

Behind the ice walls of the Himalayas lie the immense empty deserts and remote mountains of Central Asia. There, blown clear of all but the most tenacious vegetation by harsh winds, the high plateau of Tibet extends north thousands of square miles to the unexplored peaks of the Kunluns, a mountain range longer than the Himalayas and almost as high.

the world's most important art, literature, music, and science, against a time when "wars would rage so hotly that every precious thing will be in danger." When this Armageddon is finally over and "the strong have devoured each other," the treasures saved in the hidden sanctuary of Shangri-La will enable mankind to rise from the ruins of the past and build a new and better world.

Heaven on Earth Beyond the Himalayas

For centuries rumors of a hidden kingdom resembling the Shangri-La of *Lost Horizon* have lured travelers to the wastes of Central Asia

by Edwin Bernbaum

Beyond its valleys are two of the world's most barren deserts: the Takla Makan and the Gobi. Farther north more ranges—the Pamir, the Tien Shan, the Altai, and numerous others—punctuate the horizon until they give way to the great forests and open tundra of Siberia. Sparsely populated and cut off by geographic and political barriers, this region remains the least known and most mysterious part of Asia, a place where almost anything could be lost and waiting to be found.

Since Hilton's novel was published, Shangri-La has come to mean any kind of hidden sanctuary or earthly paradise. President Franklin Roosevelt used the name for the hide-away he built in the Maryland hills—which was later rechristened Camp David—and owners of countless restaurants and resorts all over the world have followed his lead. The lasting impression made by the novel and the movie based on it raises an interesting question: Was *Lost Horizon* simply a romantic fantasy, or was it based on something deeper of which Hilton may or may not have been aware?

Early in 1969 I was trekking in the Himalayas of Nepal with the abbot of a Tibetan Buddhist monastery that is near the foot of Mount Everest. The monastery's spectacular setting in-

Below: A Tibetan tanka depicts Shambhala within mountain rings, its 8 regions surrounding the capital city like lotus petals.

Through the ages this desolate land has fascinated Buddhists, Hindus, Taoists, Muslims, theosophists, and Christian missionaries. Explorers and archaeologists were as strongly drawn to its mystery. Without doubt it inspired James Hilton to write *Lost Horizon*, his novel about Shangri-La, a Tibetan monastery hidden among lofty summits in an idyllic valley where people live for hundreds of years in good health.

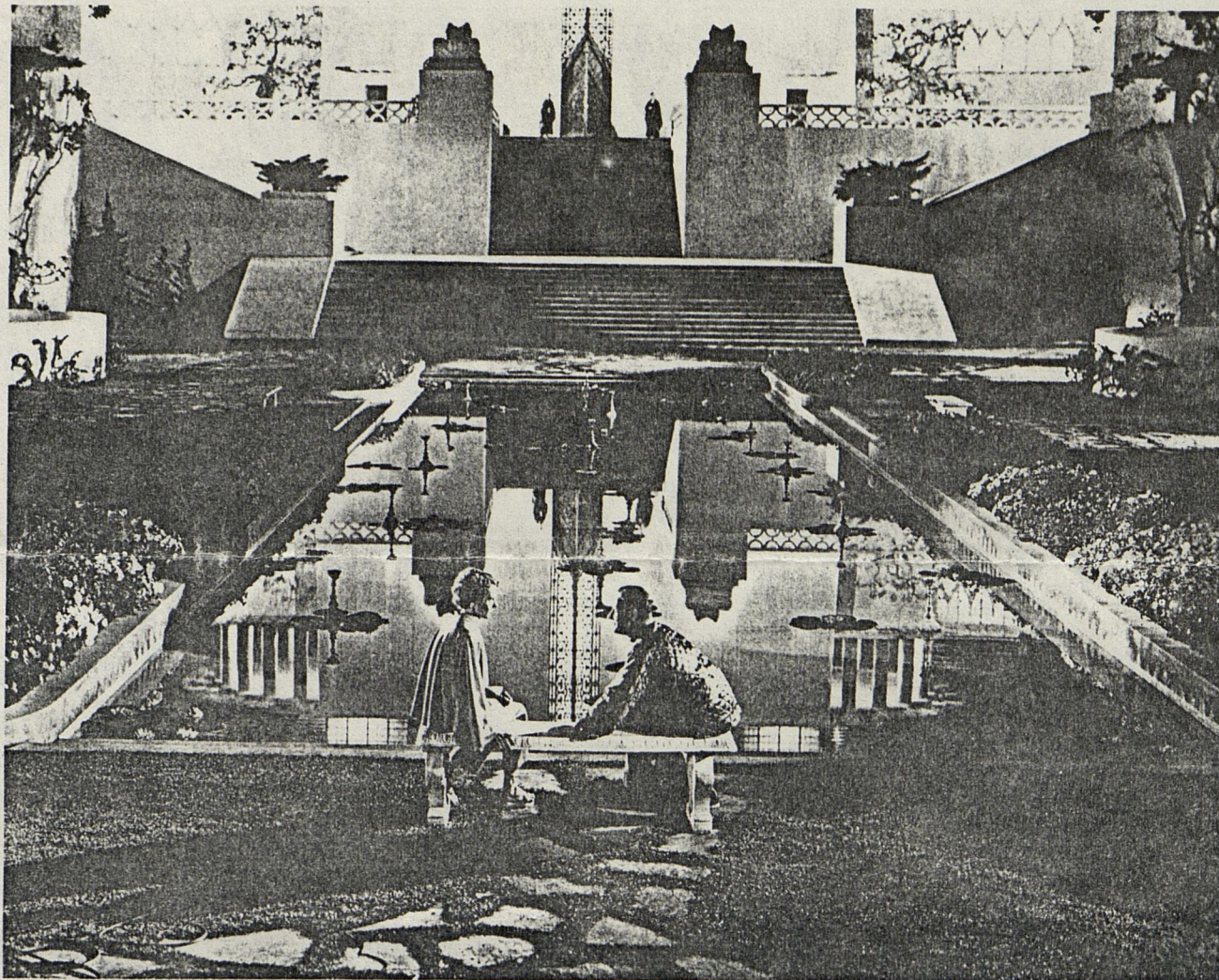
In his story, published in 1933, only those who get lost—or whose airplanes are hijacked—can find their way to this sanctuary. And it is concealed not in the Himalayas, but north in the Kunluns. There the inhabitants lead peaceful lives devoted to the study and enjoyment of

Musee Guimet



Left: Nestled amid evergreens and snowcapped peaks, a Nepalese Himalayan village conjures up visions of the idyllic Shangri-La.

Prof
Roerich:
I thought you
would be interested
in pp. 40-41.
How are you and
Madame Roerich
doing?
John A. Lent



The Penguin Collection

vited comparison to the one in Hilton's book. As a joke, I asked my companion if he had ever heard of Shangri-La. Yes, he had heard Westerners mention it but did not know what the name implied. I told him the story of *Lost Horizon*. He smiled.

"Well, the old Tibetan books speak of a place like that—a land of great kings and lamas called Shambhala. They say that the way there is long and difficult and that you can only go if you are an accomplished yogi."

Since then I have searched out every reference to the mysterious kingdom. In 1975–76 I spent several months in Nepal, India, and Sikkim interviewing lamas and laymen, gathering texts, and photographing art concerned with Shambhala. And in the United States I worked with Lama Kunga Rimpoche on Tibetan texts assembled from my trip, his library, and a collection in the University of California at Berkeley.

While many Westerners have regarded Tibet as *the* mysterious hid-

den sanctuary, I found that Tibetans themselves have looked for it elsewhere. Their Shambhala is a mystical land tucked among snow peaks north of Tibet where a line of enlightened kings will guard the most secret teachings of Buddhism until all truth in the world outside is lost in war and the lust for power and wealth. Then, according to prophecy, the last king of Shambhala will emerge with a great army to destroy the forces of evil and usher in a golden age. Under his enlightened rule the world will become, at last, a place of peace and plenty, filled with wisdom and compassion.

Tibetan texts say that to find Shambhala one must take a long and mystical journey across a wilderness of deserts and mountains. Whoever reaches this remote sanctuary will then learn a secret teaching that will enable him to master time and free himself from its bondage. The texts warn, however, that only those who are called and have the necessary

Above: *Hollywood's version of love in Shangri-La had Ronald Colman courting centenarian Jane Wyatt in the 1937 classic Lost Horizon.*

spiritual preparation will be able to reach Shambhala; all others will encounter only blinding storms, empty mountains, even death.

The earliest references to Shambhala appear in the most sacred books of Tibetan Buddhism, two series of over 300 volumes called *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*. These works, known as the Tibetan Canon, are for Tibetans what the Bible is for many Westerners. They include the sayings of the Buddha and commentaries on his teachings by later saints and scholars. The oldest volumes concerning Shambhala were first written down in Tibetan around the 11th century as translations from older works in Sanskrit. The books themselves are made up of long loose-leaf pages of thick paper—many embellished with gold and silver letters—that are wrapped in silk

and bound between two wood planks.

The most secret aspects of Shambhala, however, have only been transmitted by spoken word from teacher to initiated disciple. Lamas say that without these oral teachings many of the texts, which are written in obscure symbolic language, cannot be properly understood.

Located within rings of mountains, the kingdom of Shambhala is divided into eight regions that surround the capital city of Kalapa like lotus petals. Peace, plenty, and health reign in this land of golden-roofed pagodas, lakes filled with jewels, flowering trees, and lush meadows. Most Tibetan lamas say it is a Pure Land meant only for those on their way to nirvana, the ultimate state in which one is no longer subject to the vicissitudes of life and death. When I was once speaking with the Dalai Lama, I suggested that the kingdom might only be symbolic of a state of mind. Definitely not, he replied, "Sham-

Below: "I've been waiting for you, my son"—dying Father Perrault (Sam Jaffe) informs his successor of Shangri-La's great destiny.

bhala has a real existence in this world."

To Tibetans Shambhala means "the source of happiness," but the place is not simply a paradise of languid bliss. The inhabitants of Shambhala study and practice the most complex and secret of the Tibetan teachings—the *kalacakra* or "wheel of time." Lamas say that even among initiates only a very few outside Shambhala can understand the deep symbolism of its texts and meditation.

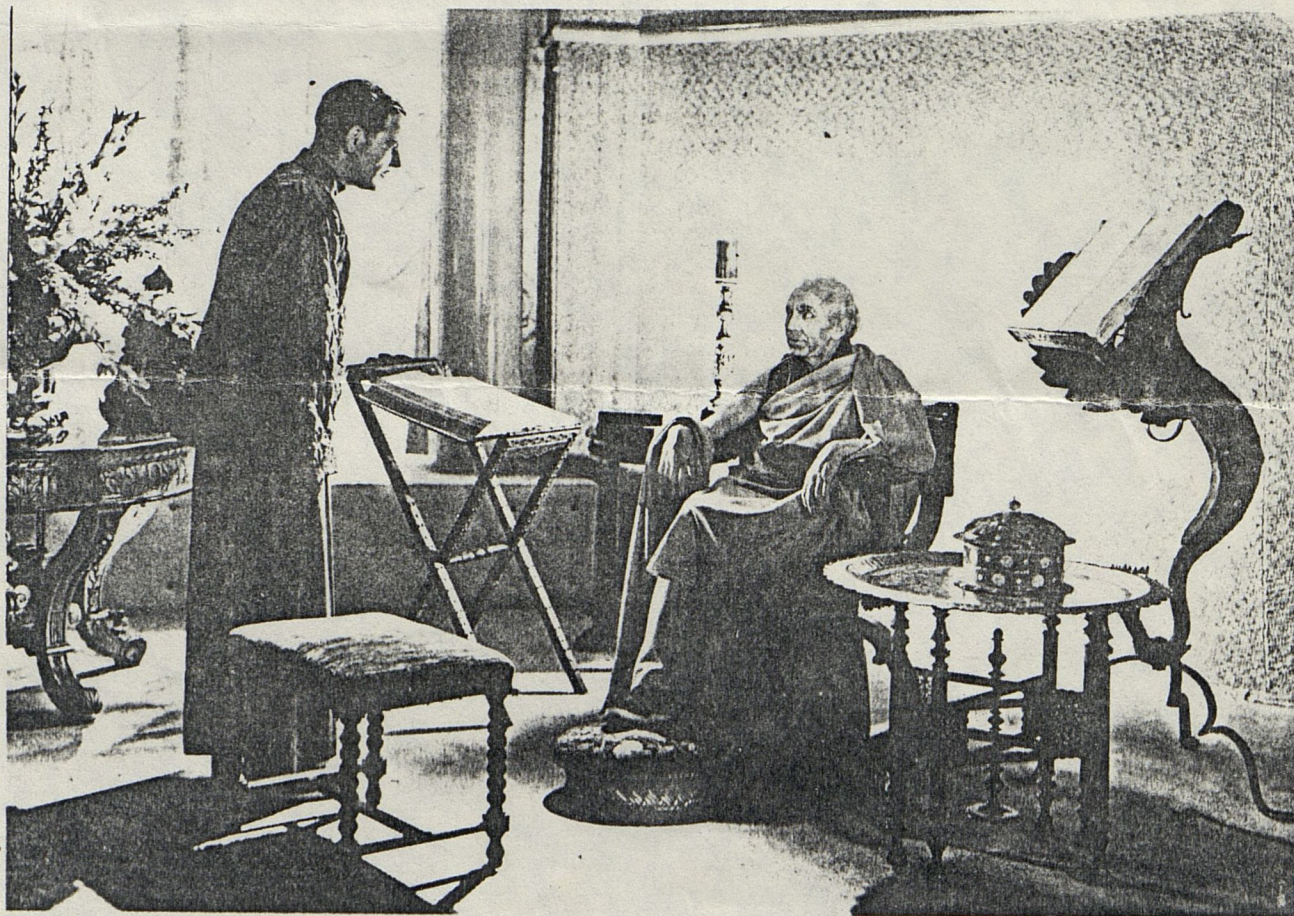
The "wheel of time" is concerned with finding eternity in the passing moment, the indestructible in the midst of destruction. Those who practice the *kalacakra* seek the perfect state of nirvana here in the imperfect world. Rather than renounce worldly distractions, the people of Shambhala use everything, even luxuries and family life, as means of attaining enlightenment. They strive to free themselves from illusion through the very things that bind others to it.

Because of their positive attitude toward the material world, the inhabitants of Shambhala are said to have developed an advanced science and

technology, which they put to the service of spiritual ends. Tibetan medical texts that are supposed to have come from the kingdom describe human anatomy and physiology, sophisticated theories and methods of diagnosis, and ways to cure and prevent serious diseases such as smallpox. Other *kalacakra* texts from Shambhala have provided Tibetans with their systems of astronomy and astrology, as well as with one of the calendars they use today.

The people of Shambhala are not immortal, but they do live lives of about 100 years, and they die assured of being reborn in circumstances at least as good as those they enjoyed in the kingdom. Although they are not fully enlightened, theirs is the closest to the ideal society that can be reached in this world.

Their kings, on the other hand, are supposed to be enlightened, and Tibetans believe that each one is the incarnation of a particular well-known bodhisattva, one who has reached the brink of nirvana and need never be reborn but has chosen to do so in order to guide others to enlightenment. As bodhisattvas who have stopped just short of complete Bud-



The Penguin Collection

dhahood, the kings are embodiments of such spiritual forces as compassion and wisdom.

The myth of Shambhala has influenced Tibetan political history as well as its culture and religion. At the turn of the century, a Siberian lama named Dorjieff became an influential tutor of the Dalai Lama and persuaded him and other high Tibetan officials that Russia and Shambhala were the same country because they both lay to the north. The czar, therefore, had to be the king of Shambhala. As a result, the Dalai Lama made friendly overtures to the czar and exchanged gifts with him, meanwhile snubbing the British in India as enemies of Buddhism.

During this time, Great Britain and Russia were vying for influence and control over the mountain ranges separating their Asian empires of India and Siberia in a struggle of espionage and intrigue known as "The Great Game." When the viceroy of the British Empire in India heard what Dorjieff was doing, he dispatched the Younghusband Expedition to Lhasa in 1903 to force a trade treaty on Tibet.

In Mongolia belief in Shambhala used to be as strong as or stronger than it was in Tibet, and Communists there also exploited the myth for

political purposes. During the struggle for independence from Chinese and White Russian control, Sukhe Bator, the founder of the Mongolian People's Republic in 1921, composed a marching song for his troops that contained these words: "Let us die in this war and be reborn as warriors of the king of Shambhala!" A few years later, in an attempt to force out the traditional lama rulers of the country, the Mongolian Communist Party Congress of 1926 passed the following resolution:

... as there is a tradition that after the Eighth Incarnation . . . [the reigning lama] will not be reincarnated again but thereafter will be reborn as the Great General Hanamand in the realm of Shambhala, there is no question of installing the subsequent, Ninth Incarnation.

Without this obstacle the Communists could justify claiming power.

The myth of Shambhala has also subtly influenced the West. In the early 17th century, a number of Catholic missionaries left Europe to convert the Tibetans and Chinese. Among them were João Cabral and Estevão Cacella, who searched for a way from India through Tibet to Cathay, or China, and heard about Shambhala, which they named "Xembala." Their letters home contained the first mention of Shambhala in the West.

Two hundred years later another Catholic missionary, the Abbé Huc, journeyed through Tibet and heard a version of the prophecy of Shambhala. It was the Abbé's book that James Hilton used as his primary source of information on Tibet, and Huc and other Catholic missionaries who had traveled in Tibet became models for his High Lama of Shangri-La—a Capuchin friar named Father Perrault. In the novel Father Perrault stumbles on the hidden valley and sets out to convert its inhabitants only to be gradually converted himself until he becomes nearly indistinguishable from a Buddhist lama. This almost happened to some of the missionaries whose accounts Hilton read.

Knowledge of Shambhala came to the attention of a large audience

Left: Henry Wallace, secretary of agriculture and vice president for Roosevelt, was politically undone by his fascination with Shambhala.

through the theosophists. During the second half of the 19th century, the Russian Madame Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society, a mystical movement that provided the West with its first significant exposure to Eastern religions, particularly Buddhism and Hinduism. According to the society's belief, Shambhala was the spiritual center of the world and the original source of the secret doctrines of theosophy.

Among the important figures influenced by theosophical ideas was the Russian émigré Nicholas Roerich, a poet and artist who designed the costumes and sets for the celebrated premiere of Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring*. Roerich developed a deep interest in Tibetan mythology and in Shambhala, and looked for traces of the hidden kingdom while leading a scientific expedition through Central Asia. To him Shambhala was the ultimate symbol, binding together all religious traditions. His writings on the subject, including a book entitled *Shambhala*, are other probable sources for Hilton's Shangri-La.

Roerich's interest in the Tibetan myth inspired him to create and promote the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, a treaty that compelled nations to respect and preserve cultural and scientific treasures—museums, cathedrals, and other monuments and institutions—during war. Representatives of 21 nations signed the pact in a ceremony at the White House in the presence of Franklin Roosevelt; it was also endorsed by many other world leaders and prominent figures such as Albert Einstein.

Roosevelt had been encouraged to endorse the pact by his secretary of agriculture, Henry Wallace, who had met Roerich and become fascinated with his ideas. Wallace's letters to Roerich show that he had a deep interest in mysticism and knew about Shambhala.

In 1934, with Roosevelt's blessing, Wallace sent Roerich on a government-sponsored expedition to Central Asia. His ostensible mission was to search for drought-resistant grasses, but according to *Newsweek* magazine, "around the Department of Agriculture the secretary's assistants freely admitted that he also wanted Roerich to look for the signs of the Second Coming." Wallace must have been thinking of the



prophecy of Shambhala and associated its future king with the coming Messiah.

In 1948 Westbrook Pegler, a conservative columnist, published Roerich and Wallace's correspondence as the so-called "Guru Letters." Wallace was discredited, and his political career was ended. But, as it has through history, the prophecy of Shambhala, which intrigued Roerich and Wallace, continues to intrigue thousands.

When the golden age will come is a matter of controversy—a few Tibetans believe the final battle is nearly upon us—but most think it will dawn between 200 and 500 years from now. All agree, however, that it will last at least 1,000 years.

If one is impatient to experience the golden age now, one has no choice but to attempt the journey to Shambhala. Tibetan guidebooks have been written for this purpose, but their directions are puzzling and difficult to follow.

The journey they describe runs through country filled with a curious blend of realistic and fantastic features: The traveler comes to mountains populated with gods and demons; he must cross vast deserts with the aid of magic powers and fly over a river whose touch would turn him to stone. He must perform bizarre rituals, practice strange kinds of meditation, and endure superhuman hardships. Yet a number of features along the way seem to correspond to actual places, such as Kashmir and the Tarim River of western China. This leads one to wonder whether Shambhala might also have a dimension in the physical world. . . .

Joining those explorers who had been reluctant to dismiss the myth as fantasy, the author sought the help of lamas and Sherpas to locate a legendary valley, Khembalung, reported to resemble Shambhala. The Himalayan oasis he discovered through a perilous expedition perfectly fit his dream—a beautiful valley of pine and rhododendron bathed in a golden mist. ■

A student of Tibetan culture, Edwin Bernbaum spent several years in Nepal climbing the Himalayas.

Adapted from the book The Way to Shambhala Copyright © 1980 by Edwin Bernbaum. Published by Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Japan (continued from page 9)

How can Japanese operating sizable enterprises in America derive the same benefits from the skills of their American managers when cultural bias on both sides continues to make communications—and, therefore, working together—difficult?

The frustrations expressed by an American manager who groaned, "You have to remember when dealing with a Japanese that 'yes' means 'maybe' and 'maybe' means 'no,'" will most likely be diminished by increased contact and familiarity. In the meantime some binational tolerance is necessary—and already apparent.

One American working for a Japanese company has taken it upon himself to conduct an informal course for newcomers to the organization in which he reveals such mysteries of Japanese management as the consensus concept and explains the need for that rare commodity in American business—patience. And the experiences of hundreds of large and small companies with operations in the United States have not gone unnoticed back in Japan. In Tokyo these days numerous industrial seminars, articles in business journals, and special Japanese consultants guide those about to make the move across the Pacific.

And despite the difficulties that have been encountered, one thing stands out: Japanese firms today are actively operating in the United States, successfully producing everything from truck bodies to dehydrated instant noodles. Certainly the Japanese still cling to many assumptions and practices that should be abandoned in the American context. But they can also transfer from the Far East business methods that are clearly effective in the West.

"Working for a Japanese company, you have to understand the way they operate," says the American head of a Japanese-owned audio-component company. "But once you go through the whole long ritual and everyone agrees on a course of action, watch out—things are really going to move." ■

Norman Sklarewitz, a freelance writer with a special interest in international business, lives in L.A.

Jerrold G. Stanoff Rare Oriental Book Co.

P.O. Box 1599B
Aptos, CA 95003

Specialists in
rare, scarce and
scholarly books on all
aspects of Japan,
China and Korea



Catalogs issued.
Your inquiries invited.



The Thousand Buddhas

Ancient Buddhist
Paintings from
the Cave-Temples
of Tun-huang
on the Western
Frontier of China


Recovered and
described by Aurel
Stein, K.C.I.E.

Now available in a
facsimile edition
limited to 400 sets.

Portfolio with 48
plates. Bound text
with essay by
Laurence Binyon.

Price: \$425.00

For a descriptive brochure, please write to:

 The Thousand Buddhas, Dept. AS-80
Johnson Reprint Corporation
111 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10003

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____