



THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

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Film Series

Marco Polo's Roof of the World

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Friday, August 8, 2014 7:30 – 9:30 PM

113 East 30th Street New York, NY 10016

Marco Polo's Roof of the World is a documentary dealing with life around Qinghai lake in eastern Tibet. This is a watershed region, the source of many rivers, and home to several exotic species of birds. As a holy place for Tibetan Buddhists, it is not uncommon to see Tibetan pilgrims circumambulating Qinghai Lake. The film follows a group of pilgrims as they make progress on their journey around the lake. One full prostration, three steps forward, another full prostration, another three steps forward, and so forth around the full 200 mile circumference of the lake – similar to the practice of circumambulating Mt. Kailash in western Tibet. The film also takes us inside a Tibetan convent and finishes off with Bon tradition Shamans. The Shamans are highly unusual. They perform blood rituals and go into trance states resembling the trance states of the Tibetan Oracle. Some of the magic and rituals found in Tibetan Buddhism appear to have been borrowed from the Bon tradition. This is a beautifully shot film with expert cinematography. It has little to do with Marco Polo apart from the fact that the Venetian explorer traveled through this part of China and recorded his experiences in his book, "The Travels of Marco Polo."

Admission is free.

