



THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

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Film Series

# Vajra Sky Over Tibet

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Directed by John Bush

Friday, June 8, 2012 7:30 – 9:30 PM

113 East 30<sup>th</sup> Street New York, NY 10016

*Journey Into Buddhism: Vajra Sky Over Tibet.* “When the Iron Bird flies, the dharma will go to the West, says a 1,500-year-old Tibetan Buddhist prophecy, one that seems to have been amply fulfilled in 1959, when Mao’s Communist forces overwhelmed Tibet, killed a million or so Tibetans, and forced the 14th Dalai Lama into his still-continuing Western exile. In the near half-century since, there has been a deliberate long-term undermining of Tibet’s ancient Buddhist culture crudely violent in the Great Helmsman’s time, more subtle and insidious since. Deep physical and spiritual scars remain on this tiny, beleaguered nation. Longtime Buddhist filmmaker John Bush took a two-person crew into the country without official permission, they avoided interviews for fear of reprisals and filmed, often surreptitiously, the great religious sites as they exist now, after decades of oppression from Beijing. He finds a resilient, welcoming people who continue to practice their religion (now officially tolerated ) despite the infiltration of Chinese agents into their monasteries, the razing of many sites to facilitate surveillance, and the kidnapping of the family of the 9-year-old Pandau Lama (whose future duty is to choose the next Dalai Lama) and his replacement by a 6-year-old Beijing-backed stooge. Filmed only with direct light and sound, Bush’s stunning camerawork adroitly captures the majestic landscapes and icons of Buddhism: its murals and artworks, monks and nuns. Not incidentally, the film also offers a compact primer in the ways of dharma. A tonic for Buddhists, no doubt, it offers many pleasures to atheists as well.” --John Patterson, Village Voice

Admission is free.

