



# A Jewish Mother in Shangri-la

*Rosie Rosenzweig*

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An

old joke tells of a Jewish woman who treks to the Himalayas to seek an audience with a guru sitting in seclusion on a mountaintop. When at last she comes before him, she implores: "Sheldon, come home!"

Rosie

Rosenzweig became that Jewish mother—but in real life, the story has a different ending. Instead of asking her Buddhist son, Ben, to come home, Rosie accepts his invitation to find out about Buddhism firsthand. Together they visit retreat centers in Europe and Asia and meet leading meditation masters who are Ben's gurus: Vietnamese teacher Thich Nhat Hanh and Tibetan lamas Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche and Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche. While struggling to come to terms with Ben's choice of a spiritual path so different from everything that she cherishes, Rosie finds that she is learning more about herself than she anticipated.

The

adventures of Rosie recounts take her from her Boston suburb to a Zen hermitage in France, an enclave of Tibetan Buddhists in Nepal, and finally to her own spiritual home in Jerusalem. Whether she is practicing mindfulness meditation, sharing a cup of tea with a Zen master, or worrying about bowing down to idols, Rosie is intent in her quest to find common ground between two ancient traditions, to deepen her understanding of her son, and to find a way to her own authentic experience of truth. Hers is a mission of peace that seeks to build a bridge of understanding between cultures and faiths while remaining true to her own Jewish identity.

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