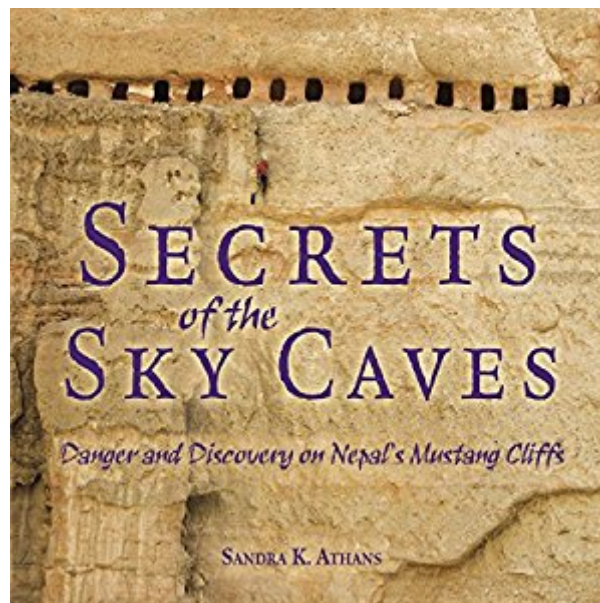




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Secrets Of The Sky Caves: Danger And Discovery On Nepal's Mustang Cliffs



Synopsis

What's more dangerous than scaling Mount Everest? For mountaineer Pete Athans, the answer lies in the ancient kingdom of Mustang, a remote part of the Asian nation of Nepal. Long-abandoned caves built high into steep cliffs contain amazing treasures - and pose incredible dangers. Reaching these "sky caves" safely takes guts, smarts, and luck. And then there's the question of what to do with a 2,000 year-old human skull.... From 2007 to 2012, Pete explored Mustang's sky caves with a team that included scientists, mountain climbers, and even two children. They found mummies, murals, manuscripts, and other priceless artifacts. Follow Pete on his dangerous trips to the sky caves and discover the secrets the caves revealed.

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Customer Reviews

I can't read the book, it's too small, and offside! I like to have a better edition. Thank you! With regards. Miriam Kassovicz.

I watched this when Nova PBS broadcast it. I was appalled at the egotistical scientists disturbing ancient tombs in the name of science. Not that it hasn't been going on for a century or more. The U. S. in conjunction with the Smithsonian disturbed ancient burial sites of the 1st peoples in the 19th and early 20th Century. It is amazing that, after being chastised here in the U. S, and slowly being forced to return objects that were removed from these sites, that another scientists are still pillaging ancient sacred sites. I actually don't mind if they visit the sites if in the right spirit. But to disturb and remove objects from those sites is unacceptable which is exactly what happened on this expedition. And to remove ancient remains? Of course the Nepalese government and the native peoples of this

region possibly not as savvy as our own Native populations. Who is advocating for them and the remains of their ancestors's spirits?

Mustang is one of those places on earth that has a harsh, unforgiving climate, alternating from being brutally cold to a desert-like environment. It's a part of Nepal, a country which lies between India and the region of Tibet. Visiting the area may give one the impression that they have stepped back in time as they watch people travel on foot or horseback. Rare animals like snow leopards can be found in the region, yet something just as rare and unusual can be found nestled on the face of Mustang's cliffs. Cliffs, with orange and sand-like colored striations, have strange dark holes peppering their sides. These are the mysterious caves of Mustang. The Mustang caves are all hand-carved and some of them are nicknamed sky caves because they are high in the air. Some of them are quite expansive, but how did people access them and what were they used for? Modern-day explorers, scientists, and historians set out to answer those very questions. Caves in Mebrak only furthered the mysteries of the caves when thirty naturally mummified bodies were found. Animal remains and grave goods gave archaeologists and scientists clues to go on. It was obvious to the Nepalese government that an expedition was in order and allowed more researchers to study the caves of Upper Mustang. Would any more secrets to the past be found? Pete Athans assembled and led a team to explore the caves. They only had thirty days and faced limitations. The team was not allowed to alter the caves or the contents inside in any way. That meant that only a photographic record could aid the outside world. Absolutely nothing could be removed from the caves. How could they begin to understand the peoples who inhabited these caves if they couldn't remove any items they found? Breathtaking scenes began to unfold before them as they discovered the kabrums, monuments built to hold sacred Buddhist artifacts and remains of important religious leaders. And then there was a giant mural and later piles of ancient papers in a cave high in the cliffs. What were the contents of these amazing sky caves telling the world about the ancient Nepalese peoples? This is an amazing tale about the Mustang sky caves that will mesmerize young readers. Mystery swirls through the pages, pages filled with full-color photographs that shout adventure. We can see mountain climbers attempting to climb the cliffs, archaeologists poring over bones, and scientists trying to find clues scattered on the floor of a cave. There are numerous informative

sidebars that add a lot to the tale. For example, we learn about how Nepalese natives recite certain phrases in hope that it will bring them good luck in their travels. Readers will learn about the Bon religion, legends, Nepal's climate, their king, the caves, and many other fascinating vignettes. In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, a "Who's Who" of people associated with the caves, a timeline (ca. 1000 BCE), source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book and website resources to explore. Additional downloadable complementary resources can be accessed on the publisher's website. This book courtesy of the publisher.

Summary: High in the Himalayas of Nepal lie abandoned caves from the ancient kingdom of Mustang. Mountaineers Pete Athans, Liesl Clark, and their two sons have led expeditions to the caves to uncover the artifacts left behind by the people of Mustang. Combining science and adventure, this book tells the history of a little-known people and how modern technology is helping to uncover their secrets. **Pros:** There's lots of interesting history about a little-known civilization in a remote part of the world. The cave exploration is somewhat harrowing and exciting, and the fact that two kids joined in the expeditions (the first when they were just three years old and 18 months!) will be of interest to kids reading the book. **Cons:** The inside flap describes these expeditions as more dangerous than climbing Mt. Everest. Since I've always been interested in tales of scaling Everest, I had high hopes for this book, but was somewhat disappointed. Accessing the caves seemed difficult, but nowhere near as tough as climbing Everest. There was much more history and science than real adventure.

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