



New York
October 30, 2006
For Immediate Release

VAJRA SKY OVER TIBET is extending its successful theatrical run to many of the nation's most prestigious and selective art film venues. Audiences continue to be moved by the film's story as the Tibetan peoples' present struggle with the Chinese authorities becomes an ever bigger part of the current news cycle.

Producer & Director: John Bush / Distributor: Direct Pictures / Documentary / 89 min.

Vajra (*Vaj-ra*) is a Sanskrit word: the thunderbolt of awakening. **Vajrayana** is the form of Buddhism practiced in Tibet.

VAJRA SKY OVER TIBET is a cinematic pilgrimage bearing witness to the indomitable faith of Tibet's Buddhist community and the ultimate threat to its very survival. It is one of the rare documentaries actually filmed in Tibet and has received the blessing and endorsement of The Dalai Lama.

Set against a backdrop of breathtaking Himalayan terrain, this feature-length documentary offers a direct experience of some of the most revered temples, monasteries and festivals still surviving in Tibet today. Filming only in natural light, director/cinematographer John Bush traveled inconspicuously as part of a two-person crew along with a Tibetan guide and driver.

An actual pilgrimage to the legendary sacred sites, the film was created as a contemplative experience where time is slowed to allow for both an inner and outer journey. The apparent randomness of image reflects the spontaneous allegory of spiritual pilgrimage, one of the most ancient of spiritual practices, still active in Tibet.

VAJRA SKY OVER TIBET presents the endangered Buddhist tradition of Tibet and its contemporary relevance. Luminous faces of faith glow in the flicker of butterlamp offerings within Lhasa's 1500 year old Jokhang Temple. Going through a mountain pass of 17,000 feet into a land of snow peaks, turquoise lakes and golden blossoms, the nephew of The Dalai Lama narrates a 17th century Tibetan poet's meditations on the natural mind.

If people in the West are being called upon to help save Tibet, the film shows why this endangered culture is worth saving. Bush bridges both the spiritual and political stories of Tibet as they are so inextricably bound together. While there is a brief introduction to the sad history of Tibet, the film essentially focuses on the violation of the basic human right to practice one's religion without interference and this builds throughout.

The film reveals a 21st century policy initiated by the Chinese government intended to suffocate the Tibetan faith within its own home. Photos of the Dalai Lama are now illegal everywhere in Tibet. The atheist leaders of China are now maneuvering to install their own "reincarnated" Dalai Lama after the present Dalai Lama passes away. In July of this year the Chinese government completed a rail system over the mountains into Tibet with the first train from Beijing arriving in Lhasa. Tibetans fear that the thousands of Chinese arriving daily is the ultimate threat to the very survival of their identity.

Director John Bush was also visiting the source of his own spiritual practice of the last thirty-five years. As a western Buddhist filmmaker, he was allowed unprecedented access. Many doors opened to him and his camera as Tibetans wanted the world to know their exquisite traditions are still alive but on the verge of extinction.

The portrayals of The Potala and Norbulinka, the empty palaces of the Dalai Lama, echo the Tibetans painful loss of the teacher they believe to be their living Buddha. During the Drepung festival, a giant tapestry of Buddha covers a mountainside as spiritually famished Chinese join with the multitude of Tibetan pilgrims. This powerful closing scene invokes a redemptive vision of renewal for this tradition.

The director chose not to include any interviews with people in Tibet because of possible reprisals. VAJRA SKY OVER TIBET presents the narration of Tenzin L Choegyal - The Dalai Lama's nephew, the acclaimed singer Dadon, who escaped Tibet while pregnant over the Himalayas to India, and filmmaker John Bush.

The film's evocative soundtrack features many of Tibet's greatest musicians and singers, overtone monastic chanting and an original Harmonic Chant score by renowned film composer David Hykes (*Baraka*, *Dead Poet's Society*).

VAJRA SKY OVER TIBET had its first public screenings at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York. It has since appeared at numerous festivals including The Bangkok International Film Festival, Munich International Film Festival, Vilnius Documentary Festival, Cork International Film Festival and IFP New York. Its theatrical debut in Boston was a great success and has been followed by engagements in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Seattle, Buffalo, Berkeley, San Rafael and others.

Direct Pictures contact:

Laure Parsons
Producer of Distribution
Direct Pictures
230 E. 11th St. 10003
New York, NY
212 353 8520
laure@directpictures.com

For Electronic Press Kit visit:
www.vajrasky.com