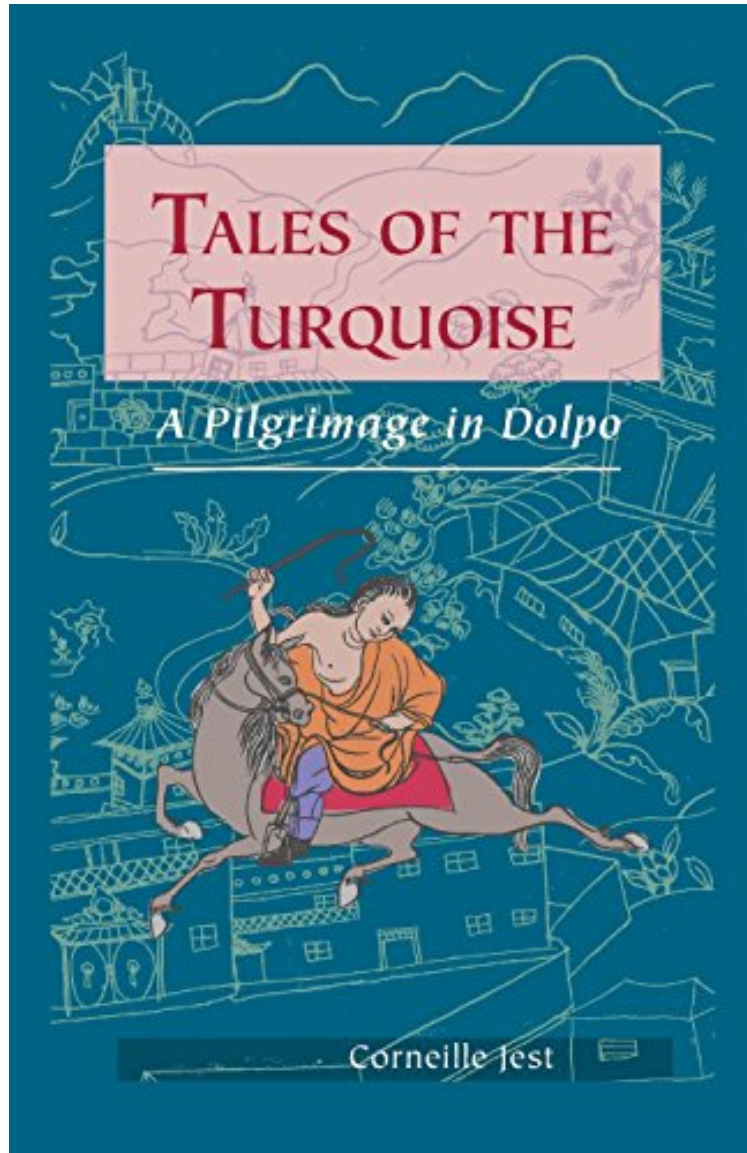


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Tales Of The Turquoise: A Pilgrimage In Dolpo

Corneille Jest

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Corneille Jest : Tales Of The Turquoise: A Pilgrimage In Dolpo before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tales Of The Turquoise: A Pilgrimage In Dolpo:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. great fairy talesBy AnetaGreat book on tibetan fairy tales. Was reading it during my trip to the himalayas, and it helped m great deal to compare to the reality and get into their minds.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The Turquoise of Life: Tibetan folklore during a pilgrimage in DolpoBy Magalini SabinaThe Turquoise of Life is the original French title of this anthology of Tibetan folktales

collected by Cornelle Jest, a well known anthropologist and savior of the cultural heritage of disappearing populations, who has extensively written of Nepalese and Tibetan life, in particular of the Dolpopas of Tarap. The book was published in 1985 in French and then translated into English as the *Tales of the Turquoise*. From the 1960's Jest has collected folktales from the Dolpo region (to appreciate its beauty watch Eric Valli's "Himalaya" (1999), that is also a fairytale from this fascinating country or the read Peter Matthiessen's "The Snow Lion") and with a picture and frame expedient he has delightfully exposed them in an anthology that stands the test of time. The fables are illustrated with line drawings that unusually deal with non religious subjects. The frame is a pilgrimage (lingkhor) of the Dolpo region carried out by the Author, a young Tibetan Norbu and an old drogpa (nomadic) yak herder Karma, that is an infinite source of stories. Before starting the pilgrimage the group visits a famous lama Kargar Rinpoche that gives them a turquoise to take along for protection along the route. Turquoises are like people, we learn, they live and die and serve as a "support" to human life and represent the ability to function as an integrated person. Turquoises are often mentioned in fables. The pilgrimage starts from Tarap, the region's main center and through the Khyungla to Shey, Samling, Pijor, Po, Ku, Saldang, Trakyem, Koma, Shimen, Tingkyu, Kula goes back to Tarap. Inserted between the stops and the visits to friends, village chiefs, power places and sacred sites are the many folktales narrated by Karma. Folktales have a fascination of their own and we usually read them or tell them to our children in our adult life to identify the archetypical thought that characterizes our ancestry. Folktales of other cultures sometimes come as great revelations because the consent an insight into different thought processes. What is amazing reading these over 50 folktales was the great similarity to our European culture. Some of the tales seem taken right out of the Grimm brothers or Aesop or Faedro. Common themes are talking helpful animals, magical objects that grant wishes, and the prince or princess that live in disguise. Some differences instead are the practice of magic as a positive act (remember Milarepa), the typical Tibetan triple division of the geographic locations as Kingdom of the East, the West and the Middle, the valley, the mountain and the high peaks, the he and she demons (derived from the old Bon religion and integrated into more recent Buddhist tradition), the identification of the "hare" as the trickiest animal (role played in our fairytales by the fox), the importance of lama mummies that remain in a sitting position. There is also an intelligent simpleton that is called Chang Apa and is a hero of many stories, together with the much more famous Gesar (that reminds us of Ulysses). Jest only cites two episodes of Gesar of Ling's saga, but the whole legend is beautifully told by A. David-Neel in .At the end of the pilgrimage the turquoise goes back to its owner and Karma concludes with a brief tale on how Lepchas, his specific nomadic group, have the heritage of Buddha's wisdom, since an ancestor swallowed only a letter of the Buddhist texts while the Tibetans took them all away. They have the books to read, but the swallowed letter is the wisdom in the Lepchas' heart. This book has never been out of print because its simplicity makes it a fascinating read. It highlights the differences and similarities of our folklore heritage with magical delicacy and remains a document of ancient traditions.

In the early spring of 1961, Dr. Corneille Jest undertook a three-week circumambulation of the valley in the company of Tibetans visiting temples, shrines, and sacred mountains. His companion Karma, an elderly nomad from Western Tibet and a gifted storyteller, punctuated the journey with traditional tales and his own reflections. Charmingly written, colorful, and engaging, the narrative transports the reader to a world of Tibetan spirit in ways not readily accessible to outsiders.

.com Dolpo, a remote Himalayan region of Nepal populated by a Tibetan people, draws more yetis than tourists. In 1961, French sociologist Corneille Jest tagged along on a pilgrimage to sacred shrines around Dolpo, accompanied by a young local and a toothless old yak herder named Karma. Writing like the scientific observer that he is, Jest notes with a detached reverence the landscape and the flora, the gestures and equipment of the people he meets, and the stories he is told--so many stories. Karma, it turns out, is a walking library of Tibetan folklore, despite his illiteracy, and at every bend in the road, at every stop for butter tea, "Karma tells the story of yaks," "Karma ... describes [the goddess] Drolma in one of her incarnations," "Karma speaks of the pastoral life," "Karma ... tells the story of the tail that talks." In fact, Karma's tales of mummified lamas and hats of invisibility monopolize the pages and make *Tales of the Turquoise* an utterly charming collection. Translated from the French, *Tales of the Turquoise* could have been written yesterday or a thousand years ago. Such is the timeless magic of folktales. --Brian Bruya "The old wise man Karma is a treasure store of ancient stories all retained in his mind and heart. His contribution to the theme of the book is a shining example of Tibetan spirit having its root in ancient Tibetan custom and culture. The book also serves as a code of conduct when one visits Tibetan Buddhist places and people."Tibet JournalLanguage NotesText: English (translation) Original Language: French