

Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures

By Wade Davis




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For renowned anthropologist and ethnobotanist Wade Davis, the term "ethnosphere" encompasses the wealth of human diversity and all that traditional cultures have to teach about different ways of living and thinking.

In "Light at the Edge of the World, Davis--best known for "The Serpent and the Rainbow--presents an intimate survey of the ethnosphere in 80 striking photographs taken over the course of his wide exploration. In eloquent accompanying text, Davis takes readers deep into worlds few Westerners will ever experience, worlds that are fading away even as he writes. From the Canadian Arctic and the rain forests of Borneo to the Amazon and the towering mountains of Tibet, readers are awakened to the rituals, beliefs, and lives of the Waorani, the Penan, the Inuit, and many other unique and endangered traditional cultures. The result is a haunting and enlightening realization of the limitless potential of the human imagination of life.

While globalization has become the battle cry of the 21st century, Davis' s magisterial work points out that the erosion of the ethnosphere will diminish us all. " The human imagination is vast, fluid, infinite in its capacity for social and spiritual invention, " he writes, and reminds us that " there are other means of interpreting our existence, other ways of being."

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"As a young anthropologist I never understood how I was supposed to turn up at some village... announce that I was staying for a year, and then notify the headman that he and his people were to feed and house me while I studied their lives," writes Davis (*Shadows in the Sun: Travels to Landscapes of Spirit and Desire*) in the introduction to this stunning collection of photographs that span the 25 years of his career. His solution was to find cultural common ground through the study of food and plants, which often was the ostensible reason for his travels through Canada, the Andes, the Amazon, Haiti, Kenya and Tibet. While Davis emphasizes that "at no time was photography [my] principal pursuit," his photographs are visually dazzling. A smiling Barasana boy of the Northwest Amazon holds a brilliantly colored macaw. A man in Haiti stands beneath the downpour of a torrential cataract, his clothes torn off by the force of the water. Indeed, these dramatic photographs frequently overshadow Davis's informative, witty essays, which introduce each of the seven chapters. In these, he shares anecdotes about the people he's met, reflects on the effects of colonialism in these areas and laments the uncertain fate of groups like the Penan of Borneo and the nomads of Kenya. Beautifully designed and produced, this album will delight armchair travelers.

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From [Booklist](#)

Ethnobotanist and anthropologist Davis, author of *One River* (1996) and *Shadows in the Sun* (1998), has traveled the world for 25 years, pen and camera in hand, to study the myriad ways indigenous people live in physical and spiritual intimacy with the natural world. Driven by curiosity and a profound respect for the "ethnosphere," humanity's diverse "thoughts, beliefs, myths, and intuitions," Davis has dwelled among the people of the Arctic, the Amazon, Haiti, Kenya, Borneo, Australia, and Tibet, learning their modes of being, cosmologies, and botanical expertise. His quest has rendered him acutely sensitive to the connection between biodiversity and cultural diversity, and as he portrays in pellucid language and magnificent photographs healers, shamans, hunters, and men, women, and children adept at survival in the most demanding of wildernesses, he decries the rampant environmental destruction and globalization that are decimating indigenous cultures, thus depriving future generations of their knowledge, wisdom, and unique perspectives. Aesthetically powerful in both word and image, this essential volume opens readers' eyes and imaginations to the wonders of the earth and humanity's varied "insights into the very nature of existence," a bounty and legacy we simply cannot do without. *Donna Seaman*

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Review

Aesthetically powerful in both word and image, this essential volume opens readers' eyes and imaginations...
-- *Booklist*, *STARRED* review

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thelma Brady:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be upgrade about what going on or information even

knowledge to make these individuals keep up with the era which can be always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe will update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to anyone is you don't know what one you should start with. This Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Lori Gravitt:

Reading a e-book tends to be new life style on this era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Books can also inspire a lot of people. A great deal of author can inspire all their reader with their story as well as their experience. Not only the story that share in the books. But also they write about the data about something that you need example of this. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your kids, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors in this world always try to improve their ability in writing, they also doing some research before they write for their book. One of them is this Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures.

Ella Hodge:

Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures can be one of your nice books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort that will put every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures nevertheless doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand new stage of crucial pondering.

Jennifer Meeks:

As we know that book is very important thing to add our understanding for everything. By a book we can know everything we would like. A book is a list of written, printed, illustrated or perhaps blank sheet. Every year had been exactly added. This book Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures was filled in relation to science. Spend your time to add your knowledge about your scientific research competence. Some people has several feel when they reading the book. If you know how big advantage of a book, you can truly feel enjoy to read a guide. In the modern era like today, many ways to get book that you wanted.

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