

**INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST FILM FESTIVAL (IBFF) DEBUTS
IN SINGAPORE — FIRST TIME IN ASIA
May 17 - 20th 2007**

“Medium of Reflection”

**Films from Nine Nations; Seven Singapore Premieres
Opening Night Benefits Two Charities**

The curtain rises as Asia's first ever **International Buddhist Film Festival** opens on Thursday, May 17 for four days at Shaw Organization's Lido Cinemas. Showcasing a diverse and international program which is coming to Singapore after sold-out events in Los Angeles, New York and Washington D.C., the IBFF offers contemporary alternatives to violence and suffering, featuring works from nine nations, with seven Singapore premieres. The Festival is presented by Asian Buddhist Film Festival Pte. Ltd. (ABFF), a newly formed Singapore organization dedicated to this emerging cinema arena.

Ranging from features to documentaries, and animation from all over the world, the International Buddhist Film Festival will screen award winning films such as winner of the the Grand Jury Prize at the AFI Festival in Los Angeles, *Buddha's Lost Children* - a documentary about a former Thai boxer turned Buddhist monk.

The Festival will also look at the lighter side of enlightenment. Audiences will be delighted to find some humorous perspectives on Buddhism, including a rare screening of Buddhist-themed episodes of international hit television shows *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill*. The opening night, graced by Guest-of-Honour, **Mr Khaw Boon Wan** Minister for Health, in aid of local charities, will kick off the Festival with a premiere of an uplifting comedy from China, *Shower*. Directed by one of China's pioneers in the underground music video scene - **Zhang Yang's** second feature film recently won for Best Film and Best Director at the Seattle Film Festival.

Renowned German director **Doris Dörrie** will have also have her feature-length documentary *How to Cook Your Life* about the San Francisco chef, food author and Zen priest **Edward Espe Brown**, make its premiere in Asia at this Festival. Here, she enlists the help of the charismatic Zen Master to explain the guiding principles of Zen Buddhism as they apply to the preparation of food as well as life itself. The Festival has also invited the very well-respected and dynamic British-born monk, **Venerable Ajahn Brahm**, to share a talk on Sunday 20th May.

“The Festival has been organized to encourage conscious thought through contemporary and provocative reflections on Buddhist ideas, using the very potent medium, that of film. The art of cinema lends an authentic voice to explore the philosophical, social, cultural and contemporary issues in our lives today. We want to make these films, some of which are not ordinarily available, more accessible to wider audiences”, said **Bhavna Vedhara**, Executive Director of ABFF.

The ABFF is in strategic partnership with the Buddhist Film Society (BFS), an independent non-profit educational organization based in California, USA. BFS's diverse Advisory Council includes luminaries such as **Philip Glass, Lisa Lu** and **Richard Gere**.

BFS, through its International Buddhist Film Festival, offers cinema as a vehicle for wider appreciation and better understanding of Buddhism by general audiences, particularly for the remarkable ethnic and cultural diversity evident among Buddhists worldwide today. "Many of the filmmakers aren't Buddhists. They're all artists exploring issues and ideas that are in alignment with any of the wisdom traditions that value compassion. These films can change the way people see the world," said IBFF's executive director, **Gaetano Kazuo Maida**.

Works to be shown are chosen through a combination of program committee invitations as well as through international *Call For Entries* solicitations. The films include English language or subtitled works from all over the world, and embrace a very broad and fluid definition of "Buddhist." The festival will also be arranging for some filmmakers and guest speakers from various countries, including Venerable Ajahn Brahm, to come to Singapore to conduct a seminar on Buddhism and Q & A sessions following some of the films.

Visit www.asianbuddhistfilmfest.org to find out more about the festival's program. Tickets for the films and seminar can be purchased through SISTIC.

Tickets for the opening night, Thursday 17 May 2007 will have proceeds going to **The President's Challenge 2007** and the **Children's Cancer Foundation**.

Opening film	: \$100 (excluding SISTIC fees)
Closing film & Talk	: \$15 (excluding SISTIC fees)
All other films	: \$10 (excluding SISTIC fees)

Embargoed till press conference May 3, Thursday

Media contact: Stephanie K.Y. Lee (interviews, press materials, media passes)

Mobile: +65 96280169 / stephanie@asianbuddhistfilmfest.org