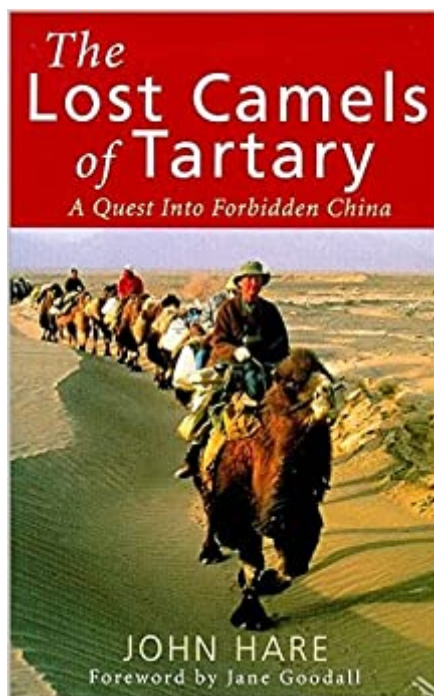


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The Lost Camels Of Tartary: A Quest Into Forbidden China



Synopsis

This narrative reveals the author's experiences on three expeditions to the Mongolian and Chinese Gobi Deserts, in search of the mysterious wild Bactrian camel. They include a 30-day walk in the Kum Tagh sand dunes and his experience as the first foreigner to cross the Gashun Gobi from north to south.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

a terrific tale LITERARY REVIEW an admirable book INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY destined to become a modern adventure classic FOCUS John Hare is a modern version of the adventurers of old... How wonderful that, in this materialistic world, people like John exist to champion that endangered, fast-vanishing wild Bactrian camel. Jane Goodall

John Hare has lectured to the Royal Geographic Society, the United Nations and the Royal Society for Asian Affairs and broadcast on BBC radio and television regularly.

Mr. Hare has written a pretty good book, actually. The information on the camels, was quite interesting, though left me wanting to know more. This could be in part due to the wild Bactrians endangered status and the wildness and hostility of the terrain that they live in - it's not easy collecting data in that kind of environment. Where Mr. Hare really shines though is his access to locales normally off-limits to foreigners (i.e. "Lop Nur" or "Lop Nor", the Chinese nuclear weapons testing ground) and insights given to historical events not commonly known to Westerners (i.e.

Russian mass executions of Outer Mongolian peoples). This is scare information that shouldn't be so readily dismissed! Now, if the author has left you begging for more information on the ancient ruins in the Taklamakan and Gobi deserts, here are two other books which you might like: 1. "The Tarim Mummies", by J. P. Mallory and Victor H. Mair. 2. "The Mummies of Urumchi", by Elizabeth Wayland Barber. They don't discuss much about Bactrian Camels, but they do speak of the climate, ecology and history of the area, as well as the migrations of many different peoples. They would both tie-in nicely with Mr. Hare's book. All in all, a good read by Mr. Hare. Am hoping he'll write another with further information on the Bactrians, hopefully with good news on their status...

This is a clear documentation of an adventure in a totally unfamiliar part of the world. John Hare intersperses local history and folk legends throughout, giving more of a feel for the people in Mongolia and nearby areas.

I thought I had some rather peculiar interests, but why on earth would anyone want to spend years trudging through the wastes of some of the worst deserts on earth looking for wild camels? Worse still, the author didn't even see that many in all his years of travel! That said, there are some true gems in this work. His description of the ruins of the ancient city of Lou Lan is intriguing, as is his description of other archeological sites. I was disappointed, though, that many of these fascinating places could have been dealt with in greater depth, and more photos could have been provided. In the end, I felt that the topic was very much "underdone." There is little explanation of major issues surrounding this book, like the background events surrounding the creation of the Gashun Gobi nature reserve, or the means by which he was given permission to visit these areas. They just "miraculously" happened. I bought it for the archeology and history, tolerated the camels, but felt a little cheated by a book which could have contained so much more.

I have this and other books by the same authors, describing their intrepid travels, and it is very interesting stuff, maybe slightly obscure, but fascinating. I listened to John Hare speak at the Hay festival, and none of the other authors, big names included, spoke with the same passion or intensity, which is why I walked out at the end of his speech and purchased his book in the book tent.

I strongly recommend this book to those with an interest in travel, nature conservation and the history of central Asia. John Hare gives a detailed and clear account of his expeditions into the Gobi and Gashun Gobi deserts in Mongolia and China in search of the wild Bactrian camel. Combining history, science and keen observation, John Hare brings the desolate wilderness of Central Asia to life.

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