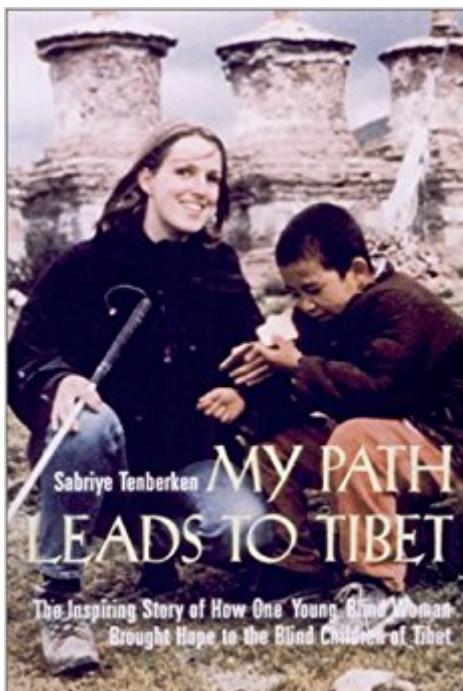


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# My Path Leads To Tibet: The Inspiring Story Of How One Young Blind Woman Brought Hope To The Blind Children Of Tibet



## **Synopsis**

Defying everyone's advice, armed only with her rudimentary knowledge of Chinese and Tibetan, Sabriye Tenberken set out to do something about the appalling condition of the Tibetan blind, who she learned had been abandoned by society and left to die. Traveling on horseback throughout the country, she sought them out, devised a Braille alphabet in Tibetan, equipped her charges with canes for the first time, and set up a school for the blind. Her efforts were crowned with such success that hundreds of young blind Tibetans, instilled with a newfound pride and an education, have now become self-supporting. A tale that will leave no reader unmoved, it demonstrates anew the power of the positive spirit to overcome the most daunting odds.

## **Book Information**

Series: the inspiring story of how one young blind woman brought hope to the blind children of tibet

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## **Customer Reviews**

When Tenberken, whose battle with retinal disease left her blind at age 13, was in her 20s, she studied Tibetan culture at the University of Bonn. Frustrated by the awkward character-recognition machinery she had to use to read Tibetan materials, she devised a Tibetan braille alphabet, so that once translated, works could be directly readable by the blind. What followed seemed natural to her: she'd go to Tibet and start a school to teach this braille to blind Tibetan children. Traveling on horseback over treacherous mountain passes, sleeping in rat-infested huts and dealing with self-interested charitable bureaucracies, Tenberken managed to keep her humor and courage. She succeeded in establishing a school, and her organization, "Braille Without Borders," continues the literacy mission in other countries. While stories of triumph over adversity are often compelling,

Tenberken gives something more: her own point of view on life as a blind person. Why does she go out of her way to visit stunning landscapes? Why are colors meaningful to her? "I consider myself a very visual person," Tenberken explains, aware that not all blind people-or "sighted" people, for that matter-have "visual imaginations." "Besides, why wouldn't a world informed and described by one's imagination be better than reality?" Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Adult/High School-With no official encouragement-rather, the opposite-Tenberken left Germany after college to set up the first school for blind children in Tibet. She found her way into the backcountry on horseback, searching for students. These youngsters were sometimes kept at the back of the hut to be safe and to avoid shaming their families, as blindness is widely thought to be a punishment from God. She slept in flea-ridden huts, haggled for supplies, made friends who helped with her enterprise, and was caught up in Chinese red tape regarding foreign residents. Her situation was iffy for several years, but ended in triumph and a firm footing for her school. Tenberken is about to move on to other countries in hopes of duplicating her work. Not only do readers learn of her problems and how she overcame them, but they get a fascinating look at behind-the-scenes Tibet as well. It's an education to follow her path through the obstacles and disappointments of presenting and implementing a new idea in an unfamiliar culture. Judy McAlon, Potomac Library, Prince William County, VA Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

After watching a slew of Everest documentaries, I came across the documentary *Blindsight* about a school for the blind in Tibet and how a famous blind mountaineer took some of them climbing near Everest. The woman who founded the school, Sabriye Tenberken, is blind herself and had come from Germany to establish this school and offer a place for Tibet's blind children to learn. It was amazing and I was so moved that I immediately had to know more about these schools! I saw that Sabriye (sorry to be a little casual, she strikes me as the kind of lady who would insist on being known by her first name and not "Ms." anything!) had a memoir about her journey to Tibet and I bought it immediately and read it all in a single sitting. I don't know that I can offer any comment on this woman's life that can compliment her accomplishments properly. Just a taste of the strength of this woman: she traveled to Tibet by herself with the idea to establish a school to teach braille because she had just created a Tibetan translation for braille. Then she headed into the countryside on horseback with only one companion - someone she met while traveling (she did not bring a 'sighted' companion with her on this journey, feeling that she didn't need one), broke down social

stigma barriers related to blindness in encouraging the locals to ADMIT that there were, indeed, blind children (because most Tibetans are Buddhist, they believe that afflictions such as blindness are a penance for sins in a past life, so most blind people are shunned and treated poorly. When researching for this expedition, Sabriye was told by the government that there were NO blind people in Tibet.), then she goes and establishes a school and hires a staff and takes in a group of kids who are so eager to learn that you can't help but read with tears running down your face. It's truly a remarkable story and Sabriye Tenberken is my hero.

This autobiographical story tells about the struggles of a young blind woman trying to establish a school for blind children in Tibet. Her ability to meet and overcome obstacles is really inspiring. I feel it is not as well written as it could be, and yet there is something compelling about it that makes you want to continue reading, to find out how it all turns out. I was especially impressed by her determination which I believe stemmed from her sense of call to this mission. That is reflected in her choice of title. She also had a stubborn streak that made her determined to do what she was told she could not do. I recommend this to anyone who enjoys reading a good, true story.

Very inspirational, motivating book. Describes experience of a courageous young woman. At some point she becomes somewhat too confrontational, describing people as good or bad, but it's her subjective view, and it's easy to understand dynamics of how that can happen. Nevertheless, I was impressed by the amount of positive energy and optimism that this young woman exhibited.

Everyone should read this

Very interesting book. It helps others to realize that strength comes from many people in many great ways and that they do not let change stop them

She is a very courageous woman who is leading the way to help the people of Tibet. Very sad at times but uplifting at others. I can recommend this book if you like to read about things bared to the bone.

Sabriye is such an inspiration. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It certainly shows what determination and self belief can achieve. Well done! Some of us sighted would do well to learn from her.

An inspiring story. A great companion to the documentary Blind Sight.

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