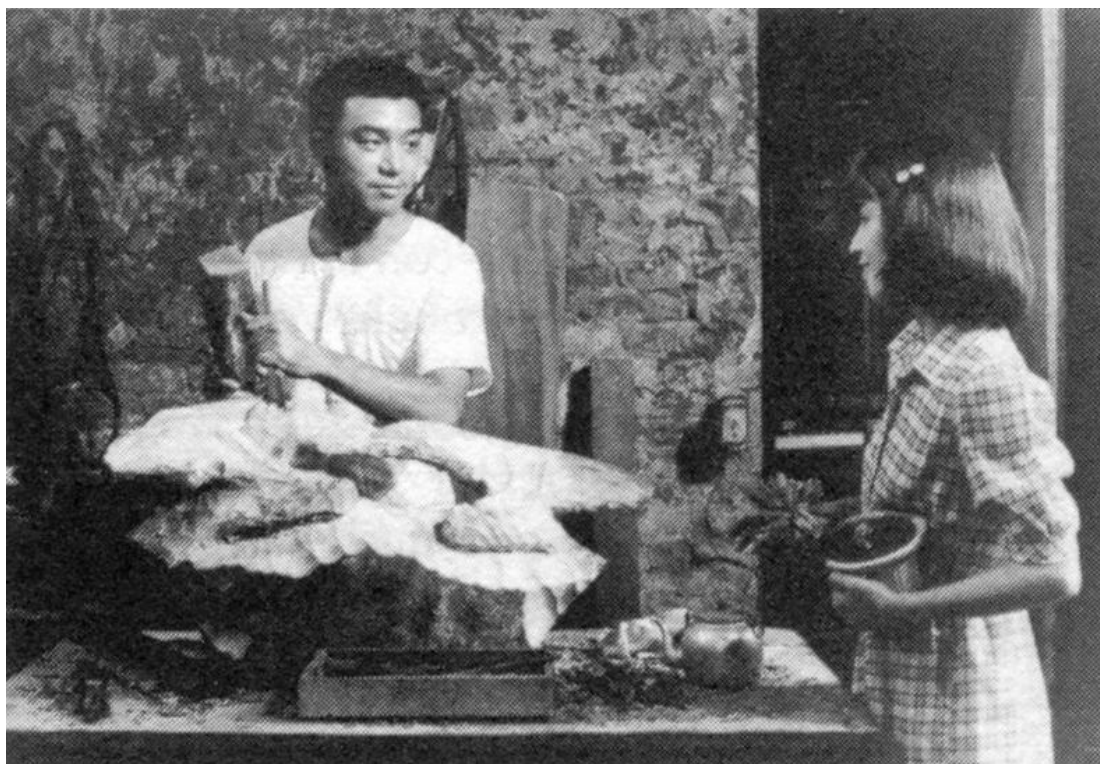
Source: International Film Guide 1981

International Film Guide 1981 review:

"...Among the older generation [of Taiwanese directors] one can point to the regeneration of the career of Li Hsing, who has emerged from a protracted spell of directing romantic Ch'iung Yao adaptations ("POSTERITY AND PERPLEXITY", "PAINTED WAVES OF LOVE", "LOVE RINGS A BELL" – the former and latter of considerable merit) to dramas of greater sensitivity. Last year's "WANG-YANG-CHUNG-TE YI-T'IAO CHUAN" ("He Never Gives Up"), based on the true story of crippled author Cheng Feng-hsi, showed a return to form since completely vindicated by "THE STORY OF A SMALL TOWN", featuring his regular team of actress Lin Feng-chiao, scriptwriter Chang Yung-hsiang, cameraman Ch'en K'un-hou and musician Weng Ch'ing-hsi. The mantle of

directing Ch'iung Yao has since notably been assumed by Liu Li-li who... has shown considerably style and finesse, softer-centred than Li's treatments but light of touch."

"There is a restrained and purposeful quality to "THE STORY OF A SMALL TOWN" which, though not new to the work of Li Hsing, is nevertheless on particularly impressive display here, improving on the less subtle emotions of last year's "HE NEVER GIVES UP" (1978). Li and his regular scriptwriter Chang Yung-hsiang have created an eloquent tribute to the virtues of small-town life and the pursuit of traditional skills, noting the regenerative strengths rather than the weaknesses of such an existence, through the story of a young man, jailed for maiming his malevolent brother-in-law, who on release seeks seclusion as an apprentice in a small-



Chung Chien-T'ao and Lin Feng-Chiao

Source: *International Film Guide 1981*

town woodcarving firm. While there he becomes involved with the mute daughter of the firm's aged boss and, almost imperceptibly, history threatens to repeat itself ...

"THE STORY OF A SMALL TOWN" notably rejects the glossy Taipei settings familiar to the wen-yi p'ien genre, instead setting its simple story among the lanes and alleys of an unpretentious town (skilfully evoked, as ever, by Ch'en K'un-hou, Li's regular cameraman) nestling in the shadow of a main highway, drawing an involving portrait of unremarkable lives occasionally ruffled by dramatic events. Fine ensemble playing by Li's regular team of actors (and particularly by his favourite actress, Lin Feng-chiao, as the mute girl) is augmented by a remarkably sensitive performance from former-pop-singer-turned-actor Chung Chen-t'ao as the troubled ex-con in search of tranquillity and contentment-through-work.

Li Hsing was born in Wuchin, Chiangsu province, in 1930 and moved with his family to settle in Taiwan in 1948. He began acting while studying at college and in 1951 entered the film industry in this capacity. Since 1958 he has worked as a director, first on documentaries and from 1963 in Mandarin features. Li Hsing is one of the pivotal figures

of the King Hu/Li Han-hsiang generation of Mandarin directors, though he shares none of their interest in either the mystical world of the martial arts nor the panoply of historical dramas.

Li Hsing's main contribution has been, working with a regular team of collaborators and actors, to produce thoughtful emotional dramas (almost always in a Twentieth-century setting) within the conventions of the wen-yi p'ien. **"EXECUTION IN AUTUMN"** (1971) is perhaps his masterpiece; other notable works include **"SILENT WIFE"** (1965), **"THE ROAD"** (1967), **"THE MARRIAGE"** (1973), **"POSTERITY AND PERPLEXITY"** (1976), **"HE NEVER GIVES UP"** (1978) and **"THE STORY OF A SMALL TOWN"** (1979). He also directed the episode "Sorrow" in the portmanteau film **"FOUR MOODS"** (1970)."

— Derek Elley

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. More words do not more clarity make. Since Ou Ti's name is given at the end of a short cast list, though, it's fair to assume his role isn't an insignificant one.

See subject index under **ASIA** for other Taiwanese material.