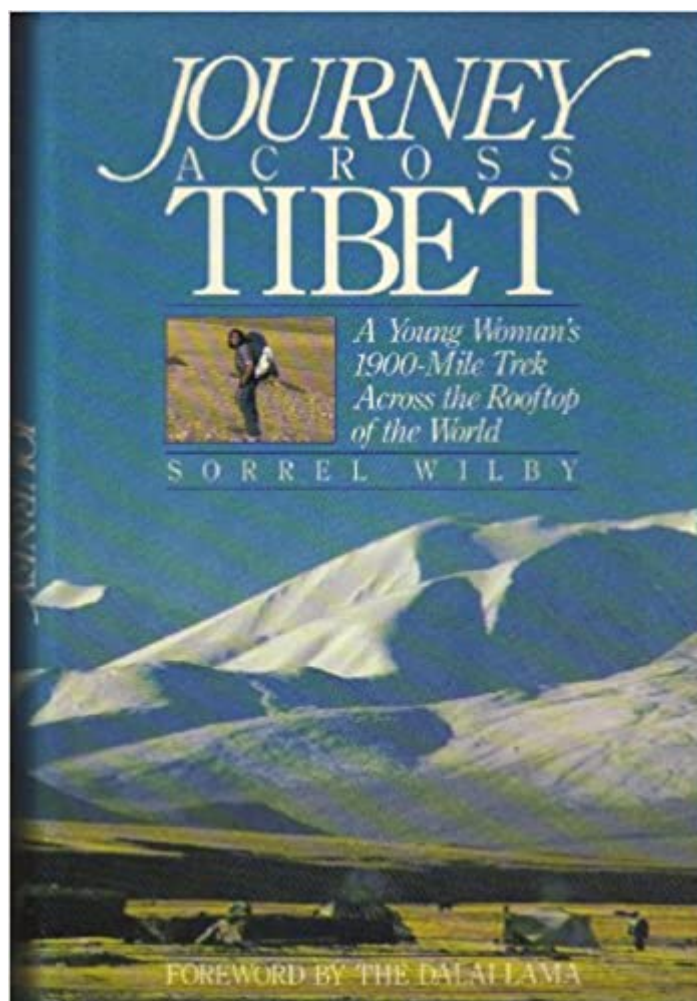


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Journey Across Tibet



Synopsis

Book by Sorrel Wilby

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sponsored by Australian Geographic, Wilby, an aspiring Australian photojournalist, walked 1500 bleak miles across the nearly empty Tibetan landscape. Starting and ending in Lhasa, she survived through the cheerful good will of local Tibetans, the decamping of her baggage donkey, floods that made a 600-mile detour necessary, and authorities who couldn't read her Chinese travel permits. Wilby's account of a Tibet not seen by the average tourist belongs in travel collections as well as among stories about long-distance walks. (Most photos not seen.) Paula M. Strain, M.L.S., Rockville, Md. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.

So pleased to find this classic still available. A great personal journey. Inspirational.

Wilby tells exciting stories, and I admit that her love of adventure is infectious, even though her writing style isn't my favorite. However, I lose patience with her almost automatic reverence for Tibetans as it contrasts against her utter disgust for the Chinese, whose culture she repeatedly labels "ugly." At one point she writes that out of two billion Chinese in the world there are only two decent people -- a helpful duo she meets on her journey. This uncontrolled prejudice is contrary to the tolerant spirit most "world travelers" would hope to embody, and I am astonished that such thoughtless sentiments were included in the final, published draft. Yes, it is tempting to rally behind

the underdogs in a situation such as Tibet's, but that does not require a sympathizer to heap disdain upon the entire nation of China. Turn the lense -- if compassion were indeed "earned" by membership in some flawless political or cultural entity, westerners abroad certainly have no business relying on others' goodwill to the extent that Wilby relied on that of her Tibetan hosts.

I found Ms. Wilby's story exciting, so much so that I kept the book and for years I dreamed of making a similar trek. Now, with my adventurous daughter planning to travel, I decided to give her the book. However, as I read some of her negative passages about China it brought back memories of signs throughout China that read "No Dogs or Chinese in the Park." I fail to see how she could be so blind as to the role of Western powers in Chinese history as to call them uncultured. That bias puts an asterisk on an otherwise wonderful book. Rolando Arango

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