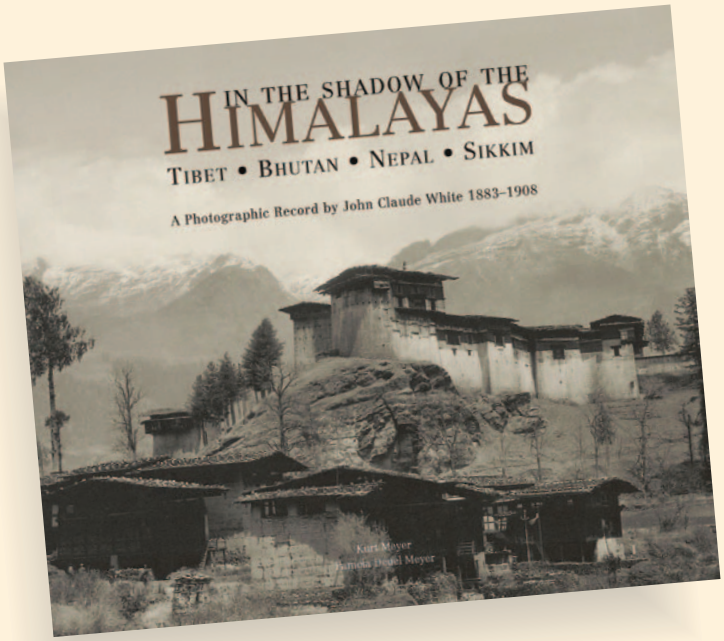
In the Shadow of the Himalayas

Tibet • Bhutan • Nepal • Sikkim

A Photographic Record by John Claude White 1883–1908

Kurt Meyer and Pamela Deuel Meyer



"This book is to be treasured; it contains many rare photographs that capture our cultural heritage."

Dasho Nob Tshering
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan

"John Claude White photographed with rare introspective skill. Kurt and Pamela Meyer bring together an amazing collection of photos of the erstwhile British civil servant, who has frozen moments in time with his camera."

Suman Tarafdar, *The Financial Express*

John Claude White was a civil engineer by education, a colonial administrator by profession, and a photographer by vocation. His photographs of the Himalayas were taken from 1883–1908. He worked for a year as an engineer at the British Residency in Kathmandu and spent twenty-one years based in Gangtok, Sikkim as the first British political officer overseeing the British interests in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet. Wherever he travelled, he photographed the world around him: panoramas of the vast Tibetan landscape; mountains and glaciers of Sikkim; portraits of the royal court of the king of Bhutan; the monks and monasteries of Lhasa. Mules followed him on the rugged mountain trails bearing his photographic equipment, and ensuring that the fragile glass plates survived the long return trip south intact, to be printed by the Johnston and Hoffman photography studio. White spent his entire professional life working for the British Raj. In 1909 he retired to England, where he published his memoirs *Sikhim and Bhutan: Twenty-One Years on the North-East Frontier 1887–1908*. This book is a tribute to this extraordinary photographer.

Kurt Meyer, Fellow Emeritus of the American Institute of Architects, was born in Zürich, Switzerland and received his architectural degree from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH). For a quarter of a century he devoted all of his spare time to exploring the Himalayas. He is a collector of rare books on Central Asia and the Himalayan countries. **Pamela Deuel Meyer** first travelled to the Himalayas in the 1970s after earning her degree in journalism from Stanford University. The Meyers lived for a decade in Nepal where, in addition to researching John Claude White, they documented the culture of the artistic Tharu people of Nepal's lowlands. They have previously published two books—*The Kings of Nepal and the Tharu of the Tarai* and *The Mahabharata: The Tharu Barka Naach*, and a documentary video of the Tharu Mahabharata.

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