

Mongolian Ping Pong

A Film by Ning Hao

2004/ 102' / 35mm / 1:1,85 / color / SR D
In Mongolian w/English Subtitles



FIRST RUN FEATURES

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MONGOLIAN PING PONG

Short Synopsis:

A charming coming of age story about three young boys in the remote grasslands of Mongolia. Young Bilike finds a ping pong ball floating in the river, leading him and his friends on flights of imaginative whimsy and a journey to find the source of the mysterious unknown object.

Technical Details:

102' / 35mm / 1:1,85 / color / SR D

Credits:

Producers: LU Bin, HE Bu
Director of Photography: DU Jie
Screenplay: NING Hao, XING Aina, GAO Jianguo
Music: WUHE
Editor: JIANG Yong
Director: NING Hao

HURICHABILIKE.....Bilike
DAWA.....Dawa
GELIBANErguotou
YIDEXINNARIBUBilike's Father
BADEMABilike's Mother
WURINABilike's Sister
DUGEMABilike's Grandmother
JINLAOWU.....Truck Driver
BUHEBILIKE.....Dawa's Father
SARENGAOWA.....Dawa's Mother
JIRIMULittle Lama

Credit Block:

BROTHER FILM & TV PRODUCTIONS LTD. AND BEIJING HOP CULTURE CO. LTD.
PRODUCTION 'MONGOLIAN PING PONG' WITH HURICHABILIKE, DAWA, GELIBAN,
YIDEXINNARIBU, BADEMA, JINLAOWU, WURINA, BUHEBILIKE, SARENGAOWA, DUGEMA,
JIRIMU ART DIRECTOR ZHANG XIAO BING COSTUMES ZHANG GENG LIANG SOUND
DESIGNER WHANG YAN WEI MUSIC WUHE EDITOR JIANG YONG LINE PRODUCER SHENG
ZHIMIN, GU ZHENG PRODUCER LU BIN, HE BU EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
LAN RUI LONG, NING HAO DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DU JIE WRITTEN BY NING HAO,
XING AINA, GAO JIAN GUO DIRECTED BY NING HAO

Synopsis

When Bilike finds an ordinary ping-pong ball floating in the creek, a series of charming adventures begins for the prepubescent Mongolian boy and his family and friends. Young Bilike has never seen a ping-pong ball before. He and his family live without electricity and running water in a solitary tent home among the vast steppe grasslands. The magnificent landscape here has changed little since the 13th-century reign of Genghis Kahn.

But life in the middle of nowhere is more exciting for a young boy than one would imagine. The smallest of details can become big events for curious Bilike and his best friends Erguotou and Dawa. The mystery of the small white ball leads to questions about the world around them, as well as innocent mischief.

Bilike's old grandmother says the ball is a glowing pearl sent by the gods. But the boys are skeptical after waiting all night outdoors for the ball to light up. Since none of their other family members have an idea about the odd white object, the three boys trek to the faraway monastery to consult the wise lamas. But even the grasslands' most knowledgeable inhabitants are stumped.

At a film projection during a local fair, Bilike and his friends discover golf. Thinking he has just a common old golf ball, disappointed Bilike dumps it in a rat hole. But soon the boys learn about ping-pong while watching for the first time the new television Dawa's father has won. They are excited to hear that their object is the "national ball of China."

Not realizing how far Beijing actually is, the determined young boys set off to return the ping-pong ball to the Chinese capital. An even bigger adventure and more amusing trouble await them.

Director's Comments

Mongolia, whether for the East or West, is such an enigmatic place. With their small horses and efficient yurt tent homes, these are the people who conquered every piece of reachable land 800 years ago. In a very short period of time, the Mongolians established history's biggest empire with their legendary invincibility. However, their empire disappeared in an equally enigmatic way. The Mongolians then returned to the barren grasslands of their ancestors where they continue their nomadic existence still today.

The vast grasslands environment plays a part in shaping Mongolian children's unruly character. When seeing them ride freely on horseback on the wide-open landscape, I am deeply touched. Their childhood, like everyone else's around the world, is full of questions and confusions. Those questions and confusions may either be clarified or simply forgotten along the way. All just a part of life.

Ning Hao (director)

'Mongolian Ping Pong' is Ning Hao's third feature film. His previous film, *INCENSE*, received international acclaim at festivals worldwide, such as Locarno, San Sebastian, Vancouver and Tokyo's Filmex 2003, where it was awarded Best Film.

Ning Hao was born in 1977 in the Yellow River valley Shanxi province of China. He studied scenic design at Shanxi Taiyuan Film School and was accepted to the Art Department of Beijing University. In 2003, he graduated from the Photography Department of the Beijing Film Academy.

While still studying, Ning Hao worked on several Chinese TV productions. He also directed dozens of Chinese music videos which have appeared on MTV Asia and have won him several awards.

Filmography

2004 MONGOLIAN PING PONG
2003 INCENSE
2001 THURSDAY, WEDNESDAY