FORGOTTEN KINGDOM

by Peter Goullart

Yunnan Publishing Group Corporation
Yunnan People's Publishing House

FORGOTTEN KINGDOM

by Peter Goullart

Yunnan Publishing Group Corporation
Yunnan People's Publishing House

图书在版编目（CIP）数据

被遗忘的王国=Forgotten Kingdom: 英文 / (俄罗斯)顾彼得著.—昆明：云南人民出版社，2007.8
ISBN 978-7-222-05101-0

Ⅰ. 被… Ⅱ. 顾… Ⅲ. 散文—作品集—俄罗斯—现代—英文 Ⅳ. I512.65

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字（2007）第115671号

责任编辑： 段兴民 董继梅
封面设计： 陶汝昌
责任印制： 洪中丽

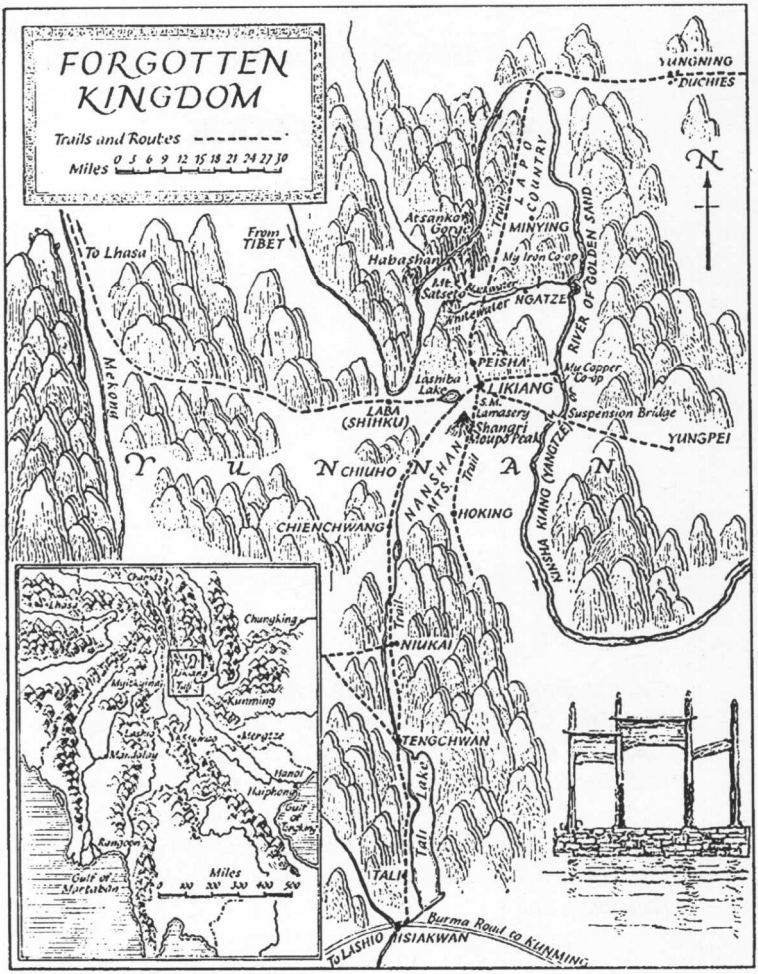
书　名	**被遗忘的王国**
编　著	【俄】顾彼得 著
出　版	云南出版集团公司 云南人民出版社
发　行	云南人民出版社
地　址	昆明市环城西路609号
网　址	www.ynpph.com.cn
E-mail	rmszbs@public.km.yn.cn
邮　编	650034
开　本	787×1092　1/32
印　张	11
字　数	95千
版　次	2007年8月第1版　2008年1月第2次印刷
印　数	5001-10000册
印　刷	云南朗明印务有限公司
书　号	ISBN 978-7-222-05101-0
定　价	25.00元

尊敬的读者： 若您购买的我社图书存在印装质量问题，
请与我社发行部联系调换。
发行部电话：(0871)4194864　4191604　4107628(邮购)

This book is dedicated to

DR JOSEPH F. ROCK

This RU edition was produced in 1957 for sale to its members only by Readers Union Ltd at 38 William IV Street, Charing Cross, London W.C.2, and at Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire. Full details of membership may be obtained from our London address. This edition has been reset in 11 point Fournier type, leaded, printed and bound at the Aldine Press, Letchworth Garden City, Hertford-shire. The book was first published by John Murray (Publishers) Ltd.



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I WAS born in Russia more than fifty years ago. The upheavals, which have swept the world since the beginning of this century, caught me at an early age, and so sudden and violent were the changes that I can never think of my life as one connected and orderly process but only as a series of lives with little to connect them. Yet the years have not dimmed the recollections of my boyhood. My father died when I was two years old, and as the only child I became the centre of my mothers devotion. She was a wonderfully intelligent and sensitive woman, deeply interested in literature, music and the beauty of nature. I always felt that she was somewhat isolated from her many relatives, because none of them could equal her in intelligence, understanding or the breadth of her views. She wrote poetry and painted: she was psychic, and all this drew her and, eventually, myself away from the other members of the family. Among her circle of friends were many of the outstanding scientists and philosophers of

her time, and this may have had something to do with the method of my education which others considered peculiar and which was undertaken by a series of private tutors, including a philosopher and a theosophist. I remember clearly the vibrant life of Moscow and the sophisticated quieter refinements of Paris, although I was still quite young at the time.

I developed early an interest in the Orient, particularly in China, Mongolia, Turkistan and Tibet. It must have been in my blood and it undoubtedly came from my mother's side. Her father and grandfather were great and famous merchants during the past century, and their caravans went to Kobdo and Kiahta, and even as far as Hankow, to pick up China teas and silks. They ranged through Mongolia, trading in cattle, and dealt with Tibet in herbs, musk and saffron. All that was over when I appeared in the world and the only relic of the glorious past was my grandmother Pelagie, my mother's mother, who lived to the ripe age of ninety-seven. During the long winter evenings she used to tell me long stories of how her husband and his father made their journeys into Cathay and Mongolia and other fabulous lands where once Prester John and Ghenghiz Khan ruled. I listened starry-eyed; and all round her were old tea-chests painted with beautiful Chinese ladies proffering delicate teacups to bearded mandarins with fans and elaborate headdresses. There was lettering on the chests, like 'Hung Men Aromatic Tea', and there was still a faint fragrance of these brands floating in the heated air of her room. There were strange robes from Mongolia and Tibet in the long coffers against the walls, and Mongolian samovars, used by caravans, stood in the corner. I can still see the Shamanist drums and flutes hanging on the walls. This

was all that remained of unrecorded travels: the men themselves were dead long ago.

I am glad that grandmother Pelagie died just before the Revolution — she was already half blind and was unable to walk, but her mind was still brilliant when she talked of her beloved past. Then the Revolution came. The subject is still painful to me, and there is no need to relate it here as it has been described so often. My mother and I were determined to get out of Russia. We rushed by train to Turkistan, only to find terror and bloodshed in Samarkand and Bokhara. The roads from there to Central Asia were blocked. We returned to Moscow to find the situation still worse. We fled to Vladivostok where we stayed for a year. On the way we were caught in the famous Czech uprising and it took us months to get through. The dangers and horrors we passed through best remain unrelated. At last we reached Shanghai.

In 1924 my mother died and I thought I could not survive her passing. In my grief I went to the famed West Lake near Hangchow and there, quite by chance, I met a Taoist monk. Our friendship was spontaneous, for I was already familiar with the Chinese language, and he took me to his monastery situated on a peak a few miles from town. There my friend ministered to me as if I were his dearest brother, and the Grand Abbot received me with wonderful understanding. With their guidance I found peace, as though by magic, and my heart seemed to heal.

I continued to visit the monastery for several years, escaping whenever possible from Shanghai, where at first I maintained myself by working for commercial firms as an expert in Chinese antiques, jade and rare teas. Then in 1931 I joined the American Express and acted as a tour conductor, escorting a wide variety of clients throughout

China, Japan and Indochina.

It may seem strange for a young man, working for a famous travel firm, to relax in Taoistic monasteries away from the brilliant lights of the 'Paris of the Orient'; but it was just because of the extreme gaiety of Shanghai night-life, which was an important feature of any tour, that I had to retire to such a refuge to restore my equilibrium and to regain my composure and strength.

I had only been at the American Express office a few days when an American millionaire, his wife and sister-in-law, booked me to take them to Peking. As a first step the millionaire instructed me to buy enough wines and food to last during the trip and to my embarrassment handed me ten thousand dollars in Chinese currency. This I had great difficulty in stuffing into my pockets. I stocked one of the cabins with two dozen cases of champagne and all kinds of fruit and canned delicacies. Unfortunately, as we put out to sea, a gale developed and the steamer rolled heavily. Several of the cases were smashed, and when the cabin door burst open bottles spun in all directions over the saloon and down the passages, crashing into the walls and exploding with deafening blasts. The good-humoured millionaire was highly amused, and this first excursion helped, oddly enough, to establish my reputation as a congenial courier and companion.

Then there was an eccentric American aviator of seventy-five, with a long white beard hanging almost to his knees. Whisking an aeroplane propeller out of his pocket he would shout, 'I am an aviator.' He was a true eccentric bent on his quest for an earthly paradise somewhere in the Far East. We flew to Lanchow, carried as cargo in a small Junker cargo plane, for in those days the Chinese airways system was still in its infancy.

Then we went to Peking and the old man rushed round amongst the other sightseers, twirling his little propeller in their faces and shouting, 'I fly, I fly, you see, like that!' He chartered an aeroplane for a flight to the Great Wall, took several reporters and gave secret instructions to the German pilot. The plane twisted and dived and sometimes the Great Wall appeared below us, sometimes on top of us and sometimes we seemed to scrape its very battlements. It was an unusual way of seeing the Great Wall and the reporters sat with faces as green as water-melons.

I travelled extensively at this time, for there were the routine tours and summer cruises as well as the more unusual journeys. China was a wonderful place to live in before the second Japanese war. I travelled also on my own and always stayed in Taoist monasteries through the introduction of my West Lake friend. I spent some time at Sian, the capital of the glorious Tang dynasty, and at Tungkwan, an old fortress of those days. I often spoke to my guru, the abbot, of my longings to go to West China, to live in that remote Tibetan country so little known to the Chinese and foreigners; but he always said the time had not yet come. Later, when the Japanese occupied Peking again and part of Shanghai, the guru told me that the moment had arrived. But how? I could not go there during war-time on my own. Then I suddenly came the offer to join the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives. I consulted the old abbot again and he made a detailed prediction of what would happen to me during the next seven years. Everything happened as he foretold.

Thus, as a member of the Co-operatives, I set out in September 1939 from Shanghai to Chungking, on what was to be the first stage of a long journey.

To get to Chungking, when the war between China

and Japan was in full swing, was a very complicated and dangerous business. I took a Dutch boat to Hongkong and thence a small French steamer to Haiphong. I was burdened with much baggage, and at Haiphong I met some missionaries who, with the University of Nanking, had been evacuated to Chengtu. They had scores of heavy cases, containing scientific instruments and other technical supplies, which they were taking to the university. Haiphong was a madhouse. American and British missionaries and business men were rushing along the streets and quays trying to identify their baggage piled like mountains everywhere. Public squares and parks were clogged with the trucks and cars of every description awaiting transportation. There was no highway to China. Everything had to go by the narrow-gauge train which took two days to get up to Kunming. Few of these people knew French and few French officials knew English. The poor missionaries were still sitting at Haiphong, although they had left Shanghai a fortnight before me. They could not explain to the Customs what they had, where it had to go and, what was worse, they could not fill in the forms in French. The French customs officials, crazed by the crowds, mountains of cases and bales, and the sea of documents, simply pushed out those people whom they could not understand. I filled their forms for them and led them to the Customs Commissioner. With a torrent of French, I pulled the commissioner outside and to a bar. I ordered all the aperitifs I could think of, whilst my friends glared at me, and in about half an hour the whole business was resolved and my baggage and their goods were on board the train in the afternoon. My poor friends were on the verge of collapse and I persuaded them to come with me to Hanoi to await the train there. In Hanoi I took them

to the wonderful Hotel Metropole and made them relax with bottles of champagne which, I assured them, was a non-alcoholic beverage. In the morning we duly caught the train, and in the afternoon of the next day we arrived at Kunming, the beautiful capital of Yunnan.

All our baggage was piled into an ancient bus and I took the whole shipment to Chengtu. The troubles and breakdowns we had on the road were such that it was more than two weeks before I glimpsed Chengtu. I stopped off for a couple of days in Chungking to pick up my instrument of appointment as the Depot Master of Kangting, capital of Sikang. At Chengtu I caught a missionary truck for Yaan — the terminus of the motor highway to Sikang. We traveled by night, and at full speed the truck crashed through a rotten bridge. I was somersaulted and landed on my head and was fortunate not to break my neck; although I suffered from headaches for months afterwards. From Yaan we walked for eight days through the terrifying gorges of Sikang.

My two-year stay in Kangting or, as it was called in olden days, Tachienlu, was on the whole unhappy, though not without its moments of adventure and humour while on travel to the furthest parts of the province. The newly created Sikang Province had undoubtedly the rottenist provincial government and it was practically independent of Chungking. What they did to block my work and to embarrass me would fill a book. I was accused, in turn, of being a Japanese spy, Stalin's spy, Hitler's agent and, at last, a secret inspector of the Central Government. They tried to do away with me on several occasions, but each time I was miraculously saved. Finally I was put under house arrest. Luckily Dr. H. H. Kung, Finance Minister and President of the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives,

intervened directly by telegraph and instructed me to return to Chungking. I was bitter, but I had to admit that this disagreeable experience had given me an unprecedented insight into the workings of Chinese officialdom at its worst. When I arrived in Chungking again I was no longer a simple and innocent foreign greenhorn, burning with the pure flame of idealism, but a real Chinese official with all the know-how to combat the machinations of the crooks with which the government teemed. I had not been without friends among the officials of Sikang, and they had certainly imparted to me confidentially a very useful knowledge of how the wheels within wheels worked in government circles.

I was received by Dr. H. H. Kung in Chungking and told him the truth. I knew he would be annoyed and he was. It was not the custom for a government official in China to embarrass his superiors by seeking redress from them. He had to work out his own salvation by becoming as wise as the proverbial serpent. In other words, he must become clever enough to outcrook the crooks. In Dr. Kung's eyes I was another stupid European who added to the friction, between the powerful Sikang Provincial Government and the weak Central Government, which the latter was trying to avoid at the critical period through which tile whole country was passing.

'I would like to go to Likiang to work,' I added timidly at the end of the interview, for although I had never been there, I had heard enough about the place to make me feel I would like it. The great man glared at me through his glasses.

'Is it I or you who makes the appointments? You shall go where I tell you to go!'

Somehow I could not suppress the feeling that there was

a hidden kindliness in his seemingly gruff manner. I was temporarily attached to the Co-operative Headquarters in the beautiful summer resort of Koloshan, about twenty miles from Chungking, where we were safe from the terrible bombing which was going on. At last an order came for me to join the Yunnan Headquarters at Kunming. This was a good sign, as the atmosphere in Kunming was much better than in intrigue-ridden Koloshan.

The days in Yunnan were comparatively peaceful as our headquarters were situated at a beautiful temple fifteen miles out of Kunming, not far from the Kunming lake. Then came a survey trip which I had to make to Paoshan and Tengyueh. Not saying a word to anybody in advance, I made a detour to Likiang and saw at once that this was the place for promoting co-operatives and not Paoshan or Tengyueh, both of which had no materials or workers, being merely military and trans-shipment points. I made my report accordingly, suggesting to Central Headquarters that they should send me to Likiang. There was a curt refusal to my request. I persisted gently but without result.

Then, quite suddenly, it happened. An order came from Dr.Kung appointing me the Depot Master of Likiang. I was packed off in a hurry and without the least ceremony. I was given only a little money, no stationery and not even the traditional seal of office. And no one was designated to accompany me. In the light of my Sikang experiences this appeared ominous. It looked more like an exile than an appointment. Usually there was a great fuss when depot masters were appointed to provincial towns. A seal and stocks of stationery were prepared for them, funds remitted and competent secretaries chosen to accompany them. I was willing to bet that somebody higher up was trying to get rid of me. The only man who was permitted

to accompany me was my old cook Lao Wong, but he was no substitute for a secretary.

Later I found out that no Chinese candidate had been willing to take up a post in Likiang. They gave many reasons for their reluctance to work there. The place was too remote. It was, so to speak, outside China, the 'Outer Darkness', a no man's land lost in the sea of barbarous tribes who did not even speak Chinese. By all reports, the food problem there was impossible for a refined Chinese. The natives consumed things which to the Chinese were almost uneatable — mutton and beef, *sauerkraut*, yak butter and cheese. What was worse, everything was cooked in yak butter. Many Chinese there had been stabbed or otherwise disposed of, and it was dangerous to walk through the streets filled with fierce and animalistic savages who carried swords and daggers at the belt ready to be used at any moment. Why not send that crazy foreigner there? If he survives, it is all right; if not, it is his business as he asked for it. There were other, deeper considerations also. My immediate superior was not overfond of me. He could not very well push me out of my job without a reason — that would have been a subtle insult to Dr. Kung. He knew better than to do anything so crude. But, if I could be sent up to Likiang all alone, without assistance or guidance, with only a small sum of money, what could I do in that strange, inhospitable and dangerous country? I should be terrified out of my wits and only too glad to return in a month or two humbly confessing my failure and praying for an asylum at the peaceful and safe headquarters. But then my fate would be sealed. A failure in Sikang and a failure in Likiang!

Yet I was filled with a sense of triumph, for it was in Likiang that I wanted to live, and I knew I could make

my work a success in spite of what they said or thought. I was now armed with some experience, and to this I resolved to add the practice of all the precepts and advice I had imbibed during my long stay at the great Taoistic monastery near West Lake. I was now one of the last of a small group of foreigners who tried to work in an executive capacity in the field with the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives. All of them but myself had left of their own free will or had been outmanoeuvred into giving up. They were honest, idealistic, energetic and genuinely devoted to their work. They all spoke good Chinese: but they had not learned enough of the nature and mentality of the Chinese to adapt their methods. The novelty of their energy had kindled great enthusiasm among the Chinese interested in co-operation, but they were unable to sustain it for long because of the very qualities they possessed. They did not recognize the moments when it was more advantageous to slow down rather than to push; to keep quiet rather than to talk. Instead of adjusting certain irregularities adroitly, they ploughed straight through them, causing both their friends and enemies a severe loss of 'face' which, in China, has to be avoided at all costs, as it arouses an unreasoning, uncontrollable, destructive hatred. But the most important thing of all was their lack of that intuitive ability to separate wheat from chaff in their relations with the Chinese of all classes. A foreigner who did not possess this sixth sense had a hard time in China. Life and relationships between the people in China are not what they appear to be. It is only the man who knows the hidden meaning of such a life and its relationships who can make his stay in the country a success.

Thus I was now one of the 'Last of the Mohicans'