

"[A] writer of uncommon elegance and sensitivity." —*New York Times Book Review*

In 1988, Dr. John Casey, a professor visiting Burma, meets a waiter in Mandalay with a passion for the works of James Joyce, and the encounter changes both their lives.

Pascal, a member of the Kayan Padaung tribe, was the first member of his community to study English at a university. Within months of his meeting with Dr. Casey, Pascal's world lay in ruins. Burma's military dictatorship forces him to sacrifice his studies, and the regime's brutal armed forces murder his lover. Fleeing to the jungle, he becomes a guerrilla fighter in the life-or-death struggle against the government. In desperation, he writes a letter to the Englishman he met in Mandalay.

Miraculously reaching its destination, the letter leads to Pascal's rescue and his enrollment in Cambridge University, where he is the first Burmese tribesman ever to attend.

*From the Land of Green Ghosts* unforgettably evokes the realities of life in modern-day Burma and one man's long journey to freedom despite almost unimaginable odds.

"A distinguished accomplishment that radiates both intelligence and spiritual awareness. . . . [This is an] incisively told, remarkable story of a long journey from the hills of Burma to Cambridge University from a young man living in Britain." —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"A true work of art." —*Financial Times*

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### Praise for *From the Land of Green Ghosts*

"A page-turner . . . deeply moving, beautifully written, and most inspiring. When I reached the last page, my heart was filled with joy and gratitude." —Nien Cheng, author of *Life and Death in Shanghai*

"[A] writer of uncommon elegance and sensitivity." —*New York Times Book Review*

"A distinguished accomplishment that radiates both intelligence and spiritual awareness. . . . [This is an] incisively told, remarkable story of a long journey from the hills of Burma to Cambridge University, from a young Burmese man now living in Britain." —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"*From the Land of Green Ghosts* is probably the best memoir you will read this year. The Padaung believe that those who die violent deaths return as terrifying 'green ghosts,' and they refer to Burma as the land of green ghosts. Pascal Khoo Thwe couldn't be further from that land, but the memories of his life there continue to haunt him and make exceptionally haunting reading." —*San Francisco Chronicle*

"Pascal Khoo Thwe's extraordinary memoir is unique as much for the riveting story it tells—a young man from a semiliterate Burmese hill tribe flees a bloody civil war to attend Cambridge University—as for the sublime way it is told. It's as if the very purpose of the author's arduous study of English literature was to enable him to tell this tale with requisite power and dignity. In fact, the narrative often reads like good fiction, with its memorable characters, indelible images, and an unwavering moral compass." —*Seattle Times*

"*From the Land of Green Ghosts* is a requiem written in exile for a once-rich country destroyed by a corrupt regime. It honours the ideals of fellow students in their dream of a free and multiethnic Burma. And while it bears the wry and unmistakable imprint of Pascal's literary education, it has an immediacy and lyrical candour all its own. A political statement as well as a poetic lament, the book is a true work of art." —*Financial Times*

"A perceptive, moving, elegant, earthy, ironic book about the innocence of tribal life, the absurdity of the Burmese 'Road to Socialism,' the perils of rebellion, and the painful benefits of exile. Pascal Khoo Thwe has written an extraordinary, tragic memoir in luminous English, with no self-pity, but with a powerful self-knowledge." —Patrick French

"*From the Land of Green Ghosts* is a moving story that travels from a remote hill village to modern Cambridge by way of a brutal regime and the struggle of decent, ordinary people to counter it. In places, it is a thrilling and fascinating page-turner. In others, it fills one with respectful awe at the resilience and determination of a young man to fight despair and never lose hope." —*Sunday Times* (London)

"What gives [this story] particular resonance is the beauty of its prose: rich, vivid, and never cloying. He never loses his sense of humanity, always seeing through the barbarism to the frailty—and folly—beneath. The result is a marvelous book, full of pity, yearning, and wisdom." —*Sunday Telegraph*

"*From the Land of Green Ghosts* is a magical story, full of richness and subtlety, told with the instinctive touch of a true writer. An extraordinary tale." —*Mail on Sunday*

"I shall not reveal how Pascal became a student agitator in the movement for democracy, learnt of the order for his arrest and was forced to flee into the jungle to join the guerrilla fighters against the regime; or the terrible details of the ragged fighting in which he saw the death of many of his friends; or the stages by which, in his extraordinary 'Burmese Odyssey,' he reached the doors of Caius College: for by now, any reader who has bought this book will be utterly gripped, and will need no incentives from a critic to read on. *From the Land of Green Ghosts* deserves to become the *Wild Swans* of this new century. You should buy it for the vividness of its firsthand reporting—this is what guerrilla warfare is like, this is what jungles are like to live in—but you will actually read it for Pascal himself: he is wonderfully witty, tender, self-aware, and wise about his own youthful vanities, yet still deeply vulnerable. One finds oneself waiting, quite desperately, to discover how he will cope with what, if any, degree he will get from Cambridge. And I was left wondering, with a degree of interest rarely raised by any other memoir, how happy he is now. For in the end one realizes just how those apparently simple memories have been sharpened by the complex—and Yaula-destroying—griefs of exile." —*The Spectator*

### About the Author

PASCAL KHOO THWE was born in 1967 in a remote part of the Shan States, in southeast Burma. He was born as a member of the tiny Kayan Padaung tribe, famous for its "giraffe-necked" women. How he developed a passion for English literature (specifically, James Joyce), became involved in the student resistance to savage military repression, escaped to Thailand, and won an English degree at Cambridge University is the story told in *From the Land of Green Ghosts*, his first book. Pascal Khoo Thwe lives in London.

### Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
Map	xi
Foreword by John Casey	xiii
Part One: Idyll of the Tribe	
Prologue: Imagined Journeys	3
1 The Goddess of Creation	7
2 Grandfather's Domain	20
3 Learning to Love the General	44
4 A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Padaung	51
5 Death of a Footballer	65
6 Hunters and Hunted	76
7 The Shaking of the Dead	83
8 A Spoiled Priest	95
9 To the Land of Green Ghosts	108
Part Two: Revolution and Flight	
10 'Never, Never Argue'	117
11 Moe	128
12 Worth Only One Bullet	136
13 By Courtesy of James Joyce	146
14 The Whirlwind: Moe's Fate	155
15 SLORC	168
16 The Reluctant Flight	178

17 The Great River at Last	189
18 With the Rebels	198
19 Guns and Ghosts	205
20 'Like Alcestis from the Grave'	214
21 Staying Alive	222
22 An Impossible Hope	231
23 Talking to the Enemy	236

Part Three: Rescue	
24 Defeat: Escape into Thailand	247
25 The Rescue	256
26 Learning Words of Civility	268
27 Gate of Humility: Cambridge	272
28 Reunions with Old Ghosts – and a Farewell	285
29 Gate of Honour: Graduation	290
Epilogue	294
Index	297