

**An Adventure-Documentary**

**“At the end of the road, Lhasa”**

**5400 km by bicycle and on horseback  
on the trail of Evariste Huc**





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## 1. Background history:

In the 19th century, only a few explorers and missionaries left to discover China, which was then prohibited to Westerners.

In 1844, Evariste Huc (1813-1860) and Joseph Gabet (1808-1853), two French missionaries belonging to the Lazarists order, accompanied by Shambdachiemba, ventured to the far-off regions of the Celestial Empire.

Then began a “Grand Voyage” towards the steppes of the North, which was still unknown to Westerners.

The most incredible adventures began for these “astonishing travellers”. For two years, their caravan, made up of horses and camels, crossed hostile areas, facing the agony of the extreme climate of these desert areas and the attacks of bandits. Throughout this journey, they adapted to all conditions, adopting each time the language (Manchu, Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian), clothing, cooking and the nomadic way of life.

In this manner, on January 29, 1846, Mr. Huc and Mr. Gabet, mingled with a Tibetan caravan, and dressed up as lamas, arrived at Lhasa, “after 18 months of struggle against innumerable suffering and exhaustion”. They were the first Frenchmen to discover the capital of Tibet (Lhasa), and to leave there alive, 70 years before Alexandra David-Néel. In the Forbidden City, people hurried to observe these “Lamas from the West”, natives of an unknown country.

By means of his travel book, “Memories of a Voyage in Tartary and Thibet”, Evariste Huc humorously recounted their extraordinary journey. As a true ethnologist, he thoroughly described the traversed areas. Even today, his writings remain an invaluable and unique testimony to the China of the 19th century.



## 2. An human adventure:

On February 21, 2006, at the Tien Amen Square in front of the Forbidden City, Stéphanie Huc and Jean Guillemot leave Beijing on the trail of Evariste Huc to join the mythical city of Lhasa, by bicycle and on horseback. At the origin of this adventure there are, on the one hand the story of Evariste Huc “Memories of a Voyage in Tartary and Thibet” which Stéphanie Huc was brought up on, and, on the other hand, the coincidence of the same family name. The great-great-grandfather of Stéphanie grew up in the same region as Evariste Huc, the Tarn-et-Garonne. The writings of the Huc father shaped the vocation of traveller Stéphanie Huc and her will to carry out her childhood dream, namely, to leave on the trail of her namesake.

The voyage attempted by Stéphanie Huc and Jean Guillemot had never been accomplished since the journey of Evariste Huc. From February to August 2006, they followed as best they could, the route taken by Evariste Huc. This voyage lasted five months during which, they crossed still poorly known or unexplored regions of China, such as Inner Mongolia, the deserts of Ordos, Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai and the wild landscape of the Tibetan Plateau before entering Lhasa “the mythical one”.

It is more than 4500 kilometers of frozen asphalt or dusty tracks that they covered by bicycle and 900 kilometers of steppes and marshes on horseback. This voyage proceeded under the extreme climatic conditions of winter. They fought against the snowstorms and sandstorms, the constant winds and low temperatures of minus 25°C, not to mention the 4700 meters of average altitude of the Tibetan Plateau. The hospitality and the generosity of the people they met, made it possible to face these rough conditions and to endure until the end of their journey.

Surprising China, land of contrasts, at the same time so close and so far away from the descriptions of Evariste Huc, 160 years ago. Northern China is composed of an extraordinary mosaic of different ethnic groups: Mongols with their glorious cultural past, followed by the Hui descendants of the Moslem merchants who arrived by the old Silk route, to the Tibetans with a piercing gaze.





### 3. The movie in a few words:

The movie is a subtle blend between an adventure movie and a documentary. It follows the itinerary from Beijing to Lhasa and pays homage to Evariste Huc.

The documentary was filmed in 2006 during the journey.

These frames are shown alongside the unedited black and white archival pictures of the Congregation of the Mission of Lazaristes and the Foreign Missions of Paris.

The comparison between the archival pictures, combined with the excerpts of the story of Evariste Huc, and the commentary for the contemporary frames skillfully shows the evolution of these regions up until today.

The original soundtrack will provide the finishing touch to transport you in a unique travel experience to the confines of the “Middle Empire”.

### 4. The movie in few numbers:

**Direction date:**

02/01/2006 to 07/21/2006

**Production date:**

June 2008

**Lenght:**

64 minutes

**Standard:**

PAL – NTSC – MiniDV – BETA SP - DVD

**Aspect ratio:**

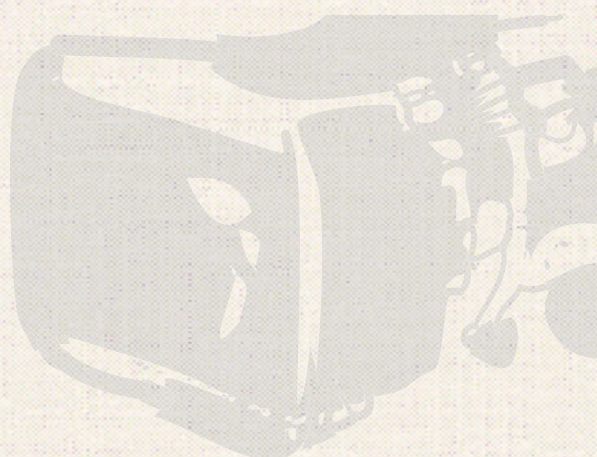
16/9 – 720 x 576 pixels – ratio: 1.422

**Original language:**

French

**Subtitles:**

French, English, Spanish, Dutch





## 5. Media coverage:

- **Television:**
  - o From March to April, 2006, Chinese television stations – Chifeng TV, Duolun TV, Yinchuan TV: 4 minute report.
  - o July 18, 2006 - France 2, News 20H00: 4 minute report.
  - o August 17, 2006 - Antenne Réunion, News 12H00 and 20H00: 4 minute report.
  - o From the 17-24 February, 2007 – Voyage channel, television programme, « Blog Story »: 26 minute report.
- **The press:**
  - o November and December, 2005 – Reunion Newspaper
  - o From March to April, 2006, Chinese newspapers - Chifeng, Hohhot, Dongsheng and Yinchuan.
  - o April and August, 2006 - Reunion Newspaper.
  - o November and December, 2006, January 2007 - « Carnets d'Aventure »
  - o From February to August, 2006 - Publication in the « Piaf » (magazine of information of the embassies and consulates of France in China).
- **Radio Broadcasting:**
  - o February 24, 2006 - France Inter program « Au détour du monde ».
- **Internet:**
  - o [www.futura-sciences.com](http://www.futura-sciences.com): scientific reports website.
  - o <http://education.bleu-outremer.net>: educational website.
  - o [www.a360.org](http://www.a360.org): travel website.

## 6. Other:

- **Conferences:** « Beijing to Lhasa, 5400 km by bicycle and on horseback on the trail of Evariste Huc».
  - o June 19, 2007 - Media Library of Langenier (Reunion).
  - o December 8, 2007 - Media Library of Rueil-Malmaison (Paris)
  - o April 1, 2008 - High School of Roland Garros.
  - o June 6, 2008 – Media Library of Vichy.
- **Photo exhibition:** «Beijing to Lhasa from Evariste until today».
  - o From December 4, 2007 to January 5, 2008 – Media Library of Rueil- Malmaison (Paris).
  - o From April 8, 2008 to June 10, 2008 – Media Library of Vichy.



## 7. Contact us:

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