



# Sky Burial: An Eyewitness Account of China's Brutal Crackdown in Tibet

*Blake Kerr*

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## **Sky Burial: An Eyewitness Account of China's Brutal Crackdown in Tibet** Blake Kerr

Sky Burial is the remarkable story of a young American physician who witnesses the largest independence demonstrations in Lhasa since China entered Tibet in 1949. After graduating from medical school, Blake Kerr hitch-hiked across the Tibetan Plateau with a college friend, John Ackerly, and trekked as high as they could on the Tibetan side of Everest in sneakers. Before returning to Lhasa, there were glimpses of China's occupation: Tibetan children unable to learn Tibetan in Chinese schools; Buddhist monks at monasteries who were "tour guides in a museum;" and Tibetans in cities outnumbered by a majority of Chinese immigrants. On October 1st 1987, China's National Day, monks chanting "Free Tibet" prompted thousands of Tibetans to demonstrate. Dr. Kerr documented 12 deaths when Chinese police opened fire on unarmed Tibetan men, women and children. Sneaking out to treat the wounded who hid in their homes and monasteries, Dr. Kerr also met the victims of torture and forced sterilization. After being arrested and escaping to Kathmandu, Dr. Kerr's and Mr. Ackerly's testimony of the riots in Lhasa led to international condemnation of China's crackdown in Tibet. Both men have since become activists committed to ending China's military occupation of Tibet. Mr. Ackerly worked as president of the International Campaign for Tibet for 20 years. Dr. Kerr has journeyed to Tibetan refugee camps in India, and conducted on site investigations in Tibet of China's torture of Tibetan political prisoners, and China's National Family Planning Policy of coerced abortion, sterilization and infanticide. Sky Burial's unprecedented, first-hand accounts of Tibetans struggling for freedom in their Land of Snows articulates why many Tibetans fear that the Chinese are trying to end their race.

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