



LEELAME PRODUCTION

presents

KaLaChaKra

— THE ENLIGHTENMENT —

a film by **Natalie Fuchs**



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INTRODUCTION

HIMALAYA

Thousands of prayer flags float in the wind.

Lying on the grass, a woman tells her suffering after the loss of her sister when she was still a child.

Immersed in the colorful and vibrant setting of Dharamsala (India), four characters from very different backgrounds come together to face their deepest fears as they approach the transformational power of the Kalachakra initiation, led by the Dalai Lama and followed by millions.

Through this film, we enter and discover an ancient yet unknown dimension where death meets life, a dimension which changes someone forever.





SYNOPSIS



Coloured flags of prayer float in the wind. We hear the voice of a woman: "I was 8 years old when my parents came back from the hospital and told us: "Dorothy is dead - My sister is dead". The screen goes black, the voice continues: "Someone shut off the light in me. It was pitch dark. Why Life? How can I accept the unacceptable? My quest begins".

NATALIE at 42, today. She wishes to go to the Kalachakra's grand initiation which will be given by the Dalai Lama at Bodhgaya. This ritual, designed to celebrate peace around the world, is the highest initiation in Tibetan Buddhism. She hopes to find answers and spiritual comfort.

To prepare for this exceptional event, she travels to Dharamsala (Northern India), a city at the foot of the Himalayas where the Tibetan Government in exile has found refuge with his Spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The yearly grand ritual of Kalachakra starts in the Dalai Lama's private monastery. Six young monks, selected randomly, have the privilege of creating the sand mandala (a geometric figure drawn within a circle, painstakingly filled with fine sands of various colours projected through a metallic tube)

There, Natalie meets **JAMPA**, her Tibetan friend, a former monk who renounced monastic life to be with Tenzin, who hesitates between becoming a nun or getting engaged to Jampa. A deep friendship will bind the two women in search of the same need for unity and peace.

KHETSUN, a 15-year-old monk, follows this triangle with interest. He shares the same desire to attend the Kalachakra initiation and wishes to know more about Natalie. Their attraction is unexpected and reciprocal. They establish a relationship of trust that in turn opens ways to understand the motivations of an adolescent to devote his life to the good of all beings.

Her friends will introduce her to the greatest masters of Tibetan Buddhism: the Nechung oracle, Thamtog Rinpoche, the abbot of the private monastery of the Dalai Lama and to Jhado Rinpoche, eminent master of Kalachakra.

They all respond to Natalie's questions with the simplicity and humour that characterize Tibetan Buddhists, while at the same time bringing light to the basic principles of Buddhism and the Kalachakra initiation.

The bigger surprise is still to come. His Holiness the Dalai Lama grants Natalie an exceptional audience. He speaks and laughs holding her hands. He delivers a universal message of peace for the world. Humanity is at its pinnacle.

From encounters to discoveries, Natalie is the guide who allows us both to enter delicately this world beyond suspicion and to accompany her with humility in her intimate quest.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When I arrived at Bodhgaya to film the Kalachakra initiation, I was so impressed by the intensity of what was happening in that place that, with my team, we decided to capture the totality of the initiation during 11 days instead of the 4 previously planned. The Indian team that offered us their knowledge is very much responsible for the majesty of these images. Sometimes filmed with the aid of a crane, they exude magic through the alternation of close, long and aerial shots of the 250.000 pilgrims reunited under a gigantic tent over more than 10 days... But we needed to introduce the creation of the sand Mandala which is an essential part of the initiation. We then organized a second shoot at Dharamsala, in the private monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, source of Kalachakra. There again, the second Indian team were precious and essential supporters. In the silence of this place, I wanted to film the ritual in an intimate way. The colored sand that poured of metallic tubes inspired me to take very close, sensual shots as if the sand was flowing from our own hands. We were also able to capture, in slow, precise movements, the expressions inhabited by

prayer and meditation practices of the young priests: day after day, a holy work of art came alive before our eyes, then disappeared...

I chose to present the initiation ritual of Kalachakra in parallel to a story of human encounters, revolving around the everyday lives of four people linked by friendship, and their discussions over intimate questions in their lives.

These very different people find themselves in diverse points in Dharamsala and speak with lightness and depth about subjects that move them: love, the couple, monastic life, separation, death. They all share the search for happiness and had the immense privilege, during the film, to meet the great Masters of Tibetan Buddhism, who in turn had the kindness and humour to accept the proposed mise en scène. Several sequences of the four characters filmed at Dharamsala allow us to create links with the initiation that unfold at Bodhgaya.

The sound and music composed by Laurent Ferlet have a very special place in the film... sound that is crystal clear and pristine heard over the guttural prayers of the monks. The melody of the nun's chant brings the energy to lofty heights.

This film is an initiation journey that allows the viewer of any persuasion to acquire knowledge of the basic principles of Tibetan Buddhism, and to discover a world that is joyous, respectful and profoundly human, of which many still ignore the existence. My desire, shared during the editing process with Yves Deschamps, has been to render the Kalachakra experience accessible to a large public while respecting its essence.

This film has been seen and blessed- with joy- by the immediate entourage of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

"May love reign in the heart of all beings" ...

Natalie Fuchs

PRODUCER'S NOTES

The production of this film has started as an individual adventure. Then, little by little, investors got involved to support the desire to give voice, in a strong and ample way, to a philosophy that has acquired major importance in the world those past years. A philosophy of peace, self-improvement and changing the relationship with the world.

My encounter with Manuel Collas de la Roche was crucial; he opened the doors of this world that was unknown to me and accompanied me in this extraordinary adventure. I thank him with all my heart for everything we have done and lived together. Without him, this film would not be a reality now.

The important financial support that Leelame Production decided to give at the start has been taken over and passed on by private investors. Passionate, concerned, convinced investors like Dominique Marzotto, who was there from the very first images, Loic Vecchio, who arrived on the eve of a shoot that was about to be cancelled; Olivier du Paty de Clam, Fanny Manakea and Laura Merlo, who gave us support in the most elegant way; Valérie Brüggeman, whose loyalty and passion allowed the post production to proceed without major encumbrance; as well as Dominique Hurtebize and Frédéric Fuchs, who were the last to arrive but are the first to be thanked for having seen the importance of finishing this film in the conditions it deserves. I also want to thank the ensemble of the 210 friends and strangers who followed us on the «Touscoprod» crowdfunding site, as well as Benjamin

Magnard, Rosine Lafon and Odile Charpiot, Nepal Tamang (Jampa), actor and coproducer, friend and guide, and the group of friends, links and relays in India and in France who opened essential doors to us. These sources of financing were found as we continued our path during three and a half years of production, from filming to completion.

Today, the whole production team, the financial partners and the Tibetan actors, religious or other, who have contributed to the film are very happy of a result worthy of the faith and energy invested by each.

I particularly would like to thank the two Indian teams - of technicians and executive producers- at Bodhgaya and Dharamsala- whose professionalism and knowledge of the terrain allowed us to build a film with images shot with talent and passion by Sejal Shah and Pankaj Kumar that we hope are worthy of their subject.

To reach the end of this adventure, I've had at my side Yves Deschamps, whose patience, humour, sensibility and passion brought the fire that allowed us to get to the heart of the 90 hours of rushes and extract the essence, the essential: with him, we have given birth to a film that is at the service of peace in the world. I very sincerely believe that.

As a last minute miracle we were given the chance to work with an exceptional musician, Laurent Ferlet, who, a few days away from the end of the sound mix, committed with body and soul to make this film magical by composing an original music of extraordinary quality.

I'm proud and happy of the work accomplished by all. Thank you.

Natalie Fuchs



APPENDIX - "Kalachakra" : the ritual

Kalachakra is a three-day Buddhist initiation ritual that has been delivered by the Dalai Lama thirty times around the world since 1954. This initiation is preceded by preliminary teaching for seven days to prepare and purify those who will receive the initiation. During this phase, the sand mandala is created by monks, who trace the design's circles with liquid chalk before filling them

with colored sand using a metal funnel. The mandala symbolizes the palace of the gods. Upon its completion, on the eighth day, the Kalachakra initiation begins. Following the initiation and after the long-life prayer fervently addressed to the Dalai Lama by all participants, which closes the 11-day ceremony, the sands are scattered in rivers, lakes, or seas.



THE STAGES OF THE RITUAL :

Prior to the ritual, the Dalai Lama provides teaching on purification and preparation for the initiation. The theme of these lessons helps develop altruistic motivation, that of giving more importance to others than oneself. This is meant to open the heart of the 250,000 monks, nuns, and pilgrims gathered under a large tent built especially for the event near the Stupa (building housing relics of Buddhas) and another 150,000 people sitting outside the tent, impassive despite the cold and, on some days, drenching rain.

First day : the rebirth

Hundreds of thousands of people are praying, ready to experience rebirth. Offering dances are performed in honor of Kalachakra by monks wearing Tantric tiaras, brocades, and bone jewelry. They see themselves as goddesses. The Dalai Lama teaches that everyone is called to become a Buddha. The call is made to be reborn into what we already are.

Second day : entering the mandala

Monks distribute red headbands that participants place across their foreheads to symbolize the veil of ignorance that covers our mind in its ordinary, unpurified state. They vow to free all beings from suffering and its causes. Once the negativities have been purified, the monks will remove their red headbands and enter the mandala, now with clear vision. They may then receive the initiation.

Third day : the seven initiations analogous to childhood events

- 1) The water initiation symbolizes the first bath given the newborn by the mother, to wash defilements from our common physical vessel. The Dalai Lama symbolizes the ritual by pouring water into a consecrated container.
- 2) The crown initiation is associated with the act of tying the hair on top of the child's head. The hair is sometimes compared to the thousands of threads that bind us to the

samsara, which we cut when taking the monastic vows. By knotting the hair at the crown of the head, one is freed from seizure and appropriation.

3) The silk ribbon initiation, which cleanses the psychophysical defilements circulating in our subtle system, determines neuromotor functions, such as the joints or the act of walking.

4) The vajra and bell initiation corresponds to when the child begins to laugh and articulate sounds. It is linked to the enunciation of ideas via the spoken word. Here we see the Dalai Lama ring the bells.

5) The conduct initiation corresponds to teaching the child who is discovering the world of the senses. It is the realization of emptiness.

6) The name initiation is the ceremony during which a name is assigned to the child; it purifies our faculties of action.

7) The permission initiation corresponds to the lesson that the father teaches his child. The lessons we receive enable us to then act appropriately. This last initiation makes it possible to do good unto others by teaching the dharma (proper conduct) that frees one from pain.

The ritual concludes with a meditation on the theme of emptiness, which is compared to a mirror, symbol of the purified consciousness.

During these seven stages, the Dalai Lama provides explanations for his every movement and gesture.

On the last day, a long-life ceremony is dedicated to the Dalai Lama. The faithful believe that a spiritual master dies because many beings in other worlds pray that he may come teach them. To postpone this moment, an effigy representing the Dalai Lama is offered as a substitute master and teacher. He is then presented with dances, offerings, and prayers. The Dalai Lama then dissolves the sand mandala before pouring it into a river, thereby closing the initiation ceremony.

PRODUCERS

Leelame Production

The mission of Leelame Production founded in July 2011 is to produce films that are humanistic in nature.

Ms Fuchs has the privilege of producing a feature documentary about the "Kalachakra" initiation, the name assigned the most sacred teaching in tibetan buddhism, given by His Holiness the Dalaï Lama, first part filmed in january 2012 in Bodhgaya (India) and second part filmed in Dharamsala in april 2013.

There is also a draft film adaptation currently being developed, based on a novel about Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Clare.

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

Manuel Collas de la Roche
Dominique Marzotto
Frédéric Fuchs
Loïc Vecchio
Valérie Brüggemann
Olivier Mercier du Patty de Clam
Dominique Hurtebize
Nepal Tamang Lama
Benjamin Magnard
Rosine Lafon
Odile Charpiot

TECHNICAL SHEET

Genre : feature documentary

Running time: 83 minutes

Rating : PG

Country : France, India

Languages : french, english, tibetan

Subtitles : french, english

Shooting format : 2K, HD

Screening format : color HD

TECHNICAL CREDITS

With the exceptional participation of
Uma Thurman as the voiceover of Kalachakra.

Executive producer	Natalie Fuchs
Indian line producer (Bodhgaya)	Ravneet Mahajan (RADICAL BOMBAY PRODUCTION)
Indian line producer (Dharamsala)	Samir Sarkar (MAGIC HOUR FILMS)
Author-director	Natalie Fuchs
Actors	Tenzin Norzom, Nepal Tamang (Jampa) Tenzin Khetsun, Natalie Fuchs
Photography director (Bodhgaya)	Sejal Shah
Photography director (Dharamsala)	Pankaj Kumar
Editor	Yves Deschamps
Original music	Laurent Ferlet
Sound engineer	Philippe Richard
Production manager	Sybille Wallon
Photographer	Hervé Saint Hélier
Post-production	Olivier Lavielle
Production assistant	Valérie Brisse
Mandala 3D	Elizabeth Popolo et Kavita Bala (CORNELL UNIVERSITY)



CONTACT

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In an atmosphere mixing with spontaneity the former and the current, Laura proposes a simple and authentic cooking, made by fresh and season products, natural and flavourful, without forgetting her vnothèque of italen soils. *Meraviglioso!* Settled in Cannes since 1932 in this former store of oysters and shell, where she makes the old-fashioned charm of the nice time and our everyday pressed life meet. Laura activates the irresistible urge to return to the traditions... relooked. A privileged place which won't leave unmoved and will give you a deep pleasure. To renew. *Questo è vero!*

DA
LAURA

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