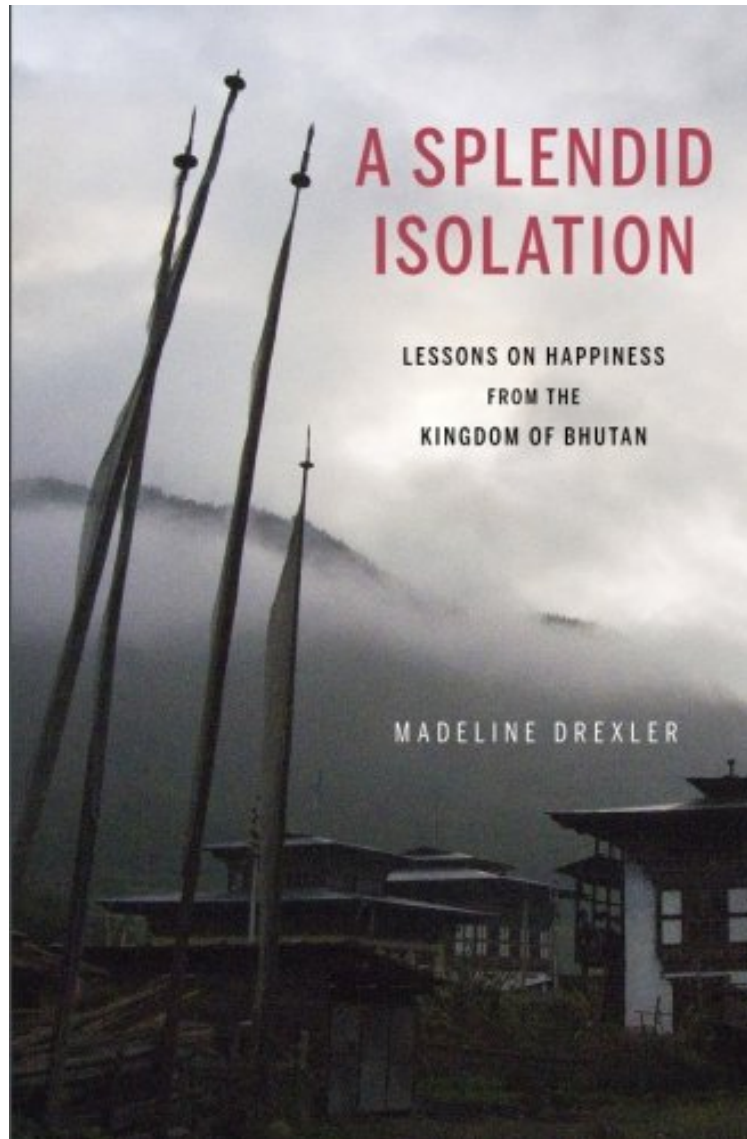


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## A Splendid Isolation: Lessons on Happiness from the Kingdom of Bhutan

*Madeline Drexler*

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**Madeline Drexler : A Splendid Isolation: Lessons on Happiness from the Kingdom of Bhutan** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Splendid Isolation: Lessons on Happiness from the Kingdom of Bhutan:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Fascinating Look at BhutanBy ReactingtoLitWhile on a trip to Bhutan, I was made aware of this book. After spending ten days in the country, I appreciated the contents of the variety of essays written by Drexler. Her essays provide an examination of a variety of aspects of Bhutan, specifically the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) as viewed from different perspectives within the country. This book is written for a specific audience--people interested in Bhutan, people who will or who have traveled to Bhutan.7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An exquisitely beautiful bookBy Rocky RicewingDrexler tells the story of Bhutan's unique experiment in elucidating and prioritizing Gross National Happiness (GNH). She tells it through dozens of interviews with citizens, Buddhists, and government officials. Even better, the tale is transmitted through beautiful narrative passages describing Bhutan's culture and traditions. It is almost inconceivable that a monarchy would voluntarily and on its own initiative cede power to democracy, and that that government would be accountable to quantify and measure GNH. As Bhutan now modernizes and confronts the globalization challenges of the 21st century, I can only hope that GNH remains front and center in its priorities.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Tradition in ProgressBy Robert G. SimonThis beautifully written book opens up a remote and unfamiliar country in which Buddhism is ingrained in the fabric of social and political life. Drexler provides an introduction to Buddhism along with Bhutan, and also to the country's role on the world stage of progressive politics. However, the story of contemporary Bhutan should appeal to readers of any political or religious persuasion, since the author's love of the country does not preclude a deeply probing analysis of it. She is undaunted in reporting the conflicts and inconsistencies within Bhutan's concept of "happiness" and of itself. This account also serves as a case study of the effect of modernization on the social structures that originally sustained tradition in any number of countries now undergoing development. As Bhutan provides a particularly moving example of precious traditional values in action and peril, I look forward to a sequel, some 5 or 10 years hence, to tell us how the soul of the nation has fared in opening to the rest of the world.

What does Bhutan understand about happiness that the rest of the world does not? Award-winning journalist and author Madeline Drexler recently traveled to this Himalayan nation to discover how the audacious policy known as Gross National Happiness plays out in a fast-changing society where Buddhism is deeply rooted--but where the temptations and collateral damage of materialism are rising. Her reported essay blends lyrical travelogue, cultural history, personal insights, and provocative conversations with top policymakers, activists, bloggers, writers, artists, scholars, religious leaders, students, and ordinary citizens in many walks of life. This book is sure to fascinate readers interested in travel, Buddhism, progressive politics, and especially the study and practice of happiness. A Splendid Isolation was a Finalist in the 2015 Next Generation Indie Book Awards.

About the AuthorMadeline Drexler is an award-winning journalist, author and travel essayist. She is editor of Harvard Public Health magazine and a senior fellow at Brandeis University's Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism. Among her national honors: Best American Travel Writing 2015 (Houghton Mifflin); Grand Gold Winner for Best Article of the Year, CASE Circle of Excellence Awards; 2012 Sigma Delta Chi Award for Public Service in Magazine Journalism; 2012 Clarion Award for Feature Articles; and 1996-1997 Knight Science Journalism Fellowship at MIT. Drexler's articles have appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Nation, The American Prospect, The New Republic, The Los Angeles Times, The Boston Globe, and many other national publications. Her book Emerging Epidemics: The Menace of New Infections (Penguin, 2010), originally issued in 2003 as Secret Agents: The Menace of Emerging Infections, drew wide critical praise. Drexler began her career as a staff photographer for The Associated Press. For more information on Madeline Drexler's writing and photography, go to: [madelinedrexler.com](http://madelinedrexler.com).