



# **The Trembling Mountain: A Personal Account of Kuru, Cannibals, and Mad Cow Disease**

*Robert Klitzman*

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Kuru, like Mad Cow disease, is caused by a rare, infectious crystal protein that invades and colonizes human cells, destroying the nervous system of its victims. There is no known cure. It flourished in one of the remotest places on earth, Papua New Guinea, among the Fore, a people living in the Stone Age, who until recently practiced ritual cannibalism, consuming the brains of their forebears during funerary feasts. Robert Klitzman helped establish the links between these rituals and kuru. What he discovered has provided keys to understanding the mysterious Mad Cow Disease, which may become the world's next major epidemic. Robert Klitzman was 21 years old when he was invited by the Nobel prize-winning scientist Dr. Carleton Gajdusek, then at the National Institutes of Health, to conduct original research on kuru. Seizing the chance to travel to the other end of the world, Klitzman embarked on an adventure that would change his life.

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