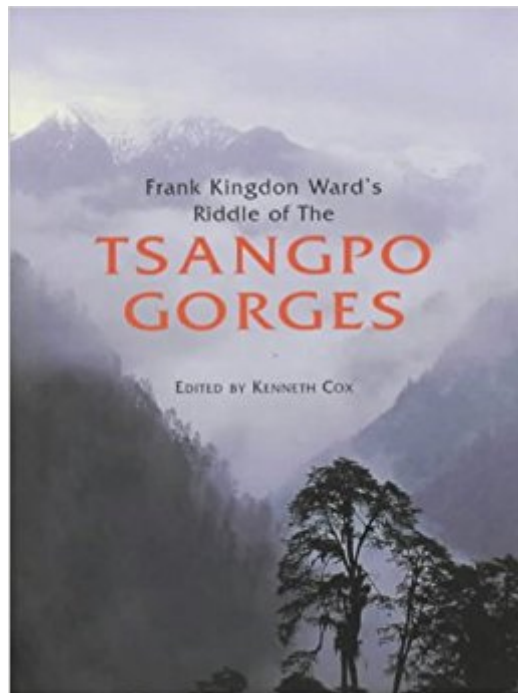




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Frank Kingdon Ward's Riddle Of The Tsangpo Gorges



Synopsis

A new, fully-illustrated edition designed to celebrate the 75th anniversary of this classic account of botanical exploration in Tibet in 1924-5. Little explored and virtually inaccessible, the Tsangpo Gorge in south-east Tibet is the world's deepest. Through it twists the Yarlong Tsangpo, Tibet's great river, emerging far below on the plains of India. This is the story of its exploration and the flora and fauna found there.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Original text by Frank Kingdon Ward, edited by Kenneth Cox. Additional material by Kenneth Cox, Ken Storm Jr. and Ian Baker Kenneth Cox, from a family of writers, plant hunters, nurserymen and world experts on rhododendrons, runs the family horticultural business in Scotland. He has travelled extensively and led two expeditions to Yunnan, China, and five to Tibet in search of plants. Kenneth R. Storm, Jr. has explored Mexican gorges, the Colorado Plateau, the Green and Colorado Rivers, the western Himalayan region of Ladakh and has made five journeys to the Tsangpo gorges. Ian Baker has written extensively on the art and culture of Tibet and the Himalayas. He has made eight expeditions into the region of the Tsangpo gorges following pilgrimage routes described in ancient Tibetan texts.

One of the best book I have read.

In a world where almost everywhere has been explored, it is exciting to read about the world's

deepest ravine, almost inaccessible, full of virgin forest, strange plants, and animals, and still not fully explored either by Chinese or Westerners. Frank Kingdon Ward explored it in the 1920s, in what was then Tibet, leaving a stretch of several miles unknown to all but the local tribes. His original book is reproduced as the core of the present one (with some editing of his words to remove comments that would today be viewed as unacceptably racist). There are also accounts of earlier explorations of the region, including the wild borderlands of India to the south, choked by subtropical forests and then populated with violent tribes (this border region is still disputed by China and India). Kingdon Ward was a botanist, focusing on the plant life of the gorge, whereas the new book gives accounts by modern explorers and covers additional aspects, such as Tibetan religion. There are some fascinating photographs: black and white ones by Kingdon Ward and modern color ones. Two I particularly like are the same view of mountains and old-growth forest taken from a cave where Kingdon Ward camped in the 1920s. One is Kingdon Ward's photograph, and the other is taken some 75 years later, with individual trees grown larger, a large glacier melted away, and the treeline higher up the mountains. Recent, separate expeditions by Western and Chinese teams in the 1990s have shrunk the unexplored stretch of the gorge to about three miles. The discoveries of the Westerners are described and illustrated in the book, including a "new" waterfall. Unfortunately, though, politics make an unwelcome intrusion at the end of the story.

I was really looking forward to this book after spending quite a lot to purchase it. However I was then very disappointed to find it had been designed and printed with large blocks of the smallest text I have ever seen in a book. It is actually difficult to read.

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