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The World of Film in Australia - on the Internet

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BUDDHA'S LOST CHILDREN

SYNOPSIS:
 Former professional Thai boxer Khru Bah became a monk 15 years ago, during which time he has been caring for needy and homeless boys at his Golden Horse Monastery in Northern Thailand. Under his guidance and with the help of a nun as his colleague, the young boys learn not only Thai boxing, but an entire life philosophy as they are exposed to the fundamental basics of survival and inner peace.

Review by Louise Keller:
 An exquisite and tranquil documentary about a Thai monk and the homeless boys to whom he gives a brand new life, Buddha's Lost Children is richly affecting on many levels. Winner of half a dozen festival prizes including Grand Jury prize for best documentary in Los Angeles, most surprising is the depth of emotion we feel as we become involved in the lives of these young boys adopted by the Thai boxer-turned monk. Khru Bah describes himself as a distributor of knowledge and through his tough-love approach, offers the boys a spiritual anchor and a valuable set of life skills.

The film's philosophy is summarised at the very beginning: Living is an art to be learned. Life according to Khru Bah seems simple. He is a local hero who believes that if you do good, happiness will follow. There are many lessons for Khru Bah's young novices, who come to his Golden Horse Monastery mostly to escape from impoverished lives in a drug-dominated country. They are taught self-dependency, compassion, confidence, inner strength and the difference between right and wrong. A horse falling badly during a long trek through dense jungle and across rivers is an opportunity for the boys to learn how to make the best of things when adversity strikes (distance proves a horse; time proves a man).

There are tears and fears from those who have never been away from home before ('you have to hold your tears inside') and the value of being alive ('if you are dead you can't do anything') is a sentiment that is reinforced throughout. Emphasis is placed on what you can do, not on what you cannot. How satisfying it is to follow the journeys of three young boys who become novices - from their initiation, integration and obvious progress.



CRITICAL COUNT
 Favourable: 1
 Unfavourable: 0
 Mixed: 0

BUDDHA'S LOST CHILDREN (PG)
 (Netherlands, 2006)

CAST: Documentary

PRODUCER: Ton Okkerse

DIRECTOR: Mark Verkerk

CINEMATOGRAPHER: Rene Heynen

EDITOR: Helen Delachaux, Jos Driessen

MUSIC: Bernard Joosten, S.P. Somtow

RUNNING TIME: 97 minutes

AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR: Aztec International

AUSTRALIAN RELEASE: October 25, 2007

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The Knowledge

AFTRS Centre for Screen Business



How can we ever forget the big eyes and happy disposition of the little four-year old future Buddha with weak legs and good karma? This is a beautiful and uplifting film that leaves us with a genuine sense of harmony.

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