

News - international

## **China censorship in spotlight at Global Conference**

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In the award-winning Chinese film "Nuan," a simple married woman with a bum leg is tempted by a man who is not her husband. While encouraged by her husband to begin anew with the man, who offers her much more than he can, she sticks with her humble and selfless husband.

The plot of "Nuan" was front and center at Tuesday's 2005 China Global Conference in Los Angeles. Except that one of the filmmakers, Dong Fan, president of Beijing Aureape Ocean ARK, also told of what the script called for before Chinese government censors got a hold of it.

Nuan was supposed to be a half-blind woman married to a mute, and the couple had four mute children. For the chance to give birth to a child who could actually speak to her, she sought an extramarital affair.

Chinese censors didn't like the idea of portraying a woman with only one good eye, so instead she was given a bad leg. They also didn't like that she bucked government sanctions and had more than one child, so it was changed to a single child who was no longer mute.

And of course the extramarital affair was out of the question.

In China, censorship happens not only for many reasons -- violence, homosexuality, anti-government political statements, etc. -- but also at many levels, such as with the Ministry of Culture or the Department of Propaganda.

"Censorship will always come to bite," said Robert Woll, a partner with the Morrison & Foerster Corporate and Securities Practice Group, who spoke with Fan on a panel discussion about Chinese entertainment that also included producer Terence Chang ("Face-Off," "Mission: Impossible 2") and Michael Green, a founding partner of China Media Partners.

When the panel was asked why the Chinese government was so strict about content yet seemingly allows any movie ever made to be sold uncensored by DVD pirates, they had no ready answers.

"It's definitely an apparent contradiction," said Woll. "You have a combination of monopolistic practices sanctioned by the government along with rampant piracy."

Piracy, Woll said, "will only be addressed in China when it's in China's best interest. The Olympics will be a big impetus."

In fact, the 2008 Beijing Olympics were the keynote discussion at the one-day conference organized by the Asia Pacific USA Chamber of Commerce and co-sponsored by Morrison & Foerster

About 11,000 athletes from 210 countries are expected to compete in Beijing which, for 17 days, will house the largest broadcasting facility in the world.

China has already passed laws designed to protect the Olympic trademarks, said Kelly Crabb of Morrison & Foerster, and customs agents have already seized pirated goods related to the games, which won't enjoy their opening ceremonies until Aug. 8, 2008.

Mark Lewis, vp of GE Olympic Sponsorship, said that all the pieces are in place, including \$40 billion in infrastructure improvements ahead of the games, to "produce what's likely to be one of the great spectacles of our time," mostly because the Chinese government is even more focused on projecting a positive image to the world than previous host countries were.

Xin Xiang Chen, chairman of Capinfo Co., called what will happen in Beijing the "Digital Olympics," whereby people can get news through traditional means or via wireless Internet and information kiosks. He showed off a Motorola phone whereby phrases typed in English are spoken back in Chinese.

"I was going to learn Mandarin," joked Robert Cooper of Morrison & Foerster. "Now I guess I'll just get one of Dr. Chen's cell phones."

Cooper said that the televised unveiling of the logo China has selected for the games was one of the top-rated shows in the history of the country.