



TOURA D'OR 2004

Category: Information and Documentary Films

Electricity for the Sherpas – Modern Times on Mount Everest (Eco Himal, bce Film, German, 29 minutes)

The TOURA D'OR 2004 has been awarded to the documentary film *Electricity for the Sherpas – Modern Times on Mount Everest* by Bettina Erhard. The film shows in an extraordinary way the tradition-driven lifestyle of the Sherpas in Nepal, while also explaining their interwoven existence and dependency on tourism on Mount Everest. In addition, through the example of a small power station built with the support from an Austrian initiative, the documentary illustrates the benefits that can be brought to such a remote region by modern technological development.

While the main focus of the documentary is not on the tourist aspects, the type of progress it describes would never have been possible without the presence of the trekking tourists. After all, also in Europe, in the industrialised countries, progress in our understanding began to take shape and an improvement in the standard of living after the discovery of the steam engine – therefore, in this respect, the availability of electric power is also a symbol of modern times and continuous change.

Electricity for the Sherpas – Modern Times on Mount Everest is awarded the TOURA D'OR 2004, for its authentic and sensitive depiction of the changes in the daily existence of this ethnic group in Nepal. The social, economic and ecological consequences of tourism in the Himalayas are described. The film gets its persuasive power from observing one selected family, through which the viewer finds out about the daily hardships and modern achievements. The chances and limits for mobility are pointed out through authentic personal statements. The film offers an interesting glimpse behind the tourist scenes and shows the mutual dependency of man-society-culture-nature.

The cinematic quality of the documentary leaves something to be desired, however.