

**TRAVELLING
THE MYSTERIOUS
LANDS OF ASIA**

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DRAGAN POTOCNIK



Dragan Potocnik was born in Maribor, Slovenia. He went to school there and in 1998 obtained his PhD in cultural history at the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, where he now works as an associate professor of history.

Dragan is a Founding member and President of Vagant society, which organises cutting edge talks and discussions on cultural, social and travel related topics. He is widely considered to be the leading expert in Asian History in Slovenia, and is Director of the Centre for Intercultural collaboration with Asian, African and Latin American countries at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor. In that role, he has organised and participated in a number of international conferences and symposia on the topic of intercultural dialogue.

Dragan's interest in both academic and applied history and philosophy of Asian and African cultures led him to extended travels, which he started as a student and has continued with throughout his life. His unique amalgamation of academic knowledge and practical, lived experience is evident in many travel reports, essays and research studies.

In addition to Dragan's extended research and travel writings, he is a prolific writer of poetry and prose, that are inspired by travels and cultural, personal, and political historical events. This has resulted in two published collections of poems, *Sebil* and *Sahrah*, and a collection of short stories with a title *Stories from African and Asian Backyards*.

Some of Dragan's best-selling novels are *Poems for Sinin Jan*, *Mountain, sing to Me* and *Heaveny Rain*.

He is also the author of the following monographs:

Cultural Life in Maribor in the years 1918 – 1941;

Asia between the Past and the Present;

Historical Context of the Activities of General Rudolf Maister in Styria, Carinthia and Prekmurje;

History, the Teacher of Life;

Sources in the Teaching of History;

Students from Primorska at the Classical Grammar School in Maribor;

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History of Islamic Civilization;

The Art and Science of the Islamic World.

Dragan Potocnik is a co-author of several history textbooks, such as the textbooks for the second year of secondary schools, and years seven and eighth of primary school.

As an Academic leader in the field of the history of non-European nations and Dragan has written a number of research and review papers on Slovenian and non-European history. This highly esteemed academic work resulted in Dragan being the first Slovenian Academic to be

invited as a guest Professor at the University of Esfahan in Iran, and other Universities in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Turkey.

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As I uncover the secrets of unknown roads,
as I surrender myself to the prayer of the wind,
as I watch the people,
as I taste them,
these minute pure droplets of the mountains.

There are times I feel like the rain,
lost among fences and houses.

As the path takes me past cliffs,
across sands,
grazing herds,
up there to the unfamiliar, foreign rooftop.
I let my stride guide me,
measuring distances
from the temple to the altar,
from the smile to the kiss.

In the silence of the body
the steps measure their way,
from a distance I can see clearly, then
the way to the mountaintop.