Visions From The Fields Of Merit; Drawings of Tibet and the Himalayas by Philip Sugden

"Based on his journeys to the Himalayas and Tibet, he has created a body of work that testifies to his dedication, not just for the cause of the Tibetan people, but also to the transformation of people through the process of art."

--**His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

"I find this book an enchantment; through the meditative clarity of Philip Sugden's vision of the Himalayan world, one is transported into an environment which, as Sugden suggests, is 'a catalyst to perceptual change.' the sumptuously produced drawings and text of this book make the reader's journey a pleasure, and the artist's organic and vibrant images bring to life the mysteries of a hidden and underappreciated culture. If you are a novice to the Himalayan world (as I am), you will find much to savor for the first time; if you are a veteran, there will be much in this volume to take you back to the subtle ephphanies of the Himalayan experience."

--**Oscar Hijuelos**, Pulitzer Prize in Literature for *Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* and *Dark Dude.*

"Visions From The Fields of Merit is a beautiful and insightful work of art that probes the depths of reality and the subtleties of our perceptions of it. The exquisite drawings, with their firm delicacy of line, portray both the concrete immediacy and the evanescent mystery of Tibet and the Himalayas. Directly inspired by Philip's experience of the philosophy and practice of Tibetan Buddhism, these drawings and the accompanying captions and introduction point to the higher role of art - to transform our perceptions of reality and awaken a fresh awareness of ourselves and the world around us."

--**Edwin Bernbaum**, Author of *Sacred Mountains of the World*, and *The Way to Shambhala; A Search for the Mythical Kingdom Beyond the Himalayas.*

"Visions from the Fields of Merit is a detailed, inspired and personal view of Tibet, Nepal, India and the mountains they share. By an artist many describe as obsessive and meticulous in his detail. Sugden devotes half of these 144 exquisite pages to his drawings, the other half to journal notes and other commentary that infuse it all with the unique culture he visited 11 times before these works were published. Quality is in the detail, and that seems to describe the reaction by professionals to Sugden’s work in his many exhibitions. Even to the choice of paper. He prefers handmade Himalayan Daphne paper and an emphasis on simple, powerful details. Mountains and monasteries occupy much of the subject matter, as do the people of this special destination controlled for years now by the Chinese. His purpose is not political, but Sugden does want to help preserve a culture that may be disappearing. Part of that is the Buddhist eagerness to remove or release all the “baggage” of life’s journeys to permit a pure expression of reality. The author notes that

many of today’s scientists are adopting the notion that there are no true, perfect answers. Even in physics. Followers of New Age principles will appreciate that many of the people Sugden captures here have believed as much for centuries. Page after page, evidence of meditation and an appreciation of the mysterious power and peace that lies yonder."

Reviewed by Bill Kavanaugh and
published in the Spring/Summer edition of ***The Book Reader***
Scotts Valley, California