



**A chance to watch films together.
An opportunity to discuss the issues raised.
A time of friendship, food and fun.**

4th Nov	War Horse
2nd Dec	Tsotsi (replacing The Bishop's Wife)
6th Jan	Kundun
3rd Feb	In Time
3rd Mar	The Invention of Lying
6th Apr	The Hunger Games

**Films start at 5:30pm
Followed by food, coffee and conversation**

**10 Bletchington Road
Islip**

**Further details from Jonathan (Ox 842214)
Email: info@spiritualityonscreen.org.uk
Web: www.spiritualityonscreen.org.uk**

Spirituality
SOS
n
screen

SOS

Spirituality
SOS
n
screen



Some thoughts on watching films

Stories are the stuff of life. They allow us to reflect on all sorts of issues at a safe distance as we engage with the characters, cry with them, laugh with them, get cross with them and generally share their experience. How they deal with the issues they come across may frustrate us, or give us new insights; cause us to laugh or cry; result in us hurling abuse at the screen or willing there to be a happy ending. And through it all we can encounter God in all sorts of unexpected places if only we take time to look.

Questions to ask yourself

- ▶ What did you think of the film? What do you like most? Least?
- ▶ Which incidents made you think or feel most strongly? How well did you think the film treated those incidents?
- ▶ What issues did the film raise for you?
- ▶ What character(s) do you most identify with and why?
- ▶ Does the film have any echoes of Christian beliefs or stories from the Bible? Does it support or challenge Christian values?

Some facts about the film

- ▶ Filming in Tibet itself was not possible, so Morocco was used instead. Some of the monastery scenes were filmed at the Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Monastery in Woodstock, New York.
- ▶ The director, Martin Scorsese, the writer, Melissa Mathison, and her then husband, Harrison Ford, were all banned from entering China as a result of making this film.
- ▶ Martin Scorsese opted to use non-professional actors throughout. The Dalai Lama and his family are played by actual relatives of the Dalai Lama himself, with Tenzin Tsarong, who plays the Dalai Lama as an adult, being his grand nephew.
- ▶ The film is dedicated to Martin Scorsese's mother who died during pre-production. Scorsese commented: "the Dalai Lama represents unconditional love and, to me, my mother was the closest person with that kind of love."
- ▶ The film was nominated for four Oscars in 1998: Best Cinematography, Best Art/ Set Decoration, Best Costume Design and Best Original Score.
- ▶ Melissa Mathison, the screenwriter, is best known for *E.T.*

Memorable Quotes

- Reting** You have chosen to come back to this life once more. You will stay as long as you can. And then, you will come again. You will be born again and again as long as all life continues. You are here to love all living things. Just love them. Care for them. Have compassion for them. "As long as any living thing draws breath, wherever they shall be, there in compassion shall the Buddha appear."
- Kundun** I will liberate those not liberated. I will release those not released. I will relieve those unrelieved. And set living beings in nirvana.
- Kundun** Thus by the virtue that has collected through all that I have done may the pain of every living creature be completely cleared away.
- Mao** Religion is poison. Like a poison, it weakens the race. Like a drag, it retards the mind of people and society. "The opium of the people." Tibet has been poisoned by religion and your people are poisoned and inferior.
- Kundun** You have bombed a peaceful people.
- Tan** It is my job to deal with reactionaries.
- Kundun** No, we are a peace-loving people.
- Tan** We are here to heal the people of Tibet. You need reform. We are here to liberate you.
- Kundun** No, Buddha is our physician, General Tan. He will heal us. Wisdom and compassion will set us free. You cannot liberate me, General Tan. I can only liberate myself.
- Kundun** Just like a dream experience, whatever things I enjoy will become a memory. Whatever is past will not be seen again.
- Adviser** Nonviolence means co-operation where it is possible and resistance when it is not. You have tried co-operation. Your resistance must come from outside Tibet, Kundun.
- Kundun** Nonviolence takes a long time.
- Monk** Do we have the time, Holiness?
- Adviser** You are in grave danger. The Dalai Lama cannot fall into Chinese hands. Our only hope is to fight.
- Kundun** We cannot.
- Guard** With all respect, sir, may I ask, who are you?
- Kundun** What you see before you is a man, a simple monk.
- Guard** Are you the Lord Buddha?
- Kundun** I think I am a reflection, like the moon on water. When you see me, and I try to be a good man, you see yourself.

Kundun

Kundun is the name used by Tibetans to refer to the Dalai Lama and means "The Presence". Tonight's film charts the life of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, who was forced to try and accommodate a cynical Chairman Mao after the Chinese invasion of Tibet and finally escaped into exile in India. Although not setting out to be a documentary, the project had the blessing, and input, of the Dalai Lama, who provided a number of interviews to the screenwriter, Melissa Mathison. The result is a film which invites us to reflect on another faith through a spiritual figure who, in some way, personalizes the divine as well as someone who has come to embody the Tibetan cultural identity and national character. Described by many as a rare masterpiece, *Kundun* is at one and the same time a spiritual journey, a compelling story and a delight for the eyes and ears.

The Dalai Lama

The institution of the Dalai Lama has become, over the centuries, "a symbolic embodiment of the Tibetan national character." Today, the Dalai Lama and the office of the Dalai Lama have become focal points in the country's struggle towards independence and, more urgently, cultural survival. The Dalai Lama is regarded as the principal incarnation of Chenrezig, the bodhisattva of compassion and patron deity of Tibet. In that role, the Dalai Lama has chosen to use peace and compassion in his treatment of his own people and his oppressors, thus upholding Tibetan values and becoming a cornerstone of Tibetan identity and culture.

A multi-faith approach

Epiphany is the season when we continue to reflect on the way God revealed himself to us in human form and how that revelation was to both Gentile and Jew (ie. to all people). It is also a time when we think about how God continues to reveal himself today. The question is how that revelation takes place. As Christians, we believe that we have a particularly unique view of the divine through Jesus. But is that the only way? What can we learn from other faiths and different approaches? After all, faith (and denomination) in many ways is an accident of birth. Much of it is inherited. Yet God is surely above and beyond such accidents. And, if so, we cannot then readily assume that he is only to be found where we were born.

Nonviolence

The Tibetan way of life is centred on one of nonviolence. But nonviolence, as the Dalai Lama says, takes a long time. Is it realistic to always hold on to that ideal, however long it takes, and however painful the journey?

Reincarnation

Phowa is a Buddhist meditation practice that transfers the mindstream to another body at the moment of death. It is sometimes described as "the practice of conscious dying". Such a belief distinguishes between one's spirit and the body that houses it, with the inherent dangers of Gnosticism that that implies. How do you respond to the idea of reincarnation? And how does that compare with Christian resurrection and your own ideas on what happens when you die?

Religion as poison

There are many people over the years who have laid the blame for the world's woes at the feet of religion, Richard Dawkins being one of the current ones. There is no doubt that dreadful things have been done, and continue to be done, in the name of religion, but such religion has often become extremely distorted. How do you respond to the accusation that "religion is the opium of the people"?