

# *Drifters* Discussion Guide

## *Story*

What does the film suggest about the extreme lengths Chinese immigrants are still (in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) willing to go to in order to reach the shores of foreign lands? (consider Er Di's "celebrity" status upon his return and also, China's recent emergence into the global market as an economically powerful nation)

Er Di leaves China in search of a better life, does he find it?

What are the ramifications of Er Di's actions for his family?

Compare the US/Chinese experiences of Er Di's family and the family of his son.

What do we learn from the relationship between "Big Brother" and "Young Brother"?

What does the scene at the beach signify for the story as a whole?

What is the significance of the character Xiao Nu?

How does the film highlight the struggle between traditional China and the desire of the youth for a better way of life? What are the symbolic elements that show this divide?

Er Di is kept from his son by American law but also by class differences within China. What is the film suggesting about Chinese class systems and the government's response to the poor? (\*\*keep in mind the announcement heard on the television about China's entry into the WTO)

## *Film*

Taiwanese film and Chinese film differ greatly in pace and cinematic style. What aspects of cinematography and tempo make this film uniquely Taiwanese? (Compare to Xiaoshuai Wang's other films *Beijing Bicycle* and *Shanghai Dreams* - both Chinese films)

## *Acting*

How does the acting affect the pace of the film?

Er Di is a relatively calm and composed character. In the scene in which he arrives home with his son to find the families fighting, how do his reactions and emotions differ from the rest of the film? Are they believable?

## *Directing*

Discuss the so-called "Sixth Generation" of Chinese directors (of which Xiaoshuai Wang is considered to be a part) that jumped into "underground" filmmaking after the events of June 4, 1989.