



Spring 2008

EAST ASIAN FILM SERIES

Special Series: Monsters and the Monstrous



EAST ASIAN
STUDIES CENTER
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Saturday evenings on the Indiana University campus
free and open to the public

Note: These films are generally not suitable for a young audience.

January 26

***R-Point* 7:00 pm, Woodburn 101, 107 min.**

During the Vietnam War, a South Korean army base suddenly receives mysterious radio transmissions from a patrol that went missing six months earlier. A shell-shocked commanding officer and a ragtag military unit are sent into the desolate stretch of land known as R-Point to gather clues as to the whereabouts of the missing soldiers. What appeared to be a clear search and rescue mission turns into something far more terrifying than any battle. *R-Point* is the directorial debut of the screenwriter Kong Su-chang (*Tell Me Something*, 1999; *Ring Virus*, 1999). This critically acclaimed film is a political commentary on the suppressed history of the large Korean involvement in the Vietnam War. The thematic originality of the film is its exploration into the experience of true fear by the soldiers. *R-Point* is a very well done psychological horror thriller, with an excellent performance by an ensemble cast led by Kam Woo-sung (*The King and the Clown*, 2005). **Dir. Kong Su-chang, 2004. In Korean with English subtitles.**

February 9

***Rampo Noir* 7:00 pm, Woodburn 101, 134 min.**

This horror anthology of four short films takes its cue from the short fiction of writer Taro Hirai, better known by his pen name Edogawa Rampo—a wordplay on the name of Edgar Allan Poe. Directed by Takeuchi Suguru, *Mars Canal* sees a naked man wander through a dark and depressing landscape recalling the excruciating details of his last encounter with his former lover. Jissoji Akio directed *Mirror Hell*, in which women are discovered with their faces burnt and skulls charred. A young detective investigates, discovering that a unique hand mirror is always found at the scene. Sato Kisayasu's *Caterpillar* tells a story of a limbless war veteran who returns home only to be systematically abused by his wife. *Crawling Bugs*, directed by Kaneko Atsushi, depicts a chauffeur becoming obsessed with his actress employer. **Dir. Takeuchi Suguru, Jissoji Akio, Sato Kisayasu, and Kaneko Atsushi, 2005. In Japanese with English subtitles.**

February 23

***Re-Cycle* 7:00 pm, Woodburn 101, 109 min.**

The Pang Brothers return with another horror movie, *Re-Cycle*, which closed the Cannes Film Festival's "Un Certain Regard" section. This visually impressive piece stars Angelica Lee who first worked with the Pang Brothers in *The Eye*. She plays a popular author, Ting-yin, who falls into an eerily beautiful world while writing a supernatural thriller. Ting-yin, who is suffering from writer's block and keeps discarding her ideas, starts to sense that her apartment is haunted. When she steps out of her building, she enters a mysterious world where she comes across characters she has created and abandoned. An old man (Lau Siu Ming) tells her that she must go to "The Transit" to leave this place, and a little girl (Tsang Nga Kei) accompanies her to go through one desolate world to another in this inexplicable space. The first half of the film delivers plenty of suspense in the same style as other Pang Brothers' films. However, the second half of *Re-Cycle*, mostly an RPG-like adventure, innovatively weaves into the exquisite setting a sense of spookiness. **Dir. Pang Brothers, 2006. In Cantonese with English subtitles.**

March 1

***Epitaph* 7:00 pm, Woodburn 101, 98 min.**

In 1979 Dr. Park receives an old photo album dating back to his days as a medical intern at Ahn Seng Hospital. Ahn Seng Hospital lies in the center of Kyung Sung, the capital of 1940s Japan-occupied Korea, representing the twin glories of Japanese imperialism and western modernization. In Young (Kim Bo Kyung) and her husband Dong Won (Kim Tae Woo) return from their studies in Tokyo to work at the prestigious hospital. There they meet Jung Nam, an intern who feels trapped in his arranged marriage to the hospital director's daughter. Jung-Nam's arranged marriage ends when his fiancée (whom he has never met) commits suicide. Later, when assigned to monitor the morgue late at night, he falls in love with a corpse that turns out to be his deceased fiancée. Soon other mysterious events take place in the hospital, involving a young girl haunted by ghosts and a serial killer targeting Japanese soldiers. **Dir. Jung Brothers, 2007. In Korean with English subtitles.**

March 22

***Death Note* 7:00 pm, Woodburn 101, 126 min.**

In summer 2006 a film adaptation of the popular Japanese manga series *Death Note*, starring Fujiwara Tatsuya and Matsuyama Kenichi, became a blockbuster success throughout Asia. *Death Note* supposes that human lives are snuffed by Shinigami, roving ghouls who write their victims' names down in a notebook called—not surprisingly—a Death Note. Bright and restless student Light (Fujiwara Tatsuya) picks up the notebook and soon realizes the power that has been bestowed upon him. He adopts the name Kira (Killer) and sets about ridding the world of criminals. His callous renegade justice, however, is not tolerated by the authorities. Faced with so many unexplained deaths, the police enlist the assistance of the young genius L, whose eccentricity is aptly portrayed by Matsuyama Kenichi. And so begins a dangerous battle of wits between the mysterious L and the increasingly calculating Light. **Dir. Shusuke Kaneko, 2006. In Japanese with English subtitles.**

April 12

***Silk* 7:00 pm, Woodburn 101, 108 min.**

Dedicated cop Tung (Chang Chen) helps weird scientist Hashimoto (Yosuke Eguichi) uncover the secret of how human beings become ghosts after death. Hashimoto and his two assistants (Barbie Hsu and Wilson Chen) use their research on the anti-gravity Menger Sponge to trap a ghost child. Called in for his exceptional vision, Tung sees in the ghost child the "silk" which mysteriously connects human beings and ghosts. Little does he know that participating in this experiment has placed him and even his girlfriend (Karen Lam) in great danger from the unknown world. Chang Chen, who has already proved his skills in art films such as *Three Times*, takes up the leading role as a capable but rather ill-tempered cop. His charismatic performance in *Silk* helps deliver an engaging story that mixes sci-fi, suspense, and horror into one intriguing piece. **Dir. Su Chao-bin, 2006. In Mandarin with English subtitles.**