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Reginald Fleming Johnston

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### **From Peking to Mandalay**

Sir Reginald Fleming Johnston (1874–1938) was a colonial administrator and oriental scholar. He travelled extensively in the Far East and developed a deep interest in Chinese culture and religion. His fourteen-year posting to Weihaiwei, a quiet naval base, allowed him to travel to places not usually visited by Europeans, and to begin writing. In 1906 he spent six months travelling across China to Burma, publishing this illustrated account of his arduous journey in 1908. In it he comments on the economic and political state of China, but the book's main theme is the beauty of the country and the character of its people. His understanding of the language, religion and culture make this a valuable description of Chinese society at the beginning of the twentieth century. Johnston's *Lion and Dragon in Northern China* (1910) and *Twilight in the Forbidden City* (1934) are also reprinted in this series.

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# From Peking to Mandalay

*A Journey from North China  
to Burma through Tibetan  
Ssuch'uan and Yunnan*

REGINALD FLEMING JOHNSTON



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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108050494](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108050494)

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2012

This edition first published 1908

This digitally printed version 2012

ISBN 978-1-108-05049-4 Paperback

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CROSSING THE YALUNG RIVER. (See p. 191.)

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FROM  
PEKING TO MANDALAY  
A JOURNEY FROM NORTH CHINA TO  
BURMA THROUGH TIBETAN SSUCH'UAN  
AND YUNNAN

BY R. F. JOHNSTON, M.A., F.R.G.S.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY  
DISTRICT OFFICER AND MAGISTRATE, WEIHAIWEI

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1908

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

WHILE this book is passing through the press I have received a letter from the author giving me what appears to be very useful and valuable information in regard to the material which he has embodied in it, a good part of which has been obtained since the original MS. was completed.

The author is in the Far East and I am unable to communicate with him before publication, but, as the following details may be of some value to reviewers and readers, I venture on my own responsibility to put them forward in the author's own words:—

“I must explain that the extensive corrections which have had to be made and the notes which have been added were based on information gleaned by myself at first hand from Chinese chronicles and other native books which for months I had tried in vain to get hold of, and which (when I sent you the finished MS.) I had almost given up all hope of securing. For a long time I tried, through several friendly native officials as well as through the British Legation at Peking, to get copies of the books I wanted, but failed to do so. It was not till the proofs were already beginning to reach me that my endeavours were successful. The *Ssuch'uan Chih* and the *Omei-hsien Chih* and a few other Chinese books reached me just in time to enable me (by dint of extremely hard work) to scramble through them and make use of them for my book. When I tell you that the *Ssuch'uan Chih* alone is a Chinese work of about

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160 volumes, you will understand that I had my work cut out, especially as Chinese books are unhappily devoid of indices. Probably no other European has ever tried to read—and certainly none has translated—the books to which I refer; and I think that even if the original part of my book is of no value, the rest of the book is bound to be of interest to serious students of the Far East on account of the use I have made of the native chronicles. The books cost me a good deal of money; but I shall not regret the expense, provided you have found it possible to allow the printers to give effect to my corrections and additions.

“I have succeeded in finding a place for some interesting stories and legends dealing with the early history of Mount Omei; and I think they make the book less ‘heavy’ than it originally was, and probably more interesting both to the student and to the ordinary reader. It would have been a thousand pities to give no effect to the fund of fresh information about Mount Omei and the Tibetan States which I collected from my Chinese books: and it was literally impossible for me to make my corrections sooner than I did. Very few writers of travel-books on China have made much use of Chinese authorities (except the translated ‘classics’), partly because copies of the books themselves are extremely hard to find, and partly because very few travellers have had an adequate knowledge of the written language; and native ‘teachers,’ who might be of service, have no idea of the kind of thing that interests Europeans. I think, if you will glance at my descriptions of Mount Omei and Tachienlu (as amended and annotated) . . . you will see that my plan of hunting up the local folk-lore and utilising all available Chinese records is by no means to be despised.”

JOHN MURRAY.

50 ALBEMARLE STREET,

*April 1908.*

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TO

DAVID PLAYFAIR HEATLEY

WHOSE PRESENCE IN THE EAST WOULD BRING HAPPINESS

TO EXILE, AND WHOSE ABSENCE IN THE WEST HAS

CAUSED HIS BANISHED FRIEND TO TURN

MANY TIMES WITH LONGING TO

THE SETTING SUN.

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