



Topples World

by Susan Murphy

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Sudha Johorey, wife of an Indian diplomat, was posted in Tibet in the late 1950s, during the Chinese occupation. She and her husband KC were friends and political allies of both Prime Minister Nehru and the young Dalai Lama, who extended his blessing for this book when it was first conceived.

Sudha was a teacher who opened schools wherever she and her husband were posted; a mother who raised their four children in daunting circumstances; and a woman whose devout spiritual practice is an inspiration to all. Throughout their years of service, the Johorey's played many instrumental roles pivotal to the ongoing dynamics of the Himalayan subcontinent today.

From the author

I accompanied this extraordinary couple to Dharamsala for a private audience with the Dalai Lama in 2005. Listening to their shared experiences in Tibet and seeing their deep connection was breathtaking! When the Dalai Lama implored them to write a book to set the story straight yet again, I knew that I would do whatever I could to honor his request and bring this lovely historical memoir to light. For the last ten years it has been my mission to bring Sudha's captivating story to light. Thanks to her amazing humility, grace, and humor, this task has been one of the great joys of my life.

Discussion Questions

1. How did Sudha's childhood prepare her for life of service? Discuss the varying sets of life skills passed down from her parents.
2. From the onset of her arranged marriage, Sudha expressed the desire for a break from the traditional Indian woman's role in marriage. Do you think she achieved this over the years?
3. Although a deep Hindu belief system was instilled in her at an early age, she was early on attracted to Buddhism. Discuss her seamless conversion.
4. Her husband was usually overly focused on his career. Although Sudha at times resented his fervor, isn't this what gave her the ability to be who she ended up being?
5. Although Sudha was so often in the center of history being made, she tells the story with a reserved objectivity. Discuss her laconic tone.
6. Throughout their postings, Sudha was a mother to four children. There are several times in the book she had to decide whether she wanted to be a wife and part of history and send her children off or be a mother and leave with them to safety. Discuss how difficult these decisions were.



7. Throughout the story, she is exposed to extraordinary people yet she never appears “star struck.” The tribal, Tibetan peasants and even her students held the same importance to her as the Dalai Lama, Prime Ministers and venerate monks. Discuss

About the author

Susan Murphy is a mother, grandmother, artist, baker, world traveler, and, now, an accidental author. She never planned to write a book, but a chance meeting with Sudha Johorey and His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 2005 led to nearly twelve years of research, interviewing, writing, editing and countless trips to India, all resulting in this fascinating memoir.