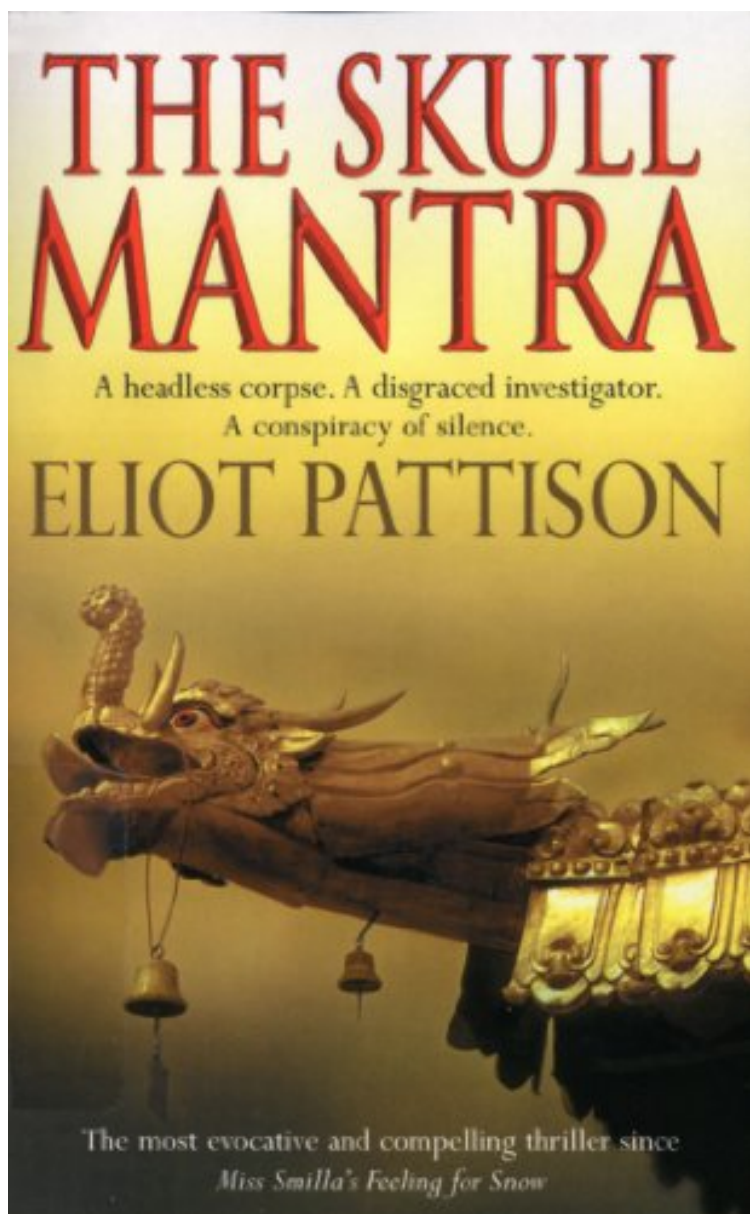


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The Skull Mantra



Par Eliot Pattison
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Par Eliot Pattison : The Skull Mantra before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Skull Mantra:

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Description : Description du produitCritical acclaim ranks THE SKULL MANTRA with Gorky Park and Smilla's Sense of Snow as a novel as much about a people and a place--the Tibetans of the high Himalayas--as it is a gripping thriller. Winner of the Edgar Award for Best First Novel, author Eliot Pattison masterfully scales the heights of the genre, taking readers to the top of the world while he chills us to the bone...The corpse is missing its head and is dressed in American clothes.Found by a Tibetan prison work gang on a windy cliff, the grisly remains clearly belong to someone too important for Chinese authorities to bury and forget.So the case is handed to veteran police inspector Shan Tao Yun. Methodical, clever Shan is the best man for the job, but he too is a prisoner, deported to Tibet for offending Beijing.Granted a temporary release, Shan is soon pulled into the Tibetan people's desperate fight for its sacred mountains and the

Chinese regime's blood-soaked policies. Then, a Buddhist priest is arrested, a man Shan knows is innocent. Now time is running out for Shan to find the real killer...in an astonishing, emotionally charged story that will change the way you think about Tibet--and freedom--forever. AUTHOR BIO: ELIOT PATTISON is a world traveler and frequent visitor to China, whose numerous books and articles on international policy issues have been published on three continents. *The Skull Mantra* is his first work of fiction.

Presentation de l'auteur 'Summoning is a dangerous thing. To the old Buddhists, words were the most dangerous weapon of all.' Shan Tao Yun is a former investigator for the Chinese government who once got a little too close to the truth. Now he breaks rocks in a Tibetan prison camp high in the Himalayas. Only the remarkable courage of the Buddhist monks who are his fellow prisoners give him the will to survive. But when a smartly dressed headless corpse is discovered on the bleak mountainside, Shan is forced to become a detective once more. And as he uncovers a web of intrigue involving a beautiful American mining engineer, Tibetan sorcerers, corrupt Chinese officials and the Buddhist Resistance, he begins to realize that far more than his own survival is at stake. Not many political thrillers are set in Tibet, and few can match the power and poetry of this debut novel by journalist Eliot Pattison. At the heart of the story is a forced labor camp where the Chinese imprison Buddhist monks and other local dissidents they've swept up since taking over Tibet. The prison also holds a few special Chinese prisoners--including Shan Tao Yun. This middle-aged man was once the inspector general of the Ministry of Economy in Beijing, specializing in fraud cases. For reasons even he doesn't understand, he has been imprisoned and brutalized, and now he spends his days breaking rocks high in the Himalayas on a road crew called the People's 404th Construction Brigade. Shan manages to survive under these harsh conditions thanks to the spiritual guidance of his fellow prisoners, but this precarious balance is threatened by the discovery of the headless body of a local Chinese official near a road construction site. The dead man's head soon turns up in a famous shrine--a cave that contains the skulls of heroic monks. The shrewd Red Army colonel in charge of the district asks Shan to conduct an investigation: offers of better food and conditions combined with threats against his monk friends convinces him to take on the task. Colonel Tan wants a fast resolution that incriminates a mute, passive monk found near the cave, but Shan is certain that the man isn't guilty. More likely killers include other high-ranking Chinese officials, as well as some American mining capitalists who had personal as well as financial dealings with the dead man. By engaging his readers in a mass of details, Pattison makes us believe completely in Shan and his perilous situation--and creates a rare combination of excitement and enlightenment. --Dick Adler From Publishers Weekly A venerable plot device The discredited detective given one last chance A is invested with stunning new life in this debut thriller from a veteran journalist who clearly knows his exotic territory. The gulags of Tibet, where the Chinese keep the Buddhist monks and other locals they've swept up since occupying the country, also house a few special Chinese prisoners. Shan Tao Yun, working as a laborer on a road crew called the People's 404th Construction Brigade high in the Himalayas, was once the inspector general of the Ministry of Economy in Beijing before he was imprisoned for refusing Party membership. Now he struggles to survive his harsh new life, gaining spiritual sustenance from the monks in his brigade. The discovery of the headless body of a local official, wearing American clothes and carrying American cash, changes all that, as Shan is threatened and cajoled by the shrewd colonel in charge of the district into conducting an investigation. Col. Tan wants a quick and dirty job that implicates a monk found near the site, but Shan knows the man isn't guilty: more-likely culprits include other high-ranking Chinese and a pair of American mining entrepreneurs. To encourage Shan to come to a rapid resolution, Tan dangles the fate of the monks of the 404th before him, surrounding their barracks with brutal Public Security troops. Like Martin Cruz Smith's Arkady Renko, Shan becomes our Don Quixote, an apolitical guide through a murky world of failed socialism. As his Sancho, Pattison has created another memorable character, an ambitious and conflicted young Tibetan called Yeshe, who can "sound like a monk one moment and a party functionary the next." Set against a background that is alternately bleak and blazingly beautiful, this is at once a top-notch thriller and a substantive look at Tibet under siege. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.