

Mountain Patrol

For those with a yen for the exotic, for entry into a wholly alien world, you could do worse than go on a "Mountain Patrol." This Chinese-made film narrates how a group of downtrodden Tibetan tribesmen go after poachers of the storied Tibetan antelope.

Based on true episodes of such patrols in the 1980's, it is told through the presence of a Beijing journalist (Zhang Lei) who comes to the Himalayan highlands to report on the patrols and eventually gets involved himself in their dogged trek to locate a key poacher and his gang.

This search takes place among one of the starkest of landscapes you are ever going to see in the movies, reminiscent, to this viewer, of the world of the great Inuit film of a few years ago, *The Fast Runner*. The story is simple, the characters almost archetypes, the outcomes of their efforts bleak, but if you get caught up in this sweeping, ominous world (no, it is definitely not Shangri-La!), it can prove riveting.

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