

Life of a Silk Road Trader

By Anakin Hass, 3/30/2017

There once was a traveler named Radii. He used to sit around his Indian hometown as a merchant. He sold jewelry and clothing, among other merchandise. Many people came and bought things. Then one day a strange fellow came and said to all: "Come, come! Bring your things to sell and follow me!" At first no one listened to him. But overnight, Radii thought about his life. *Was it worth his time?* He knew one thing: If the fellow came all this way to trade, it must be profitable back home! In the morning, he packed his stuff and went to the man. "What do you want?" he said. "Why did you come from such a faraway place?"

"I came a long way from here to trade. There is a route, but it is dangerous. Will you come?" He had to choose: *Would he stay a merchant and stay here forever? Or would he join this man to a new place?* He knew the answer immediately. "I'll join you." He said. "Great! We will go 10,000 Kilometers to the gates of China, home of the proud Emperor himself!" Really? 10,000 Kilometers!? "That's a long way, sir!" He exclaimed. "Yes, but it'll be worth it when you can trade your goods for theirs. There are never seen here relics, metals, and most treasured of all, Rubies and Diamonds!" *Wow*, He thought. *This place China has goods better than anywhere here!* Perhaps it is better on the route to China than it is in India! So, he went on the trail.

He was equipped for the sandstorms and thirst. But he had no defense against starvation. "Man, I sure do miss the sweets and vegetation of India!" he exclaimed. "You're going to have to get used to that. Want to share?" He nodded reluctantly. "Say, what's your name,

anyway?" He said between muffled bites. "Wang Guan," Wang said. "Dang 'Mon? Wow! You sound gangster!"

"No, I said *Wang. Guan.* You got it? Oh, forget it. Just call me Wang." Wang sighed. How was he going to live with this man? "Sorry. That's what I heard. Say, how far have we walked?"

"About 950 Kilometers. Well, we're lucky! Usually Bandits attack about now." And he spoke too soon. Just when he said it, a band of people attacked with knives in their hands. "Give me the goods!" The ringleader said. "Or you'll pay the price with your neck!" So, they could do nothing but give them their goods. "Keep the Indian stuff! We want the jade and silver only!" And then pushed Radii's bag into him. "Bye, victims!" They said before disappearing.

"Still lucky?" Radii asked. "Still lucky! Those bandits were soft on us. They usually take everything and kill, just for the fun of it!" This made Radii swallow hard. Kill for fun? Ok, he will not leave his home again.

After that, they never met any more bandits. On the way to China, they met more travelers. Even though all they had now were Indian goods, they held on to hope because they almost reached the Wall of China! "Only 4,000 Kilometers to go!" Gosh. So far! Well, at least they were in China. If not, I'm not sure he would've lasted much longer!

"Ok, hopefully no more bandits. They usually only attack in the desert." Those were words of encouragement. Only 4,000 Kilometers to go, and pretty much no bandits! "Ok. How many people go on this path?"

"Many people. But not many people make it all the way to their destination."

"You said we were lucky. How? What happened that was so lucky? You also stated that the bandits liked to kill for fun. Why?"

“So many questions! But no time to answer. Look!” So, he looked. It was true! They were already in sight of the Great Wall of China. “Wow! I have never seen such a long wall!” But this was no surprise to Wang. He lived here, after all. “This, my friend, is the city of Beijing!” He said. “After all this way, I can finally trade my goods! Oh, do they like sweets? Or Milk Jade? Oh, I do hope they like my gifts!” Wang just laughed. “Don’t worry, my friend. They will like it, I’m sure!” So, Wang kept going back and forth between cities and traded goods from both. Sure, he was attacked by bandits, but he lived a happy life.

This was a short narrative of the life of a Silk Road trader. Granted, many died, and sadly Wang was killed by a bandit group. He was 40yrs old when he was killed. However, he was successful in his trading, so people got to see new things from China in India.