



Foreign Devils on the Silk Road: The Search for the Lost Treasures of Central Asia

Peter Hopkirk

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The story of the intrepid men who, at great personal risk, led the long-range archaeological raids on the Silk Road, incurring the undying wrath of the Chinese

The Silk Road, which linked imperial Rome and distant China, was once the greatest thoroughfare on earth. Along it traveled precious cargoes of silk, gold, and ivory, as well as revolutionary new ideas. Its oasis towns blossomed into thriving centers of Buddhist art and learning. In time it began to decline. The traffic slowed, the merchants left, and finally its towns vanished beneath the desert sands to be forgotten for a thousand years. But legends grew of lost cities filled with treasures and guarded by demons. In the early years of the last century foreign explorers began to investigate these legends, and very soon an international race began for the art treasures of the Silk Road. Huge wall paintings, sculptures, and priceless manuscripts were carried away by the ton and are today scattered through the museums of a dozen countries.

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