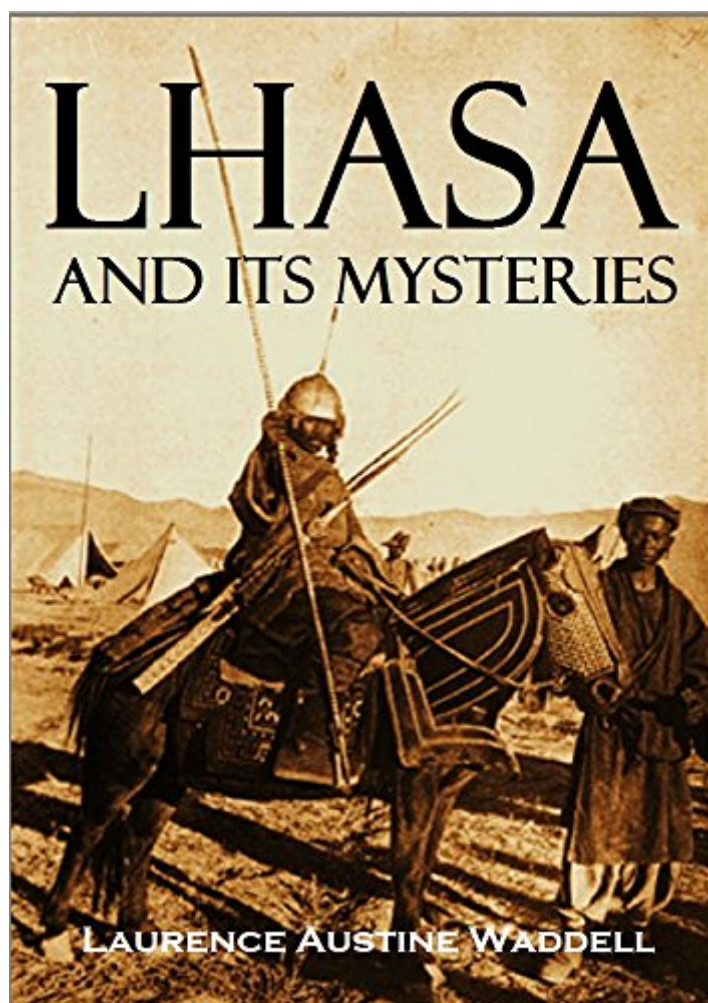


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Lhasa And Its Mysteries: With A Record Of The Expedition Of 1903-1904



Synopsis

This detailed account of the British expedition to Lhasa is written by Colonel Waddell, of the Indian Medical Service, the chief medical officer of the military escort which accompanied Sir Francis Younghusband on the British expedition to Tibet, also known as the British invasion of Tibet (1903--1904). The expedition was effectively a temporary invasion by British Indian forces under the auspices of the Tibet Frontier Commission, whose purported mission was to establish diplomatic relations and resolve the dispute over the border between Tibet and Sikkim. The book is decidedly interesting. Armed as he was with a knowledge of the people and the Buddhist religion in India and Burmah, and an adventurous curiosity which had often led him to avoid the frontier guards and tramp along the Tibetan side of the mountain barrier, Waddell was in a position to make a valuable study of the Tibetan people, their language, customs and religion. But what lay beyond these frontier regions, and what was the real character of that mysterious city of Lhasa with its priest-king and its fabulous rites had been known only to a few Europeans, whose records, from those of Friar Odoric in the fourteenth century to those of two French Lazarist priests sixty years ago, are outlined in a succinct chapter in this well-arranged volume. The expedition of 1903 afforded Colonel Waddell the opportunity which he desired. He who expects to find in mysterious Tibet a contribution to the religious philosophy of the world will be disappointed. That may be gathered from Colonel Waddell's narrative. The religion of the country he shows to be based upon a degenerate type of Buddhism, where the forms and consequent superstitions have taken the place of its deeper meaning. The Grand Lama is not only revered as ruler and an incarnation of deity, but he and his creatures themselves exercise power. The vast palace at Lhasa, with its relic shrines, its gorgeous decorations, its altars, mausoleums and magnificent entrances, is the more imposing by contrast with the wild and rugged country by which it must be approached. It is one of the trappings by which the priest-god sustains his character as "Buddha's vice-regent on earth." What the Grand Lama is at the head of the State the lesser priests are in their smaller spheres. The superstitious fear which is the basis of government is extended to the whole priestly craft, and is fostered by the vilest practices, by the encouragement of devil-worship, occult charms and sorcery. Colonel Waddell's visit to the "learned monastery," at Gyantsé, led him to the conclusion that "it trains chiefly in incantations and silly mystical gestures and puerilities, and has little that is intellectual about it." He describes a "Devils' Chamber of Horrors," "a sort of Satanic Aladdin's cave in the dark, designed to awe and impress the superstitious pilgrims." Contents: I. Lhasa the Forbidden. II. The Grand Lama and his Evolution as the Priest-God of Lhasa. III. How the British

Mission came to be sent. IV. Forward ! The Peaceful Mission becomes an Armed Force. V. Invasion of the Chumbi Valley across the Jelep Pass and Occupation of Phari Fort. VI. Advance to Tuna on the Tibetan Plateau VII. WINTERING IN TIBET. VIII. On to Guru, with Battle at the Crystal Springs. IX. The Tibetan Army and its Leaders. X. Dash on Gyantse, past the Lakes Rham and Kala, with fight in the Gorge of the Red Idol. XI. GYANTSE – ITS Fort and Town. XII. Temples, Priests, and Convents of Gyantse XIII. Besieged at Gyantse. XIV. Relief of Gyantse and Storming of the Jong. XV. Gyantse to Lhasa, XVI. Lhasa, "The Seat of the Gods. – XVII. Temples and Monks in the Hermit City: The Lamas' Holy of Holies. XVIII. Oracles and Sorcerers. XIX. The Priest-God and his Palace. XX. Tea with the Regent, Ruler of Tibet. XXI. Peace Negotiations and Signing of the Treaty. XXII. Rambles round Lhasa. XXIII. The Return Journey

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