

ever, when he arrived he discovered, to his horror, that the miners conducted further blasting that ultimately caused considerable damage to the material; in Ze's words, "I almost cried." Although the colour and quality of the crystals were spectacular, only a very few matrix specimens could be salvaged. Since the same crystals still attached to their host matrix could have yielded "5 to 6 times" the selling price, Ze and the Pederneira team quickly learned an expensive lesson in gem and mineral mining. Fortunately, the team moved on from this misstep and subsequent pockets were handled more diligently.

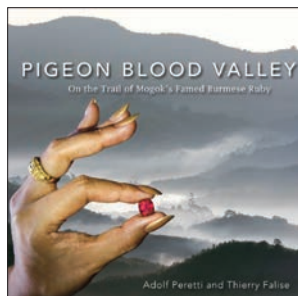
The narration is accompanied by video footage of amazing tourmalines as they are slowly rotated, including famous named specimens such as the 'Rocket' and the 'Big Blue' (the latter being a perfect 15-cm-diameter, 23-cm-tall blue-green tourmaline crystal perched upon

a 'soccer ball'-sized piece of white albite matrix). The film is full of such visual treats.

For those interested in the Pederneira locality, or tourmaline in general, this is a must-watch video. However, gemmologists will find little discussion of gem rough and faceted material, as they are not the subject of focus. Some of the narrators' English pronunciation is challenging to understand, but this actually adds to the authenticity of the story. The audio and video are both of excellent quality, and most of the video was filmed on location at Pederneira. The film truly captures the spectacular beauty of Pederneira tourmaline, and hopefully we will see similar video treatments of additional world-class gem and mineral localities in the future.

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Pigeon Blood Valley—On the Trail of Mogok's Famed Burmese Ruby



By Adolf Peretti and
Thierry Falise, 2016.
GRS GemResearch
Swisslab AG, Lucerne,
Switzerland, 237 pages,
ISBN 978-952386774,
www.mogok.com. Fund-
raiser edition, US\$200.00
hardcover.

In the foreword of this attractive book, the authors explain that this is a personal journey through the history of this fascinating locality for vivid red rubies (commonly called *pigeon blood* red by gem traders). They divide the book into 12 chapters. The text is minimal (only 1–2 pages per chapter), but well written and concise. The authors prefer to let the photographs and captions tell much of their story.

The first four chapters focus on some of the famous old-time ruby dealers, as well as on Burmese kings and British colonization, before shifting to more modern history. The photos show the local people, places, mines and, of course, wonderful jewels. There are numerous spectacular full-page colour images supplied by auction houses Sotheby's and Christie's, as well as by a plethora of famous jewelers including Cartier, Graf, Van Cleef & Arpels, Harry Winston and Bulgari, to name a few. These photos show the reader exactly why Mogok is so famous for pigeon-blood rubies, with examples of modern and vintage necklaces, bracelets, rings, watches and earrings. The authors also include comprehensive historic maps, reproductions of original photos from the late 1800s, and antique letters and stamps from the famous collection of Santpal Sinchawla of Bangkok. These help the reader to better understand this amazing and complicated valley.

In Chapter 5 the authors introduce the reader to the 'Men Who Mine', covering many modern-day deposits and the miners who work them. Chapter 6, 'Till the Last Crumb', is a tribute to an old tradition of allowing village women and children to go through the mine tailings and keep whatever they find. Chapter 7, 'Ruby Royalty', covers some present-day local gem dealers, followed by 'Warlords and Smugglers' in Chapter 8. The latter characters are an age-old problem in Mogok, as well as in most gem-producing areas throughout history. Chapter 9 covers the 'Subcontinent Influence' of the many Indians and Nepalese who have become strong players in the Mogok gem business. Chapter 10, 'The Final Cut', describes how Mogok locals skilfully transform rough material into beautiful gems, often using techniques passed down from their grandfathers' time.

Chapter 11, 'The Soul of the City', shows how Mogok is focused completely on gemstones. The authors start with quotations from older books on Mogok that point out the fantasy and charm of this fabled place, and illustrate the chapter with photographs that confirm the beauty and mystique that visitors feel there. The final chapter, 'A Future between Gloom and Hope', tackles social and environmental issues in a realistic dialogue. The chapter ends with the author's statement that "only when the river is no longer red will Mogok be finished".

The last few pages focus on 'Specialist Doctor Wanted', as one of the overriding purposes of this book is to help the AIDS victims of the Mogok District.

For any gemmologist interested in classic Burmese gemstones, especially ruby, I recommend this book. The hundreds of photographs will give you a new understanding of the Mogok area, and you will gain an appreciation of just how rare and beautiful gemstones from this fabled valley are.

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