

One More Horizon

Ohio to Hong Kong the Long Way

Scott Zamek

Castellated Press
Warren, New Jersey

CASTELLATED
PRESS 

Copyright © 2003 by Scott Zamek.
Cover Photos copyright © 2003 by Scott Zamek.
All rights reserved.

Castellated Press
P.O. Box 4406
Warren, NJ, 07059-4406
www.castellatedpress.com

Excerpt from *After Kuo Chu-pu's Poems* from *The Selected Poems of T'ao Ch'ien* translated by David Hinton, copyright © 1993 by David Hinton. Reprinted by permission of Copper Canyon Press, Port Townsend, Washington. www.coppercanyonpress.org

Excerpt from *The Hillsborough Beacon*, September, 1992, reprinted with permission from Packet Publications/Princeton Packet.

Book design by Charles King of Cox-King Multimedia.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2003097780

ISBN 0-9746416-0-X

Contents

Foreword / ix

Chapter One: Preparations / 1

Chapter Two: Europe / 9

Chapter Three: A Spanish Summer / 27

Chapter Four: African Sand / 41

Chapter Five: Italy / 79

Chapter Six: Greece / 89

Chapter Seven: Turkey and the Middle East / 95

Chapter Eight: The Red-Eye Runaround / 113

Chapter Nine: India / 125

Chapter Ten: Back to Pakistan / 173

Chapter Eleven: The Middle Kingdom / 201

Chapter Twelve: Lost Time / 233

Chapter Thirteen: Journey's End / 247

Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits . . .
I rather would entreat thy company
To see the wonders of the world abroad,
Than, living dully slugardised at home,
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.

–Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

1

Preparations

THE MAN on the phone sounded like Marlon Brando in *The Godfather*, but not quite as endearing. He was a public relations executive for one of the major mountain bike companies, and I was attempting to find a sponsor.

“Bicycle around the world, eh?” he said, his voice raspy in my ear. “Are you a professional cyclist?”

“Not exactly.”

“Do you train a lot?”

“Ah—no.” The fact was, I hadn’t cycled since high school, and I had only recently quit smoking. I decided to keep those details to myself.

“Have you done anything like this before?” the man asked.

“Well, I . . .”

“Never mind,” he interrupted. “Call us when you get to Africa.”

Perhaps finding a bicycle was not the best way to start. I decided to call a camping supply company instead.

“Call us when you get to Africa,” they said.

A magazine.

“Call us when . . .”

It was obvious I would have to buy the gear myself. I sought out a private bicycle designer who advertised as “specializing in expeditions.” The man lived in a small house on the outskirts of Akron, Ohio, where I had been working and saving money for a year in preparation for the trip. He was tall and wiry, with a backwoodsman’s beard and eyes peering through coke-bottle glasses. His living room was a mass of spare parts and bicycle frames, with odd cables and worn tires dangling from the ceiling. I told him of my plans to ride a bicycle around the world.

“Hell, yeah! I’ll help ya. What an expedition.” He wrung his hands in excitement.

“Just think of the publicity. Why, we’d be written up in every magazine in the country.” He wandered around the shop, muttering more to himself than to me.

“My business would prosper. Never done anything this big before. Did a trip across New Zealand once . . .” he went on as I stood by, unnoticed.

“Wait a minute.” I felt compelled to interrupt his reminiscing. “I just want to know a price range.”

“Hell, we can build ya’ a bicycle from scratch! All the best parts. Best frame. I can even getcha’ the best bearin’s to throw in yer bottom bracket.”

“How much?”

The man rooted for a pad and pencil and began tabulating. While he was scribbling, I thought about asking him what a bottom bracket was, then thought better of it.

“Twenty-five hundred for the bike,” he pronounced. “Then there’s spare parts and supplies.” He scratched his head in thought. “We’d have to mail caches ahead to different cities. I would say another five thousand for that.”

“All I have is seven thousand dollars,” I sheepishly admitted.

“For the bike?”

“No. For the entire trip.”

He looked at me, an expression of horror crossing his face. His enthusiasm deflated like a leaky balloon.

“This is impossible,” he said after overcoming his shock. “It can’t be done.”

I explained my intentions of camping out most nights, leaving food as my main expense.

“Call me when you get to Africa,” he said—and showed me to the door.

I PUT MY SEARCH for a bicycle aside and began planning my route. Research encompassed all my spare time. My room became a collection of maps, travel guides, and library books.

As I discovered places I wanted to visit, I marked that place with a pin on my world map. I became obsessed. By the time I was done, there were 358 colored pins stuck in the map, ranging from Tierra del Fuego to Vladivostok, from Addis Ababa to Tashkent.

My mind wandered to all the exotic places I'd read about and desired to see. The vast expanses of Asia called with a single, undeniable voice. What treasures and tales awaited in Kipling's India or Stanley's Dark Continent? China seemed so distant that it could not be reached by imagination. Although the art and culture of the world intrigued me, I would need to avoid major cities to have access to camping and stay below my five-dollar daily budget. But wilderness intrigued me as well. My reading brought me to ancient cities and fabled gardens, to holy rivers and sacred lakes, to wide rivers and wider mountains.

I began writing the countries which drew my attention. I wrote travel bureaus, tour companies, health departments—anyone that could give me information on the journey. The replies trickled in slowly, and many were discouraging.

Extreme Adventure Tours
122 E. Sir Edmund Hillary Blvd.
London, England
January 12

Dear sir,

Regarding your request for travel information of Africa, Asia, and the former Soviet countries. We are sorry to inform you that Extreme Tours cannot help you with an itinerary of that kind. Our office does not organize individual travel in Asia and points east. We do not advise traveling to some of the areas you suggested. Thank you for your interest in Extreme Tours.

—Tour Director, Extreme Adventure Tours