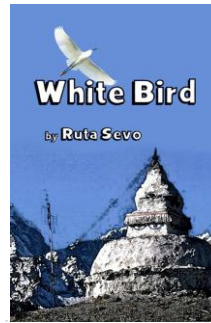




Self-publishing a Buddhist Novel Set in Nepal

Ruta Sevo, Ph.D.
2015

The novel



- ▶ Story and themes
- ▶ Research process
- ▶ Writing process
- ▶ Self-publishing process

What's it about?



A man travels to Nepal to scatter his brother's ashes.

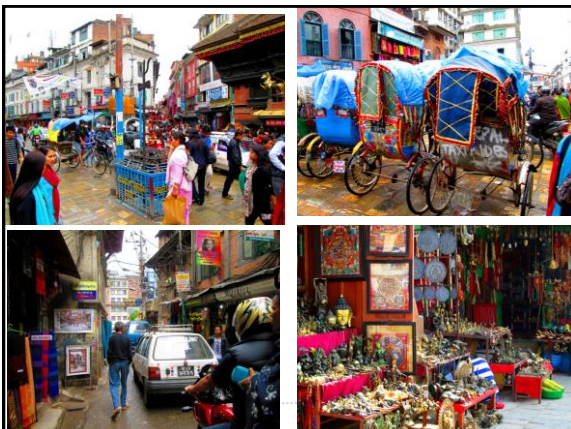
He discovers his brother had a love child who became an unlikely Tibetan Buddhist shaman.



The journey recreates his family and his sense of himself.

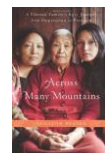
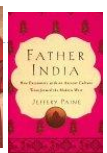
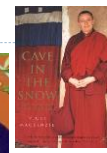
Themes

- ▶ Travel to Kathmandu, exotic tourism
- ▶ Tibetan refugee camps
- ▶ Peace Corps romance
- ▶ Expatriates in Kathmandu
- ▶ "An unlikely shaman"
- ▶ Two old ladies, psychic in Seattle
- ▶ A Western Buddhist nun
- ▶ Beliefs about death



Sources/Research

- ▶ Alexandra David-Neel
- ▶ Tibetan shamans
- ▶ Tibetan refugees & camps
- ▶ Western Buddhist nuns
- ▶ Peace Corps in Nepal
- ▶ Geography



Journeys to the Exotic, Secret East

My Journey to Lhasa – Alexandra David-Neel
Magic and Mystery in Tibet – Alexandra David-Neel

The Secret Lives of Alexandra David-Neel – Barbara Foster and Michael Foster

Seven Years in Tibet – Heinrich Harrar

Peaks and Llamas – Marco Pallis
Prisoners of Shangri-La – Donald Lopez
A Search for Secret India – Dr. Paul Brunta
Ultimate Journey – Richard Bernstein

Reinchantment – Jeffery Paine
Adventures with the Buddha – Jeffery Paine
Father India – Jeffery Paine

Touching My Father's Soul – Jamling Tenzing Norgay
Sherpas – James Fisher
A Portrait of Lost Tibet – Rosemary Jones Tung



Buddhist Nuns, Native and Western

Women of Wisdom – Tsultrim Allione

Traveller in Space – June Campbell

Meetings with Remarkable Women – Buddhist Teachers in America
 – Lenore Friedman

Being a Buddhist Nun – Kim Gutschow

Women in Tibet – Janet Gytso and Hanna Haunvik

Cave in the Snow – Vicki Mackenzie

Sleeping in Caves – Marilyn Stablein

Across Many Mountains – Yangzom Brauen (Tibetan refugee story)

H.P. Blavatsky, Tibet and Tulku – Geoffrey Barborka (spiritualism)



Elements of writing

- ▶ Who's this about?
- ▶ What's it about?
- ▶ Point of View or POV
- ▶ Scenes
- ▶ Plot points
- ▶ Dramatic structure
- ▶ Dialog
- ▶ Show versus tell
- ▶ The cast



Writing help

- ▶ **Writer.org** – classes
- ▶ Workshops – “workshopping” your drafts
- ▶ **Books:**
 - ▶ **Story Physics** – Larry Brooks
 - ▶ **The Scene Book** – Sandra Scofield
 - ▶ **The First Five Pages** – Noah Lukeman
 - ▶ **The Screenwriter's Workbook** – Syd Field
 - ▶ **Write Your Novel From the Middle** – James Scott Bell
- ▶ “Developmental editors”
 - ▶ Steven Bauer www.hollowtreeliterary.com
- ▶ Friends who are literary
- ▶ <http://www.patmcnees.com/> and <http://www.writersandeditors.com/>



Writer's Center in Bethesda



Self-publishing : it is technical

- ▶ Use of Word, PDF
- ▶ Interior design of a book
- ▶ Conventions of printed book: e.g. inside cover
- ▶ RULES for printed book
- ▶ Cover design
- ▶ Rights to cover photo?
- ▶ ISBN
- ▶ Kindle and ePUB formats (HTML)
- ▶ Upload mss to createspace or kindle-direct-publishing
 - ▶ <https://www.createspace.com/>
 - ▶ <https://kdp.amazon.com/>



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— Franz-Josef Wittmann
Jean-Henri Fabre Series

Shutterfly.com

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MAKE YOUR BOOK

Why Self-Publish?

- ▶ You need an agent to reach most commercial publishers
- ▶ Agents are highly selective (they hope for \$\$)
- ▶ Publishers are highly selective (they hope for \$\$)
- ▶ The industry is in flux, e.g. how much marketing support
- ▶ Quality is a subjective judgment; lots of opinions
- ▶ Do you map to a familiar genre?
- ▶ Stigma of self-publishing is going away
- ▶ **HOWEVER**, your own channels for marketing and distribution are weak
- ▶ Amazon has "Kindle Direct" program, Kindle Singles etc

Good Reasons

- ▶ You'll see publication in your lifetime
- ▶ Books for family are priceless
- ▶ Sharing books with friends is priceless
- ▶ It's a great hobby
- ▶ You never know...

Resources for self-publishing

- ▶ Help pages
- ▶ Books:
 - ▶ Building Your Book for Kindle
 - ▶ Publish on Amazon Kindle with Kindle Direct Publishing
 - ▶ Format Your Ebook for Kindle in One Hour
 - ▶ Do It Yourself Book Covers
 - ▶ From Word to Kindle
- ▶ Consultants
 - ▶ Fiverr.com (proof, edit, format, book cover)
- ▶ ISBN - <https://www.myidentifiers.com/>

My sites

- ▶ The novel: <http://momox.org/whitebird.html>
<http://www.amazon.com/White-Bird-Ruta-Sevo/dp/0990586200>
- ▶ Author page: <http://www.goodreads.com/sevo>
- ▶ Author page: <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/sevo>
- ▶ Trip report: <http://momox.org/nepalruta.pdf>
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