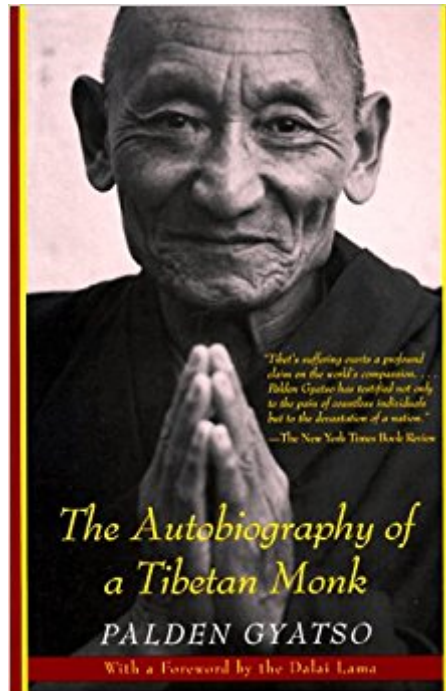




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The Autobiography Of A Tibetan Monk



Synopsis

Palden Gyatso was born in a Tibetan village in 1933 and became an ordained Buddhist monk at 18; just as Tibet was in the midst of political upheaval. When Communist China invaded Tibet in 1950, it embarked on a program of 'reform' that would eventually affect all of Tibet's citizens and nearly decimate its ancient culture. In 1967, the Chinese destroyed monasteries across Tibet and forced thousands of monks into labor camps and prisons. Gyatso spent the next 25 years of his life enduring interrogation and torture simply for the strength of his beliefs. Palden Gyatso's story bears witness to the resilience of the human spirit, and to the strength of Tibet's proud civilization, faced with cultural genocide.

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Customer Reviews

If you've ever wondered what it's like to walk in the shoes of a Tibetan monk, you're in for a shocker. Palden Gyatso followed his heart into the monastery at the age of 10 to study under his uncle, also a monk. By his mid-20s, when he should have been preparing for a higher degree, he instead found himself behind the bars of a Chinese communist prison. For the next 30 years, he would endure interrogations, deprivation, starvation, beatings, and psychological torture. When he was finally released in 1992, he fled the country, managing to smuggle out not only the names of his fellow prisoners but Chinese instruments of torture to show the world. With the help of translator Tsering Shakya, Palden Gyatso has crafted his story into a fluid yet surprisingly dispassionate account of his time in prison. Still, it is almost impossible not to be swept along on waves of pity, horror, and compassion as he suffers unspeakably at the hands of his tormentors. To understand the plight of

one Tibetan monk is to step behind the eyes of an entire people. --Brian Bruya --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

To readers of this memoir, however untraveled, Tibet will never again seem remote or unfamiliar. The author embodies in his personal story the trials of his country under half a century of Communist Chinese rule. In 1992, Gyatso, a Buddhist monk then 59 years old, fled from Tibet to Dharamsala, India, where the exiled Dalai Lama encouraged him to write his autobiography. The chronicle of Gyatso's early adult years provides a window onto the ways of a Tibetan Buddhist monastery; the rest of his memoir, however, is largely about prison life. For after China invaded Tibet in 1950, claiming it for part of the People's Republic, many native monks, deemed politically reactionary, were thrown in jail. Gyatso was arrested in 1960 for refusing to accuse his teacher of spying for India. In prison he endured repeated interrogations, shacklings, and beatings at the hands of his captors. For his ability to bear up with dignity under such conditions, both Gyatso and the Dalai Lama, who wrote this book's foreword, credit his Buddhist training. But Buddhist teachings on meditation, suffering, and compassion are invoked here only tangentially. This is all the more noticeable when Gyatso himself questions the tradition: For example, he wonders why a learned monk of his acquaintance would show fear in the face of death, while a layman untrained in Buddhist philosophy can somehow manage to accept his own execution in peace. Gyatso leaves the question hanging. He refrains from asking Buddhism, which offers so many insights into individual suffering, to explain why whole nations suffer. Nor will readers find sustained reflection on the uses of Buddhist teachings to political resisters. Nevertheless, the writer gives witness to physical and mental anguish, inviting sympathy for the Tibetans while also asking for political intervention on their behalf. Gyatso reminds us that the language of suffering is universal. (11 illustrations, not seen) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I met Palden Gyatso on his world tour in 1997 when he gave a talk. He is one of the most remarkable people I have met, and his book is a story of amazing resilience.

Ven. Palden Gyatso was the longest held prisoner in Chinese camps since the occupation of Tibet. This memoir, told in clean, plain prose">Read more

I've read a few books about the sufferings of Tibetans by now, but still, this book managed to affect

me and make me stop and think. Again and again. First of all, how has nothing changed since this book confirmed that China is continuing to do all it can to wipe out the culture, religion and spirit of Tibet? I know I have responsibility to speak up about this (and I will) but I still can't believe that higher powers up there did not stop China by now. Anyway, back to the book- Palden Gyatso is the image of courage, compassion and inner strength. I read passages of how he was tortured and bullied and then would flip to the inner photo of this tiny, frail man-astonishing! I see now that the determined and strong look on his face at the UK Independence rally co-exists with the gentle, loving portrait on the cover and it's a wonderful combination. This book reminded me that it takes deep courage to stand up for who you are and what you believe in but there is no greater purpose for each of us than to aim for that goal with all that we have. Read this book to better understand why Tibet needs our support but also to re-instill your own will to be a decent, kind and courageous human being.

This book is a testimony to the endurance of the human spirit, able to overcome the most nefarious system perhaps the world has ever known. The fact that Palden Gyatso is able to relay his story to you and me is nothing short of a miracle after what he had to endure for years inside China's prison system undergoing "reformation." The stories of torture, starvation and freezing nights will stay with you forever and make you question how strong your own beliefs are and whether you could do what Palden Gyatso did. I do not wish to reveal too much, but will say that calling the story compelling is a vast understatement. This book is as important now as ever. China has the 2008 Olympic games and yet these brutalities continue to occur. Not to mention the fact that China is now relocating Chinese into the Tibetan region, threatening forever one of the world's great cultures through dilution of the society and culture. Buy this book and see both the horrors of mankind and also his greatness in what he can overcome. If you like this book, I would also recommend Ama Adhe's book from a woman's perspective in the same system. We often hear the word hero, but rarely is it so appropriate as it is in describing these amazing individuals.

This book is an amazing story of a monk who preserves through many many years of persecution and imprisonment. The book truly inspires.

This was a good book. Very descriptive and an easy read. A good choice for a budding Buddhist.

Having been blessed to have read this book and having met Palden-la, I can only say that he has

something inside of him that is truly exceptional. He is one of the most compassionate, courageous, forgiving, strong, funny, and seriously dedicated human beings I have ever known. The book is amazing and I read it in one night. The first few chapters are written in a way that carries the reader into pre-invasion Tibet as well as Palden-la's family...it is breathtaking. As his story unfolds, it very clearly shows how ridiculous China's claims are, from their so-called "liberation" of Tibet, to their denials of torture practices, both physical and mental, to their claim that Tibet is part of China. Sadness, nausea, and shock swept through me as I read this book, coupled by a respect and awe for Palden-la's resilience and resistance. The re-education sessions and interrogations are enough to leave one speechless, such is the horror that goes on in Tibet's Chinese prisons--even today. One can see the serious string of grievous errors carried out by the communist regime over time in Tibet--errors which they are terrified of admitting to now and will not risk loss of face at any price. Palden-la's book is A MUST READ FOR ANYONE AND EVERYONE. And, for anyone who is interested in Tibet's Independence Struggle and China's Communist regime, it is essential.

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