

## Far from the Rooftop of the World: Travels among Tibetan Refugees on Four Continents

**Amy Yee**

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Amy Yee's book *Far from the Rooftop of the World* features the narratives of everyday Tibetans in exile.

Gathered in India from 2008 to 2010 and in Australia, Belgium, and the United States from 2015 to 2021, the book contains the narratives of people who fled their homes in Tibet and those who were born in exile. It centers the experiences of everyday Tibetans and spans generations, vocations, gender, and geography. Here, stories shared between friends over a meal are told with the same care and reverence as are those about interactions with the Dalai Lama.

A throughline is established: people blame the Chinese government for the personal and cultural pain they've experienced—not the Chinese people. This Tibetan compassion and solidarity toward Chinese people is a core theme; it comes to the fore due to Yee's identity as an American woman of Chinese descent.

Of particular power is Deckyi's story. She fled Tibet in 2008 during the Chinese government's crackdown against pro-Tibetan sentiments. Though previously apolitical, she agreed to photocopy pro-Tibet fliers at the behest of two Tibetan Buddhist monks. When the government found out, the monks were arrested. Fearing that her connection to the monks and her small act of assistance would lead to her own imprisonment or death, Deckyi and her husband fled their comfortable lives in Tibet, eventually settling in Dharamsala, India. Despite one small action changing the course of her life, Deckyi expresses no regrets, saying, "we did something right, something good for Tibet."

Through incredible personal narratives, *Far from the Rooftop of the World* paints a deep, nuanced picture of the Tibetan diaspora and the real human impact of China's policy toward Tibet.

CAMILLE TINNIN (November / December 2023)

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