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NEWS RELEASE

Feb. 16, 2001

Contact: Deanna Sheriff, 549-1707.

BUDDHIST FILM, TIBETAN NUN FEATURED AT UM

MISSOULA -

The award-winning documentary "Chasing Buddha" and its subject, Buddhist celebrity Venerable Robina Courtin, will be featured at The University of Montana Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 21-22.

The documentary, which tells the story of Courtin and her transition from a life of "drugs, sex and politics" to life as a Tibetan Buddhist nun, will show at 7 p.m. on Wednesday and noon on Thursday in the theater on the University Center's third floor. Courtin will be introduced before each screening and will answer questions afterward. In addition, Courtin will give a public talk titled "Wise Selfishness: The Art of Happiness" at 7 p.m. Thursday in University Center Room 332.

A native Australian, Courtin met two Tibetan lamas at one of their dharma centers and was ordained a nun in the Gelukpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism more than 20 years ago. "Chasing Buddha" portrays a series of traumatic events that preceded her ordination and the unfolding of her spiritual journey.

Courtin serves as editor of Mandala magazine and is director of the Liberation Prison Project, inspiring prisoners nationwide with personal visits and guidance of spiritual practices. With a "uniquely direct and penetrating teaching style, Courtin speaks at Buddhist centers worldwide, shattering preconceived stereotypes of a Tibetan Buddhist nun," event organizers say.

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Buddhist.rl--2

“Chasing Buddha” was an official selection at the Sundance International Film Festival and four others and won Best Documentary Award and the Rouben Mamoulian Award at the Sydney Film Festival last year. The documentary was written, directed and produced by Courtin’s nephew, Amiel Courtin-Wilson.

The screenings and Courtin’s visit are sponsored by the UM MultiCultural Alliance and the Osel Shen Phen Ling Tibetan Buddhist Center in Missoula. The UM events are free, but Courtin will ask for free-will offerings to benefit her Liberation Prison Project.

After a weekend retreat at UM’s Lubrecht Forest in celebration of the Tibetan New Year, Courtin will return to Missoula to offer teachings at the Osel Shen Phen Ling Center, 441 Woodworth Ave. Each teaching begins at 7 p.m. Feb. 26-28. An offering of \$10 a session is requested.

For more information about Courtin’s Missoula visit, call Deanna Sheriff at 549-1707.

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