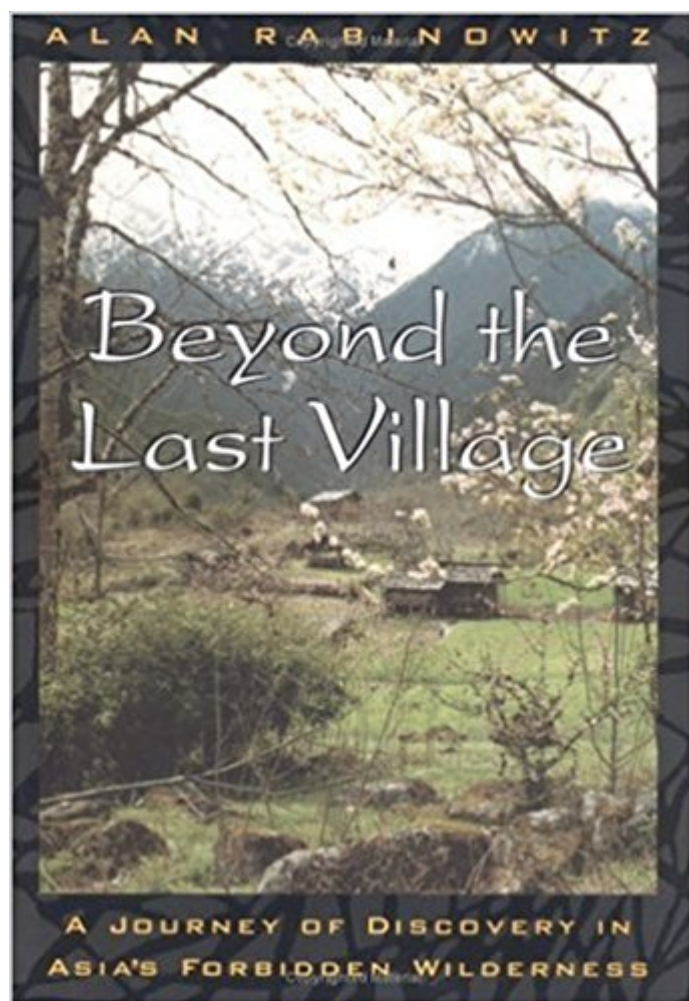


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Beyond The Last Village: A Journey Of Discovery In Asia's Forbidden Wilderness



Synopsis

In 1993, Alan Rabinowitz, called the Indiana Jones of wildlife science by The New York Times, arrived for the first time in the country of Myanmar, known until 1989 as Burma, uncertain of what to expect. Working under the auspices of the Wildlife Conservation Society, his goal was to establish a wildlife research and conservation programme and to survey the country's wildlife. He succeeded - not only discovering a species of primitive deer completely new to science but also playing a vital role in the creation of Hkakabo Razi National Park, now one of Southeast Asia's largest protected areas.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It feels like Conrad's Heart of Darkness in reverse, as he escapes the 'civilisation' of a brutal military regime to find peace and light in the farthest lands." (The Guardian)"...often reads like a dispatch not just from a distant place but from a distant time, a letter home from the Age of Discovery that was somehow delayed in transit for a couple of centuries." (The New York Times Book Review)

Alan Rabinowitz is Director of the Science and Exploration Program at the Wildlife Conservation Society based in the Bronx, New York. He is a frequent contributor to Natural History and is the author of two previous books: Jaguar (Island Press, 2000) and Chasing the Dragon's Tail (Doubleday, 1991).

Beyond the Last Village is an excellent read with riveting information for anyone who is interested in little known ethnic groups, animal species retention, and knowledge about people and groups that are quite literally hidden in remoteness. The account chronicles a joint effort between a U.S. zoo and the government of Myanmar to identify and protect species. The author trains a Myanmar crew in northern Myanmar, an area of the world unavailable to most outsiders, in methods and strategies to preserve wildlife, and also locates a small group of Asian pygmies, the Tarons, who will soon disappear.

I heard the author on an interview on NPR. I was fascinated by his story. I love travel adventures, and boy did he have some! I thought this would be a book I could go to sleep to and finally looked at my clock at 3 a.m. and thought about having to get up at 5 a.m. for work. His descriptions made me long to see the Icy Mountains of Myanmar. His sensitivity and compassion for both people and animals is heartwarming. His openness about his personal demons made me feel that I know him and that I took part in his journey as a friend. Loved the book!

Wonderful! I have previously read the book from the library. I found it so interesting and somewhat inspiring, I had to purchase my own copy. The reality shared in this book makes you appreciate the great wonders of our earth.

This is a wonderful and fascinating book. It joins several other Rabinowitz books - all interesting. After growing up with all of the "jungle books" featuring hunters and explorers (though I did enjoy them and I understand the times in which they were written), it is so fulfilling to read of preserving our fellow creatures and protecting the habitat as our world has been evolving.

I have been to Burma and thought this was a very interesting book. It is good to know some of the past history when traveling there.

Written by a biologist...this book was interesting as to the natural history of the area. It was a slow read if you do not have an interest in this area.

Added Alan Rabinowitz's other books to my library..Need to research it and see if there are DVD's made! Thanks alot!

Not many Americans know where Myanmar is; it might help if it hadn't changed its name from Burma. And almost no outsider has gone up to the far northern reaches of the country, where it shares borders with India, Tibet, and western China. Alan Rabinowitz has been, and has played a role for the good of the region and for all the world. He tells about that role in *Beyond the Last Village: A Journey of Discovery in Asia's Forbidden Wilderness* (Island Press). It is an intensely personal story about important human and ecological issues. Rabinowitz has been an explorer and an expert in setting up nature reserves in other places, but he was amazed to find the hunters dealing in body parts of rare animals, mostly in trade with China for salt. In expeditions by foot that sound as tough as the ones Victorian explorers had to face, he was able to come to terms with hunters, planning a park system that would encourage hunters to benefit from the study and the conservation of wildlife, rather than the commercial disposal of it; such a system ran, at least partially, on salt as a reward to the former hunters, making wildlife more valuable alive than dead. He also had to try to deal with the bureaucracy of the Myanmar government, which seems stranger than most such institutions. Strangely, Christian proselytizing in the area, teaching that all animals were placed here for our use, was a serious obstacle to be overcome. It is often his attempts to connect with those of other cultures that are the most moving parts of this book. For Rabinowitz, connecting has not been easy. He still has the stutter that crippled him as a child, and his book has flashbacks of his upbringing and the difficulty of dealing with parents whom he blamed for it and who blamed themselves. He has openly described the difficulties being an explorer has posed within his marriage, and the strain between him and his wife caused by his absences and of the miscarriages they had to go through. The journey through Myanmar was for him also a personal journey dealing with his childhood, being a husband, and becoming a father. He succeeded in sparking a wildlife reserve that is something we can all profit from, but his success in fighting his own personal demons is laid out here as well. With good humor, astute observation, passion, and candor, Rabinowitz has provided a book of exotic travel, and something far more.

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