



# Frontiers of Heaven: A Journey to the End of China

*Stanley Stewart*

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**Winner of the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award**

For the Chinese, the Great Wall of China has defined much more than a physical barrier. Over the centuries it has represented a psychological frontier-within it lay the Celestial Kingdom, the compass of all civilization. Beyond lay a barbarian world of chaos and exile. Chinese journeys to the west along the ancient Silk Road were passages into the unknown, often into legend.

Following in their wake, Stanley Stewart recounts his wanderings halfway across Asia in *Frontiers of Heaven*, his Thomas Cook Travel Book of the Year Award-winning account. The journey took him from Shanghai to the banks of the Indus, and along the way he encountered the modern Chinese for whom these regions beyond the Wall still hold the same morbid fascination. Today, the great Western province of Xinjiang is still a land of exile, the destination of soldiers, reluctant settlers, political prisoners, and disgraced officials.

Whether describing the lost cities of Central Asia, a Buddhist monastery in the shadow of Tibet, a Kirghiz wedding on the roof of the world, ballroom dancing in the Mountains of Heaven, an escape from the secret police in Kashgar, or a love affair in Xi'an, Stewart tells his story with wit, charm, and affection. In a book packed with character and incident, Stewart explores the paradoxes of travel, the lure of far horizons, and the isolation of exile.



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