



The Lure of Everest - Getting to the Bottom of Tourism on Top of the World

Clint Rogers

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Everest. The word strikes a chord in the minds and hearts of people around the world, conjuring up images of a magnificent obelisk of rock and ice stretching so impossibly high into the sky that it pierces the jet stream. For nearly a century, daring men and women have pitted themselves against the world's greatest symbol of personal challenge and danger, pushing their limits and risking their very lives for the chance to stand atop the highest point on Earth. For every person who has managed to scale the peak, hundreds more have been drawn to walk the incredibly scenic valleys at its base, visiting the villages and monasteries of the famous Sherpa people living in the mountains shadow. As mountain guides and devotees of Tibetan Buddhism, the renown of the Sherpa people has grown over the years, and today the name "Sherpa" is as readily identifiable as Everest itself. Brave, strong, pious, jovial, hospitable... these are just a few of the superlatives that have been used to describe an indigenous group that has been the focus of more research and popular attention than perhaps any other on Earth. Over the past few decades, the onslaught of thousands upon thousands of foreign visitors has brought considerable change to the Everest region and to the Sherpa people. While some of these changes (like improved health care and education) have been welcomed, others have not. This book provides a thought-provoking and at times surprising expose of the effects that tourism has had on the economy, environment, and culture of the Everest region, as well as on the personal well-being and self-determination of the people who live there. Utilizing a wide array of perspectives, exhaustive literary research, and his own extensive experience in the Himalaya, the author offers a comprehensive picture of what has worked and what hasn't and draws concrete lessons from all this to help guide socially and environmentally responsible tourism development in the Himalaya in the future.

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