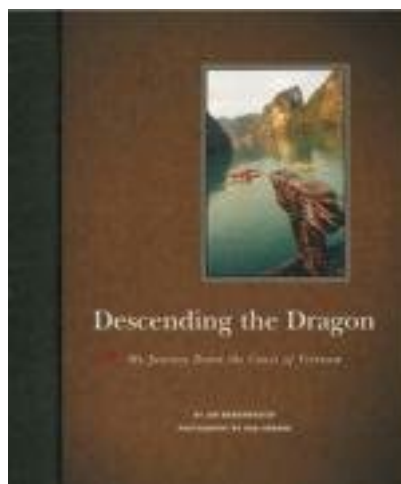


# Descending the Dragon



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著者:Bowermaster, Jon/ Howard, Rob (PHT)

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Sometimes the longest journey begins with great patience. When Jon Bowermaster proposed an 800-mile kayak expedition along Vietnam's northern coastline, the country's government initially responded, "That will be quite impossible." Negotiation saved the day, and Jon Bowermaster and his team of five including a Vietnamese-American woman who had fled Saigon as a child on the final day of war in 1975 completed an unprecedented voyage, seeing Vietnam and its people in a brand new light.

One-third of Vietnam's 80 million citizens live on or near the coastline, and Bowermaster met thousands of them rich and poor, fishermen and entrepreneurs, almost all beach dwellers who live and depend on the sea. For many, he was the first American they had ever encountered. In chapters flowing from north to south, Bowermaster's highly personal story and Rob Howard's compelling images bring to life Vietnam's vibrant edge.

The enigmatic nation is enjoying an upsurge today as a popular destination for both cultural and adventure travel: In the first six months of 2007, arrivals increased more than 14 percent over the same period last year, and the dynamic growth is projected to continue. This fascinating volume, offering a fresh perspective on the land and its people, will captivate real-life explorers and armchair travelers alike with its intriguing take on Vietnam from the sea.

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目录:

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评论

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