

Country and Things well-known. But he turned again from thence, from whence he was come. And so he lost much painful Labour, as he himself said a great while after, when he was come Home. For it befell after, that he went unto Norway. And there a Tempest of the Sea took him, and he arrived in an Isle. And, when he was in that Isle, he knew well that it was the Isle, where he had heard speak his own Language before and the calling of the Oxen at the Plough; and that was a possible Thing."

This book was written over a century before the voyage of Columbus. It was intended as a popular exposition of geographical knowledge and was so widely circulated that the British Museum alone has about a hundred different printed editions in all European languages and there are over three hundred different manuscript versions extant. And in this fourteenth century book of travels we find it stated as something more than a theory, not only that the Earth can be circumnavigated but that in its circumnavigation would be found "Men, Lands and Isles, as well as in this Country."

Little attention has been of late accorded Maundeville's *Travels* because it is alleged the book is mainly cribbed from other authors and even that no Sir John Maundeville ever existed. However, in this connection it matters nothing whether the *Travels* was written by Maundeville or Jehan de Bourgogne nor whether it is a compilation from the works of Hetoum, Odoric, William of Boldensele and others. If the latter be true it only shows the more general diffusion of the matter the *Travels* contains.

We know from Aristotle that in his day the globular form of the Earth and the possibility of sailing west to India were discussed. Eratosthenes and Seneca both maintained that the voyage could be made, and Strabo believed that other inhabited worlds lay beyond the confines of the then known world. Although during the Middle Ages these views were lost sight of and the geographical theories of Cosmos Indicopleustes generally accepted except by the learned, the travels of Carpini, Rubruquis, Marco Polo and others in the thirteenth century had revolutionised geographical knowledge. In 1267 Roger Bacon is discussing the distance from Spain west to Asia; in 1410 we find a similar discussion in the *Imago Mundi* of Alliacus. The passage quoted from Maundeville adds further weight to the conclusion that the idea of a westward route to the Indies was no novelty in the fifteenth century. And it is known that Columbus was familiar with these views.

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PETER RIJNHART IN TIBET.

Our readers may remember occasional notes and communications made on Dr. Peter Rijnhart, a missionary of rare enthusiasm and energy bent on converting the Tibetans to Christianity. He had tried to enter the country from the south, but did not succeed. So he decided to try the longer and more dangerous way through China.

He was not sent by any Church or Board of Missions, but went on his own responsibility, a free lance for the propagation of Christianity, supported by a few friends, among whom the Rev. Charles T. Paul, pastor of the Church of Christ, Toronto, Canada, has done much to support his cause and start him on the way to Tibet.

Rijnhart was a native Dutchman, but he made many friends in the United States and married a Canadian lady, a missionary herself who had taken a degree in medicine. He was a sympathetic figure and in many respects like the ingenuous sons of Central Asia. There was a kinship between him and Kumbum Lamar, not in faith but in disposition, which he had plenty of opportunity to find out. He was as naïve in his faith as were the Buddhists he met in theirs; he was cordial, open-hearted, zealous in his convictions, but his zeal was the warmth of love taught him by his religion.

Mr. and Mrs. Rijnhart had entered deep into Inner Tibet; they had suffered innumerable hardships, were threatened by robbers, had lost their native guides, and were endeavoring to cross a river when he disappeared and no trace of him has ever been found. They had discerned at a distance with the help of their telescope herdsmen on the other bank, and Mr. Rijnhart went down to the stream to swim across. Wading half across, he put out his arms to make the first stroke, but suddenly turned around and walked back again to the bank where he had first entered the water. Shouting something up to Mrs. Rijnhart which she did not hear on account of the rushing river, he walked up-stream in the opposite direction to the tents he had set out for. Then he followed a little path around the rocks that had obstructed their way the day before, until out of sight, and she never saw him again.

Whether Peter Rijnhart was drowned in the river, or slain by robbers, or met some other untoward end, is more than any one can tell. Mrs. Rijnhart, however, was left alone, a forlorn and lonely woman in the midst of the wildest tribes of Inner Asia. Her anxiety, her misery, her despair, can only approximately be measured by those who consider her desolate condition. Yet her courage never flagged, and under the most trying circumstances she succeeded in returning to the Yangtse Kiang, where she passed back through Hankow, Nanking and Shanghai to her native land.

Her new book,¹ illustrated by photographs of Mr. and Mrs. Rijnhart and some characteristic types of Tibetans, tells the story of her travels, and we need not say it is interesting reading throughout. Her report is a valuable addition to the information given by Huc and Gabet, partly confirming their statements, partly correcting, and partly adding to them; but the delineation of the character of the Tibetans is so similar that some of the figures whom one meets in these pages seem familiar, like new incarnations of old friends. Compare only the character of the Regent of Lhasa as described by Huc and Gabet to the Kanpo of Kumbum as characterised by Mrs. Rijnhart. The circumstances under which the two live are somewhat different, but the attitudes they take are typical and they speak and behave as the same person will act on different occasions.

Mrs. Rijnhart's book is so interesting that it deserves to be read all through, but for the sake of showing what the reader may expect we quote some passages from chapters that for one reason or another deserve special attention.

Kumbum is to the Buddhist the most sacred place in Outer Tibet; in fact, next to Lhasa there is no place in the world regarded with greater awe, not even the sacred land of the Buddhists in India itself excepted. Mrs. Rijnhart rightly compares it to Rome; and as there the pilgrims go on their knees up the steps of St. Peter's, so in Kumbum they show their reverence in a similar way. And the abbot of the lamasery is practically the pope of Outer Tibet. As the pope is

¹ *With the Tibetans in Tent and Temple*. By Susie Carson Rijnhardt, M. D. Chicago, New York, and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company. 1901. Pages, 400. Price, \$1.50.

deemed infallible and the successor of Peter, the vicegerent of God on earth, so the abbot is believed to be the living incarnation of the Buddha.

Mr. Rijnhart had the good fortune to become the personal friend of Mina Fuyeh, the *kanpo* or *fa tai* of Kumbum. Mr. Rijnhart's guide, Ishinima, had often spoken of him as inaccessible; but, says Mrs. Rijnhart: "To our amazement we received from the kanpo an invitation to take up our abode in the lamasery during the rebellion, an offer which, needless to say, we eagerly accepted, not only because of the safety it offered us, but also because of the prestige it would give us in the eyes of those whom we were seeking to help. This apparently sudden kindness on the part of the abbot was dependent upon an amusing incident during Mr. Rijnhart's visit to Kumbum in 1892. One day he was sent for by one of the 'living buddhas' of Kumbum, and, expecting to have a pleasant and profitable conversation about spiritual matters, he went immediately to the buddha's apartment, where he learned with some disappointment that he had been summoned not from any religious motive, but to be consulted about a music-box which the buddha had bought as a curiosity when on a visit to Peking. The music-box was, to express literally what the lama had said 'sick,' and had ceased to give forth music; and the lama had concluded that since it had been made by foreigners it could surely be cured by a foreigner. Mr. Rijnhart carefully examined the instrument, and finding it only needed lubricating, gave it a liberal treatment of castor-oil, the only kind available, whereupon its powers returned, and the wonderful box was, as the lama expressed it, 'cured.' He had therefore conceived great confidence in the skill of the foreigner, for if he could cure a sick music-box with one dose of medicine, how much more could he do for a sick man! The result of an apparently insignificant act of kindness cannot be estimated. The music-box incident, though forgotten by Mr. Rijnhart, had evidently left an impression on the lama, who had in the meantime risen to the dignity of the abbotship, for he it was who now again summoned the foreign doctor with his magic oil to come and treat the treasurer of the lamasery, who had fallen ill, although he did not know at the time that Mr. Rijnhart was the same foreigner who had 'cured his sick instrument.'

"The kanpo was particularly interested in the fact that Mr. Rijnhart had a wife, and as more ominous reports of the progress of the rebellion reached the lamasery, he evinced a sincere anxiety about our welfare. He had indeed a greater surprise in store for us than the privilege of paying him a visit, for he told us very cordially that his own home in the lamasery was at our disposal, and bade us move our goods at once to his apartments and take up our abode there until the rebellion was over. 'If the Mohammedans attack Lusar,' he said gravely, 'the people will take shelter in the lamasery and leave you to be killed.' We could but feel that the kanpo's offer was providential, so, accepting it as heartily as it was given, we removed those of our valuables which were not hidden in the cave, over to his house, where we found he had prepared for our occupancy two large rooms and a kitchen."

Mrs. Rijnhart describes the *kanpo* as "far superior to the average lama in intelligence, yet his knowledge was extremely limited, a fact which he cheerfully admitted. He knew practically nothing of the outside world, and was woefully ignorant of natural science; but we found him an accomplished linguist conversant with Tibetan, both classical and colloquial, Chinese and Mongolian." The superstitions to which he was addicted Mrs. Rijnhart describes as mainly consisting in a firm and obviously honest conviction of the doctrine of reincarnation, "Although only twenty-seven years of age, he confidently asserted that he had lived in this palatial

abode previous to the year 1861. He professed even to have vivid recollections of all that pertained to his previous incarnation, and more than that, he could tell some things that were going to happen in the next. He took great pleasure in prophesying that Mr. Rijnhart would in his next life-time reappear on earth as a Buddha, as a reward for the good work he was doing in the present existence.

"Frequently the kanpo expressed an ardent longing to accompany us to America or to Europe if we should ever go home, in order that he might see for himself and learn something of the world beyond, so full of mystery.

"Of the occult knowledge of the hidden things of nature, attributed by Theosophists to the Tibetan priests, Mina Fuyeh, although abbot of one of the greatest lamaseries in all Tibet and occupying a position of spiritual and intellectual eminence surpassed only by the 'Dalai Lama' at Lhasa, knew nothing. He had never seen a mahatma, and was much surprised when we told him that Western people believed such to exist in Tibet. On the question of mahatmas we made very careful and minute inquiries of many lamas, all of whom confessed their ignorance of any such beings. There was no record or even legend of any having ever visited Kumbum, and one of the oldest priests in the lamasery, who had spent years in Lhasa, told us he never heard of a mahatma, even in that 'City of Spirits.' There are, it is true, some lamas who profess to have magical powers.

"During our stay in the Palace, Mina Fuyeh came with his secretary and treasurer to perform religious devotions in his household temple during a period of three days. Their worship consisted mainly in the chanting of prayers to the accompaniment of the jingling of bells, and the beating of little drums made of skins stretched over human skulls. When they had chanted themselves hoarse they swallowed copious quantities of tea, and then came into our apartments, seeming to enjoy the respite from the dull routine as keenly as school children enjoy recess.

"During such intermittent visits much time was spent in conversation on Christianity and Buddhism, subjects of which Mina Fuyeh never seemed to tire. Soon after we had made his acquaintance Mr. Rijnhart had given him copies of the Christian Gospels in the Tibetan character, among them a copy of St. John, which he prized very highly. He had a marvelous memory, and was soon almost as familiar with the text of the Gospels as we ourselves, and was able quite intelligently to discuss the various incidents of the life of Jesus, quoting passages with astonishing accuracy and appositeness. He told us that he believed thoroughly in Jesus, but that he did not see any reason why he should renounce Buddhism and become a Christian. He could not see any insurmountable difficulties in accepting both systems, for even on the great doctrine of reincarnation with respect to which Christianity and Buddhism are supposed to stand at the opposite poles, he claimed that whereas the Gospels did not explicitly teach the doctrine, yet they did not expressly deny it. He indeed went further and declared his belief that Jesus was no other than a reincarnation of Buddha, and that Tsong K'aba, the great Tibetan reformer, was a later incarnation of Jesus. At the same time Mina Fuyeh confessed himself charmed with the gospel story. He told us there were many parallels between Jesus and Tsong K'aba; that the latter had gone about healing the sick and teaching the people just like Jesus. When we spoke of the crucifixion he said that Tsong K'aba had been persecuted, too, and added that even to-day in Tibet it was not wise for a lama to be 'too good.' I believe that, all unconsciously perhaps, Mina Fuyeh has been the means of spreading gospel teaching among his people to an extent that has as yet been possible for no Christian

missionary. With all the famous lamas and pilgrims from the far interior, even from Lhasa, as also from Mongolia, he conversed on the subject, telling them what he knew about Christian doctrines, and teaching them to pronounce for the first time the name 'Yesu Ma'shika,' Jesus Christ."

If we were to select all the interesting incidents, we should have to reprint half of the book, so we limit our quotations to one passage only, because it refers to the mooted question of the trees with one thousand images, of which M. M. Huc and Gabet say that they had seen the trees and Tibetan characters on their leaves, an incident which they had no means of explaining. Mrs. Rijnhart's account of the trees is rather disappointing, for having seen them she declares that the leaves bear neither images nor Tibetan characters, but are simply leaves, just like those of other trees. Whether, perhaps, in some season of the year when the Rijnharts were not staying in Kumbum, the veins of the leaves present the appearance of Tibetan characters, which would explain the statement of M. M. Huc and Gabet, or whether the whole thing is imagination, we leave to our readers to decide. Mrs. Rijnhart says: "Of the sacred tree from which the lamasery takes its name, and which grew up from the hairs of Tsong K'aba, a word must be said. There are three of these trees in a yard near the Golden Tiled Temple. All pilgrims visiting the lamasery take special pains to pay reverence to the central tree, and to receive some of its leaves, on each one of which is clearly discernible to the eye of the faithful the image of Tsong K'aba. No one around Kumbum seemed to question this marvel but the two foreigners. We frequently visited the tree and had the leaves in our hands, but our eyes were holden from seeing the image or anything approaching it, a disability which the lamas coolly informed us arose from the fact that we were not true followers of the Buddha. This explanation is rather damaging to the reputation of M. M. Huc and Gabet, who declare they saw on the leaves of the tree, not images of Tsong K'aba, but well-formed Tibetan characters. There is nothing in Huc's narrative so perplexing as this, and without questioning his veracity one cannot refrain from wondering to what extent he fell under the magic spell of the Tsong K'aba legends; nor is it any the less clear why the leaves which in Huc's day bore Tibetan characters, should have passed on from literature to art, producing now only images of the saint! The tree has been variously classified. Rockhill, following Kreitner, first thought it was a lilac (*Philadelphus coronarius*), but later he concluded it was a species of syringa (*syringa villosa*, Vahl). We saw the tree once when it was in bloom—the flowers are very much like lilacs, but the leaves seem to be stiffer."

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