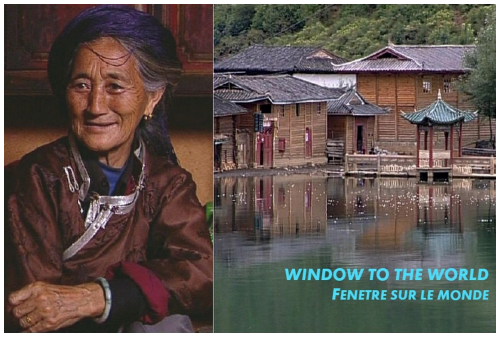


CHINA: FURTIVE UNION

Director(s): Fang Hui WANG

The Mossos are a small ethnic community who live in the mountainous region in China's Yunnan district near the Tibetan border. Perpetuating a time-honoured tradition, men and women live very much separately and "couples" as such do not exist, although a man and a woman can be faithful to one another all their life and have children together. The head of any household is the oldest woman, she holds the power and the pursestrings. Their sons live all their lives at home, do chores like any woman would. At ten at night, they leave the house to go to their lover, the woman they have chosen for life without being married. In contrast to the men, each grown woman has her own room in the house so that she may receive her lover, the children of these "furtive unions" live with the mother. We witness a young girl "taking the skirt", a traditional initiation rite that signifies that a young girl enters womanhood and will thus be allowed her own room where she will be able - in time - to welcome her chosen man. Or will she prefer traditional marriage when her turn comes?The way of life of the Mossos has survived centuries. It did not even come under threat by the cultural revolution. Today, however, only 50% of the community adhere to tradition, the rest live in conventional marriages.

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