# A Tale of Espionage, the Silk Road and the Rise of Modern China



## THE HORSE

ERIC

## THAT LEAPS

ENNO

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TAMM

CLOUDS

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"Tamm writes with impassioned honesty about his subject's many dimensions."

Publishers Weekly on Kiriyama Prize Notable Book Beyond the Outer Shores

Mannerheim boarded the midnight train from St. Petersburg, charged by Tsar Nicholas II to collect intelligence on the sweeping reforms radically transforming China. The last tsarist agent in the so-called Great Game, Mannerheim chronicled almost every facet of China's modernization, from education reform, foreign investment, and industry to the military, Muslim borderlands, and Tibet's struggle for independence.

On July 6, 2006, author Eric Enno Tamm boarded another train in St. Petersburg, intent on following Mannerheim's 17,000-kilometer route across the Silk Road to Beijing. Discovering both eerie similarities and seismic differences between the Middle Kingdoms of today and a century ago, Tamm runs a gauntlet of political and geographic extremes, including some of the world's hottest deserts, cruellest dictatorships, and most polluted backwaters.

Along the way, he offers piercing insights into China's past that raise troubling questions about its future. Can today's Communist China truly be open to the outside world while keeping Western ideas such as democracy and freedom at bay, just as officials mistakenly believed a century ago? What can the reforms of the late Qing Dynasty teach us about the spectacular transformation of present-day China? Perhaps taking a cue from Confucius ("Study the past if you would divine the future"), Tamm's epic quest becomes a cautionary tale.

Two epic adventures along the Silk Road—one past and one present—offer a cautionary tale about China's breathtaking rise in the modern age.

the last tsarist spy in the so-called Great Game, Eric Enno
Tamm has written a grand sweep of a narrative. It combines
a long and arduous physical journey—from St. Petersburg across
the Tibetan Plateau and the Gobi Desert to Beijing—with revelations
of espionage in virtually unknown territory in the early years of the
twentieth century. At its core, this is a journey into the soul of the
Middle Kingdom and the roots of modern China. Full of wild characters, harsh geography and historical surprise, Tamm's journey reveals
him to be at once an intrepid adventurer, fine writer and discerning
historian. Altogether a wonderful book."

WADE DAVIS, author of The Clouded

Leopard and The Wayfinders: Why Ancient
Wisdom Matters in the Modern World



