



BEYOND THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM

THE
SILK ROAD
CHINA

COLIN THUBRON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
CARLOS NAVAJAS



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USSR

RENHABERG
SHAN
阿尔金山

Kuqa 库车

阿克苏

Korla 库尔勒

Kashgar
喀什

叶尔羌河

和田河

Tarim
盆地

Taklīmakān

KUNLUN
SHAN
昆仑山

Hotan
和田

Kerak He
克里雅河

Qarqan He
车尔臣河

ALTUN
河

KUNLUN
SHAN
昆仑山

India





乌鲁木齐

Urumqi

BOGDA SHAN 达坂山

TIAN SHAN 天山

Turfan

吐鲁番

Mongolia

哈密

北山

Desert

Less used route
to Kashgar
via Hotan

Dunhuang
敦煌

Yumen
玉门

Jiayuguan
嘉峪关

SHAN 祁连山

Qilian
祁连山

To
Xi'an 西安

IF a traveller were to seek out on the map the most landlocked spot in Asia, the arms of his compasses would intersect deep in the Chinese province of Sinkiang – a mountain-circled wilderness whose heart is pure desert. It is here that the legendary Silk Road once began its five-thousand-mile course to the Mediterranean.

From as early as 200 BC the silk traders at Xi'an, China's ancient capital, put together great camel trains for their long trek along the Silk Road to Constantinople. The end of the Great Wall was the point at which the traders left comparative safety and went beyond the Celestial Kingdom. Today it is marked by the exquisite Jiayuguan fort built in the fourteenth century and it is here where the Silk Road proper begins on the edge of the ferocious Taklimakan Desert.

Written by Colin Thubron and exquisitely photographed by Carlos Navajas who spent six weeks in 1988 travelling The Silk Road in China, this book is a beautiful and evocative travelogue of the ancient Silk Road from Jiayuguan, through the desert cities of Sinkiang to Kashgar on the borders of Pakistan. This is a route of legend, through a land where civilisations meet. It is a place where today's traveller may find one of the last great journeys of the world, and for those who wish to make the journey themselves the book provides all the practical information required.

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