

Morning of 25 March - Day Seven Snow!

Well, it's not going to be onward just yet. The Lord really pulled us through that pass just in time. It snowed last night, and the temperature has dropped considerably. It's raining sporadically outside and a medium size mountain outside the window (of this tea house where we spent the night) is covered half way down in snow.



The wind has apparently shifted from the original direction to out of the north. We could not cross Lamjura Pass if we had been a day later. Out the door the snow is above us maybe 1000 feet so all we got last night was a hard rain at our level.

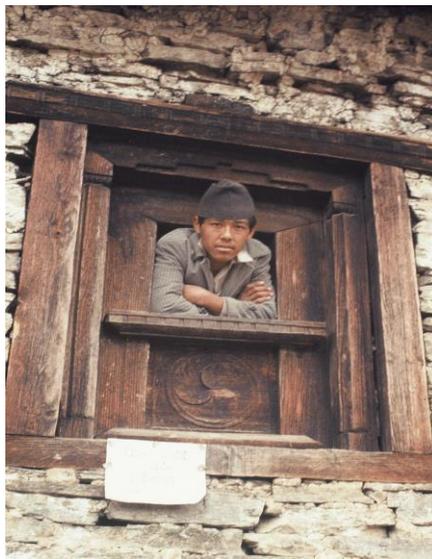
Overlooking
Junbesi; the
town of Junbesi,
site of yet
another Hillary
school





Yak at Junbesi.

To the right, my Sherpa leans out of the window at a teahouse between Junbesi and Ringmo



To the right is a continuation of the trail headed to Ringmo. Ringmo is in the distance, at the edge of the dark ridge line and the cloud bank. Over the ridge is the monastery and my Sherpa's home.

There is no right of way... cows always have priority.





Monastery at Tragshinda, just over the ridge line in the picture above.

Afternoon of 25 March At home



The family poses for a portrait.

Here we are at my Sherpa's home just west of Manidingma. After what looked like a shaky beginning, the day turned out fairly well. It was cool all day with the temperature somewhere between 40 and 50 degrees all the time. The area south of the pass around Junbesi east was shrouded with clouds all day.

As we climbed out past Ringmo we were in a cloud. We descended then to his (the Sherpa's) home. Just over the mountain from Ringmo is the monastery of Tragshindha. My guide was close friends with the lama of the monastery.

One of the really neat things about today was meeting an American couple trekking through to Namche. They were really nice and down to earth. They seemed to be experiencing this trek on about the same plane I am - that it's tough and the up

and down likes to ruin you, but there is that sense of urgency to see Everest and the beauty and simplicity of the mountain folk of Nepal. I also met an American named Donna. She's trekking to Namche then Base Camp all alone! I was rather shocked. I think it's foolish for a man to be in the mountains alone, let alone a woman. She seems quite at home, but a night alone in the forest on a mountain could change that rapidly. For example, two young lads of the Commonwealth (Australia) have gotten off the track twice while we've been on the road. They move much faster than we, but mistakes cost hours, even days. We caught them today (rather my Sherpa did) heading off towards a lake at 15,000 feet completely opposite from the direction they wanted to go. There was nothing on that mountain, no one to straighten them out until they realized their mistake. Also, the young girl admitted having flitted around in the fields, off the path, lost. She finally noticed the American couple on the trail and managed to make it to the Sherpa house where we all met. I go to great lengths in this not to discredit these trekkers, I admire their stamina - stick-to-it-tiveness. With plenty of time on their hands they can afford to look around, whether on purpose or not. My point is to illustrate the importance of a guide who knows the way and can lead you where you want to go in the least amount of time. And, after all, time is critical on my journey.

A postscript 26 years later. I can't get over the life application of what I've just written above. Years later I have come to appreciate how short our time on earth is and just how important it is to have Someone as your Guide.

Another good thing is that with my Sherpa, small things that I'm interested in can be explained and don't go unnoticed. All in all, the seventh day has been good. I finally saw my face in a mirror. I'm a regular wolf man with this beard. I should also mention Tibetan tea - I had about two and a half cups. It is very buttery with salt in regular tea (that part I'm still not sure about - Mrs Hillary speaks about Tibetan tea in her book, noting that she ended up drinking her girl's share. Rough after the first couple of sips. Sherpas seem to drink quite a lot of it, and they enjoy it. I also saw Sir Edmund Hillary's school or rather the one he helped to make possible for the people of Junbesi. The village is beautiful, nestled beneath several large peaks and just down the valley from a Tibetan monastery that apparently houses the 14th Dali-Lama reincarnated.