THUS HAVE I SEEN
t·h·i·s
Buddhist Film
Festival 2018
22-29 SEPTEMBER
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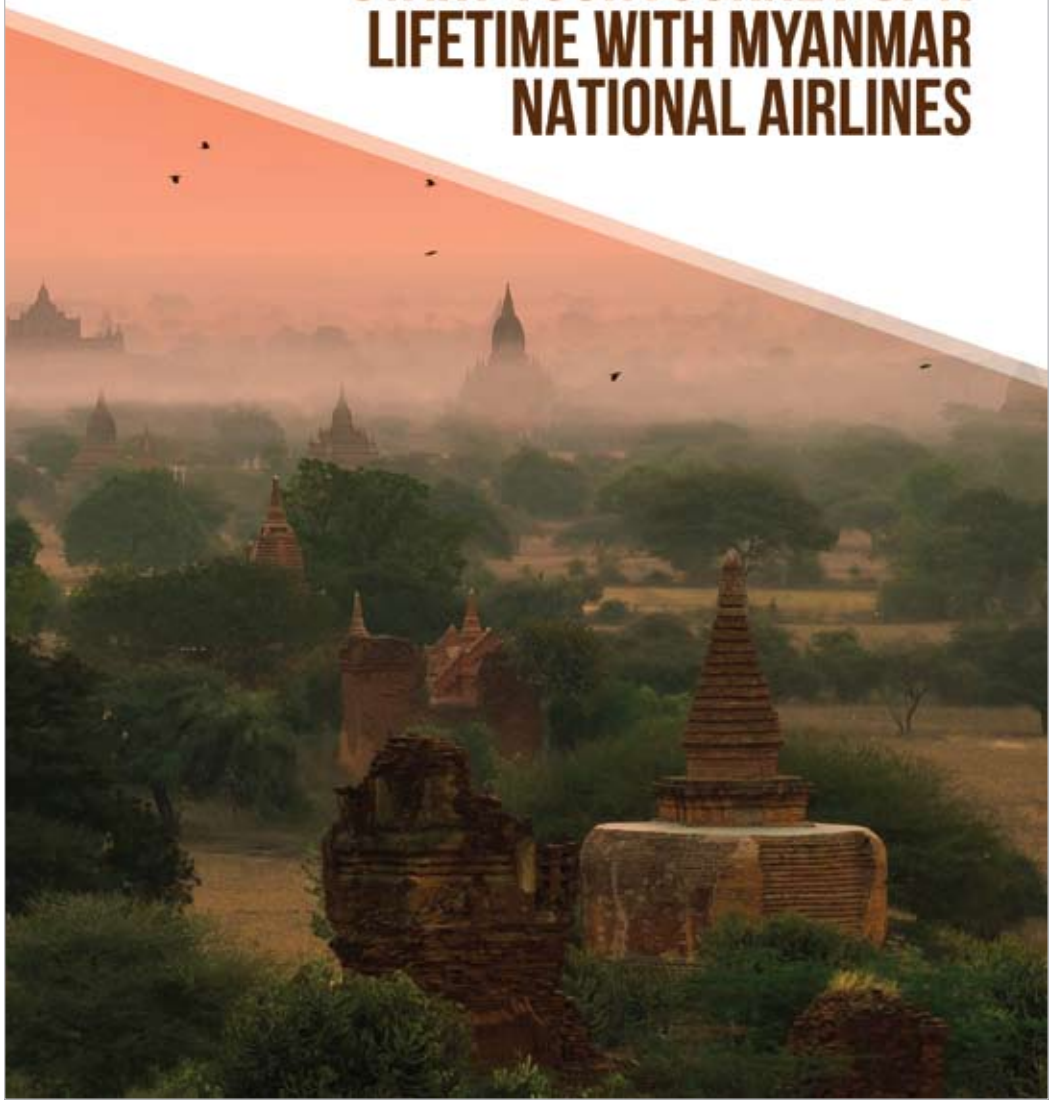
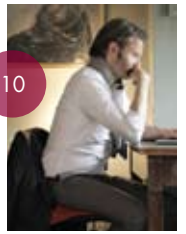
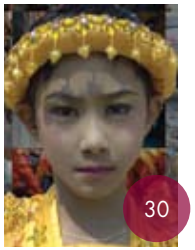
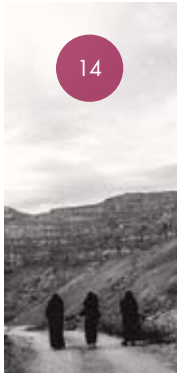


CONTENTS



02 DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE
03 ABOUT THE ORGANISER
03 ORGANISING COMMITTEE
24 SCHEDULE
46 TICKETING AND VENUE
47 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
48 THISBFF DIALOGUE WITH FILM MAKERS





FILMS

04 FLOWER AND SWORD 花戦さ
06 KARMA
08 HONEYGIVER AMONG THE DOGS
10 FINDING HYGGE
12 SOUND OF SILENCE
14 A THOUSAND MOTHERS
16 TSUNMA TSUNMA
MY SUMMER WITH THE FEMALE MONASTICS OF THE HIMALAYA
尊玛尊玛
我和她们在喜马拉雅山的夏天
18 ONE MIND
20 TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS
22 SUFFERING OF NINKO 仁光の受難
26 BECOMING WHO I WAS
28 A CAMBODIAN SPRING
30 SACRED
32 SOUL ON A STRING 皮绳上的魂
34 THE LAST DALAI LAMA?
36 OUT OF THIS WORLD

director's MESSAGE

Welcome to the fifth edition of Thus Have I Seen Buddhist Film Festival (THISBFF). Once again, we are delighted to present a line-up of 16 specially curated films with Buddhist themes and values for your enjoyment.

When THISBFF first started out almost a decade ago in 2009, screening of Buddhist-themed films was less common in Singapore. Today, we are heartened to see Buddhist-themed films gaining a wider audience and interest. Beyond THISBFF, Buddhist-themed films are also being featured in other film festivals. The proliferation of Buddhist-themed films reflects a gradual acceptance and acknowledgement of the universal values espoused by Buddhism.

Films, like other forms of arts, record and showcase human actions, thoughts and reflections. It is our vision that through THISBFF 2018, we can continue to inspire our audience to look deeper into our human inclinations to find encouragement to create happiness for ourselves and for our society.

During the film curation process, we took extra care to ensure that the many traditions and cultures in Buddhism are represented as widely as possible. For THISBFF 2018, audience can look forward to films from different countries, Buddhist traditions and new film genres.

We thank all our generous sponsors, like-minded partners, ardent audience and supportive well-wishers for making THISBFF possible and successful throughout all the editions. Please continue to give us your feedback and suggestions so that we can do better come 2020.

Thank you and we hope to see you again at THISBFF 2020.

Teo Puay Kim
Director
Dharma In Action Limited

ABOUT THE ORGANISER
DHARMA IN ACTION

Dharma In Action Limited (DIA) is a Company Limited by Guarantee officially incorporated in Singapore. Our mission is to present cultural and educational programmes rooted in Buddhist values and philosophies to the local community. We aspire to provide a dynamic platform for exchanges of ideas and cultivation of friendship to promote a society of compassion and wisdom.

DIA activities are organised mainly by volunteers from all walks of life and various age groups. Thus Have I Seen Buddhist Film Festival is our signature biennial event. We are always looking to develop new events and look forward to suggestions from our supporters.

For more information on Dharma In Action Limited
please visit www.dharmainaction.net

THIS BUDDHIST FILM FESTIVAL 2018
ORGANISING COMMITTEE

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TEO PUAY KIM

FLOWER 花戦さ AND SWORD

SAT 22 SEP | 12:30pm
WED 26 SEP | 6:45pm

Set in the 16th century 'Age of Civil War', *Flower and Sword* follows the tribulations of a monk as he works with flowers to bring peace to the land. Senko Ikenobo is one of the 'flower monks' of Rokkakudo Temple. Due to his exceptional skills in Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement, Senko is unwillingly thrusted into the limelight as he attempts to pacify the murderous tendencies of warlords during this strife-filled war-torn period of medieval Japan.

Spanning decades in its narration, *Flower and Sword* is a rare film on the art of Ikebana and features famous Kyogen actor Mansai Nomura and many other established Japanese actors. The film expounds on the Buddhist values of non-violence, even amidst tyranny, and mindfulness as Senko digs deep into his heart and wisdom to save himself and his compatriots during these difficult times.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Born in 1962 in Tokyo, **Tetsuo Shinohara** worked as an assistant to directors such as Yoshimitsu Morita and Shusuke Kaneko before making his own debut as a director in 1996 with *One More Time, One More Chance*. His films include *First Love, Heaven's Bookstore, Breathe in, Breathe Out, Riding on the Metro, Yamazakura, Battle under Orion, At River's Edge, Sweet Heart Chocolate, A Sower of Seeds 2*, and *Terminal*.

ABOUT IKEBANA

The art of ikebana flower arranging, now practiced around the world, has its origins in the 6th century, with the decoration of altars for the newly arrived religion of Buddhism. By the 15th century it had become firmly established in Japanese culture. This is the first motion picture to incorporate ikebana to this degree. Enlisting the cooperation of the Ikenobo flower arranging school, the film features some 200 arrangements in the oldest type of ikebana, the rikka or 'standing flower' style.

Ikebana is a prayer for both tranquility in the world and the happiness of the people in it, designed to bring a smile of optimism to all who see it.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

JAPAN 2017
127 mins
PG
Japanese with English subtitles
Directed by Tetsuo Shinohara

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Daichi Yashiki
Toei Company Ltd
International Sales & Acquisitions
+81 (0)3 3535 7621
dai_yashiki@toei.co.jp

Festival and Award Highlights:

Shanghai International Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

Toronto International Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

San Francisco International Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

Japanese Film Festival in Australia 2017, Official Selection

KARMA

SAT 22 SEP | 3:45pm

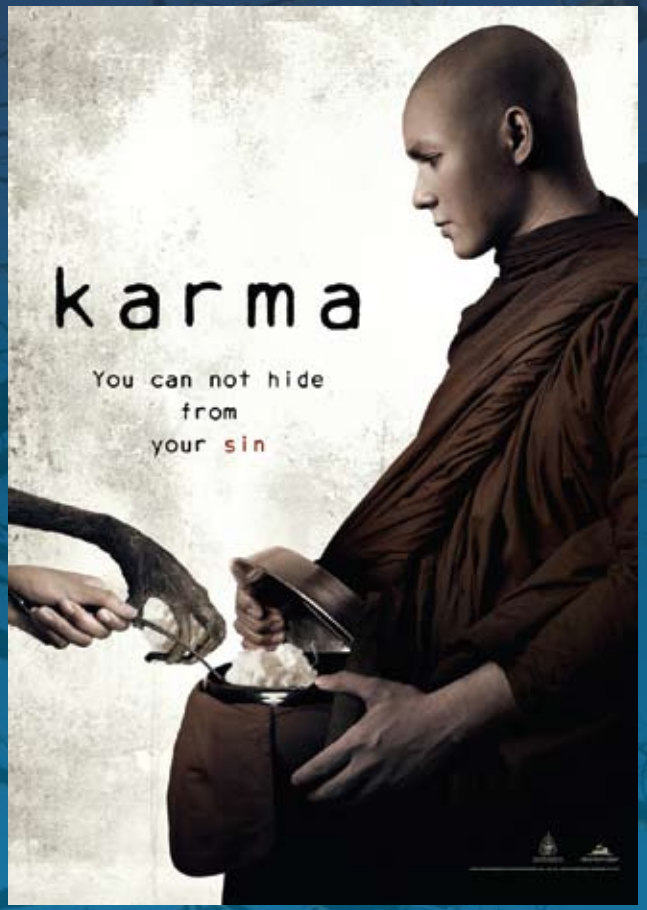
Karma portrays 19-year-old Sun, who becomes a fugitive after he ran over a girl in an accident. To escape the law, he unwillingly ordains as a novice in a remote north-eastern forest monastery without real faith. On the night after his ordination, he steps on the offering to the hungry ghost and the act brings him to a confrontation with a hungry ghost who comes to ask for the merit that was lost because of his action. In the meantime, he is also haunted by the ghost of the girl who died in the accident.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Kanitta Kwanyoo studied broadcasting and films in Bangkok University. She has directed a number of short films and music videos. Kanittha started her first short film in 2007 called *Time...Love* which won the 2nd place for Popular Vote in Short Thai Film Festival by Thai Film Foundation and was also presented in many short films festivals. *Time...Love* was also selected to be in 1 of 11 films presented in International Award Winning Thai Films 2010.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My intention is to explain what sins, merits, and moral conscience are. All of these are abstract concepts we learn in Buddhism class – which are also present inside each and every one of us. It is important that we are aware of the decisions we make and the actions we take. I want the audience to first understand the characters, after which I believe they will then understand the underlying concepts. I wish the audience would view this film as a Dharma lesson. We all make mistakes, and it is up to us whether we want to do something to salvage the mistake.



SINGAPORE PREMIERE

THAILAND 2015
82 mins
PG13
Consumer Advice:
Horror
Thai with English subtitles
Directed by Kanitta Kwanyoo

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Panu Aree
Director of Acquisitions
Sahamongkolfilm International Co.,ltd
66 2 2730930 ext 122
panu@sahamongkolfilm.com

HONEYGIVER AMONG THE DOGS

SAT 22 SEP | 6:30pm*

Detective Kinley is sent to a remote region of Bhutan to investigate the disappearance of a Buddhist nun. He goes undercover and enters a risky alliance with his only suspect, a mysterious and alluring young woman named Choden, known to the villagers as a demoness. As Choden draws Kinley into her world, his supervisor takes him off the case, sending Kinley spiralling into delirium and nightmares. *Honeygiver Among the Dogs* is the debut feature by Bhutanese director Dechen Roder, one of the Himalayan nation's few female directors. Her film merges spirituality and tradition with the classic hallmarks of the *film noir* genre.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Dechen Roder is one of the first female directors from the Kingdom of Bhutan. She has been making small shorts and documentaries since 2005. Her most recent short film *"Lo Sum Choe Sum"* (or "3 Year 3 Month Retreat") competed in the Berlinale Shorts 2015, and later screened in multiple festivals around the world, including Palm Springs Short Fest, Melbourne, Fribourg, and Seoul International Women's Film Festival. She is also the co-founder and organiser of the only film festival in Bhutan- Beskop Tshechu Film Festival.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Growing up as a young girl in Bhutan, my mother told me stories of dakinis. But I was lucky. For the most part, in modern Bhutan, dakini stories don't float around so much anymore, as the male lens ironically becomes stronger when it comes to stories of our past.

When I actually met a woman who had the dakini essence, it was the first time that I realised the dakini stories are more than just paintings on temple walls or in old texts. They are real life stories of female strength, bravery, compassion and wisdom. Remembering and recognising the dakini becomes more and more important. For us as Bhutanese, as women, and as humans.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

BHUTAN 2016

132 mins

PG

Dzongkha with English subtitles

Directed by Dechen Roder

**There will be a post-screening discussion with the film director*

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

World Sales
Premium Films
Paris, France
+33 1 42 77 06 39
jcm@premium-films.com

Festival and Award Highlights:

Fribourg International Film Festival 2017, Don Quixote Award – Special Mention

Berlin International Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

Busan International Film Festival 2016, Official Selection

Festival International des Cinémas d'Asie, Official Selection

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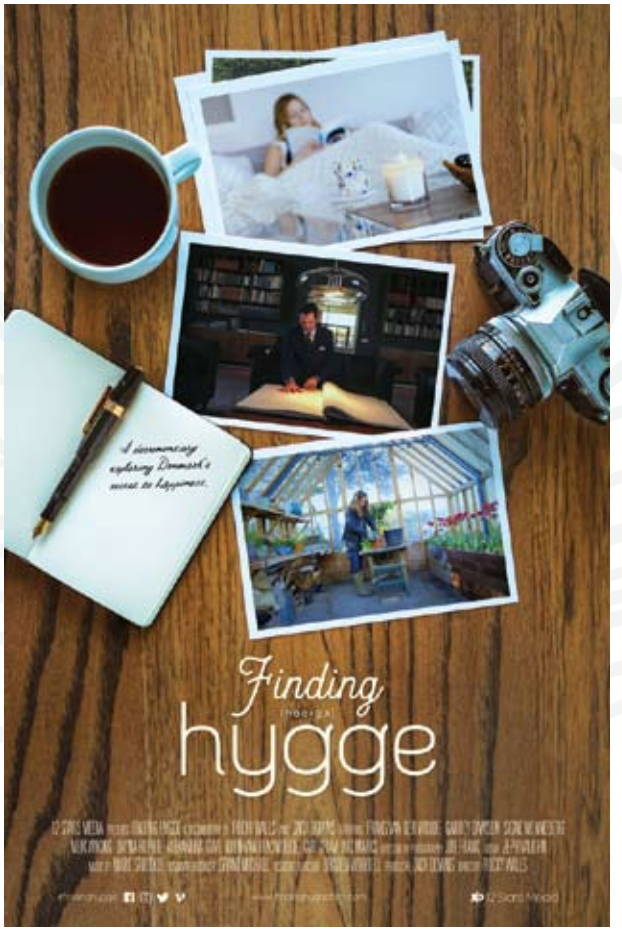
FINDING HYGGE

SUN 23 SEP | 11:00am

"Hygge" has exploded in popularity amidst growing division and distrust around the world, but the Danish word and its definition are more complicated than it seems. For those who seek happiness, this exploratory documentary travels around the globe to discover the true meaning of "hygge" and how to find it.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Rocky Walls makes his directorial debut with the documentary feature film *Finding Hygge*. The co-founder of 12 Stars Media, a video production company focused on telling stories that help make the world a better place, Walls led his team on a mission to discover what role "hygge" plays in making Denmark one of the happiest countries on the planet.



SINGAPORE PREMIERE

DENMARK 2018
90 mins
PG13
Consumer Advice:
Some course language
English with no subtitle
Directed by Rocky Walls

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Rocky Walls
rocky@12starsmedia.com
+1 317 620 1212

SOUND OF SILENCE

SUN 23 SEP | 1:30pm

Set in a beautiful Himalayan valley, it's a journey of a neglected and abandoned mute boy, who loses his mother at birth and is furiously neglected by his father. When his father goes behind bars, the boy stares at a lonely and deserted life ahead. His relationship with an elderly Buddhist monk helps him to detach from his voiceless suffering and to explore the bond that each creation shares with nature. With nowhere to go, he joins a Buddhist monastery even as he fights an inner battle of unrequited love.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Dr. Biju (Bijukumar Damodaran) is an Indian filmmaker who has won India's top film award, The National Film Award, three times. His films were widely screened at many international films festivals like Cannes, Montreal, Shanghai, Cairo, New York, Telluride, Tehran, Jeonju etc. *Sound of Silence* is his eighth film as writer director.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The film was shot in a beautiful Himalayan village in Himachal Pradesh – a remote place inaccessible by road. The story is about the inner conflicts of a boy who could not speak. The film is set in two backdrops. The first part is set in a beautiful rural Himalayan village, and the other, in a tranquil Buddhist monastery. Most of the characters in the film were selected from the village and they had no prior acting experience. The film is like a stream, in a calm meditative mood with stunning magical visuals of beautiful landscapes and haunting sounds of nature and Buddhist chanting.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

INDIA 2017

89 mins

PG

Pahari, Hindi & Tibetan with English subtitles

Directed by
Bijukumar Damodaran
(Dr. Biju)

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Bijukumar Damodaran (Dr. Biju)
drdbijufilmmaker@yahoo.co.in

Festival and Award Highlights:

Winner Best Director at 23rd Kolkata International Film Festival India 2017, in Indian Competition Section

Winner Best Cinematography award at India International Film Festival Queensland, Brisbane, Australia 2017

Winner Best Music Director award at Aurangabad International Film Festival, India 2018, in Indian Film Competition section

A THOUSAND MOTHERS

SUN 23 SEP | 4:00pm

Set at an ancient nunnery above the majestic Irrawaddy River, *A Thousand Mothers* is an unprecedented look into the lives of Buddhist nuns in Sagaing, Myanmar, an ancient religious region with one of the largest concentrations of monasticism in the world. While the choices available to girls and women in Myanmar are quite limited, the film poetically unfolds to reveal unexpected opportunity and beauty as young orphans find a refuge, an education, and a healthy environment with older nuns who have dedicated their lives to service with the wit and wisdom required to live outside the pull of their rapidly modernising culture.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Kim Shelton has been making award-winning documentary films for over 30 years. Her tastes are eclectic and she has covered a very wide range of subjects from cowboys to Sudanese refugees, war veterans and now, Buddhist nuns. Her films, *A Great Wonder, Cowboy Poets, The Highly Exalted, Lost Borders* and *The Welcome*, among others, have won numerous film festival awards, and have been broadcast internationally on POV, PBS, National Geographic, The Discovery Channel and the BBC.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

On a Buddhist retreat in Myanmar, I met a young nun. Each morning we quietly walked the monastery gardens, holding hands. I wondered, "who are these women with shaved heads and pink robes?" In making this film, I was deeply moved to discover "a thousand mothers," a remarkable community of women, living a life of service, kindness, and generosity. May they be an inspiration to you too.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

USA 2017

36 mins

PG

Burmese with English subtitles

Directed by Kim Shelton

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Kim Shelton
shelton@ccountry.net

Festival and Award Highlights:

United Nations Association Film Festival 2018, Official Selection

Sakyadhita Conference on Women in Buddhism 2018 Hong Kong, Official Selection

Buddhist Film Festival Europe, Amsterdam 2017, Official Selection

尊玛 尊玛
TSUNMA TSUNMA

MY SUMMER WITH THE FEMALE MONASTICS OF THE HIMALAYA

我和她们在喜马拉雅山的夏天

SUN 23 SEP | 4:00pm*

为拉达克的第一位安尼藏医。亦有住在山洞十年的老安尼多玛慈仁，讲述她们学习佛法的生活和故事。本片也纪录了小安尼秋田多玛十八岁时即成为小主持的欢乐与眼泪。更有德烈汪莫从西藏家乡一路磕长头花了一年多的时间费尽千辛万苦到印度学习佛法，经过十七年的苦读成为西藏第一批女格西（佛学博士）的故事。

Tsunma, an honorific term connoting "noble, delicate, and pure", refers to the Tibetan Buddhist Nuns of the Himalayan Region who have been largely dismissed or forgotten by the traditions they follow and the societies they've served. Taiwanese photographer Lin Li-Fang undertook a solo journey up 4,270 meters into the Himalayan Plateau and lived for an entire summer with some of these nuns and recorded life in the unforgiving environment dubbed "The Roof of the World". There, Li-Fang captured a life devoted to hope and faith and a people possessing a unique kind of tolerance, humility, and perseverance.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Lin Li-Fang was born 1965 in Taishi Township in Yunlin County of Taiwan. In 1999 she began traveling to India, documenting the life and work of Tibetan Buddhist Monks. In 2002, she received her MFA in Documentary Filmmaking from the National Taiwan University of Arts Graduate School of Applied Media Arts. In 2005, she won the Johnny Walker's "Keep Walking" Prize. To date, she has completed the following films: *Papa's Youthful Dream, Buddha's Sons, The Returners,* and *My Mother*. Her films have been selected in film festivals all around the world, including France, Holland, and Japan. *Tsunma, Tsunma: My Summer with the Female Monastics of the Himalaya* is her newest feature length documentary.

林丽芳出生于1965年云林县台西乡，1999开始印度之旅，纪录藏传佛教僧侣在印度的学习与生活。2002 年投入纪录片创作，进入台湾艺术大学应用媒体研究所，并顺利取得MFA学位。2005 获得Jonny Walker梦想资助计画圆梦学堂。至今作品有《阿爸的青春梦》、《心子》、《朝圣者》，《我的母亲》；作品入围法国、荷兰、日本等多国影展。《尊玛、尊玛：我和她们在喜马拉雅山的夏天》是她 2016 最新纪录长片作品。

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Looking back, I really felt that my solo trip to the Himalayan region of India–at more than 3,700m in Ladakh and 4,250m in Spiti - to make a documentary about the Ani (nuns) has been the wildest and bravest thing I've done creatively.

回想起来，我真的觉得只身一人到印度喜马拉雅，位于海拔3,700公尺的拉达克，4,250公尺的斯比堤，拍摄关于安尼的纪录片是我这辈子在创作上，做过最疯狂和最勇敢的事。

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

TAIWAN 2017
70 mins
PG
Mandarin and Tibetan with English and Chinese subtitles
Directed by Lin Li-fang 林丽芳

**There will be a post-screening discussion with the film director*

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:
牵猴子整合行销股份有限公司
Activator Marketing CO., LTD.
黃舜鈺 Anne Huang
hsyu.angie@gmail.com

Festival and Award Highlights:
Women Make Waves Film Festival Taiwan 2017, Official Selection

ONE MIND

MON 24 SEP | 7:00pm

One Mind is a rare cinematic portrait of life inside one of China's most austere and revered Chan Buddhism communities. The monks at Zhenru Chan Monastery continue to uphold a strict monastic code established over 1,400 years ago by the founding patriarchs of Chan Buddhism in China. In harmony with the land that sustains them, the monks operate an organic farm, grow tea, and harvest bamboo to fuel their kitchen fires. At the heart of this community, a group of cloistered meditators sit in silence for 8 hours every day. *One Mind* offers an intimate glimpse into a thriving Buddhist monastery in modern China.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Edward Burger grew up in a small Ohio town, spending his days in forests and fields. His favourite toy was a microscope. He would trade it in for a camera much later in life. He studied religion at The College of Wooster, and Buddhism with Antioch University in Bodh Gaya, India. After graduation, Edward moved to China, learnt to read and write Mandarin and sought out a Buddhist master living in the remote Zhongnan Mountain region in central China. He studied Buddhist meditation and philosophy in one of China's most vital Chan monasteries. In the earlier years, Edward was working occasionally as a film-set interpreter, before he eventually began making his own documentary films about the Buddhist communities with which he had become so familiar.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The monks at Zhenru are not typical Chinese Buddhist monks; they are a subset of the population respected for their utter dedication to spiritual cultivation in every aspect of their daily lives.

Over the past century, many old traditions and cultures have been lost, leaving an empty space in the hearts of many Chinese people. Most believe that these traditions are lost or are corrupted. The potential for such communities such as Zhenru Monastery to be wellsprings of hope and healing is enormous. Therefore, it is important to let the world know these traditions not only exist, but are in the process of revitalisation in China.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

USA 2016
78 mins
PG
Mandarin with English subtitles
Directed by Edward Burger

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Edward Burger
Common Folk Films
edward@commonfolkfilms.com

Festival and Award Highlights:

Spirit Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

The Inner Path Buddhist Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

Lion's Roar & Buddhafest Online Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

Buddhist Film Festival Europe 2015, Official Selection

TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS

TUE 25 SEP | 7:10pm

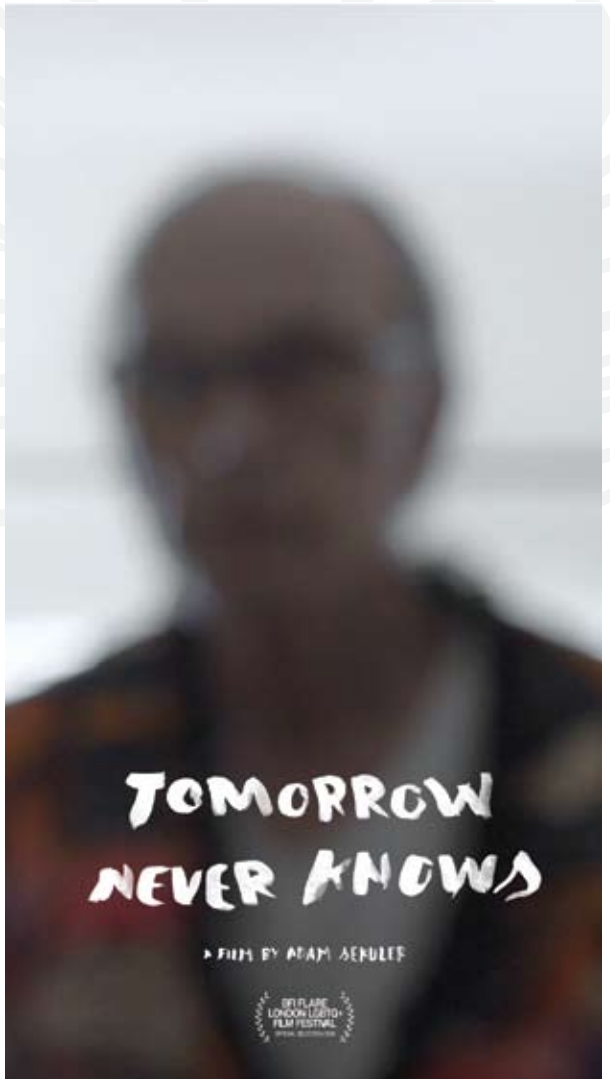
A sensitively rendered documentary looking at the life and death of Shar Jones, a transgender person living with early onset Alzheimer's Disease, and the difficult choice he and his wife Cynthia Vitale faced as the couple struggled to figure out how to proceed amidst his chaotic decline. Instead of letting his memory slip away and burdening Cynthia with years of care, the film highlights the couple's journey as Shar pursues a conscious death. With an intimate visual style, Shar's tale of gender identity gives his choice in death an especially telling element.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Adam Sekuler is a filmmaker, curator, educator and editor based in New Orleans. Screening in forums and film festivals throughout the United States and internationally, his many alternative films strike a delicate balance between stylisation and naturalism, creating a poetic and lyrical form of visual storytelling. He holds an MFA in Studio Arts from the University of Colorado, Boulder, is Founder and Programmer of Radar: Exchanges in Dance Film Frequencies, Associate Director of Zeitgeist Multi-disciplinary Arts Center and was Program Director for Northwest Film Forum (Seattle) for 8 years.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

IIn the United States, assisted suicide isn't available to anyone who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease because the disease isn't considered terminal. In making a decision to pursue a conscious death, I realised Shar would have the support he needed to go through with this process. The decision was sustained through a spiritual practice of Buddhism, supported by a team of hospice and palliative care doctors, and held through the process by his love for Cynthia.



SINGAPORE PREMIERE

USA 2018

93 mins

M18

Consumer Advice:
Mature theme

English with no subtitle

Directed by Adam Sekuler

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Jim Browne
Argot Pictures
jim@argotpictures.com
+646 732 3725

Festival and Award Highlights:

Dok Film Norway 2018, Official Selection

Festival Encuentros Del Otro Cine 2018, Official Selection

BFI Fare: London LGBTQ + Film Festival 2018, Official Selection

SUFFERING OF NINKO
仁光の受難

THU 27 SEP | 7:00pm*

Ninko, a young diligent Buddhist monk, has a serious problem: women (and some men too) are attracted to him. After a series of troubling encounters with infatuated women, Ninko starts a journey to seek purification and to escape from his troubles.

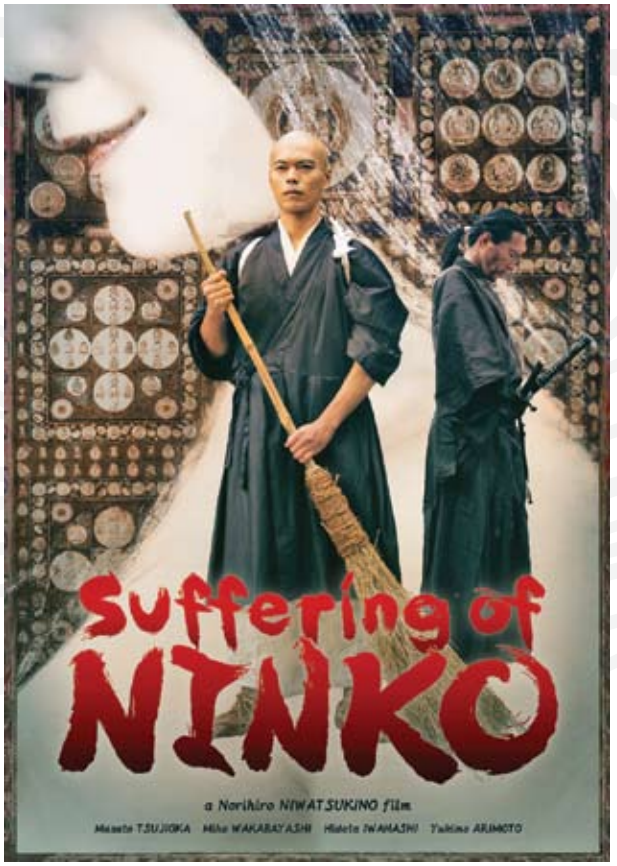
Bizarre and sometimes kitschy, the film follows Ninko as he comes to grip with the anguish of his hyper-sexualised world, mirroring our modern day society where we are constantly bombarded by sexuality and its allure. Suffering of Ninko turns on sensuality to overload and asks "does the suffering of Ninko come from external sources or from his internal weaknesses?"

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Born April 6, 1981, **Norihiro Niwatsukino** started making films while attending the Kyushu Institute of Design in Fukuoka. After graduating from the Graduate School of Design at Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Niwatsukino moved to Tokyo and started working as a freelance director and also a screen writer. He has directed various video works includes live-action, music video, animation. *Suffering of Ninko* (2016) is his first feature film.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

New and unexpected film experience is what I always want to offer to my audience. I want to show them what they have never seen before. I want to lure them into an unknown world. In order to achieve this, I played with the genre and features of *Suffering of Ninko*. I also wanted to add a layer to the experience of the main character, Ninko, by bringing his inner world as a live-action, a Ukiyo-e (a Japanese traditional woodblock print) animation and a mandala animation.



SINGAPORE PREMIERE

JAPAN 2016

70 mins

R21

Consumer Advice:
Mature content

Japanese with English subtitles

Directed by Norhiro Niwatsukino

**There will be a post-screening discussion with the film director*

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:
Asian Shadows
contact@cineseshadows.com

Festival and Award Highlights:

Vancouver International Film Festival 2016, Dragons and Tigers Award for Young Cinema Competition

Busan International Film Festival 2016, A Window on Asian Cinema

Rotterdam International Film Festival 2016, Competition

Seattle International Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

SCHEDULE

DATE & TIME	FILM	DIRECTOR	COUNTRY	YEAR	RUNTIME	RATING
SAT 22 SEP | 12:30pm	OPENING FILM: **FLOWER AND SWORD 花戦さ**	Tetsuo Shinohara	JAPAN	2017	127 mins	PG
SAT 22 SEP | 3:45pm	**KARMA**	Kanitta Kwanyoo	THAILAND	2015	82 mins	PG13
SAT 22 SEP | 6:30pm	**HONEYGIVER AMONG THE DOGS** *	Dechen Roder	BHUTAN	2016	132 mins	PG
SUN 23 SEP | 11.00am	**FINDING HYGGE**	Rocky Walls	DENMARK	2018	90 mins	PG13
SUN 23 SEP | 1.30pm	**SOUND OF SILENCE**	Bijukumar Damodaran	INDIA	2017	89 mins	PG
SUN 23 SEP | 4.00pm	**A THOUSAND MOTHERS**	Kim Shelton	USA	2016	36 mins	PG
	TSUNMA TSUNMA: MY SUMMER WITH THE FEMALE MONASTICS OF THE HIMALAYA **尊玛尊玛:** 我和她们在喜马拉雅山的夏天 *	Lin Li-fang 林丽芳	TAIWAN	2017	70 mins	PG
SUN 23 SEP | 7:00pm	**THISBFF DIALOGUE WITH FILM MAKERS**				60 mins	
MON 24 SEP | 7:00pm	**ONE MIND**	Edward Burger	USA	2016	78 mins	PG
TUE 25 SEP | 7:10pm	**TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS**	Adam Sekuler	USA	2018	93 mins	M18
WED 26 SEP | 6:45pm	**FLOWER AND SWORD 花戦さ**	Tetsuo Shinohara	JAPAN	2017	127 mins	PG
THU 27 SEP | 7:00pm	**SUFFERING OF NINKO 仁光の受難** *	Norhiro Niwatsukino	JAPAN	2016	70 mins	R21
FRI 28 SEP | 7:00pm	**BECOMING WHO I WAS**	Moon Chang-Yong and Jeon Jin	SOUTH KOREA	2017	96 mins	PG
FRI 28 SEP | 9:00pm	**A CAMBODIAN SPRING**	Chris Kelly	USA	2017	121 mins	M18
SAT 29 SEP | 11:00am	**SACRED**	Thomas Lennon	USA	2016	87 mins	PG13
SAT 29 SEP | 1:20pm	**SOUL ON A STRING 皮绳上的魂**	Zhang Yang 张扬	CHINA	2016	142 mins	NC16
SAT 29 SEP | 4:45pm	**THE LAST DALAI LAMA?**	Mickey Lemle	USA	2016	82 mins	NC16
SAT 29 SEP | 7:10pm	**OUT OF THIS WORLD**	David Wright	USA	2017	75 mins	NC16

FILM CLASSIFICATION

Parental Guidance (PG)
Suitable for all, but parents should guide their young

Parental Guidance13 (PG13)
Suitable for person aged 13 and above but parental guidance is advised for children below 13

No Children Under 16 (NC16)
Suitable for persons aged 16 and above

Mature 18 (M18)
Suitable for persons aged 18 and above

Restricted 21 (R21)
Restricted to persons aged 21 and above

* *There will be a post screening discussion with the film director*

All information is correct at the time of print. For updates, please visit www.thisfilmfest.com

BECOMING WHO I WAS

FRI 28 SEP | 7:00pm

The coming of age and a heart-warming tale of a young Rinpoche's reincarnation and journey home.

Padma Angdu's world turns upside down when the monastery where he belonged to expels him. He is recognised as a 'Living Buddha' in Ladakh, and the only thing that holds him together is the unfaltering love of his teacher. High expectations from his community leads the young Rinpoche into rebellion as he enters into adolescence. After having waited years in vain for his disciples from Tibet, the soon-to-be teenage Rinpoche and his aging teacher embark on an epic journey towards Tibet, in search of an answer.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Moon Chang-Yong is South Korea's multi award-winning director and cinematographer who has been creating documentaries for Korea's major broadcasters since 1998. His awards include EBS Prize for Excellence (2009); KIPA Best Documentary Award Grand Prize (2011); KCTTA Work of Art Prize (2012); and KBS Prize for Excellence (2013).

Jeon Jin is a a producer/director, raised in Africa and currently producing documentaries in South Korea for a global audience. Her credits include *1 Hectare of Happiness* (2013), awarded the KBS Prize for Excellence.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

At the core of this heart-warming tale of two characters living in the harsh, barren land of Ladakh, is the undeniable love and sacrifice that is universal. Despite having been miles away from home, it moved me deeply and conjured up familiar feelings of the unconditional love that I received from my mother. With the sense of hope amidst the trials and tribulations that our characters face, this film recaptures the most valuable human feeling we have long forgotten in our modern world.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

SOUTH KOREA 2017

96 mins

PG

Ladakhi and Tibetan with English subtitles

Directed by Moon Chang-Yong and Jeon Jin

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Cargo Film & Releasing
Cailin McFadden,
Sales & Marketing Assistant and Festival Coordinator
cailin.cargoreleasing@gmail.com

Festival and Award Highlights:

Berlin International Film Festival 2017, Grand Prix for the Best Feature Film (Generation Kplus)

Seattle International Film Festival 2017, Documentary Competition Grand Jury Prize

DMZ International Documentary Film Festival 2016, Beautiful New Docs Award

Moscow International Documentary Film Festival 2017, Grand Prize for the Best Documentary Feature and Best Editing Award

A CAMBODIAN SPRING

FRI 28 SEP | 9.00pm

How much would you sacrifice to fight for what you believe in?

A Cambodian Spring is an intimate and unique portrait of three people caught up in the chaotic and often violent development that is shaping modern-day Cambodia. Shot over six years, the film charts the growing wave of land-rights protests that led to the 'Cambodian Spring' and the tragic events that followed. This film is about the complexities – both political and personal, of fighting for what you believe in.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Chris Kelly is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and the founder of Little Ease Films. He has spent the last nine years making his first feature documentary *'A Cambodian Spring'* which recently won the Special Jury Prize for International Feature Documentary at Hot Docs 2017. In 2014, he produced an award-winning undercover investigation into slavery in the Thai fishing industry. His work has taken him as far afield as South Sudan, Burma, the Philippines, Laos and Thailand.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

A Cambodian Spring is for me, a deeply personal film, which took nine years to complete. It is an exploration of what motivates us, what gives our lives meaning, and what happens when our personal desires colour and shape our actions. It is an unapologetically subjective portrait of my time in Cambodia, of the people who shared their lives with me and of the shifting landscapes, both physical and emotional, that I found there.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

USA 2017

121 mins

M18

Consumer Advice:
Mature content

Khmer and English
with English subtitles

Directed by Chris Kelly

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Chris Kelly

chris@little-ease.com

+44(0)7515651572

Festival and Award Highlights:

Busan International Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

Human Rights Watch Film Festival 2018, Official Selection

Cambodiatown Film Festival 2018, Winner of Best Documentary

Hot Docs 2017, Winner of Special Jury Prize

SACRED

SAT 29 SEP | 11:00am

Shot by more than 40 filmmaking teams around the world, *Sacred* immerses viewers in the daily use of faith and spiritual practice. At a time when religious hatred dominates the world's headlines, this film explores faith as a primary human experience, and how people turn to ritual and prayer to navigate the milestones and crises of private life. The film's director commissioned or sourced footage from top independent filmmakers from more than 25 countries – and a wide range of religious traditions – each team contributing a single scene.

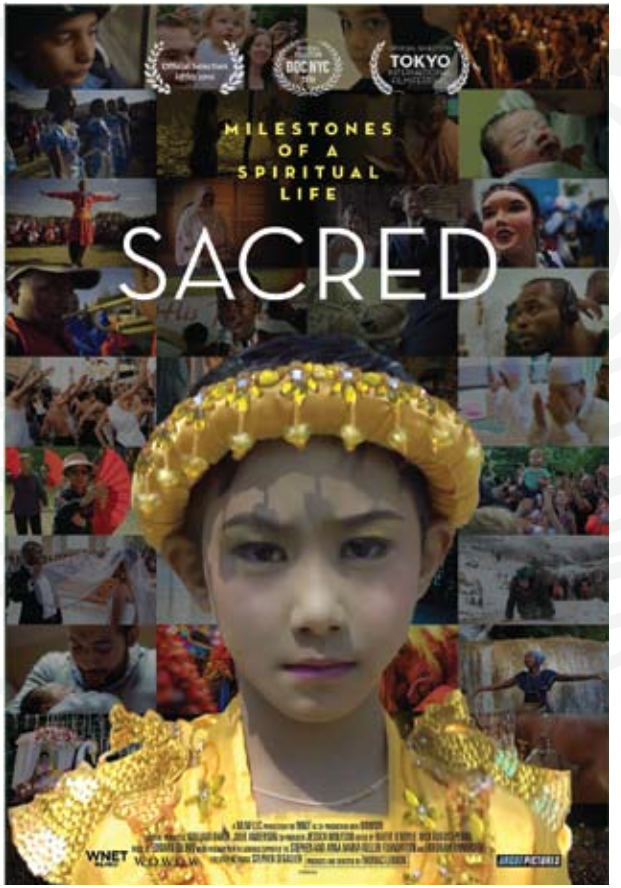
DIRECTOR'S BIO

Thomas Lennon's work in documentary film has earned him an Academy Award and three Academy nominations. His works often explores the themes of society and history. His works have been nominated three times for the Academy Award, winning in 2007 for *The Blood of Yingzhou District*. He has also won all major USA television awards including two Peabodys, Emmys and duPont-Columbia University Awards. Other notable films include *"The Battle Over Citizen Kane"* and *"Seven Days in Bensonhurst"*.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When it comes to faith, we know what we think. Our minds are set. That's true of many issues, of course, but with religion, it seems especially so.

As journalists and documentary filmmakers, our training is to approach faith sceptically, and that's probably as it should be. Religion has wreaked a lot of havoc in recent years; it invites hard scrutiny. And yet that scepticism – a badge we wear proudly – is also limiting. With this film, we set out to take faith seriously as primary human experience. The goal was to capture that experience from the inside, and with enough immediacy that it disturbs some of our certainties, and invites us to think.



SINGAPORE PREMIERE

USA 2016

87 mins

PG13

Consumer Advice:
Some violence and nudity

Directed by Thomas Lennon

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Argot Pictures
Jim Browne
+646 732 3725
jim@argotpictures.com

Festival and Award Highlights:

DOC NYC 2016, Official Selection

Idfa 2016, Official Selection

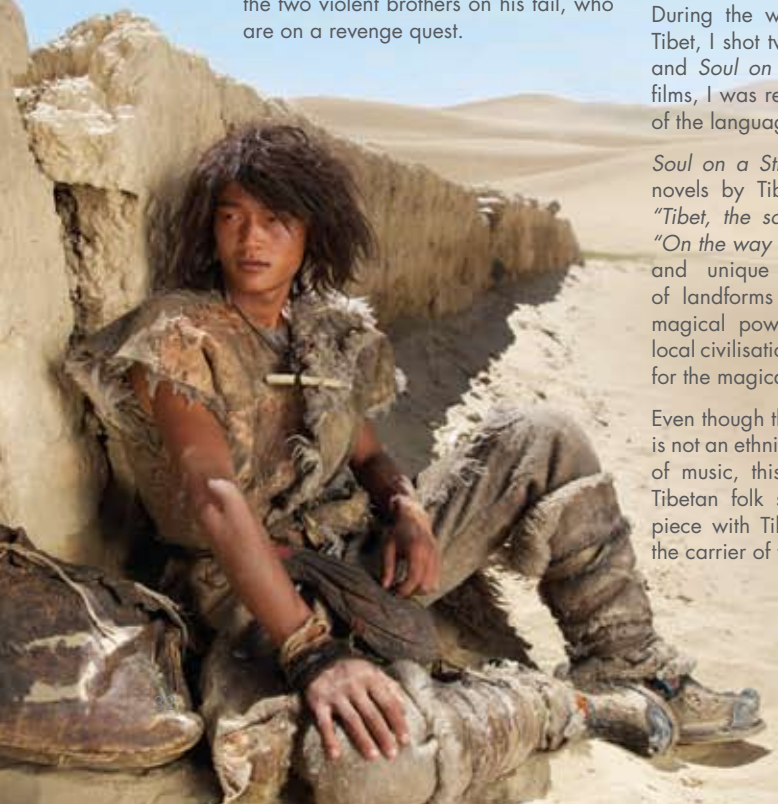
Tokyo International Film Festival 2016, Official Selection

Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

SOUL ON A STRING
皮绳上的魂

SAT 29 SEP | 1:20pm

After discovering a sacred stone in the mouth of a deer he just killed, Tabei, a young lonesome Tibetan cowboy, embarks on a long and difficult mission: to bring it back to the holy mountain of Buddha's handprint. His journey turns sour as an obstinate woman, Qiong, and a psychic yet dumb elf, Pu, soon decide to join him. This is in addition to the two violent brothers on his tail, who are on a revenge quest.



DIRECTOR'S BIO

Zhang Yang is a Chinese film director, screenwriter, and occasional actor. He studied Chinese literature in Beijing, where he later moved to the Central Academy of Drama from where he graduated in 1992.

One of his earlier films, *Paths of the Soul* premiered at Tokyo International Film Festival 2015, screening with great success in many international festivals including Busan, Rotterdam, Black Nights, Goteborg and Hong Kong. The film was released in North American and Japan during the summer 2016.

Soul on a String, his latest film, premiered in competition at the Shanghai International Film Festival in June 2016 where it received the Best Cinematography award.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

During the whole year of my stay in Tibet, I shot two films: *Paths of the Soul* and *Soul on a String*. With these two films, I was researching the possibilities of the language of cinematography.

Soul on a String is adapted from two novels by Tibetan writer Tashi Dawa: *"Tibet, the soul tied on a string"* and *"On the way to Lhasa"*. The spectacular and unique landscape and variety of landforms of Tibet have a natural magical power. The religion and the local civilisation provide a strong ground for the magical realism.

Even though the film was shot in Tibet, it is not an ethnic film. If I take the example of music, this is not like a traditional Tibetan folk song, but a world music piece with Tibetan elements. "Tibet" is the carrier of the film's space.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

CHINA 2016

142 mins

NC16

Consumer Advice:
Some sexual scenes
些许性相关画面

Tibetan with English subtitles

Directed by Zhang Yang 张扬

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:

Asian Shadows
contact@chineseshadows.com

Festival and Award Highlights:

Shanghai International Film Festival 2016, Best Cinematography award

Toronto International Film Festival 2016, Official Selection

Film rights:

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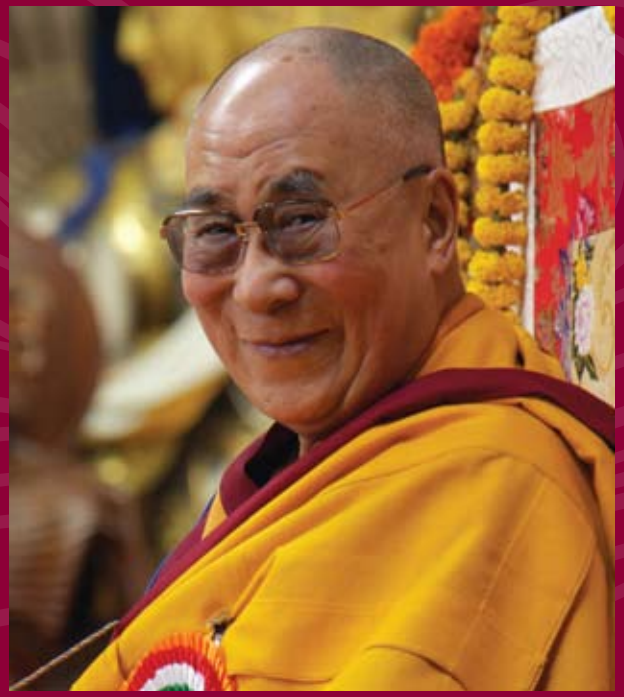
THE LAST DALAI LAMA?

SAT 29 SEP | 4:45pm

The Last Dalai Lama? takes a fresh look at what is important for the 14th Dalai Lama at age 82: the historical confrontation between Tibet and China; his influence in political, spiritual, and educational spheres; and his personal feelings on aging, dying and whether he will be the last Dalai Lama. The film artfully weaves archival and contemporary footage from Lemle's ground-breaking *Compassion in Exile: The Story of The 14th Dalai Lama (1992)*; intimate interviews with His Holiness, shot 25 years apart; and interviews with his family and the westerners he's inspired since his exile from Tibet in 1959. The film is enhanced by a beautiful original music score composed and performed by Philip Glass and Tibetan musician, Tenzin Choegyal.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Producer/Director **Mickey Lemle**'s multi-award winning documentaries include: *The Other Side of the Moon; Our Planet Earth; Compassion In Exile: The Story of The 14th Dalai Lama; Hasten Slowly: The Journey of Sir Laurens Vander Post; Ram Dass Fierce Grace,* which Newsweek Magazine named one of the "five best non-fiction films of 2002"; and *The Last Dalai Lama?* For the past 20 years, Lemle has been Chairman of the Board of the Tibet Fund. He has been named "Cinemas Soul Man; One of the 40 Artists Who Shake the World" by The UTNE READER.



SINGAPORE PREMIERE

USA 2016

82 mins

NC16

Consumer Advice:
Some mature content

English with no subtitle

Directed by Mickey Lemle

Scan to watch trailer

Print source:
Lemle Pictures, Inc.
+(212) 736 9606
lp@lemlepictures.com

Festival and Award Highlights:

Maui Film Festival 2016, Audience Award

Mill Valley Film Festival 2016, Audience Award

Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia 2017, Audience Award

International Buddhist Film Festival 2018, Official Selection

OUT OF THIS WORLD

SAT 29 SEP | 7:10pm

As the dust was still settling after WWII and the Cold War divided the world, the mysterious and impenetrable mountain kingdom of Tibet sent out a plea to help stop the communist forces of China from invading their country. They chose the most well-known newsman of his day to document their plight, hoping to garner international support to protect their borders from the Red Army. Lowell Thomas, along with his son, became only the seventh and eighth Westerners invited to walk through the Western Gate of Lhasa. Meeting the 15-year-old Dalai Lama was an adventure of a lifetime for them, and the start of a relationship between His Holiness and the Thomas family that has now spanned three generations.

Out of this World is a digitised and re-released version of an original film print from the 1950's by Lowell Thomas, which will include new scenes and information, as well as photographs from the original trip and those from our 2016 expedition.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

David Wright is an award-winning documentary filmmaker. He has worked in more than 60 countries and has made films for National Geographic, the BBC and PBS. David was cinematographer on features including *Slingshot (2015), Voice of America: Lowell Thomas and the Rise of Broadcast News (2017), The Boys that Said No* and *The Dark Illuminates the Light (2018).* "Lowell Thomas is regarded as the father of broadcast journalism," David says, "and after a 25-year career shooting and producing documentaries it was a privilege to rework Out of This World for a new audience."

ABOUT LOWELL THOMAS

Lowell Thomas was America's best known newsman, one of the world's greatest adventurers and is considered one of the founding fathers of broadcast journalism. With a 50-year career spanning radio, television, cinema and the publication of many books, he brought the world to the American people. Much of what Lowell broadcast was immediately archived and has sat untouched for decades.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

USA 2017
75 mins
NC16
Consumer Advice:
Some mature content
English with no subtitle
Directed by David Wright

Print source:
David Wright
hdcamera@me.com

Festival and Award Highlights:

Dharmasala International Film Festival 2017, Official Selection

84000

TRANSLATING THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

Die Worte des Buddha übersetzen
बुद्धवचनानुवादः
Traduire les paroles du Bouddha
Переводя Будды слова
बुद्धवचन अनुवाद
Traduciendo las palabras del Buddha
Oversette ordene til Buddha
만대장경 번역 佛典傳譯
Μεταφράζοντας τα λόγια του Βούδα
Prekladame Buddovy slova
မြတ်စွာဘုရားတရားကို ဘာသာပြန်ခြင်း
แปลพระพุทธพจน์สู่สากล
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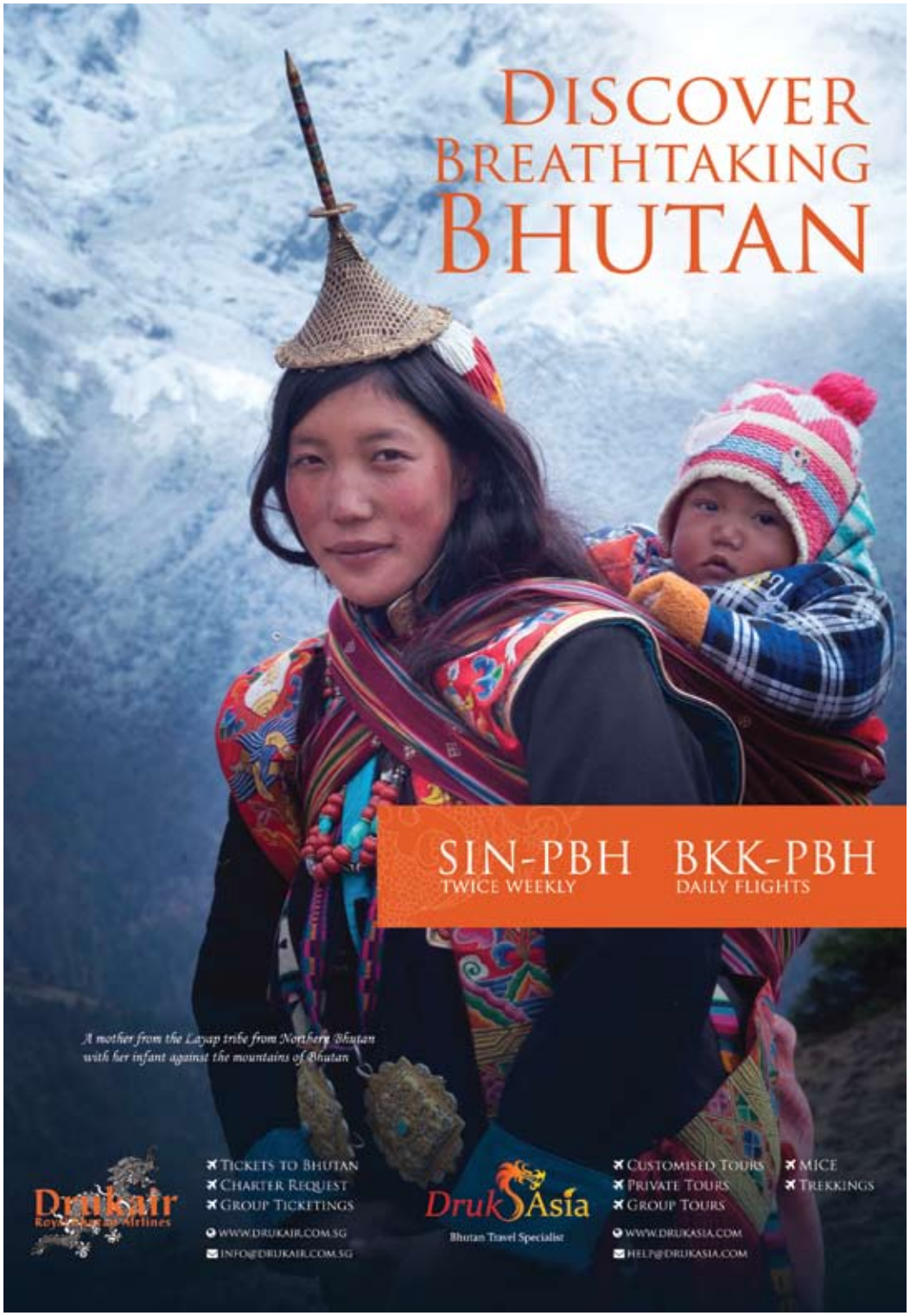

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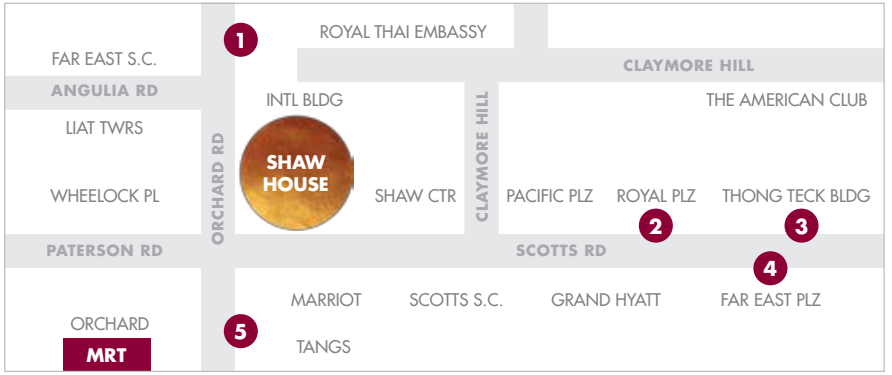

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THISBFF Dialogue *with* Film Makers

Thus Have I Seen Buddhist Film Festival (THISBFF) 2018 is pleased to announce our inaugural THISBFF Dialogue with Film Makers of our featured films this year. Join Lin Li Fang and Dechen Roder as they share what motivates them to overcome challenges faced in making films with religious themes.

This Dialogue will be conducted in English and moderated by Mr Tan Bee Thiam.

Date : Sunday, 23 September 2018
Time : 7.00pm
Venue : Lido 2

Free Admission. Register via thisbff.peatix.com

Dechen Roder is one of the first female directors from the Kingdom of Bhutan. She has been making small shorts and documentaries since 2005. She is also the co-founder and organiser of the only film festival in Bhutan - Beskop Tshechu Film Festival.

Lin Li-Fang, a Taiwanese, began traveling to India in 1999, documenting the life and work of Tibetan Buddhist Monks. In 2002, she received her MFA in Documentary Filmmaking from the National Taiwan University of Arts Graduate School of Applied Media Arts.

Tan Bee Thiam has worked as a director, producer, writer and editor with the 13 Little Pictures, an independent film collective whose films have garnered critical acclaim. Based in Singapore, his films and projects have been presented in many international film festivals. From 2014 to 2017, he was the film curator for the Singapore International Festival of Arts.

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