

# Three Cups of Tea

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By Greg Mortenson

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## Summary

"The first time you share tea with a Balti villager, you are a stranger. The second time, you are an honored guest. The third time, you become family..."

In 1993, Greg Mortenson attempted to climb K2, the world's second highest mountain in the world, and in Pakistan, as a way of honoring the memory of his deceased sister Christa. He was planning to lay her amber necklace on the summit of K2. After more than 2 months on the mountain, Greg and three other climbers had their climb interrupted by the need to complete a 75-hour life-saving rescue of a fifth climber. After getting lost climbing down the mountain, he became weak, exhausted and alone, instead of arriving in Askole, where his helpers awaited; he came into Korphe, a small village built near a large canyon. He was greeted and taken in by the chief elder of Korphe.

To repay the remote community for its hospitality, Greg promised to build a school for the village. After difficulties in raising capital, Greg was introduced to Jean Hoerni, a Silicon Valley pioneer who donated the money that Greg needed for his school. In the last months of Hoerni's life (Hoerni was dying from leukemia), he co-founded the Central Asia Institute, endowing the CAI to build schools in rural Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Greg faced many challenges in his quest to raise funds for the building of more than 55 schools in Taliban territory, including death threats, long periods of separation from his family, and being kidnapped by Taliban sympathizers.

Schooling in the area usually focuses on the boys, but educated boys tend to move to the cities to find jobs, and sometimes don't return. But the educated girls tend to remain in the community and pass their knowledge to the next generation. So Greg Mortenson thought that educating girls has more of a lasting benefit for the community.

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One of the main highlights of the book was when at the beginning, Greg noticed that the children of the village were very happy to see him but they were very poor. When it came to learning, they had no school building. He saw children writing on the open frozen floor with sticks to make their characters. They shared a teacher from the nearby village that came by 3 times a week and were left alone to study for themselves the rest of the time.

Greg wanted to repay the villagers back for the hospitality that they gave him by going house to house using his skill of nursing to help them medically. When it was time for him to leave, he promised the villagers that he will build them a school building. He thought that it would be a greater thing to do then to leave a necklace on top of a mountain for his sister. The children and the villagers were so excited that they thought that god brought Greg Mortenson as a gift from heaven. Now Greg was on a mission to fulfill his dream of and making a difference for the people who treated him so royally.

I recommend reading this book to anyone who's complaining on how Pakistan encourages, helps and harbors the Taliban. Greg will change your heart and mind as he has mine. Though getting to know that Pakistan's Culture and educating thousands of its children, Greg has accomplished more in preventing Taliban strongholds in Pakistan than thousands of military personnel who failed to get rid of the Taliban through deadly force and violence.