



THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

113 East 30th Street New York, NY 10016 212-686-2520 www.firstzen.org

會協禪一第國美

Film Series

Ven. Jian Zhen

Animation Feature

A Da Ai Documentary

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Friday, April 7, 2017 7:30 – 9:30 PM

113 East 30th Street New York, NY 10016

Ven. Jian Zhen (688-763) was one of the most respected Chinese monks of the Tang dynasty, and was the head of a large temple in Yangzhou. In this film, Jian Zhen (J. Ganjin) is approached by Japanese monks who extend an invitation from the Japanese Emperor to teach the Chinese Buddhist precepts in Japan. He accepts this request, proving his dedication in a journey that takes eleven years, five unsuccessful attempts and the loss of his eyesight before he finally crosses the ocean and arrives in 754. At Nara he presides over a large ordination ceremony, which had long been awaited in Japan, not only by many Japanese priests of high standing but also by Emperors Shomu and Koken. Japan was gradually forming itself into a Buddhist country, and Jian Zhen's arrival provided an important impetus to that end. In his own words:

The Moon knows my aspiration of going abroad to pass on the torch. I will not be stopped by obstacles, teaching Buddhism with a pure heart.

Once in Nara, he founded Toshodai temple in the year 756. He was a monk in the Risshu sect, one of the six Buddhist sects in Nara, known for its emphasis on the Vinaya. He is noteworthy for his discipline and perseverance in the face of repeated failures – due to uncooperative government officials, bad weather and faulty maritime navigation. This is a high quality animated film with a well-written script. Spoken in Mandarin with English subtitles. Licensed through the Tzu Chi Culture and Communication Foundation, www.en.tzuchiculture.org. 100 Minutes.

Admission is free.

