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Ashild Kolas, Monica P. Thowsen : **On the Margins of Tibet (Studies on Ethnic Groups in China)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised **On the Margins of Tibet (Studies on Ethnic Groups in China)**:

The state of Tibetan culture within contemporary China is a highly politicized topic on which reliable information is rare. But what is Tibetan culture and how should it be developed or preserved? The Chinese authorities and the

Tibetans in exile present conflicting views on almost every aspect of Tibetan cultural life. Ashild Kolas and Monika Thowsen have gathered an astounding array of data to quantify Tibetan cultural activities--involving Tibetan language, literature, visual arts, museums, performing arts, festivals, and religion. Their study is based on fieldwork and interviews conducted in the ethnic Tibetan areas surrounding the Tibetan Autonomous Region--parts of the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan, and Qinghai. Aware of the ambiguous nature of information collected in restricted circumstances, they make every effort to present a complete and unbiased picture of Tibetan communities living on China's western frontiers. Kolas and Thowsen investigate the present conditions of Tibetan cultural life and cultural expression, providing a wealth of detailed information on topics such as the number of restored monasteries and nunneries and the number of monks, nuns, and tulkus (reincarnated lamas) affiliated with them; sources of funding for monastic reconstruction and financial support of clerics; types of religious ceremonies being practiced; the content of monastic and secular education; school attendance; educational curriculum and funding; the role of language in Tibetan schools; and Tibetan news and cultural media. *On the Margins of Tibet* will be of interest to historians and social scientists studying modern China and Tibetan culture, and to the many others concerned about Tibet's place in the world.

"Kolas and Thowsen have written a useful work that contributes to the debates on contemporary Tibetan culture and development in China. In the often-polarized environment of such debates, this book offers an alternative data set of information, all the more unique because the authors had official research access to each of the twenty-five Tibetan counties under survey. This work ultimately seeks to understand the viability of Tibetan cultural survival." *Asian Ethnology* "Kolas and Thowsen have bravely sketched the contours of religious and cultural trends in the eastern Tibet regions, while offering detailed illustrations . . . the vast geographic area and multiple arenas addressed in the book comprise an unprecedented map for further research on Tibetan religious and cultural production and a possible model for facing similar methodological challenges." *History of Religions* "There is a need for the kind of broad-ranging, interregional comparative fieldwork the authors carried out. They provide a snapshot glimpse of the contemporary situation--something others without their official access could not have accomplished. A useful and timely report." Charlene E. Makley, Reed College "On the Margins of Tibet consists primarily of detailed empirical observations of two contexts of 'culture' in Tibetan society: schools, which emphasize the secular aspects promoted by the Chinese government, and monasteries, which emphasize the sacred aspects promoted by the Government in Exile. It is a major contribution to the growing literature on the situation in Tibetan areas." Stevan Harrell, University of Washington About the Author Ashild Kolas and Monika P. Thowsen collaborated on this book while serving as researchers at the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo.