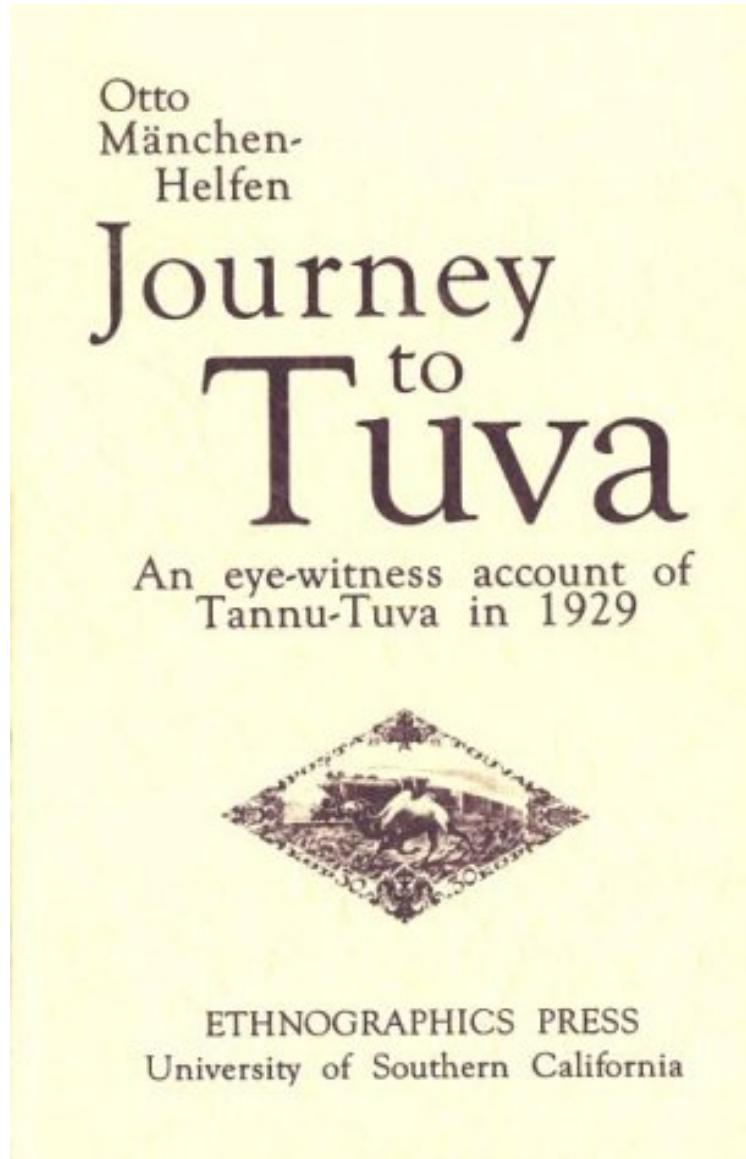


(Library ebook) Journey to Tuva

Journey to Tuva

Otto J. Manchen-Helfen, Alan Leighton
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Otto J. Manchen-Helfen, Alan Leighton : Journey to Tuva before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Journey to Tuva:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. rare glimpse of throat singer country By Bob Newman Some parents take a lot of photos of their kids. But some people have---in their later years---just a handful of faded photos of odd moments, maybe totally unrepresentative of their lives, but nevertheless the only preserved picture of themselves way

back when. Tuva is a country like that. Hardly anyone outside Russia ever wrote about it, there are only a few extant pictures, few foreigners ever even saw it in its days of independence (1921-1944) With considerable difficulty, and only because he was teaching ethnology and sociology at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow at the time, the author managed to get to Tuva and become the only Westerner to write a book about that small, "independent" republic before the end of Communism. Tuva, north of Mongolia but south of the Sayan Mountains of Siberia, issued a great series of postage stamps back in the 1930s. The Ethnographics Press and the Friends of Tuva re-published this book in 1992, illustrated with black and white copies of many of those stamps, and with a forward by the author's wife who still lived in California. They also included Manchen-Helfen's report to the Moscow authorities---quite different from the tone of the book (but then, he liked living !) The book also contains a report, 60 years later, by the Leighton brothers, of their own trip to Tuva. Good thing Otto Manchen-Helfen had a sense of humor. It probably prevented him from swallowing everything told to him in Moscow and it helped him realize that Russian Communism often resembled nothing more than old Russian Colonialism. Tuva in 1929 still retained most of the culture developed over centuries under Uighur, Kyrgyz, Mongol, Chinese, and Manchu rule. Most people lived as nomads and hunters, following the dictates of lamas and shamans. Roads, railways, and airports remained a distant dream. Urban subtleties remained few on the ground. The Russians had assumed control. Tuva, unfortunately, was anything but independent. It was the second Russian satellite after Mongolia. Russians controlled policy; the Tuvan government imitated Moscow in everything as far as possible. While Mongolia eventually has become an independent country, Tuva with its small population remains a part of Russia. Manchen-Helfen wrote entertainingly, if not entirely accurately, about what he saw. If that remote part of the earth interests you, you cannot fail to read JOURNEY TO TUVA. Where do those throat-singers come from that tour on the "World Music" circuit ? You find out here, though they never get a mention in the book. If you need more, you might also get hold of S. Vainshtein's "Nomads of South Siberia" which is a far more academic work, but tells you somewhat less about what Tuva looked like. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A great early reference about Tuva By A Customer This highly informative book is a great addition to any Tuvaphile's library. It is a great depiction of the land, people, and culture of Tuva during a pivotal point in the tiny nation's history. Mänchen-Helfen's account of his personal experiences is very open-minded and accepting for coming from a European of his time. The text covers many topics ranging from government and living conditions to herding and tobacco. This book flows too, and is recommended for anyone interested in other cultures. In general: a great book.

A prescient, eye-witness account of Tannu Tuva in 1929, when Tuva was "independent." Full of fascinating footnotes, this book is a must for history buffs and lovers of esoterica. Translated from the German edition and annotated by Alan Leighton.

Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original Language: German Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. An eccentric Englishman-he might have stepped right out of a Jules Verne novel-once traveled the world with the sole purpose of erecting a memorial stone at the midpoint of each continent, bearing the inscription: "I was here at the center of the continent on this day"-and the date. Africa and North and South America already had their stones when he set out to put a monument in the heart of Asia. According to his calculations, it lay on the banks of the upper Yenisei in the Chinese region of Urianghai. A rich sportsman, tough (as many fools are), he braved every hardship and reached his goal. I saw the stone in the summer of 1929. It stands in Saldam, in Tuva (as the former Urianghai is now called), in the herdsman's republic, which lies between Siberia, the Altai Mountains, and the Gobi: the Asian land least accessible to Europeans. - - - I saw the beautiful Gorki film Mother there. The Tuvans sat packed like sardines on the narrow wooden benches, with the keenest expectations. My neighbor was the shaman who on the previous day had sent his soul to Erlik~oranb, the realm of the dead. . . . Now he sat in the movie theater: next to him' a soldier, then the Mongolian envoy, then a lama, children, old women, young girls, and men who ran the Buddhist rosary of 108 pearls through their fingers. The film broke at least twenty times that night, but that only made the viewers happy. So much the better! Now the fairy tale would last that much longer! They could not understand anything, not the slightest bit. . . . but their pleasure was nevertheless unending. They were absolutely neutral towards the proceedings on the screen. Whoever just fired, that was their man! . . . When horses appeared, the whole room went crazy. They jumped up, screaming, and drove the horses with wild cries of "Chaa! Chaa!" They had a magnificent time. . . . The showing had long since ended, but still they stood together, laughing and chatting. At the cashier, one man just had to buy the horse that "the man with the golden tooth" had ridden in the film. Finally, one by one, they mounted their horses and rode home past the electrical power station and the post office, back to their yurts, back to the steppes through which the dark tones of the shaman's drum were already calling the spirits from every quarter.