

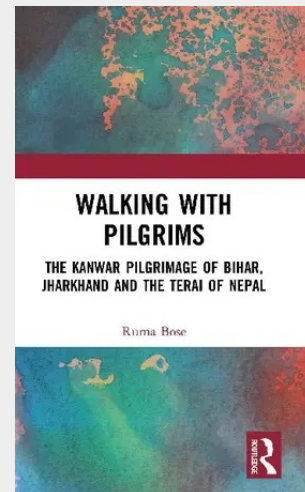
Walking with Pilgrims

The Kanwar Pilgrimage of Bihar, Jharkhand and the Terai of Nepal

This volume makes a contribution to understanding pilgrimage, not as a transient activity at the margins of daily life, but as an event grounded firmly in the physical, symbolic and social experience of the everyday world. The vital relationship between pilgrimage and society is explored via a focus on a specific pilgrimage – the Kanwar pilgrimage of Bihar and Jharkhand in India and the southeast Terai of Nepal. The rising popularity of this old but relatively unknown pilgrimage is striking and reflects profound changes in caste, class and gender relationships, subjectivity and notions of work in a modern economy.

Through the lens of pilgrimage and pilgrims, the book explores the everyday context of life in parts of rural Bihar and southeast Nepal, questions about agency and desire in Hinduism, and the meaning given to symbolic life in a changing world. This requires an integrative approach looking beyond the performance of the pilgrimage to the historical, economic and social-cultural context. The volume underscores the role of popular and local history in understanding the life and popularity of a complex phenomenon, such as the pilgrimage today. Equal importance is given to the geography and climatic conditions, for natural rhythms such as that of rains, rivers, planetary movements, were and still are, intimately entwined with the agricultural, socio-economic and ritual cycles. The particular experience of the world that this engenders and its relationship to the pilgrimage is described through the active voice of the pilgrims and descriptions of rites, some new and many fast disappearing. Please note: Taylor & Francis does not sell or distribute the Hardback in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

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