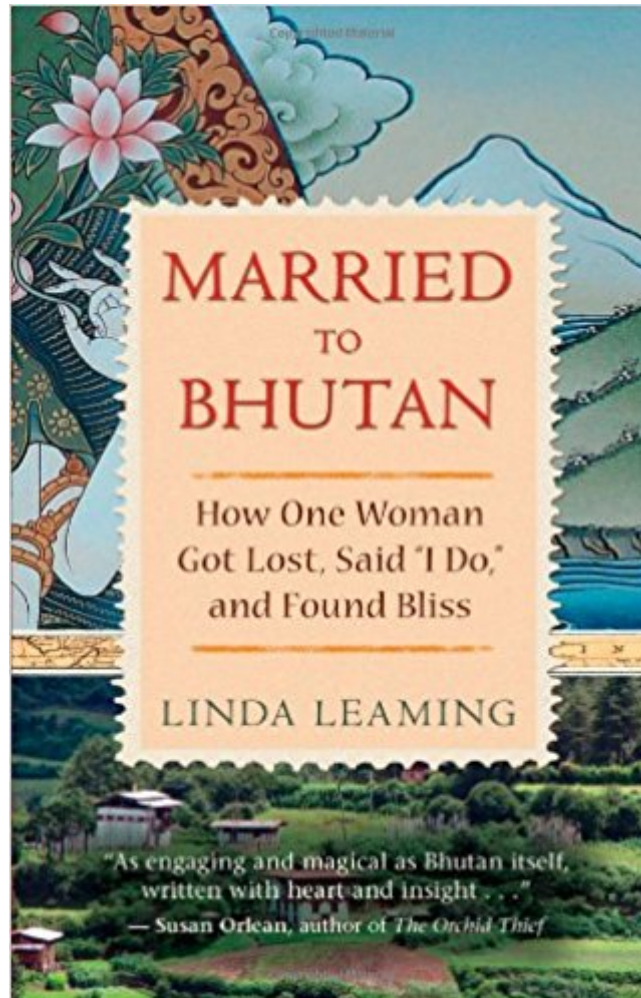


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Married To Bhutan: How One Woman Got Lost, Said "I Do," And Found Bliss



Synopsis

Tucked away in the eastern end of the Himalayas lies Bhutan—a tiny, landlocked country bordering China and India. Impossibly remote and nearly inaccessible, Bhutan is rich in natural beauty, exotic plants and animals, and crazy wisdom. It is a place where people are genuinely content with very few material possessions and the government embraces “Gross National Happiness” instead of Gross National Product. In this funny, magical memoir, we accompany Linda Leaming on her travels through South Asia, sharing her experiences as she learns the language, customs, and religion; her surprising romance with a Buddhist artist; and her realizations about the unexpected path to happiness and accidental enlightenment. As one of the few Americans to have lived in Bhutan, Leaming offers a rare glimpse into the quirky mountain kingdom so many have only dreamed of. For over ten years, Leaming has lived and worked in the town of Thimphu, where there are no traffic lights and fewer than 100,000 people. “If enlightenment is possible anywhere,” she writes, “I think it is particularly possible here.” The Bhutanese way of life can seem daunting to most Westerners, whose lives are consumed with time, efficiency, and acquiring things. But Leaming shows us that we don’t necessarily have to travel around the world to appreciate a little Bhutan in our own lives, and that following our dreams is the way to be truly happy.

Book Information

Paperback: 264 pages

Publisher: Hay House (April 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1401928463

ISBN-13: 978-1401928469

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.7 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 159 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #126,027 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in Books > Travel > Asia > Bhutan #722 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Travelers & Explorers #4239 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs

Customer Reviews

“As engaging and magical as Bhutan itself, written with heart and insight, *Married to Bhutan* is a wonderful memoir and a great journey.” • Susan Orlean, author of *The Orchid Thief*

“*Married to Bhutan* is wonderfully wise and endearing, much like the Himalayan kingdom that is its subject. Leaming’s graceful, witty prose captures the magic of Bhutan, a place where happiness is more than just a nice idea. It is a way of life.” • Eric Weiner, author of *The Geography of Bliss*

“After reading this book, I wanted to marry Bhutan” and Linda Leaming. I was inspired by Linda’s open-hearted embrace of such a completely different culture and way of life, take lack of plumbing as just one small example. In the end, her book is about openness and love and how they are expressed in the caring actions of ordinary Bhutanese people. Linda shows us the beauty of Bhutan and expresses a tenderness toward her earthly in-laws that inspires me to open my own heart more and helps me realize that we are all bigger and more capable of love and adventure than we can imagine.” • Cyndi Lee, Founder, OM yoga

“Paradise exists and you can find it within the pages of this book, which provides a delightful and charming trek through the happiest, most beautiful, and most serene place on earth, Bhutan. A must-read for all those who know that the best journey’s take place in multiple dimensions simultaneously.” • Arielle Ford, author of *The Soulmate Secret*

Linda Leaming is a writer whose work has appeared in *Ladies’ Home Journal*, *Mandala*, *Guardian UK*, *A Woman’s Asia* (*Travelers’ Tales*), and many other publications. Eric Weiner included her in his bestseller, *The Geography of Bliss*. Originally from Nashville, she has an M.F.A. in fiction from the University of Arizona; and she regularly speaks about Bhutan at colleges, churches, seminars, and book groups. She is married to the renowned Bhutanese *thanka* painter, Phurba Namgay. Find her at: www.marriedtobhutan.com and www.twitter.com/lindaleaming.

This book is a wonderful, informative book about life in bhutan, you almost feel like you are there. I have visited Bhutan and the descriptions by Linda Leaming are truthful and beautiful about the people and geography of this magical country. I hope more people in America will read this book and put their life in perspective , we are not on this earth forever, make your life count: that does not mean with money and material things, you are not taking one thing with you when you leave, just the love and kindness you gave will matter. Signed: Daunn Munn

Married to Bhutan is the best book I've read this year so far. And I stumbled upon it by accident. I was looking at Eric Raff's "No Sense of Direction" and this was one of the "customers also read" choices. Since Leaming's memoir is about following your intuition and about choices, I like the fact that it fell into my lap. When I was about 13, my English teacher at my school in Ireland left and went to Bhutan. She came back and did a slideshow for the whole school. I just remember how happy and relaxed she seemed. There was one picture of her sitting in an outdoor bath, smiling, with a grinning young Asian man pouring water over her. All the girls laughed nervously. I never forgot how she had "followed her bliss." I can't remember if she came back to teach, or returned to Bhutan. But it was a rare glimpse of someone daring to make an unconventional choice. To get back to Leaming's memoir. It's beautifully written. A tongue in cheek humor comes through in the first part, where Leaming describes her experiences teaching English at a school in Bhutan. Her efforts to learn Dzongkha, the Bhutanese language, are truly hilarious. I guess I wondered why she was so desperate to fit in in this foreign country. The funny thing about the book for me is that as it progressed, I really didn't take to Bhutan! I realized that I would be quite unhappy there, what with the isolation, the crazy roads, the religious conformity, not having water on a regular basis, and so on. But I never for a moment doubted Leaming's love of the country. And I found her description of her relationship with her now husband, a *thangka* painter at the school, quite touching. There is a picture of them together at the end that melted my heart. They look right together. The book is not so much introverted and psychological as it is a meditation on happiness and making choices. Leaming says, "In the West it is possible to live and be asleep. In Bhutan one is compelled to wake up." She has certainly made what many people would think of as a crazy leap, to leave behind all that she knows and fully adopt a foreign country and its ways--and yet it makes perfect sense. In the end Leaming suggests that we can all find our own version of Bhutan, off the beaten path.

I lost myself completely in this book. Humorous, entertaining, witty, fun and insightful, Married to Bhutan makes you think about what you love and how to find yourself. Anyone who has ever entertained the idea that we are simultaneously in charge of our destiny and NOT in charge of our destiny will love this book. Self-deprecating and funny, Linda makes us appreciate both the awkwardness and the beauty of everyday events and tells a love story about life in a way that is appealing to everyone. This book makes you laugh and want to love something and someone so clearly and with such abandon that you cannot put it down. I loved reading it and started over once I had finished so as not to allow the glow of its pages to fade!!!!

I was invited to Bhutan to speak at a International Congress on Asian Medicine and I fell in love too! So as I read this book I was totally captivated and I felt like I was back in Bhutan. The people are indeed wonderful and happy! I delayed reading the last chapter because I did not want the book to end! I've since joined her web page and get news from time to time. I am amazed at how well she acclimated coming from the Continental U.S. to Bhutan but I can definitely relate and indeed how she describes Bhutan and her people is very accurate. I love this book!!! I had a wonderful time and a very profound Spiritual experience. I will be returning to Bhutan. They truly have had over 100 years of peace and happiness! Get it, enjoy it.

I read this book about six months ago, in preparation to going to Bhutan on a GeoEx tour and just finished rereading it now that I'm back. Had a wonderful trip and, loved this book. It was a great preparation for the trip. The author's description of the country really helped me prepare for a fascinating experience. She has a wonderful eye and a great sense of humor. I really enjoy her insights into her own journey and why she was there and her marriage. Actually I'd love to meet her and wish I could have done that when in Bhutan. Now having returned and preparing to write some travel blogs about the experience I found rereading it make my experience all the more meaningful. If you are interested in Bhutan, thinking about going there or just want a fun and interesting read, I recommend this book.

I finished it but I don't know that I'd recommend it. It is an interesting and unusual personal story

After a two-week Odyssey through parts of Bhutan it was very interesting to read Linda Leaming's book. I saw a very different country wholly through western eyes, she sees it with "easternified" eyes. The book helps to recognize places, to understand why things are as they are, and to slowly begin to let parts of the "Bhutan thinking" seep in through your skin. Bhutan is a country which cannot be understood by only visiting it for a few weeks, a good guidance is needed, and Linda Leaming provides just that, apart from her own "life journey" through Bhutan.

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