

THE ALLURING TARGET
In Search of the Secrets of Central Asia

by
Kenneth Wimmel

Foreword
by
Ella Maillart

*The earth, which once danced and spun
before us as alluringly as a celluloid ball
on top of a fountain in a rifle range,
is now a dull and vulnerable target.*

PETER FLEMING



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First Edition

This book is for
Christina Krishna
a daughter of East and West

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Daring expeditions on camel and yak; biplanes buffeted by gales in the Himalayas; shootouts with bandits as paleontologists race across the Mongolian steppes; lost cities beneath desert dunes, priceless art treasures and manuscripts along the ancient Silk Road—here are real-life adventures in the great uncharted “alluring target” of Central Asia at the dawn of the modern age.

Rescued from obscurity and profiled in compelling detail are eleven explorers, scientists, mystics, and just plain adventurers—including two indomitable women—who journeyed through this forbidding region between 1890 and 1935 and brought back its secrets, its treasures, its knowledge, and, as vividly presented in *The Alluring Target*, fascinating accounts of their travels.

“Central Asia, once second only to sub-Saharan Africa as an area of exploration, appealed to a much more bizarre band of travelers ... mystics, soldiers, charlatans and savants. Writing with an eye for vivid detail, Kenneth Wimmel does them all proud.”

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— Luree Miller, author of
On Top of the World •

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