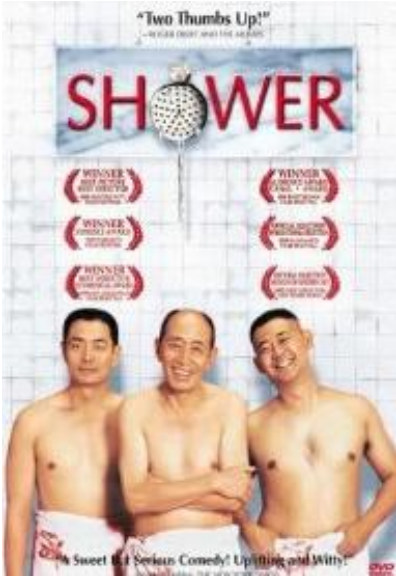


# Shower

Xizao, 1999, China

## Film Overview



In the opening moments of *Shower*, a man gets clean in a hilariously high-tech contraption, something akin to a human car wash. But the old ways are the best ways in Zhang Yang's winning Chinese comedy, a bath of pleasure so appealing that any cavils about conservatism swirl down the drain.

Modern businessman Da Ming (Pu Cun Xin) reluctantly checks up on his aging father, and retarded adult younger brother Er Ming (Jiang Wu) in Beijing, where the two men run a traditional bathhouse. Neighbors soak, chat, sip, and scrub, as others have done for thousands of years. But the old man is getting frail. And without Da Ming's help, a lovely age-old tradition will vanish in the name of "modernizing." What would dry up, too, Zhang demonstrates in deftly arranged scenes, is a kind of openness and communal good will. Without ever dipping into indignity among wet, half-naked men, *Shower* sparkles with joy. –Lisa Schwarzbaum, *Entertainment Weekly*

*Shower* received critical acclaim shortly after its release; it won the International Film Critics Award at the Toronto International Film Festival and was soon thereafter invited to other major film festivals, including Sundance. The producer, an American by the name of Peter Loehr, is praised as one of few in the Chinese film industry who still knows how to bring people into the theater. –*Beijing Scene* (<http://www.beijingscene.com/v06i004/feature/feature.html>)

## Culture Notes

- **Public Bathing in China:** Not every home in China has hot water, so public bathhouses like the one in *Shower* are still available. They often offer side services such as full-body exfoliating massages and the chance to soak in a sauna. Occasionally, the bathhouse will sell cheap meals as well.