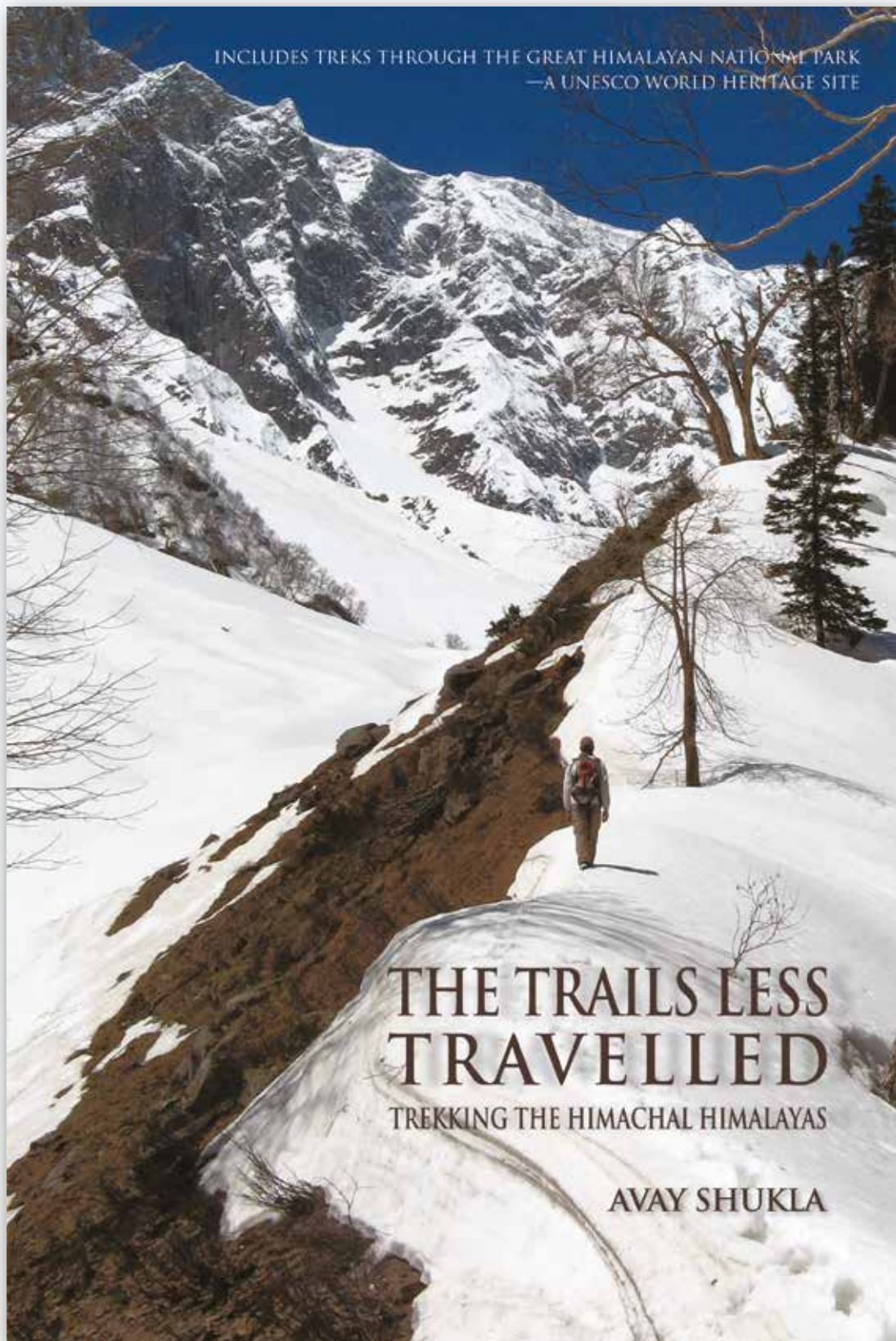


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THE TRAILS LESS TRAVELLED

TREKKING THE HIMACHAL HIMALAYAS

by Avay Shukla

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This is a book on high-altitude trekking in the magnificent Himalayan range in Himachal Pradesh, India, and the flora and fauna that inhabit it. It is also much more. The treks described in such detail are pegs on which the author has draped the entire tapestry of the mountains—the life of local communities, their unique customs, mythology, the challenges of “development” in ecologically fragile landscapes, the politics of environmental conservation, the rapid transformation overtaking these remote regions which, unfortunately, are not exempt from the effects of progress (as we define it in its limited way). The book covers four enthralling treks through the Great Himalayan National Park in Kullu district, inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in July 2014—perhaps the first time that this unique nature reserve has been depicted in such faithful and loving detail. Eight other treks in the districts of Chamba, Kullu, Kangra, Lahaul and Spiti, Shimla, and Kinnaur complete a fascinating account spread over 20 years.

The Trails Less Travelled is, in essence, both a celebration of wild Nature and documentation of a valuable legacy that may not survive the next 20 years. It needs to be treasured for both these reasons.

- **Includes 4 treks through the Great Himalayan National Park—a UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- **Hand-drawn maps by the author accompany each trek, indicating the entire route and natural features.**
- **The author’s IAS background translates to informative insights otherwise unavailable to the common trekker.**
- **A comprehensive and indispensable guide for both amateur and hardened trekkers.**



Avay Shukla belongs to the Indian Administrative Service and has served in Himachal Pradesh for 30 years. He is president of the Himachal Pradesh

Trekking Association, and a founder member of the Ecotourism Society of India. He is an unapologetic conservationist and has quite often found this clashing with his role as a government servant, a trait portrayed honestly in this book. His passion for nature has seen him tramping up and down the remotest areas of this mountain state for the last 20 years. His detailed account of some of the major and more difficult treks is unique in that he brings to bear on these journeys his administrative insights and experience, which adds depth and perspective to his observations and narrative.

The author is now retired and settled in a small village (pop. 225; 224 when his wife dumps him for Delhi, which is quite often) 20 km above Shimla. He is a relentless blogger and spends his remaining time tending to his apple plants and looking for golf balls that he unerringly drives into the forests every time.

