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Magic And Mystery In Tibet



Synopsis

For centuries Tibet has been known as the last home of mystery, the hidden, sealed land, where ancient mysteries still survive that have perished in the rest of the Orient. Many men have written about Tibet and its secret lore, but few have actually penetrated it to learn its ancient wisdom. Among those few was Madame Alexandra David-Neel, a French orientalist. A practicing Buddhist, a profound historian of religion, and linguist, she actually lived in Tibet for more than 14 years. She had the great honor of being received by the Dalai Lama; she studied philosophical Buddhism and Tibetan Tantra at the great centers; she meditated in lonely caves and on wind-swept winter mountains with yogi hermits; and she even witnessed forbidden corpse-magic in the forests. Her experiences have been unique. *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* tells the story of her experiences in Tibet, among lamas and magicians. It is neither a travel book nor an autobiography but a study of psychic discovery, a description of the occult and mystical theories and psychic training practices of Tibet. She tells of great sages and sorcerers that she met; of the system of monastic education; the great teachers and their disciples; Tibetan folklore about their spiritual athletes; reincarnation and memory from previous lives; elaborate magical rites to obtain siddhis; the horrible necromantic magic of the pre-Buddhist Bonpa shamas; mental visualization exercises to create disembodied thought forms (tulpas); visions; phenomena of physical yoga, control of the body heat mechanism; breathing exercises; sending âœmessages on the windâœ; and much similar material. An unusual aspect of Madame David-Neelâ€™s book is that she herself experienced many of the phenomena she describes, yet she describes them with precision and in a matter-of-fact manner, permitting the reader to draw his own conclusions about validity, interpretation in terms of psychology, and value. Particularly interesting for the modern experiencer are her detailed instructions for tumo (the yoga of heat control) and creation of thought projections.

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Customer Reviews

One remarkable book. The "Magic and Mystery in Tibet" was written by Alexandra David-Neel - a French woman explorer, spiritualist and Buddhist. The book tells a fascinating story about the author's travels in Tibet in search of the mystical aspects of Buddhism and the occult. She lived for many years in Tibet and the surrounding countries during the early-to-mid 20th century, practicing much of what she learned. In 1912, she was the first European woman who met the thirteenth Dalai Lama. She wrote many books about her travels. This one concentrates on the occult practices of mystics, and the supernatural events she witnessed during her long journey. Here are two excerpts:"I shall cite a question, current in Tibet, which mystic hermits, as well as philosophers living in monasteries, put to their pupils: A flag moves, What is that which moves? Is it the flag or the wind?The answer is that neither the flag nor the wind moves. It is the mind that moves.""I may add that average Tibetans are much less eager than we are to investigate psychic phenomena. They take them as certainly uncommon, but not altogether extraordinary occurrences. They have not enough fixed ideas about the laws of Nature of what is possible and impossible to be disturbed by such phenomena. Educated or ignorant, all implicitly admit that everything is possible to him who knows the way of doing it and consequently supernormal feats do not, as a rule, awaken any special emotion beyond admiration for the competent wonder worker."The author seems to be a skeptic with a life long fascination with the occult. A difficult combination. Despite the author's frequent use of long sentences, I thoroughly enjoyed it and plan on re-reading it in the future.

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