



DREAMING LHASA

WHITE CRANE FILMS
presents

a film by
RITU SARIN and TENZING SONAM

DREAMING LHASA

with
TENZIN CHOKYI GYATSO JAMPA KALSANG TENZIN JIGME

Executive Producers
JEREMY THOMAS RICHARD GERE RAJ SINGH

Directed by
RITU SARIN and TENZING SONAM

India/UK, 2005
1:1.85, 35mm, colour
90 minutes, Tibetan/English

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Synopsis

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1:1.85, 35mm, colour
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Karma, a Tibetan filmmaker from New York, comes to Dharamsala – a small town in the foothills of the Indian Himalayas, home to the exiled Dalai Lama and the spiritual and political focus of the Tibetan diaspora. Escaping from a deteriorating relationship back home, she is here to make a film about former political prisoners who have escaped from Tibet. Their harrowing stories of courage and suffering heighten her own sense of cultural alienation.

One of Karma's interviewees is Dhondup, an enigmatic ex-monk who has recently escaped from Tibet after spending four years in prison for his role in anti-Chinese activities. Dhondup confides in Karma that his real reason for coming to India is to fulfill his dying mother's last wish, to deliver a *gabru* – a charm box that Tibetans use as a protection amulet – to a man named Loga. He appeals to her for help in finding him.

Karma's assistant in Dharamsala is Jigme, a local Tibetan boy who is an aspiring rock musician, full of attitude but basically confused, torn between wanting to do something meaningful for a homeland he has never seen

and plotting ways of getting to America and the "good life".

Jigme instinctively dislikes Dhondup and tries to discourage her from getting involved. But something about Dhondup's quiet dignity touches Karma and she decides to help him.

As they set out to find Loga, Karma finds herself unwittingly falling in love with Dhondup even as she is sucked into the vortex of his quest, which becomes a journey into Tibet's fractured past and a voyage of self-discovery.



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Notes on the Film

Dreaming Lhasa is the first dramatic feature film by documentary filmmakers Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam. It is also the first internationally recognized feature film by a Tibetan to explore the contemporary reality of Tibet. Although the film is set among the exile community in India the story it tells has resonances beyond just the Tibetan experience; it touches upon the larger questions of cultural identity, dislocation and loss that are very much a part of today's post-modern world.

Ritu and Tenzing have been making documentaries on Tibetan subjects for many years but their longtime desire was to make a feature film that would tackle comprehensively the issues closest to their heart – the political and cultural reality of Tibet under Chinese occupation, the in-between world of the younger generation of refugees who have never seen their homeland, and the gradual dying out of the older generation whose memories of a free Tibet are the only living link to the past.

More than 45 years have passed since the Chinese invasion of Tibet forced the Dalai Lama and close to a hundred thousand Tibetans to flee their homeland. Two generations of Tibetans have grown up, either under Chinese rule or in exile. Today, China rules Tibet with an iron hand and all forms of dissent are ruthlessly quashed. The goal of

regaining a free Tibet – the *raison d'être* of the refugee community – seems further away than ever before. Where does this leave the Tibetans? Inside Tibet, Tibetans have no voice, no way of expressing themselves freely. In exile, the Tibetan community is relatively tiny and it is only recently that a small band of filmmakers has begun to take the first hesitant steps towards looking at its own situation. In this context, Ritu and Tenzing's first feature film is of particular significance as it captures some of the complexities and contradictions of being Tibetan at this crucial juncture in Tibet's history, and opens up these issues for reflection, both among Tibetans and for a larger audience.

The germ of the idea for the story came from a true-life incident: Tenzing's father, Lhamo Tsering, had been an important figure in the resistance movement against the Chinese and had served as the key liaison between the guerilla forces and the CIA, which helped to train, arm and fund them from the late fifties to the end of the sixties. Tibet's armed struggle finally came to a close in 1974 and Tenzing's father spent nearly seven years in prison in Kathmandu as a result. In 1998, Ritu and Tenzing were commissioned by the BBC to make a documentary on this little-known piece of history, and while researching the film, heard the story of how one of the CIA-trained fighters – someone Tenzing had known as a child – had simply vanished without a trace some years after the end of the movement. What could have



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Notes on the Film/contd.

happened to him? Musings on his mysterious fate led to the framework on which the story of *Dreaming Lhasa* slowly evolved.

The central characters of Karma (the New York filmmaker) and Jigme (the lost rock musician in India), with their confused cultural identities, their efforts to find some meaningful connection with a homeland they have never seen, their desire to keep alive a political struggle that seems all but lost, stem directly from Tenzing's own experiences as a first-generation Tibetan exile who was born and brought up in India and then lived most of his adult life in the West before returning to Dharamsala.

The background to the character of Dhondup, the recent refugee from Tibet, grew out of a series of interviews that Ritu and Tenzing conducted in 1999 while making a short film, in which former political prisoners from Tibet – nuns, monks, ordinary men and women – described in graphic detail their ordeal while in Chinese custody for the simple offence of having demonstrated for Tibet's independence. These interviews had a profound impact on the filmmakers, so much so that some of the interviewees actually appear as themselves in the film, giving their real-life testimonies to Karma.

The older characters of Loga, Tse Topgyal and Ghen Rabga are drawn from the many former resistance fighters that Ritu and Tenzing interviewed while making their film on the CIA's involvement in Tibet. As the Tibetan struggle increasingly takes on a non-violent character, references to Tibet's armed struggle are gradually sidelined and the sacrifices made by these men are in danger of being forgotten, even by Tibetans themselves. Ritu and Tenzing were keen to pay tribute to these older Tibetans, and their story is a key element in the film, forming as it does, the arc that leads from the past to the future.



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Music

From the beginning, Ritu and Tenzing wanted to challenge the audience's perceptions of what Tibet represented and in this regard, the choice of music became a crucial factor. They had a clear idea that the original score should be a mix of contemporary electronica and traditional Tibetan sounds.

Ritu and Tenzing had known Andy Spence, a London-based electronica artist and producer, for a number of years and although he had never scored a film before or had much exposure to traditional Tibetan music, they instinctively felt that he would bring the right combination of freshness and innovation to the soundtrack. They roped in another old friend, Techung, a Tibetan musician based in California, to collaborate with Andy. Techung sent Andy various Tibetan instrumental solos played on the *piwang*, *dranyen*, and *yangchin*. Incorporating these, Andy came up with some moving pieces of music that struck a fine balance between the traditional and the modern.

Karma's character as a New York filmmaker, coupled with the fact that Dharamsala is a melting pot of young travellers from all over the world, gave the filmmakers the freedom to go for an intriguing mix of sourced music. This included a famous Bollywood song, the dub reggae sounds of The Skatalites and Augustus

Clarke, dance music from Underworld and Organic Audio, and a track by the Cowboy Junkies.

Adding to this mix are two contemporary Tibetan rock songs, performed on-camera by the character, Jigme, who in real life is one third of the popular band, JJI Exile Brothers. The Brothers themselves make a guest appearance in the film.

Yet one more musical motif was woven into the film: a traditional nomadic air sung in a delicate soprano by Dharamsala-based singer, Kelsang Chukie Tethong, which acted as a counterpoint to the more contemporary bent of the soundtrack.



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Casting

Finding the actors for the film was a major challenge. There is no such thing as a Tibetan film industry in exile and therefore, no pool of professional actors to choose from. Yet, the moment the word went out that a Tibetan feature film was looking for actors, the response and enthusiasm was overwhelming. Everyone wanted to be a part of this venture and there were so many applicants that the directors felt bad that there were not enough roles to accommodate everyone who showed promise.

One person who had some prior acting experience was Kathmandu-based Jampa Kalsang, who had played an important role in the indie feature film, *Windhorse*. Jampa was the right age for the role and had the kind of face the directors were looking for, but he was an exile-born Tibetan who had spent all his life in India and Nepal. Could he convincingly play a newly escaped Tibetan from Tibet? This was a crucial point as there are marked differences between Tibetans brought up in exile and those brought up in Tibet. The directors took a gamble and it paid off handsomely. Jampa's total dedication and the professionalism with which he approached his work proved an inspiration to all the cast and crew. In the best traditions of method acting, Jampa got under the skin of his character and literally became Dhondup for the duration of the shoot, so much so that most Tibetans who did not know

him in Dharamsala, assumed he was yet another recent refugee from Tibet!

Ritu and Tenzing knew that they wanted a Tibetan brought up in North America to play the role of Karma. In early 2003, a casting call was put out on various websites and newsletters catering to the small Tibetan communities in America and Canada, which brought a clutch of responses. These were whittled down to a handful and finally, to 30-year-old Tenzin Chokyi Gyatso, who had come to America as a child with her parents. At first glance, she was as far removed from the character she was to portray as could be imagined: Tenzin worked in a bank in suburban DC, whereas Karma was meant to be an East Village bohemian. But something about the confidence with which she did her audition, and her quiet determination to prove that she could play the role, convinced the filmmakers that she was the right choice. In many ways, Tenzin Chokyi had the most difficult challenge to overcome. As a Tibetan who had grown up in the States with virtually no experience of either India or the exile Tibetan community there, she was the one real outsider in the entire group. As the leading lady, she was naturally the focus of everyone's attention, which put enormous pressure on her. And as someone with no prior acting experience, she had to work extra hard to prove herself.



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Casting/contd.

In June 2003, a series of auditions were held in Dharamsala to find Jigme, the local boy who is torn between conflicting emotions and priorities. More than a hundred applicants showed up, but Tenzin Jigme, who in his normal life is one third of the Dharamsala-based rock band, JJI Exile Brothers, was without question the best. He turned out to be a natural actor – a one-take, shoot-from-the-hip artist – who constantly surprised the directors with his unexpected improvisations and character interpretations. As a Dharamsala boy himself, who had done his fair share of hanging around, he had a real understanding of the character he was to play. The fact that his alter ego was also called Jigme led to some confusion in his mind; in fact, his biggest dilemma was to find a separation between himself and his character but it was this very tension that enabled him to give his performance a depth and vitality that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise. His being a rock musician was incorporated into the script and this gave his role an added dimension.

Finding the older Tibetans – all of whom had to be in their seventies – to play the smaller, but nonetheless crucial parts was equally daunting. The choice was limited and once potential candidates had been identified, they had to be convinced to try out for the roles! A retired official from the Dalai Lama's government, two

former resistance fighters, and a house mother at the Tibetan Children's Village were among those selected, and they threw themselves into their roles with great enthusiasm and acquitted themselves remarkably convincingly.



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Directors

Ritu Sarin - Producer and Co-Director
Tenzing Sonam - Writer and Co-Director

Ritu was born in New Delhi. After graduating from Delhi University, she worked in Brussels for three years, before doing her MFA in film and video at the California College of the Arts in Oakland.

Tenzing was born in Darjeeling, India, of Tibetan refugee parents. He worked in the Tibetan Government-in-exile in Dharamsala for a year after his graduation from Delhi University. He then studied broadcast journalism at the Graduate School of Journalism, University of California, Berkeley.

Ritu and Tenzing worked on their first film together as a student project. *The New Puritans: The Sikhs of Yuba City* was completed in 1985 and won a number of awards in America. The film was broadcast on national PBS and the Learning Channel.

In 1987, they moved to London to work for the Meridian Trust, a film and video archive specializing in Buddhist and Tibet-related audio-visual material. Between 1987 and 1990, they helped the Trust develop its archives and were involved in documenting on video a number of historic trips made by the Dalai

Lama to Norway, America and the former Soviet Union.

In 1990, they started White Crane Films and began work on *The Reincarnation of Khensur Rinpoche*, an independently produced documentary. The film was screened at numerous international film festivals and broadcast throughout the world. It also had a successful theatrical release in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the United States.

Their subsequent films, some of which were commissioned by the BBC, include: *The Trials of Telo Rinpoche* (1993); *A Stranger in My Native Land* (1997) and *The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet* (1998).

Ritu and Tenzing are married and have two children.



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Key Cast

Tenzin Chokyi Gyatso – Karma

Tenzin Chokyi was born in India. She immigrated with her parents to America at the age of four and grew up in Warrenton, a small lumbering community in Oregon. Since 1991, she has lived in Fairfax, Virginia, on the outskirts of Washington, DC. After graduating in International Business from George Washington University in 1996, she joined Chevy Chase Bank and still works there as a Portfolio Officer in Private Banking. She has always been interested in acting and seized her opportunity by responding to the casting call for *Dreaming Lhasa* and auditioning for the role of Karma. Back at her bank job again, she nevertheless hopes to develop her acting career.

Jampa Kalsang - Dhondup

Born and brought up in Nepal, Jampa's first experience as an actor came when he played an important role in the film, *Windhorse*. He then worked on the French production, *Himalaya*, both as an actor and as assistant director. Subsequently, he worked as an assistant on *Samsara*, in which he also had a small role. Besides acting, Jampa is keenly interested in the whole process of filmmaking and hopes to direct his own film in the future. In his spare time, he is an avid guitar player and performs a range of Western and Tibetan songs.

Tenzin Jigme - Jigme

Tenzin Jigme was born in Dharamsala, India. He studied at the Tibetan Children's Village before devoting himself fulltime to music. He plays lead guitar with the Dharamsala-based rock band, JJI Exile Brothers, which is made up of himself and his two brothers. Playing original songs that combine Western rock and traditional Tibetan influences with politically conscious lyrics, JJI Exile Brothers are popular among the exile Tibetan youth. Selected from nearly 100 applicants who auditioned for the role, this is Tenzin Jigme's first and only acting experience.



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Key Cast/contd.

Phuntsok Namgyal Dhumkhang - Loga

Phuntsok Namgyal was an official in the Tibetan Government in Lhasa before following the Dalai Lama into exile in 1959. In India, he served for many years in the Tibetan government-in-exile. Later, he turned his attention to his first love, traditional Tibetan music and calligraphy. For a few years in the nineties, he lived in London and earned a living by busking on the Underground, singing traditional Tibetan songs and playing the Tibetan lute called a *dranyen*. He now lives in Dharamsala. This is his first acting experience.

Tsering Topgyal Phurpatsang - Tse Topgyal

Tsering Topgyal comes from a chieftain family in Eastern Tibet. Following the Chinese invasion, he joined the local resistance and was subsequently arrested by the Chinese. He spent nearly 20 years in prison before being released in the early eighties. He fled to India shortly afterwards and now works for the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala. He has never acted before.

Tenzin Wangdrak - Ghen Rabga

Tenzin Wangdrak was a member of the Chushi Gangdruk (Four Rivers Six Ranges) resistance organization that fought the Chinese in Tibet in the late fifties. Following his escape to India in 1959, he became the Dalai Lama's personal driver for many years until his retirement a few years ago. He still lives close to the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala. This is the first time he has ever acted.



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Key Crew

Ranjan Palit - Director of Photography

Ranjan graduated from the prestigious Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, in 1982, with a diploma in cinematography. He is widely held to be the best documentary cameraman in India and has won two Indian National Awards in recognition of his work. He is also an award-winning filmmaker in his own right. He has worked with the majority of India's leading documentary makers and has shot over 50 documentaries. *Dreaming Lhasa* is his sixth feature film and the second time he has worked with its directors, having earlier shot their documentary, *The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet* (1998). Ranjan is based in Calcutta.

Paul Dosaj – Editor

Paul is an award-winning editor based in London. He has collaborated with a number of highly-regarded British directors and his work includes: *Kelly and her Sisters* (Winner of the Bafta, Grierson, Royal Television Society and Broadcast awards); *Living on the Edge* (Silver Globe award); and *Danger! Unexploded Bomb* (Silver Screen award). Paul also produces and directs documentaries in his own right.

Andy Spence – Music

Andy is a London-based music producer who has, over the past ten years, produced several albums and songs as part of, or in conjunction with, Organic Audio, The Freakniks and Hexstatic. He has remixed songs for INXS, Zero 7, UFO and Richard Dorfmeister's *Tosca*. His music has been used in the films, *Swordfish*, *The Fast and the Furious*, *Sex and the City* and *Queer As Folk*. He has worked on a couple of short films and done some TV work but *Dreaming Lhasa* is his first feature film as composer.



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Reflections on the Shoot

Tenzing Sonam

(as posted on www.whitecranefilms.com)

We finally finished our shoot on Christmas Day! Soon afterwards, the last goodbyes were said and hugs and kisses dispensed with and suddenly, this magical, unreal, self-contained and utterly intense experience that nearly 50 of us shared, day in and day out, for the past two months had come to an end, leaving Ritu and me stranded, as if in a vacuum - elated, relieved and not a little sad.

October was when the whole lumbering machinery finally started to pick up speed as cast and crew gathered at our temporary headquarters at the Om Hotel in McLeod Gunj in Dharamsala. The noted Delhi-based, expat British theatre director, Barry John, came up to conduct a two-week acting workshop. His vast experience in working with non-professional actors and preparing them for the rigours of a film shoot proved invaluable. This was when our actors began the crucial process of working as a team and getting to know each other. Barry also helped start us on our first scene rehearsals. Never having worked with actors in our life, this was our biggest apprehension, but in the event, all our actors proved totally committed and cooperative and not only helped us to settle into this unfamiliar role without any difficulty but actually made the process fun and exciting.

It was early on in the workshop that our first disaster struck: during a particularly strenuous exercise, Tenzin Jigme, who plays the role of Jigme, one of the three main characters in the film, got a little over-enthusiastic and cracked his knee-cap. He was promptly put in an ankle-to-upper-thigh cast and told by the local doctor that he would be on crutches for at least the next six weeks. Fortunately, specialist advice from an orthopaedic surgeon recommended that the cast be removed and the knee be allowed to heal naturally. But the reality was that Jigme would not be able to walk without a

serious limp for the duration of the shoot and that's how his character in the film developed a physical handicap that gave him an unexpected dimension!

Then, a week before our original start date, we had our second setback. Our friend, the cameraman Alphonse Roy, whose Arri SR3 we were hiring, had done a routine camera test in Madras. We expected no problems as he had only recently serviced his camera in London but the test blow-up to 35mm showed soft focus. Another test was immediately done using his zoom lens and the same problem cropped up. This was serious as we had already rejected the only other Super 16 camera of comparable quality available in India on technical grounds and getting a last-minute replacement was going to be almost impossible. Alphonse hopped on the next flight to London and, luckily, was able to quickly sort out the problem, so we were late by only a week!

For the previous two months, every single day had been spectacularly clear and beautiful but, as a special auspicious omen, the day of our inaugural shoot dawned overcast and bitterly cold. Before long, it was raining and we had to make a last-minute change of schedule to accommodate the inclement weather. Instead of shooting at the Kesang Guest House, we decided to go for the Cue Ball snooker hall, a scene where Jigme and his friend, Lee, have an altercation as they play a game, a far more complex shoot that we had originally scheduled for much later. Several extras had to be hired and their movements coordinated. For good measure, we laid a track for the opening shot. For a first shoot, this was pretty challenging stuff!

Outside, two policemen, along with our team of enthusiastic production assistants, were on hand to help block traffic and keep the noise level down.



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Reflections on the Shoot/contd.

It didn't take us very long to discover the torturous hazards of doing a sync sound shoot in India and the pattern was set for the rest of our production: vehicles of every size and shape loudly thrummed their engines just as we were ready for a take, or worse, in the middle of one; stray dogs did battle on the streets just for fun; errant school children insistently screamed their heads off; builders employing crude implements made unimaginably loud sounds; various pieces of machinery switched on and off at will; evil hordes of cawing crows hovered overhead; and always, gangs of human beings predictably walked or talked when they should have bloody well stayed frozen and kept their mouths shut!

It took us two days to finish the snooker hall scene (it was a day's schedule) but by the end of it, we were elated...we had done it and now there was no turning back! Ritu and me were in a state of feverish excitement. It was unimaginable that this thing that we had nurtured for so long, that we had struggled to keep alive against all odds, was actually taking form, becoming real, in front of our very eyes. As a creative process, this was perhaps the most intensely rewarding experience of our lives. Of course, the inescapable part of any film shoot is the fact that more than any other creative venture, it is finally a team effort. And in this we were truly fortunate that everyone, from the most skilled technician to the rookie production assistant, gave us their best, literally put in a bit of themselves into the project.

Before we knew it, the days had rolled into weeks and the various departments – camera, lights, sound, production design and production department – had meshed into a fully-functioning unit. The usual frictions, born mostly out of logistical stress, flared up...and just as quickly died down. In between the hectic schedule of the actual shoot, sub-groups formed,

friendships were kindled and romances blossomed (and then a few wilted). As the head honchos, Ritu and me found ourselves in the unfamiliar position of being the authority figures...a very strange feeling indeed! But very early on in the shoot, we realized that this hierarchical setup was somehow necessary for the film to proceed smoothly and consequently, much against our natures, we stayed mostly to ourselves, spending our free time discussing the film or endlessly reflecting on our own experience of being in the process of making it. *Shooting to Kill*, the book about filmmaking by the New York indie film producer, Christine Vachon, became a trusted companion and we took very seriously her admonishment that we were not here to win a popularity contest!

Our cameraman and old friend, Ranjan Palit, had been in on the project for years and we worked closely with him on the look and style of the film. From the beginning, we knew we wanted two contrasting styles to run through the film; a handheld, restless look juxtaposed against a more quiet and stylized one. We had already worked out a detailed shot list and storyboarded the entire script. During rehearsals, we had shot most of the key sequences on mini-DV and edited them on FCP (Final Cut Pro), so by the time we came to the actual shoot, we had a pretty good idea of what we were aiming for. Still, it was one thing to shoot a scene on a small camcorder and another to do it for real, with all the paraphernalia and people required to set it up and the unrelenting pressure of time, fading light, extraneous noise and everything else that could be imagined, constantly bearing down upon us.

We had a number of ambitious scenes that required serious logistical coordination. These included: a fight scene in a disco jammed with Mcleod's finest who continued to party long after we had wrapped up (the much-anticipated fight



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Reflections on the Shoot/contd.

happened seamlessly in one take); a busload of “new arrivals” from Tibet coming up to Dharamsala (most of whom were sick by the time we had stopped and started a few hundred times); a Gaddi (a local tribe) wedding procession carrying a palanquin down a steep hill; a candlelight vigil of around 40 extras, old and young, who patiently chanted the same prayer and yelled the same slogans well into the early morning hours; a hunger strike in the heart of Majnu ka Tila, the crowded Tibetan settlement in Delhi, that could have been a disaster in terms of crowd management but proved surprisingly straightforward.

Perhaps, the most maddening shoot of all was a sequence involving a bus breakdown on the main highway some 40 kilometres from Dharamsala. Our two main characters, Karma and Dhondup have an intimate conversation a little way below the road. This was one of the key turning moments in the film and we had to get it right. As the sun slowly changed angle, we did take after frustrating take, trying to stop traffic on the highway, which only invited crowds of onlookers who refused to keep silent. As our frustrations built up, we wondered if we were ever going to be able to complete the sequence. Astonishingly, against all odds, and to the credit of our two actors who maintained their focus, we did. There were many other similar occasions where extenuating circumstances threatened to undermine our efforts but somehow, we always managed to overcome them. Here again, we are thankful to our cast and crew whose total commitment enabled us to surmount these difficult hurdles. Thanks are also due to the various individuals who helped us in innumerable ways; to the homes, hotels, shops and organizations in and around McLeod Gunj that we used as locations; and to the inhabitants of McLeod Gunj who, by and large, kept quiet when asked to, didn't create a scene by crowding around us, and didn't make our lives too miserable!

A word about our actors: our initial fears about working with a cast of largely non-professional actors proved to be totally unfounded. Our trio of leading actors led the way, placing complete faith in us, showing absolute dedication to their work and giving us some truly moving performances. The rest of the supporting cast, particularly the older actors, constantly amazed us with their natural abilities and their patience and willingness to try out whatever we asked of them.

The last two weeks of the shoot were on the road. After the relative comfort of McLeod Gunj where we had lived and worked as a unit for over two months, we were suddenly thrust into the unfamiliar territories of Clement Town, Majnu ka Tila and Jaipur, moving fast and working on the run. In Clement Town, we filmed at the Tashi Kyil Monastery and it was thanks to the cooperation of the monks there that we were able to complete our shoot – which included a fairly complicated funeral sequence – without any hitch. Majnu ka Tila was a big worry, given that this was the busiest time of the year there and we had a very real concern about noise and crowd control. Our very first shoot there, a night scene where Karma and Dhondup walk up to the Lhasa Guest House late at night, threatened to be disrupted because the lights we had set up in the alleyway attracted hundreds of curious bystanders who simply refused to move out of frame. We resolved this by doing a dummy shoot, complete with exaggerated instructions of “Action!” and “Cut!”. This seemed to satisfy our uninvited audience who slowly dispersed. Much later, at around one in the morning, we came out and did the actual shoot! Our biggest problem in Majnu ka Tila turned out to be two days of power cuts, which meant that every single generator in the vicinity was turned on, making it almost impossible for us to continue. Jaipur was the



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Reflections on the Shoot/contd.

first location where we were out of a Tibetan setup and in a totally Indian environment. Here again, our work would have been well nigh impossible had it not been for the support and cooperation of the local Tibetan sweater sellers' association.

Our last shoot was scheduled on Christmas Day. A greatly reduced crew along with our two leads, Tenzin Chokyi and Jampa Kalsang, took the train to Moradabad. We were to return to Delhi by car and shoot the last of our road sequences on the way. And so it happened, quite by chance, that the very last shot of the shoot happened inside a speeding Maruti van on a gloomy, wintry afternoon, somewhere on the highway leading to Delhi. As soon as we had called "Cut!" for the very last time, we stopped by the side of the road and all of us hugged each other in celebration, our excitement and relief already tinged by a sense of something magical and wonderful having just ended.

DREAMING LHASA

Credits

Directed by
RITU SARIN and TENZING SONAM

Produced by
RITU SARIN

Written by
TENZING SONAM

Executive Producers
JEREMY THOMAS
RICHARD GERE
RAJ SINGH

Director of Photography
RANJAN PALIT

Editor
PAUL DOSAJ

Music
ANDY SPENCE

Sound
PM SATHEESH

Associate Executive Producers
KLAUS HEBBEN
SANJIV SHARMA
ARUN and RUMMI SARIN
ANTHONY and MARIE LAURE ARIS
ELIZABETH CHATWIN
FRANCESCA VON HABSBURG

Cast

Dhondup JAMPA KALSANG
Karma TENZIN CHOKYI GYATSO
Jigme TENZIN JIGME
Loga PHUNTSOK NAMGYAL DHUMKHANG
Tse Topgyal TSERING TOPGYAL PHURPATSANG
Ghen Rabga TENZIN WANGDRAK
Dekyi LOBSANG CHOEDON
Penjor SONAM PHUNTSOK
Lee TSERING NGODUP
Tenzin JAMPA CHOEPHELL
The Oracle TSULTRIM DOLMA
Travel Agent SONAM WANGDUE
Long-haired Sweater Seller LOBSANG WANGYAL
Monk Attendant NGAWANG LODOE
Ghen Rabga's Granddaughter TASHI DOLMA RUBLING
Hunger Striker Wangpo TSERING DORJI
Receptionist TSERING DORJI BAWA
Old Man SHERAB SANGPO
Woman Reporter ANNIE THOMAS
American Girl MARIA RICCIUTI
Dekyi's Husband TEMPA DHONDEN
Protestor TASHI DORJEE
Kid 1 TENZIN JUGNEY
Kid 2 TENZIN RABGA
Kid 3 TENZIN NYISHEY
Bus Attendant SUMAN KUMAR
Sweater-Seller KHENRAB
Indian Disco Dancer SANDEEP DHINGRA
English Girl SARAH CUNNINGHAM
Samten's Mother NYIMA NAMDOL
Bass Guitarist TENZIN JAMYANG
Drummer TENZIN INGSEL
Sweeping Hermit GYALTSEN
Indian Bride SUMAN KUMARI
Shepherd Boy MANISH KUMAR

Former Political Prisoners from Tibet as themselves:
ANI NGAWANG JAMPA (Gutsa Prison, 1989-1991)
GYALTSEN PELSANG (Gutsa Prison, 1993-1995)
ANI TENZIN CHOEDON (Gutsa Prison, 1988)
PHUNTSOK WANGCHUK (Drapchi Prison, 1994-1999)

DREAMING LHASA

Tibetan Instruments performed by
TASHI D. SHARZUR (aka TECHUNG)

Atong Yo, Traditional Tibetan Song, performed by
KELSANG CHUKIE TETHONG

Production Designer RACHNA RASTOGI
Production Manager YODON AUKATSANG
Associate Director TSERING RHITAR
Associate Producer TENZIN DORJEE
Art Director PHUNTSOK TSERING
Production Coordinator TENZIN TSETAN CHOKLAY

First Assistant Director DEVIKA BHAGAT
Second Assistant Director DIKI TSOOMO BHUTIA
Third Assistant Director TSEWANG GONPO

Chief Assistant Camera ANIRUDH GARBYAL
Camera Assistants N. DEVARAJAN
KAVITHA
CHOYANG THARCHIN
Still Photographer TENZIN DORJEE

Gaffer NANDHA KUMAR
Lighting Assistants APAL SINGH
MANU ANAND
Key Grips SEBASTIAN JOSEPH
PANKAJ BHAKUNI
Additional Grip MANJU
Genset Operators SUMAN KUMAR
LAL BAHADUR

Production Sound Mixers AMRIT PRITAM DUTTA
VIVEK
SUBHASHIS ROY
Boom Operator NICOLE LAZAROFF

Property Master WENDY JARRAH
Set Dressers SHELDON REBELLO
TENZING BHUTIA

Carpenter LOBSANG DHONYOE
Painter ASHOK RAWAT
Wardrobe Coordinators TASHI DORJEE
TASHI DOLMA RUBLING
Make-Up SATYA PRAKASH VERMA
VIRENDRA

Assistant Production Coordinators KELSANG TSERING KHANGSAR
SONAM WANGDUE
Production Assistants LHAKPA TSERING
KALDEN CHOEPHEL
Office Assistant YANGZOM DOLMA
Production Accountant DORJI GYALTSEN

Catering LOBSANG TSERING
GYALTSEN
NYIMA TASHI
TSERING WANGCHUK
DAWA TSERING

Tibet Consultant TASHI TSERING
Reggae and Dub Consultant DAVID KATZ
Production Consultant B.S. NARAYANASWAMY
Legal Consultant MANOJ ARORA
Karma's Style Consultant (NY) DECHEN WANGDU

Actors' Workshop Director BARRY JOHN
Casting (USA, Canada) TENZIN DORJEE
DAWA NARONGSHA
Story Boarding Artist GURUDUTT JAHANGIRDAR
Translations TENZIN NORGAY

Assistant Editor (New Delhi) SUSANT MANI
Assistant Editor (London) JOHNNY BURKE
Avid Film Composer REAL IMAGE TECHNOLOGIES,
INDIA
CINECONTACT, LONDON
Avid Consultant (India) ASHWIN RAMNATHAN

DREAMING LHASA

Sound Design P.M. SATHEESH
Chief Sound Editor SHAJITH KOYERI
Sound Editor AMRIT PRITAM
Sound Studio Supervisor VIMAL KUMAR T.K.
Foley Artists KARNAIL SINGH
GUPTA
Foley Recording SAJJAN CHOWDHRY
Audio Post Production ARADHANA SOUND SERVICES, MUMBAI
FIREFLYS POST SOUND, MUMBAI

Re-recording Mixer STUART HILLIKER
Assistant Re-Recording Mixer MARTIN JENSEN
Re-recorded at BOOM STUDIOS, LONDON
Dolby Sound Consultant, London JAMES SEDDON

Film Processed at PRASAD FILM LABS, MUMBAI
Digital Intermediate Post-Production EFX, MUMBAI
Colourist KEN METZKER
EFX Post-Production Supervisor K MADHUSUDAN
Line Producer KAILASH JADHAV
EFX Assistants SHEKAR S.V.D.C.
K.C. SHIVASHANKAR
PARTHASARATHY
Scanning JAYADEV TIRUVEAIPATI
EMMANUEL M.
Recording SONY ANTHONY
SANJIVAN BHOSALE
SANDEEP HIRASKAR
ARUNKUMAR MOHANTY
Best Light Telecine MAKARAND SURTE
EFX Systems Support N. ANANTHAKRISHNAN
Compositer BHARAT PRAJAPTI

Camera Equipment Y. ALPHONSE ROY, CHENNAI
Audio Equipment SCUBA LOCATION SOUND, MUMBAI
Grip and Electric Equipment FLAMINGO FILMS, NEW DELHI
Generator SUBHASH GENERATORS, NEW DELHI

Accountants VOHRA, SAHNI AND ASSOCIATES,
NEW DELHI
SILVER LEVENE AND CO, LONDON
Website Maintenance JAMES WALKER
Tibetan Title Calligraphy PHUNTSOK NAMGYAL DHUMKHANG
Title Design CHRISTOPHE BESUCHET

AAGE BHI JAANE NA TU
Written by Ravi and Sahir Ludhyanvi
Performed by Asha Bhosle
Courtesy of Saregama India Ltd.

MIDDLE EAST DUB
Written by Lloyd Brevett
Performed by The Skatalites
Courtesy of Motion Records, London

COME ON (DIRTROID REMIX)
Written by Andy Spence and L. Lofisoye, Copyright Control
Performed by Organic Audio
Vocals by Lola Olafisoye
Courtesy of Autoa Records 2004

I BELIEVE IN YOU
Written by Andy Spence, Copyright Control
Performed by Organic Audio
Courtesy of Autoa Records 2004

THE DREAM
Written by Jamyang, Jigme and Ingsel
Performed by Tenzin Jigme

LOVING PAUPER
Written by Dobby Dobson
Performed by Augustus Clarke
Courtesy of Motion Records, London

BLUE MOON REVISITED
Written by Timmins, Timmins,
Hart and Rodgers
Performed by Cowboy Junkies
Courtesy of BMG (Canada) and EMI Music Publishing (UK)

DREAMING LHASA

GYA NAGPOE TA
Traditional Tibetan Song
Performed by Jampa Kalsang

TRIM
Written by Rick Smith and Karl Hyde
Performed by Underworld
Courtesy of V2 Music Ltd. and
Sherlock Holmes Music Ltd.

WHISPERING DUB
Written by Lloyd Brevett and Lester Sterling
Performed by The Skatalites
Courtesy of Motion Records, London

MURDERER
Performed by Augustus Clarke
Courtesy of Motion Records, London

TENZIN YULU
Written and performed by Tenzin Woser
Courtesy of Tenzin Woser

MELODY PRAYER
Written by Jamyang, Jigme and Ingsel
Performed by JJI Exile Brothers

AMA LE HO
Traditional Tibetan Song
Performed by Tashi D. Sharzur (aka Techung)

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Hotel Bhagsu, Tenwang Guest House, Planet C Internet Café,
Mc'lo Restaurant, JJI Exile Café, Sunset View Café, Triund View
Café, Rock 'n' Roll Night Club, Cue Ball, Bhagsu Travels,
Bedi Tours and Travels

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