

Visiting the Land of the Lost Horizon



The trail leads over the towering Himalayas—

THE land of the lost horizon lies high up on the world's frost-bound roof-tree, remote and mysterious behind the eternal barrier of the towering Himalayas.

Here, in Tibet, is the forbidden realm that James Hilton chose as the setting for his fascinating tale, "Lost Horizon." And while that tale was fiction, the reality is hardly less strange.

In Tibet's lofty mountain passes, on its limitless windy plains, in its quaint, isolated towns, there is a strange sense of remoteness from ordinary life; a feeling of wonder and of terror, of unseen powers that lie hidden, of a culture and a knowledge incredibly ancient, brooding and hiding their time and letting the outer world go its unheeded way. . . .

Foreigners are forbidden to enter Tibet. The natives regard all strangers as intruders; a few explorers who have gone in have come out with tales of how they were robbed, attacked, beaten, refused food, and left to starve in the desert.

But a young American—a smiling chap from Arizona named Theos Bernard—recently went into Tibet and made himself welcome there.

A student of Buddhist philosophy—he studied it in India, after taking

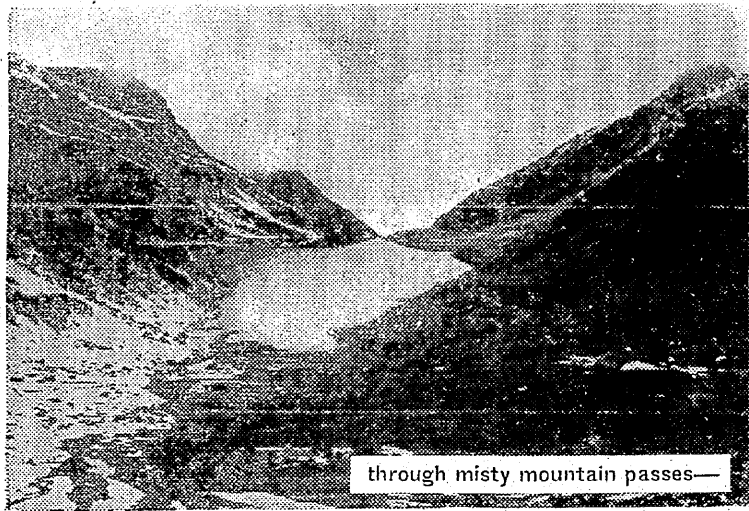


Theos Bernard.

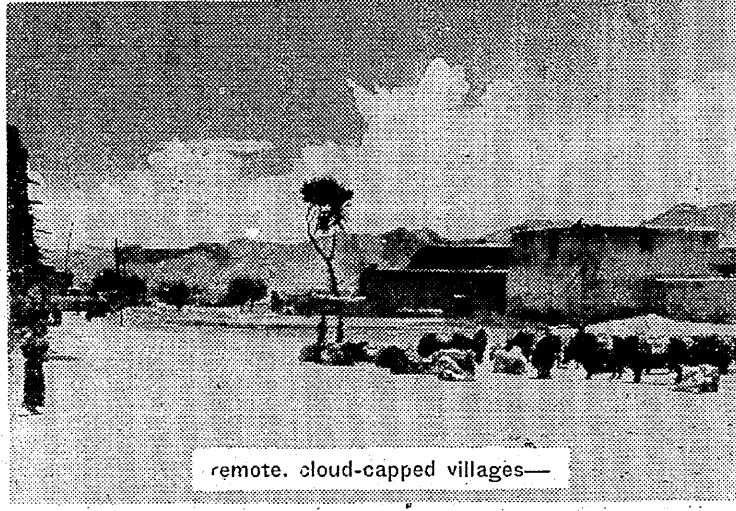
degrees at the University of Arizona and Columbia University—he resolved not long ago to go to Lhasa, capital of Tibet and Rome of the Buddhist faith. He prepared himself by mastering the dialects spoken in Tibet and by learning Tibetan customs; he lived for a time in a Buddhist monastery, to get this knowledge.

Then he made formal application for permission to visit the country. It was granted. Armed with a slip of paper that guaranteed him safe passage he went to Lhasa, stayed there two and one-half months, lived in the home of a cabinet minister, visited monasteries and participated in religious rites and ceremonies ordinarily forbidden to strangers—and, when he left, took with him a great load of rare Buddhist books, ancient scrolls and manuscripts and a complete photographic record of his visit.

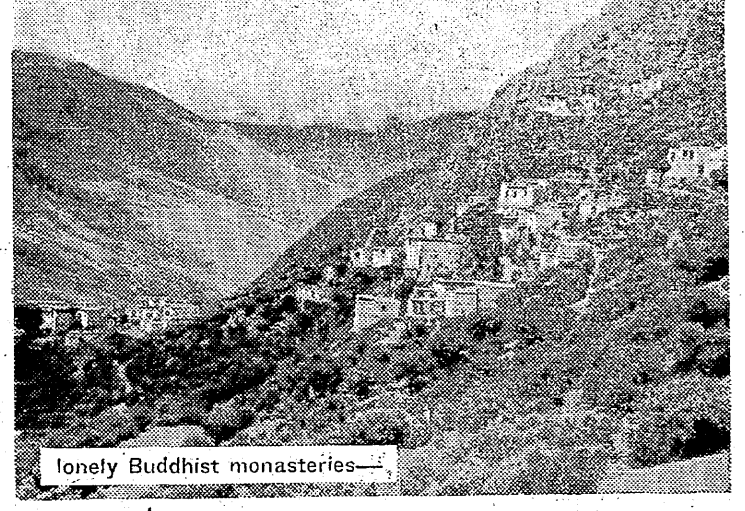
It is the story of that visit which is presented on this page. The pictures are those taken by Bernard himself. They tell a story of a remarkable trip through a remarkable country, where the air is like wine and great white clouds go forever tumbling and rolling across a sky of deepest, purest blue.



through misty mountain passes—



remote, cloud-capped villages—



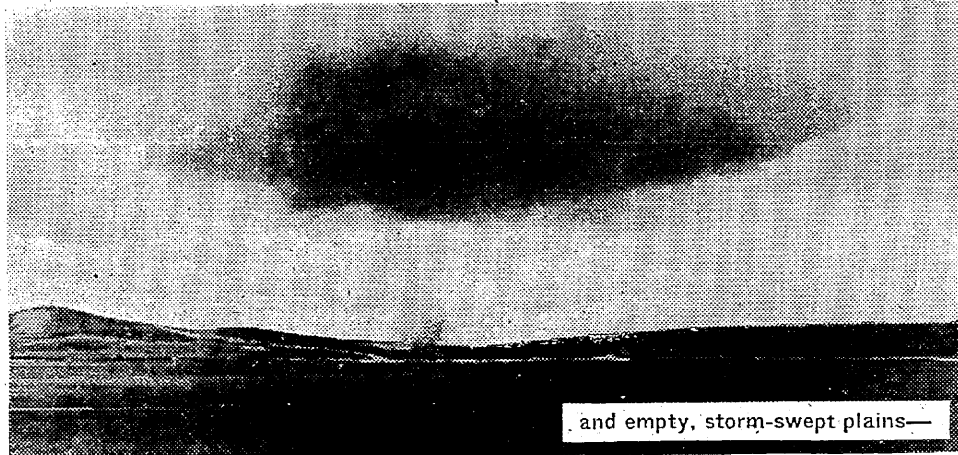
lonely Buddhist monasteries—

MAKING the trip to Lhasa is no soft touch for any traveler. The world's greatest mountain range lies across the route, and the explorer who goes in must traverse valleys that are lost in the clouds, where lonely, gem-like lakes mirror gigantic peaks and drifting banks of mist shut off the last glimpse of the outer world. The horizon is truly lost, in lost-horizon-land!

Then, beyond the passes, come immense plains, empty and forbidding in their austere loneliness; ringed by distant mountain ranges and swept periodically by swirling dust-storms.

On the plains live a strange people who do not like intruders. "They will turn their dogs on you, even though they realize that if you don't get food you'll die," says Theos Bernard. "Why? Because they have their orders from the government. If one of them gives food to an intruder he will be punished."

But if the way is perilous, it has its rewards. Tibet is a land of dazzling contrasts: of balmy valleys in the shadows of mountains where it never stops snowing; of tribesmen who will try to kill you, one minute, and will invite you to dine, the next; of a delicate, almost exotic love of beauty which finds expression amid luxury or filth; of



and empty, storm-swept plains—

a ruler who keeps quarts of American whisky in his house; subscribes to American magazines—and knows only two people in his whole kingdom who can speak a word of English; of a country where there is no means of communication except the word carried by wandering traders, yet where communication is carried on mysteriously and effectively across great distances.

Bernard set out across the frontier with two servants, two mules and a sack of tsanpa, or barley flour.

He crossed rivers whose only ferries were odd little round boats made of skins. He passed mountain canyons where dwelt raiding tribes called Khams, who come out periodically to steal and kill but who somehow left him unmolested. He traversed mile upon mile of lonely desert land, where no maps existed and only his two natives could guide him.

High up on mountain walls he saw over and over again the clustered buildings of the monasteries—for the lamas, or Buddhist monks, of Tibet are almost beyond number. In these buildings he found men who might be ragged and unclean, but who had learning, devotion and a genuine love for beauty.



Rich woman—



poor man—



debutante—



thief.

WHAT are the people of Tibet like? Well, says Bernard, what are the people of America like? How do you judge them—by the minority which is cultured, wealthy folk, or by the majority which is a tiny bit shy on culture and a great deal shy on wealth? Tibet contains 3,000,000 people. Some of them are learned, cultured and refined; a great many are half-wild tribesmen with no learning or refinement whatever.

In Lhasa, Bernard stayed at the home of

the Tsarong Shape, a cabinet minister.

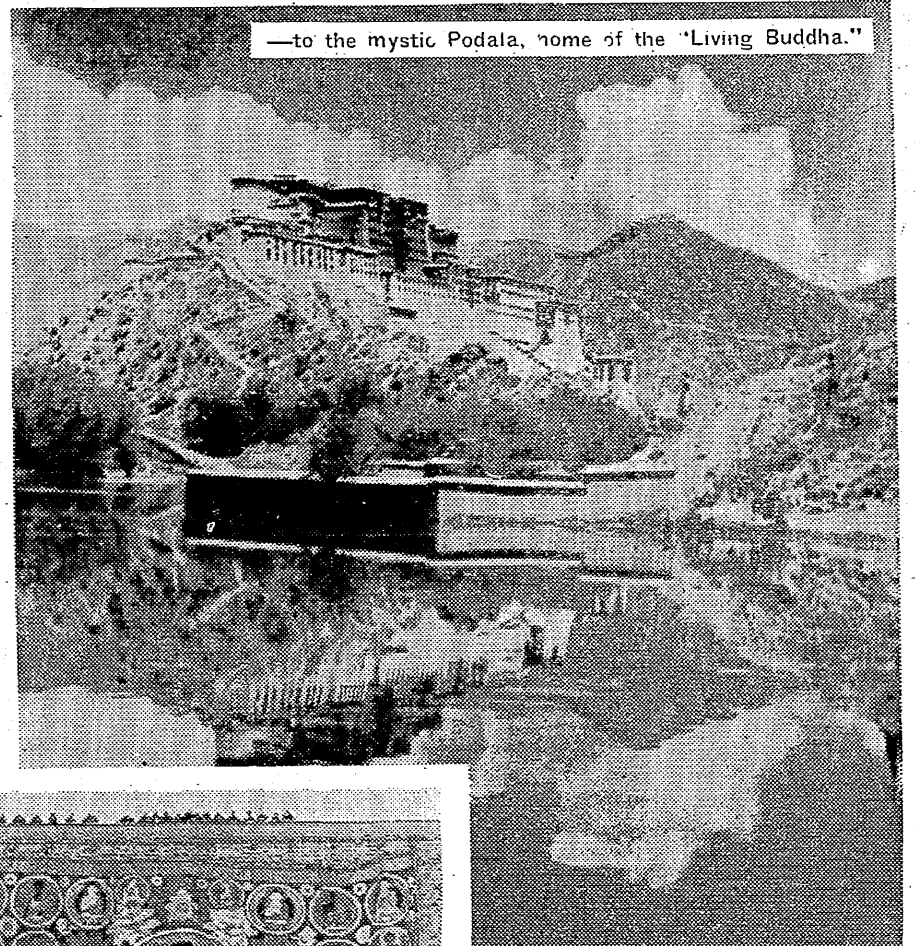
"He would love to wear European clothes and cut his hair," says Bernard. "The Tibetans never cut their hair. The tradesmen let it hang in a long braid with a tassel at one end; the higher Tibetans braid it and pile it on top of the head, so that it is flat in the middle with a knob at each end. Rather attractive, too."

"The Tsarong used to make several tiny braids around the front of his head, out of three infinitesimal hairs, and pin them up.

"He had a radio, but we only listened to one program. We used to turn it on to hear the news. There was only one other radio in the country."

Most interesting of all the people in Tibet are the lamas.

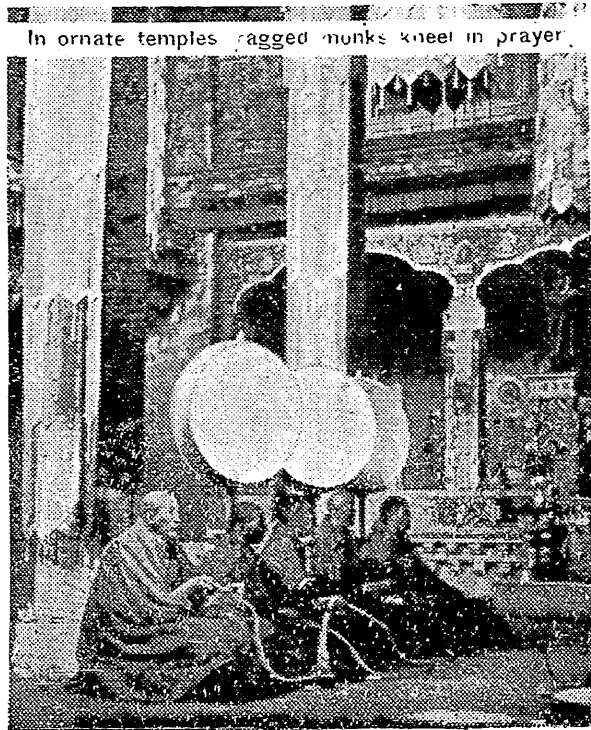
These people believe that the farther away they can get from worldly habits such as eating, drinking and sleeping, the sooner they will be fit to enter Nirvana—the state of "divine nothingness" that comes after death.



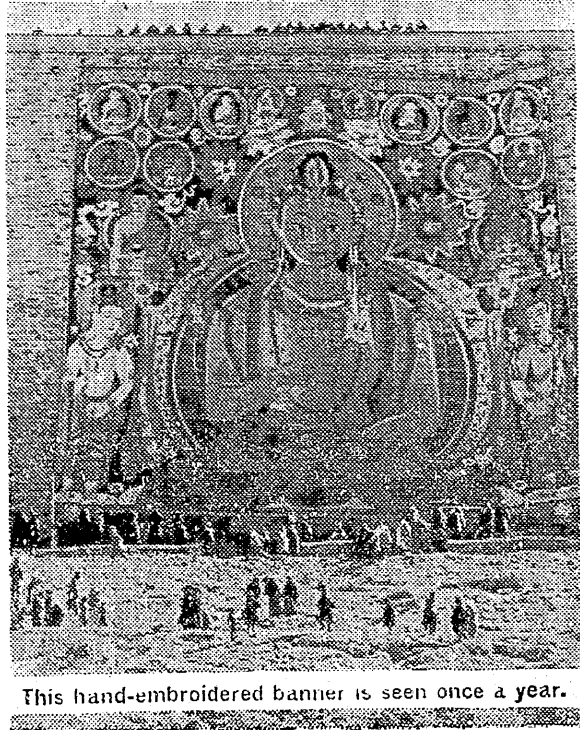
—to the mystic Podala, home of the "Living Buddha."



White clouds drift over picturesque bazaars.



In ornate temples ragged monks kneel in prayer.



This hand-embroidered banner is seen once a year.

GENERAL shrine of Buddhism is the towering building of the Podala, home of the Dalai Lama, the "living Buddha" who is spiritual leader of Buddhism.

That title, "living Buddha," is meant literally. The Dalai Lama is believed by Buddhists to be the actual, living reincarnation of Buddha himself. When he dies, Buddha is immediately reincarnated in the body of some other human; it becomes the task of the Buddhist hierarchy to discover who this person is, bring him to the Podala, and install him as the new Dalai Lama.

The last Dalai Lama died four years ago, and the new one has not yet been chosen.

Rich and sumptuous are the ceremonies and pageants of Buddhism. The lamas may wear ragged clothes, but they kneel in ornate and beautiful temples; and once each year—for just one hour—they bring out and hang on a high wall the great Kiku banner, which Bernard photographed.

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