



# Bringing Progress to Paradise: What I Got from Giving to a Mountain Village in Nepal

*Jeff Rasley*

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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.

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