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Raymond J. Demallie

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The Good Red Road: Passages into Native America. By Kenneth Lincoln with Al Logan Slagle. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. Illustrations. xxiii + 271 pp. \$17.95 cloth, \$10.95 paper.

In John G. Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks*, the red road represents the path of life, of peace, and of the continuity of the generations. To many American Indians today it stands for the old, traditional ways, a state of being in harmony with the universe. In this book, the symbol of the red road has been generalized to embrace all humanity, a deeply-felt psychological sense of oneness and balance that serves as counterpoint to the frenetic lifestyle of modern America.

The Good Red Road is the story of a quest undertaken in 1975 when Kenneth Lincoln, with a small group of students from UCLA—one of whom was Al Logan Slagle—organized an on-the-road seminar based in Jamestown, North Dakota, to explore Indian America. All were Anglos with the exception of Slagle, a North Carolina Cherokee, whose quest, driven by the need to forge personal identity and to search for meaning in an Indian context beyond tribal boundaries, was more intense than the others'.

Wide-eyed, eager, and trusting, Lincoln and his students traveled throughout the Dakotas, visiting the Sioux as well as the Turtle Mountain Chippewa and the Three Affiliated Tribes at Fort Berthold. They lived on the reservations, observing, talking with people, studying, and writing. Beyond poverty and social problems they also discovered deeply held values of family, of relatedness, and of the sacredness of the red road.

Lincoln characterizes the book as "autobiographical ethnography" (p. xv), a reflexive account of the group experience not focused exclusively on the Indian people but exploring simultaneously their own responses as outsiders to American Indian cultures, aiming ultimately to achieve intercultural understanding, a dialogue across cultural boundaries.

A substantial part of the book concerns Rosebud Reservation and incorporates, in revised form, Slagle's master's thesis on the practice today of traditional Lakota religion, offering intimate glimpses of medicine men in the modern world. Although this is not the usual type of descriptive ethnography, the authenticity of detail and the rightness of reported dialogue bring to life these people and their work with a vividness invariably lacking in more narrow scholarly analyses.

Exceptionally well crafted, *The Good Red Road* makes engaging reading. The interrelations among the various personalities that formed this group of vagabond scholars are sharply etched, and they come to represent in microcosm the quest for personal identity that characterizes contemporary America. The book is honest and direct, yet romantic and idealistic. To read it is to undertake along with its authors a journey that is as satisfying intellectually as it is emotionally and that rewards the reader with a sense of understanding the power and beauty of the red road, as well as its relevance to modern life.

RAYMOND J. DEMALLIE
Department of Anthropology
Indiana University