

## **Outline for "SIT" (2016, Yoko Okumura)**

Outlined by Erica Rowell

<https://vimeo.com/176520042>

### INT. MEDITATION ROOM - DAY

A Buddhist monk, 70s, married father of two, sits upright, cross-legged with eyes closed, breathing through his nose as he explains in voiceover the three practices of Zazen — posture, abdominal breathing and letting go of thought.

### EXT. MONK'S NEIGHBORHOOD IN INDIANA - DAY

Views of a quiet, rural town where not much is going on -- lots of greenery, a random cat wanders by. A lone car drives down a rural road.

### INT. MONK'S HOME -

The monk's wife and mother of his two children practices kakyushi, a traditional craft, which her voiceover explains is part of Zazen practice -- the tiny "poppyseed"-sized stitches are meant to put the sewer into a Buddhist frame of mind.

### INT. MONK'S HOME, STUDY ET AL. ROOMS -

The couple, alternately sitting next to each other in family mode and doing their Buddhist practice separately, look through old family pictures, as the monk explains he married his wife who was 10 years younger decades ago after a decree by the Japanese government against Buddhism.

### INT. BUDDHIST SANCTUARY - DAY

The monk wraps his robes around him, as he explains how the decree affected his Buddhist study and work.

### INT. MONK'S HOME - DAY

A snapshot of the monk as a dad a bit goofier than before with a banana on his head and his child on his back.

### INT. SON'S ROOM - DAY

Masaki, the son, shot from behind, at his computer with earphones on appears to be playing a computer game.

### INT. DINNER TABLE - DAY

Dad and son seated at table with dad chewing his meal and the son sitting next to him with an empty plate, meal eaten.

### INT. MASAKI'S ROOM - DAY 2:30

The son talks about the difficulty of the move from Japan to Indiana, and we see more of his room -- miniature Buddhist figures, American robot action figures, a stack of books in Japanese.

### INT. MASAKI'S ROOM - DAY

Masaki sits at his desk playing computer games as his father explains Masaki quit school and since roughly age 12 has kept very much to himself without much contact with his peers.

INT. FAMILY CAR - DAY

The family is out for a drive. The mother starts to talk about a common issue among some Japanese / Buddhist families.

INT. MONK'S HOME - DAY

The mother explains that too many children live with their parents into their 30s and 40s with the parents continuing to treat their adult children like young children.

INT. MASAKI'S ROOM - DAY 309

Masaki plays his computer games.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A patty sautéing in a pan, a tomato being cut, potatoes being mashed, Masaki holds up a chef's knife as Masaki and his mother explain in VoiceOver that he has a knack for cooking.

INT. MASAKI'S ROOM - DAY

Masaki talks about he is considering going into cooking professionally but isn't set on it yet.

EXT. MONK'S HOUSE - DAY

Snow is on the vine, the family poses in front of the house in winter regalia. A change of seasons. The passage of time. Masaki deals with the trashcans in his hoody as the snow comes down.

INT. MASAKI'S ROOM - DAY

Scrolling through a website on his computer, Masaki's sister, the filmmaker, helps him apply to culinary school.

EXT. INDIANA NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Ice on the vine.

INT. MASAKI'S ROOM - DAY

Brother and sister scrolling through their devices as sister suggests they go tour the campus. Despite her encouragement, Masaki is not ready to go check it out yet.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MASAKI'S ROOM AND GROCERY STORE

INT. MASAKI'S ROOM - DAY

Later. As Masaki closely examines an object he is looking to clip with pliers, he explains his ambivalence and fears to his sister who hits the nail on the head with her comment that their parents do not articulate their expectations. Masaki wholeheartedly agrees with this and expresses the desire that his parents communicate more.

INT. GROCERY STORE – DAY

As Masaki and sister shop, they express frustration at not receiving the guidance they would like from their parents. Masaki again agrees, expressing his wish that his parents tell him what to do and being moved to tears at the lack of communication between him and his father.

EXT. FIELD IN JAPAN - DAY

Over early footage of a family and friend picnic, the monk explains he pursued Buddhism against the wishes of his own parents and because of that negative experience, he wants to support his own children in whatever choices they make.

EXT. MONK'S HOUSE – DAY

It's raining heavily. We see a Buddhist statue with the rain behind it.

INT. MONK'S HOUSE – DAY

With the rain behind him coming down outside the window the monk talks about the communication challenges of two quiet parents, but hopes that they are able to communicate a la Buddhism's "heart to heart transmission" with sans language.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A hand puts the finishing touches on a dish of small round dumpling-like food. The monk cooks this dish at the table as son watches. Then Masaki tries his hand at the same technique.

INT. MALL – DAY

As the monk walks through different stores and sits watching the mall shoppers pass by, he explains that the striving for an end result and material things – called Samsara in Buddhism – is a negative and so Masaki's lack of materialism and ambition is something his father admires about him even though he also acknowledges that Masaki must pursue some kind of work so he can live on his own.

INT. CAR – DAY

Masaki rides in the back seat.

INT. AQUARIUM – DAY

The monk, standing amid the fish swimming in large tanks around him as aquarium visitors look at all the fish, opines on how we humans need to find a path to how to live our lives while finding peace within it.

EXT. BIRD EXHIBIT – DAY

The monk looks at a bird, explaining how birds need to figure out how to fly.

INT. AQUARIUM – DAY

He continues talking about other animals like fish needing to figure out the necessities of their lives, like how to swim.

INT. MONK'S HOUSE – DAY

The mother practices her stitching; Masaki cuts a tomato as the monk explains how by doing we find meaning in life.

INT. MEDITATION ROOM - DAY

The monk meditates as his voiceover says there's more to life than just sitting.

EXT. INDIANA STREET – DAY

As the monk walks, he explains that we must fill our days with "sit, sleep, walk, work."

Prof. Rowell / MES153

EXT. AIRPORT – DAY

Masaki walks along the sidewalk in front of an entrance to an airport.

EXT. INDIANA STREET – DAY

The monk walks continuing to explain how we must learn to live just as the fish and birds do by finding what to do.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Masaki walks toward the escalators.

A closing title card reports that Masaki moved to Japan and is studying culinary arts.

---

*Separate from the outline, some questions to consider when watching the short: Where are the acts? Can it be divided into three acts? Who is the protagonist? Whose story is it? Who are we pulling for?*