

The Book of the Dead

(Shisha no sho)

Kawamoto KIHACHIRO – 2005 – 70 min

October 3rd 2013, 19:30h - Meeting Point - FREE ENTRANCE

Nara in the Nara Period (mid-8 c). The film starts with a description of the historical background of the Nanke branch of the noble Fujiwara family. There is a family legend surrounding the death of Prince Otsu and his relationship with Mimimo no Toji, a beautiful woman and a mandala* that was made. The animation follows the story of one of Mimino no Toji's descendants, Princess Iratsume. Iratsume is also a beautiful young woman and bears a striking resemblance to her ancestor.

Like many other nobles, Iratsume is wrapped up in the new trend of Buddhism. Yet, she has taken it to a level of obsession as she spends most of her time hand-copying the sacred texts - sutras, in order to gain a deeper understanding of Buddha. Her most recent task is to make a thousand copies of one of the sutras. After finishing her thousandth copy she finds herself at a religious epiphany as she gazes out the window towards the mountains. Between the two mountains she sees a radiant floating image that she believes is the Buddha. In a trance like state she leaves her home in the middle of a downpour and starts to walk towards the mountains...

* Mandala is a patterned circle-shaped picture or an object with emphasized center, and has a very deep meaning in the Buddhist philosophy. It is a symbol of universe and energy and represents "the whole world" or "the center of Universe". The circle stands for the wholeness, unity, eternity...

