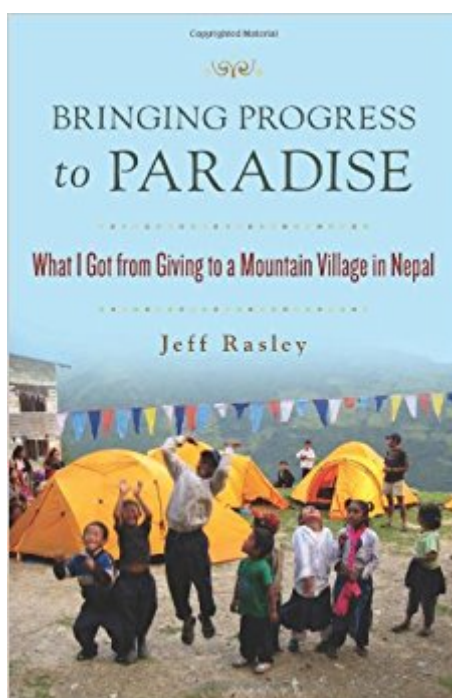


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Bringing Progress To Paradise: What I Got From Giving To A Mountain Village In Nepal



Synopsis

In this second book in the series of *Memoirs of a Thoughtful Traveler* the reader is asked to consider these questions: "What does it mean to bring progress--schools, electricity, roads, running water--to paradise? Will introducing the benefits of modern progressive cultures really improve life within a community that has survived contentedly for centuries? Does it matter whether the desire to "do good" is a motivation of the ones helping to bring progress?" In October 2008, climbing expedition leader and attorney, Jeff Rasley, led a trek to a village named Basa on a Himalayan mountainside in the remote Solu region of Nepal. His group of three adventurers was only the third group of "white people" ever seen in this village of subsistence farmers. What they found was a people thoroughly unaffected by Western consumer-culture values. They had no running water, electricity, or anything that moves on wheels. Each family lived in a beautiful, hand-chiseled stone house with a flower garden. Beyond what they already had, it seemed all the villagers wanted was education for the children. Rasley and his friends helped finish a school building already in progress. But then, the villagers asked for help to bring electricity to Basa. *Bringing Progress to Paradise* describes Rasley's transformation from adventurer to committed philanthropist. "We are attracted to the simpler way of life in these communities, and we are changed by our experience of it. They are attracted to us, because we bring material benefits." *Bringing Progress to Paradise* offers Rasley's critical reflection on the tangled relationships among tourists, "do-gooder" missionaries, and native people in "exotic" locales. He provides a surprising analysis of the effect of Western values on some of the most remote locations on earth. Other books by Jeff Rasley - "If you are interested in learning the rest of the story of Basa Village, read *Light in the Mountains* - *Namaste*, *Rakshi*, and *Electricity in a Himalayan Village* and its prequel "India - Nepal Himalayas In the Moment (an honest Three Cups of Tea)." "Want to get out of the snow and mountains and onto sandy beaches and swaying palms, check out the lyrical *Islands in my Dreams*" "For a change of pace curl up with *False Prophet*. It's a romantic mystery and inspirational tale based on a legal case Rasley handled in his 30-year Indianapolis law practice." "If you enjoy sports action, history, humor, romance, or the sex/drugs/rock & n roll cultural revolution of the 60s, check out *MONSTERS OF THE MIDWAY: Love and Redemption in College Football*." "Pilgrimage: Sturgis to Wounded Knee and Back Home, a Memoir - It begins with a motorcycle road trip to the Bacchanalia of Sturgis Bike Week, then takes a detour to the massacre at Wounded Knee, and crosses the ocean to a remote village in the Himalayas. But, reconciliation is found back home in Indiana." "GODLESS - Living a Valuable Life

beyond Beliefs makes the case that beliefs divide us, but values unite us. So we should fight religious and political violence with positive values. *Hero's Journey* - John Ritter, the Chip Hilton of Goshen, Indiana; a Memoir is a meditation on what makes a real hero and a nostalgic reminiscence about childhood heroes.

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Customer Reviews

"Quite an amazing book - really a must read for conscientious travelers not only to Asia but other parts of the world that have been in any way isolated from Western influence." -American Buddhist Perspective

"Our Nepal experiences have been through a locally-owned company in Kathmandu staffed by people from Basa, near Everest. Jeff has spent time in Basa and taken on this village as his personal project. A school and electricity generation were the first two projects Jeff undertook and this is about his personal growth experience." Maximum Adventure maximumadventure.net/?s=books

"This ... is an experience in spiritual enlightenment as well as Himalayan adventure ... It is a rare book indeed that can provide this kind of spiritual and psychological depth as well as breathtaking high adventure. It will be of interest to mountaineering explorers, anthropologists, spiritual seekers and anyone looking for an exciting true adventure story. It is a wonderful addition to eco travel literature as well as a book for spiritual journeyers, soul travelers, and philanthropy travelers." examiner.com/review/bringing-progress-to-paradise-1 by Sylvia Andrews for Examiner.com

Bringing Progress to Paradise is more than a travel memoir. It is a how-to and a how-not-to

manual for Himalayan trekking. More significantly to me, it introduces readers to the strongest and kindest people I know. ~ ~ God willing, it will inspire others to action, to live adventurously, but not just for self, but to transmit love and compassion across mountains, oceans, and cultures. A Pinterest photo album related to Bringing Progress is at pinterest.com/pinner362436/ Copy, paste, and enjoy the photos.

This is my favorite type of book...journeys into different cultures. This interesting journey is very well written by the man who walked the walk and talked the talk, Mr. Jeff Rasley. After years of trekking the foothills/mid-hills of the Himalayas in Nepal's various regions of peaks, he finds that there is a remote village not a part of 'this century'. (It is not even located on any map.) It is very much cut off from mass society. With no road leading to this village, Mr. Rasley finds it worth putting together all he can of a trekking party...one that consists of people from the U.S. who will fly with him to Katmandu, Nepal, then to join a trekking team consisting of a very reliable Sherpa who will head the trek, and responsible porters who carry the needs of the trekkers, i.e. supplies for cooking and, well 'other necessary things' (you'll see!). To trek this journey will take a few days to reach the remote village of Basa. But it's worth the pain of the hike as he and his entourage are bringing books and school supplies to last a few years of teaching and learning. And a teacher will also be supplied and paid. As they find it, the village has no roads, no hospital, no school, no running water, no electricity or any other type of socially integrated systems. The villagers have only what is man/woman made. All building materials and food gardens are all foraged from their surroundings, and from what they plant. The people (like many in that region of the world) live in a caste system. But with the educational materials which Mr. Rasley and the team are providing make these new tools hopeful ones, so that they can catch up with differentiations for change. Hopefully the internet will enter it's way once younger generations have found how knowledgeable learning can be applied. Educating this village could bring it prosperity economically and how to make their small society prosper even more like in other parts of the world, or that like their neighbors in their own part of the world. Thank you, Mr. Radley for writing the book so well done, and God Bless you for the size of your heart and your determination! I do hope you will write a sequel to this in a few years. I'll be waiting, no matter the outcome. You planted your seeds. I'm sure you are keeping an eye on their growth!

I was fascinated from the beginning by the author's enthusiasm for getting away from our modern society with all of it's gadgets and greed into a culture so simple and yet so apparently satisfying to its people. Rasley obviously finds fuel and meaning for his own life by observing the love and

happiness evidenced by the inhabitants of the remote village of Basa in Nepal, despite their lack of even the simple conveniences of electricity and running water. His story of the logistics of trekking in a foreign land and culture, the difficulty of just getting there, the friendships formed with the locals who make it possible, and the interaction of his fellow trekkers is well told. His description of how happy the people of Basa are to receive his group and the school supplies they bring, and the sadness of the villagers when they depart is very touching. This is an inspiring, real-life adventure story, well written, deserving of recommendation to both young readers and old cynics.

The title: "What I Got", the word there being I, as in the author. It's a good book. Maybe not great, and I've read much better travelogues, and much worse. I don't like to assume, but throughout the book I just got the feeling that the author was feeding his own ego and really trying to help the people of Basa to simply say he helped them. More trying to help himself rather than the people. He was heading a cultural expedition, but seemed like he took every opportunity to leave the members behind and hike by himself. His first meeting with the people of Basa (outside of the porters that travel outside of the village) and what does he do, pulls out a book and starts reading. What? Pulls out a book. After everything he is saying and how he is so excited to get to the village. Pulls out a book. Hmmm, not a good sign. Bottom line, and all my opinion, definitely worthwhile if your interested at all in Nepal, but just a bit too much of the author, and too little of the people he is trying to help, for me. More a trekking experience type book. I do give it four stars, after saying all that, because it is well written and did hold my interest. Not one of my favorites, but far from bad. Again, definitely a worthwhile read if your interested in the area and whatever or however the author writes or feels, he did some good for the people there and if thats not worth writing and reading about, I don't know what is.

This insightful and well written book takes the reader along on a trek through the mountains of Nepal. We see not only the physical struggles of trekking in unexpected conditions, but the emotional struggles within Mr. Rasley as he contemplates whether he is doing the right thing by bringing the western world and progress to the remote village of Basa. He is led by Niru, a villager who wisely sees an opportunity in Mr. Rasley to bring much needed support for the schools and eventually electricity and running water. Mr. Rasley is understandably conflicted at the thought of introducing tourism to Basa because of what he has seen happen to other so-called paradises. Reading this book is as close to trekking in Nepal as some of us may get, but I felt the pain of every step and the reward of the smiles on the faces of the children and villagers who welcomed his party

into their hearts and homes. The account is thought provoking for anyone considering traveling to remote areas. Can lives be improved without completely changing their culture? You'll have to read the book to find out.

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