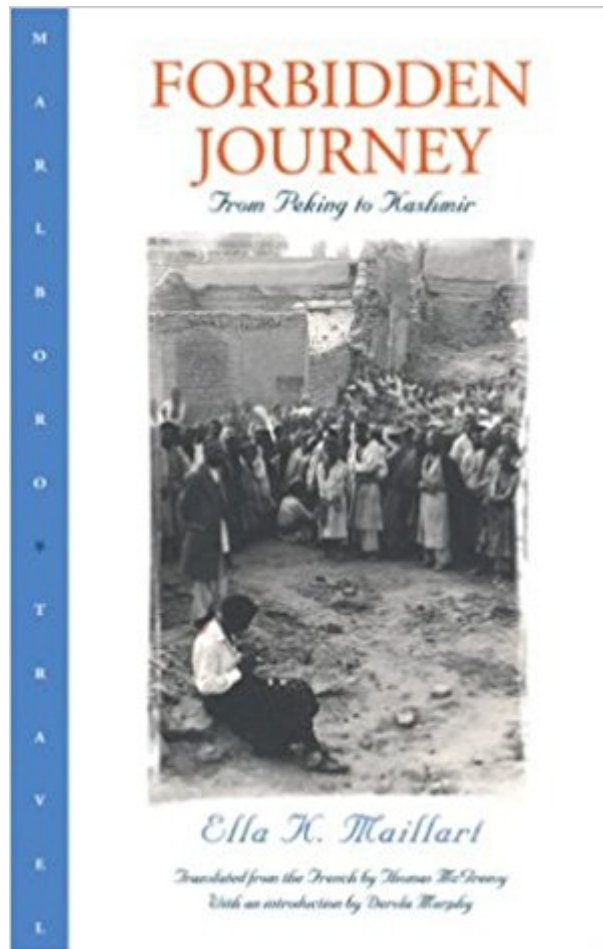




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Forbidden Journey: From Peking To Kashmir



Synopsis

A classic account of a trip through China during the golden age of travel. In 1935 Ella Maillart contemplated one of the most arduous journeys in the world: the "impossible journey" from Peking, then a part of Japanese-occupied China, through the distant province of Sinkiang (present day Tukestan), to Kashmir. Enlisting with newswriter Peter Fleming (with the caveat that his company remain tolerable), Maillart undertook a journey considered almost beyond imagination for any European and doubly so for a woman. The trip promised hardships such as typhus and bandits, as well as the countless hazards surrounding the civil war between Chinese communists and Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists. Setting out with pockets full of Mexican money (the currency used in China at the time), Maillart encountered a way of life now lost, but one that then had gone unchanged for centuries. Maillart describes it all with the sharp eye and unvarnished prose of a veteran reporter—the missionaries and rogues, parents binding daughters' feet with rags, the impatient Fleming lighting fires under stubborn camels. It's a hard road, not that Maillart cares. At all times she is a witty, always-enchanted guide—except when it comes to bureaucrats. *Forbidden Journey* ranks among other travel narratives like Fleming's *News from Tartary*, (based on the same journey) and Robert Byron's *The Road to Oxiana*. But it is also a portrait of a fascinating woman, one of many women from the pre-WWII era who ignored convention and traveled in hidden lands. It remains a vivid account of its time and a classic of travel literature.

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Customer Reviews

A classic account of a trip through China during the golden age of travel. In 1935 Ella Maillart

contemplated one of the most arduous journeys in the world: the "impossible journey" from Peking, then a part of Japanese-occupied China, through the distant province of Sinkiang (present day Tukestan), to Kashmir. Enlisting with newswriter Peter Fleming (with the caveat that his company remain tolerable), Maillart undertook a journey considered almost beyond imagination for any European and doubly so for a woman. The trip promised hardships such as typhus and bandits, as well as the countless hazards surrounding the civil war between Chinese communists and Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists. Setting out with pockets full of Mexican money (the currency used in China at the time), Maillart encountered a way of life now lost, but one that then had gone unchanged for centuries. Maillart describes it all with the sharp eye and unvarnished prose of a veteran reporter—the missionaries and rogues, parents binding daughters' feet with rags, the impatient Fleming lighting fires under stubborn camels. It's a hard road, not that Maillart cares. At all times she is a witty, always-enchanted guide—except when it comes to bureaucrats. *Forbidden Journey* ranks among other travel narratives like Fleming's *News from Tartary*, (based on the same journey) and Robert Byron's *The Road to Oxiana*. But it is also a portrait of a fascinating woman, one of many women from the pre-WWII era who ignored convention and traveled in hidden lands. It remains a vivid account of its time and a classic of travel literature.

Ella Maillart was born in Switzerland in 1904. An Olympic athlete, actress, movie stuntwoman, and captain of the Swiss Ladies Hockey Team, Maillart also found time to travel widely in Asia. In 1939 she and her companion Annemarie Schwarzenbach drove from Switzerland to Afghanistan, a trip described in Maillart's book *The Cruel Way* (Beacon, 1987). Her other books include *Turkestan Solo* (Long Riders Guild, 2001). She died in 1997. Thomas McGreevy (1893-1967) was a poet, a critic, and a translator.

This is a barebones edition that never should have been published. The original contains some 67 photographs, including a few very useful maps. They add immensely to the pleasure of reading Maillart's narrative. Aside from the cover, this edition contains none. Much better to search out an independent bookseller through [...] and buy an earlier edition with the photographs in parallel with buying an earlier edition of Peter Fleming's travelogue for the same trip. Though both authors describe the facts of the travel from Beijing to India along the southern Silk Road route, their descriptions of their inter-personal interactions and among the people they encounter along the journey are very different and complementary.

VERY INTERESTING AND WELL WRITTEN.

I read this book years ago while I was living in France and I left my copy there. I have often wished I still had it. It's doubly entertaining and informative to read with the Peter Fleming book. I'd like to give you more details, but it's been so long, only the pleasure of the tale lingers.

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