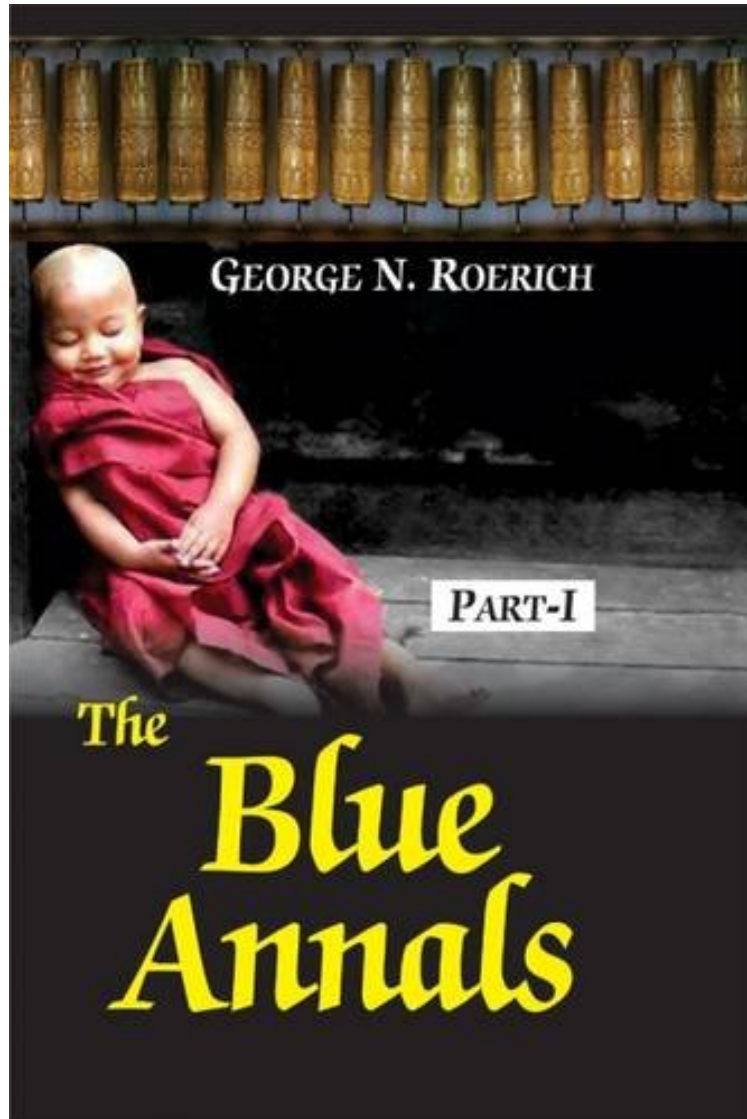


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The Blue Annals (Pt. 1 2)

George N. Roerich

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George N. Roerich : The Blue Annals (Pt. 1 2) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Blue Annals (Pt. 1 2):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Oft-cited, classic piece of the Tibetan religious history genreBy inner exilealso known as 'chjung' (written form: chos-'byung) among the ecclesiastically educated natives. The usual way of reading from cover to cover is not applicable here, for the simple reason of doing so presupposes a great deal of preliminary familiarity with Tibetan Buddhism and its history. In other words, it works as a primary source for tracing particular lineages of the Nyingma, Kadam, Kagy, and Sakya sects, with many of their by now extinct

branches; abbatial successions; excerpts from the hagiographies of wandering siddhas/druptob-s and yogins/neljorpa-s; related names and places; royal and noble patrons; stra and tantra transmissions during the later diffusion (phyi-dar, pronounced 'cheedar') and, to some extent, under the early diffusion (snga-dar) of Dharma in Tibet. The compilation of this treasure trove of primary data came to completion in 1478 at the quill of the "translator from the G region, Shnupel"; a fact which naturally implies that the systematic destruction of Tibetan culture by the Chinese lies almost half a millenium beyond the scope of the book. For a much more recent treatment of similar kind, see Dudjom Rinpoche's (1904-87) *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History* (trans. and annot. by Gyurme Dorje Matthew Kapstein, Boston 1991) originally in two volumes, but of late reissued in one tome. To researchers: T.V. Wylie's "A Place Name Index to George N. Roerich's Translation of the Blue Annals" (Rome 1957) comes in handy! As for the translator (1902-60), he was a student of the pioneering French Orientalist Paul Pelliot's. His father, the famous Nicholas Roerich, was a Russian-born painter, Theosophist, traveler, art collector and potential intel gatherer who is also said to have been the "guru" to Vice President Henry Wallace (Secretary of Agriculture, and of Commerce). This latter gentleman is credited with having come up w/ the pyramid and the all-seeing eye (of Horus?) design being visible on back of the US dollar bill. As a concluding note, the saffron-robed novices/monks, shown on the cover photo while on their daily routine to collect alms, are not Tibetan but hail from some Theravadin/Hinayna country in Southeast Asia.

7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Very comprehensive history of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism
By A Customer
This comprehensive work of Mr. Roerich includes the introduction of Buddhism in the 8th Century to Tibet, as well as some history of the earlier period of "kings" and the Bon religion. The author explains how the influx of Buddhism came mainly from India with some Chinese culture mixed in with the Bon religion. Though thorough Mr. Roerich's writing style is very scholarly rather than literary and could be called somewhat dry. The lineages of the major sects of Tibetan Buddhism are traced from the first teacher of each sect to the next and the next to the near present or current "holders of the faith" of each line. The author tells how the written form of Tibetan was instituted to translate texts from the Indian treasury of the Buddhist canon. Many pilgrimages were undertaken by Tibetans to the centers of Buddhism in India right up until these centers of learning were destroyed by the Mogal invasions of the 11th and 12th centuries. The Blue Annals is very complete in describing a huge amount of history up until the time of the Chinese takeover of Tibet, the genocide of the Tibetan people and the attempted eradication of the Buddhist tradition in the 1950's.

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. notice re: review of Sept. 13th, 1999
By A Customer
There are a number of misleading comments in the September 13, 1999 review from "A reader from Southern Vermont." For what it's worth: the *Blue Annals* is, in fact, a fine translation by Mr. Roerich of an extremely important Tibetan historical text by the renowned Tibetan historian `Gos lo-tsaaba gZhon-nu-dpal. The Tibetan text translated here is known as the *Deb-ther sngon-po*; it dates from the late 15th century. Roerich's translation is from 1946. I have not examined the 1988 reprint, but if it conforms to the previous edition, there is not (indeed there could not be, given the dates) any information whatsoever about "the Chinese takeover of Tibet, the genocide of the Tibetan people and the attempted eradication of the Buddhist tradition in the 1950's" in this work. For a very detailed (and fortunately still in print) treatment of post-1950 Tibetan history, the reader should see M. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951 : The Demise of the Lamaist State*.

The Blue Annals is a landmark in the historical literature of Tibet composed by a well known scholar and translator Gos lo-tsa-ba-gZon-nu dpal (1392-1481 A.D.). It is the main source of information for all later historical compilations in the "Land of Snows". This work is invaluable inasmuch as it establishes a firm chronology of events of Tibetan history and works out in detail the list of the names of famous religious teachers and their spiritual lineage. The work is divided into fifteen chapters, each dedicated to the history of a particular school or sect of Tibetan Buddhism. It provides a comparative study of the chronological data given by T`ang Annals, Blue Annals, and Tunhuang chronicles. The Blue Annals appears to be a faithful reproduction of the list given in the T`ang Annals with minor differences. The book concludes with the portrayal of the origin, etc. of the communities of the four schools. It contains indexes for Sutras and Sastras, Personal Names and Book Titles and Personal Names (Tibetan), etc.