

On This Beautiful Land

My Everest Base Camp Trip and Project iBelieve

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December 2016

**"Heaven is a myth,
Nepal is real."**

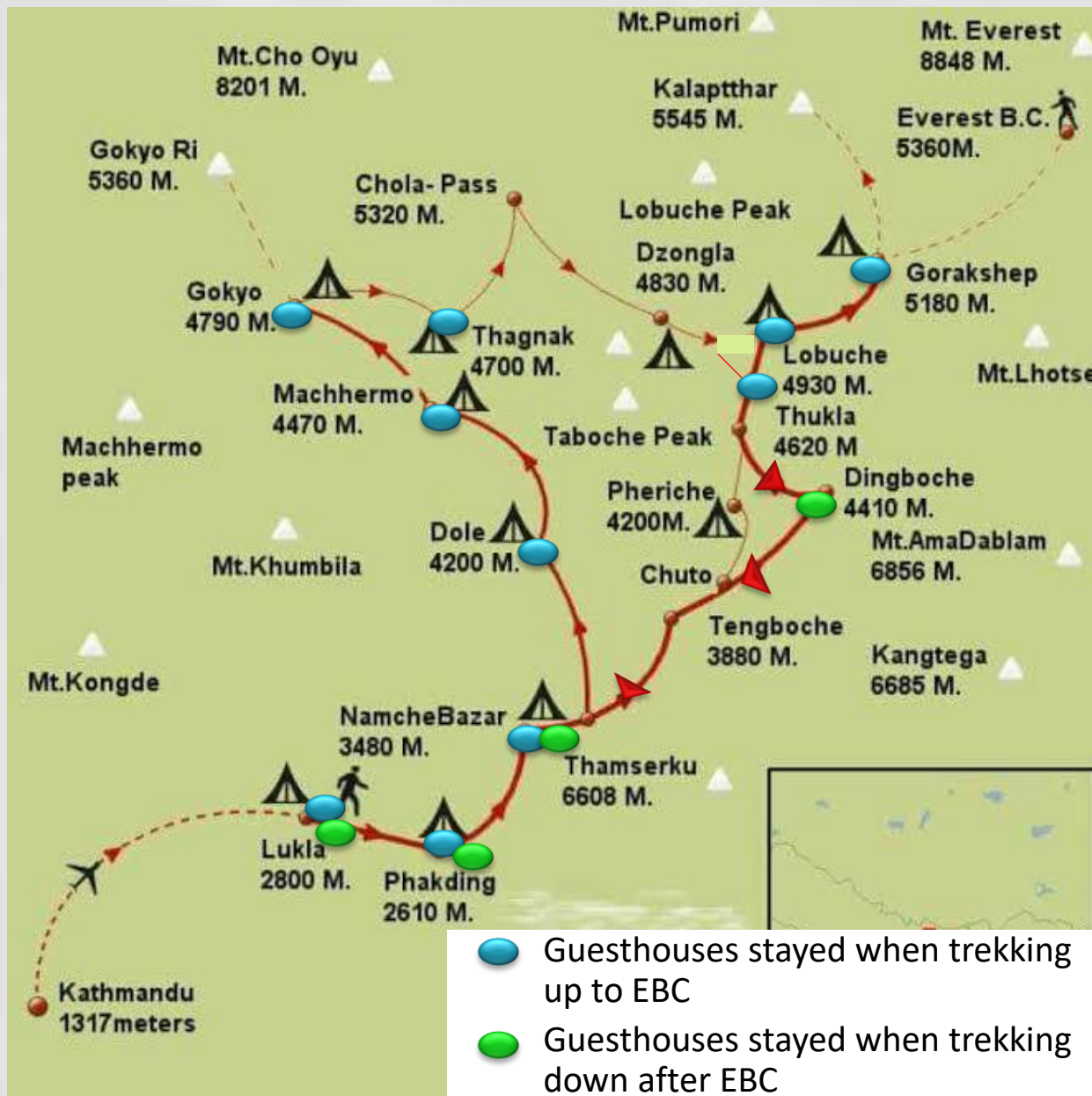
* Quote by [@nepal8thwonder](#) from Instagram

The start of our Journey to heaven



Departure at Toronto Pearson International Airport
in October 2016 for our Everest Base Camp (EBC) Trek Trip

14-day Everest Base Camp via Gokyo Ri Trek Route



Lukla (2,800m)



Day 1

Phakding (2,610m)



Day 2

Namche Bazaar (3,445m) Day 3

The 35-minute flight is definitely a blast. What skills does it require for landing and taking off on the 527-meter long runway with a 12% gradient?

Bird's eye view of Himalayan Ranges



The mountain is almost touchable

Runway at Lukla Airport





The guesthouse near Lukla Airport has the best décor among all the guesthouses we stayed

The ceiling and walls in the dining room are covered by flags that EBC trekkers put up after their trips





Start of the journey

The trail at the beginning is nicely paved.

You will be disappointed if you expect the whole trail is like this.

Stupas and mani stones with Buddhist prayer inscription along the trail



Prayer wheels on the trail
(rotate them to find peace in mind)





Does the waterfall
come from the sky?

We crossed 5 suspension bridges over the same river on Day 2



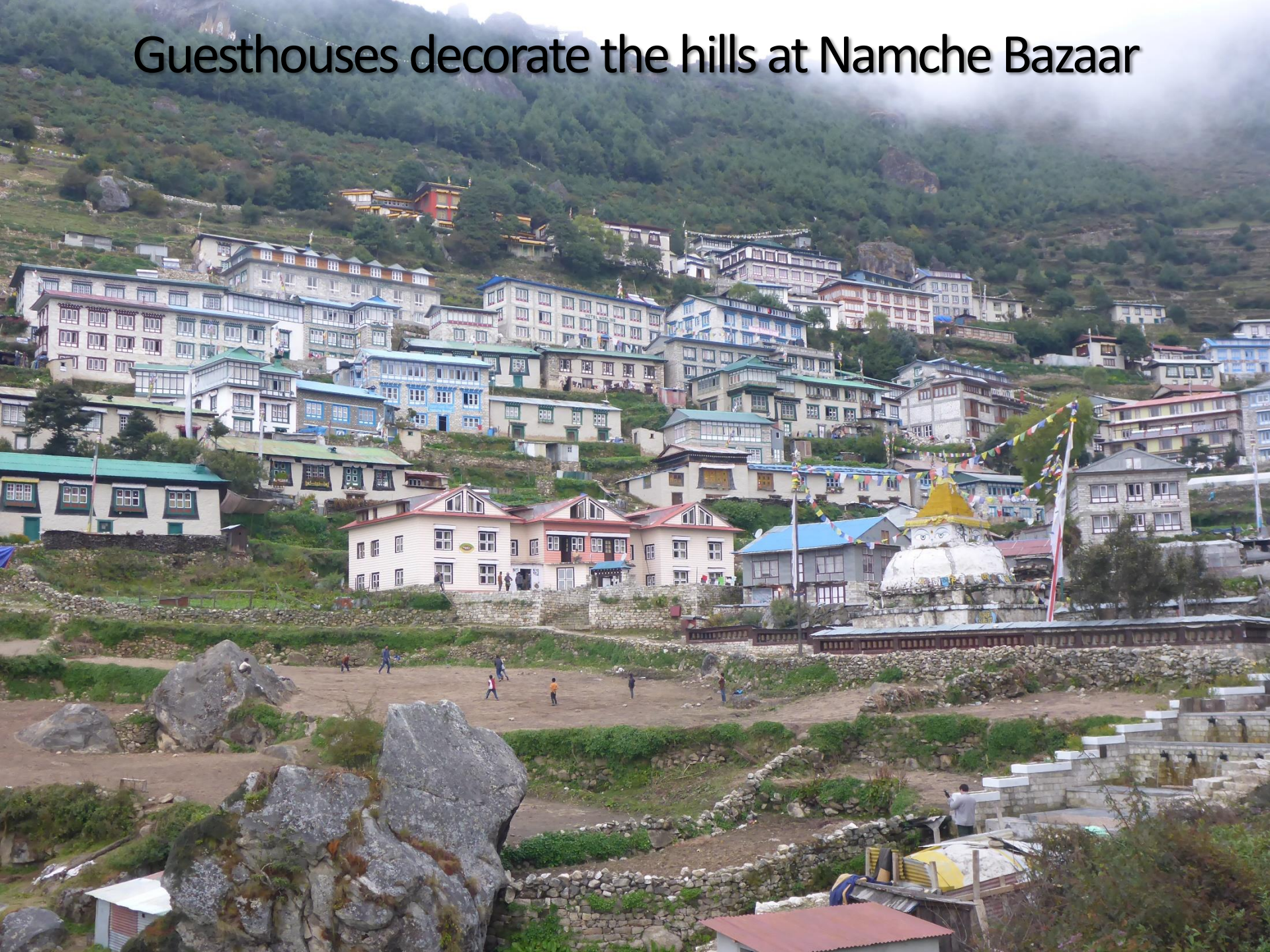
Milk river roars under the bridge and along the trail



The gate at Namche Bazaar is so inviting
(trekkers usually stay at Namche Bazaar for a day
to acclimatize)



Guesthouses decorate the hills at Namche Bazaar



There are lots of shops selling souvenirs and trekking gear. Bars and coffee shops spread in the bazaar as well.



Good morning,
Namche Bazaar!



The view on the top of the hill

Do you see it? That is the summit of Mt Everest!



A close shot of Mt Everest



Overlooking the Tibet side



Tenzing Norgay, who accompanied Sir Edmund Hillary in his expedition to Mt Everest in 1953
(they were the first people who reached the summit of Mt Everest)



Namche Bazaar (3,445m)

↓ Day 4

Dole (4,040m)

↓ Day 5

Machhermo (4,410m)

↓ Day 6

Gokyo (4,750m)

A country view to start the day



This old man, named Pasang Sherpa, collects donations from trekkers to maintain the trail due to the government's failure on trail construction



Trekking in between cliffs



The peak of Mt Amadablam stands out from the clouds

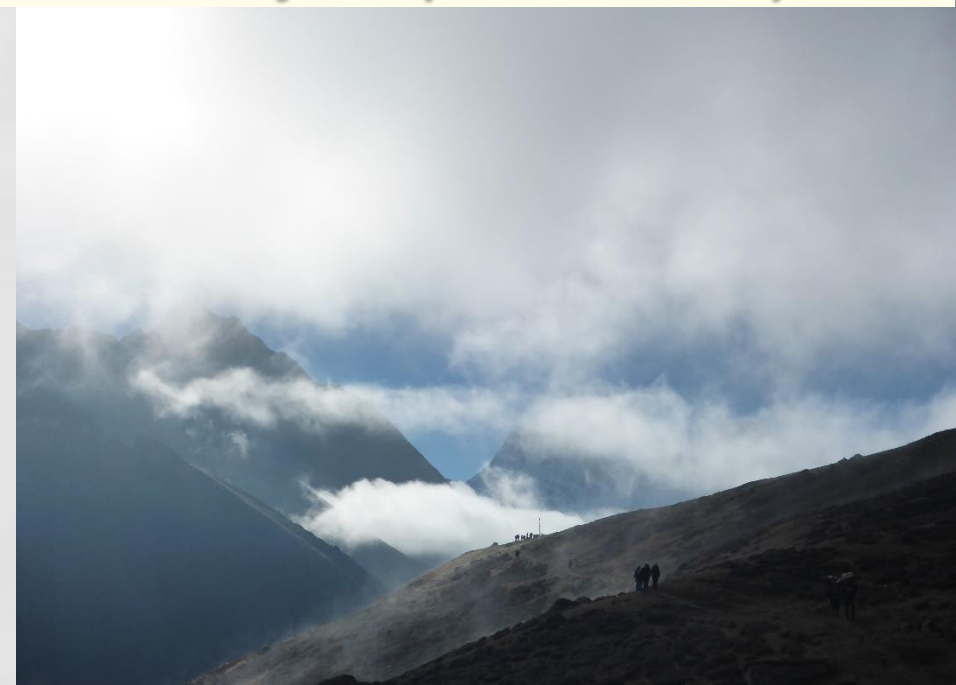


Tree lines disappear after Dole (4,040m)
(but the views never disappear)





My point-and-shoot camera does not justify the scenery





Glacial lakes near Gokyo valley highlight our day



A mountain mermaid at a glacial lake



A view from the guesthouse dining room at Gokyo valley



Gokyo Ri (5,360m)
A peak next to Gokyo valley

(we hiked to the top of Gokyo Ri in the early morning of Day 7)

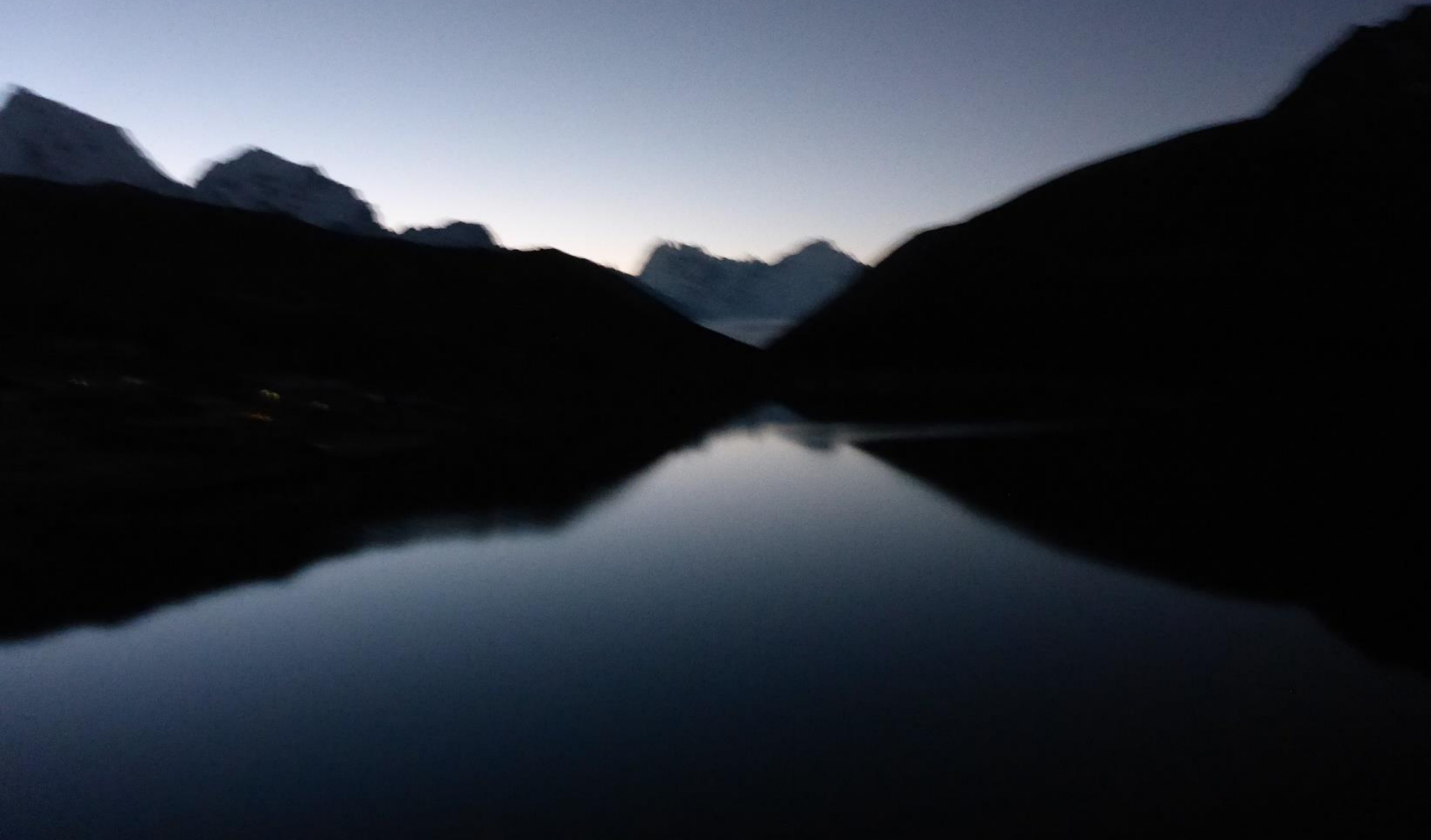
Gokyo Ri: climbing up to the peak
(It was 2.5 hours' hard work before breakfast)



Gokyo Ri: Sitting at the peak (I feel like I am in heaven)



Gokyo lake before sunrise (5:15am)
(The darkness could not hide the reflection of hills in the lake)



Gokyo lake before sunrise (5:26 am)
(Clouds started to move in from far back)



Gokyo lake before sunrise (5:45 am)
(Clouds are taking over the whole lake)



Gokyo lake after sunrise (6:10 am)



Gokyo lake after sunrise (6:54 am)
(Where is the lake?)



Gokyo (4,750m)



Day 7

Thangnak (4,700m)



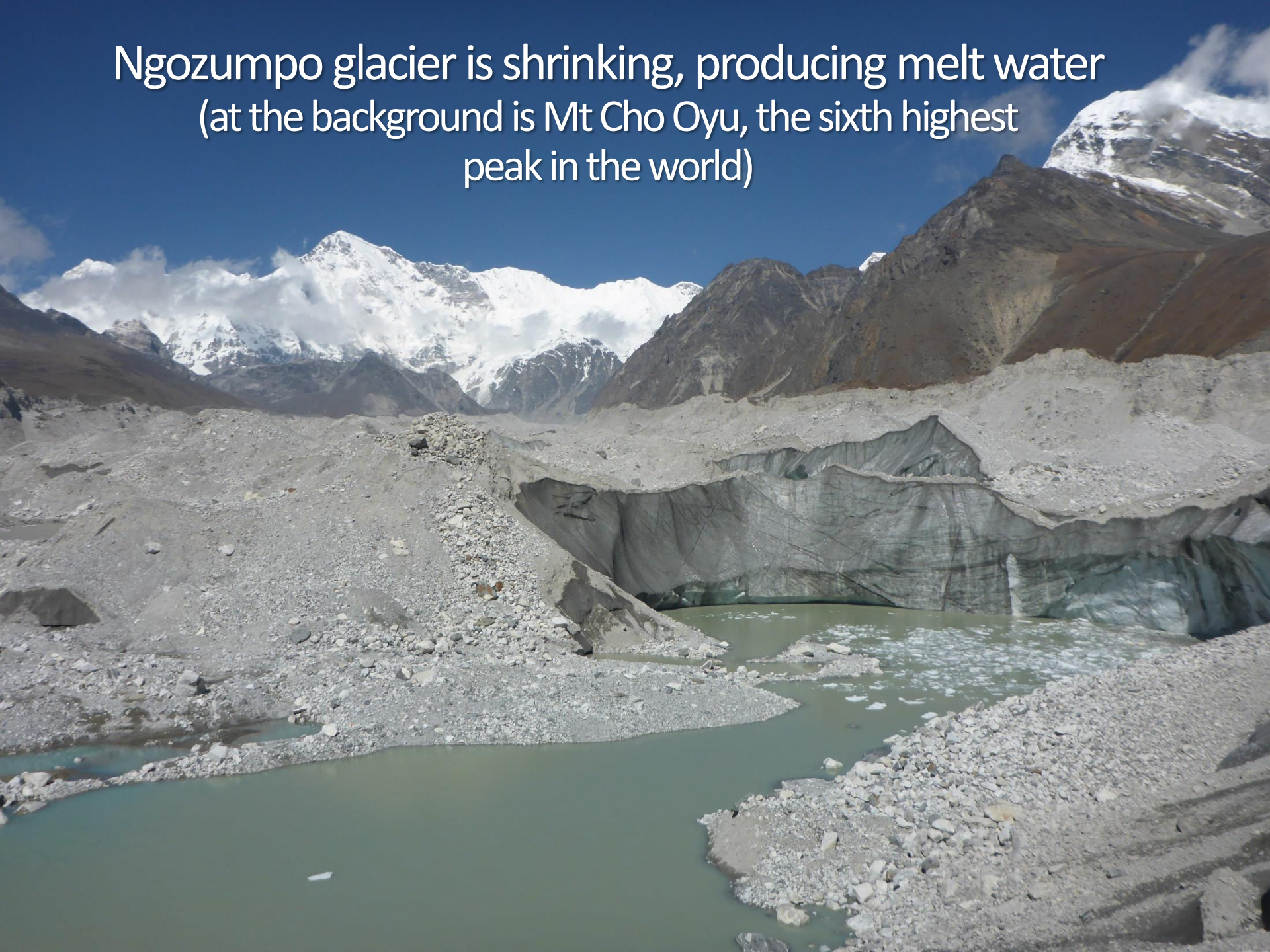
Day 8 (Chola Pass)

Thukla (4,620m)

Ngozumpo glacier (36 km)
(the longest glacier in Himalayas)



Ngozumpo glacier is shrinking, producing melt water
(at the background is Mt Cho Oyu, the sixth highest
peak in the world)



There is no easy way when it comes to crossing a glacier



One step a time, we will get there



The rugged terrain is compensated by amazing mountain views



To heaven we trek



I think I deserve a little celebration



Conquering Chola Pass

(after a night's rest at Thangnak, we started the day early at 5:15am)



There is really no visible trail in some areas on Chola Pass



The amazing view ahead is our motivation



A short rest before crossing this steep hill ahead



After the hill, it is a snowland
(the only section covered with snow in the entire trip)



Conquering Chola Pass was the toughest day of the trip
(12 hours on the trail that day)



Thukla (4,620m)



Day 9

Lobuche (4,910m)



Day 10

Gorak Shep (5,180m)

The Climbers' Memorial Park (dedicated to fallen climbers on Mt Everest)



Clouds are leading the way to a wonderland



Let's catch up with the clouds



With this view, I will never get tired



Guesthouses at Lobuche



Helicopters are often seen to take sick trekkers back to Lukla

Isn't it the top of the world?
(in the morning of the day trekking to Everest Base Camp)



Watch your step, please!
(Carrying supplies to Gorak Shep, the last resting point
before reaching the Base Camp)



Fallen boulders can serve as stools for a short break



To Everest Base Camp (5,365m)

(afternoon of Day 10)

After lunch at Gorak Shep, we are
en route to the Base Camp





A small avalanche - snow falls down from the hills frequently not far from where we pass and at distances

Are we there yet?

(our excitement and expectation have been built up with the altitude)



Are we there yet ?
(not yet, but watch your step)



Yes, we are there! This is the Base Camp!




We did it !



I did it !!!



There is no single tent at the Base Camp!
Neither could we see the summit of Mt Everest.



The now deserted Base Camp will be crowded with
climbers and tents in spring from March to May.

But the view at the Base Camp is not disappointing at all



Is this the pass to heaven?



The sunset adds a layer of glory





Even the reflection in a puddle is breathtaking

Kalapathar (5,545m) (hike to the peak on the early morning of Day 11)

- Kalapathar means black rocks in Nepali.
- We started around 5:00am and reached to the top of Kalapathar in 2.5 hours.
- As the name suggests, black rocks are everywhere on the hill. For the last 500 meters we had to hop on rocks to get to the top.
- The view of Mt Everest from Kalapathar was great. But the top of Kalapathar was so windy that we started to descend shortly after we arrived.

Wake up time for Himalayas



Black rocks everywhere



Mt Everest looks mysterious to me every time when I see it
(can you tell which peak is Mt Everest?)



I am almost as tall as Mt Everest!



The way back to Lukla

(Day 11 to Day 14)

Trekking down is not as easy as expected



Dynamic mountain views
make the hike interesting

at 3:30pm



at 4:00pm



at 4:40pm



Sunset in Himalayas
(I would love to see it everyday)



The best view is always ahead of us



Nothing is boring in Himalayas



Each angle of Mountains and rivers is beautiful





Tengboche Monastery, a UNESCO world heritage site (3,867m), is the holiest place in Khumbu Valley for the Sherpa community



Animal porters always add fun as well as sadness in our trip



“Excuse me, we porters are coming through.”



A big crew of mule porters crossing a suspension bridge



An artistic way to make fuel from animal droppings



Guesthouse dining room are heated by these dried "pancakes"



Stone shelters used by farmers for forest grazing



Back to the guesthouse at Lukla
(It concluded the 14-day challenging but fantastic trekking trip)



We celebrated this great achievement with our guide, associate guide and porters



**Our guide and 6 porters
(we wouldn't make it without their support and encouragement)**



A big thank-you to our porter team
(from left: Mithem, Nikumar, Namaraj, Barat, Milan and Prakash)



Our guide Bal (left) and assistant guide Karan
(they provided great guide services and helped us get through
the difficult days)



If you are planning a trekking trip in Nepal, I highly recommend our guide **Bal Darnal** - he is knowledgeable, responsible, encouraging and helpful.

<https://www.facebook.com/balbahadur.darnal.1>

Everest Base Camp trek trip - my experience

- Challenging but fulfilling
 - Physical preparation is required
- Basic food and accommodation offered by guesthouses on the trail
 - Don't expect big steak or lobster meals – food is basic but quite tasty and with a good variety
 - Don't expect starred hotels – guesthouses provide basic twin bedrooms (no heat and a paid hot shower is a treatment)
- Friendly Nepalese – the most humble people I have ever met
- Affordable trip price
- Amazing Himalayan views

All worth it!

Read Kim's EBC trip journal on kimsibelieve.blogspot.com

Nepal, a vacation destination offering a wide range of tourism activities and beautiful scenery

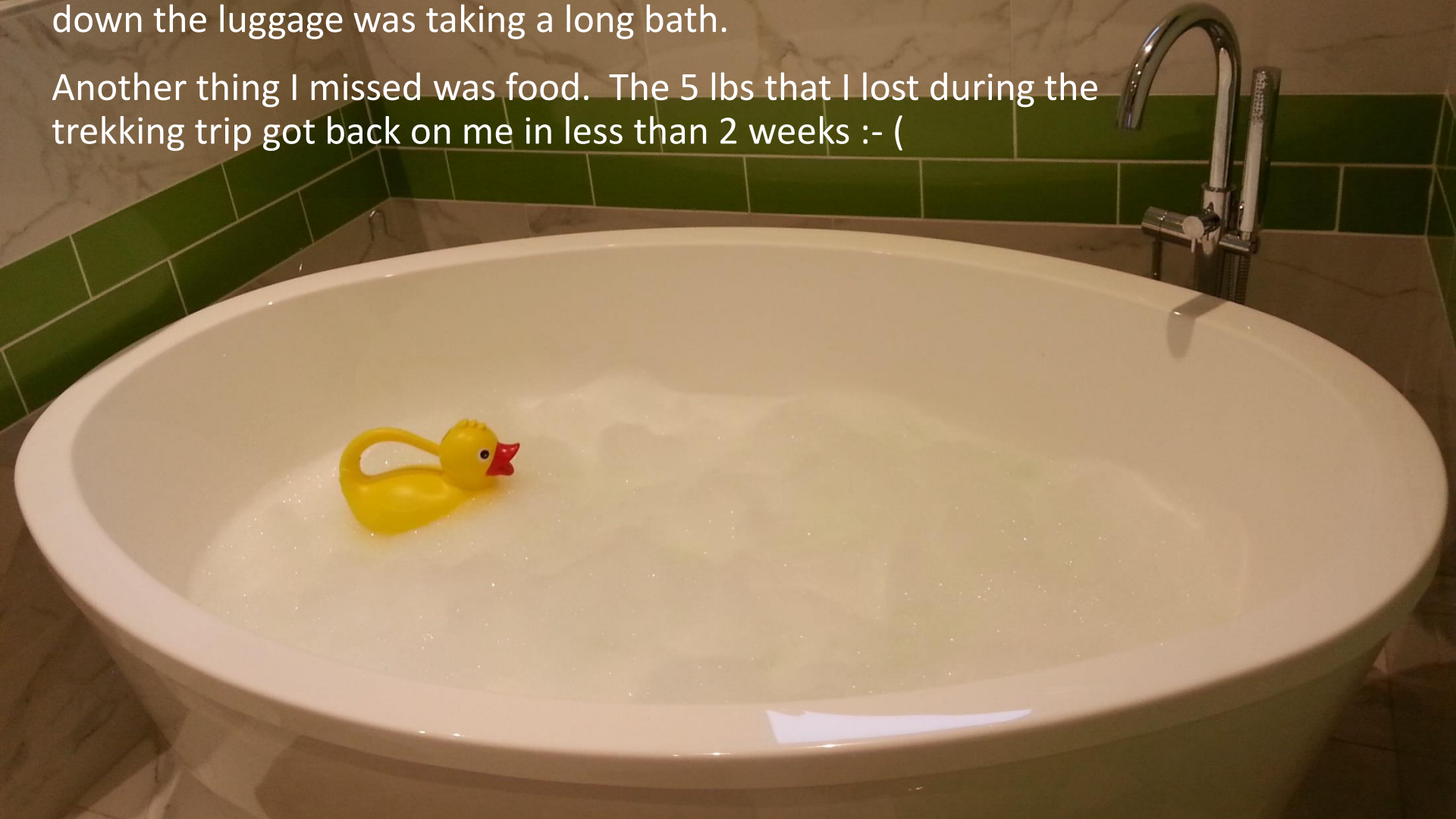
(I hope you are not discouraged by the hardship of the EBC trip. There are a variety of trips available in Nepal and some are not challenging at all)

- Trekking and hiking (*easy, intermediate and difficult*)
- Wildlife safari (*easy*)
- Cultural and historical tours (*easy*)
- White water rafting (*intermediate*)
- Photography tours (*easy and intermediate*)
- Mountain flight (*easy*)

Back to the comfort of modern civilization

After flying back to Toronto, I realized how much I missed the comfort and convenience of my daily life. The first thing I did after putting down the luggage was taking a long bath.

Another thing I missed was food. The 5 lbs that I lost during the trekking trip got back on me in less than 2 weeks :- (



For me,
it was only 14 days of hardship of mountain life.

But for the people living in the Himalayas,
it is their whole life.



We came across many porters carrying heavy loads





This is their life, a life with no hope to change



We also saw many young porters on the trail

At this age, kids in North America go to school and have fun at playgrounds or playing video games. But many kids in Nepal bear the burden of supporting their families.



But no matter what, they
all have cheerful spirits



This young porter is 15 year old.
He was delighted to take the
picture with me at my request.

They all have dreams!
But poverty deprives them of their dreams.



Without education,
they will not be able to break the cycle of poverty.



Generation by generation,
they work in the field or as porters,
with no hope to have a better life.

On such beautiful land,
poverty exists, everywhere!



Heaven needs help!

With a little help,
their lives could be changed,
and the lives of their next generations could be changed.



Project iBelieve

A project to change some Nepalese lives

Project Objectives:

- To help Nepalese children with their education
- To connect children in need with people who have loving hearts (sponsors)
- To build one-to-one relationship which allows sponsors to see direct impacts

Let's help one child at a time!

Project iBelieve

What is different from existing charitable projects

- 100% of the financial support from sponsors goes to the paired kids
- Sponsors maintain their desired levels of communication with the kids
- Sponsors receive regular updates from schools and kids
- Sponsors watch their supported kids learn and grow
 - What a great accomplishment!
 - Sponsors become a good role model for their own children (if any), or even better, involve them in the process and let them be the proud sponsors

Project iBelieve

Things on the to-do-list

Lots of work to do before the project takes off

- Understand Nepalese education system and relative regulations
- Build connections with local school, volunteers or non-for-profit organizations
- Identify Nepalese children who have the desire for education but need financial support, and create candidate profiles
- Promote *Project iBelieve* to a broad audience
- Build a sponsor pool

I believe:
Love has no boundary.

A small gift from us,
could have a huge impact on someone in Nepal!



I believe:
We have the power to raise them high!
We could change their lives!



Extend our hands!

Support Project iBelieve!

Be a sponsor,
join me in making this project happen,
or help me spread the word.

If you are interested in getting involved or receiving project updates,
please contact Kim Chen at project.ibelieve2016@gmail.com

or

like Project iBelieve at
<https://www.facebook.com/project.ibelieve2016>