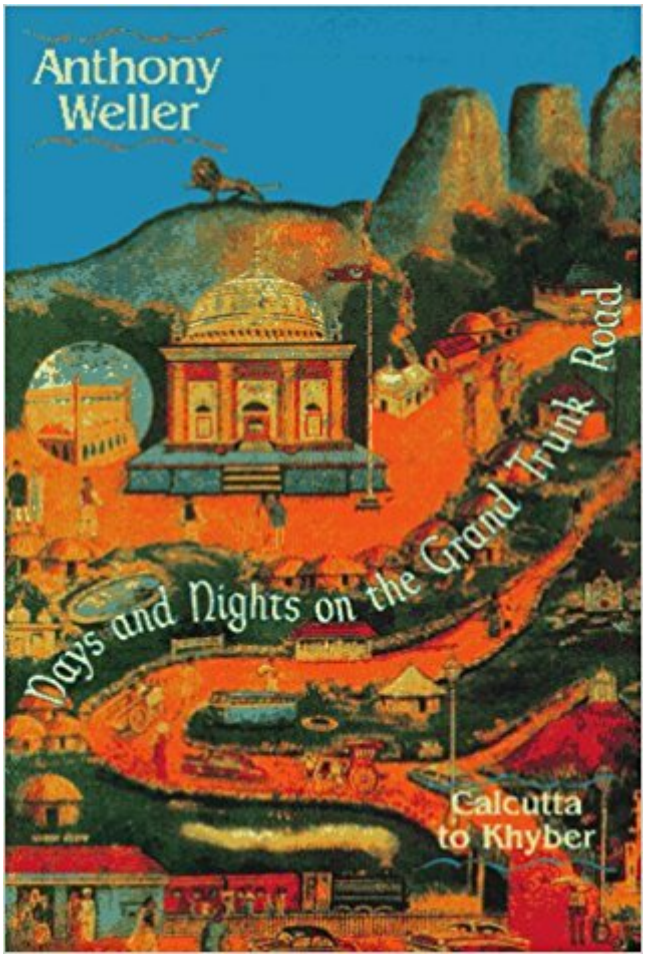
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Days And Nights On The Grand Trunk Road: Calcutta To Khyber



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Synopsis

A "wryly observant travelogue . . . brimming with beauty and strangeness" ("Kirkus Reviews"), this work recreates the author’s remarkable adventures on the ancient route that spans India and Pakistan. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

On the 50th anniversary of the independence and partition of India, Weller, an American poet, novelist, and journalist (e.g., The Garden of the Peacocks, LJ 9/1/96) has written a richly anecdotal account of his journey along the subcontinent’s most historic highway, the Grand Trunk Road, for centuries India’s main artery, running from Calcutta to the Khyber Pass. The Grand Trunk has been the traditional route of invaders, as well as a conduit for new ideas and faiths. On a previous visit, Weller was stirred both by India’s beauty and by his inability to comprehend the experience. So he returned and traveled the 1600-mile length of the Grand Trunk, hoping to make at least partial sense of his earlier impressions. Weller makes an excellent companion whether regaling us with the story of a Mogul emperor’s elephant, describing the Jain faith, or speculating on the paucity of beggars in Pakistan. Recommended for academic and public libraries.?Robert Andrews, Duluth P.L., Minn.Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

While the title is somewhat of a misnomer--since much of this ancient road cutting across India and Pakistan is too infested by bandits to travel after dark--make no mistake about the courage and intelligence behind this wryly observant travelogue. ``From what I’d witnessed, the future for most

Indians looked like hell,'' writes novelist and travel writer Weller (The Garden of the Peacocks, 1996), and while this bleak prediction resonates throughout his account, one is equally impressed that India's explosive mixture of cultures and religions has not blown the lid off the world's largest democracy. Along this road, cut by conquerors from before Alexander, lie the birthplace of Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, ornate but crumbling tombs--including the Taj Mahal (``that Moby Dick of architecture'')--as well as the sites of great pilgrimages and human slaughter. Traveling this frequently crumbling artery, his hired drivers dodging careening trucks, Weller alights in the sacred Hindu city of Benares astride the Ganges, whose ``stench is encyclopedic and hypnotic'' and into whose waters are commited some 40,000 cremated bodies yearly. Up the road, Kanpur is the site of the 1857 massacre of 1,000 British men, women, and children that led Queen Victoria to formally annex India. Weller traces the paths of Kipling, perhaps the only writer of the time to look beneficently on the Indians during the Raj. Tireless, aside from a bronchial disorder caused by the poisonous air of New Delhi, Weller proceeds to the Punjab, home to the Sikhs, and passes into Pakistan, which, while lacking the liberties and the cultural freedom of its neighbor, is generally cleaner, with far fewer beggars and homeless people. The last stage, up the forbidding Khyber Pass, in which dwell smugglers of all description, and through which he was required to hire an armed bodyguard, is perhaps the most exotic locale yet in an account brimming with beauty and strangeness. -- Copyright Ã Â©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

This was a joyful read... entertaining as well as informative.I enjoyed his sense of humor and descriptions which brought back memories of the hardships & fun of travel while trying to make some meaning of it all.This is a book I'd take to India and Pakistan while travelling or read it after you return. You'll enjoy! I'll read again.

Not a bad book, but not particularly good either.Weller, while intelligent and well-meaning, doesn't seem to know very much about India. To be sure, he's done some background reading -- at the end he provides a curious list of dated references -- but his knowledge seems flimsy. One does not get the feeling that he's studied or thought deeply about the country, its history or culture; but rather that he's parroting views he's read in books or that he's simply reacting to what he sees on the road. As a result one doesn't have confidence in his attempts to synthesize the meaning of India's past or its prospects in the future. What he has to say in this regard is rather banal in any case. I suspect he included these broad pronouncements -- about the population problem, about communal violence -- only because this is what people have come to expect from travel writers, instant and concise

analyses of foreign cultures. Unfortunately not every travel writer is a Naipaul.Also, his narrative of his encounters on the road is simply not interesting. It’s not boring exactly, just bland. He meets uninteresting people, has brief uninteresting conversations, and then moves on.

Travelling along the GT Road is an expirience that one never forgets.The author gives an historical perspective of the points along the GT Road. He starts out in Calcutta, the city built by the Raj. Along the way he finds the foundations of the Jain and Buddhist religions. Weller writes about thses religions in an objective manner and gives a clear concise history of the religions along with their beliefs. Between these highlights he meets present day Indians. What he puts into words is what I thought but could not expess myself, both humorously and insightfully. I had lived in India for two years while serving in the Peace Corps. I felt the same frustrations he did in communicating and dealing with the bureaucracy.This is an excellent book for one intending to travel through the subcontinent or has spent some time there.

A. Weller is a superb writer, I learned more about India in 10 pages than I could have in a year of school. Although the names, and dates can be eye crossing after awhile, it only showed me that mr. Weller did a ton of research, and cut no corners’ in writing this book. From keen observations interspersed with humerous encounters with strangers’ and beauracratic red tape, I applaud mr. Weller for writting a book the he could be proud of first, and not an "India for dummies". Rock on Tony!!

Having spent a month in India, and experiencing first-hand Indian roads and traffic, I found Days & Nights on The Grand Trunk Road to be as entertaining as a travelogue on the Travel Channel...no more no less. Some errors intersperse the book, but are of little consequence to its overall flow. However, Weller should be aware that Muslims normally perform ablutions five times a day, preceding each set of prayers. The Pakistani fellow who advised him otherwise was grossly misinformed.

Reading this book was a great way to take a journey from home. Weller makes great observations about everyday encounters while en route through Northern India. From truck drivers to border guards to off the beaten track historic sites, Weller informs and entertains. I was suprised that the book educates as it entertains. Weller explains various history and religon in a manner that is never boring.

India is enormous in every sense, and thus unwieldy. Anthony Weller captures its peculiar flavor as well as anyone. This is an erudite piece of scholarship for serious India students, as opposed to a Bill Bryson "drive-by."

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