



THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

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會協禪一第國美

Film Series

The Light of Asia

Written by Sir Edwin Arnold (story, 1879) and Niranjana Pal (screenplay, 1925)

Directed by Franz Osten and Himansu Rai, Produced and Distributed by

Münchener Lichtspielkunst AG Great Eastern Film Corporation

Initial Release 1925, Soundtrack © 2001 Rare Film Classics

Friday, April 3, 2014 7:30 – 9:10 PM

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Prem Sanyas (The Light of Asia) (Die Leuchte Asiens in German) is a 1925 silent film, directed by Franz Osten and Himansu Rai. It was adapted from Sir Edwin Arnold's epic poem, *The Light of Asia* (1879), based on the life of Prince Siddhartha Gautama. The film was an Indo-European co-production, released during the time of the Weimar Republic, with German technicians and Indian actors. It was made with the cooperation of the Maharajah of Jaipur and included a cast of thousands. Shooting took place in Lahore, in what is now Pakistan, where the set decoration was created by Devika Rani, the wife of actor/director Himanshu Rai. The film was released in the USA by the Film Arts Guild on 11 May 1928. *The Light of Asia* depicts the story of Prince Siddhartha Gautama (portrayed by director Himansu Rai), the man who became the Buddha, as he journeys from privilege and seclusion to awareness of the inevitability of life's suffering, finally renouncing his kingdom to seek enlightenment. The film features the competitive tests of manhood which Siddhartha must undergo in order to win his wife, and depicts the machinations of Siddhartha's evil cousin Devadatta. In what is definitely a piece of poetic license, Gopa, the Buddha's wife, instead of staying at home in the palace after his departure, goes after him into the forest and becomes his first disciple! This film is being screened courtesy of Rare Film Classics, www.rarefilmclassics.blogspot.com. 97 Minutes.

Admission is free.



Seeta Devi as Gopa (the Buddha's Wife)