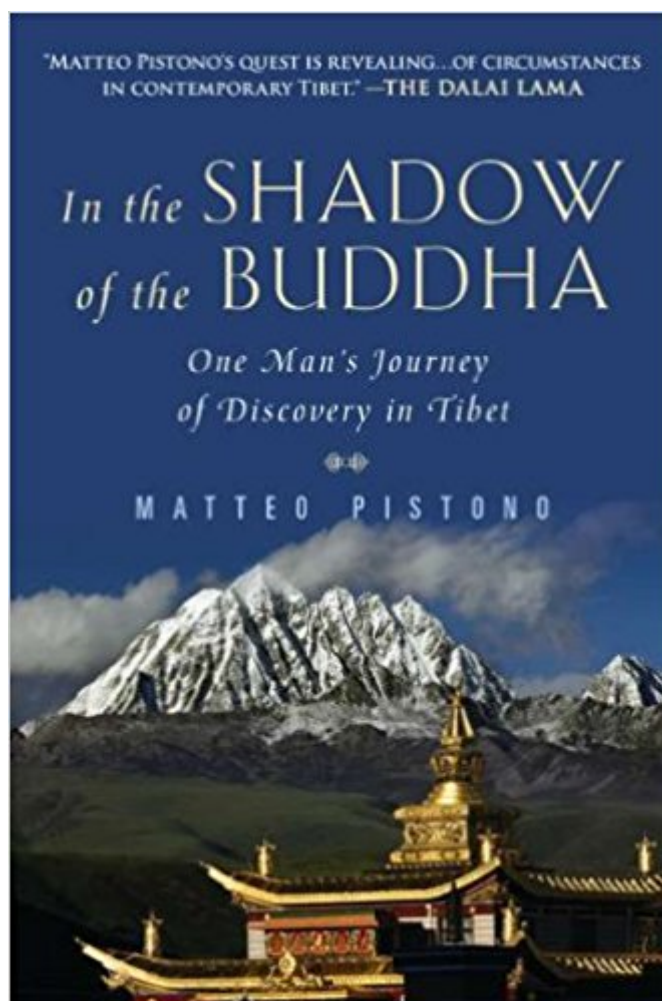


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# In The Shadow Of The Buddha: One Man's Journey Of Discovery In Tibet



## Synopsis

"Part spy thriller, part Dharma travelogue, part spiritual autobiography . . . 100 percent page-turner."  
-Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence  
For nearly a decade, Matteo Pistono evaded Chinese security and smuggled out photos of prisons, secret documents, and firsthand interviews of torture victims and other atrocities committed by the Chinese government. Yet Pistono had not initially gone to Tibet to fight for human rights-but as a Buddhist pilgrim. After Pistono became the student of a venerated meditation master in Tibet, he began couriering messages to him from the Dalai Lama in India. This began an extraordinary adventure. In the Shadow of the Buddha is both a vivid account of how Tibet's rich spiritual past is slipping away under repression, and the story of one man who merged political activism with Buddhist mysticism in pursuit of freedom and peace.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Pistono draws on his experiences as a journalist, activist, and student of Tibetan Buddhism to explore the intersection between spirituality and politics. He weaves together the stories of his pilgrimages in Tibet, his role in smuggling out evidence of the Chinese government's human rights abuses to the West, and the history of Tertön Sogyal, a lama who served as spiritual and political adviser to the current Dalai Lama's predecessor in the late 19th and very early 20th centuries. Pistono follows the path of Tertön Sogyal across vast expanses of the Tibetan landscape while hearing testimonies to suffering by Tibetans who sought him out to share their stories. The phurba, a "great weapon of compassion" in Tibetan ritual to destroy anger, provides a continuing motif.

Spiritual aspirations and political realities collide tragically in present-day Tibet, and through this complex set of narratives Pistono explores his own search for freedom from anger when faced with massive injustice and the apparent ineffectiveness of activism on behalf of Tibet. These inner and outer journeys are no less astonishing for being told matter-of-factly, accompanied by keen analysis of modern realpolitik. (Jan.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**\*Starred Review\*** From Wyoming to Himalayan meditation caves to Capitol Hill, Pistono's account of his quest for spiritual illumination and political justice is heartbreaking and awe-inspiring. Pistono, raised with the belief that social activism is a core responsibility, began traveling to Tibet in 1999, motivated, in part, by his fascination with Tertön Sogyal, a nineteenth-century mystic and Tibet's great champion and protector. Pistono follows in Tertön Sogyal's footsteps while telling the mystic's astonishing story, from his father's insistence that he join a band of highway robbers to serving as teacher to the XIII Dalai Lama and guiding Tibet through political turmoil and the intrusion of British forces. Traveling as both a journalist and a Buddhist pilgrim, Pistono also found himself at the crossroads of spirituality and politics when he was asked to serve as a human-rights courier, carrying to the West hard evidence of China's systematic brutality in occupied Tibet. Pistono tells chilling cloak-and-dagger tales and offers mesmerizing descriptions of haunting landscapes and miracle-performing lamas. But what shimmers most in this riveting and mysterious chronicle, which includes a foreword by Tibet activist Richard Gere, is the courage of those dedicated to the Dalai Lama's vision for real autonomy and religious freedom in Tibet through nonviolent means. --Donna Seaman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Yesterday, I sat in the park with my daughter and we brought our books along. We were both turning pages as quickly as we could read them. We were both uttering sounds of surprise and excitement from what we were reading. She was reading the new Dan Brown novel and I was reading, *In the Shadow of the Buddha* by Matteo Pistono. My daughter was reading a fictional tale. What I was reading is factual, yet it reads and flows like a great novel. It combines the wonderment of a travel book with the great anticipation of a story of intrigue and still it is infused with a devoted student's mystical and spiritual quest. I love this book, and I have not wanted to put it down. I force myself to do so because I want to savor it, spend more time with it. Often, when authors write such

accounts, jumping from one century to another, I find it challenging to follow and often, clumsy. Not so here. There is continuity, a smooth flow that moves the reader from the time of Tertön Sogyal to the recent past and back again without having to look back and see where you jumped off. In the *Shadow of the Buddha* is a moving book. Matteo's devotion to his teachers' instructions is inspiring. His willingness to risk his own well being to tell the truth of the atrocities to which the Tibetan people are subjected, shows that he is a brave and compassionate person. This book is mystical, tragic and loving all at the same time. Bravo.

For an entire week after I finished this book I felt like I had been on a retreat, immersed in meditation, devotion, compassion and dharma. It is definitely a dharma book-- but it reads like a novel. Mr. Pistono weaves together three stories: the story of his pilgrimage to Tibet to learn more about the 19th-century mystic Tertön Sogyal (the previous reincarnation of his current-day teachers), the historical story of Tertön Sogyal's involvement in politics and his relationship with the 13th Dalai Lama (predecessor to today's 14th), and a modern day story of human rights abuse in Tibet, which began when individual Tibetans asked him, at great risk to themselves and to him, to take human rights abuse information out of Tibet. This last story includes secret prisons, sobering stories of abuse, dangerous liaisons, harrowing journeys, a dreamlike sense of Tibet today and encounters with those in the US who used the evidence that Mr. Pistono smuggled out. The thread that ties all the stories together is Pistono's personal spiritual journey and that journey includes remarkable spiritual experiences, facing his own death, deep compassion, patience, transforming anger, and following the teacher's instructions to the end even when the reasons weren't clear. What amazed me was how he wove the three threads of the story together. What inspired (and challenged) me was seeing how Pistono's devotion and compassion were manifested in risk-taking that is way beyond my comfort level. I wish there were ten more like this!

Whether you are interested in reading about how a spiritual path might develop, or in the geopolitics of the Himalayan region, or just fancy an authentically thrilling adventure, this book is a must-read! In the *Shadow of the Buddha* offers a unique rendering of actual events in Tibet, past and present, making them more accessible by presenting them in the context of the journey of an authentic spiritual seeker- a young American to whom one can easily relate. Not only did I marvel at the esoteric history presented, but gained insight into a number of topics underscored in Tibetan Buddhism, such as mediation, karma and reincarnation. I found the juxtapositioning of past and present to be very powerful, bringing alive figures and places so integral to understanding this

imperiled wisdom culture. Matteo Pistono brings honor to his mentors and teachers with his courage and dedication to the Tibetan cause. This is an emotional chronicle, but the horror and sadness which might arise are ameliorated by a call for positive action. One can only pray that the more widespread knowledge of the catastrophic situation in Tibet becomes, the more pressure will come to bear on bringing human rights and justice to the Land of Snows.

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