



The Darjeeling Distinction: Labor and Justice on Fair-Trade Tea Plantations in India (California Studies in Food and Culture)

Sarah Besky

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Nestled in the Himalayan foothills of Northeast India, Darjeeling is synonymous with some of the finest and most expensive tea in the world. It is also home to a violent movement for regional autonomy that, like the tea industry, dates back to the days of colonial rule.

In this nuanced ethnography, Sarah Besky narrates the lives of tea workers in Darjeeling. She explores how notions of fairness, value, and justice shifted with the rise of fair-trade practices and postcolonial separatist politics in the region. This is the first book to explore how fair-trade operates in the context of large-scale plantations.

Readers in a variety of disciplines—anthropology, sociology, geography, environmental studies, and food studies—will gain a critical perspective on how plantation life is changing as Darjeeling struggles to reinvent its signature commodity for twenty-first-century consumers. *The Darjeeling Distinction* challenges fair-trade policy and practice, exposing how trade initiatives often fail to consider the larger environmental, historical, and sociopolitical forces that shape the lives of the people they intended to support.

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