



**A16–401**

***Yoga, Inc.***

**Friday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Erie\***

Stuart Sarbacker, Oregon State University, Presiding

*Yoga, Inc.* examines the commercialization and commodification of the contemporary practice of yoga. Competitions, franchises, and legal action have all marked the rise of a billion-dollar industry built around a phenomenon that has captured the imagination of millions around the world. A facilitated discussion will follow the film.

**A16–402**

**Disaster, Film, and *Souls of Zen: A Documentary and Discussion of Religious Responses to the 2011 Tsunami***

**Friday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Huron\***

Levi McLaughlin, North Carolina State University, Presiding

This panel will present perspectives on Buddhism in the midst of Japan's recovery from the March 11, 2011, earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters through the lens of a feature-length documentary film. *Souls of Zen* explores the role of Buddhism in caring for the 3/11 bereaved and the dead based on attention to the everyday lives of Buddhist professionals in the disaster zone and in other areas. Shot from March to December 2011, with a focus on Soto Zen and Jodoshu, the film captures Buddhist temples and local communities in their struggles to rebuild. By contextualizing the triple disaster within recent rapid transformations in Buddhism and Japan's enduring tradition of ancestor veneration, this panel will reflect on the complex role of Buddhism in a society shaped by natural disasters, religious pluralism, and demographic change.

Panelists:

Tim Graf, University of Heidelberg

Inken Prohl, University of Heidelberg

Mark Patrick McGuire, John Abbott College

Steven Heine, Florida International University

### **A16–403**

#### ***The Agony and the Ecstasy***

**Friday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Michigan\***

Ken Derry, University of Toronto, Presiding

Religion and art are often understood to involve spiritual qualities of inspiration, creativity, and suffering. Recounting/imagining the events of the early sixteenth century that resulted in Michelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel, *The Agony and the Ecstasy* suggests that religion and art are also, often, bound up with the very material concerns of politics, money, and violence — and that these connections may at times be vital for achieving some forms of transcendence. Commissioned by the ever-warring Pope Julius II (played by Rex Harrison) to decorate the ceiling of a favored place of worship, Charlton Heston's Michelangelo encounters a variety of inner and outer obstacles that slowly, slowly, slowly lead him to painfully create what continues to be regarded as one of the most important artworks of any time, in any place. (Based on the novel by Irving Stone. Dir. Carol Reed, USA, 1965)

### **A17–405**

#### ***Eden***

**Saturday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**  
**Hilton Chicago – Lake Erie\***

Erin Reese, New York, NY, Presiding

Chef Gregor Barbier is a portly, culinary genius, who despite his *Michelin*-starred talent is desperately in need of companionship. His socially awkward and 137 kilo presence is not necessarily whom one would expect to find behind the exclusive, renowned, and sensually decadent 'Cucina Erotica.' Chef Gregor's recipe for companionship is equally unusual in that it is Eden, a married waitress and her developmentally disabled daughter Leonie who prove to be muse, catalyst, and ultimate playmates. As their chaste affair blossoms, transformations abound and community understandings (value systems, family dynamics, concepts of pleasure, and patriarchal norms) are placed into flux. In viewing

*Eden*

theologically, we witness an alternative table where Divine and devotee indulge in a shared delicious transformation confronting conventional ideas of what it means to experience gratification, and who is both worthy to receive and to contribute to a divine relationship. (Dir. Michael Hofmann, Germany, 2006, 98 minutes. English subtitles)

**A17–406**

***The Flower Assembly Rite of Yakushiji***

**Saturday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**  
**Hilton Chicago – Lake Huron\***

Asuka Sango, Carleton College, Presiding

The documentary film *The Flower Assembly Rite of Yakushiji: The Ceremony and the People Who Support It* (2007), directed by Matsuo Kōichi, centers on the Flower Assembly Rite at Yakushiji Temple in Nara. This rite began in the late Heian period (794–1185), and is still held annually today. For seven days, from the end of March to early April, monks at Yakushiji perform the Repentance Rite day and night. Most of the documentary films about ancient temples in Nara tend to depict "traditional" Buddhism, represented by Yakushiji, as ancient, antiquated, and historically important, but lacking vibrancy and contemporary relevance. Matsuo's film radically challenges this view, and demonstrates that "traditional" Buddhism is very much alive today. Specifically, his film invites us to reflect on the vital roles that lay people have played in creating and recreating the traditions of Japanese Buddhism throughout Japanese history.

**A17–407**

***Tokyo Godfathers***

**Saturday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Michigan\***

Stephen Okey, Boston College, Presiding

*Tokyo Godfathers* begins on Christmas Eve, when three homeless people (Gin, Hana, and Miyuki) find a baby abandoned in the garbage. Calling the child Kiyoko (after the Japanese name for Silent Night), they begin a search for the child's parents. Each one of them has a troubled past: Gin is an alcoholic who abandoned his family, Miyuki is a teenage runaway afraid to return home, and Hana is a transvestite who has felt alienated her entire life. Their quest, which winds its way through encounters with a Yakuza boss, a Latin American hitman, and the woman who first kidnapped Kiyoko, helps the three godparents to face their difficult pasts.

Written and directed by Satoshi Kon and featuring animation by Madhouse,

T

*okyo Godfathers*

tells a powerful redemption narrative without falling into the traps of more typical second-chance stories. (Dir. Satoshi Kon, Japan, 2003, 92 mins.)

**A18–403**

***Higher Ground***

**Sunday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Erie\***

Alexander Ornella, University of Hull, Presiding

Portraying a lifelong spiritual struggle, actress/director Vera Farmiga offers a refreshing take on the relationship between the secular world and faith. Based on Carolyn S. Briggs 2002 memoir "This Dark World," Farmiga's *Higher Ground* (USA, 2011) tells the story of Corinne Walker and her difficulties with her religious beliefs. Avoiding the clichés and stereotypes of Christian believers often found in popular media, Farmiga takes seriously the character's crisis of faith and yearning for truth. Farmiga's directing debut is an exploration of a woman who tried to be passionate about every aspect of her life, and an exploration of what compassion, quest for holiness, or self-transcendence can mean. Come join us for a transformative filmic event, for a film that has been called a "rich, completely engrossing experience" by critics. (Dir. Vera Farmiga, USA, 2011, 109 min.)

**A18–404**

***Jilbab***

**Sunday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Huron\***

Jenn Lindsay, Boston University, Presiding

In Jogjakarta, Indonesia, the Muslim woman's headscarf is distinctively colorful, fashionable, fun, and expressive. Women are free to don the jilbab or not, and sometimes even non-Muslim Indonesian women will veil in order to keep up with this popular fashion trend. What are the dreams and commitments behind the choice to veil or not to veil? *Jilbab*, a 73-minute documentary named after the Indonesian word for the Muslim hijab, is about veiling trends for women in the city of Jogja. The film features students from Universitas Gadjah Mada, designers of local women's fashion boutiques, and Muslim women from outside of Indonesia who comment on the cultural variations of the veil across the globe. The women of

*Jilbab*

speak about the significance of veiling, veiling ideology and fashion, and the history of veiling in Islam. This film explores uniquely Javanese Islam, its unmistakable religious aesthetics, and what the jilbab suggests in an Indonesian context, as opposed to Middle Eastern, North American, or European Muslim contexts.

[The trailer is viewable here](#)

.

**A18–405**

***The Tree of Life***

**Sunday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Michigan\***

Rachel Wagner, Ithaca College, Presiding

Somewhere between macrocosm and microcosm, *The Tree of Life* creates an enchanted world: from computer generated imagery representing the birth of the universe and the death of the dinosaurs, to family life in 1950s Texas. Terrence Malick's Palme d'Or-winning film reimagines childhood as the nexus between paradise and fall, birth and death, lust and repression, and violence and pacifism. That innocent world is seen through the lens of experience, through a knowing voiceover that constantly looks back with questions — however theologically

pedestrian — about choices of good versus evil, beneficence versus malice, and absence versus presence. Infused with theodicy, mythology, science, and the quest for meaning, *Tree of Life*

is cinematically shot-through with breathtaking cinematography and musical score. (Dir. Terence Malick, USA, 2011, 129 mins.)

## **A19–401**

### ***The Gates of Heaven***

**Monday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Erie\***

Brenda Beck, University of Toronto, Presiding

The King and Queen of Ponnivala set out on a long walk towards the Gates of Heaven, hoping for an end to their childless condition. They meet with many adventures. The Queen even carries her husband on her back for a time. Sadly, he grows too weak to continue. He has to stop partway along the steep path. Finally, with Lord Vishnu's help, the Queen continues toward her destination alone...Finally, after meeting many additional challenges, she finds herself at the Gates of Heaven. There she undergoes a twenty-one-year penance, including seven ritual "deaths." During this period Lord Shiva tests her determination and her steadfast devotion repeatedly. Finally she persuades the Great Lord to call off his curse of barrenness. He then places three magical children in her womb. The Queen returns to Ponnivala, rejoining her husband on the way. Once back she distributes fertility to every living being in her kingdom by sprinkling a magic liquid given to her by Lord Shiva on all creatures capable of breathing and drinking. This animated legend retells one part of a much larger oral legend sung over eighteen nights by an itinerant bard whose work took him throughout the interior villages of northwest Tamilnadu, India, in 1965. This is the same area that Saint Thomas passed through on his trek to the East Coast of India, just months before his death.

## **A19–402**

### ***Alms***

**Monday, 8:00 PM–10:00 PM**

**Hilton Chicago – Lake Huron\***

Edward Burger, Common Folk Films, Presiding

*Alms* explores the basics of Chan/Zen Buddhist monastic life through the eyes of the Head Chef of a Chan Buddhist monastery in Southern China. Witness how this community functions as a self-sufficient micro-society in which every element of daily life is an expression of this distinctive Buddhist school. *Alms* is the first of a series of academic short films on Buddhist life in China. The Dreaming Buddhas Project short films are carefully crafted to supplement readings and lectures, bringing images and sounds from modern China's Buddhist communities into your classroom.

*\*Room locations are subject to change. Please check your Program Book onsite to confirm the location when you arrive at the Annual Meeting.*