



Murder in the High Himalaya: Loyalty, Tragedy and Escape from Tibet

Jonathan Green

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On September 30, 2006, gunfire echoed through the thin air near Advance Base Camp on Cho Oyu Mountain. Frequented by thousands of climbers each year, Cho Oyu lies nineteen miles east of Mt. Everest on the border between Tibet and Nepal. To the elite mountaineering community, it offers a straightforward summit—a warm-up climb to her formidable sister. To Tibetans, Cho Oyu promises a gateway to freedom through a secret glacial path: the Nangpa La.

Murder in the High Himalaya is the unforgettable account of the brutal killing of Kelsang Namtso—a seventeen-year-old Tibetan nun fleeing to India—by Chinese border guards. Witnessed by dozens of Western climbers, Kelsang's death sparked an international debate over China's savage oppression of Tibet. Adventure reporter Jonathan Green has gained rare entrance into this shadow-land at the rooftop of the world. In his affecting portrait of modern Tibet, Green raises enduring questions about morality and the lengths we go to achieve freedom.

Murder in the High Himalaya: Loyalty, Tragedy and Escape from Tibet Details

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From Reader Review Murder in the High Himalaya: Loyalty, Tragedy and Escape from Tibet for online ebook

Michael Kerr says

This moving book covers the murder of Nangpa La, a young Buddhist nun trying to cross the border from Tibet to Nepal in 2006. The murder is witnessed - and recorded - by western climbers at their base camp (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0crs...>). It's a truly disturbing narrative of Chinese human rights abuses, the indifference of the west, the callous attitudes of most of the climbers, and the efforts of the Chinese to quash the story. This is an important read, giving context to the more recent discovery of internment camps for Moslems in China (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/...> a call to action regarding the human rights record of our trading partners).

Linda says

Good read

It was shocking to hear what has happened there, but as a supporter of the Dalai Lama I was somewhat aware. Glad this is in print.

Michael says

A good book that will make you angry. I love how everyone ignores the fact that China has invaded countries like Mongolia and Tibet but yet nothing is done. Guess it's because they have no oil. But anyway, a good book. Kinda sad.... Kinda aggravating.... Kinda educational. Definitely a story that needed to be known. A good read for modern history. I usually prefer older history, but I learned a lot from this book and I personally consider it an important piece to teach people of the horrible things China's government is doing in Tibet.

Valentina says

For anyone who calls himself or herself a humanitarian, this book should be on your list to read. It is the harrowing story of a young Tibetan nun trying to make it across the border into India along with her best friend and a large group of Tibetans, to gain freedom, religious and otherwise, from a stifling Chinese rule. This is a non-fiction book but it reads so smoothly, without the endless citing of statistics or names that can make some books of that genre seem stilted. The chapters alternate between the Tibetans attempting the dangerous journey, and a group of climbers who come face to face with the secret atrocities being committed against human rights, showing the many points of view with a journalist's careful and impartial eye. The story, however, is almost incredible to read. The author has managed to cross through the red tape that China imposes, to expose a system that abuses a large part of its citizens and that has managed to hide, through censorship and violence, the real truth of Tibetans' plight under Chinese rule. This book is not easy to read because of the violence and the cruelty inherent in its theme, but it should be

read and shared with as many people as possible. We need to become aware of what is going on around us, and this includes knowing what one of the most powerful countries in the world, China, is doing to its citizens. You will not be disappointed in the book, but you might be in our species.

KnigasBooks says

Obraz zniewolenia Tybetu przez Chiny. Tragiczne i poruszaj?ce historie ludzi, którzy pragn? by? wolni.

Joy says

My mind is still spinning after reading Jonathan Green's *Murder in the High Himalaya: Loyalty, Tragedy and Escape from Tibet*. Green's gripping account of the escape attempt & murder of a Tibetan nun, is spellbinding. In the shadow of the highest peaks in the world, over 40 individuals from Tibet seek to find refuge in India, and under the thumb of the Chinese government. This nonfiction account reads like a fast-paced thriller, told from the perspective of two young Tibetan girls planning their escape to an experienced mountain climber from the West who ultimately ends up witnessing the murder. Through this story, I learned so much about Tibet, and it's sad history & oppression, and I learned even more about the Chinese government, and it's slow [& bloody] rise to worldwide superpower.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys nonfiction, political, travel reads. I couldn't put it down!

Kathryn says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It has much for many different readers. First, the glimpses into climbing culture were fascinating! In many ways, climbing is not what I thought it was and I think this aspect of "Murder in the High Himalaya" will most interesting to many of readers.

Reading about the Chinese domination of Tibet is disturbing. I was mindful as I was reading of the many regimes throughout the world that hold their people under tight control and what a nightmare that can be.

This was a terrific account of an actual event that reads like a novel! I look forward to the author's next book.

Jody says

I rated this book five stars for the concise but captivating rendition of the lives of modern-day Tibetans and for its description of the power of China to manipulate the facts. Like "Zeitoun," I think this book is a must-read for anyone interested in learning about events as they actually occurred, rather than how they have been presented to us. The author's website has the Romanian video of the shooting described in the book.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

This is a story that could practically tell itself, and it's one that should have been gripping every step of the way. Instead, the author seems to have gone out of his way to make it dry and disjointed and hard to follow. Not bad, but could have been better.

It's sort of a crossbred look at the climbing community (not pretty) and the brutal Chinese treatment of Tibetans who want to escape to Nepal (also not pretty).

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Priscilla says

Murder in the High Himalaya is an exquisitely crafted tale that depicts nearly indescribable horrors. It is actually three vivid stories, woven seamlessly together: the heroic attempts of impoverished Tibetans to survive economically, culturally and spiritually; the ethical dilemma of wealthy Westerners faced with choosing between dangerous self-indulgence and moral imperative; and the abuse and torture inflicted by the Chinese as they pursue genocide in their relentless drive for world dominance.

These three irreconcilable cultures converge at a moment in time - September 30th 2006 - at a single place on Earth: the Nangpa La Pass through the Himalayan Mountain Range between Tibet and Nepal. In the brilliant morning sunlight on snowy mountains, Western climbers witness Chinese border soldiers murdering Tibetans, including a 17-year-old nun, as the Tibetans attempt to go to India to meet their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. The Tibetans want to leave oppressive captivity in their own country - some briefly, some permanently - and are restrained, retained and tortured by the Chinese occupying forces. The Western climbers want to battle the thin air and treacherous ice of the world's highest mountains, and pay extraordinary amounts of money to the Chinese for the right to safely enter Tibet. The Chinese stand at the fulcrum, AK-47s fully loaded in the hands of young soldiers.

It is one thing to tell a story; it is another to tell a story truthfully; it is yet again a much more nuanced and delicate task to be both elegant and objective, and allow the story to unfold itself to the reader. The author has achieved the last of these three, and the death of 17-year-old Tibetan Buddhist nun Kelsang Namtso is all the more heart wrenching because Mr. Green remains objective and lets the facts to be the judge. Additionally, he goes beyond superficial cultural stereotypes as he describes the political history of Tibet, the complexities of current world politics and the motivations and choices of individuals.

There is a fourth thread in this braided tale: the perseverance and courage of the author, award-winning investigative journalist Jonathan Green. He obviously thoroughly researched the history and current events of Tibet and is well schooled in world politics. It is also clear, by implication only, that Mr. Green risked his own welfare, traveling to India, Nepal and the Roof of the World to gather first-hand information for the story. It is clear only by implication because it is the writer's job to step aside and allow the story to emerge, and that is exactly what Mr. Green achieved.

I hope Jonathan's next book is the back-story; the risks and dilemmas he faced in order to tell the truth with extraordinary clarity, depth and compassion. We, the readers, have a responsibility to honor and thank investigative journalists for bringing the world to us in our safe homes and comfortable chairs. Too often, we forget that investigative journalists are irreparably harmed or killed in their commitment to tell the truth.

So I say here: Thank you, Jonathan Green, for all you did to write this book, and then for writing it. It is essential that human rights violations be documented and the details available for all in the world to know.

Mag says

A very important book for anybody interested in Tibet, modern China, human rights, and climbing.

It deals with an incident which became known as Nangpa La shooting/murder. In this incident, a 17 year old nun was attempting to cross the border to Nepal when she was shot at from behind and killed. The incident, in itself not so rare, was for the first time captured on camera and therefore documented, and subsequently made headlines and brought awareness to the plight of Tibet around the world.

There are many issues that are dealt with in the book. The murder itself is symptomatic of human rights abuses by the Chinese occupying Tibet, and the glimpse we get of the ordinary life in the Chinese part of Tibet is quite appalling. Another big part of the story deals with commercialization of climbing and what seems to be loss of ethics and/or lack of sensitivity to the suffering of others in some climbing expeditions and their leaders.

The story follows two people as their fates intertwine very closely over the period of a few weeks, even though they know nothing about each other- a close friend of the shot nun- Dolma Palkyi and an American guide and expedition leader, Luis Benitez. Their lives will be changed forever by what happens on Nagpa La pass.

It is especially interesting in light of another book that I just read, also about Tibet, The Snow Leopard. It's amazing how much has changed in the last 40 years. Unfortunately, it does not seem to have changed for the better.

Here are the links to the real footage of the killing, and the documentary that was made of it.

The trailer:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFw-Gm...>

Murder in the Snow Part 1/6

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrj9JO...>

(follow the links for further parts)

Thanks to First Reads for the review copy.

Dianne says

What can I say about this powerful accounting of a complex, multifaceted tragedy? I'll start by saying that the duality in its message profoundly affected me...heroism vs. cowardice, humility vs. egocentricity, desperate fear vs. unbounded courage, altruism by doing good for good's own sake vs. doing good to look good to others, calamitous deceit vs. faithful blind trust, utter helplessness vs. unwavering hope...

Mr. Green's command of timing, tone and descriptive settings had me hooked and I found myself not wanting to put it down so I could read what was next and yet wanting to read it slowly because I knew the eventual outcome. I couldn't help but become introspective after reading it... feeling some stinging shame at being a westerner, questioning what would I have done if I were there and wondering what do I do now, reflecting upon how much I don't know about the world... This is an important book and I will recommend it often. I'm grateful to have won this book from Goodreads.

Ruth says

The book seems written to avoid sucking in the reader: it starts with a rather dry, reporterly sketch of two rural Tibetan girls, their families, daily lives and friendship. Then the narrative switches to a similarly dry description of a mountain-climbing guide's preparation for leading a climb. The story keeps switching back and forth between the two narratives with no explanation of what they have to do with each other. The dramatic events that led the author to investigate the lives of these people are described in strict chronological order--which is way too late in the book to get the reader interested. At other points, Green has no problem with stepping back in time to give historical background--why not start the book with the exciting "hook" events, then go back and start the story.

Still, I read most of it, and was appalled by the incredibly self-centered attitudes of the professional climbers and their wealthy clients. I have always regarded mountain-climbing as totally pointless and needlessly risking one's life and health. It seems that the more extreme the mountain, the more pointless the climb really is.

Brigid says

Audiobook: Narrator not the strong suit, but a riveting story. I am thoroughly disgusted with the climbers who witnessed this tragedy and did nothing at the time or later. Well-researched and timeless, this story will touch you, unless you're a mountain climber of the type in this book. Though Dolma can't return to Tibet, I admire perseverance and strength. I hope she gets over her survivor's guilt. Bonitez was not a likable person, even as he tried to make things right. He did seem too egocentric, but that's how all climbers are at heart. Even though I didn't empathize with him, my hackles still rose when the other climbers were badmouthing him. The whole situation with China annexing Tibet is incomprehensible to me--shouldn't other world leaders and governments done something in the early fifties when they started their campaign? China's government shouldn't be given MFN trade status from any country, based just on how they treat Chinese people, but then add the Tibetans. This book left me feeling disgusted with climbers, China's government, the US government, and Nepal's government. I guess I'll have to jump into the fray.
