



Last Days

John Roskelley

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In *Last Days*, *Roskelley* documents two alpine-style expeditions to the Himalayas: the difficult and risky first ascent in winter of the Northeast Face of Tawoche in Nepal with Jeff Lowe; and a four-man attempt on the East Ridge on Menlungtse in Tibet with Jim Wickwire, Greg Child, and Jeff Duenwald. A highlight in the book is Roskelley's First Climber's Dictionary, where he defines terms as they really should be defined.

After an aborted attempt in 1984 by Roskelley, Jim Bridwell, and Naoe Sakishita in the pre-monsoon because of rockfall of suicidal intensity down their intended route, Roskelley was still determined to climb Tawoche's Northeast Face. His solution - climb it in winter. Four years later, he recruited Jeff Lowe, one of the best alpine climbers in the world, to join him. Together they pushed alpine climbing to a new level, spending nine days on the frozen wall dodging falling missiles of rock and ice and bivouacking in minus zero temperatures. This is their journey up one of the most insane-looking mountain walls in the world.

Menlungtse was first explored by Eric Shipton and his party in 1951 when they unknowingly and illegally entering Tibet. Forty years later, Roskelley and his group of experienced Himalayan mountaineers traveled to Tibet and into the Menlung Valley to attempt the unclimbed Southeast Ridge, an arrow straight, mile long ridge complicated by a long stretch of double cornices. Roskelley's narrative covers the history of the peak; earlier attempts by other expeditions; the approach and reconnaissance; and the final attempt by him and Greg Child.

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Katherine Herron:

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