

LITTLE BUDDHA

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(Credits not contractual)

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c 1992 Ciby 2000/Serpr...

1 EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE. ANCIENT INDIA. DAY

A small cluster of stone huts surrounds a simple courtyard on the edge of a cliff. In the distance beyond stretches a chain of snow-peaked mountains, so vast and overwhelming that they can only be the Himalayas.

Twenty or so VILLAGERS are gathered respectfully in front of an elevated stone altar, facing the HIGH PRIEST -- an elderly Brahman in ceremonial robes accompanied by two young BRAHMAN ATTENDANTS.

HIGH PRIEST

Soon the rains will come. For
the harvest to be successful,
we must prepare a sacrifice.

He looks towards a small GOAT tethered nearby, nibbling on a pile of straw.

One of his Attendants hurries over. As he unties it:

1ST ATTENDANT

(whispering)

Don't be afraid, little goat.
It is a great blessing to be
chosen for such an important
sacrifice.

He picks the Goat up in his arms and carries it back to the altar -- where the Second Attendant unsheaths a long sacrificial knife and hands it to the High Priest.

Then -- just as the High Priest is about to cut its throat -- the Goat begins to laugh -- (in a human voice). The High Priest hesitates. Everyone stares...

HIGH PRIEST

Why are you laughing? Don't
you know what is about to
happen to you?

GOAT

(laughing)

Oh yes! Oh yes!

(then in a calm voice)

After four hundred and ninety
nine times dying and being
reborn as a goat I will be
reborn again as a human being.

The Brahman Priests and the Villagers stare in astonishment at the talking Goat -- and then in bewilderment as the Goat suddenly begins to cry.

HIGH PRIEST

But in that case -- why are you crying now?

GOAT

I'm thinking of you, poor Brahman! Five hundred lives ago I, too, was a Brahman Priest and, like you, I sacrificed goats to the gods....

The High Priest drops the knife and sinks to his knees in front of the Goat...

HIGH PRIEST

Forgive me, I beg you! From now on I will be the Guardian and protector of every goat in the land.

GOAT

That might bring you merit, Brahman, but whether you kill me or protect me will have no effect on my destiny. My hour has come.

BOOM!

A THUNDERBOLT (SFX) cracks down from the clear sky and strikes the Goat, killing it instantly!

The Goat has a smile on its face.

2 INT. MONASTERY CLASSROOM. BHUTAN. DAY

A large room with frescoes on the wall and a statue of Buddha.

An impressive elderly Tibetan, a Buddhist monk called LAMA NORBU - with shaved head and maroon robes, sits cross-legged on a dais, addressing a GROUP OF YOUNG MONKS, five to ten years old, gathered round him on the floor -- all of them also with shaved heads and maroon robes.

Sitting near Lama Norbu is his personal Attendant, CHOMPA, a monk with a round pleasant face, about 20 years old.

LAMA NORBU

Now then, what does this ancient tale teach us?

ENTIRE CLASS
 (shouts in chorus)
 "That no living creature must
 ever be sacrificed."

LAMA NORBU
 (raising a finger)
 For he who commits an evil
 deed?

ENTIRE CLASS
 "Will surely suffer an evil
 result."

YOUNG MONK
 (five years old)
 What happened to the goat?

LAMA NORBU
 (enjoys telling stories)
 Ah yes, the goat!....The goat
 had many many lives as a human
 being...until one day he turned
 into someone very strange
 indeed...
 (dramatic pause, then
 suddenly pointing)
 -- Chompa!

Squeals and claps of approval from the class as Chompa
 bends forward on his hands and knees, bleating like a
 goat, making everyone laugh.

Suddenly an OLDER MONK comes scurrying into the
 classroom, holding an envelope which he hands to Lama
 Norbu...

OLD MONK
 (loud whisper)
 A telegram, Lama Norbu... For
 you!...

Silence in the room as a surprised-looking Lama Norbu
 opens the envelope...

LAMA NORBU
 (to the class)
 Excuse me...

He searches for his glasses (round old-fashioned frames)
 and starts to read. Chompa watches the expression
 changing on his face: curiosity, puzzlement, then some
 kind of profound realisation....He lowers the telegram,
 lost in thought...

LAMA NORBU
 (quietly to Chompa)
 I have been waiting for eight
 years to receive this...

The sound of a large GONG resounds through the monastery
 breaking into his thoughts. He looks up at the restless
 Young Monks now fidgeting in front of him:

LAMA NORBU
 I can see from your empty
 expressions that your stomachs
 are now fully in control of
 your minds...
 (he smiles)
 So you better go and fill them.

The Young Monks jump up, laughing and chattering and run
 out of the door, leaving Lama Norbu and Chompa alone in
 the silent hall...After a moment:

CHOMPA
 (hushed voice)
 Is it about Lama Dorje?

LAMA NORBU
 Yes...

CHOMPA
 (whispered excitement)
 Have they found him?

LAMA NORBU
 (looks at him)
 Perhaps.

3 INT. LAMA NORBU'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

CLOSE-UP on a large framed photograph of an old Tibetan
 Lama. He is seated in the Lotus position, looking
 straight ahead, with an expression of compassionate
 repose -- and one hand pulling thoughtfully on his ear.
 LAMA DORJE.

The photograph stands on a simple altar with offering
 bowls, butter lamps and a smaller framed picture of the
 Dalai Lama.

In the distance, outside, we hear a cock CROW.

Lama Norbu, seated on the floor in front of the altar,
 ending his meditation, touches his forehead to the floor
 three times...then gets up, breathing heavily, and with a

little difficulty.

He blows out the butter lamps and opens the wooden shutters of the window. The first pale light of dawn reveals the rest of the room, a bare monk's cell...

Slowly, as if he was having difficulty breathing, Lama Norbu removes the photograph of Lama Dorje from the altar, touches it to his forehead in a traditional sign of devotion and packs it away in a large wooden trunk which lies on his hard narrow bed. Inside it we see two neatly folded maroon robes, some pairs of longjohns, and loose-leafed books of Buddhist scripture bound together with string.

As Lama Norbu completes his packing, there is a quiet knock at the door. He opens it and finds Chompa, who bows, and comes in with a large bowl of water and a towel.

Lama Norbu thanks him and starts to rinse his face...

4 EXT. COURTYARD. MONASTERY. DAWN

For the first time we get an impression of the ancient building as a whole --- huge and fortress-like, with towering white-washed walls and black timber beams. Mountains, touched with pink, rise above the tiled roofs.

Lama Norbu and Chompa come down an outside staircase and cross the great flagstoned courtyard, followed by two YOUNG MONKS carrying the trunk and two small suitcases.

From the inner sanctum of the monastery comes the low chanted MURMUR of morning prayers...

As they approach the gates they pass an enormous wooden board resting on legs where TWO MONKS, using long pieces of coloured string, have started to lay out the intricate geometric pattern for a mandala (a ritual Tibetan picture of the universe).

Just then, an old Lama with a tall yellow hat, comes out of a side building - the ABBOT of the Monastery. Dignified and partially lame, he walks slowly towards them, supported by an ATTENDANT MONK.

With both hands, Lama Norbu and Chompa offer the Abbot white ceremonial scarves (katas) which, in the traditional Tibetan manner, he takes and then gives back, placing them around their necks.

ABBOT

We shall all pray for the
success of your mission.

He touches foreheads with Lama Norbu (another traditional
ritual) -- then laughs:

ABBOT

And remember to take your
medicine!

5 EXT. COVERED BRIDGE. EARLY MORNING

Lama Norbu, Chompa and the Two Monks with the luggage
come down a steep path to an old covered bridge built of
wood, spanning a swift mountain stream.

Glancing back, they can see the great Monastery on the
hillside above, surrounded by hundreds of prayer flags
flapping in the wind.

As they turn back towards the bridge, a strange figure
emerges from the shadows...His body wrapped in old furs,
a white bone through his long black hair, jade earrings
in his ears -- he has the wild appearance of a MOUNTAIN
YOGI.

He is carrying an ancient wooden bowl -- which he holds
out to Lama Norbu.

MOUNTAIN YOGI

This bowl belonged to Lama
Dorje...He gave it to me before
I left, thirteen years ago, to
live in the cave. You will
need it for your search.

He laughs at some private joke, and gives a quick polish
to the bowl with his sleeve.

MOUNTAIN YOGI(cont)

Lama Dorje always insisted that
everything be clean. Including
me.

Lama Norbu accepts the bowl with great reverence, bowing
before the Yogi.

LAMA NORBU

And how is your retreat going?

MOUNTAIN YOGI

As I expected. When I entered
the cave I was a complete fool.
Now that I have come out for a
day, I realise that I am an
even bigger fool.

Without another word, he turns on his heel and sets off
along a narrow path -- heading back into the mountains.

Lama Norbu and the others enter the covered bridge --
where they are lost in darkness.

6 INT. LARGE MODERN AIRPORT. DAY

A young CUSTOM'S OFFICIAL is looking through Lama Norbu's
wooden trunk, picking through the bowls, drums, and other
religious paraphernalia.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Are you carrying any drugs or
fire-arms, any fruits or
vegetables?

LAMA NORBU

No.

The Customs Official picks out a small dagger.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

(suspicious)

What's this? A weapon?

LAMA NORBU

It is a religious object. It
is used to cut through the
bonds of ignorance.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Well, it looks like a weapon to
me.

He sets it aside and continues his search.

ON A SUPERIOR OFFICER

Witnessing the scene.

SUPERIOR OFFICER

(coming over)

It's okay, Tom.

(CONTINUED)

SUPERIOR OFFICER (CONT)
 (respectfully, to Lama
 Norbu)

You may proceed, Lama. Welcome
 to America.

He joins his hands in front of him, bows slightly, then
 walks away.

CHOMPA
 A Buddhist! An auspicious
 sign!

7 INT. ARRIVAL LOUNGE. DAY

A small cherubic Tibetan - KENPO TENZIN - stands with
 another Buddhist Monk - SAMPO - both wearing traditional
 maroon robes.

As Lama Norbu and Chompa approach, they present
 ceremonial scarves to Lama Norbu, who places them over
 their shoulders, smiling and joking. They are old
 friends...

8 INT. OLD CHEVROLET. DAY

Sampo drives Lama Norbu, Chompa and Kenpo Tenzin through
 the outskirts of Seattle.

Chompa and Lama Norbu, jet-lagged from the trip, but
 excited also, stare with amazement at the futuristic
 buildings of downtown Seattle. Chompa points to the
 freeways and bridges coming together in great clusters as
 they link the sparkling bays and inlets and pine-covered
 mountains into a grand display of urban efficiency.

KENPO TENZIN
 As I wrote you, the dreams
 began about a month after Lama
 Dorje died. Always the same
 dream.

LAMA NORBU
 The empty building site?

KENPO TENZIN
 Yes....He was walking in front
 of me -- uphill...

DISSOLVE TO:

9 KENPO TENZIN'S DREAM. EXT. DAY

A quiet suburban neighborhood of luxury homes.

An elderly Tibetan - LAMA DORJE - wearing blue jeans and a white shirt, walks up the street, KENPO TENZIN following behind him.

Suddenly he stops, KENPO TENZIN waiting respectfully behind him, then points slowly at an empty building site.

KENPO TENZIN(cont) (V.O)
He was pointing at this empty spot -- showing it to me. But there was nothing there.

CUT BACK TO:

10 INT. CHEVROLET. DAY

Astonished, Lama Norbu stares at Kenpo Tenzin.

LAMA NORBU
Lama Dorje was wearing jeans?

KENPO TENZIN
(laughs)
Yes. It was quite startling.
He always wore his robes in life.

LAMA NORBU
And he was pointing west, you wrote?

KENPO TENZIN
Yes. Always west...It took me several months to find the empty site. I went there often -- whenever the dream returned. But the site was always empty.

Sampo makes a turn and drives on through a quiet residential neighbourhood.

KENPO TENZIN(cont)
Until two years ago when, one day, I saw they had started to build a house...I discovered it belonged to the family of an architect -- with a small boy -
- Jesse -- an only child.

(CONTINUED)

KENPO TENZIN (CONT)

He was born the year Lama Dorje died.

Sampo makes another turn, driving uphill, along the same quiet street we just saw in the dream...

LAMA NORBU

The year of the snake.

The car stops in front of a fine modern two-story house, clearly designed by a serious architect.

Sampo turns off the engine. Silence in the car as everyone stares across the street at the house...

KENPO TENZIN (cont)

Of course I felt very shy about approaching them... But then I was lucky...

11 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND. DAY

Seen through the wire mesh of the perimeter fence, a large group of CHILDREN, mostly boys, 7-10 years old, are milling about, chasing each other, or playing football.

Kenpo Tenzin, with his bald head and maroon robes, is watching from the other side of the fence along with a group of PARENTS arriving to collect their kids.

A white Saab parks nearby and an attractive woman in her early thirties, LISA CARRAS, comes over to the fence near Kenpo Tenzin.

She scans the playground, looking for a child, then glances at Kenpo Tenzin, friendly but curious. He smiles at her.

KENPO TENZIN

A beautiful day.

LISA

Yes, it truly is...

She looks at the playground then back at him.

KENPO TENZIN

I'm a Buddhist Monk -- from Tibet.

LISA

Ah...

KENPO TENZIN
I am teaching here, now, in
Seattle.

LISA
Oh, really? I'm a teacher too.
Mathematics.

KENPO TENZIN
Like me sometimes. Also I
teach astrology -- mostly
astrology.

LISA
(smiles)
That's unusual. Do you tell
the future?

KENPO TENZIN
Oh, yes! Many things. We have
a very advanced system of
astrology.

They watch the Children for a moment...Lisa shouts at one
playing in the distance: "Jesse! Jesse!" As he sees
her and waves back:

KENPO TENZIN
May I ask what day your son was
born?

LISA
Jesse? Oh March 1st.

KENPO TENZIN
And at what hour?

LISA
(smiles)
Oh, in the morning - early.
6.30, I think.

KENPO TENZIN
(laughs happily and claps
his hands)
Oh, wonderful! Wonderful!
6.30! Very special!

LISA
Well, I don't know about
that...

JESSE -- a small boy, 8 years old, with ruffled hair and
an intense open expression, runs up to the fence.

LISA(cont)
Hi, darling. Have you got your things?

Jesse nods silently, and stands there pulling on one ear, staring at his mother's unusual-looking friend -- who is watching him with great interest.

LISA
(introducing him)
Jesse, this is...?

KENPO TENZIN
(smiling and bowing)
Kenpo Tenzin. Very honoured!

LISA
He's from Tibet, darling...
(Jesse doesn't move)
Now hurry up. I'll meet you at the car.

Jesse turns on his heel and runs off along the fence.

12 INT. CHEVROLET. DAY

The Buddhist Monks sit in the car staring at the house -- all except Chompa who has fallen asleep.

CUT BACK TO:

13 INT. MODERN STUDY. HOUSE. DAY

Lisa Carras is sitting at a desk correcting a pile of children's exercise books...she takes a sip from a cup of tea, then hears the front door bell RING.

She gets up, glad to have an interruption from work, and goes up a short flight of stairs.

14 IN THE HALL

As Lisa goes to the door she sees their maid, MARIA, (Latin, pretty, plump, late 20s) coming down from the floor above.

LISA
It's okay Maria...I'll get it.

Maria turns back up the stairs. Lisa opens the door. To her great surprise she finds Kenpo Tenzin standing in

front of her. He bows respectfully.

KENPO TENZIN
Mrs Carras? Do you remember
me? We met --

LISA
(smiles)
Of course. At the school. The
astrologer -- Kenzo?

KENPO TENZIN
Kenpo Tenzin.

He glances over his shoulder where Lisa discovers Lama
Norbu and Sampo watching from the pavement below. She
looks puzzled but intrigued.

KENPO TENZIN
I hope we are not disturbing
you?

LISA
Oh no -- I was just correcting
some exam papers...

KENPO TENZIN
My friend Lama Norbu has just
arrived from Bhutan...He is a
very important Lama...He has
never been in America before...
(he is visibly
embarrassed)
I was wondering -- I was
wondering...

LISA
(amused)
Eh...well...would you like to
come in? Does he want to see
an American home?

KENPO TENZIN
(beams -- just what he
wanted)
Yes! Yes! That would be very
kind! It will be very
interesting for him!

He waves to the others, who hurry up the steps, both
smiling, and bow to Lisa.

KENPO TENZIN

This is Mrs Carras. And this
is Lama Norbu. And that is
Sampo.

LISA

I'm glad to meet you. Please -
- come in.

The three Buddhist Monks step into the hall, curious and
smiling, and follow Lisa up the stairs.

LISA

As a matter of fact several
people have asked to see the
house. My husband designed it.
He's an architect.

15 INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

A long, sparsely-furnished room with a curved, wall-to-
ceiling window at one end overlooking a wooded bay and,
in the distance, the glinting tower blocks of downtown
Seattle.

There is a white carpet on the hard wood floor, and
several modern lithographs on the wall. The overall
impression is severe but elegant.

As Lisa leads the Tibetans over to the window, Lama Norbu
pauses to peer at a framed photograph on a side table:
Jesse with his parents, standing on a lawn, pulling on
his ear...

LISA

As you can see, it's quite
simple...

TIBETANS

(nodding approvingly)
Very beautiful! Very empty!

LISA

(laughs)

Oh, yes -- my husband is
obsessed with emptiness.
Please -- sit down...

Kenpo Tenzin and Sampo sit on chairs while, to Lisa's
slight surprise, Lama Norbu settles down cross-legged on
the floor and removes his shoes -- just as Maria appears
at the end of the corridor wearing her overcoat. As she
stares at the unlikely visitors:

MARIA

(dubious)

Mrs Carras? Is it all right if
I leave now?

LISA

Yes -- it's fine, Maria. Thank
you. See you tomorrow...

Maria leaves (looking back over her shoulder as she
goes).

LISA

Can I get you something to
drink?

LAMA NORBU

No, no, thank you. We are very
comfortable.

Lisa sits down on the sofa, increasingly mystified by her
strange visitors. She smiles politely, not knowing what
to say...

KENPO TENZIN

Lama Norbu is also a teacher.
He was my teacher -- in our
monastery in Bhutan!

LISA

Oh...I see...

KENPO TENZIN

He has come on an important
mission -- for all of us...
He...will stay at the Dharma
Center we have started -- in
Oakville.

LISA

I see...And is this your first
time in America?

LAMA NORBU

Yes.

A sound from the front hall -- the murmur of VOICES, then
the front door closing.

LISA

(getting up)

That must be Dean. He's back
early.

She goes off down the corridor -- where she meets her husband DEAN CARRAS coming up the stairs. He's a Greek-American, attractive, about 40, and looks exhausted.

LISA

(surprised)

Are you okay, darling? You look done in.

DEAN

(tired smile)

I am.

He catches sight of the Tibetans in the distance.

DEAN(cont)

(low voice)

What's going on, honey? Who are these people?

LISA

(makes a face)

I don't know. Visitors from another planet. They like the house or something...

DEAN

(following her)

Where's Jesse?

LISA

Finishing his homework.

As they come back into the room Lama Norbu and the other two Monks stand up:

LISA

(starts introductions)

This is -- eh...

LAMA NORBU

(puts his hands together and bows)

Lama Norbu.

The other two do the same: "Kenpo Tenzin"...."Sampo"...

LISA

This is my husband, Dean.

DEAN

Hi.

(he smiles)

Sit down.

Everyone sits down again (Lama Norbu on the floor).
After a pause:

LISA
(awkward)
I met Mr Tenzin a few weeks
ago, darling -- at Jesse's
school...

DEAN
Uh-huh.

The three Tibetans sit in contented silence, facing the couple on the sofa. Dean, half-amused, waits calmly for some further explanation... Lisa gives a polite cough.

LISA
(secretly teasing Dean)
Our friends were admiring the
"emptiness" of the room,
darling...

DEAN
(laughs, tired)
Oh, yes. Nothing can be empty
enough for me.

He picks up a magazine from the floor and pops it into a cupboard. Then sees one of Jesse's shoes -- and puts that away too. Then sits down again. Only Lama Norbu's shoes remain between them.

LAMA NORBU
Emptiness is a big subject.
(to Lisa)
Like zero for a mathematician.
(to Dean)
But no room will be empty if
the mind is full.
(with a broad smile)
You learn that in a prison
cell!

Dean and Lisa stare at the visitor on their living room floor. Who is this Tibetan Lama?

LAMA NORBU(cont)
(serious, to Dean)
All form is about emptiness.
(to Lisa)
Every cause has an effect.
(CONTINUED)

LAMA NORBU(CONT)

(to both)

Everything is impermanent. And
nothing happens by chance.
Buddhists believe these things.

Silence after this heavy statement -- before Lama Norbu
breaks into a hearty laugh.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

But from the expression on your
faces I can see I teach too
much!...

DEAN

(deadpan, whisper to
Lisa)

Honey, I need a scotch.

LISA

(quietly)

So do I.

But as she starts to rise, Lama Norbu becomes suddenly
serious again:

LAMA NORBU

Now I must explain our mission.

He murmurs a few words in Tibetan to Kenpo Tenzin, who is
sitting on a chair just behind him, then begins:

Lisa glances helplessly at Dean (she can't leave now) and
sits back again:

LAMA NORBU

We are Buddhists from Tibet.
For many years we have been in
exile -- the guests of our
brothers in Bhutan and Nepal
and India.

He pauses, takes a breath, then continues while the other
two Monks accompany his words with confirmatory nods.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

It is the practise of Buddhism
which keeps the spirit of the
Tibetan people alive...In
Tibetan Buddhism we believe
that everything is re-born
forever...

(CONTINUED)

LAMA NORBU(CONT)

...but that a few very
enlightened beings, who could
escape from this endless cycle
of death and rebirth, and reach
Nirvana, decide voluntarily
after death to help the others.
We believe they come back...as
particular people. And this is
our mission.

Dean and Lisa stare at him in silence, not sure what to
say anymore. Lama Norbu glances off down the corridor --
and notices a long-nosed (home made) papier mache mask
peering out from a half-open door -- like a red rat...

DEAN

(leans forward)

You're here to find someone?

LAMA NORBU

My teacher, Lama Dorje.

LISA

(leans forward)

Jesse? Is that you?

A small masked figure (Jesse) appears at the corner of
the corridor.

LISA

Come and say hello.

Dean registers the intense expressions of the three
Tibetans as they watch Jesse venture into the room...and
stop in front of Lama Norbu, staring at him from behind
his funny red mask.

LISA

This is Lama Norbu, darling.
And you've already met Kenpo
Tenzin...

Jesse lifts up his mask, looks at Kenpo Tenzin, then back
at Lama Norbu -- and pulls on his ear in his habitual
way...

JESSE

Why don't you wear your shoes?

LAMA NORBU

(smiles)

It's an old habit.

He looks down at Jesse's feet -- who is only wearing socks.

JESSE
(pulls his mask down again)
Do you like my mask?

LAMA NORBU
In my country, we love masks.

Whereupon Jesse looks suddenly round, as if he'd heard something -- and races off. The three Tibetans look at each other in surprise -- as do Dean and Lisa.

16 INT. FRONT HALL. DAY

Jesse runs down the stairs -- races to the front door -- pulling off his mask -- and flings it open -- just in time to catch Chompa, pointing his finger, about to ring the bell...

JESSE
Hi!...I'm Jesse.

Chompa stares at him in surprise -- then bows. He is holding three packages in his arms (two wrapped in cloth, one in paper).

17 INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Dean and Lisa stare incredulously as Jesse returns -- followed by yet another shaven-headed, maroon-robed Tibetan Monk.

JESSE
This is Chompa!

LAMA NORBU
(from the floor)
Ah, Chompa, you have woken up!
These are Jesse's parents -
Dean and Lisa.

Dean and Lisa stand up politely. Chompa bows to them, clutching his packages and staring at the room -- the first Western living room he has ever seen.

LAMA NORBU
(to the parents)
Please excuse us. Chompa was very tired. He arrived with me this afternoon. It was a very long flight...

Dean and Lisa stare at him in amazement. Chompa lays the packages on the coffee table in front of them.

DEAN

You mean you arrived today?
From Bhutan? And came straight
here?

Chompa sits down on the floor behind Lama Norbu --

LAMA NORBU

(slight bow)

Yes.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

(another half-bow)

These are for you.

He pushes two of the gifts towards them, keeping the third by his side. Dean and Lisa look at each other...and sit slowly down again...taking in fully for the first time that they and Jesse are the targeted goal of this Tibetan's entire expedition...It's a situation which they don't know how to take -- especially with Jesse standing there beside them, watching with wide-eyed interest.

JESSE

Why are they giving you
presents, Mom?

Lisa doesn't reply. Silently, she and Dean begin to open the packages...A beautiful bronze bell for Lisa and an old bronze Dorje for Dean (a kind of small sceptre).

LAMA NORBU

The bell represents the silence
of time...and the dorje is a
thunderbolt...

DEAN

(grave)

Thank you. It's beautiful.

He hands the dorje to Jesse, who looks at it, fascinated.

DEAN(cont)

Jesse? Could you go to the
kitchen please and get one
glass, three lumps of ice, and
the bottle of whisky? And
also?....

He looks questioningly at the others.

LISA

Tea! Boil the water and bring
some teabags and some cups for
our friends -- and -- and milk!
You can use the trolley.

JESSE

(feels important)
I know how to do it, Mom!

As he puts down the dorje and runs off:

DEAN

(calls after him)
But be careful with it, eh?
Take your time!

Jesse disappears through some swing doors at the end of
the room.

Silence.

The Tibetan Monks are all smiling...

LAMA NORBU

I will explain. I was the
pupil of a very great Lama -- a
truly holy man. Lama Dorje.
He was one of our greatest
teachers. He was even a
teacher of the Dalai Lama.
Towards the end of his life he
believed it was important to
spread the Dharma to the West -
- so he came here... where he
died eight years ago. We have
been searching for his
reincarnation. And now we think
he might have been reborn as
your son.

LISA

Jesse?...

She and Dean look completely stunned...

18 INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Jesse is working at a feverishly fast pace, doing
everything at the same time: ice in the glass, fridge
door shut behind him with his foot, trolley half set
already, water beginning to boil, biscuit box opened,
more plates and cups, a fistful of tea-leaves, and then

up onto a stool to pour the hot water into the tea-pot...
Worthy of the Keystone Cops.

19 INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

DEAN
(with a disbelieving
smile)
Let me understand this clearly.
You think that our son Jesse
could be the actual
reincarnation of your Tibetan
teacher?

The Tibetans keep smiling at him, with imperturbable good
humour.

LAMA NORBU
Yes. Please do not be angry.

DEAN
Well...
(he has to laugh)
That is fantastic...
(after a pause)
It's the most unbelievable
thing I ever heard.

LAMA NORBU
Of course we are not sure, yet.
It is very difficult to know.
(he smiles)
Almost as difficult as it is to
understand...

At which moment the kitchen doors fly open with a BUMP
and Jesse re-appears triumphantly pushing the loaded
trolley -- but going much too fast.

JESSE
Mom! I made real tea! And I
poured the cups!

LISA
(shouts)
Oh God, Jesse! Look out!

Too late. As the wheels hit the edge of the carpet the
trolley tips forward and half the contents crash onto the
ground.

CLOSE UP: SLOW MOTION (SFX): Tea in mid-air spills out
from one of the cups.

Dean and Lisa jump up:

DEAN
For God's sake Jesse! I told
you, be careful!

JESSE
I'm sorry.

LISA
I'll get a cloth!

As she runs out into the kitchen everyone stares at the white carpet - strewn with biscuits, saucers, ice cubes, a bottle of scotch...

JESSE
(again, miserable)
I'm sorry...

Lama Norbu hasn't moved a muscle, but seen the incident very clearly, very strangely -- as even Dean begins to notice -- nothing is actually broken and there is hardly a stain on the carpet...

As Lisa hurries back with a cloth and a sponge:

DEAN
It's okay, darling -- it's not
bad.

He looks at Jesse, and ruffles his hair.

DEAN(cont)
A lesson in cause and effect.

The Tibetans laugh appreciatively. As everyone helps to pick things up:

LAMA NORBU
(still seated)
But a very rare one.

He is looking at one of the cups, which has fallen almost in front of him. The cup is resting on its side on the edge of a saucer -- into which the tea has spilt, almost filling the saucer but with hardly a drop having fallen on the carpet...

Lama Norbu picks up the empty cup and glances at the tea-leaves inside. Carefully he drinks the tea from the saucer...then sets it back on the trolley with the cup.

It is growing dark outside.

LISA
I'm so sorry - I really am.

LAMA NORBU
(standing up)
No, no. It was a great honour
to visit you. But now we must
leave.

He puts on his shoes again -- then hands Jesse the third
package (it looks like a book wrapped in paper).

LAMA NORBU(cont)
This is for you.

Jesse stands there, pulling on his ear...

JESSE
(thinks Norbu is great)
Are we going to see you again?

LAMA NORBU
I hope so, certainly.

JESSE
You should see the monorail --
(turning)
Shouldn't they, Dad? I'll show
you the monorail!

LAMA NORBU
That would be very kind. But
it depends on your parents, I
think.

He, Jesse and the other Tibetans turn to Dean and Lisa,
awaiting their decision.

JESSE
I haven't got school tomorrow,
Mom!

The two parents look a bit trapped...How can they refuse?

DEAN
Sure, Jesse, you can show them
round.

Lisa smiles, pleased at the decision.

LAMA NORBU
(bows to Jesse)
Then you will be my guide.

Everyone except Jesse understands the double-meaning of his words.

20 INT. FRONT HALL. EVENING

Jesse and Lisa stand at the door watching the Tibetans leave. Lisa closes the door. Jesse looks at his package, then opens it. A children's book called "Prince Siddhartha" about Buddha's childhood.

JESSE

Look, Mom!...

Lisa looks at him and smiles.

21 INT LIVING ROOM. EVENING

Night has fallen and the room is in semi-darkness. Dean has drawn up a chair to the plate glass window where he sits, slumped in thought, staring at the twinkling lights of Seattle. Again we notice how exhausted he looks.

Lisa comes up behind him, gently extracts the tumbler of whisky from his hand -- and takes a big gulp. Dean watches her with a wry, tired smile, then glances over his shoulder:

DEAN

Where's Lama Dorje?

LISA

(smiles)

Running a bath.

She takes a second gulp.

LISA(cont)

Wow...It's like science fiction.

DEAN

Yeah...Amazing. At least they didn't tell us Jesse was the result of an immaculate conception.

He gets up and pours himself another whisky. Lisa watches him, then stares out of the window.

LISA

I think it's a nice idea -- re-incarnation. I wouldn't mind coming back. Seeing the places I like again, the people I love...

DEAN

(returning)

Suppose you came back as an ant?

LISA

What's wrong with an ant? Lots of group activity...

DEAN

(twists his shoe into the carpet)

You can get squashed.

LISA

People get squashed too.

DEAN

(stares quietly into his glass)

Yeah...That's a fact...

He sits down again, sips the whisky:

LISA

Dean -- what's the matter? Is something wrong?

DEAN

It's Evan...He's bankrupt.

LISA

(shocked)

Evan?...

She sits down on the edge of the sofa...

DEAN

I've worked with him for seven years...Designed three projects for him. He's my best friend...But the downtown centre -- my great building -- he can't sell a square foot of it. Not with the economy the way it is. I've never seen him like this. He's desperate.

Lisa reaches out, touches his hand...then gazes at the little bronze bell on the coffee table in front of her.

LISA

(quietly)

What's going to happen, then?

DEAN

I don't know...Except things could get very tough for us too...I don't know if I'll be able to finish paying for the house.

LISA

So we'll be poor again.

(she smiles at him)

We can still be happy...

JESSE(VO)

(a distant shout)

Mom! I'm ready!

LISA

(calls back)

I'm coming, Jesse!

Dean and Lisa look at each other for a moment in silence. Lisa touches the Tibetan bell.

LISA

What shall we tell Jesse -- about the Tibetans, I mean?

DEAN

Oh...I think it's okay -- as long as they speak to us first.

JESSE(VO)

(another shout)

Mom!

LISA

(calling)

Yes!

She picks up the bell...

LISA(cont)

Maybe if you don't work so much you'll have more time with us?...

Dean looks at her lovingly. Lisa glances at him, then rings the bell once and puts it down.

22 INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Jesse sits in the bath looking at the pictures of Siddhartha in the book while Lisa soaps his back -- then removes the book and sets it on the floor nearby. After a moment:

JESSE

Mom? Where do those men come from?

LISA

They're Tibetans. But they live in Bhutan now.

JESSE

Where's that?

LISA

Oh, that's very far away. It's in the Himalayas.

JESSE

What are the Himalayas?

LISA

Ah, the Himalayas...they're the highest mountains in the world...Now let's check your toes.

Jesse falls silent while Lisa washes his toes...Then:

JESSE

Mom? Is Dad angry with me?

LISA

(loving)

Oh no, darling. He's not upset about you...

Another pause.

JESSE

Mom? I know how to disappear.

He holds his nose, lies back, and sinks under the surface.

23 INT. MONORAIL. SEATTLE. DAY

Jesse, Lama Norbu and Chompa are sitting in the front seat of the shuttle with Maria as a silent chaperone in the seat behind.

Through the front window they get an exciting view of tall glass tower blocks as they speed along the rail, suspended fifty feet above street level. Chompa hangs tightly onto the rail, looking slightly nervous.

JESSE

(points)

Look! That's the needle! It's the highest building on the west coast of America!

CHOMPA

Aren't we going too fast?

JESSE

(laughs)

This isn't fast! Wait till you go on a roller-coaster!

(he turns to Lama Norbu)

I know why you're here. You're looking for your teacher, aren't you?

LAMA NORBU

(looks faintly surprised, then smiles)

Yes. And red rats have very long ears...

JESSE

(looks away, then back at him)

What's your teacher's name?

LAMA NORBU

Lama Dorje...which means thunderbolt in Tibetan.

JESSE

Lama Thunderbolt?

LAMA NORBU

It was a good name for him. He had a very powerful mind, though he was also very funny. Always making jokes.

JESSE

What does he look like?

Lama Norbu produces an old leather wallet, and extracts a small picture of Lama Dorje wearing maroon robes, with the Himalayas in the background...Jesse stares at the photo, then looks shyly up:

JESSE

Does he smell funny like you?

Lama Norbu and Chompa burst out laughing:

LAMA NORBU

Ah, that must be the smell of yak butter. We use so much of it in our tea that the smell gets into our skin!

JESSE

What's a yak?

LAMA NORBU

It's a Tibetan cow -- like a buffalo with long hair.

Jesse studies the photograph again...

JESSE

I think you should go to the police if you want to find him.

LAMA NORBU

No...The police can't help us, I'm afraid. You see...Lama Dorje is dead.

JESSE

(amazed)

But...how can you find him if he's dead?

Lama Norbu looks at Jesse for a moment, wondering how to reply...

LAMA NORBU

It's difficult to explain...But we think he's been reborn.

JESSE

Like a ghost, you mean?

LAMA NORBU

No...As a child.

JESSE
 (stares at him)
 Could I be Lama Dorje?

LAMA NORBU
 You could be, yes...

Jesse looks away out of the side window of the monorail...After a moment:

JESSE
 (quietly)
 I think I am...
 (he turns back to
 Lama Norbu)
 I am Lama Dorje!

Lama Norbu and Chompa both chuckle.

LAMA NORBU
 Oh, we'll have to see about that...

JESSE
 Then why did you come to our house?

LAMA NORBU
 (stuck)
 You ask a lot of questions.

Maria, who has been sitting behind them, leans forward and whispers in Jesse's ear...

JESSE
 Yes, Maria! Yes!
 (to the Tibetans)
 I know where Buddha lives!

24 INT. SEATTLE MUSEUM. DAY

The great entrance hall is dominated by a huge stone ramp guarded by two enormous stone camels.

A noisy crowd of SCHOOL-CHILDREN is just coming down as Jesse, holding Lama Norbu by the hand, leads him, Chompa and Maria up to the main exhibition rooms on the floor above.

As they wind their way up through the crowd one of the kids (no great friend) recognises Jesse.

BOY

(about 12)

Hi, pig-face! Who're the cool
dudes?

Jesse throws him a look of withering disdain and
continues coolly on his way.

25 IN THE EMPTY HALL AT THE TOP

A beautiful statue of Buddha seated in the lotus
position, carved in grey stone, is set in front of the
window with downtown Seattle behind.

The little group halt in front of it and gaze quietly at
the serene expression on Buddha's face...

LAMA NORBU

Yes...

After a while:

JESSE

Was Buddha a God?

LAMA NORBU

No...He was a real person.

JESSE

Like Jesus?

LAMA NORBU

Yes -- quite a bit like Jesus.
Though he was born long
before...Two thousand five
hundred years ago...in a small
kingdom in Northern India...

As he speaks he strolls over to another stone carving, a
bas-relief standing nearby depicting a small elephant
suspended in mid-air over a bare-breasted woman lying on
a bed.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

There...That is his mother
Queen Maya...

Jesse stares wide-eyed at the bas-relief with Maria (also
very interested) standing behind him with Chompa.

JESSE

What is the elephant doing?

LAMA NORBU

Ah yes, the elephant...
According to the legend, Queen
Maya was asleep with her
husband King Suddhodhana...

DISSOLVE TO:

ANCIENT INDIA...

26 INT/EXT. PAVILION AND COURTYARD. NIGHT

SERVANTS lie asleep in alcoves in the deep recesses of a large courtyard (faintly reminiscent of the illustration in Jesse's book).

Nothing moves in the dense tropical heat...until the mysterious form of a small white elephant emerges from the shadows of an archway...

Silently, the baby elephant (no more than 5 foot high) approaches a covered pavilion in the centre of the courtyard -- where we discover a beautiful young woman, QUEEN MAYA, sleeping with her husband, KING SUDDHODHANA, on a large cradle-like bed on a raised platform.

The white elephant stands there for a moment beside the sleeping couple, then reaches out with its long trunk and touches the Queen's side...

Queen Maya, still asleep, touches her side at the same spot. She smiles softly -- then suddenly opens her eyes, wide awake, and sits up.

But the elephant has disappeared...as if into thin air.

As the Queen gazes round the courtyard, the King also wakes.

KING SUDDHODHANA

What is it?

QUEEN MAYA

I had a dream...A white
elephant...standing just here
...It was so strange...It
touched me.

KING SUDDHODHANA

Were you frightened?

Queen Maya shakes her head and stretches out again beside her husband.

QUEEN MAYA

No. It was like...a blessing.

King Suddhodhana smiles and strokes her face, then kisses her. Queen Maya's arms enfold him in an embrace...

27 EXT. DUST ROAD. ANCIENT INDIA. DAY

A small caravan consisting of a few FOOTSOLDIERS and a retinue of HANDMAIDS, accompanies a large covered cart with wooden wheels drawn by two black water buffalos.

They are moving through a landscape of tall savannah grass dotted with small clumps of thick forest. The pre-monsoon air is hot and still.

LAMA NORBU(VO)

Ten months after her dream,
Queen Maya was expecting the
arrival of her first child...

INSIDE THE COVERED CART

Queen Maya, fully pregnant, lies on a bed of silk pillows, breathing heavily, her eyes closed, while a Handmaid soothes her brow with a damp cloth and another one gently rubs her swollen belly with oil.

LAMA NORBU(VO)(cont)

Now, as was the custom in those
days, she was returning to her
parents' home to give birth...

As the cart bumps over the rutted road, the Queen moans, her body seized with labour pains. She opens her eyes and grips her Handmaid by the arm...

The Handmaid, looking worried, calls for a halt...and the cart comes to a stop.

Queen Maya, now in labour, is helped slowly down by her Handmaids.

Then, sweating, and biting her lip with pain, but making no sound and refusing any further help, she walks unsteadily, but alone into the grass towards a small wood.

Her Handmaids follow at a discreet distance.

28 EXT. SMALL WOOD. DAY

Shafts of light spill through the thick twisted branches above, the only sounds sudden bursts of bird-call, the screech of a monkey...

Queen Maya, holding her stomach in pain, stops beneath a canopy of thick vegetation -- roots, branches and leaves twisted together into a kind of green cave.

The time of birth is near. The teeming chattering sounds of the forest suddenly cease. Every plant, every leaf seems magically suspended, as if poised in witness...

Then a soft breeze rustles through the branches -- and one of them bends gently down towards the Queen (SFX), until it is low enough for her to grip with both hands...

Standing upright, gripping the branch, with tears in her eyes but almost smiling and without a sound, Queen Maya begins to give birth...

SOME WHILE LATER...

The newborn Baby is being bathed under the tree by the two Handmaids while Queen Maya, resting on the ground nearby, looks on with a beatific smile.

Suddenly, the Baby (who is unusually big, almost like a one year-old) slips out of their hands, and to their complete astonishment, standing on his own two legs, takes seven little steps towards his mother.

From each of his footprints springs a lotus flower...and then the Baby begins to speak (SFX):

BABY

(to camera)

I have been born to reach
enlightenment and free all
creatures from suffering. This
is my last re-incarnation.

29 EXT. FOOD STAND. DOWNTOWN SEATTLE. DAY

The MAN behind the stand hands out doughnuts to Maria who gives them to Jesse, who passes them to Chompa and Lama Norbu.

As the Tibetans examine the unfamiliar shape, Jesse holds his up to one eye and squints at them through the hole in the middle.

The Tibetans copy him....

JESSE
Agent Cooper's favourite food.

CHOMPA
Agent Cooper?

Jesse swings round, looking through the doughnut at a new green glass building across the road, opposite the museum. The Tibetans do the same.

JESSE
(proud)
My Dad designed that building!
He dug a huge hole in the
ground, as big as the building,
and at the end he put the green
dome on the top!

He takes a huge bite from the doughnut, then turns to Maria and whispers in her ear.

30 EXT. GREEN SKYSCRAPER. DAY

Jesse and the two Tibetan Monks stand with their faces pressed to the smoky plate-glass windows of the ground floor -- peering into a huge unoccupied office space.

Meanwhile, in front of the closed main entrance, Maria negotiates with a reluctant but sympathetic-looking GUARD...who finally gives in, calls to Jesse, and leads the group inside through a revolving door.

31 INT. LIFT. GREEN SKYSCRAPER. DAY

The temporary wall panels are made of plywood and the doors (not functioning yet) remain fixed open. The effect is like being in a huge chicken crate.

Jesse stands at the back with Lama Norbu and Chompa looking out past Maria and the Guard as the lift moves up at half speed, revealing floor after floor of empty unoccupied space...

Suddenly, standing alone in the middle of one of them, Jesse glimpses the solitary figure of a MAN in a blue jacket.

JESSE
(calls out)

Evan!
(he looks up, smiling
at Lama Norbu)
That's Evan. He owns the
building!

Maria and the Guard exchange glances, but say nothing...

The lift slows down and stops at the top floor. The
Guard steps out.

GUARD
Okay, Jesse. Ten minutes.

32 INT. TOP FLOOR. GREEN SKYSCRAPER. DAY

Jesse leads the Tibetans out of the lift...and then races
off across the empty uncarpeted floor -- and out through
the curved green glass wall at the end onto the terrace
beyond.

Lama Norbu and Chompa follow behind at a slower pace,
gazing at the empty unfinished floor. Wires and cables
dangle from the uncovered ceiling.

33 EXT. HUGE TOP FLOOR TERRACE. GREEN SKYSCRAPER. DAY

Jesse peers over the rail at his ball of spit as it
plummets into space...Jesse quietly watches Lama Norbu
and Chompa as they come out and stare at the magnificent
surrounding view: tall skyscrapers on all sides with the
port of Seattle and the mountain-fringed bay beyond...

Lama Norbu points out the tallest skyscraper to Chompa.

LAMA NORBU
Mt. Everest.

CHOMPA
(points at another)
Anapurna.

As Maria and the Guard stroll out behind them...

34 INT. TOP FLOOR. GREEN SKYSCRAPER. DAY

Evan -- seen from behind -- steps into view and walks
with his hands in his pockets, quietly over to the green
windows from where he can hear and observe the others

without being seen...

35 EXT. TERRACE. GREEN SKYSCRAPER. DAY

Lama Norbu comes up to Jesse.

JESSE

(frowns)

But I don't understand, Lama.
How could the baby speak if he
was only just born?

LAMA NORBU

(smiles)

Oh...because that's the way the
story has always been told.
But in any case -- it is what
actually happened afterwards.

JESSE

What did? What happened after
he was born?

LAMA NORBU

Well...First of all they named
the child "Siddhartha", which
means "He-who-brings-good"...

DISSOLVE TO:

ANCIENT INDIA...

36 INT. ROYAL PAVILION. DAY

All the bedecked DIGNITARIES of the kingdom plus rows of
BRAHMAN PRIESTS stand gathered under the spreading roof
of a huge pavilion -- entirely constructed of bamboo --
which has been set up on the edge of a lake, dotted with
boats filled with people and brightly coloured umbrellas.

LAMA NORBU(VO) (cont)

One week after the birth they
gave a great reception to
present their son to the court.

All eyes are focused on the platform at the far end as
King Suddhodhana appears with Queen Maya holding
Siddhartha in her arms. Everyone bows.

The Royal couple take their place on two simple
thrones...and then the entire court gathers round and
files past smiling and bowing as they look at the child

on Queen Maya's lap.

LAMA NORBU(VO(cont)
And then, to everyone's
surprise, an unexpected guest
arrived...

Suddenly there is a commotion at the back of the crowd
and an old SAGE with long white hair and a wooden stick
and a wooden bowl hanging from his waist comes into view
-- a figure of such austere authority that everyone steps
back to let him through...

LAMA NORBU(cont)
He was a revered hermit and
astrologer called Asita, whom
nobody had seen for years...

Asita reaches the throne and bows. The King stands up
in respect.

KING SUDDHODHANA
Welcome, Asita. You do us
honour by your visit.

Gently, he takes the baby from Queen Maya and passes him
to the old Sage.

As he holds him in his arms, Asita sees Siddhartha
differently from everyone else -- noticing signs
invisible to the others (SFX): a tuft of blond hair
between his eyebrows, the mark of a wheel on the ball of
his feet, thin membranes between his webbed fingers, a
round bump on the crown of his head, and his unusually
long earlobes...

Queen Maya, watching Asita, becomes alarmed at his
changed expression and by the tears in his eyes...She
reaches out for the King's arm.

Asita hands the baby back to her.

ASITA
Do not be alarmed, oh Queen.
Mine are only the tears of an
old man who knows he will not
live long enough to learn from
the teachings of your son.

KING SUDDHODHANA
Will he be a great king?

ASITA

(hesitates)

He will be the master of the world...or its redeemer.

KING SUDDHODHANA

(smiles)

When he is old, Asita, he can become a teacher like you if he wants. But first of all he must follow me and be a king.

ASITA

It may be as you wish, Suddhodhana. But the Gods often betray the wishes of mortal men.

King Suddhodhana regards the Sage with a quizzical expression...until Asita bows and turns away without another word.

Sadly, Queen Maya watches him leave, holding the baby tightly to her breast, and then closes her eyes...

LAMA NORBU(VO)

The Queen was filled with a strange sadness, as if she already knew that her own life would soon be over...And in fact, a week later, she was stricken with a terrible illness.

37 INT. QUEEN'S PAVILION. COURTYARD. EVENING

Queen Maya lies on her bed, pale and weak, on the verge of death. The baby rests close beside her. The only other figure is her young sister PRAJAPATI, kneeling by the bedside. The rest of the courtyard is shrouded from view by the drawn muslin curtains, though the hushed murmur of chanted prayers can just be heard.

QUEEN MAYA

(whispers)

Oh, Prajapati...my sister...
Care for him...as if he were
your son.

PRAJAPATI

(hoarse)

I swear...

With trembling hands, Queen Maya strokes Siddhartha's face once more, then tries to hand him to her sister -- but has no strength left...Prajapati picks him up for her...

Queen Maya looks upon them with a soft smile...until we realise that her eyes no longer see -- and she has passed away.

Prajapati hugs the baby tight and gives a single awful sob.

The guttering flame of an oil lamp beside the bed goes out.

38 EXT. TERRACE. GREEN SKYSCRAPER. LATE AFTERNOON

Jesse sits on a bench with Lama Norbu and Chompa, listening to the story and staring at the ground, twisting his hands...He looks upset.

JESSE
(quietly)

I don't like this story.

LAMA NORBU
(smiles gently)

But life is not all happiness.
That is what Siddhartha had
come to teach us. How to see
beyond life and death...

Jesse looks up at Maria who is standing some way off, with the Guard, leaning on the parapet, gazing at the view.

He jumps up and runs over to her, tugging at her sleeve.

JESSE
I want to go home, Maria.

39 INT. FIRST FLOOR. GREEN SKYSCRAPER. LATE AFTERNOON

Evan, who has been watching from behind the smoked glass windows, turns away -- and walks quickly out of shot...

As Jesse, Maria and the others come inside, he steps behind a column out of sight.

Everyone gets back into the lift...and then the lift sinks out of view.

40 INT. FRONT HALL. CARRAS HOME. EVENING

The front door opens. Jesse bobs his way inside, ahead of Maria, and runs on up the stairs.

41 INT. LIVING ROOM. CARRAS HOME. EVENING

Dean is in an armchair studying an architectural brief; Lisa is on the sofa correcting maths papers -- as Jesse comes racing in and throws his arms around her waist.

LISA

Hi, honey. What's up?

JESSE

(face in her lap)

Are you all right, Mom?

LISA

Me? I'm fine.

JESSE

(looks up)

If you die will you come back?

Dean lowers his brief...

LISA

(laughs)

What are you talking about?

I'm not going to die!

Dean observes them from the armchair...

LISA(cont)

How was Lama Norbu?

Jesse's strange mood has suddenly changed. He seems as happy as a lark.

JESSE

Oh -- he was great! I took them to see your building, Dad!

DEAN

You did what?

JESSE

It was all shut, Dad -- but Maria got us in!

MARIA
(appears in the distance)
Jesse!

JESSE
Coming!

He seizes the Tibetan bell from the coffee table and runs off down the corridor ringing it as loud as he can.

LISA
(to Dean)
Why are you looking at me like that?

DEAN
Like what?

LISA
Like you never saw me before.

DEAN
(wry smile)
It's my "Tibetan" look.

As he gets up Jesse runs back through the swing doors of the kitchen.

JESSE
And Dad? Lama Dorje means Lama Thunderbolt! And Bhutan is the Land of the Thunder Dragon! And I want to go there!

He lifts his arms and contorts his face, pretending to be a dragon, then vanishes back into the kitchen...

LISA
(faint smile)
What do you mean, your "Tibetan look"?

DEAN
I mean this is all fine, but how far do we want to go with it?

Lisa shrugs with mock innocence...

DEAN(cont)
The "re-incarnation" of Jesse Carras? You know your son, don't you?

(CONTINUED)

DEAN (CONT)

You know what kind of an
outsize imagination he's got.
Well, he's going to get
confused. Or isn't he? And
upset. I tell you -- soon he's
going to start thinking he is
Lama Dorje!

(Lisa is staring at
him...)

That's meant to be a joke.

LISA

(smiles)

Well...maybe. But how often
does a little boy from Seattle
get to learn about another
world like this? It's like a
fairy tale come true.

DEAN

Except that it's not true, is
it? It's a load of medieval
superstition. I don't believe
in "re-incarnation", Lisa. Not
like this, anyway. "Coming
back" as a specific person.
And neither do you.

(a double-take)

Or do you?

LISA

(quietly)

No.

DEAN

So?

Lisa stares at the numbers in one of the maths exercise
books:

LISA

So we don't know much about
anything -- and nothing about
the most important things of
all.

(she looks up, smiles
brightly)

And that's interesting.

DEAN

(sighs, tired)

I've got to call Evan.

He walks out.

42 INT/EXT. SAAB. SEATTLE STREETS. DAY

Lisa drives while Jesse peers at a map and issues directions.

JESSE

Left. No, right! I mean left!

LISA

(exasperated)

Which way, Jesse?

JESSE

Left. First left...yeah...and then the next right...

As they turn another corner:

LISA

There it is! The Dharma Centre...

They park near a white church building now in the process of being converted into a Buddhist centre. As they climb out we see that Jesse is carrying his book about Siddhartha.

JESSE

What does Dharma mean, Mom?

LISA

I think it means "the way" -- or something.

They go up the front steps.

43 INT. DHARMA CENTRE. DAY

At the far end of a vaulted two-storey room, formerly the church, two TIBETAN PAINTERS perched on scaffolding work on a huge painting of the Buddha, murmuring low prayers as they carefully fill in the intricate details.

As Jesse and Lisa stop to watch, Chompa appears from a side room -- wearing jeans and a T-shirt.

As he makes a respectful bow:

JESSE

Hi...

(he tugs on his earlobe)
You look different in jeans!

CHOMPA

(laughs)

Not all monks have to wear robes. It depends on your vows.

LISA

(changing the subject)
Was this a church before?

CHOMPA

Oh, yes. It still is a church -- in a way.

Lisa -- interested -- points at the Painters who are still chanting.

LISA

What are they singing?

CHOMPA

That is the Heart Sutra. It is our most famous prayer...

They draw closer to the Painters...

CHOMPA(cont)

(translating quietly)

"Form is emptiness, emptiness is form;

(he hesitates)

All things are emptiness, not born,
not destroyed,
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
No colour, sound, smell, taste, touch,
thing..."

(he laughs)

It is difficult to translate so quickly...

LISA

(quietly)

It's beautiful...

JESSE

Is Lama Norbu here?

CHOMPA

He is waiting for you.

As they turn away:

LISA
(to Chompa)
I'll leave Jesse with you,
then.

Chompa bows to her.

LISA(cont)
Bye, honey. Dad will pick you
up at four, okay?

JESSE
Bye, mom.

Lisa watches as Jesse with the book under his arm, walks happily off, holding Chompa's hand and disappears through a door at the back...she remains alone for a moment listening to the chant of the Heart Sutra.

44 INT. CORRIDOR. DHARMA CENTRE. DAY

Jesse follows Chompa through the centre past open doors giving onto a prayer room, day room, kitchen; a few Monks, young MEN and WOMEN, a couple of small KIDS...

Chompa stops in front of a blue door and knocks quietly. When there is no answer he opens the door carefully and peers in.

45 INT. LAMA NORBU'S ROOM. DHARMA CENTRE. DAY

Lama Norbu sits cross-legged on his bed, his head slumped forward, a rosary twisted in his hands.

The room is austere: a dresser and a simple altar in one corner, hosting a single butter lamp and framed picture.

Suddenly concerned by Lama Norbu's complete immobility, Chompa comes quietly in and goes over to see if he's breathing...

Lama Norbu opens his eyes, immediately alert. Chompa steps back.

CHOMPA
Excuse me, Rinpoche, I
thought...

LAMA NORBU

(laughs)

One day, Chompa, but not yet.

He smiles at Jesse, who is watching shyly from the doorway, pulling on his ear.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

Come in, Jesse...

Jesse steps inside, holding his book, and gazes round... He points at the picture:

JESSE

Is that Lama Thunderbolt?

Lama Norbu nods, then watches (with Chompa) as Jesse stops beside a little table under the window. Near a thermos and some tea cups are four wooden offering bowls...

JESSE

Asita had a bowl like this, didn't he?

LAMA NORBU

(quietly)

Yes...

Jesse picks up the oldest-looking one -- the one the Mountain Yogi had given Lama Norbu the day he left.

JESSE

It's dusty...

Lama Norbu and Chompa seem transfixed. Jesse blows into the bowl, shines it with his elbow, and puts it back -- then goes over to the altar.

A subtle display of emotions on the old Lama's face, a mixture of joy and exhaustion. He eases himself off the bed, goes up to Jesse and gently lays his hand on his shoulder.

Jesse, unaware of the effect he has had, picks up a strange-looking instrument made of bone and silver.

JESSE

What's this?

LAMA NORBU

It's a trumpet -- made from a human bone...

JESSE
 (deeply impressed)
 Honest?...A human bone?....

CHOMPA
 Is it "cool"?

JESSE
 Yeah...it's cool!

He laughs and blows on the trumpet -- producing a strange blast.

Lama Norbu takes the book from under Jesse's arm.

LAMA NORBU
 Did you read some more?

He sits back down on the bed.

JESSE
 I read about Siddhartha growing up! And his father built him a palace of his own! Three palaces! And...and he became a great rider, and a great archer and...

He hops onto the bed beside Lama Norbu, while Chompa sits down cross-legged on the floor.

JESSE(cont)
 And he just had a great time!

Lama Norbu smiles as he leafs through the pages of the book...Pictures of Queen Maya, Asita with his bowl -- and then of Siddhartha as a young man with black shoulder-length hair on a white horse with a courtier beside him blowing a silver trumpet.

Jesse blows on Lama Norbu's trumpet again, copying the picture.

ANCIENT INDIA...

46 EXT. SUMMER PALACE. DAY

The COURTIER blows his trumpet -- and they're off! -- six horses -- six riders -- galloping bareback down a straight dirt track...

Half way along there are six low posts with six eggs balanced on top.

As the Riders thunder past they have to lean down -- snatch up the eggs (without breaking them) -- and gallop on to the finishing line.

Then, CHEERED ON by a large group of laughing COURTIERs the Riders (before dismounting) have to set their eggs onto silver spoons, dismount and run on towards six YOUNG WOMEN, waiting at the finishing line with heads lifted and open mouths -- ready to catch the eggs (which survive) between their lips.

The winner (by a fraction) is Siddhartha -- and the woman is his beautiful young wife YASODHARA. She is very pregnant.

LAMA NORBU

Siddhartha was married to Princess Yasodhara. He had spent his whole life in his three palaces - one for winter, one for summer and one for the rainy season - protected from all knowledge of pain or worry.

The royal couple stroll away from the sports field, accompanied by their friends and courtiers -- all of them young, healthy, beautiful.

As they return to the main buildings through a lush tropical garden, Siddhartha pauses, puzzled by the sight of some YOUNG GARDENERS changing the flowers in a flower bed -- though the ones they remove look perfectly healthy.

SIDDHARTHA

(to the Gardeners)

Why are you changing the flowers?

The only reply he gets are bows and scrapes and smiles... Siddhartha laughs and shakes his head and moves on.

47 INT/EXT. OPEN AIR PAVILION. DAY

Siddhartha lies on a silk rug languishing against embroidered cushions while a graceful HAREM GIRL massages his feet with fragrant oils and ANOTHER refills his goblet with wine.

Yasodhara lies on a similar rug some feet away near a display of fruit and drink laid out on silver trays. A peacock walks by, trailing its long blue tail across the marble floor.

Around them, on different levels are all the thick curtains of a hanging garden, and a small complex of temples and pagodas.

A group of HAREM WOMEN recline under the shade of a palm tree nearby, drowsy from the intense summer heat. One of them, a lovely Tibetan Girl, plays on a lute and begins to sing. Siddhartha cocks his head, listening intently to the melancholy tune.

SIDDHARTHA

What is that song?

HAREM GIRL

(massaging his feet)

It is a song from a faraway land, my Lord...About the wonders and beauties of countries she saw as a child... the lakes and mountains she can never forget.

SIDDHARTHA

How strange. Do such places exist?

(he sits up)

Places as beautiful as here?

(he stares round)

I have never wanted to go outside...

YASODHARA

I have heard that only suffering lies beyond these walls.

SIDDHARTHA

(puzzled)

What is suffering?

YASODHARA

(hesitates)

...Your father loves you very much. He's given us everything we could want...There is no need to go anywhere else when you have such beauty around you.

Siddhartha rises and goes to the parapet from where he can see the Girl singing the song of the Faraway Lands...

LAMA NORBU(VO)
 It was true. Everything around
 him was perfect...but for the
 first time Siddhartha was no
 longer satisfied.

A peacock spreads its huge and gorgeous tail...filling
 the screen with blue and gold.

48 INT. LAMA NORBU'S BEDROOM. DHARMA CENTRE. SEATTLE. DAY

Jesse is still sitting on the bed beside the old Lama,
 reading the book with him, while Chompa sits cross-legged
 on the floor.

LAMA NORBU(cont)
 He was determined to look
 outside and see the beauties of
 the world for himself...At
 least his own city.

JESSE
 And then what happened? Go on,
 Lama, please!

He turns the page -- to a picture of King Suddhodhana on
 his throne, deep in thought, surrounded by his Ministers.

LAMA NORBU
 (sighs and goes on)
 Well...King Suddhodhana was
 worried that if his son saw
 what life was really like
 outside, he might lose interest
 in being a king...But when
 Siddhartha insisted he finally
 agreed. Secretly, however, he
 prepared everything in
 advance -- so that nothing
 Siddhartha saw in the city
 would disturb him. And
 finally, the great day
 arrived...

Jesse blows the trumpet again. Lama Norbu turns the
 page:

ANCIENT INDIA

49 EXT. PALACE GATES. KAPILAVASTU. DAY

Watched by the King and his Ministers Siddhartha, bare to
 the waist, with a gold chain around his neck, waits on

his chariot drawn by his white horse KANTAKA, with CHANNA, his loyal charioteer beside him wearing a plain red cloak.

As drums BEAT and trumpets BLARE, SOLDIERS open the gates...and Siddhartha rides out looking like Apollo.

50 EXT. MAIN SQUARE. KAPILAVASTU. DAY

It seems as if the entire Kingdom has turned out to greet the Prince. From the rooftops thousands of flags and banners hang over the street below where throngs of colorfully dressed people, unable to control their enthusiasm, press forward into the street, barely contained by the phalanx of uniformed GUARDS.

Others lean from balconies or hang out of windows.

A great roar goes up from the Crowd as Siddhartha appears on his chariot. The ground is strewn with freshly cut flower petals. Clouds of red powder thrown from the roofs descend over the Crowd as they press forward, singing and shouting.

Siddhartha gazes round, ecstatic at seeing the world for the first time -- a world so full of joy and colour.

But as he looks closer, he can see certain signs that betray the perfection: too many Guards, the Crowds too arranged, the smiles too fixed...

Then, as he rides slowly round he glimpses a white-haired MAN standing on a balcony. The Man's body is bent and crippled with age. His eyes are vacant. Two teeth are all that are left in his wrinkled face.

Siddhartha reins his chariot to a halt -- and points:

SIDDHARTHA

(to Channa)

Who is that man, Channa?

CHANNA

A man like the rest of us, my Lord -- who once sucked milk from his mother's breast.

SIDDHARTHA

But why does he look that way?
Why is his hair white?

CHANNA

He is old, my Lord...

SIDDHARTHA

What do you mean, "old"?

Hurriedly, the Old Man is dragged out of sight by two GUARDS.

CHANNA

Old age destroys memory, beauty and strength. In the end, it happens to us all, my Lord.

SIDDHARTHA

(very distressed)

To everyone?

CHANNA

It is better not to concern yourself with these things, my Lord.

SIDDHARTHA

Why? What are you saying?

Suddenly, he jumps down from the chariot, pulls the cloak off Channa's shoulders, covers himself up with it, (including his head) -- and plunges into the sweaty crush of Celebrants looking for the Old Man.

Channa -- taken by surprise -- hands the reins of the chariot to a Soldier and rushes after him.

A line of Guards pushes back the Crowd as they press after Siddhartha, who finally makes his escape down a narrow alleyway.

51 EXT. LARGE SQUARE. DAY

The noise of the crowd has faded into the distance. As Siddhartha (disguised by the cloak) enters the square with Channa, he finds himself confronted by a different world. As if unaware of the festivities only a few streets away, the people here go about their daily business, forking straw into huge bales, washing under a crude fountain, making pottery on an outdoor kiln -- and quite a few of them are old.

Siddhartha stares at them -- then hears the low moans of someone racked with pain coming from a nearby house.

Through the half-open door, he peers in at an OLD WOMAN, her face ravaged with leprosy, coughing horribly.

SIDDHARTHA

(frightened)

What's the matter with that woman? Why is she crying like that?

CHANNA

(hushed)

She is in pain, my Lord. She is very sick.

Siddhartha glances at him -- and then into the long dark room beyond -- a kind of Hospice -- with twenty or so very ill people lying on beds in the semi-darkness...

SIDDHARTHA

What is sickness? I have never heard that word before.

CHANNA

Perhaps it is better not to know such a word.

SIDDHARTHA

Tell me Channa! I command you!

Channa hesitates...but finally cannot refuse.

CHANNA

Sickness is a misfortune common to all creatures. No one reaches the moment of death without falling ill at least once.

SIDDHARTHA

And death? What is death?...

Channa stares dumbly at his Master, shaking his head, unable to speak. Siddhartha seizes him by the shoulders, shaking him.

SIDDHARTHA(cont)

Show me, Channa! It is too late to go back! Show me death!

52 EXT. CREMATION GROUND. SUNSET

Channa and Siddhartha, (still disguised by the cloak), approach the cremation grounds of the city -- and see the funeral pyre burning along the banks of the river.

Nearby, a body wrapped in white cloth waits on a wooden platform covered with sticks and branches, like the nest

of a giant bird. As it is carried away towards one of the burning pyres -- and thrown onto the flames -- it is followed by a parade of grieving RELATIVES.

CHANNA

The moment of separation comes
to every person, in every
family. When a body grows cold
and stiff like wood, then it
has to be burned like wood.

Siddhartha is reduced to silence, profoundly moved. Slowly he walks to the edge of the river, where the celebrations of life and death seem to be inextricably mixed, as entire families, Widows, Pilgrims and Priests wade in up to their waists intoning their evening prayers.

Caressing the river with their hands, the Worshippers launch flower petals and lighted candles set on little paper trays into the holy current, watching with total absorption as their tiny armadas of light slide into the gathering darkness.

53 EXT. KING SUDDODHANA'S APARTMENTS. SUNSET

Siddhartha strides through an arched doorway, surrounded by intricately carved columns, into a small courtyard. In front of him, through rising vapors of steam, he can see King Suddhodana sitting in a round pool, having his shoulders rubbed by two young CONCUBINES.

As Siddhartha stands in front of his father, his eyes still blaze with the passion of his discovery.

SIDDHARTHA

Oh, my father -- why have you
hidden the truth from me for so
long? Why have you lied to me
about the existence of sickness
and old age and death?

The King looks at his son -- and realises that in spite of all his efforts, the terrible moment he has tried to avoid has finally arrived. He waves the Concubines away and climbs out of the bath and puts on a robe...Finally:

KING SUDDHODHANA

(his voice shaking)

If I have lied to you, my son,
it has been because I love you.

SIDDHARTHA

Can love be dressed in lies?
How can I live as I lived
before -- when so many are
suffering outside? I must leave
this palace of illusions! I
must find an answer to suffering!

KING SUDDHODANA

Even if you betray me,
Siddhartha, have you no pity
for the wife you leave -- and
for your own son?

Siddhartha stares at him:

SIDDHARTHA

My son?

KING SUDDHODANA

Who was born this very evening?
Think of them!

Siddhartha turns his back, torn by conflicting
emotions...His father touches him on the shoulder:

KING SUDDHODANA(cont)

You cannot leave now!

After a moment:

SIDDHARTHA

Even my love for Yasodhara and
my son cannot remove the pain I
feel...For I know that they too
will have to grow old and die..
(he looks at his father
again)
Like you...like me...like us all.

KING SUDDHODANA

No man has ever escaped from
the Lord of Death, Siddhartha.

SIDDHARTHA

Then that is my task.

He turns on his heel and leaves. King Suddhodhana sees
himself in a huge polished silver mirror -- and throws it
to the floor.

KING SUDDODHANA

(shouts)

Guard! Guard!

A uniformed OFFICER races in and kneels before him.

KING SUDDHODHANA
Lock the gates! Double the
guard! Prince Siddhartha must
not be allowed to leave the palace!

54 EXT. LAMA NORBU'S BEDROOM. DHARMA CENTRE. SEATTLE. DAY

As Jesse turns another page of the book, he sees that Dean is standing in the doorway, leaning against the post, as if he had been listening for a while.

JESSE
Dad!

DEAN
(smiles)
Am I interrupting?

Chompa springs up and bows. Lama Norbu remains seated, but also bows.

LAMA NORBU
Of course not. Please, come
in. Sit down.

As Dean enters, Jesse runs over:

JESSE
Dad! Look at this trumpet!
It's made from a human bone!

Dean looks at it appreciatively.

DEAN
Amazing...
(he ruffles Jesse's hair)
And now I'd like to talk to
Lama Norbu alone for a few
minutes.

JESSE
Sure, Dad.

CHOMPA
Come! I will show you round
the centre.

He takes Jesse's hand and they go out. Dean sits down on a chair. Lama Norbu smiles and puts the book aside.

LAMA NORBU
I was just telling Jesse the
story of Siddhartha.

DEAN
(sincere)
It's a beautiful story -- A
beautiful myth...

He is trying to say what he feels.

LAMA NORBU
(with equal sincerity)
It is a way of telling the
truth. Children seem to love it.

A pause.

DEAN
Lama Norbu...I have a great
respect for your religion, your
culture...I know about the
invasion of Tibet -- the
tragedy that happened; I...

LAMA NORBU
(calmly)
But you are frightened.

DEAN
(laughs)
I am -- in a way...I mean I
don't want to be like
Siddhartha's father. To
"protect" Jesse from the world...

LAMA NORBU
It is natural to protect the
people you love.

DEAN
Lama Norbu, I don't believe in
reincarnation. And neither
does my wife.

LAMA NORBU
(smiles)
Why should you?! According to
the Buddha you shouldn't
believe in anything -- unless
you test it like gold. Would
you like some tea?

Dean shakes his head. Lama Norbu gets up off the bed and

goes over to the table and pours himself a little from the thermos.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

In Tibet we think of the mind
and the body like the contents
and the container.

He returns to his place on the bed, holding a cup and a small flannel, resumes his cross-legged position, and then calmly knocks the cup on the table -- breaking it in two. Dean doesn't move.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

The cup is no longer a cup, but
what is the tea?

They watch as the tea spreads out on the table, then flows off the edge, and finally forms a small puddle on the floor.

DEAN

(dry smile)

It's still tea.

LAMA NORBU

Exactly. In the cup, on the table, or on the floor -- it's still tea. Like the mind after death; it moves from one container to another, but it is still mind.

He leans down, wipes up the puddle with the flannel, then holds it up.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

Even in the flannel it is the same tea!

Dean smiles -- he likes this old Lama but he's still completely sceptical. He looks over at the picture.

LAMA NORBU

At the end of his life, Lama Dorje came to the west. Many were against it. But he persevered. He felt the Dharma should be spread through the world. This, perhaps, is the spiritual purpose of Tibet's exile. He died in this room, seven years ago.

(CONTINUED)

LAMA NORBU (CONT)

(Dean looks at him in surprise)
Because of his life we thought
it quite believable that he
would choose to be reborn in
the west.

DEAN

You can choose how you are re-born?

LAMA NORBU

A great spirit -- yes.
(he laughs)
But it is still very hard for
us to find him!

DEAN

And suppose you do? What
happens to that person in your
tradition, if you do?

LAMA NORBU

There are no definite rules.
Normally the child would
receive a special education in
one of our great monasteries.
He could become a powerful
figure in our society -- a
spiritual leader.

DEAN

Even if he's a westerner?
(he shakes his head)
I mean, are you offering Jesse
a life in a Buddhist monastery?
Is that it?

LAMA NORBU

Of course! If you wanted it!
Or he could go on with his life
here -- and decide when he is
older. You see, all this is
almost as new to us as it is to
you. It is really very rare.
It is very funny too!

And he bursts into laughter. Dean can see that he is
completely sincere. And the two of them start laughing
together -- almost appreciating the gulf between them.

Then:

LAMA NORBU(cont)
(suddenly serious)

To be sure of the
reincarnation, we would have to
take Jesse to Bhutan -- to
consult the Abbot of the
monastery and other experts.

Dean stares at him incredulously.

LAMA NORBU(cont)
Now you look angry.

DEAN
Well, I could be! Taking
children from their families?
In this country we call it
kidnapping!

Suddenly Jesse runs into the room, pretending he's riding
a motorcycle.

JESSE
Vroooooom! Vroooooom! Special
delivery for Lama Norbu!

He hands a telegram to Lama Norbu, then rides his
imaginary motorcycle around Dean's chair and out of the
room.

LAMA NORBU
We would hope that you and your
wife would come with him.

DEAN
To Bhutan?

LAMA NORBU
(opening the telegram)
It is a very beautiful country.

Quickly he reads the telegram, looks surprised, then
resigned.

LAMA NORBU(cont)
Though perhaps the problem
won't exist. It seems our
search has been complicated by
the appearance of another
"candidate". A little boy
living in Khatmandu.

DEAN
Well...He has my total support.

DEAN(CONT)

(he stands up)

Lama Norbu, I think you should go back to your world and let us stay here in ours -- where I've got enough troubles as it is.

Suddenly Jesse re-appears in the doorway. He has obviously been listening.

JESSE

Are there lots of us, Lama Norbu? How many are there? I want to meet them!

DEAN

(angry)

Come on, Jesse! It's time to go.

He picks Jesse up in his arms.

LAMA NORBU

Your book, Jesse Long-Ears.

He hands it to him and smiles.

DEAN

Goodbye, Lama Norbu.

He leaves the room, carrying Jesse. Lama Norbu remains alone, pensively winding his old wrist-watch.

55 INT/EXT. WHITE SAAB. SEATTLE. DAY

Dean drives, lost in thought, Jesse beside him (in seat belt). They are on a highway skirting a residential area. After a moment:

JESSE

Dad? Is it always wrong to lie?

DEAN

I don't know. Perhaps.

Jesse looks out of the side window. Through the surrounding pine trees he can glimpse a bridge crossing the bay and the downtown skyscrapers.

JESSE

Dad? I liked it when you were Father Christmas.

DEAN
(pretends surprise)
Me?

JESSE
Dad! I know about Father
Christmas, for Crissakes!

DEAN
Oh yes? Since when?

Jesse shrugs.

DEAN(cont)
And just what do you "know"
about Father Christmas?

JESSE
(quietly)
I know who he is.

Dean suppresses a smile. Suddenly the car phone rings.
He picks it up.

DEAN
Hello?

A long silence.

DEAN(cont)
(shaken)
Evan?...I can't believe it.

Jesse watches him, realising that something awful has
happened.

DEAN(cont)
When?...How did it happen?...
San Francisco? God...I'll try
to catch a plane this evening.

He hangs up, stunned...staring out of the window at the
road ahead.

JESSE
(quietly)
What happened to Evan?

DEAN
(softly)
He had an accident.

A beat. Jesse sees tears appear in his father's eyes.

JESSE
Is Evan suffering?

Dean glances at his son, surprised by the word he used. He shakes his head...and pulls into the side lane and stops the car.

DEAN
Just a minute, Jesse.

Jesse watches his father get out of the car and walk up a bank and sit down on the grass in a state of shock.

The traffic keeps rolling past.

Jesse looks down, sees the book on the seat beside him...and opens it again.

56 INT. MAIN HALL. SIDDHARTHA'S PALACE. NIGHT

A MUSICIAN strums slowly on a sitar...a few dying notes before he falls asleep.

All around him in the cavernous hall, the entire COURT lies asleep already -- on the carpets, on carved benches and marble steps -- nobody awake.

Except for a single figure stepping carefully between the bodies: Handmaids, Dancers, Musicians, Servants...

He is Siddhartha, still wearing Channa's old cloak, and occasionally whispering his name aloud as he searches amongst the youthful sleeping crowd....A thread of saliva trickles from the slightly open mouth of a beautiful GIRL; a tambourine lies between the dark legs of another; a young man's head rests on a Girl's naked lap...their complete sensual abandonment is utterly innocent. They are the unconscious ones, blessed and trapped by dreams.

Siddhartha makes a mistake, touches a shoulder, goes on...until he finds Channa asleep on a step.

SIDDHARTHA
(shaking him)
Channa! Channa!
(Channa opens his eyes
sleepily)
Get Kantaka! Muffle his
hooves! Meet me at the first
gate! Go now!

Channa jumps up, confused but awake, and sees Siddhartha disappear in the dark.

57 INT. YASODHARA'S PAVILION. COURTYARD. NIGHT

Siddhartha enters the pavilion, past the sleeping Handmaids, and approaches the bed -- the same bed in which he was conceived and in which his mother died.

He finds his wife, Yasodhara, beautiful and asleep with a newborn baby asleep in her arms -- Siddhartha's son RAHVLA.

Siddhartha comes closer, longing to see his son's face...But as he circles round, Yasodhara shifts her arm -- and the baby's face is hidden from him.

Siddhartha looks at the two of them, torn with emotion, longing to touch them -- then turns his back and stares out over the parapet into the night.

The sky is filled with millions and millions of tiny stars.

Siddhartha walks away -- without looking back.

58 EXT. PALACE SQUARE. DAWN

Siddhartha finds Channa, holding Kantaka by the reins, waiting for him in the shadow of a temple facing the main gates. Kantaka's hooves have been wrapped in straw.

Between them and the gates there are three elephants, two of them asleep but one of them standing majestically -- the only other being awake in the Palace.

CHANNA

(whispers, amazed)

My Lord, only the Great
Elephant is awake!

SIDDHARTHA

(whispers)

The whole world is dreaming, Channa.

With Channa leading Kantaka behind him, Siddhartha walks quietly past the Elephants...and up to the palace GUARDS at the gate -- who are all sound asleep, snoring loudly. Reality has become like a dream.

And like someone in a dream, where what happens need only be imagined, Siddhartha pushes on the gate with his hand...and silently opens a door within the door -- and SEES into the empty city square beyond...

59 EXT. INDIAN COUNTRYSIDE. DAWN

Siddhartha is now riding Kantaka with Channa behind, holding onto him. The dust road, passing through tall savannah grass and clumps of thick forest, becomes increasingly familiar -- until we recognise the landscape of his mother's journey and of his own birth.

Without realising it, Siddhartha rides past the jungle grove where he was born -- where the branches still hang down to their roots.

60 EXT. THE EDGE OF A LARGE FOREST. DAY

The road gets narrower here as it enters the trees. Siddhartha reins to a halt. Ahead of him he can see a small fire with a strange group of half-naked MEN sitting round it, staring into the flames.

SIDDHARTHA

Who are they, Channa? Are they robbers?

CHANNA

No, my Lord. They are Ascetics.

SIDDHARTHA

And why are they so thin, and naked?

CHANNA

They have given up all the comforts of life, my Lord. They have sworn never to leave the forest until they have reached Enlightenment.

SIDDHARTHA

Then they are looking for the same thing as me...

He dismounts suddenly, his gaze fixed on the distant group of Ascetics. Channa gets down behind him, watching his back, waiting.

Siddhartha removes the gold chain from around his neck and unbuckles his sword and turns around.

SIDDHARTHA

Channa -- embrace my father and my wife and my child. Tell them I shall not return until I have overcome death and rebirth.

He hands his sword and belt and necklace to Channa, who is silently weeping.

SIDDHARTHA(cont)
Channa, I am doing this for everyone. I am looking for freedom.

He turns towards Kantaka, strokes his noble white face...and walks away. He never looks back; he never has; he never will again.

As he starts down the path a wandering BEGGAR appears from behind a tree, dressed in a few filthy rags.

BEGGAR
(holding out a bowl)
Oh Nobly Born, have mercy on a beggar who has nothing left.

SIDDHARTHA
(quietly, after a pause)
Give me your rags.

The Beggar stares in amazement as Siddhartha silently disrobes...holds out his clothes and his sandals...and accepts the Beggar's rags in return.

Without another word he enters the Forest.

61 EXT. FOREST. DAY

Siddhartha pauses deep inside the forest, surrounded by mysterious sounds and strange silhouettes: a deer, the bright flash of a parrot, a huge snake winding itself around a tree, the trumpeting of an elephant, a rhinoceros behind a bush. It is a dangerous place for an unarmed man.

AS NIGHT FALLS

Siddhartha approaches a river. He stops beside a tree and sits down and falls asleep, leaning against the trunk, lit by a single moonbeam...

THE SAME PLACE AT DAWN...

Siddhartha sits beneath the tree, his eyes closed in meditation.

In front of him are five strange-looking ASCETICS, sitting on the ground, fascinated by his beauty and concentration.

One of them wears cow horns on his head and has a tail stitched to the skin of his back. Another stands on all fours like a dog with his tongue hanging out. He is covered in mud. A third, covered with ash, is blindfolded, practising sightlessness. The Fourth has a long white beard; his fists have been closed for so long that his fingernails have grown through his hand and a plant grows between his fingers. The Fifth has a hole in his tongue threaded with string from which hangs a stone.

A dark cloud passes in front of the sun. A roll of monsoon THUNDER. Rain breaks through the canopy of leaves.

Before a drop can fall on Siddhartha, a huge COBRA rises up behind him and spreads its hood...protecting Siddhartha from the rain, which now falls in torrents.

The five Ascetics, drenched to the bone, stare in wonder as Siddhartha continues to meditate, not opening his eyes.

Then, as suddenly as it began, the rain stops. The Cobra sinks down and glides away. The forest is completely silent. Siddhartha opens his eyes.

Slowly the Ascetics prostrate themselves before him.

Siddhartha lifts his hands to his mouth, expressing a vow of silence. The five Ascetics repeat the same gesture, tacitly accepting the vow of silence.

DISSOLVE TO:

62 INT. JESSE'S BEDROOM. CARRAS HOME. SEATTLE. NIGHT

There is a huge National Geographic map of Tibet and Nepal and the Himalayas on the wall.

Jesse lies in bed with the reading lamp on, gazing at the map, though half asleep. The book on Siddhartha lies on the floor beside him.

There is a Meccano set on the table assembled into a drawbridge like London Bridge.

From downstairs we hear the sound of the front door opening -- and of his parents' voices.

Jesse falls asleep.

63 INT. FRONT HALL. CARRAS HOME. NIGHT

Dean and Lisa set down their one overnight bag and take off their coats as Maria joins them. Dean is dressed in a dark suit; Lisa in a black dress. They have just returned from Evan's funeral in San Francisco and are in a subdued mood.

MARIA
(helping with the coats)
I'm so sorry about Mr Evan, Mr Carras...I...

DEAN
(touched)
I know, Maria. Thank you.

LISA
Is Jesse all right?

MARIA
He read in his room all afternoon. He's asleep now.

LISA
Thanks, Maria...for staying and all.

MARIA
Can I get you something to eat?

DEAN
No...We've left the cab outside. He's waiting to take you home.

64 INT. JESSE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Dean and Lisa look tenderly in on Jesse who is fast asleep (or pretending to be).

Gently, Lisa tucks him up and turns off the bedside lamp.

As they go out, Jesse turns around and opens his eyes again and gazes at the map -- then falls truly asleep.

65 INT. DEAN AND LISA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Lisa comes in in a bathrobe and sits in front of the dresser, looking at her face in the mirror.

LISA
(light)

I've got a new wrinkle.

Behind her, Dean hangs up his jacket, pulls off his tie and sits down on the edge of the bed, deep in thought. He stands to undo his shoelaces.

DEAN
Lisa?...I've been thinking
about Jesse. I think maybe he
should go to Bhutan.

LISA
(turns around)
What?

DEAN
Go to Bhutan.

LISA
Dean, are you joking?

DEAN
No...It's just that I've
changed my mind about a lot of
things these last two days.

He slips off his shoes.

LISA
But what are you saying, Dean?
You haven't started to believe
that Jesse is a Tibetan Lama,
have you?

DEAN
(deadpan)
I thought you were the one who
was open to the idea.

LISA
(angrily)
Oh come on, Dean! It's crazy.

DEAN
(still joking)
Don't you think we could do
with some fresh blood in the
family?

LISA

Dean! Jesse can't go to Bhutan alone with a bunch of strangers! And I'm in the middle of term! He's never been away from me!

DEAN

(serious again)

I thought I could go.

Lisa stares at him.

LISA

Just the two of you? On your own?

Dean nods...

LISA(cont)

And what about me? I stay here alone?

Dean looks at her and tilts his head, asking for her agreement.

LISA

But you've never looked after Jesse before -- you...

DEAN

It's a strange time for me, Lisa. There's nothing much I can do about the business -- except wait for the lawyers to work it out...Maybe it's the right time for me to go. I need to think about what I really want to do with the rest of my life.

LISA

Like leaving me?

DEAN

(smiles)

We'll never "leave" you, honey...just for a few weeks.

LISA

But...what happens if they decide Jesse is this re-incarnation?

DEAN

First, they never will...But if they ever did, well -- we'll decide then...And when he's older Jesse will decide for himself.

LISA

(unhappy, but giving in)
Oh, Dean...I don't know...

DEAN

(takes her in his arms)
I love you, Lisa...

LISA

I love you, too...

They kiss.

66 INT. JUMBO JET. DAWN

Jesse wakes up. He is sitting by a window. He lifts the blind and peers out -- and sees the Himalayas...still far away, more than a hundred miles, but clearly visible like a broken white wall on the horizon.

JESSE

(whispers)
Dad! Dad, look!...

But Dean, slouched in the seat beside him, is still fast asleep with an open book on his lap: ("In Exile from the Land of Snows").

Jesse looks again at the distant Himalayas, then picks up his own book (about Siddhartha), steps over his sleeping father and walks down the central aisle.

The plane is half empty. Most of the passengers (half of them Indians, the women in saris) are still asleep...lying in odd positions -- and reminding us of Siddhartha's sleeping court.

Jesse looks at two sleeping Air India HOSTESSES who look exactly like the re-incarnations of Queen Maya and Yasodhara. Perhaps they are.

Across the aisle, Chompa lies stretched across three seats -- fast asleep but wearing his earphones.

Two rows further back Jesse spies Lama Norbu, sitting upright, rolling his rosary beads between thumb and

forefinger, deep in meditation...the only other person with the blind open.

Jesse slips into the empty place in front of him, where he kneels and watches him shyly over the top of the chair.

After a moment Lama Norbu opens his eyes and smiles:

LAMA NORBU

Good morning Jesse Long-Ears.

JESSE

Are you praying, Lama?

LAMA NORBU

(in half-agreement)

I'm meditating.

JESSE

What is meditating?

LAMA NORBU

It's a way to empty the mind.
A way to detach yourself from
the world...To watch your
thoughts as if they were
passing clouds -- nothing more.

JESSE

I love clouds.

LAMA NORBU

(smiles)

Come.

He beckons for Jesse to join him -- which Jesse does by climbing between the seats in front of him, and sitting beside him next to the window.

Lama Norbu points down past the great fan jets under the wings at the vast flatness below, still hazy in the dawn light, and stretching to the Himalayas on the horizon.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

(quietly)

That's where Siddhartha was
born...and became the Buddha.

Jesse stares down from the window -- and then up at the towering cumulus clouds above, touched by the rose of dawn...

LAMA NORBU(cont)
 If we can learn to meditate in
 the right way, we can all reach
 Enlightenment.

JESSE
 (gazing at the clouds)
 What is Enlightenment?

LAMA NORBU
 It is what we look for but
 cannot describe...

Gradually the huge white clouds assume the shape of trees
 -- and then of a white forest. (SFX)

JESSE
 Look, Lama! Look! It's a
 tree! It's lots of trees!

DISSOLVE TO:

ANCIENT INDIA

67 EXT. FOREST. EVENING

Siddhartha sits in the same clearing in the same forest
 with the same five Ascetics -- each one under a different
 tree with the river beyond.

Siddhartha looks like a skeleton now, his body encrusted
 with mud and leaves. Ivy grows around one of his legs.

LAMA NORBU(VO)
 For six years Siddhartha and
 his followers lived in silence
 and never left the forest. For
 drink they had rain; for food
 they had a grain of rice or a
 broth of mud, or the droppings
 of a passing bird.

There is a large leaf on the ground in front of
 Siddhartha that serves as a tray. His arm trembles with
 weakness as he lifts one of the few seeds lying on it and
 eats_it, chewing slowly.

LAMA NORBU(VO)
 They were trying to master
 suffering by denying their
 physical being, by making their
 minds so strong they would
 forget about their bodies.

NIGHT FALLS...and DAWN RISES...

Siddhartha is meditating under the tree, his eyes closed.

The silence is broken by the distant sound of a flute and a Vina (an ancient one-stringed instrument).

ON THE RIVER BEYOND THE TREES:

A Raft made of bamboo logs floats slowly into view.

On it are an OLD MAN and a BOY, sitting beside a small cooking fire, playing a melody which reminds us of the song of the Faraway Lands sung long ago by the Tibetan Girl in Siddhartha's Palace.

The Old Man pauses a moment to instruct the Boy:

OLD MUSICIAN

If you tighten the strings too much, they will snap -- and if you leave them too slack, they won't play.

Siddhartha opens his eyes and lifts his head -- as if the meaning of the Old Man's words had entered his soul.

Suddenly, he starts to move. He struggles painfully to his feet, leans against the tree for support, then totters slowly away towards the banks of the river.

On his path he passes some of his followers, the other Ascetics, including one, standing on one leg like a stork, with a beard reaching to his knees -- who stares in amazement and anger as Siddhartha staggers past.

68 EXT. RIVER. DAWN

Siddhartha gazes at the soft flowing waters then totters down the bank and wades slowly into the water up to his waist -- where he stops and stares round.

In the mid-distance, on the opposite bank stands a timeless mud-walled village. Around him a herd of black water buffalo wallows happily in the muddy water, small islands of Lotus plants float past on the current...

For a moment, Siddhartha stares at his two dry, bony hands.

OLD MAN (VO)

If you tighten the strings too much...

Slowly Siddhartha cups his hands together, lowers them into the river...and then lifts some water to his face -- then to his shoulders, and his arms...

A YOUNG GIRL (about 13) is coming along the path beside the river, shepherding two goats, and carrying a plain wooden bowl under her arm. She is dressed in a blue cotton sari with a necklace of white shells around her neck. Her name is SUJATA.

She slows down as she notices Siddhartha bathing in the river -- and then, as he wades out onto the bank, is struck and moved by the look of his face, his extraordinary thinness, his air of exhaustion...

As she passes by him she stops -- and holds out her bowl, silently offering him some rice.

Siddhartha looks upon her...then dips his hand into the bowl. He takes some rice and starts to eat -- slowly, painfully...

Sujata smiles, tears in her eyes. Impulsively, she lays the bowl at Siddhartha's feet and walks quickly on with her goats -- down to the little ferry nearby -- a single log carved into a canoe.

As she drifts across to her tiny village on the far bank, Sujata keeps her eyes fixed on Siddhartha, who sits on the grass with her bowl and continues to eat...

Also staring down at him -- in shock and disillusionment -- are the Five Ascetics, who have crawled out of the forest to the top of the bank above him.

Siddhartha looks up at them, and lifts the bowl:

SIDDHARTHA

Come and eat with me.

None of the Ascetics move...Siddhartha smiles at them, very calm, very human, and continues eating, accepting their disapproval...

Finally, one of the Ascetics staggers to his feet, and spits on the ground in anger:

1ST ASCETIC

(hoarse whisper)

You have betrayed your vows,
Siddhartha! You have abandoned
the search!

Another Ascetic stands up beside him...

2ND ASCETIC

We can no longer follow you!
We can no longer bear witness
to your teaching!

SIDDHARTHA

To learn is to change. The
path to Enlightenment is in the
Middle Way. It is the line
between all opposite extremes.

But the Ascetics are not ready to understand. One by one
they stand up...and spit...and turn around...and leave
him on his own.

Siddhartha watches them disappear into the forest, then
turns back to look at the river.

SIDDHARTHA

(murmurs)

If I can reach Enlightenment,
may this bowl float upstream.

Gently, he lays the empty rice bowl on the water and
watches as it floats away...and begins to spin...and to
move magically up-river, against the current (SFX).

69 INT. JUMBO JET. DAY

STEWARD'S VOICE(OFF)

(on speaker)

Good morning, ladies and
gentlemen...We expect to land
at New Delhi airport in about
fifty minutes. Passengers
continuing on to Khatmandu are
requested to remain seated
until all the other passengers
have disembarked.

The announcement wakes Dean -- who finds Jesse missing.
He gets up and starts down the aisle to look for him --
then sees him, asleep, leaning against Lama Norbu's
shoulder...

He hesitates a moment, half-jealous, half-touched...then
returns to his seat and resumes reading his book about
Tibet -- with photographs of the Tibetan diaspora.

70 EXT. COURTYARD. BUDDHIST HOSTEL. KHATHMANDU. EVENING

Lama Norbu, Chompa, Dean and Jesse cross the courtyard following TWO NOVICE MONKS carrying their luggage.

A Western GIRL in jeans is going the other way. Music from a radio plays in the distance...

It is a strange-looking place for Dean and Jesse, very different to Seattle.

71 INT. CORRIDOR. HOSTEL. NIGHT

The little procession stops in front of a small blue door -- the same as all the others.

NOVICE

(to Dean and Jesse)

This is your room! Very good room!

He starts to unlock the door -- or rather tries to.

LAMA NORBU

Good night, Jesse. Good night, Dean. You have a lot to see tomorrow -- so sleep well.

Dean and Jesse say goodnight and watch Lama Norbu and Chompa disappear down the dimly lit corridor.

The Novice finally unlocks their door...

72 INT. BEDROOM. HOSTEL. NIGHT

White walls, two iron beds, and a cracked enamel bowl in the corner. The Novice turns on the light -- a naked electric bulb which flickers uncertainly. He deposits their luggage on the floor, smiles, bows, and goes out.

Father and Son are left alone.

Dean feels suddenly anxious and claustrophobic as he looks around the small room. He reaches in his pocket and takes out a pack of cigarettes.

DEAN

I hope they allow smoking here.

He lights a cigarette.

JESSE

I'll never tell on you, Dad.

Dean watches his son as he looks curiously around the room.

DEAN

What is it, Jesse? I can't believe you're not tired.

JESSE

Dad...I...I know that smell...

DEAN

It's incense, Jesse. Like they had at the Dharma Centre in Seattle.

(dry smile)

Nothing from your previous life. They burn it all the time.

He turns away and starts to unpack.

A LITTLE LATER

Jesse, who lies in bed in his pajamas, props himself up on one elbow, and looks at his Father, who lies on his back on the other bed staring at the ceiling.

JESSE

Dad?

Dean doesn't answer. He feels strangely lost and anxious.

JESSE

What do you think happens after we die?

DEAN

I don't know, Jesse...I don't know about a lot of things. Now try and get some sleep.

Jesse lies back. After a moment:

JESSE

Dad?

Dean swings his legs over the edge of the bed, holding his head in his hands.

DEAN

(on edge)

What, Jesse?

JESSE
I'm hungry.

DEAN
So am I. But there's no room service at night and the coffee shop won't be open until morning. So please, go to sleep.

He gets up and looks out of the window. The empty courtyard is bathed in moonlight.

JESSE
What's wrong, Dad?

DEAN
Nothing, Jesse. But we've been travelling for over twenty hours, so shut your eyes and at least pretend you're asleep. Maybe you'll get lucky.

JESSE
(increasingly awake)
Dad?

Dean swings round:

DEAN
(angry)
For God's sake, Jesse! Go to sleep!

Hurt and confused, Jesse turns on his side and buries his head in his pillow, trying not to cry.

DEAN
I'm going to take a walk. And I want you to be asleep when I get back.

He goes out the door, shutting it behind him.

73 INT. CORRIDOR. HOSTEL. NIGHT

Dean walks down the long pasageway, past the row of small blue doors, where he can hear Guests snoring...

At the end, around a corner, is a much bigger door which is wide open...

74 INT. GOMPA (PRAYER ROOM). HOSTEL. NIGHT

A high-ceilinged room with large tankas (Buddhist paintings) and a life-sized statue of Buddha lit by one electric bulb and several butter lamps.

A solitary MONK sits in a corner on the floor, saying his prayers.

Dean walks quietly up to the statue and stares at the Buddha's mysterious face.

Behind him, Jesse enters the Gumpa barefoot, in his pajamas...He walks silently up to his Father, and reaches out for his hand.

JESSE

Don't be afraid, Dad.

Dean looks down at him in surprise -- touched by the hidden truth in the words. He smiles and picks him up in his arms and carries him quietly out of the chamber...

In the corner, the solitary Monk continues undisturbed with his low murmured prayers: "Om Mani Padone Hum" -- the same litany repeated over and over...

75 EXT. BUSY STREET. KHATMANDU. DAY

The democratic chaos, noise and colour of the Third World -- as seen by Jesse and Dean for the first time as they sit in the back of a brightly painted motorcycle rickshaw, weaving between tooting cars, cycles and pedestrians.

Sometimes ahead of them, sometimes behind, are two similar motorcycle rickshaws carrying Chompa and the Novice in one and Lama Norbu and another shaven-headed monk -- SANJAY -- in the other.

SANJAY

His name is Rinchen. He comes from a very poor family.

LAMA NORBU

Yes...I read the report. The dreams are the interesting part. They are remarkably similar.

SANJAY

Almost identical! Fifteen different monks! Even the somersaults!

LAMA NORBU

I know...But I have not seen his charts yet.

SANJAY

They are perfect -- like Jesse's...It is what you feel when you see him that matters most, Lama Norbu...

Lama Norbu nods, tired, and takes out one of his black pills and quickly swallows it.

The three rickshaws come to a halt at a busy corner where everyone disembarks (and Chompa pays). They set off down a short narrow road (no motorised traffic allowed).

76 EXT. BODANATH STUPA SQUARE. KHATMANDU. DAY

A large round square of medieval houses surrounds a huge white stupa -- one of the most beautiful and famous sacred monuments in Asia.

The square base, with side walls about ten feet high and fifty yards long, rises in a series of stepped levels to the great white sphere of the stupa itself, on top of which rests a white cube with a single brilliantly painted eye on each side staring at the four points of the compass -- capped by a tiered pyramid of gold.

Dean and Jesse stand there for a while, completely awed.

JESSE

Wow, Dad...isn't it great?

DEAN

Yeah...It's amazing...

A beat.

JESSE

It's like your building...

Dean smiles. Only gradually do they become aware of the crowd around them -- Western tourists, hustlers, stall owners, trinket sellers and -- most strikingly -- droves of Tibetan PILGRIMS, many of them old and poorly dressed, who may have walked for weeks to reach this sacred spot.

As the Pilgrims move slowly round the stupa, intoning their prayers, they roll the thousand prayer wheels fixed in the walls...and many of them prostrate themselves on the ground.

Lama Norbu, Sanjay and Chompa have been watching Jesse and Dean in silence, calmly giving them time to take it all in.

Finally, Lama Norbu comes up to them and explains:

LAMA NORBU

The square base is the symbol of the earth; the dome is the symbol of water...Above the eye are the levels of enlightenment; the umbrella above is the symbol of air; and right at the top is the symbol of the sun and the moon together, the unity of opposites, microcosm and macrocosm...

(he smiles at them both)

And now you should walk around -- and look for yourselves. We can meet here in an hour -- at this coffee shop where Chompa will be waiting.

He indicates the little restaurant behind them.

DEAN

That would be fine.

He produces a camera and a large notebook from his satchel.

JESSE

Lama? Can I go round the prayer wheels? Can I touch them?

LAMA NORBU

Of course.

(to Dean)

He will be quite safe here.

DEAN

Okay Jesse. See you later. I'm going up onto the stupa.

The group sets off into the crowd -- and breaks up. Dean goes through a gate and up the steps onto the stupa,

preparing to photograph the building. Jesse runs to the prayer wheels and, copying one of the Pilgrims, touches each one and makes it spin...

Lama Norbu and Sanjay follow at a distance, occasionally keeping an eye on him, but deep in conversation.

AT THE WALL

Jesse makes his way round the base of the stupa, spinning the prayer wheels, and staring at the strange exotic-looking crowd, many of them, even poor people, wearing turquoise and coral necklaces and bracelets.

Suddenly, as he rounds a corner he comes upon a HOLY MAN sitting on the ground lost in trance -- looking just like one of the Ascetics in Siddhartha's story. He is naked except for a loincloth, has white hair, and is covered in ashes.

ON THE STUPA

Dean, fascinated by the geometric perfection of the building, is making architectural notes and sketches in his notebook.

AT THE WALL

Jesse edges nervously past the Holy Man, looks into the crowd -- and notices TWO STREET URCHINS, about his age, doing somersaults and dances in front of some passing TOURISTS -- but failing to make an impression.

...Except on Jesse, whom they quickly identify as a more likely-looking score.

They walk over and look him up and down, appraising his potential. The Boy, barefoot, wearing nothing except an old pair of shorts, carries a small monkey with a little red waistcoat with him, chained to a wooden bar. The Girl carries a tambourine.

The Boy hands the monkey to her, does another quick handstand and looks back at Jesse.

BOY

- You want to see more tricks?

Jesse shrugs noncommittally...and pulls on his ear.

BOY(cont)

I know many tricks.

FAR AWAY IN THE CROWD

Lama Norbu and Sanjay, deep in conversation, catch sight of Jesse with the Street Urchins. Lama Norbu comes to a sudden halt -- looking at them with a strange expression.

LAMA NORBU

(quietly)

That's the other boy, isn't it?

SANJAY

(awed)

Yes...

The two candidates have found each other in the crowd and do not know it...

SANJAY(cont)

That is Rinchen...

Lama Norbu continues watching -- as Rinchen reaches out -- and draws a thin red paper streamer out of Jesse's ear. And then he sits down on a bench, losing sight of them, lost in thought.

ON JESSE:

Surprised and impressed by Rinchen's trick -- which Rinchen immediately follows with another quick handstand somersault -- before pulling a similar blue paper streamer out of his own ear -- and a yellow one out of the Girl's.

JESSE

(laughs)

That's really cool!...

While the Girl and the Monkey try to collect coins from the small gathering crowd:

RINCHEN

How much you give?

Jesse smiles shyly and makes a gesture -- he hasn't got any money.

RINCHEN

(pointing)

So what is in your pocket?

JESSE

It's my Nintendo...

RINCHEN
(thrilled)

I play Nintendo! I am the
champion of Khatmandu! Show
me!

Jesse pulls his Nintendo game out of his pocket and holds it out. Rinchen takes it and immediately starts to play -- a real expert -- while the Girl drops interest in all else and eagerly looks over his shoulder -- with the Monkey on her shoulder.

Suddenly, the Monkey POUNCES -- snatches the game from Rinchen's hands -- and bounds away into the passing crowd.

Rinchen and the Girl shout after it -- "Tashi! Tashi!"

Jesse stares at them, hurt and shocked by what he now sees as a planned theft. Furious, he shoves Rinchen to the ground, and races off into the crowd chasing the Monkey -- whom he glimpses disappearing down an alley...

77 EXT. NARROW ALLEYS. OLD KHATMANDU. DAY

Jesse races after the thieving monkey, turns a corner into a little medieval-looking street, turns another corner -- and finally stops, out of breath, panting hard -- facing a small butcher's shop where the raw skinned heads of three goats stare blindly at him from a wooden shelf.

Jesse backs away and turns around, feeling suddenly frightened.

As he stops at the crossroad, completely lost, we recognise the alley, only slightly transformed by time, along which Siddhartha had run after seeing the Old man and learning of Old Age...

Jesse hesitates...goes in one direction -- then turns and goes the other way -- then stops and sits down on a step on the verge of tears.

...Until his stolen Nintendo set is laid quietly down in his lap.

Jesse looks up in surprise -- and finds Rinchen standing in front of him holding a bottle of milk, with Tashi perched on his shoulder.

RINCHEN
Tashi is a very bad monkey.
But also very clever. Come!

He signals for Jesse to follow and rounds a corner.

...INTO A LARGE SQUARE

which we also recognise from the Siddhartha story.
Rinchen ducks through a low door. Jesse follows.

78 INT. LOW DARK ROOM. DAY

RINCHEN
(proud wave)
Welcome to my home!

The room is a living room, kitchen and bedroom all in one, containing five wooden cots, one of them screened off by a curtain. From behind it comes the occasional sound of an old woman's cough.

RINCHEN
(easy)
My grandmother. She is not
well. You sit! Sit on my bed!

He points at one of the cots and disappears behind the curtain with the bottle of milk.

Jesse sits down, gazes round, then looks at the cut-out magazine pictures posted on the walls above Rinchen's bed of Gandhi and Michael Jackson.

When he looks back at the front door, he is surprised to see the Urchin Girl leaning against the post, arms akimbo, silently guarding the entrance from the potential invasion of at least ten little CHILDREN peering in at the unexpected visitor...She kicks at one of them, keeping him back and continues looking at Jesse...

Until Rinchen re-appears (with Tashi) and points at the photographs:

RINCHEN
Do you know Gandhi?

Jesse looks dubious and shakes his head.

RINCHEN(cont)
Do you know Michael Jackson?

Jesse nods.

RINCHEN
He is a friend of Michael
Jackson!

The Girl Urchin shouts to the other Children in Nepalese.

GIRL URCHIN

(subtitles)

Our friend is a friend of
Michael Jackson!

A ROAR of admiration from the kids!

JESSE

(awkward)

Well...I'm not...I mean, I'm
not really a close friend...

RINCHEN

You are my friend! Come! We
go back!

He waves the Children away from the door.

79 INT. COFFEE SHOP. STUPA SQUARE. DAY

Lama Norbu sits on his own in a corner, cross-legged with an envelope in his lap, his eyes half-closed and a cup of tea in front of him. At another table Sanjay sits with the Novice. At a third table, Dean works on his sketches of the stupa (some of them quite technical) and occasionally checks his watch. Chompa sits in front of him lost in thought.

DEAN

(quietly)

Chompa...Can I ask you
something?

CHOMPA

Of course.

DEAN

Is Lama Norbu ill? I see him
taking those pills...

After a pause:

CHOMPA

He is...not completely
well...But very strong...

Silence. Dean checks his watch again, beginning to be worried -- when Jesse suddenly bursts in through the door, dragging Rinchen by the hand, while the Gang of other Kids stand outside, pressing their faces to the window.

JESSE

Lama! Dad! This is my friend
Rinchen! And I got lost and he
found me! And --

Lama Norbu wakes from his meditation and looks at the two
Boys -- as does everyone else in the room, including
Dean.

LAMA NORBU

I know Jesse, I know...We have
been waiting for you both.

Jesse stops in his tracks -- looking puzzled. He pulls
on his ear. Dean (who already knows the situation)
watches with unusual interest, and an attitude of greater
tolerance than before.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

Your friend is called Rinchen.
And we came here to meet him.

Jesse stares at him in surprise. Lama Norbu puts his
hands together and bows to Rinchen. In Nepalese:

LAMA NORBU

(subtitles)

I am very pleased to meet you,
Rinchen. Sanjay has told me
much about you.

Jesse and Rinchen continue staring at him...

LAMA NORBU(cont)

It is good that two of the
candidates have found each
other in this way. It is just
like one of Lama Dorje's jokes!

The two Boys look at each other in amazement...then
separate -- Rinchen going over to Sanjay, and Jesse to
Dean -- still friends but now also rivals.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

And now we must visit a third
candidate.

(he lifts the envelope
from his lap)

-- Whom I have only just heard
about -- and who lives far
away. It will be a very long
drive, so let us hope it will
be Lama Dorje's last joke!

Jesse and Rinchen keep looking at each other across the room...

DEAN
(ruffles Jesse's hair)
Shall we try and call Mom?

Jesse looks down and nods -- it's exactly what he's longing for.

80 INT. PHONE BOOTH. HOTEL LOBBY. KHATMANDU. NIGHT

Jesse and Dean wait together, crammed into the same small booth. The phone rings. Dean nods. Jesse grabs the receiver.

JESSE
(quietly)
Mom?...
(yell of excitement)
Mom! It's me! Yes! I miss
you mom! I miss you so
much!...What?...Well I've got a
new friend and he's an acrobat
and he's got a monkey and his
grandma is ill and...what?
(he can't hear any more)
Here's Dad!

DEAN
(takes the phone)
Lisa? Hello? Oh, God, I can't
hear a thing!...Now I can!...
Yeah...Oh, I guess I'm learning
...What? We're losing the
line...
(he shouts, looking at
Jesse)
Lisa, we love you!

The line goes dead. He hangs up, and looks at Jesse -- who is smiling happily.

81 INT. VAN. SOUTHERN NEPAL. DAY

Dean drives, with Lama Norbu beside him and Chompa, Sanjay, Jesse, Rinchen and Tashi in the back two rows.

They have left the hills behind them and are driving across a flat dusty plain of dry parched fields broken by occasional clumps of forest. The horizon is lost in a haze of heat. Ahead of them appears a small oasis of

green.

82 EXT. PALACE. DAY

Dean steers the van through two stone pillars - the crumbling gates of an old estate, once grand, now untended and gone to seed. A goat grazes amongst the weeds; wild geese strut among majestic trees overgrown with creepers.

The van rounds a curve and stops in front of an ancient red mansion, sunk into ruinous decay. Around the collapsed marble steps of the verandah, stands an untended rose garden. This is the home of the "third candidate". In the van, everyone looks at each other...

On one side of the mansion there is a magnificent banyan tree with enormous knotted roots, a giant trunk at least twenty feet in circumference and long thick branches spread in luxurious splendour.

An OLD TIBETAN NUN (ANI-LA) is standing in a doorway on the verandah. As everyone gets out of the van, she comes towards them and bows, holding out a white scarf to Lama Norbu.

ANI-LA

Tashi de Lek, Rinpoche.

Lama Norbu receives the scarf and places it over Ani-La's shoulder.

ANI-LA

Dharma gossip has arrived before you Rinpoche. Is it true that one of the other two candidates is an American?

LAMA NORBU

Yes, Ani-La. Lama Dorje was always surprising.

He indicates Jesse who has appeared from behind the van with Rinchen and Dean. As Ani-La peers curiously at the foreign visitors another woman comes out of the house - SONALI - an attractive middle-aged Indian, about forty-six, wearing an elegant sari, mistress of the estate.

She bows to Lama Norbu with great respect, bending to touch his feet with her fingers in the traditional Indian manner.

SONALI

I hope your journey was not too tiring, Rinpoche.

LAMA NORBU

Thank you, thank you....

(helping her up)

Now I want to meet the child.

Sonali turns. Standing on the verandah is a young girl - GITA - 8 years old, wearing a red sari and carrying a white scarf.

SONALI

Here is my precious one.

Sanjay, Chompa, Dean and the two Boys stare at the Girl in surprise....Lama Norbu steps towards her.

SONALI(cont)

Gita, come and meet Lama Norbu.

Sweetly, with eyes lowered, Gita comes down the steps and shyly hands the white scarf to Lama Norbu.

But as soon as he returns it, she goes around him and walks directly over to the two boys - where her entire demeanour changes.

GITA

(eyes blazing)

I am the real Lama Dorje! And you are both fakes.

Lama Norbu and the other Grown-Ups are watching, immobile.

RINCHEN

(quietly)

Lama Dorje wasn't a woman.

GITA

He was the Abbess of a convent!

(she looks him up and down)

But how could you know? You don't even go to school.

(she looks at Jesse)

And you're just a foreigner.

She pauses dramatically, holding the boy's attention with her fierce gaze.

GITA(cont)

I have a secret garden.

Whereupon, spreading her arms like a dancer, she whirls away towards a thick grove of trees.

GITA(cont)

Come! Come, oh ignorant boys!

Jesse and Rinchen, clearly fascinated, glance at Lama Norbu - who is smiling and nods agreement -- then run after Gita who has almost disappeared.

DEAN

(quietly, to Chompa)

I better look for a mechanic in the village. I'll be back soon.

As he gets back in the van and drives away, Chompa hurries to catch up with Lama Norbu and Sanjay, who are following Ani-La and Sonali onto the verandah.

LAMA NORBU

(to Sanjay)

Gita is quite right, you know. Five lives ago, Lama Dorje was a very famous woman...The head of an important convent in Tibet.

83 EXT. SECRET GARDEN. DAY

Gita and the two Boys are in an ancient walled garden, overgrown with vines and thick grass. In the middle two stone cobras rise out of a cracked empty water tank. A parrot squawks loudly at Tashi who leaps from a tree onto the stone cobras and back again.

GITA

(defiantly)

So, pretenders! It is too bad you had to come all this way for nothing.

Slowly the two Boys circle her, then stop.

RINCHEN

(points to Jesse)

He is Lama Dorje.

JESSE
(pointing at Rinchen)
No. He is Lama Dorje!

Gita turns her back, then whirls round again, hands on her hips.

GITA
Right here in this garden my grandfather, who was a Raja and a great saint, was eaten by a tiger!

The two Boys regard her with suspicion and interest.

GITA(cont)
There was a terrible famine.
The tiger was looking for food to feed her babies and so my grandfather offered himself.

JESSE
(trying not to be impressed)
He must have been pretty stupid to do that.

GITA(cont)
Bah! Only a great being could do something like that.

JESSE
(to Rinchen)
Eat me, oh poor hungry tiger.

Rinchen growls ferociously and prowls towards him pretending to be a tiger. Jesse darts away. Rinchen chases after him.

As they run round the empty tank, Gita pulls out her necklace and takes it off -- a simple chain with a large tiger's tooth hanging on the end.

GITA
(holding it up)
This tooth belonged to the tiger that ate my grandfather!

The two Boys stop playing and come up to her. They stare at the long yellow tooth swinging back and forth....

Jesse takes it. While he examines it, Rinchen whispers into Gita's ear:

RINCHEN

You can't fool me. I've heard
that story a thousand times.

(glancing at Jesse)

But the American boy doesn't
know that.

Gita looks at Rinchen who has suddenly risen in her estimation. She gives him a friendly shove. Both of them look at Jesse. He indicates the blunt end of the tooth.

JESSE

Your grandfather must have been
pretty tough....if the tiger
lost his tooth.

They all laugh. Gita grabs the necklace back, but Tashi snatches it away from her.

Yelling and shouting, the three Children run after the monkey as he leaps through the branches overhead, pausing to tease them, then scampering out of reach -- and over the wall of the garden.

84 EXT. VERANDAH. CRUMBLING MANSION. DAY

Lama Norbu, Chompa and Sanjay sit with Sonali and Ani-La having tea.

SONALI

My late husband, a man of great
faith, made a donation every
year to Lama Dorje's monastery.

She shows them a photograph of Lama Dorje...

SONALI(cont)

And one day, he came here -
unannounced. Just appearing at
the door like a miracle! He
stayed for two days....

She turns to Lama Norbu, dramatically placing her hand on her stomach.

SONALI(cont)

And just as he was leaving, he
placed his hand on my stomach -
like this - for a long time. I
didn't know what it meant.

(CONTINUED)

SONALI (CONT)

But immediately after he died I became pregnant, something I had thought was impossible.

She pauses, unable to go on, overcome with emotion.

ANI-LA

A month ago, they wrote to me to come right away because a most amazing thing had happened! One night, the child...

SONALI

(interrupting)

...Gita was chanting mantras in Tibetan! Saying things which I couldn't understand.

LAMA NORBU

She was speaking Tibetan in her sleep?

ANI-LA

She was speaking the Lotus mantra! How could she know that?

She repeats some of the words in Tibetan...

Lama Norbu looks at Chompa and Sanjay. He puts down his teacup and stands up.

85 EXT. INDIAN VILLAGE. DAY

The van is parked in front of an outdoor garage, the location of a solitary petrol pump. An old INDIAN MECHANIC is peering under the hood, working on the engine, with Dean beside him....after a moment:

OLD MECHANIC

See?...Broken.

DEAN

Yes.

The Old Mechanic extracts the dynamo, and shakes his head.

OLD MECHANIC

Nothing to do. Bad Karma.

DEAN

(wry smile)

There's always something to do.
I mean, can't we mend it?

OLD MECHANIC

Oh no! Dearie me! How can you
mend your Karma?

Without further explanation, he walks off across the street with the dynamo and disappears into an alley leaving Dean alone.

Dean stares disconsolately at a white cow wandering up the street, then hears the distant SOUND of VOICES coming from behind the garage.

He strolls around the building and sits down on a bench facing the flat open fields, parched and dusty.

About fifty yards away there is a solitary tree, another huge banyan, with a class of SCHOOLCHILDREN sitting beneath it in the shade.

Dean lights a cigarette.

After a moment TWO CHILDREN detach themselves from the class - and come running over. They stop in front of him and stare, shy but excited....then burst out:

FIRST CHILD

Are you Japanese?

Dean smiles, surprised.

SECOND CHILD

(more doubtful)

Or American?

DEAN

American...

BOTH CHILDREN

(shouting back to the
others)

American! American!

Whereupon the entire CLASS - about 30 children - come racing over followed by an almost equally excited TEACHER.

As they surround him, grinning and chattering and asking questions:

CUT TO:

86 EXT. THE GIANT TREE. DAY

As Lama Norbu and the Grown-Ups stroll down from the verandah they see the Children chasing after Tashi who swings in the branches above clutching the necklace.

GITA

(stops suddenly)

Did you know that Siddhartha reached Enlightenment under this tree?

(one look from the boys and she adjusts her boast)

Anyway -- a tree just like this one?

JESSE

(seeing Lama Norbu)

Is it true Lama Norbu?

Lama Norbu pauses, looking up into the branches...Tashi is perched above him.

LAMA NORBU

Yes...It must have been very like this tree.

He raises an arm and opens his hand. Tashi drops the necklace into his palm. It's impressive.

Slowly, (the Grown-Ups are already ahead of him), he begins to stroll around the huge tree...followed by the Children.

LAMA NORBU(cont)

It was outside a little village called Bodgaya. Siddhartha had found the path to understanding -- what he called the "Middle Way". Now he sat down under the great tree, ready for his final battle, determined to reach Enlightenment or to die.

As they circle the tree behind him, the Children stare up at the thick foliage above -- discovering the life of the tree: birds' nests, colonies of ants, monkeys and squirrels...

Then, suddenly, they see some VILLAGE GIRLS coming towards them along a path -- beautiful graceful figures

in simple cotton saris, carrying pots and copper jars....
The Children stop to watch.

Meanwhile, the Grown-Ups, who were at the head of the procession, disappear from view around the tree. Then even Lama Norbu strolls out of sight...

The Children, now on their own, stare at the Village Girls who stop beside a small well and begin to fill their jars and pots with water.

Then, sitting right there under the tree only a few feet away from the Girls we discover Siddhartha....He is seated in the Lotus position, his eyes half-closed, lost in meditation. He looks beautiful.

The Village Girls go about their business with hardly more than a glance in his direction. Discreetly, one of them turns her back, lowers her sari, pours water over her shoulders and begins to wash. Another loosens her long black hair and begins to comb it; a third sits on the edge of the well and plays a soft languid tune on a sitar; a fourth accompanies her with a tambourine.... The atmosphere is ordinary, innocent, yet strangely sensual.

But Siddhartha remains impervious to their presence, lost in meditation.

Finally, one of the Village Girls glances over her shoulder at him then whispers into the ear of her friend. They giggle sweetly and continue washing. Still no reaction from Siddhartha...

Then a fifth Girl comes round and calmly stretches out on the ground directly in front of him, leaning on her side, her head supported by her hand and looks at him, as if daring this beautiful man to notice her.

With seductive eyes she stares silently and suggestively at Siddhartha -- who remains completely detached.

LAMA NORBU(V.O)

Those girls were the daughters
of the Lord of Darkness...who
had sent them to tempt
Siddhartha from his search.

Smiling softly and keeping her eyes fixed on Siddhartha, the Girl reaches out towards one of the large earthen jars. Slowly, sensually, she caresses the perfect round form with the tip of her finger....Until she reaches the neck of the jar -- and pushes it over.

Water gushes and gurgles from the jar and forms a large pool in front of Siddhartha, who still doesn't move, still keeps his concentration.

LAMA NORBU(V.O)

Mara had tried to tempt Siddhartha in the cleverest of ways, by disguising the Temptations of life in the simplest forms. But Siddhartha was looking beyond form, beyond the present. And now Mara was enraged...

ON THE POOL OF WATER

As Siddhartha continues to meditate, his eyes half-closed, his posture erect, the calm reflection of his face transforms into the hideous face of a man - a monstrous face -- MARA, Lord of Darkness.

THE THREE CHILDREN....

Are now standing by the same pool, frightened but fascinated, staring at the terrible face in the water. A distant roll of THUNDER.

LAMA NORBU(V.O)

Now Mara had to attack again.

Looking round, the Children catch sight of Lama Norbu again, some way ahead, still strolling calmly round the tree with the Grown-Ups -- but just about to disappear from view once more.

IN THE POOL OF WATER

The face of Mara SCREAMS...

The Children turn on their heels and bolt, shouting for Lama Norbu.

Glancing back, they see Mara's head - hideous - jerking up out of the water - SPITTING BLOOD - spraying the Village Girls with blood.

Terrified, the Children see the Girls begin to turn into monsters -- sprouting entire arms and legs like hydras. The Children scream: "Lama! Lama!" -- and then lose sight of the monster as the huge trunk of the tree cuts off their view.

But ahead of them, Lama Norbu and the Grown-Ups have also moved on and are again out of sight.

The sky has grown suddenly dark...Another roll of THUNDER, followed by a tremendous wind - a gale - which starts to blow the Children backwards...

Desperately they clutch at the vines of the tree, and with the wind tearing at their hair and clothes, try to battle their way round the huge trunk.

Tashi jumps down from a branch onto Rinchen's shoulders, clinging to his neck in fear.

A bolt of LIGHTNING hits the ground nearby...

Desperately the Children reach out to comfort each other. Then, coming round the tree once more, they catch sight of Siddhartha again from the back. He is seated in the same place as before, in the same Lotus position, shielded in calm, while the howling wind, LIGHTNING and BALLS OF FIRE (SFX) assault him from all sides....and DISSOLVE a few feet from his body.

The Children, taking shelter amongst the huge roots of the tree, watch the attack of the elements on Siddhartha ...until, as abruptly as it began, the storm stops....and is followed by profound silence.

For a moment nothing moves, nothing breathes....until from out of the dark the Children hear the eerie sound of TRAMPLING FEET....A steady menacing beat, growing louder, coming closer, until the ground itself seems to shake....

Out of the night appears an ARMY - a great wall of FOOTSOLDIERS, hidden by shields, bristling with lances, spears and arrows.

Siddhartha never flinches, never moves.

CLOSE ON THE ARMY OF DARKNESS

A fearful black arrow with a barbed point is fitted into a bow....Then another and another...

Hundreds of bows, hundreds of arrows, which lift up - draw back - and take aim.

Faceless Soldiers with flaming torches run past in front of the arrows setting them alight.

The Children, shaking with fear, crouch lower behind the roots of the tree...

The shower of flaming arrows streaks through the dark - aimed at Siddhartha.

But -- just before they strike -- they turn into a shower of Lotus petals...and fall softly round him in a carpet of pink....

From their hiding place, the Children gaze out at Siddhartha in awe...When they look back the army has vanished into the dark as if it had never existed. All is calm; only Siddhartha remains, detached from everything, in perfect balance.

The CHIRP of a cricket...Quietly, the Children stand up, look round, then up into the tree. The sky is clear. A full moon appears from behind a branch...

ON THE POOL OF WATER IN FRONT OF SIDDHARTHA

As a last few petals fall upon the surface, the water trembles and the reflected moon DISSOLVES INTO the reflection of Siddhartha, gentle and benign, gazing at himself.

Calmly, Siddhartha's reflection leans forward and reaches up (towards us) with one hand....

The real Siddhartha, leaning over the pool in the mirrored position, touches his own reflection...As the two hands meet upon the surface, one real and one reflected, we wonder which is which.

Now, as Siddhartha straightens up again, his reflection literally rises out of the water in front of him - indistinguishable from himself - and faces him from the other side of the pool.

The Children stare in wonder at the two Siddharthas, both seated in the same Lotus position.

SIDDHARTHA'S EGO (V.O)

(his lips never move)

You who go where no one else
will dare, will you be my God?

SIDDHARTHA (V.O)

It is hard to be born so often.
Architect - finally I have met
you. You will not rebuild your
house again.

He touches the ground with his fingers.

SIDDHARTHA (V.O) (cont)

The earth is my only witness.

Opposite him, his mirror image, his EGO, is doing exactly the same.

SIDDHARTHA (V.O) (cont)
Oh Lord of my own ego, you are
pure illusion. You do not
exist.

The Children stare, wide-eyed, at this telepathic confrontation...And then see that Siddhartha's Ego has changed into the face of Mara...

TOTAL SILENCE

Until Mara DISSOLVES into thin air...

In the all-pervading illumination that surrounds him, Siddhartha sits alone on the carpet of lotus petals.

Quietly, the Children emerge from their hiding place amongst the roots and, for the first time, walk out in front of Siddhartha.

He looks at them for a moment, blessing them with his understanding....and then he too DISSOLVES into thin air.

IT IS DAYLIGHT AGAIN, THE SAME AFTERNOON AS BEFORE

As if nothing had happened, Lama Norbu and the Grown-Ups are still strolling round the tree...The Children, as if waking from a dream, hurry to catch up.

LAMA NORBU
(continuing his story)
The great calm that Siddhartha
had found was stronger than
anything.

As they pass the well, Gita picks up a pink petal from a small puddle of water...Rinchen picks a petal from the path, Jesse catches one in the air.

LAMA NORBU(cont)
He had reached beyond himself.
He was beyond joy or pain,
separate from judgement: able
to remember that he had been a
girl, a dolphin, a tree. He
remembered his last birth....
and the millions before that.
He could see beyond the
universe.

He looks round at the Children behind him, staring, fascinated, at his face -- the face of a great storyteller.

LAMA NORBU(cont)
Siddhartha had seen the
ultimate reality of all things.
(he raises a finger,
smiles)
He had understood that nothing
happens by chance.

He moves away, joining the Grown-Ups who are sitting nearby, and, with some difficulty, lowers himself down on the grass.

Looking round he sees that Dean is back, sitting with the others -- as if he'd been there for a while. A SERVANT is pouring out some glasses of water.

Lama Norbu looks at the Children who have gathered in front of him.

JESSE
(cocks his head)
What did he mean about the
architect?

LAMA NORBU
(smiles)
He wasn't talking about your
father. I think he meant the
prison of oneself. From that
moment on, Siddhartha was
called the Buddha, the Awakened
One.

The Children sit down at his feet and gaze at the tree - huge, green, tranquil - then look back at Lama Norbu.

LAMA NORBU(cont)
And that's as much as this old
man can tell you.

Jesse looks at his father who is smiling at him, and then at Lama Norbu who is holding an empty glass which the Servant fills with water.

87 INT. PASSENGER PLANE. DAY

Flying from Pokhara to Bhutan. Lama Norbu and Chompa sit at the front, Jesse and Dean behind, then Rinchen and Sanjay, then Gita and Ani-La -- all of them staring out

of the windows -- reduced to silence by the most spectacular mountain view in the world. Brilliant white crests of the Himalayas, an unbroken chain stretching from Anapurna to Everest lie about two to three miles away, yet many thousands of feet higher than the plane itself. So everyone is staring upwards....including Tashi.

88 EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY. BHUTAN. DAY

The plane comes in to land...and bumps along the single runway of a small airport -- where a group of MONKS are patiently waiting.

89 INT/EXT. COVERED BRIDGE. BHUTAN. DAY

The little procession, with Lama Norbu, the three Children, Dean and the chaperones, plus the group of Monks carrying Lama Norbu's trunk and the other luggage, walks through the dark wooden tunnel of the bridge -- and out into the sunlight at the edge of the clear running stream.

Some way above, at the top of the path which winds up the mountainside, the three Children catch sight of the monastery.

90 EXT. MAIN COURTYARD. MONASTERY. DAY

The procession passes through the tall main gate into the vast flagged courtyard...led by Lama Norbu who is visibly tired and out of breath -- but also happy.

LAMA NORBU
(to his Guests)
Welcome...to our home...

The three Children stare round at the massive ancient building, awed and suddenly shy. Dean, too, is obviously impressed...

Three or four Senior Monks are already hurrying to meet Lama Norbu -- exchanging greetings and news -- and then presenting the three little candidates with traditional white katas.

Meanwhile, in the distance a group of YOUNGER MONKS, who have been playing a furious game of football, catch sight of the new arrivals...and come racing over, yelling and shouting.

They quickly surround Jesse, Rinchen and Gita -- and stare at them with intense, smiling, curiosity, gossiping into each other's ears, and saying "Hello!" "Welcome!" From another direction they are joined by a third group -- including four YOUNG GIRLS.

Jesse looks round at Dean -- who winks at him.

LAMA NORBU
(to Dean and the three children)
Many of them are also tulkus --
reincarnations of other lamas.

He puts his arms around his three young Guests, and says a few words of Bhutanese to the crowd.

The Senior Monks then issue some sharp instructions -- whereupon the luggage is seized and the three little Guests are taken by the hand -- and led enthusiastically off to their quarters, each group preceded by a Senior Monk.

Jesse (who has Chompa with him) looks uncertainly back at Dean.

JESSE
Dad?

Dean smiles and gestures as if to say "what we we do?" He nods for him to go ahead:

DEAN
See you later.

The youngest Monks with Jesse shout back in unison:
"Alligator!"

Dean, Sanjay and Ani-La find themselves momentarily alone with Lama Norbu...while a couple of OLD MONKS wait at a respectful distance. He asks them a question -- and they murmur a reply. From his expression it is clear that the answer means something special to him.

LAMA NORBU
(to Dean)
Come.

He leads him (followed by Sanjay and Ani-La) over to a corner of the courtyard where a large canvas awning has been erected around the great mandala to protect it from the wind -- an amazingly intricate and precise design made entirely of coloured sand. It is almost complete -- though Two Monks are still working on it.

LAMA NORBU

(moved)

We make this mandala once a year...It was started the day I left the monastery -- more than a month ago...And now it is almost complete...

DEAN

(impressed)

It's extraordinary...

LAMA NORBU

It represents the precision of the universe -- and the impermanence of all within it.

91 INT. MAIN REFECTORY. MONASTERY. DAY

Lunch-time in a vast medieval-looking hall...

Dean and Jesse are the only ones provided with a low table to eat on.

Chompa sits next to them on a rug, his food piled neatly on a white apron as he eats it with his fingers. Rinchen and Gita sit on his other side.

Around them sit a couple of hundred Monks of all ages, many of them unable to take their eyes off the new arrivals (especially Dean and Jesse). They are eating a similar meal of psampas (roasted barley and water rolled into little balls) plus some watery soup mixed with butter.

An old MONK sits on Jesse's other side, apparently asleep, his head slumped on his chest. Suddenly he wakes and looks up.

Jesse gives a start as the Monk leaps to his feet and starts to sing!

CHOMPA

(laughs)

Sometimes a monk's prayer takes over and he does a solo. This song was written by a famous Tibetan saint called Milarepa...

As the Monk sings on, Jesse starts to eat -- with his fingers like everyone else -- and forces himself to swallow a psampa.

JESSE
 (whispers)
 It's not as bad as it looks,
 Dad -- honest.

Dean nods, still unable to manage a full bite.

92 EXT. COURTYARD. DAY

Dean stands at one end of the courtyard, sketching the join of a giant wall as it meets the edge of a tiled roof -- a tiny slit of light appearing between.

JESSE, RINCHEN and GITA

are waiting nervously on a bench nearby, in the care of two very old Monks, watching a lively Dharma debate between two Monks: a highly theatrical form of logic obeying time-honored rules of gesture and expression.

One of the Monks claps his hands loudly, gesturing dramatically towards his opponent as he makes a philosophical point.

The other Monk shouts his rebuttal, snapping his fingers and extending his arm.

Around them several other debates are in progress, witnessed by a large audience of MONKS clapping and shouting their approval and criticism.

Chompa wends his way through them -- and stops in front of the three Children.

CHOMPA
 The Abbot is now ready to meet
 you -- but he wishes to see you
 one at a time. Have you got
 your katas?

Nervously the three Children show him their white scarves.

CHOMPA(cont)
 Good. Now follow me.

He leads them through the crowd of Debators to a steep outside staircase leading to the Abbot's Quarters -- a separate building on the far side of the courtyard.

93 INT. ABBOT'S QUARTERS. MONASTERY. AFTERNOON

A long comfortable-looking room, with piles of old Tibetan books stacked on small tables and a large altar lit with butter lamps where Lama Dorje's framed photograph is prominently displayed.

The old Abbot (whom we saw at the start of the film) sits in an armchair, Lama Norbu standing just behind him.

The door at the far end opens -- and Chompa lets Rinchen into the room -- then closes the door behind him.

The Abbot smiles and holds out his arms:

ABBOT
(in Nepalese with subtitles)
Come in, Rinchen -- the friend
of little monkeys...

Shyly, keeping his eyes on the floor, Rinchen comes up to the Abbot and hands him his white silk scarf, which the Abbot returns in the usual fashion.

ABBOT(cont)
Now. I have a question for you.
Do you see those yellow hats?

He points to four tall yellow felt hats, dusty with age, which have been carefully set out on a long side table. The hats look absolutely identical down to the smallest stain.

ABBOT(cont)
Please choose the one you like
best...

Rinchen goes over and stares at the yellow hats...while the Abbot and Lama Norbu watch with acute attention. Rinchen tugs on his ear...and looks round at Lama Norbu.

RINCHEN
They are all the same...

ABBOT
They are all the same, yet each
one is different.

Rinchen touches one. Lama Norbu has a reaction -- but we cannot tell what it means. The Abbot smiles, puts his hands together and bows solemnly.

ABBOT(cont)
Thank you, Rinchen.

Rinchen turns uncertainly and leaves the room -- letting Gita in behind him...

Whom the Abbot welcomes in the exact same manner...

ABBOT(cont)

(subtitles)

Come in, Gita -- the friend of
starving tigers.

Gita seems more confident (or defiant) than Rinchen as she hands the Abbot her white scarf -- which the Abbot returns -- before asking her to choose one of the yellow hats...

Coolly, Gita goes over to the table, looks carefully at each hat...holds out her hand, hesitates...and then lays it on the same one as Rinchen.

The Abbot exchanges a quick glance with Lama Norbu...and bows to her.

ABBOT(cont)

(quietly)

Thank you, Gita...

Gita looks at the two Lamas for a second quizzically, her head on one side -- then walks briskly out.

Jesse comes in behind her, and stops uncertainly, and tugs on his ear...

ABBOT(cont)

(in English)

Welcome, Jesse Long Ears...I
have heard a lot about you.

Lama Norbu smiles at him. Jesse comes forward and shyly exchanges scarves with the Abbot -- who then points at the yellow hats.

ABBOT(cont)

Now then. Do you see those
hats? Will you choose the one
you like best?

Jesse goes over to the table...He studies the four identical hats for a moment (watched with avid interest by the Abbot and Lama Norbu)...looks back at them once -- then picks one up and puts it on -- covering his entire head down to his mouth. He turns blindly round:

JESSE
(smiling)

This one.

Lama Norbu and the Abbot look at each other and back at Jesse.

All three Children have chosen the same hat...

ABBOT
That is Lama Dorje's hat, so
please be careful with it.

94 EXT. COURTYARD. AFTERNOON

Dean is sitting on a stool sketching the sand mandala, as Chompa comes down the stairs, followed by Rinchen, Gita and Jesse -- who run quickly over and stand beside him.

DEAN
(keeps drawing)
So? What happened?

JESSE
(shrugs)
I don't know. It was like a
hat trick, dad. We had to
choose a hat...

Dean glances at him -- and continues sketching the mandala.

95 INT. ABBOT'S QUARTERS. AFTERNOON

The Abbot and Lama Norbu stand at the window looking down into the courtyard -- at the debating Monks, and the three Children all of whom are now gathered around the great sand mandala.

From above, the cosmic design is more clearly visible than ever. Inside the brown outer circle are smaller circles of yellow, green and gold -- the innermost one of all surrounded by a complex whirl of lines -- like the trajectory of an atom.

LAMA NORBU
(quietly)
I think...I have very little
time Your Holiness...

The Abbot looks at him once -- then back at the mandala.

ABBOT

Then we must ask the Oracle,
Lama Norbu.

Very carefully, one of the Monks working on the mandala makes a delicate correction on the sand with a thin brush.

95 INT. ORACLE'S CHAMBER. AFTERNOON

The ORACLE sits on a high chair in the middle of a claustrophobic room hung from floor to ceiling with giant tankas (paintings). He wears a five-pronged metal helmet and has a delicate, almost feminine face. His expression is utterly blank.

Lama Norbu sits in front of him with a small group of older LAMAS, plus some ATTENDANT MONKS hovering on either side.

After a moment of deep thought, he whispers a question to the Attendant Monk, who in turn whispers the question into the Oracle's ear.

The Oracle's arms jerk upright. His body arches with violent convulsions, then slumps forward into a semi-trance...His eyes roll backwards into his head.

In hushed silence, the small audience waits for him to start his journey...

Suddenly the Oracle's body begins to shake, as if inhabited by another being.

Leaning forwards, he spits compulsively on the floor, high-pitched sounds issuing from his lips.

An OLD MONK, specially trained to decipher his utterances, keeps writing them down on a pad of paper... until, without warning, the Oracle falls unconscious to the floor.

96 EXT. COURTYARD. SUNSET

Lama Norbu comes out of the Oracle's Chamber accompanied by the small group of Old Lamas.

For a moment he stands there watching Jesse, Rinchen and Gita playing a game of tag in the midst of a circle of Young NOVICES -- including most of his class from the beginning of the film...then starts to walk towards them alone, while the Old Lamas hang back.

The children catch sight of him coming -- and stop playing and fall silent, waiting in suspense...as if all three know that the moment of decision has come.

Lama Norbu stops in front of them; he smiles at all three -- then turns to Gita with his hands together and bows to her.

LAMA NORBU
(with deep feeling)
Oh my teacher, I am so happy to
have found you again!...

Each of the three Children's faces expresses a different mixture of awe, happiness and disappointment as Lama Norbu kneels down and prostrates himself in front of Gita. His head touches the ground.

But when he stands up he immediately turns to Rinchen, in just the same way, with his hands together -- and bows to him too...

FROM A HIGH TERRACE

Dean, standing at the head of an outside staircase, looks down at the scene below -- and sees Lama Norbu kneel down and prostrate himself in front of Rinchen...

Other Monks are running out onto the terrace, calling excitedly to each other, some already running down the stairs past Dean.

IN THE COURTYARD

Lama Norbu gets up again -- and now turns to Jesse, bowing to him in the same solemn way he did to the others.

LAMA NORBU
(with equal sincerity)
Oh, my teacher -- I am so happy
to have found you!

And again he kneels -- and prostrates himself on the ground...

Gita, Rinchen and Jesse look at each other, all of them happy -- and a little confused.

Lama Norbu stands up once more, (with some difficulty, and a little out of breath) and smiles radiantly at all three.

LAMA NORBU

I am truly happy -- three times
happy!

The small circle of Novice Monks standing round them
begin to jump up and down, shouting excitedly.

JESSE

But...but how can we all be
Lama Dorje?

Lama Norbu holds up his hand to quieten the Novices:

LAMA NORBU

It is very rare, but it has
happened before -- to be
reincarnated separately as
body, speech and mind.

(to Gita)

You are Lama Dorje's speech.

(to Rinchen)

You are his body.

(to Jesse)

And you are his mind.

(to all three)

None of these exists without
the other. All of us are
attached, like the world to the
universe...But remember this:
what is truly important in our
life is to help others -- like
the Buddha. After his
Enlightenment, Buddha devoted
the rest of his years to
helping others. And he is
still helping us -- even now.

As he turns and walks away the Young Novices begin
jumping up and down again and prostrating themselves in
front of the three new Tulkus (recognised Re-
incarnations).

They are quickly joined by a whole CROWD of Monks, young
and old, hurrying into the courtyard from all directions,
trying to get to the three Tulkus, whom they quickly
prostrate themselves in front of and then pat them on the
back and call to their friends. (This is not a formal
ceremony but a first joyous welcoming).

In the growing confusion, Jesse, Rinchen and Gita (the
three new Tulkus), stand there, smiling and a bit
bewildered, looking round for someone they know.

Dean is now at the bottom of the stairs, watching from a distance, smiling, while more Monks continue to rush past. Jesse catches sight of him:

JESSE

Dad! Dad!

He starts to run towards him.

ON LAMA NORBU:

who is standing apart at the edge of the courtyard. He sees Jesse running over towards Dean -- and trip up and fall flat on his face...

He looks back at Gita and Rinchen and sees both of them also running towards their respective Guardians (Ani-La and Sanjay) -- and both of them also tripping up and falling flat on their faces...There is something almost magical about the little coincidence which only Lama Norbu notices.

The Children pick themselves up and run on.

ON DEAN:

-- as Jesse runs up and embraces him:

JESSE

Dad! It's so exciting! We're all Lama Dorje! Even me!

DEAN

(with wry affection)

Yes. Big day..."Jesse Long Ears".

He tugs Jesse's ear...and then watches, detached but happy for him, as Jesse is dragged off by the crowd of insistent child Novices -- back into the middle of the courtyard -- as are Rinchen and Gita -- where they are all surrounded again by the even larger crowd...and hoisted onto their shoulders.

ON DEAN

-- now alone -- who suddenly notices Lama Norbu sitting on a stone bench, almost beside him, winding his old watch which he has taken off.

LAMA NORBU

(quietly)

This is for you...and this is for Jesse.

He lays the watch in the old wooden bowl lying in his lap (the one the Mountain Yogi had given him) and sets it on the bench...

Dean, perplexed and also moved, sits down beside him...

LAMA NORBU(cont)
(tired, but peaceful)
My work is done...Now I can
rest.
(a faint smile)
I can even go back to Tibet...

Dean looks at him, silenced by his words. Lama Norbu stands up (with slight difficulty) and walks away...

Dean looks down at the watch and the bowl...He picks them up...then gazes after Lama Norbu and sees him pause under an archway, supporting himself against the wall with his hand, before disappearing inside.

Dean, suddenly worried, picks up the bowl and the watch and quickly follows him.

97 INT. CHAPEL. SUNSET

A large simple room with a single large statue of Buddha seated in the lotus position.

When Dean looks in he sees Lama Norbu settling down to meditate...and turns quietly away not wishing to disturb him.

Lama Norbu remains alone, calm and serene, entering into deep meditation...

DISSOLVE TO:

98 INT. GOMPA. (PRAYER HALL). DAY

A huge red-columned chamber where three small empty Thrones stand side by side next to a larger, more ornate one (the Abbot's).

A long, highly decorated altar nearby holds hundreds of butter lamps and overflowing bowls of food offerings.

Jesse, Gita and Rinchen, wearing yellow and crimson robes, stand in front of the three small Thrones, looking overlooking the Gumpa which is already more than half full with LAMAS and MONKS. At the entrance, other MONKS perform prostrations towards the altar as they file

inside.

Behind the Children are Ani-La, Sanjay and Chompa fussing with the Children's robes, checking that they look exactly right, sleeves turned up, collars folded etc.

Suddenly the Crowd falls silent as a MONK enters the Gompa, cracking a long red whip on the floor -- followed by TWO MONKS with enormous bowls of incense and two more blowing Trumpets.

A cacophony of HORNS, CYMBALS and DRUMS breaks out, together with the deep chanting of Monks as the Abbot makes his slow entrance, followed by a parade of High Lamas.

The HORNS and DRUMS blare ever louder, almost drowning the deep chanting -- while an Attendant helps the Abbot step up onto his throne -- and the music suddenly stops. Silence.

99 INT. CHAPEL. DAY

Lama Norbu (seen from the back) is not at the ceremony with the others, but sitting exactly where he was before, cross-legged, as if deep in trance -- as still and unmoving as the statue of Buddha in front of him.

He is accompanied by a single old Lama, praying quietly beside him. The Monk leans forward, touches Lama Norbu's wrist, feeling his pulse, and then continues his prayer.

100 INT. GOMPA. DAY

The ceremony continues. The Abbot smiles at the new Tulkus and beckons them forward.

Prodged by Ani-La, Gita kneels before him, bending her head while the Abbot snips off a lock of her hair. Rinchen and Jesse repeat the procedure, each of them losing one small lock.

After which all three are led to their little thrones and helped to climb up.

As the Abbot begins to intone his prayers the assembled Monks respond in a low chanted chorus...

Dean watches from the back as the music begins again.

101 INT. CHAPEL. NIGHT

Lama Norbu still hasn't moved, though his shoulders have slumped a little. Nothing else has changed except that he is now accompanied by two Lamas, both praying.

102 INT. GOMPA. DAY

The ceremony goes on -- with all the smiling Monks and Lamas filing past the four thrones, exchanging white katas and receiving blessings from the three little Children.

103 INT. CHAPEL. DAY

A small group of Monks, including Chompa and the Abbot himself, are now seated on either side of Lama Norbu, quietly praying as they witness his journey out of life.

At last, Lama Norbu's head slumps forward slightly onto his chest and a small drop of blood appears at the corner of his mouth.

The Monk beside him takes his wrist, while the Monk on the other side puts his hand on his throat to be sure that he has stopped breathing...then wipes away the small stain of blood.

Chompa begins to cry quietly, his body heaving with silent sobs.

One of the Monks lays a white shawl around Lama Norbu's shoulders (who remains seated, cross-legged as before).

Calmly, the Abbot begins to chant the great Heart Sutra in a low powerful voice.

Suddenly Jesse, Rinchen and Gita -- almost magically -- appear dressed in their ordinary clothes in front of Lama Norbu -- as if they had emerged from thin air -- or been there for a while (SFX).

As they gaze at their old friend and teacher, all three look terribly upset, their faces trembling, their eyes filling with tears...

One by one, all the other Monks begin to join the Abbot in singing the Heart Sutra -- even while many, including Chompa and several Old Lamas, are still wiping tears from their eyes.

Jesse, about to crack, turns and sees Dean watching silently from the doorway with Sanjay and Ani-La beside him. He suddenly runs to him, breaking up, and throws his arms around him, sobbing...

Gita and Rinchen run to Ani-La and Sanjay.

Silently, Dean hugs Jesse and then picks him up and carries him outside...

The haunting chant of the Heart Sutra rises in volume as more and more voices join in -- its words continuing over the following scenes, translated in rainbow-coloured subtitles which grow bigger and bigger (SFX)...

THE CHANT(VO)

Form is precisely emptiness, emptiness
precisely form,
Sensation and consciousness are also
like this.

104 EXT. COURTYARD. SUNSET

Dean comes out of the chapel carrying Jesse in his arms. Together they gaze at the huge cosmic mandala, finally complete and standing now -- magnificently -- in the middle of the courtyard...

Rinchen, Gita and Sanjay come out behind them and together they all walk slowly towards it.

THE CHANT(cont)(VO)

O Sariputra, all things are
expressions of emptiness;
Not born, not destroyed, not
stained, not pure;
Neither waxing nor waning.

A gentle wind begins to blow across the intricate circles of coloured sand slowly blurring the mandala's perfect design...

THE CHANT(cont)(VO)

Thus emptiness is not form;
Not sensation nor perception,
reaction nor consciousness...

105 EXT. FUNERAL PYRE. MOUNTAIN VALLEY. A FEW DAYS LATER

Jesse, Rinchen and Gita stand with Dean, Chompa and Ani-La watching the noble body of Lama Norbu -- still erect, cross-legged, and wrapped in white cloth -- as it sits in

a specially constructed hut -- which is set on fire, watched by hundreds of Monks.

The mood is no longer sad -- but colourful, almost festive.

As the flames consume the entire building:

THE CHANT(cont)(VO)
(with rainbow subtitles)
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
No colour, sound, smell, taste, touch,
thing,
No realm of sight, no realm of
consciousness,
No ignorance, no end to ignorance...
No old age and death,
No cessation of old age and death.
No suffering, no cause or end
to suffering,
No path, no wisdom and no gain. No gain --
thus Bodhisattvas live this
Prajna Paramita with no hindrance
of mind -- no hindrance, therefore no fear.
Far beyond all such delusion,
Nirvana is already here.

There is a kite flying high up in the air above.

106 EXT. MOUNTAIN RIVER. A BEAUTIFUL SUNNY DAY

The same small group (Jesse, Rinchen, Gita, Dean, Chompa, Ani-La) sit on some rocks overlooking the fast flowing river. They look relaxed, even happy. Tashi is with them and a Boy Monk playing with Jesse's Nintendo.

On the banks below ten or twenty Young Monks are mixing Lama Norbu's ashes with mud from the river -- moulding them into cones like small cakes.

They too look jolly and smiling. We can even hear their laughter.

As the ash-mud cakes are completed they get passed along -- and consigned to the river.

Three Young Monks come running up from the river to where the Group is sitting -- and solemnly present each of the Children with one of the ash and mud cones...

DISSOLVE TO:

107 EXT. ON A PINE-CLAD COAST. SEATTLE. SPRING

Jesse lies on the fresh green grass beside his Mother, with his ear pressed to her very pregnant stomach...

JESSE

(humorous)

Yeah...I can hear him kicking...

LISA

(laughs)

Or "her"!

Jesse jumps up, smiling.

JESSE

Look, mom! I'm Rinchen!

He shows her a very unsatisfactory headstand...

DEAN(VO)

Okay everyone - we're ready!

Dean is sitting in a small boat nearby with an outboard motor -- which suddenly roars to life.

LISA

Coming!

She gets up with some difficulty, Jesse helping her.

108 EXT. IN THE BOAT. FAR OUT IN THE BAY...

Jesse, Dean and Lisa. No one talks anymore. The landscape -- mountains, forest and sea -- is pure and beautiful.

Dean and Lisa look at Jesse as if awaiting his decision - - and finally he nods. The ancient wooden bowl is resting in his lap.

Dean cuts the engine and looks at Lama Norbu's old watch. The two hands come together. It is 6.30. The boat slows to a halt...The silence is sudden and immense.

Dean and Lisa look at Jesse with great love.

Solemnly, he looks down into the bowl on his lap containing Lama Norbu's ashes -- glances at his two parents and lays it gently down on the water.

Slowly, the bowl begins to spin...and get caught by the current...and to float away towards the sea.