



The Dragon in the Land of Snows

By Tsering Shakya

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The Dragon in the Land of Snows By Tsering Shakya

Since 1950, Tibet has been sandwiched between the heavyweights of Asian geopolitics: Britain, absolving itself of its colonial dominion; India, finding its legs as a newly independent nation; China, seeking to simultaneously consolidate its new communist regime and engender a "motherland"; and the United States, striving to contain the perceived threat of international communism. Tsering Shakya here gives a balanced, blow-by-blow account of Tibet's desperate attempts to maintain her independence and safeguard her cultural identity.

The Dragon in the Land of Snows provides

- the first detailed account of the behind-the-scenes political developments in Tibet and the Tibetan, Chinese, and British personalities involved;
- the first complete account of the CIA's involvement in Tibet and the establishment of a secret military base in the Nepalese Himalayas;
- the first description of Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's involvement following the Chinese invasion, and his failure to recognize the truth of what was happening in Tibet;
- the first account of the power struggles during the Cultural Revolution and of the mass uprising against the Chinese that has remained secret until now;
- the first detailed account of the negotiations between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government during the late 1970s and early 1980s; and
- the first full assessment of the agenda behind the current and future developments in Tibet.

With careful and thorough documentation, the author details the Chinese depredations of Tibet and the many concomitant shifts in policy and political fortune. However, he also reveals the failures of the Tibetan leadership's myopic and divided strategies to engage the Chinese by on the one hand pursuing a policy of coexistence with communist China and on the other trying to preserve her unique identity as a Buddhist state under the leadership of the Dalai Lama.

Charting a clear course through the intricacies of the historical record, Shakya lucidly depicts the tragedy that has befallen Tibet and outlines the conflicting geopolitical forces that continue to shape the aspirations of the Tibetan people to this day.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Long isolated by virtue of its remoteness and its government's suspicion of outsiders, Tibet was drawn a century ago into an uneasy alliance with Great Britain. In the bargain, the British gained a buffer state between its Indian colonies and China, while the Tibetans gained some measure of protection against Chinese encroachment. With the end in 1947 of British rule in India, Tibet was left defenseless, and China lost no time in claiming Tibet as its own, invading the mountainous kingdom in 1949. China has ruled Tibet as a colony ever since, settling ever larger numbers of ethnic Chinese there in order to establish a majority over the original occupants.

Thanks to the decades-long efforts of the exiled Dalai Lama, the Tibetan demand for sovereignty is well known throughout the world today. Readers seeking a deeper understanding of the complex political relationships that obtain between China and Tibet, and between both countries and the rest of the world, now have a thoroughly documented, accessible guide in Tsering Shakya's *Dragon in the Land of Snows*. Though far from nonpartisan--Shakya, too, pleads the cause of Tibetan independence--the book covers much unfamiliar ground while attempting to understand China's persistent claims of rule. China is unlikely to give up Tibet willingly, he concludes, for to do so would entail loss of face for the nationalists who now rule in Beijing.

No other book offers as comprehensive a picture of modern Tibetan history, and Shakya's work contributes much to the debate over that sad nation's future. --*Gregory McNamee*

From Publishers Weekly

A valuable scholarly history of modern Tibet that passes an unflattering judgment on the role of the West, this study earned critical praise in England, where it was first published. Shakya, a research fellow at London University, fled his native Tibet with his family amid the horrors of China's Cultural Revolution in 1967. Remarkably, his tone is objective as he seeks to understand and present the Chinese viewpoint that Tibet has always been part of the Chinese empire and that Maoism has ushered a backward feudalistic society into the 20th century even as he forcefully refutes it. Using Tibetan-language and Chinese sources, oral records of Tibetan leaders and British, U.S. and Indian government documents, Shakya compellingly explains what has happened to Tibet since the Chinese military invasion of 1950. Almost the entire Tibetan army, plus many activists, monks and students, were arrested and dispatched to labor camps in Tibet and in China. Tibet's monasteries and temples were destroyed or pillaged by China's Red Guards. All expressions of dissent and of loyalty to the exiled Dalai Lama have been punished. As part of its policy of total assimilation aimed at the annihilation of Tibetan culture, Beijing has encouraged tens of thousands of Chinese to settle in Tibet. Shakya's quietly devastating chronicle faults the U.S. and Britain for making the question of human rights subservient to the West's desire for better relations with China. Thorough and fair, Shakya sheds light on a country whose complex reality is often ignored even by the most well-intentioned advocates of the Tibetan cause in the West. Photos. (Oct.)

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From Library Journal

Shakya, a Tibetan national and scholar at the School of Oriental and African Studies, has assembled a detailed, scholarly, and objective history of Tibet from the 1940s to 1990s. Comfortable examining both the local and international aspects of this wrenching period, he gives new insights in the diplomatic arena, in particular where Tibet intersected with the UN and India. CIA involvement in Tibetan independence forms

an interesting sidelight. One gains a well-rounded picture of the institutional, socioeconomic, demographic, cultural, and, of course, religious implications of Tibet's "return to the motherland" (China). Though he consulted no Chinese-language materials, his lengthy bibliography is rich in both English and Tibetan resources, including oral accounts. And while the chronology is at times presented in ponderous detail, one is left firmly appreciative of the author's balanced view of the politically and emotionally charged issues surrounding modern Tibet. Recommended for public and academic libraries, especially those with Asian studies collections. AD.E. Perushek, Northwestern Univ. Lib., Evanston, IL

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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