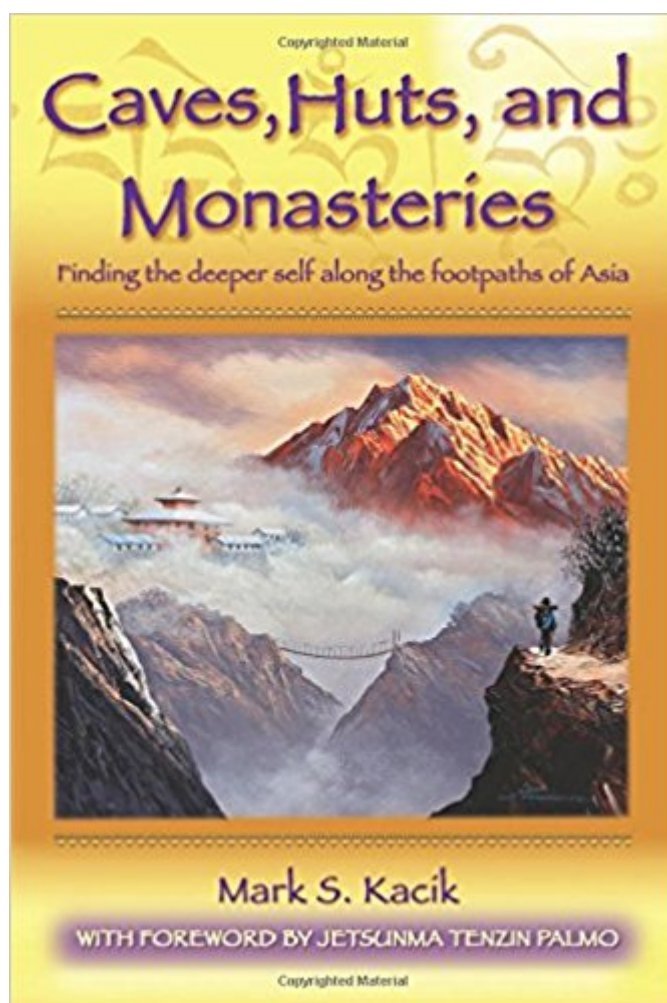


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# Caves, Huts, And Monasteries: Finding The Deeper Self Along The Footpaths Of Asia



## Synopsis

When the anxiety of materialistic excess overcomes your soul, and you hear a cry from deep within, what do you do? Author Mark Kacik traveled the remote back roads of Asia in search of a peaceful mind, a deep understanding of self, and an alternative to his hectic and materialistic American lifestyle. Probing remote footpaths and following the breeze of his soul, Kacik serendipitously encounters Buddhist masters in out-of-the-way temples and monasteries, where he is given deep meditative exercises and lessons in awareness, consciousness, and mindful living. Follow Kacik's spiritual odyssey as he travels through the timeless deserts of India, the frigid Himalayas of Nepal, scorching Vietnamese jungles, and the culturally rich Korean mountains and has surprising and sometimes terrifying adventures. Meet the incredible people he comes face-to-face with who lead lives so amazingly different from his own. *Caves, Huts, and Monasteries* is more than a travelogue: The vibrant descriptions of faraway jungles, mountains, and deserts, along with jewels of advice gifted from masters of various Buddhist traditions, speak to the heart of spiritual seekers of any faith tradition. Kacik shares the teachings that affected him most deeply; those that helped evolve his perception of self, and taught him that peace can settle in the wailing soul that remains open and still. Because all of us get stuck; all of us sometimes want to scream; all of us have heard our deeper self crying for more substance in our lives. "

## Book Information

Paperback: 298 pages

Publisher: Turning Stone Press (September 15, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1618521004

ISBN-13: 978-1618521002

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,343,545 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #78 in Books > Travel > Asia > Tibet #1440 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Tibetan #5910 in Books > Self-Help > Spiritual

## Customer Reviews

Mark S. Kacik is a spiritual seeker who has traveled the world studying local religious practices and customs. Although his practice is rooted in Japanese Zen, it is significantly influenced by Tibetan,

Vipassana, Vietnamese, and Korean traditions as well. An avid backpacker and backcountry adventurer, he has learned to thrive by living simply and seeing in nature an unfathomably complex expression of the Divine. Kacik is a mechanical engineer with a keen interest in quantum physics. He lives in Cleveland, Ohio, with his wife, Jayne.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I picked this book up by Mark Kacik. I must say I was pleasantly surprised and found myself unable to put the book down. It was such an adventure into the Asian world of Temples, Monasteries and other prayer practices in the Buddhist traditions. I must say I did not realize there are so many different forms. I practice Centering Prayer or also called Contemplative Prayer. Mark's book helped me to more focus and deepen my prayer experience. Mark visits about four or five counties exploring their temples and monasteries so you get a real flavor of the many forms of prayer practiced in the Buddhist traditions of that area. You learn to quiet your mind on a deeper level so the universe or God as you perceive can talk to you or just be in the quiet. In our everyday hectic American lives this is a refreshing book to read. Highly recommended.

I'm a Yoga Instructor, attend local Buddhist Temple when possible and have a pretty strong "Sitting" practice. For me, this was a great solid easy to read journey of Mark's quest to deepen his practice, both in a quiet monastic setting, and in the "normal" day to day craziness of living/working in the real everyday world that most of us live in. While it's not a How to Meditate book (it's not titled that way) it did give me inspiration to deepen my practice, appreciate the simple things in life and to be grateful for what I have. Buy it. Namaste.

This amazing book is an adventure story of Mark's soulful process toward enlightenment. His words so inspired me to practice with determination. His easy to understand explanation of Buddhist teachings and terms were very helpful in broadening my religious world view.

Caves, Huts and Monasteries was a surprise Christmas gift in 2015 from friends who have been spiritual partners for the past fifteen years. I'm usually a bit dubious about books that others select for me and happily I was amazed how beautifully this work fit into my own spiritual practice. I have been a serious meditator since 2001 and have practiced Vipassana meditation since 2009. After reading the introduction I wanted to dive in and push right through to the end and yet something told me to take a slow deliberate journey of discovery as Mark did on his many months' travels. I used the book as a mini retreat and read one chapter every several days

and allowed the truths to settle in and be diffused into my daily living and interactions with others. That approach was well worth the patience and yielded wonderful results in my practice: a greater appreciation of the many faces of Buddhism and a deeper understanding of the idea "one goal many paths". Mark writes what could be called a travelogue on one level and indeed it is an exciting adventure of navigating many different countries, societies, customs and Buddhist practices. I'm a traveler myself and I found his level of detail about the people, places and practices fascinating and richly rewarding. On the other hand it is a handbook, a guide to the many spiritual practices and the wisdom of a number of Buddhist schools that have evolved over two millennia. I believe that the more we delve into these different schools the more we realize that at their core the teachings of Gotama the Buddha are there: Perform no unwholesome actions, perform only wholesome actions and purify the mind. This is a joyous read and perhaps the best non-fiction book I've read in many years. As I understand it the question Mark asks of himself and perhaps we ask ourselves, is it possible to practice in Caves, Huts and Monasteries with highly evolved masters, developing calm and insight, and then return to hectic, active lives in the west and maintain the practice or does one need to become a monk or a nun and live apart. He does not give us his answer, so I can only hope that he will give us his answer in a follow on book.

I was given this book as a gift for my birthday by the editor and my friend, Deborah Burke. I could hardly put it down once I started it! From the cover to the last page I found it to be a fascinating journey into many practitioners practice. Not only did I love hearing about Mark's journey, I really loved hearing about the insights along the way and the gift of teachings that he was so fortunate to have sought out and experienced. I know I will read it more than once to absorb once again the teachings of the great masters, which always, always help to enhance one's own practice. Thank you Mark and Deborah for sharing this journey with us all. I encourage you to write on and let us know the next part of your inward journey and where you are today with the inner urgings. May you be well, may you be at ease with what is, may you be happy. Thanks again.

This is a truly amazing read, Mark takes you along a spiritual journey like no other. It's as if you are with him for the duration. His narratives bring you in to his experience and you feel as if you are there yourself. I must say that the wisdom contained in this book has transformed me. I have noticed that, after applying the meditation techniques Mark learned from the teachers he encountered has already deepened and enriched my practice. Not only is this a captivating story, it's a lesson, and a key text for learning. All in all, Inspiring!!! Namaste.

Authors true character shines in his Epilogue....

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