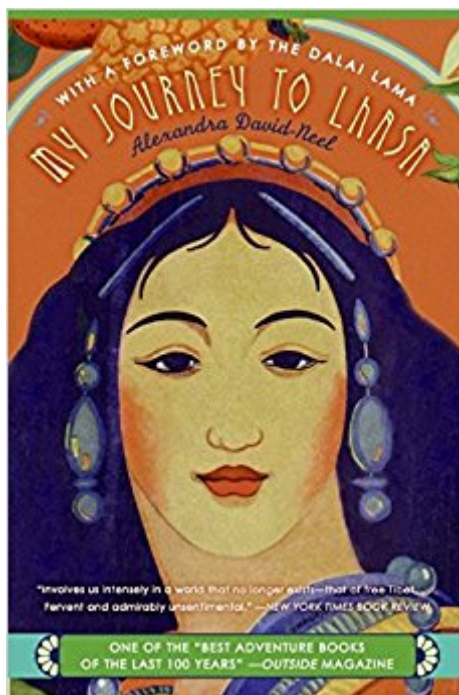




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# My Journey To Lhasa: The Classic Story Of The Only Western Woman Who Succeeded In Entering The Forbidden City



## Synopsis

An exemplary travelogue of danger and achievement by the Frenchwoman Madame Alexandra David-Neel of her 1923 expedition to Tibet, the fifth in her series of Asian travels, and her personal recounting of her journey to Lhasa, Tibet's forbidden city. In order to penetrate Tibet and reach Lhasa, she used her fluency of Tibetan dialects and culture, disguised herself as a beggar with yak hair extensions and inked skin and tackled some of the roughest terrain and climate in the World. With the help of her young companion, Yongden, she willingly suffered the primitive travel conditions, frequent outbreaks of disease, the ever-present danger of border control and the military to reach her goal.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In any time, Alexandra David-Neel would have been considered an extraordinary woman, but in the Victorian era, she was truly exceptional. Born in 1868, David-Neel eschewed the dances, dinners, and formal marriages common to women of her era and social standing in order to indulge her fierce independence and insatiable intellectual curiosity. Her interest in comparative religions dated back to early childhood; even as a student in a Catholic convent school, she kept statues of both Christ and the Buddha in her room. She made her first trip to Asia in 1891, then supported herself as a light-opera singer and journalist before marrying a seemingly conventional man, Philip Neel. Fortunately for both Alexandra David-Neel and for posterity, Philip was less stodgy than his position as a well-off engineer might imply; though he did not accompany her, he supported his wife's explorations and even acted as her literary agent when she began to write about the places she

visited. Alexandra and Philip remained the closest of friends until his death in 1941. David-Neel spent years traveling in India and China, but perhaps her most daring adventure was the trip to Tibet's forbidden city of Lhasa. She was 55 years old at the time, fluent in Tibetan and well versed in both Sanskrit and Buddhism. Disguised as a man, she spent four treacherous months on the road before finally becoming the first European woman ever to enter Lhasa. *My Journey to Lhasa* is David-Neel's own account of her astounding journey, one fraught with hardship and danger. It is both a chronicle of a bygone time and a testimonial to a remarkable human. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• David-Neel was indisputably a fearless traveler, a rogue's rogue. Her account has the power to awe even today. • (Outside magazine)

I came across this book for the first time about 30 yrs ago. At that time I borrowed it from the library in Swedish after having read a book review in the local newspaper. A marvelous story that let my imagination go wild. This trip would not be easy in today's world, much less 80-90 years ago. I forgot the name of the author and the name of the book later but every once in a while I'd try to search for it - thank goodness for the Internet! Finally I found what seemed to be the right book. This has been my evening reading now and it is as enjoyable as ever. I envy the author for her courage and perseverance. Someone might find the description of the journey somewhat monotonous but it is what it is. Pretty splendid in my opinion.

*My Journey to Lhasa* is a well written book about Tibet circa 1919. Alas, the country that Alexandra David-Neel describes in her travels is no more. The Chinese have butchered and degraded the native population and ethnic Chinese are the majority of the population in the capital city of Lhasa. David-Neel made her trek with her adopted son to the forbidden city Lhasa (where no foreigners were allowed) in the dead of winter succeeding where much younger, better equipped male-only explorers failed. This religious pilgrimage is the main highlight of this strong-willed French woman's 101 year adventure packed career. She was a noted Buddhist scholar and wrote 25 books on eastern themes after she made her death defying trip in her mid-fifties. This book reads as fresh today as when it was written over 90 years ago. Ms. David-Neel's command of the English language is better than most native speakers. I personally didn't like the ending to her journey. Soon after she had achieved her goal of setting foot in the Forbidden City, she had no problem in identifying herself as a French woman and allowing herself the protective care of the British supervised Indian Army

escort. It would have been elegant of her to have crossed back into India anonymously just as she had begun her journey crossing into Tibetan territory anonymously.

I bought this book for a friend, having read it myself years ago. The tale of the intrepid Frenchwoman and her adopted son, the lama Yongden, and their travel in disguise into the then-forbidden land of Tibet is a classic tale of adventure, made all the more fascinating because she was the first western woman to attempt such a feat. An erudite Buddhist scholar and fluent speaker of Tibetan, she was 55 when she started her journey. Dying her skin to look darker and wearing a black yak-hair wig, dressed in the rags of a poor Tibetan pilgrim, she and her companion traveled by foot in winter through hazardous conditions--once, trapped by a snowstorm, they spent a week in a cave and boiled their leather boots for sustenance. This book is erudite, spiritual and also quite funny, well worth reading and re-reading.

This book has two valuable things: It presents a portrait of the old Tibet pre-Chinese invasion, and shows Alexandra David Neel's personality. Some people find it's reading boring at the point of not even finish it, David Neel has serious troubles to progress with the narration. She takes a lot of time describing minimal trivial details of each place and situation, making the reading dull and a bit tiresome sometimes. There is also a tinge of self-conceit and egocentrism from her part (you can notice it along the narrative). As a matter of fact, I couldn't find anything particularly brilliant in the story, except maybe, the daring love and stubborn perseverance who took David Neel to the confines of the Himalayas. If you are still interested in David Neel's books, check out her next publication *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*.

I have been looking for this book for a long time. I read it in Chinese and love the book. Unfortunately, I lent the book to someone who never returned it. I have been searching it on the net for a long time and finally, I found the English version of it. I was so excited. I ordered it right away and the book dropped on my doorstep a few days later. Thank you very much! I am reading it as a book I loved and as an English "text book" as well.

I did not enjoy this book at all. In fact, I had to stop reading it halfway through because I was so bored. I should have known by the title "Journey TO Lhasa". So it's pretty much about all of her travels GETTING THERE. Not at all interesting to me.

AMAZING adventure story by one of the real masters of the early 20th century. LOVE this book, and learning from it every time I re-read it.

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