

(Ebook pdf) Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia, A

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Fred Burnaby

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Fred Burnaby : Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia, A before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia, A:

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Some books just don't stand the test of time unfortunatelyBy Paul SuniBy all accounts (see e.g. Wikipedia) Fred Burnaby was a larger than life English character who traveled the world, bent fire pokers around people's necks with his bare hands as a party trick, spoke multiple languages, and died young in battle. He also wrote travelogues, "A Ride to Khiva" being the perhaps the best known - maybe a better term would be the least unknown given that the current sales rank is about 1.8 million.Khiva was a state in Central Asia near the Aral Sea that few Europeans had visited by the time Colonel Burnaby set out to do so in the 1875-76, while on a 6-month sabbatical leave from the Army. That the six month period happened to coincide with an unusually cold winter, rather than, say, a nice warm period of the year, seemed not to be a consideration to the sturdy Englishman. A complication of the trip was obviously that Khiva was planted right in the borderlands between Russia and British controlled India and thus in a highly contested area in years to come.The Preface opens with the modest lines "The title explains the nature of this work. It is merely a narrative of a ride to Khiva". The latter is a true statement and is perhaps the reason why this book is not particularly well known. No doubt the trip was adventurous beyond words, but the narrative is in large parts a pretty dry description of the trip. This is unfortunate because in places Burnaby exhibits a great dry wit, as when he discusses what happened when a bunch of locals left their master's cotton out in the wild while they went off partying:"Will not some of the cotton be stolen?" I inquired of Nazar."If God pleases," was his pious answer.The Mohammedans invariably throw upon the Deity the responsibility for any mischance that may

occurs through their own negligence. The doctrine of fatalism thus covers a multitude of sins. I subsequently discovered that the only way to impart a little circumspection to my careless camel-driver when, after smashing my boxes, he excused himself on the grounds that the Almighty had been the cause of his disaster, was to administer to the delinquent a slight chastisement. This having been inflicted, I exclaimed, "Brother, it was the will of God. You must not complain; it was your destiny to break my property and mine to beat you. We neither of us could help it, praise be to Allah. This method of dealing with my party had a capital effect upon them, and much more care was afterwards taken in loading and unloading the camels." I'm glad I read it as it gives some interesting insights into local customs, the treatment of women relative to sheep and horses, etc. But, on the whole it was a bit disappointing and is somewhat difficult to recommend, unless you really are hungry for first-person accounts of the time and geographical area. Speaking of hunger, in case you ever need a bit of practical information, this book more or less explains how to eat a horse in 12 hours or so. One odd thing is that this is the only book I have ever bought (from) that has zero publishing information. It is a nice paperback but with no publishing or printing information whatsoever. Looks like a straight reprint of the original with no printing date. The only thing it does have is an ISBN number on the back. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. It is really amazing book, based on real travelogue story of Burnaby ... By Alisher It is really amazing book, based on real travelogue story of Burnaby to Central Asia, it is very useful for scholars, students, researchers and travelers. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating. By Carroll S. Collins A fascinating book to peruse. Interesting history.....strange place to read about.....and on a horse,, yet....who knew that was possible at that time.