

BUILDING HEAVEN, REMEMBERING EARTH: CONFESSIONS OF A FALLEN ARCHITECT

ENGLISH TRANSCRIPTION

0(H)00(M)00(S) Picture Start

Title in Moving Circle:

"Building Heaven, Remembering Earth: Confessions of a Fallen Architect"

Female Voice Over:

0:00:22

Suffering from the fatalism of architecture..

These documents are reminders of desperation and leisure, pictorials of incongruities in time and culture allowed for by traverses of political, economic and real geography's.

Male Voice Over:

0:00:37

Making meaning to discern the horizon through the night of a hollow and infertile life - the suddenness of lightning in a pervasive miasma called a today without a tomorrow.

When lying in your bed the room you exist in is not made from stone or wood but from memory, desire and loss. Windows of imagination spring into being and even the possibility of rekindled and impossible joy appears as doors to a somewhere else that feels more like home than any architectural actuality.

Female Voice Over:

0:01:15

The dark behind your eyes is the obfuscation of a dense cloud, a cacophony of symbols and signs. The full and noisome universe of a history of tension, debt and balance, of gravity and aspiration, thunderous and fated steam ships of the heart. Your house is founded on, naturally, an abyss that is a hallucination - a libidinal economy that is as regulated as the most conservative of National Banks in other words a myth - the myth, for all myths are the one myth of the beginning and ending of the world.

Man in Office

00323

More and more generations are becoming Dyslexic. They are incapable of having letters represent anything. as the image has replaced language, and now the image has been consumed into the speed of perception itself. This is why so many architects are cladding their monstrosities in mirror and metal and glass.

Everything that is real is actually suppose to be insubstantial and vice a versa.

The time frequency of light has become the determining factor in the apperception of phenomenon, leaving the spatial frequency of matter for dead.

Women in office:

You're not smart enough to say that!

Man in office

OK it's true I heard it in a pop song.

00428

Telephone Answering Machine:

"Received today at 6:16 P.M.

00431

Man's recorded voice on Answering Machine

"I need more money. Send my last paycheque. I'm in Rome
I'm on my way to Varanasi. I'm going to fax you the particulars.

I am sorry about the breakdown...I had to get away...one more lousy
condo project and I was going to put the bullet to myself...running out of Lira...got to
go...thanks...will send videotape.

Telephone Answering Machine:

End of message.

00455

Woman:

The first book on architecture is, in fact, ten books - the ten books of Vitruvius.

Man: (overlap)

Well, it is the first book that we have...I mean there were probably other books...

Woman:

The Roman Vitruvius. He lived at that time of the Caesarean expansions, forty years
before Christ, in what the old scholars called the Golden Age..Eight of the books are
about buildings...but then the two other books are about machines and time pieces...time
pieces as in sundials...using the shadow cast by the sun to tell the time...its the shadow
that's important(...the insubstantial shadow...)

00545

INTERTITLE:

The Pantheon, Rome
(27 B.C., 120 A.D. and sometime in your lifetime)

Male Voice Over:

Originally a Pagan temple to Nature. A light machine, a timepiece,

a calendar. Also it is a lesson into the Self.

Listen: You stare up to imagine your own eye...it is how a focus is created by concentration - how this then creates contrast - foreground and background and then how one loses awareness of the whole by this concentration yet simultaneously if one pays attention awareness is brought back to the source of the focus

Fact: In 608 A.D. the Pantheon was conceded by the Emperor to Pope Boniface the Fourth who transformed it into a Church.

Fact: The Pantheon is 43.30 meters in diameter and 21.65 meters high - and so it is implied that the building is a perfect sphere. An invisible negative projection completes the building by the viewers mindfulness of the balance of dimensions.

Of course this negative half also has an opening but it opens to a world that is ultimately unknown.

00732

INTERTITLE:

The Pantheon, A Feather Falls

Male Voice Over:

00950

Being thoroughly alive is a series of seductions and forgetful intoxications - an absorption in one way or another in the contours of needs and pleasures - usually an imagined reflection of forms, a balance of attractions that ultimately cancel each other out - the result of this perfect symmetry is an absolute negation - a vanishing point identical to the infinite - that is why the most consummate of buildings - such as the Pantheon are machines of the mind and its actual presence signals the intersection of the eternal with the mortal.

01030

INTERTITLE:

St Peter's Basilica

(a number of appropriations)

Bernini's baldacchino

(The canopy made from the Pantheon)

01106

Male Voice Over:

In the Seventeenth Century Urban the seventh stripped the bronze ceiling of the portico of the Pantheon and melted it down to make the canopy over the main altar of St. Peter's and eighty cannons for the Papal Sea. The canopy, by Bernini, is arguable the most interesting work in St. Peter's, it is other than all the other works in this Catholic capital. It is pagan in its complex and twisted forms. It is maybe the revenge of the Pantheon. The supremacy of nature in the temple devoted to a man.

01327

INTERTITLE:
the catacombs of Rome

"We are looking for the city which is to come."
(Heb. 13,14)

Male Voice Over:

A field of Poppies and wheat grows over the catacombs of Rome.

Half a million inhabitants of this city of the dead. Waiting for the Final Judgment in a renewed and utopian earth. Waiting for the moment to rise from their sleep to be citizens in the city of God.

For their bodies to be made immortal in their master Christ. Half a million inhabitants in this city of the dead. The galleries, sometimes in four levels are over twelve miles long.

A field of Poppies and wheat grows a top the catacombs of Rome.

01657
INTERTITLE:
Without a home

Male Voice Over:

"I haven't told you this but since we're on the subject of form, I think it is about time that I talk to you about...I have, I have a personal cloud...even on the bluest of days I can sense it over the horizon--it could be in the East, the West, the North, the South, somewhere in the never reaching arrow of the four directions. Of course it is not only my cloud I just happen to recognize it as the same cloud wherever I go. I first recognized in a painting by Bruegel the Elder. His large Tower of Babel picture. The cloud was to the left of the building not as ominous as his larger brother cloud to the right.

A cloud is a shelter for weather, gray shades, rainwater - as such it functions as a mobile momentary architecture. But no, it is an anti architecture! It is the prototype of all uncertain of shape.

A cloud is a cloud is a cloud is a cloak of wisps of black and white and isn't anything in particular - you can send a whole squadron of bombers right through it - the cloud doesn't care. The cloud lives between heaven and earth. It's generally impartial. It doesn't mind hanging out with other clouds but it can as well exist by itself and wouldn't whimper about being lonely. One can imagine holding a cloud delicately in ones hand and petting it, but you couldn't smooth out a clouds inherent abstraction.

The cloud doesn't believe in gravity! - it weighs less than air! It's completely unmanageable and doesn't think about tomorrow.

Clouds are blatant representatives of the will of nature. Floating armadas of extremely determined and complex fluff!

One of my best photographs of the cloud was taken in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh North India. The cloud is here foregrounded by a prodigious and delirious column constructed in the 1780's by the Frenchman - General Claude Martin. A good businessman, an excellent opportunist and an even better eccentric.

The last time I saw the cloud was out my office window - just the other day.

02033
INTERTITLE

"La Rotunda (1560-1571), Vicenza and Vicinity, Italy.
(obligatorio)

Male Voice Over:

The four corners of the horizon are surrounded by Palladio's Rotunda.

The simplicity of a square and a circle. The simplicity of symmetry a trap. Its elegance belies the brutality of the labyrinth. The labyrinth of the world in which the Rotunda acts as its radiating core. The Rotunda designed by the Architect Palladio in Vicenza, Italy. Considered an original of the Western Tradition. Commissioned by a political advisor, a consultant to the Pope, a wealthy landowner.

This is an image of Saturn eating one of his children. It is one of the paintings inside the Rotunda.

The building looks suspiciously when viewed in a cursory manner as banal as a bank and then you realize that it is a kind of nightmare, a kind of perfection and a kind of joke

Four massive identical entrance ways box a cylinder and crowning dome. There is no back or side to the building - it is all front. Hysterical. This more than doubling, this more than mirroring makes the entrance way into a phantom architecture and your own presence in relation to the building an act of fevered vision.

The overly invoked identity maybe and finally seems designed to dwell a God - A God determined to leave or to arrive in a grand fashion but not necessarily knowing where in the compass the trajectory of duty or desire or would it be all predestination calls.

The masquerade of excessive stability, exacting symmetry, produces a vertigo of perspectives making the building wonderfully insubstantial, makes it virtual...the building so apparently solid spins off to a kind of timelessness.

A child repeats a word over and over again to learn the word but also to establish the meaning as a sound

Here the repetition of the entrance ways identical on all four sides is repeated with the same insistence. This iteration establishes the meaning of the building as purely the articulation of space.

The last work designed by Palladio was the Teatro Olympico. The first work performed in the Theatre was Oedipus Rex. This was in the 1570's.

02425
INTERTITLE
Amsterdam
Colours

Male Voice Over:

Its colour is orange and every other colour.

It is, it can't be denied, a city of drinking, of smoking, of sex, of tourists stoned, shopping and fucking (X). They come here to drink and they come wanting to burst their seed into the immaculate whores. Sex workers in antiseptic white lingerie that glows under the violet black lights like the exoskeleton of a yet classified species of a subterranean bug. I don't mean to say that cruelly. I have never seen such dazzling white lingerie...Is it the famous Dutch obsession with cleanliness.

Architecture is considered the earliest of arts, but prostitution, as everyone knows, is the first profession.

I imagine these women in two architectural lights. They form an impenetrable barrier between the excess of desire and the will to care it out. They cancel the future-absorbing every thrust like a mother tolerating the tossing and thrashings of a child. They profit from the simple biological by furthering the delusions and real intoxications of anonymous sex. What does this sex produce - what does it build? Always the same, for centuries the same, tomorrow the same. It is a punctuation in time, to mark time, to imagine it exists, to escape its passage, to suck the pleasurable tit in the blank of pure sense- the bio-chemistry of a turgid organ vibrating for so many guilders in one of so many enclosing holes. Every place is for rent but you gotta pay in advance.

02826
INTERTITLE
Amsterdam
Founded on Sand

02912
INTERTITLE
Holland,
Towards the Northwest

03003
INTERTITLE
Neeltje Jans, Holland,
Aquatic Pavilion
Media Architecture

03111

Man Speaking on Camera - Outside...

Two young architects. We were impressed by Lars Spoebrueck.

...shining part of the building...Spoebrueck published alot about architecture...computer designs...etc...but had never built a building ...

morphing with computers...but we were impressed by his ideas.

03245

TEXT OVER IMAGE:

"media architecture, fluid architecture, architecture that reflects the world of data, that makes it visible, explicit..."

03347

INTERTITLE;

Amsterdam

New Metropolis

Male Voice Over:

Renzo Piano's New Metropolis. A Palace of science and technology in an industrial and working class part of the city. But forty paces from this building - the need for architecture is far from her mind...her need for science is personal the structure is escape and the dissolving of identity into an ease without form. Science like art is a lie. It doesn't take as its first account that humanities primary problem and glory is also its last. What to do about the driving fact of being alive and inevitable going towards death.

Unfortunate needs still rule in the Northern Paradise.

03442

INTERTITLE

Park Güell

1900-1914

Gaudi and Jujol & Barcelona

Women's Voice Over:

Gaudi said that Nature was his architectural teacher...here on this great platform that overlooks Barcelona he built a massive snake bench. His partner Jujol clad the snake in ceramics broken pieces of tiles, fragments of plates, china dolls, and shattered glass wine jars.

Creating a fantastic collage without precedent. This bench, which is immense, is an invitation to intimate conversation because of its sensuous quality of it - it is full of isolated bays.

Male Voice Over:

There are few things sorer than a lopsided architect.

My left foot gave out it just refused to operate in its habitual manner...I began to hobble...cursing with pain at every second step and at every third attempting to empty my mind completely to transcend the pain. The side effects of this self hypnotic remedy - a headache the kind in which wide open eyes feel they have been wacked by a raw wood board...I became nasty, short tempered, aggressive, over emotional and because extremes call out to each other across the waste land of the middle way ecstatic...my foot felt like a bad foundation put up by a sleazy developer. I began to lean over. When I started to stand up I soon collapsed. It was funny. It's amazing how dependent standing and walking is upon feet.

And then on top of the structural damage on the left foot...I began to grow blisters on both of them.

...

Another configuration of nature and complex detailing by Gaudi designed and built in the years 1847 and 1887...A wrought iron dragon by Gaudi...

Bones, skins, amantia muscaria mushrooms...masks, webs, bats, alive and malleable, cellular, undulating, wrapped, warped. The maximum possible intensity of natural light for the times..animals, plants, and the human body as process, as one key point of reference. Building as the topography of the alive...as transformative space as space transformed...

Female Voice Over:

I have seen historical photographs of this building and they appear otherworldly...horses and buggies in front of this friendly sci-fi alien structure...who can it be that it is so futuristic when it was built over a hundred years ago?

04014
INTERTITLE
Gaudi's
Sagrada
Famillia
photographed

Male Voice Over:

By my scientific calculations I have come up with these conservative estimates...photographs and video images of the Sagrada Famillia..120 photographs a minute times 60 minutes equals 6 thousand one hundred an hour...6 thousand one hundred an hour times lets say 12 hours a day equals 73 thousand 4 hundred and forty a day...73 thousand 4 hundred and forty times 7 days a week equals 5 hundred and 14 thousand and 80 a week...now 5 hundred and 14 thousand and 80 a week times 4 weeks a month equals 2 million 56 thousand 320 per month and then thus the above figure times 5 month a season well equals well something like a hundred and 2 million 800 and 6 thousand...a year...pictures...of the Sagrada Famillia... in Barcelona...OK?

04132
INTERTITLE
mies van der rohe
-Ludwig to You-
German Pavilion
Barcelona - 1929

the building that won the war
as to which modernism would prevail...

Female Voice Over:

This modernism a rationalism and functionalism which makes every place into a dentists waiting room is won over the exuberance and instinctiveness of the Modernismo of Gaudi and his company...done right it is not without a sterile and neurotic charm but what it really championed is apparent cost efficiencies and standardization...the waiting room turned into an asylum of mindless productivity...a way to architecture the human out of existence

04240
INTERTITLE
Chicago -
Pork Bellies

fountainhead of the skyscraper

Female Voice Over:

This is the last and the tallest building designed by Skidmore, Perinetti, Will, and Sons...a competent exercise in contextualism
an arresting monolithic gatepost...with minimalist surface post-modern intentional historicism and ambiguity bound in leather like strippings that wraps the building in black metal vigourously expressed...the continuous columns line outside the main wall plane are sheathed in marble the spandrels are smooth face slabs of black and white slate the crystalline structure of calcium sulfate inspired the unique design the proud stepped back silhouette of the tower dominates the Chicago skyline with erect certainty and elan...these tubes are bundled together to form a mega tube providing lateral strength to withstand wind loads a massing so perfectly reinforcing the power of perspective, a master piece of Internationalist modernism, a master piece of post modern pastiche, a master piece of early skyscraper intentionality this building expresses the dignity and grandeur of the original tenants one of the foremost gypsum companies of America...the banking floor with its tall columns and high coffered ceilings is not only a monument to finance and chalk but one of the grandest spaces of the City...it is a dramatic termination that sheathes the skeleton frame gently projecting orioles that are reminiscent of Burnham and Roots Monadnock building...the structural bays are divided into two story contained units with inmates rooms arranged around a common lounge the triangular shape allows

for maximum parameter space so that each inmate rooms can have a 5 inch window the maximum allowed without bars by the bureau of police the shape also minimizes interior corridor space that requires surveillance...the roof houses a walled exercise yard.

04645

INTERTITLE

transparent/spiral

(Berlin/Forward)

Text over image:

Potsdamer Platz, if you didn't know, is the biggest construction site in the world at present.

Female' Voice Over:

This is another Romantic painting of a glowing reconciled world by that most famous Berlin Architect: Carl-Freidrich Schinkel.

1816-1818 His building - The New Watch...one of the patched pillars of the bullet ridden guardhouse...a summer residence designed by Schinkel in the outskirts of Berlin...a pile of bricks not 10 minutes away from Potsdamer Platz...this is maybe the Prince Albrecht Palais parts of which were redesigned by Schinkel...a dance hall in the Palais...the interior hallway around 1900 also designed by Schinkel...the Prince Albrecht Palais becomes the headquarters of the SD...the security service of the Third Reich...the internal informer network of the Nazi state it was responsible for not only spying on German citizens but co-ordinated propaganda for the furtherance of Germanism...from racial science to music, theatre, and architecture...

question...question...is it possible to imagine an architecture that would be anathema to the perverse office clerks of state ordered sadism?

Male Voice Over:

Notice that some of these men are wearing arm bands its Germany just before the war...on the right is a painting by Schinkel its a romantic picture of the beginnings of Western Civilization and of Western Architecture...

05356

(Text over image: Gas is an architecture too.)

05538

INTERTITLE

How Albert Speer Died

Male Voice Over:

No point talking about Architecture without bringing up rubble...

Man (on camera):

Do you know how Albert Speer died?

Male Voice Over:

Sooner or later...I mean that is the result of architecture isn't it? The more grandiose the architecture the better the rubble I figure...

Man (on camera):

He died of a stroke in a hotel bedroom in London in 1981 -
he was in London for interviews with the BBC.

Spear who had been married for decades was staying in a fancy hotel in downtown London, having his first affair with a young German woman.

Woman (on camera):

It sounds syncretic and what whimsical but its not...that is warm and fuzzy logic for you...simultaneously horrific and harmonic.

Man (on camera):

He said "It is extraordinary. I had to be in my 70's to have a first real erotic experience with a woman."... slim, tall, long blond hair, under 30, wearing a white negligee. and me next to her in slacks a thin white turtleneck sweater, ... silk, I think. "

Woman (on camera):

Of course he died after he finally got it up and it was in relationship with some one else and that is saying something for an architect.

TITLED over image:

getting the commission - rebuild Berlin - Jan. 30, 1937

Male Voice Over:

Everybody's got history My father was one of the airmen who took part in destroying Germany at the end of the war...He was 18 when he flew over Dresden - He was haunted by this all his life...incredible the Brits put up a statue to the man most responsible for these final raids...Bomber Harris...Butcher Harris... Monuments are official history official architecture...

05937

INTERTITLE:

Zurich (or is it Chicago?) but definitely to Istanbul

Woman Voice Over:

The mosque masks what it most wants to reveal...where everywhere a strict geometry is presented -an emulation of the undeniable exact plans of God, Mohammed and the placement and direction of the Faithful - the Arabic script and its decorative elements undermines the imposing symmetries of the severe God with a dizzying layering of letter forms - language and writing come first and language and writing come last and the lips from which they speak are not always in the head.

Male Voice Over:

April 23rd, 1998, the Mayor of Istanbul is appealing a sentence of 10 months in jail imposed by the law courts of secular Turkey. He is considered the leader of the Islamic opposition. He is charged with inciting hatred. He quoted a famous Turkish poet (quote here) which compares the dome of a mosque to a helmet and the minarets to bayonets. The police are out, I am told, in case of problems...Buildings are never simple buildings.

1:03:42

INTERTITLE

Divine Wisdom in 1 minute and 47 seconds

The Hagia Sophia is something like 1,470 years old.

Male Voice Over:

Birds in Istanbul are mind readers. They pickup the thoughts of humans.

I was sitting outside the Hagia Sophia, ok. A man walks by and says "You are from Chicago?" Now out of all the cities in the world why the hell does he pick Chicago? And I say "No, I am from Canada but funny you should say Chicago because I am going there in a few days to be interviewed for a teaching job. So I may soon be from Chicago." He says "Do you want to buy a leather jacket?" and I say to him in my typical buy nothing mode "No. I can't carry a bunch of stuff." He goes on his way and I think to myself ...a leather jacket was the only thing that had crossed my mind that I should buy in Istanbul. I had tried on a couple of them while in Amsterdam and told myself that no, it would be cheaper to buy one in Istanbul and I am trying to figure out how this guy could have asked me those two things. when I see him conversing with a couple of really suspicious looking birds.

We are adrift in our destiny...the currents that break around is architecture.

1:05:21

INTERTITLE:

RUSSIAN MONTAGE

It was strangely at the Istanbul Film festival that I remembered that the last refuge of the love of architecture is the love of film. The eternal of stone has been conquered by a machine that projects shadows and light.

I saw a documentary on the life of Sergei Eisenstien. His father - why hadn't I remembered? - was an architect...Sergei himself was trained - at his father's prompting - as an architect.

Architecture embodied time and the aspirations of history. It has been supplanted by a more perfect record, a medium closer to that of human memory. Human memory - a

protean narrative fabricated from a montage of chance, desire and the arabesques of power.

The similarity between architecture and memory - both are pure constructions.

1:06:17

INTERTITLE

Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia

Burger Prosperity and the Petronas Towers
(another one time tallest building in the world)

Male Voice Over:

Building has often been about building bigger...to create the monumental...in tiny Malaysia an extravagance is reaching completion, nearing the sky - having lost sight of the earth.

1:07:21

INTERTITLE:

A constructivist's future
(tin reverb and lucite trees)

Male Voice Over:

The West made a decision for me...to build new spatial co-ordinates...to build without gravity...the real world had become too expensive...and only for the very rich and the very, very, poor...in the end this world was without life...it was too pure to sustain life...I had to leave the West further and further behind to remember the drawing of the most simple and most complicated of shapes...a circle...I found myself towards India.

1:09:47

INTERTITLE

Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, South India,
Kailasanatha Temple

Female Voice Over:

Having read about it in the guide book we think - now I know this place, I can risk going there because I have received a fore warning as to what it is I will see. This is the architecture of expectation.

Then one faces the real of open sewers and malarial mosquitoes, - sounds are louder, the flies more numerous, the people thinner and fatter, and the light of the sun slaps onto the dry earth like wet fresh dung.

All the staring eyes generate a question in my head, calculating interest it accumulates to form an internal question: why the hell are you here...why are you away from home?

This is a variation of the: Why are you here? which is a variation of why are you? which condenses to the central WHY? Thus every journey is a journey of no return to a place that doesn't exist...except of course for the naturally stupid - then New York City is New York City, Chennai is Chennai, Vancouver is Vancouver.

Leaving an empty space we arrive at a fresh void. We wonder at the differences of the shadows. This is the architecture of arrival.

1:11:44

Male Voice Over:

The mountain is not a mountain but is Siva. The mountain itself is a temple. The real temple that is Siva shadows all the man made temples. Arunachala the mountain, that is Siva, that is one of the lingums of light that is the heart of the world and is the Realized Self. is a building but one that is utterly of the cultural imagination...

1:12:14

Female Voice Over:

We have a saying in Tamil that indicates this: Just a handful, just a handful of sand...that is as much as we know...but what we don't know is the size of the world.

1:14:47

Male Voice Over:

The Shiva Lingum...Yes a phallus sitting erect in a vagina. The center of devotion in a Shiva Temple - the Victorians must have blushed in embarrassment and envy - in comparison the virginity and suffering of Jesus and Mary...the Shiva-Lingum is also most contradictorily representative of the formless nature of God...this is a conundrum that can be answered in the highly erotic intoxication of ecstasy and in the esoteric architecture of the rites of devotion

1:16:22

INTERTITLE:

Badami,
Karnataka,
India.

Male Voice Over:

I cannot trust the civilization from which I come...I have no faith in my own people...lies, lies and neurosis is the order of the day...and the marketplace which is a gambling den is the deceiving construct that motors the whole contraption...the intellectual and academic classes are not blameless...the vast majority are at best loose cogs in the same machine...the machine that, as Adorno said. just rotates on the same spot. How can one build when there is no foundation??

It is easier to see this from afar.

1:19:19

INTERTITLE

Ellora, Maharashtra,
India

Male Voice Over:

In many traditional societies the human is the pivot point between the arc of descent and ascent - the living architecture of the cosmos...in this view the human as the last stage of earthly creation is the synthesis of all reality...who is this human...how does one complete the circle of creation and through these creative acts participate in the primordial act of creation itself.

There is nothing more timely today than timelessness

1:20:06

INTERTITLE

this isn't Bombay Central
shining silver lines and an academic pronouncement

1:22:01

Text over image:

Indian cities are facing acute and unprecedented problems of housing, as revealed by recent statistics. More than half of the urban households live in one room units. Water, electricity and latrine facilities are not available to nearly one third of the total urban households. The housing condition in the four megacities is especially appalling and if present trends continue...

1:23:15

INTERTITLE

Bhubaneswar, Orissa,
South India.

Male Voice Over:

In all this talk about globalization which seems so often a liberal view of Westernization and the ever straining arms of corporatism I recall that there are cultures totally and utterly other...Look at these buildings...from the perspectives of a West Coast North American they may as well be on another planet...of course they are ancient but they are also living institutions of a living culture.

INTERTITLE

Konark, Orissa,

South India

1:28:24

INTERTITLE

Sanchi,
Madhya Pradesh,
India

Male Voice Over:

In the earliest days of Buddhism the Buddha was never represented directly, never shown as a man - his presence was alluded to through symbols...The bo tree his enlightenment, the lotus his birth, the wheel his teachings...the very building itself also represents the Buddha...when I showed a rough cut of this film to friends they told me that they found this section difficult to understand...where was the personal story attached to it - but the point of this architecture is not about any I, not about the ego but about the disappearance of the illusion of self...the spiral of the world begins and ends at this vanishing point

1:30:51

INTERTITLE

where the dead are given to the wind -
Shiva-nataraj

a wall of nagas
(snakes)

1:35:00

INTERTITLE:

Kashi, City of Light
The great cremation grounds
the most auspicious of places

Male Voice Over:

You must walk to the Ghats which line the edges of the sacred river...The maze of narrow lanes can only be managed by cows and humans... Varanasi, Banares, Kashi, names for the city of light. Centre for devotion for the Hindu civilization. It's present life reaches back to the 6th Century before Christ in a continuous tradition. Peking, Athens, Jerusalem, all ancient cities yes, but only Kashi continues to exist with the same ethos as it originated from. Buddha and Shankara taught here.

At first the visitor experiences it as a horrible tourist trap, noisy, annoying, full of subterfuge polluted...however if you are fortunate you may come to realize that there is no place on earth like Kashi...
a city that reflects life by always remembering death

It is said that the membrane between this world and the Transcendent reality is so thin as to be virtually transparent in Kashi...Because dying in Kashi brings liberation living here

is an anticipatory participation in that liberation...those who dwell in Kashi intending to die here are called liberated while yet alive. They are recipients of the side long glance of the alluring goddess Murkti - who is only as far away as the moment of death..here where there are more gods than one can count there is also only the suddenness of one God.

1:38:39

INTERTITLE:

Wood for Manikarnika

the burning ghat/the sanctuary of death

1:39:35

INTERTITLE:

entrances and exists

and the egg shaped stone

Male Voice Over:

I have sent you all the letters I could. I know that you have found it insufficient so I am sending this stone too. As you can see it is shaped like an egg. Make of it what you will.

CREDITS

END