The Story of Qiu Ju (1992) (秋菊打官司) is a Chinese film by director Zhang Yimou (张艺谋). The story is about a woman in rural China (Qiu Ju) who appears to be on a mission after a local government official physically assaults her husband. The film has received attention from reviewers and critics, and commentators in various fields. This presentation revisits the film, with a focus on the story’s teachings about law, culture, and dispute settlement, and the relationship between them. What exactly is “justice”? “apology”? Are these universal concepts, or are they culturally constructed? How is each shaped by the Chinese regard for face (面子), or China’s collectivist (in contrast to individualist) orientation? There is also the Chinese shuo-fah, which is what Qiu Ju says she wants and is translated to mean different things. What is shuo-fah, and was Qiu Ju successful in achieving it?

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