



The High Road to China: George Bogle, the Panchen Lama, and the First British Expedition to Tibet

Kate Teltscher

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A virtuoso work of narrative history about two societies whose relationship is of urgent interest today

The High Road to China traces two extraordinary journeys across some of the harshest and highest terrain in the world: the first British mission to Tibet, and the Panchen Lama's state visit to China to mark the emperor's seventieth birthday.

In the late eighteenth century, with its empire expanding, the British sought a commercial opening to China, which was closed to outsiders; and they saw a possible advocate with Peking in the Panchen Lama, the spiritual leader of the Buddhist people of Tibet. The British envoy, a young Scot named George Bogle, sought an opening to China through negotiations with the Panchen Lama's envoy, a Hindu monk and trader, and then through the incarnate deity himself. All the while, he kept a journal, in prose that is by turns playful, self-deprecating, grandiose, and shrewd, and through his words Kate Teltscher makes this meeting of two worlds palpably real to the reader. *The High Road to China* brings the pleasures of narrative history to bear on a crucial turning point in history, one whose effects are still being felt.

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