

Sample Entry

Book Title: The Way of the White Clouds: A Buddhist Pilgrim in Tibet

Author: Lama Anagarika Govinda

Favourite Quote from the book:

"Here are mountains which are just mountains and there are mountains with personality... Personality consists in the power to influence others, and this power is due to consistency, harmony, and one-pointedness of character... If these qualities are present in a mountain we recognize it as a vessel of cosmic power, and we call it a sacred mountain."

A brief summary of the book (not more than 100 words):

Some call this a travelogue. Others call this a personal diary. Whatever one calls it, no one can deny that in this remarkable book, Lama Anagarika Govinda brings us on a magical journey to the 'Roof of the World', in its pristine state prior to the Chinese communist invasion. It is a world inhabited by inhospitable landscapes, sacred mountains, amazing monasteries, and great lamas. The author transports us back in time with such hauntingly beautiful prose that we cannot help but feel that we are journeying with him step by step on his extraordinary pilgrimage. A real spiritual classic!

How the book *made a difference* to me (not more than 300 words):

Twelve years ago, it was this very book which opened my eyes to Tibet and from then on, Tibet never ceased to capture my wildest imagination. It was also through this book that I got to know about this sacred mountain, the King of all Mountains, the 'axis mundi' of the universe, Mount Kailash. Ever since I set eyes on a picture of Mount Kailash in the book, I told myself that I would never rest in peace until I set foot on this holy mountain.

However, getting there posed to be an insurmountable challenge. Mount Kailash is situated in one of the most remote parts of Tibet, and to get there and perform a 'kora' or circumambulation around its hallowed peak, one not only has to be extremely fit, one also requires a very deep pocket. Being a student at that time, I had to bide my time but it did not take long for me to fulfill my lifelong dream.

In 2002, I had an opportunity to lead a pilgrimage to Mount Kailash. I was over the moon. My first night in Tibet, I was struck by a dreadful bout of Acute Mountain Sickness, so much so that I thought the end was nigh, but on hindsight, it was the best form of purification before my date with destiny.

Nothing could prepare me for my epic encounter with the mountain. Even though I came face to face with something which I thought I was so familiar with, its mere presence stripped me of all conceptions and ego. It made me realize that in the sea of samsara, I am but a mere mortal. But in every mere mortal, there is a Mount Kailash, this epitome of perfection, which manifests itself if one truly traversed the path of Dharma.