



THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

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會協禪一第國美

Film Series

A Pearl in the Forest

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Friday, August 12, 2016 7:30 – 9:00 PM

113 East 30th Street New York, NY 10016

Stalin's collectivization of ethnic Mongolian farmers and herders during the 1920s and 1930s forced many of them to flee from Russia into Mongolia. The border between Russia and Mongolia is long and heavily forested and leaks like a sieve, and the Mongolians are a nomadic people, so movement is easy for them. Unable to stop the border crossings, the Soviets demanded help from their Mongolian allies to deal with anyone who did not comply with their demands. During the 1930s there were many trials in the "Great Purge", including six trials of Mongolian Buddhist clergy, many of them accused of the crime of "raising the prestige of religion." An estimated 18,000 Buddhist clergy were executed, along with countless thousands of other Mongolian citizens. *A Pearl in the Forest* tells the story of a small Mongolian village caught up in Stalin's collectivizations. One of the local boys has joined the Communist Party and is directly involved in jailing and murdering his former neighbors and members of his own family. There is a love story woven into the fabric of the tale, and the "Pearl in the Forest" is a baby born in the wilderness. But where is the Buddhism in this film? There is a village idiot dressed in rags, always smiling and friendly with everybody – even when smiling is inappropriate – who can be seen playing with the village children – not unlike Ryokan. *A Pearl in the Forest* is a powerful film with a surprise ending. Spoken in Mongolian with English subtitles, it is being screened courtesy of Idugan Entertainment, www.idugan.com. 90 Minutes.

Admission is free.

