

# NIGHT GIRL

A film by Yingli Ma



2001, Germany/ China  
45 minutes, Color  
Chinese with English Subtitles

Credits  
A film by Yingli Ma



## Synopsis

What do we know about teenage girls and their journey from girlhood to womanhood? How does a girl cross the threshold into womanhood? Is there initiation? Is there ritual? What do these girls dream of? What are their expectations of adulthood? Of womanhood? Of mother-hood? What does society expect of them? Who are these young women of today and what will they carry forward historically and culturally into the next century? "Girls around the World" is a collection of documentaries on seventeen year old girls across the globe.

*Night Girl* presents the poignant story of Han Lin, a 17-year old prematurely made to enter into the workforce as a Go-Go dancer in order to help her family eek out a living in modern-day Peking. Born in the center of the metropolis, on the surface she is an ordinary girl from a traditional Chinese family. On closer inspection Han Li is mature beyond her years and faces an enormous burden of responsibility unfamiliar to most young women in the West. Straddling the fine line between girlhood and adulthood, she is exposed to the lure of economic independence promised by the sex industry and the lack of opportunities for women in the working world. A striking picture of contemporary China, *Night Girl* also presents the generational and cultural riff that is now causing local traditions, values and male and female roles to clash with on another.

## Director's Biography

Yingli Ma, born in 1965, she is from an ordinary Chinese family, who's everyday life provides insight into China's changing society. She studied film at the German Film and Television School in Berlin, Germany (DFFB). Her short film *Ein Schweigsamer Sommer* and her graduate film *Days of Miandi* have also been broadcast by 3sat. In 1998, she made the ZDF documentary *Bye, Bye – Hello*.