


A-2: Letter dated Nov 11, 2005 from Khenpo Tsering to L. Terhune

DIWAKAR VIHARA
Buddhist Research & Educational Institute
of H.H. the ZHARMAPA



11th Mile,
Kalimpong - 734301,
Distt. Darjeeling,
West Bengal India.

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Lea Terhune
c/o Wisdom Publications
199 Elm Street
Sommerville, MA 02144

Dear Ms. Terhune,

In your book *Karmapa, The Politics of Reincarnation* published by Wisdom Publications, 2004, in chapter 9, on page 215, you quote a prophecy made by the Fifth Karmapa, namely: "...In the succession of Karmapas, during the later part of the Sixteen Karmapa's life and the beginning of the Seventeenth, one with broken samaya will surface as a lama having the name Nata and appear at the main seat..." As a foot note to the Sanskrit word *Nata* you write on page 293 that it has three meanings: relation, protector and nephew. Further on page 216, line 9, you give the following interpretation: "...For example *Nata* can mean 'nephew' or 'relation,' and it has been suggested that two nephews, Shamarpa and Topga, wished to retain power at Rumtek, though their proper role was as 'protector' -- another meaning of the word -- of the Karmapa and his properties..."

We have checked the word *Nata* in a number of Sanskrit and Tibetan dictionaries and first, to our surprise, we found that the spelling you use does not exist.

The fact is that there exists a Sanskrit word *Natha* (see Chandra Dass's dictionary, page 286), and its only translation is only "protection." In Tibetan *Natha* is the equivalent of *ngon*. There is no mention of relation and nephew.

The word for nephew in Sanskrit is *Naptra* and in Tibetan *Thsawo* (Chandra Dass, page 1018). The Sanskrit spelling is thus different from *Natha* altogether.

In the main Sanskrit dictionary in America -- *Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, by Raman Shivaram Apte from Rinsen Book Publication, -- "nephew" is *bhratreya*.

We also checked with a well-known Sanskrit-Tibetan scholar, Sempa Dorje, who confirmed that *natha* means "protection" and *naptra* means "nephew".

In the Nyingma tradition eight lamas have the name of "natha"/"ngon" meaning "protection." Also the word *natha* is in the name of the very famous Taranatha/ Drolwae Gonpo. Maitreya in Tibetan is Jampa and the full name is Natha Maitreya/Jampa Gonpo.

Nowhere can be found a word *Nata* meaning nephew or Gonpo (protection), be it Sanskrit-Tibetan-English or Tibetan-Sanskrit-English dictionaries.