



## Jade Soturi

### Jade Warrior

Antti-Jussi Annila

FINLAND/CHINA/ESTONIA/  
THE NETHERLANDS, 2006  
Finnish, Mandarin

100 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company:

Blind Spot Pictures/Ming Productions/  
Film Tower Kuubis/FuWorks

Executive Producer: Peter Loehr,  
San Fu Maltha, Margus Õunapuu

Producer: Petri Jokiranta,

Tero Kaukomaa

Screenplay: Antti-Jussi Annila,

Petri Jokiranta, based on the story by  
Iiro Küttner

Cinematographer: Henri Blomberg

Editor: Iikka Hesse

Production Designer: Jukka Uusitalo

Sound: Timo Anttila, Erno Kumpulainen

Music: Kimmo Pohjonen,

Samuli Kosminen

Principal Cast: Tommi Eronen,  
Markku Peltola, Zhang Jing-chu,  
Krista Kosonen

Production: Blind Spot Pictures,

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*Jade Warrior* is an often bizarre, bracing and wildly successful admixture of a traditional Chinese martial-arts film – think King Hu – and laconic Finnish auteur cinema. Although it swings wildly through time and geography, the film nails its central conceits so perfectly that it feels entirely natural for a contemporary Finn to be fighting an ancient demon in medieval China.

The film was inspired by the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*, a text that bears remarkable similarities to the mythologies of ancient China. A sad-sack, part-time ironmonger (Tommi Eronen) has been abandoned by his girlfriend (Krista Kosonen). When she tries to dump his collection of Asian knick-knacks at a local *chinoiserie* antique dealer, she sets off a chain of events that implicates them in a mythical history. The ironmonger turns out to be a majestic prince, destined to fight the last of the great demons, an unnameable force that keeps human beings in bondage. But his major strength – and weakness – is a woman: a beautiful, inspiring swordswoman (Zhang Jing-chu) who is destined to betray him. Magic boxes, sensational swordplay and fantastical happenings converge simultaneously on a rural house outside Helsinki and in the misty mountains of remote China until the truth about a puzzling contemporary archaeological find is at last revealed.

Like any martial-arts epic, *Jade Warrior* insists that you pay attention, as events occur quickly, with the astonishing fighting carrying the narrative along at a fast pace.

Young director Antti-Jussi Annila has seamlessly meshed his expressive Finnish actors – especially the wonderful Eronen as the ironmonger – with more taciturn Chinese stars. His understanding of the medium is faultless. And he also reveals several surprising lessons regarding the history of European migration when you least expect them. Finland, it turns out, is closer to the centre of Asia than we ever imagined.

This is the first ever Sino-Finnish co-production. Judging by *Jade Warrior's* success, we should hope for many more.

#### ■ Noah Cowan

**Antti-Jussi Annila** studied at the Tampere Polytechnic School of Art and Media in Tampere, Finland, where he made the short films *Hard Student* (98), *HS III – Eye of the Rooster* (98), *Hard Student IV – The Ultimate Battle* (99) and *Hard Student V – The Untold Story* (00). *Jade Warrior* (06) is his first feature.

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