Sherpa women

Sylvia Woodruff
SHERPA WOMEN

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Special Major

by
Sylvia Woodruff
May 1988
SHERPA WOMEN

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Sylvia Woodruff
May 1988

Approved by:

Jennifer Randisi, Chair, English
Frances Berdan, Anthropology
Gloria Cowan, Psychology
ABSTRACT

For years the only people with whom the Khumbu Sherpas of Nepal interacted were the Sherpas who live in the contiguous area of Solu, and the people in Tibet from where they had migrated hundreds of years before. During the 1950's Nepal was opened to foreigners, and the border between Tibet and Nepal was closed. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the cultural changes that the Sherpa women are experiencing as a result of these two events which changed the Sherpa economy from one based on trading to one based on tourism.

My research was conducted while living with the Sherpas during field trips in the fall of 1984 and the spring of 1986. My research methods were observation, participant observation and interviewing.

The Sherpa culture has changed dramatically in the past thirty years. While the men are gone for long periods of time, working for trekkers and expeditions, the women remain behind and are now responsible for most of the work done in the home and fields. What used to be a very balanced society, with people having different but equal responsibilities, is becoming skewed in favor of the men.

The major question now is who will influence the changes that will take place in the future. In the past the men and women would have had equal say in how the culture was to proceed. However, it appears that the women are losing their position as equals to the men in what used to be, but is no longer, an egalitarian culture.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is impossible to name all of the people who have helped and encourage me with this project. The list would have to include bare acquaintances as well as family, friends and professors, for everyone I have told about the Sherpas has been interested and enthusiastic. It would have been much more difficult to do it on my own. Thank you all for your support.

Of course this thesis wouldn't have been written without the Sherpas, people who have earned my unending admiration. They will not be able to read what I have written, but will enjoy seeing pictures of themselves in yet another book.

Finally, my special thanks to Larry, who has encouraged me to dream on a much larger scale than I thought possible.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Acknowledgements

List of Figures

List of Maps

Introduction

Background, Preparation and Field Research

Historical Background of the Sherpas

Changes in the Sherpa Culture from 1953 to the Present

Journal for September to November 1984

Journal for May 1986

Discussion and Conclusions

Appendix

Glossary

Bibliography
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The high peaks of the Khumbu Area</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The village of Kunde</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A group of women harvesting <em>riki</em></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Temba making 'potato mashey'</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A Sherpani and her daughter</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A Sherpani harvesting buckwheat</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>People working at the water reservoir</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Young women carrying <em>dokos</em> full of firewood</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ang Doule making Tibetan tea by her hearth</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Damu putting a saddle on a <em>zopkio</em></td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ang Doule and her friends</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lhakpa and Pemba with their four daughters and a helper</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Monks forming <em>tormas</em></td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The traditional hearth in a Phortse house</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The author at 18,000 feet in front of Mount Everest</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Two Sherpanis working for a trekking group</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mingma Temba's house being built</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Planting buckwheat with two <em>zopkio</em></td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Three generations of Sherpanis</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Doing sherpa dancing at the party</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF MAPS

1 Nepal 221
2 The Khumbu area of Nepal 222
INTRODUCTION

Figure 1  The high peaks of the Khumbu area

After having done extensive research on Sherpas in several libraries, including the one at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu and the Library of Congress in Washington D. C., I have concluded that, even though the Sherpa culture as a whole has been studied, Sherpa women have not been studied as a separate entity. Neither their activities nor the material culture with which they work has been systematically recorded. While it is possible to find some mention of Sherpanis activities in his books, Furer-Haimendorf's descriptions of Sherpa culture concentrated on male activities. One of the reasons given for this omission, by the head
librarian at Tribhuvan University was that, since the women are such an integral part of their culture, they have not been studied separately. I feel, however, that it is important to record as much of Sherpa women's traditional activities as can be viewed in Khumbu at the present time, especially since the culture is changing so rapidly. Otherwise, the culture of these women, who live and work in a very harsh environment, will be lost for all time. I became interested in these people because, despite the fact that their lives are hard, they seem to be happy and cheerful and have adapted very successfully to their environment. In addition, their traditional society was egalitarian and it will be interesting to see if it remains so after extended contact with male dominated western cultures.

In this thesis I first intend to discuss how I became interested in the Sherpa culture, how I prepared for my field trips, the problems I had in carrying out my research, and my research methods. Then I will present a brief history of the Sherpa people, as well as a description of the environment in which they live, and a discussion of the adaptations which have occurred in their culture since the 1950s as a result of the closing of the border between Nepal and Tibet and the advent of tourism in Khumbu. In the next section I will discuss the major changes that have taken place in the society since 1953. These will be in the areas of housing, settlement patterns, agriculture, pastoralism, trading, clothing, tourism, political organization,
and marriage and the family. Then, through the use of an edited version of the journal I kept while living with a Sherpa family in the village of Kunde, I will present what I learned about Sherpas during two field studies in the area from September to November of 1984 and in May of 1986. Finally, I will discuss the changes that have occurred and are occurring with the Sherpas in Khumbu, and draw some conclusions.

Because of contact with foreigners, a way of life that has existed for hundreds of years is coming to an end. One purpose of this thesis is to record the material culture and activities of the Sherpa women as they now exist, to compare them to the past, and to show how their lives are changing as a result of their recent exposure to Western cultures. Another purpose is to predict, on the basis of my observations, how the lives of these women will be changing in the future.

Most of the anthropological information available on Khumbu Sherpas, and the changes affecting them, is found in three books by Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, the 'Sherpa's anthropologist'. The Sherpas of Nepal: Buddhist Highlanders, published in 1964, was based on field studies done in 1953 and 1957. In it Furer-Haimendorf discusses many aspects of the Sherpa way of life which had remained relatively unchanged in the several hundred years since the Sherpa people migrated to Nepal from Tibet. In 1975 Furer-Haimendorf wrote a second book called Himalayan Traders which was based on research done in 1971. In the section
on the Sherpa society he wrote that "Twenty-one years have elapsed since I first visited Khumbu, but so great have been the changes that it seems doubtful whether the traditional economic and social order which I then observed could be reconstructed by a study of the Sherpas as they are today" (1975:3). In 1983 Furer-Haimendorf again returned to Khumbu and found that the changes that had occurred between 1957 and 1971 "were subsequently overshadowed by much greater upheavals during the years 1971 and 1983" (1984:x). The culture was indeed changing at a rapid rate.
BACKGROUND, PREPARATION, AND FIELD RESEARCH

In this section I will discuss how I became interested in the Sherpa culture, how I prepared to do a field study, the problems I encountered, and how and where I did my research.

I have been a hiker and backpacker all of my adult life. For many years I looked forward to seeing the mighty Himalayas and the Sherpas who live in their shadow. I was aware that tourism in the Khumbu area of Nepal, where Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain in the world, is located, was expanding rapidly. In the twelve month period between July 1969 and June 1970 there were 642 people trekking in Khumbu (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:65-6). In 1983 it was estimated that 5,000 trekkers a year were visiting the area, with 15,000 Nepalese employees from outside the area accompanying them (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:66). Since the number of Sherpas in Khumbu in 1982 was about 3,000, it is possible that in the areas where trekkers tend to congregate in large numbers the Sherpas are often in the minority (Hillary 1984:12). Because of this growth in tourism, the culture of the Sherpa people was changing dramatically and I had a desire to see it first hand before it became more westernized.

In November of 1982 my husband and I found ourselves on an airplane, along with several other members of a trekking group, going to Kathmandu and the Himalayan mountains. We eventually
flew into Lukla\textsuperscript{1}, a small village at 9,000 feet at the southern end of Khumbu. The definition of a trek as a long arduous journey is a very appropriate description of our three weeks in the mountains. But even though the environment was cold and harsh, the scenery was spectacular and the Sherpa people who inhabit the area, and who accompanied us on the trek, were cheerful, friendly, hard working and hard playing. They were a pleasure to be around.

As we were ending our trek, walking to lower and lower altitudes, and therefore warmer climates, most of the people in our group were excited about leaving the severe environment in which we had lived for three weeks. However, I was walking backward, still drawn to the mountains and the people, and feeling as though I was not yet ready to leave them. When I discussed this with one of the women in the group she said we had had the experience and must let go and move on to the next one. I knew, however, that I could not do that, for it was evident to me that I wanted to learn more about the Sherpas.

Upon my return home I read about the country of Nepal and Sherpas and I was impressed by the fact that I could not find any anthropological work done on Sherpanis. It did not seem that

\textsuperscript{1} Sir Edmund Hillary and the Himalayan Trust originally built this airport for flying in materials for building projects. Now it is also used to fly tourists into the area. Where it used to take at least fifteen days to trek to the area from Kathmandu, now one can fly there in less than an hour.
anyone had systematically recorded their activities, or the material culture with which they work.

In the fall of 1983 I returned to school to work on a special masters degree in Women's Studies. I was advised to write the required thesis on something in which I was already interested. I chose to study Sherpa women and started to plan a return trip to Khumbu for a field study.

I visited Nepal twice for field studies. The first time, I elected to go in the fall in order to observe the Sherpanis during the completion of their agricultural cycle. In preparation for my trip I did a survey of the available literature about Sherpas and also studied the research methods of observation, participant-observation, interviewing and the use of key informants, as these were the methods I intended to use to gather data.

I arrived in Kathmandu on September 5, 1984. My plan was to fly from there to Lukla. However, I found that was not possible because the planes do not fly during the summer monsoon months and normally resume their scheduled flights on October 1. Since there is only one other way to get to Khumbu, I hired a porter and porter/guide and trekked in. It was an arduous trip, but it allowed me to start to become acclimatized. On the morning of the eleventh day of the trek, with two months left to spend with the Sherpas, I arrived in Kunde, the village in which I had chosen to live.
In the Khumbu area there are about three thousand Sherpas living in nine main villages and several smaller ones. Even though I had not visited it on my previous trek, I chose the village of Kunde as my base because I thought it would afford me a good opportunity to observe a village in transition. Many of the Sherpas from the village are involved with the trekking business, but the number of foreign visitors is much smaller than in some of the other settlements because it is not on a main trekking route. Since there were no lodges or restaurants there at that time, most of the people in the village, while they were at home, were engaged in traditional Sherpa activities. Being close to Kunde Hospital, the first medical facility built for the Sherpas by the Himalayan Trust², was also important in my choice because it allowed me to observe how the Sherpas were reacting to having Western doctors available to them for the first time in their history. A third consideration was the fact that Kunde is a one to two hour walk from the market town of Namche Bazaar, which is also the center for tourism in the area, and as a result is experiencing the greatest cultural change.

All that I learned about the Sherpa culture and the activities of the Sherpa women I did through participant observation and interviewing. Most of my observations were done in the village of Kunde where I was living. But I also trekked to , and spent some

² The Himalayan Trust is an organization started by Sir Edmund Hillary to improve the lives of the Sherpa people.
time in, the villages of Khumjung, Phortse, Thami, Namche Bazaar and Thyangboche where I talked with and observed people.

Upon arriving in Kunde I was able to rent a private room, with board, and access to the house of the family with which I was living. I used the following strategy to gain acceptance by the women and do my research. I spent a lot of time building rapport with my family, talking and helping with chores whenever possible. I also took extended walks to familiarize myself with the village and to be seen by the Sherpas, and participated in activities with the village women. I observed a wide spectrum of village life in Kunde, and trekked to several other villages to make comparisons with the activities I saw there. I told only a few people about my study during my two month stay, so most people thought I was just another crazy memsahib\(^3\) who was living in their village for a few weeks. This plan seemed to work with the older women who smiled and talked with me and even included me in their risque joking, but the younger ones, initially, seldom responded to me and even seemed hostile. Eventually, however, they did learn to trust me and include me in their activities.

I encountered several problems during my field study. First, since I did not know the language, it was necessary for me to talk only with people who could communicate in English. Second, when

\(^3\) The "honorific title used by Nepalis for female foreigners". (Bezruchka 1985:330)
I prepared for my project I concentrated on learning about Sherpa culture to the detriment of my knowledge about anthropological methods and theory. Third, I was greatly affected by culture shock, but I mitigated this by electing to have a research period of at least two months. Fourth, my working conditions were very difficult. There is no heat or electricity, and the weather is cold and the days short. Privacy is in short supply, which makes concentration difficult, and moving about the area on foot takes a great deal of time and energy. To compensate, I worked in the daytime in the kitchen, which was slightly warmer than my room, whenever possible, and while on the field studies I made extensive use of a tape recorder for taking notes.

In May of 1986 I returned to Kunde for a month, in the pre­monsoon season, to observe the Sherpas during the planting phase of the agricultural cycle. My mode of operation was basically the same as the first time. I found that I was accepted more easily and quickly as people remembered me from my previous trip, and, as a result, I was able to communicate with more people and was invited into more Sherpa homes.

This thesis, then, is based on an extensive search of the available literature about Sherpas, a study of field methods, two field studies during different phases of the agricultural cycle, and an overwhelming interest in the Sherpa culture.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SHERPAS

Until 1951 the Rana government of Nepal carried out a policy of strict isolation, and as a result the country had very little contact with the rest of the world and was unaffected by the spread of industrialism and the effects of colonization. In the early 1950s the monarchy was returned to power, the country was opened to foreigners and reforms were introduced to try to bring Nepal into the twentieth century politically and economically.

Nepal is a country of great geographical and climatological contrasts. It has the greatest elevation change of any country in the world, going from sea level in the south to the top of the rugged snow covered Himalayan Mountains in the north, the highest of which is Mount Everest (Sagarmantha) at 29,028 feet (Hillary 1975:130), in only one hundred and fifty miles (Bezruchka 1982:15).

In the shadows of the highest mountains, along the deep gorges formed by the raging rivers, live the Sherpas. The origin of these people is lost in time, for they do not possess an interest in chronology and do not have a recorded history. However, it is generally accepted that they immigrated to Nepal from the Kams region of Eastern Tibet (Ortner 1978:10) because their language, physical appearance, religion, dress and way of life are very reminiscent of what can be found there. The word Sherpa means

---

4 The Rana government was the oligarchy which ruled Nepal from 1846 to 1951.
'easterner' (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:1). The time and reason for their migration are not so easily agreed upon by the people who have studied the matter. Sanggye Tenzing Lama, the first Sherpa to study and write about the history of his people, believes that the first Sherpas migrated to Nepal seven hundred years ago (Axelson 1977:11). Others believe that they came either 450 years ago (Ortner 1978:11) or as recently as 1640-1680 (Axelson 1977:19). Their reasons for leaving Tibet are equally unclear. The ones which have been suggested are that they were harassed by Mongol tribes, that they were religiously persecuted, or that there was some local change in the feudal social structure in which they lived (Ortner 1978:10).

There was a second influx of immigrants into the area 150 years ago from the part of Tibet that is adjacent to Khumbu, and those people were incorporated as Sherpas (Ortner 1978:10). However, the more recent immigrants from Tibet moving into the area have not been accepted as Sherpas and in some ways live outside the Sherpa society. The lack of acceptance of these people is not easy to understand given the fact that the Sherpas themselves claim to have descended from Tibetans. However, one possible explanation is that most Tibetans arriving in Khumbu during the third migration, before 1959 the year of the Chinese take over in Tibet, were from the lower strata of Tibetan society, and did menial labor that Sherpas wanted to avoid (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:31).
Even though the time of, and reason for, the first migration is disputed, there is agreement that the immigrants journeyed 1,250 miles from their home (Ortner 1978:10), across the 19,000 foot Nangpa La between Tibet and Nepal, and settled in the region around Mount Everest. They are now found throughout the Solu-Khumbu area. This district is comprised of three very different ecological zones. The Solu Valley is the furthest south at the lowest altitude and is therefore the most fertile. Extending between the Tingri District of Tibet and the confluence of the Dudh Kosi and Bhote Kosi is the most northerly Sherpa region of Khumbu (Ortner 1978:10). The main villages in this region are built on beds of old lakes in broad valleys or on sizable ledges between mountainsides and river gorges and are located at altitudes of 12,000 to 13,000 feet with grazing stations found as high as 16000 feet (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:2). The region is one of high mountains and steep valleys carved by the mighty rivers that carry the water draining off the perpetually snow covered peaks. There are great differences in altitudes between the mountains and the u-shaped river valleys that run through them, and the area for living and growing crops is very limited. Between Solu and Khumbu is Pharak which lies along the Dudh Kosi and is a transition zone between the other two areas.

5 The two main rivers in Khumbu.
Khumbu has remained very isolated. There are no roads into the area, and no wheeled vehicles because they would be useless on the types of trails and bridges that are found there. Even the use of pack animals is very limited for those reasons. Therefore, most of the goods that are brought in must be carried by porters from Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, a journey of ten to fourteen days with loads of sixty to seventy pounds.

The architecture found in the main villages in Khumbu has remained relatively constant and is influenced by the climate and environment. The main building material used for the walls is stone that is found in great abundance in the area. The walls are as much as 18 inches thick (Hillary 1964:63), which helps to keep the cold from penetrating into the living area, and are plastered with a mortar made of soft, clayey earth and then usually painted white (Sestini and Somiglial978:65). The roofs are made of stone slabs or wooden shingles. All of the window and door trims are made of wood, which is found in some of the lower river valleys, and which is skillfully worked with very primitive tools. The typical house is two storied. The bottom floor provides storage room for fodder for the winter feeding of the animals as well as food stuffs for the people, and also provides a place for the animals to go during the cold of winter. Upstairs is the living area for the family. It generally consists of one large room built of rough timbers with a gap between them and the outer walls in order to provide more insulation from the winter weather (Sestini

14
and Somigli 1978:22). It is in this room, with an open hearth at one end which is used for heating and cooking, that the entire family eats and sleeps. Such close living conditions tend to unite and consolidate the Sherpa family (Sestini and Somigli 1978:25). A long low bench is found along the front wall of the room where men of the house and male guests sit, while the women squat around the hearth. The individual houses have remained the centers for the social life of the village as the Sherpas have no public buildings.

The houses are not arranged in streets, nor do they face each other. Instead they are scattered about with their fronts, the only sides with windows, facing south-east in order to be exposed to the warmth of the sun (Sestini and Somigli 1978:22). A small courtyard where crops are sorted, dried in the sun and prepared for storage is found in the front of the house. This area is also used for storing wood to be used for cooking. Between the houses are fields that are surrounded by low stone walls and are used by the Sherpa families as kitchen gardens and also to grow staples such as potatoes and buckwheat.

Sherpa settlements can be put into three categories. There are the main villages, at 12,000 to 13,000 feet, which are inhabited most of the year and are composed of the most substantial houses where household goods and valuable possessions are kept. These permanent Sherpa villages can only be found when three criteria are met. There must be sufficient
land for the cultivation of crops, water that is reliable year round, and an adequate supply of firewood within a reasonable distance (Furer-Haimendorf 1975-10). (Namche Bazaar, the market town and trading center of the area, is the exception to this rule being built in a natural amphitheater with no room for growing crops.) Since most of Khumbu does not contain these three elements, Sherpa villages are found in a small portion of the district.

In addition to these houses many families have gunsa 6 where crops are grown and which are located at lower elevations and in sheltered parts of the valleys, and yersa 7 where animals are grazed and are in the higher altitudes up to 16,000 feet. These buildings are smaller and simpler and are constructed of the stone found in the areas where they are located, and have wooden frameworks and dirt floors. They do not contain the elaborate family possessions that are found in the main residences, and are inhabited only during specific times of the year. Sherpa families often had houses at all three elevations and moved between them in a regular yearly cycle.

---

6 Winter settlements
7 Summer settlements
Because of the environment of Khumbu, agriculture developed as a transhumant, seasonal shifting of labor from one place to another. The agricultural round started in March in the lower gunsa areas. Since Sherpas did not believe that the fields where the potatoes were to be planted could be properly prepared by plowing, they were dug up with iron hoes and planted by the women. The few fields that were to grow buckwheat were plowed by the men. The plowing was done with a light wooden plow with a narrow, iron-tipped share and was usually pulled by a team of four men (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:8). At the end of March to early May, when the snow was gone and the ground was no longer frozen, the fields in the main villages were prepared for planting. Since there are not too many crops that will grow at altitudes over 12,000 feet the plantings were limited to buckwheat, potatoes, turnips and leafy vegetables. The first chore was to fertilize the fields. Animal manure, which was mixed with leaves which had been thickly spread on the bottom floor of the house where the beasts were kept in the winter time, was piled into large baskets and carried to the fields by the women. Emptying the latrines the Sherpas used was done by paid laborers, usually recent immigrants from Tibet (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:15). The manure was spread on the ground and dug into the soil by the

---

8 The seasonal movement of livestock between mountain and lowland pastures, either under the care of herders or accompanied by the whole population of owners.
women with iron hoes. The potatoes were planted as soon as the ground had thawed in order to have the longest growing season before the heavy frosts of early autumn.

Plowing and sowing of buckwheat began when the potato planting was almost completed. Potatoes may be planted in the same fields year after year, but buckwheat must be alternated with potatoes. As long as the crops were rotated in this manner there was never a need for fallowing except for the time during the cold winters when the ground was frozen. At the completion of planting in the main villages, in the middle of May, the families who owned yersas planted potatoes in those high altitude plots. This work was usually done by the women (Furer-Haimendorf 1975:27).

During the summer monsoons the animal herds took most of the people's time. By the middle of August the potatoes in the gunsa-settlements were ready to be harvested and grass had to be cut and dried in the yersa-settlements to be used for animal fodder in the winter.

The potato harvest in the gunsa-settlements ended in the first week of September, and until then people were prohibited from entering the fields in the main villages. When the day arrived which marked the official beginning of the harvest, the fields were cleared and the potatoes dug up by the women using iron hoes. The work was hard and long, but the people remained in good spirits and enjoyed being with their friends again after the
relative isolation of the summer grazing areas (Furer-Haimendorf 1975:27). The buckwheat was harvested in the first days of October (Furer-Haimendorf 1975: 31). The land that had been planted in buckwheat was dug up and all available grass around the village was cut and dried for storage, and the agricultural cycle had come to an end. At this time the village was opened to the cattle who had been banished to the high pastures around the yersa-settlements during the growing season to avoid the risk of them breaking into the fields and damaging the crops.

The long treks involved with cultivating land in such diverse areas were a burden at times, but, because of the differences in elevation, fields were cultivated by the families over a longer period of time. This resulted in a very efficient use of labor available for agricultural work, less slack time and a high level of food production that provided the necessary foodstuffs for the inhabitants of the area (Furer-Haimendorf 1975:32). Also, if there was a crop failure because of drought or disease in one of the areas, satisfactory crops could be grown in the others. This was a very good adaptation for ensuring an adequate food supply.

Most of the work in the fields was done by teams of men or women, people trading labor with their neighbors. Growing children were also organized into teams for work in the fields, and wage labor was relied upon as well, especially during the period when crops were being harvested in the fall.
Agriculture was greatly affected when the potato was introduced into the area about one hundred years ago. It grows well in the sandy soil found in Khumbu and has become a staple of the people. This vegetable took agriculture out of the subsistence category and placed it in one of surpluses. Some of the extra potatoes are cooked and dried and traded in Tibet, but most are used to feed an expanding Sherpa population and the growing number of tourists in Khumbu. Also, specialists, especially in the religious area, can now be supported. This was not possible before the potato was known in Khumbu, so it is a very important crop for the Sherpa people (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:9).

Almost all Sherpas were involved in agriculture, and to supplement their incomes most also engaged in either trading or pastoralism. The bulk of the Sherpa diet came from the growing of crops, but yak, cattle and hybrids provided a source of protein. The herdsmen profited from the by-products of the animals, particularly in the production and sale of butter which was needed in very large quantities for domestic as well as ritual use (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:12). Other by-products included milk which was usually made into cheese, blood, the hair and fine wool of the animals (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:5) and dung which was used to fertilize the fields and dried to use as fuel for cooking and heating. The Sherpas also ate the flesh of the animals. In addition, the animals were used as pack animals in the movements between Tibet and Solu.
Herd owners not only aimed at maintaining and increasing their herds but also bred calves for sale in Tibet, Solu and Western Nepal (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:56). The Khumbu area is a favorable location for both yak and cattle, and the beasts that were produced by crossing these two animals were in demand because they combined all of the best qualities of the separate breeds of animals. As a result their breeding and sale became an important part of the economy.

A herd of yaks was also an important male status symbol and much prestige was placed on yak breeding and its place in ritual (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:11). Men who would not touch a hoe or sickle were willing to endure much hardship when they lived with their herds in the yersa-settlements.

The Sherpas who were pastoralists\(^9\) practiced transhumance, but they could not be considered to be nomadic\(^10\). Their movements did not involve roaming over wide areas, but rather consisted of traveling back and forth between permanent land holdings for set periods during a regular cycle every year. The timing and extent of their movements depended on the size of the herd (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:52). A small herd would spend five months in the main villages, five months at yersa-settlements,

---

\(^9\) Herdsmen

\(^10\) Roaming about from place to place aimlessly or without any fixed pattern of movement.
and the remaining two months at gunsas-settlements. However, larger herds spent only one month at the main village and the rest of the year at the yersas. Because of this a man often lived most of the year away from his main house which he visited briefly during this period.

Sherpas had always been the middlemen in the trade between Tibet and Solu and other low-lying areas of the country. As a result their standard of living was well above that of other hill people. They were able to acquire many luxury goods as well as keep in touch with "...the aesthetic and intellectual interests of their Tibetan neighbors." (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:60).

The Sherpas of Khumbu had a monopoly on the movement of goods from Namche Bazaar, the main Sherpa trading center, over the Nangpa La to Tibet. This was probably the result of the fact that the Sherpas who live at 12,000 feet were better able to endure the hardships associated with a trek, carrying heavy loads, over a 19,000 foot pass and extensive glaciers. (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:22). Also, for some unknown reason, there was a government order that forbade direct trade between the Solu Sherpas and Tibet except for the purchase of goods for their own use (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:60).

Some of the trading was done by big merchants who did not engage in farming, but instead depended on their business operations for their livelihood. However, most of the trading was done by small farmers who did not own herds. It was a means of
supplementing their incomes and acquiring the goods they needed for their families (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:64). Most of the farmers undertook two or three trading expeditions a year and in addition to getting goods for their own use expected to make a profit from each trip. Often a farmer would go to lower areas in Nepal to buy goods to trade for salt, wool and other items from Tibet. The trips took as little as thirteen days or as long as five weeks.

Another factor of vital importance to the Sherpa economy was spinning and weaving. The wool from Tibet was turned into textiles used by the local inhabitants and sold to people having no direct access to the raw materials (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:78).

In 1953 there was still very little contact between the Sherpas and the central government of Nepal (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:100). The village organization was the only one that existed. Officials were appointed by some of the leading men of the village and held office for a limited period of time (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:105). There were two Osho naua whose appointments coincided with the Osho which is a rite in early May that protects the village from evil spirits and surrounds the village with a magical boundary (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:105). They had the duty of enforcing the rules that pertained to the crops during the growing season, such as when the potato harvest would start and when the animals would be allowed to enter the village after their banishment. The position did not add to a
man's wealth but it did add a great deal to his status in the village (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:105).

In addition there were three or four shingo naua appointed whose duty it was to oversee the community's wood and timber resources (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:111). This was an important job and its effective execution was of vital importance to the long-term well-being of the village community, as tree growth is slow at these high elevations. Wood is needed for building, heating and cooking, and destruction of the forests would be a threat to the existence of many of the villages. In 1957 the system was working and the forests of Khumbu were still in good condition (Furer-Haimendorf 1975:98).

There were also two honorary offices, Chorumba and Chorpen. These men were the guardians of the village temple and were responsible for the organization of village festivals as well as the upkeep of the temple and the administration of temple funds (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:113).

The Sherpa village was almost autonomous because it had people to guard its fields and forests and to arrange for the organization of worship and festivals. It was an efficient system of public service by rotation (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:114). However, the state exercised the right to levy rent on the cultivated land (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:117). The rent was collected by one of the seven pembu and taken to the treasury in Okhaldhunga once a year. Being a pembu was a lifetime job and
involved many responsibilities such as exercising control over the extension of the cultivated land in the main villages, collecting fines for breaches in certain customs, and acting as senior kinsman for their clients when that service was needed. In short, a pembu was the patron of his clients. The office was filled through principles of heredity and personal ability (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:121).

Sherpa marriage patterns were very distinctive. A union took place in three phases, with the betrothed living with their respective families until they entered the third stage. The first stage, sodene, was entered into when the parents of the girl accepted a marriage proposal tendered by the father or a senior kinsman of the boy. The second stage, dem-chang, involved a more elaborate ceremony than sodene and was a conformation of the original agreement. Sexual relations could be entered into during the entire time and any children born after the second stage were considered legitimate. However, people had to enter the third stage, zendi, before they could establish their own independent household. People who had not yet entered the third stage of marriage could have sexual relations with other than their betrothed without suffering adverse consequences.

Traditionally the family lands were divided between the brothers in the family and as they got married they and their wives and children moved to that land and established their own households (Furer-Haimendorf 1964:39). Often, in the interest of
keeping the family land holdings and herds together, and to promote solidarity between brothers, polyandry was practiced with two brothers marrying one woman (Furer-Haimendorf 12964:68). Polygyny was also practiced, but not as often.

A bride was given a share of the family’s movable property as a dowry and it remained hers for the rest of her life. As a result the wedding established a woman as an independent person. Women and men were equal partners in marriage. In some cases they had the same activities, such as caring for the cattle and carrying loads on trading trips. At other times they had different roles or activities, but neither one was considered to have greater value than the other. Since the men were away for long periods of time the women had control over monetary issues and farm work. They were equal partners, not only in the confines of their home but also while in the public view. In general, Sherpa couples exhibited a relaxed and agreeable attitude toward each other. Even when there was a sexual lapse on the part of one or the other it was hardly ever the cause of a break up of the marriage.

Because of the independence that was so important to the society, it was rare for two Sherpa families to live together, except in the case of the youngest or only son who eventually inherited his parents’ house and was responsible for the burial rites of his parents. Another exception occurred in a family that
had only daughters. Then a son-in-law moved into the household and took the place of a youngest son.

This brief history of the Sherpa people describes the culture as it existed for many years. It was a model culture, the people having adapted very successfully to extreme conditions of terrain and weather.
CHANGES IN THE SHERPA CULTURE FROM 1953 TO THE PRESENT

Until 1953 the country of Nepal carried out a policy of strict isolation and so had very little contact with the rest of the world. The Sherpa people in the Khumbu area of Nepal were further isolated because of their remoteness from the rest of the country. Their only contacts, which occurred during trading expeditions, were with Tibet, from where the Sherpas had migrated years ago, and Solu which was also inhabited by Sherpas. In 1953 the country was opened to foreigners, and later in the decade the border between Tibet and Nepal was closed by the Chinese. As a result of these two occurrences contact with "... the aesthetic and intellectual interests of their Tibetan neighbors" (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:60), with whom they shared a culture was replaced with involvement, on a large scale, with tourists from western cultures with whom they had little in common. Because of this, many dramatic changes have taken place in the Sherpa culture in the ensuing years. In this section I would like to discuss the following areas of change: economy, government, education, personal values, agriculture, herding, clothing, housing, wood and cooking, marriage, family, and general happiness.

At the time of the Chinese takeover of Tibet the border between that country and Nepal was completely closed, but it has since been opened to some limited trade in a few commodities such as salt, grain and wool (Furer-Haimendorf 1977-73).
However, there have been bureaucratic regulations placed on the traders by both the Chinese and Nepalese governments (Furer-Haimendorf 1977-73). As a result, only goods needed by the Sherpas of Khumbu are imported with very little left over for sale in the lower areas of the country, and trading is no longer one of the mainstays of the Sherpa economy (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:76), but Sherpas are still inveterate traders. One interesting adaptation they have made in their trading relationships, and an example of their entrepreneurial abilities as well, is in the use of the airstrip at Lukla in Pharak. When there is a profit to be made from such an enterprise, the merchants charter aircraft to bring goods from Kathmandu and have them carried the rest of the way by porters to be sold at the weekly market in Namche Bazaar (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:77).

Political and economic reform have been goals of the central government during the past twenty five years, in order to try to unify the country's political system and create a common national consciousness. The panchayat system\textsuperscript{11}, instigated in 1963, caused the Sherpas to become part of the statewide network (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:94). Khumbu is now divided into two

\textsuperscript{11} The literal translation of panchayat is a committee of five. In reality it is an elected committee. The panchayats are organized on a four-tier structure: the village and town panchayat, the district panchayat, the zonal panchayat and the national panchayat. The village or town panchayats have limited taxing, administrative and judicial powers.
wards, each of which has a chairman and elected members who represent the citizens of the villages. While the names are different, the village panchayat acts in the same way that the *pembu* and *naua* did in the previous Sherpa system. This new form of government was supposed to give the people a voice in the government, but at present all important powers still reside in Kathmandu.

Women are becoming more involved in the government under the new system, and are more and more vocal during the village assemblies. One possible explanation for this is that the men are away a great deal of the time working on expeditions and treks, so the women, as frequently happens cross-culturally, are assuming more political responsibility (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:96).

The tourist and expedition business in Khumbu, which resulted from the opening of the country to foreigners, has had a tremendous effect on the Sherpa economy and society. Today Sherpas are employed as guides and camp servants in Khumbu as well as in other parts of Nepal. Many women and men work part of the year for mountaineers and trekkers and the number is still growing. In 1971 about 70% of the households in two of the major villages had some connection with the new source of wealth for the area (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:90). Since tourism in Khumbu is greater today it can be assumed that that number is now even larger. In addition to the foreign cash spent for labor, people who
travel in Khumbu buy supplies, accommodations and meals adding still more money to the economy. The Sherpas were always a hospitable people who took travelers into their homes when they needed food and shelter. Now their homes are becoming tea houses, restaurants and hotels, and many new facilities are being built specifically to accommodate tourists. Because trekking has become a large, impersonal business, the attitudes of Sherpas have changed. They are no longer the loyal, attentive servants they used to be and do not hesitate to charge as much for their services as they feel will be tolerated.

Both government and foreign intervention has provided major educational opportunities for the Sherpa children. Schools up to the tenth grade are now located in the area and families are paid if their children attend the upper grades. However, many girls leave school because they are needed to work at home. Also, the attraction of the money to be earned in the trekking business is so strong that many of the young boys and girls drop out of school to become porters. The resulting lack of education has contributed to the Sherpas not making any advances in gaining positions of power in government service.

There is some evidence that the new way has started to divide the villagers. Before tourism became a big business in the area the Sherpas were united in their attitudes (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:98). The Sherpas were not impressed before with men who gained their status outside the framework of their traditional
culture. If a man wanted to gain recognition his money had to be invested in things that had traditional value to the Sherpas, such as land or animals. A man's focus was to gain prestige, wealth and status within his village. This seems to be changing as more and more people become involved in the tourist business. Now many men look to tourism and Kathmandu to improve their economic positions rather than trying to acquire influence in local affairs. Sherpas are no longer united in their reactions to events that originate outside their community (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:98), and there is conflict between the older men, with their established positions of wealth and status, and the younger men who are anxious to take advantage of modern developments.

The tourist business is causing the wealth of the villages to shift (Furer-Haimendorf 1975:87) from previously dominant Sherpa families to men with more common backgrounds, and is one of the important sources of the changes that have taken place in the economy. In the past the older men were the ones with status and money because of their trading and herding activities, but trading has been virtually eliminated and more and more men are getting out of the herding business altogether, thus these areas are no longer important to the economy. At the present time the younger men are becoming more attracted to the money to be made in the tourist industry, but there is no place for the older men in the expanding trekking business. Before tourism a young man had to work for many years to earn enough money to buy land
or animals. Now he can hire out as a high altitude porter and earn enough in one season to buy some fields. So young men who were not wealthy are suddenly becoming economically important in the community. Because the potato is available to take up the slack in the food supply the men are able to get out of food producing activities, and become involved in the tourist business.

The closing of the border with Tibet and the mushrooming of the tourist business have had a small effect on Sherpa agriculture. Some of the gunsa fields are no longer planted, and during the harvest season in October, when trekking is approaching its peak for the year, men are noticeably absent from the fields, and even some wealthy women who did not do manual labor in the past are required to work in the fields with the people they hire. The hard work done by the women remains, but gone is the fun they used to have in the process (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:18).

Many changes have taken place in herding and its role in the Sherpa economy. The sale of cross-breds was a very important source of income for the pastoralists. However, the naks (female yaks) needed for breeding may no longer be imported from Tibet and the great demand for hybrids no longer exists. Cross-breds were sold in Solu, Tibet and Western Nepal but their sale in Tibet is now forbidden (Furer-Haimendorf 1977: 56). The former route through Tibet, used to take the animals to the western markets, has been closed so that outlet is also no longer available (Furer-
Haimendorf 1977:56). The Solu market remains but large profits are not being made there. However, cross-breeds are maintained by the herdsmen for the by-products they produce and also to be used for carrying loads in the tourist and expedition business. It is not clear at this time what will replace the yak as a male status symbol, but it is possible that it will involve monetary success in the tourist industry.

Another factor of vital importance to the Sherpa economy was spinning and weaving. The wool from Tibet was turned into textiles used by the local inhabitants and sold to people having no direct access to the raw materials (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:78). Since wool is no longer available in such large amounts as a result of the diminished trade with Tibet, this source of income has also been reduced and the dress of the men has changed dramatically (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:81). They now wear western style clothing. The younger men who work on expeditions may wear down jackets and imported trousers that they received as part of their wages. However, the older men have no access to such clothes, so they must wear cotton clothes obtained from other areas of Nepal or India that are not suited to the cold climates found in Khumbu (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:81).

The dress of the women has not been altered as dramatically. The wool that is still available is used to make their clothing, but since it is in short supply they must often settle for heavy cotton
cloth to make their angis\textsuperscript{12} (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:81). Even though the fabric is different the style remains traditional.

There have been several changes to the typical Sherpa house. Metal roofs are being used by those affluent enough to afford them, and window glass is replacing the paper that once covered Sherpa windows and helps keep the houses warmer and dry. The open fireplaces that were used for heating as well as cooking are being replaced by enclosed stoves, and new houses often have a kitchen separated off from the great room.

The additional fuel required for cooking, to support the trekking and expedition business and an increasing Sherpa population, has devastated the forests in the area. The forest guards (\textit{shingo-naua}) had effectively controlled forest usage for many years. However, now that the public forests have been declared state forests, the villagers no longer control them. Since permits to fell trees for building must be obtained at a town in Solu that is at least a four day walk away the people usually circumvent the system and cut trees as they wish (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:97). As a result entire hillsides that were densely forested are now bare and the gathering of firewood has become a problem (Furer-Haimendorf 1977:97). A tried and effective system of preservation that had been in effect for many years has been replaced by bureaucratic machinery that has not been successful. To try to preserve the forests that are left it

\textsuperscript{12} Long shift-like dress.
has been made illegal for anyone other than Nepalese to burn wood for cooking or heat. This is an important law as trekkers and climbers have used much of this valuable resource in the past, but unfortunately it is not enforced and the practice continues.

The Sherpas are aware of what is happening to their forests but can do nothing to stop their destruction since they are now under the control of the central government. Recently tree farms have been started in the area, with the help of the government of New Zealand, to grow trees to replant the areas that have been destroyed.

The shortage of firewood has changed the style of the fireplaces used for the cooking of meals from an open to a closed one and has also prevented people from burning wood for warmth. Fires are used for cooking and then extinguished. Some Sherpa households have started to use kerosene stoves for cooking, and electricity is also being experimented with. In 1984 a generator on the spring in Namche Bazaar was put into operation and for the first time electricity, on a very limited basis, was available to the people of the village. It is hoped that the people will switch from wood fires to electric appliances and in that way take some of the pressure off the remaining forests.

In general the standard of living has improved. More material goods may be found in most households, and Sherpa diets have benefited from exposure to Western customs and the increase in the amount of money available for the purchase of food stuffs.
The marriage patterns have remained the same, in general. However there has been one important shift. Polyandry has become rare as the result of Sherpas being in contact with cultures that do not approve of that type of marital arrangement, but polygyny has become more common with many Sherpas who work in the tourist industry in Kathmandu having a wife in Khumbu and another, often younger, wife in the capital city (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:44).

Family life has been greatly affected for several reasons. First, the men are gone from their villages for long periods of time during the year. Second, some of the strongest and bravest of the young men who work as high altitude porters for the expeditions are killed on the mountains. And third, there is evidence that foreign women have taken many Sherpa men away from their families (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:76). This does not seem to be happening with Sherpanis and western men.

It also appears that there is a declining birth rate in the area, especially among young women who are not married, and that women are having fewer children than they had before. This is probably the result of men and women being gone from home for extended periods of time, and also the fact that, since children are no longer as economically important as they once were, some men and women are practicing birth control.

The women who are left in Khumbu and are now largely responsible for taking care of the children and all of the
agricultural work are "...largely the losers, being deprived of security, [and the] companionship of their husbands and [they also experience] a diminished social position" (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:81). This has lead to a new imbalance between the sexes and the break-up of many families. Tourism has caused a problem for the young unmarried women as well who find that the eligible men are gone most of the year doing trekking work.

In 1984 Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, in his book The Sherpas Transformed, stated, "In writing about the present situation in Khumbu, I cannot veil the feeling of disappointment and sadness to see this seemingly ideal society and life-style transformed by the impact of outside forces which disrupted the delicately balanced social fabric and undermined the traditional ideology that had dominated Sherpa thinking and conduct for countless generations. Happiness is a phenomenon difficult to measure, but my subjective impression is that the Sherpas I knew in the 1950s were happier than they and their descendants are in the 1980s" (1984-xi). So it appears that, despite the fact that economically the Sherpas are better off than they were before they became involved with tourism, what used to be a seemingly idyllic society has been irreparably damaged. The young men who are most involved with tourism seem to be in the forefront of the change with the women and older people trying to maintain the traditional values of the culture (Furer-Haimendorf 1984:xii).
In the fall of 1984 I spent two months living with the Sherpas. It was the harvest season which occurs before the first snow storms and bitter cold of the winter. Because my methods of studying the Sherpas during this period were qualitative, I have chosen to present my findings in journal form. In this way it is possible for me, the ethnographer, to document daily life and to establish patterns, generalizations and differences.

Figure 2 The village of Kunde

September 23, 1984
5 p.m., Kunde, 12,600 feet
We\textsuperscript{13} arrived in Kunde at about 3 p.m. and I am still in a daze from the events that have occurred since then. I went to the Hospital, introduced myself to the doctor, and asked if she knew of a room in the village that I might rent. She suggested I talk to Ang Doule because Sir Edmund Hillary\textsuperscript{14} has a room attached to her house and Dr. Joan\textsuperscript{15} was fairly sure it was vacant. After receiving directions on how to find Ang Doule's house we walked in the maze of curving paths through the village, and found the house with the red tin roof\textsuperscript{16}. Ang Nuru called to Ang Doule in Sherpa from outside the two story house and she answered and then came down stairs. She is a small person, about 4'10", with very black hair and what seems to be a keen sense of humor. Ang Nuru explained what I wanted and, after some conversation, she showed us the room attached to the end of her house. I took one look at it and pronounced it perfect for my needs and asked if it

\textsuperscript{13} I trekked into Khumbu with Ang Nuru my Sherpa porter/guide and Rampato, my Sherpa porter.

\textsuperscript{14} Sir Edmund Hillary was the first man to climb Mount Everest. Since his climb he has devoted a great deal of his time and energy to helping improve the lot of the Sherpa people.

\textsuperscript{15} Joan was substituting for the regular doctors in the Sherpa hospital in Khunde while they were on vacation.

\textsuperscript{16} Tin roofs are starting to be used, by those who can afford them, in place of the traditional wooden slat roofs. They offer much greater protection from the elements and do not blow off during stormy weather.
was available and if so how much she wanted for rent. She said I could rent it and we could decide on the price later, but I thought it best to decide that first. The room has three beds in it, but I told her I wanted to rent it all, so she said 45r\(^{17}\) a day including all of my meals and access to the main house. I agreed and directed Ang Nuru and Rampato to deposit my equipment in the room, but Ang Doule's son Temba was vigorously sweeping it so we waited until the dust had settled before moving in. Temba doesn't seem to be able to talk\(^{18}\), but is very friendly and was smiling broadly all of the time he was tidying up for me. When he finished, my equipment was deposited in the room and I paid Ang Nuru and Rampato and they started on their return trek to Kathmandu. When I gave them their money, adding the same healthy tip to each payment, Ang Nuru was as inscrutable as ever, but Rampato was delighted. It may not have been correct to tip them both the same amount, but I respected each for what he did

---

\(^{17}\) About $2.50

\(^{18}\) Temba is a cretin and can neither hear nor talk. The condition was caused in utero by his mother's iodine poor diet. Cretinism, and goiters, are becoming less common in Khumbu because iodine rich salt from India has now replaced the iodine poor salt from Tibet which was used exclusively in the past.
and felt they deserved the same treatment. Ang Doule asked me into the kitchen for some *chia*^20^, but before I went I took a moment to catch my breath and try to familiarize myself with this place where I was going to spend at least part of the next two months.

I finally went into the house, stepped over the high threshold, and walked through the dark room where the animals are kept to the steep stairs in the back corner. I waited a few minutes for my eyes to adjust to the dark before attempting to climb the stairs. When I finally reached the top I found myself just outside the Dutch Door leading to the kitchen^21^. I walked into the room which is panelled in very dark, smoke stained wood and sat on a bench under the window and next to the stove^22^. The kitchen is a smallish room with the fireplace standing in one corner, a double bed in another, glass fronted cabinets, open shelves, and benches covered with Tibetan carpets. The fireplace is not a traditional

19 Ang Nuru must indeed have been irritated by what I did, because none of the letters I asked him to post in Kathmandu arrived at their destinations!

20 Tea

21 The separate kitchen is a new innovation. A traditional Sherpa house consists of one large room with the kitchen at one end and the living area at the other.

22 Traditional open hearth fireplaces are being replaced by enclosed stoves of plastered stone, often with metal tops.
open hearth but rather an enclosed firebox made of stone plastered over with clay with one hole for cooking and a metal plate covering the top. I was happy to see that this stove had a pipe for the smoke to escape to the outside. In a traditional house the smoke goes into the room and escapes through a hole in the roof. Sitting in one of those Sherpa houses can be very uncomfortable. There is one small window next to the fireplace, which is almost opaque because of the grease and dirt on it, so the room is quite dark.

Ang Doule speaks what I have started calling "expedition English." Between that and a lot of gestures we were able to communicate fairly well. Next to Ang Doule's small kitchen is the large room where most of the family and guests sleep, and at the far end of that room there is a private gompa or Buddhist chapel. Many of the wealthy households in Khumbu, such as this one, have these rooms attached to their houses. Ang Doule showed me hers, and it is in a state of disarray, with a great deal of trekking and expedition equipment stored there.

September 24, 1984
9 a.m.

23 Occasionally, in the weeks that followed, I would realize that a word that Ang Doule used, that I thought was a Sherpa or Nepali word, was in fact an English word that she was pronouncing in a strange way. An example of this is cugily for quickly.
I heard a very quiet knock this morning at 6:30 a.m. I quickly got out of my sleeping bag and opened the door to find Ang Doule standing there with a cup of chia for me. She apologized for awakening me, and said tomorrow she would wait until she saw that I was up. On her way out she took a canvas bag from the room, which contained green vegetables that she is putting in the sun to dry for use during the winter.

September 26, 1984
1 p.m.

My typewriter just fell apart. I think Sherpas are lucky not to have typewriters and other modern 'things' in their lives to break at the worst possible time.

Ang Doule was really worried that I wouldn't like what she was fixing for lunch today. She said if I didn't like it she would be "noodles cooking"24. She put a small amount of shakpa25 in a bowl and handed it to me. I tasted it and said honestly that it was delicious. She laughed and said "You Sherpa." I had to agree.

Making tea is quite a process. First water is heated to boiling in a sauce pan and then the tea leaves are put in. Then

24 In Nepali the verb is placed at the end of the sentence, so Sherpas put it there when they speak English.

25 Stew
sugar and milk are put in a spun aluminum pitcher, and the tea is also poured in through a strainer. When it is all together a tea stirrer is used to blend the three ingredients, and the tea is placed on the stove to heat some more.

I told Ang Doule that I had seen her on television in America and recognized her the first day we met. I explained that National Geographic had done a show to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Bara Sahib’s successful climb of Mount Everest and, since she and her family are such an important part of the time he spends in Khumbu, they were also an important part of the program. She seemed very pleased.

Last night after dinner Temba went into the gompa to get a carved brass bowl which he brought to the kitchen. He uses it to hold live coals from the fireplace for his morning and evening puja in the gompa. Sometimes Ang Doule helps him exchange the live coals for the dead ones in the bowl. He then carries the

---

26 Fresh milk is preferred, but the Sherpas now use powdered milk when the fresh is not available.

27 A tea stirrer is a wooden or plastic dowel with a star shaped end. The doweling is spun by placing it between ones palms and rubbing them together.

28 The Sherpa name for Sir Edmund Hillary. It is an honorific title that has been given to a man who is very important to the Sherpas.

29 Prayer or prayer service
bowl back into the gompa and does his puja. He twirls the big prayer wheel that sounds each rotation with an attached bell, chants, blows a conch shell and beats on a double membrane drum. Often I can hear him through the wall in my room.

September 26, 1984
4 p.m.

I was sitting outside my room when a young woman arrived in the yard driving three zopkio\(^{30}\). Some of the wealthy people here take poor young people into their homes to be their servants and join the family. This young women, Damu, is a Solu Sherpa who has lived with Ang Doule for five years. She had spent the summer months with the animals at Ang Doule's yersa\(^{31}\) above Thyangboche\(^{32}\) and was just bringing them back down to the lower elevation for the winter. She is nineteen and is very competent and has a great deal of confidence and energy. The way she works with the animals is very impressive.

Now that the animals are back new chores have been added to Ang Doule's days. She must now milk them morning and night and make butter to be consumed by the family and used in religious ritual.

---

\(^{30}\) A cross between a yak and a cow.

\(^{31}\) Summer grazing pasture.

\(^{32}\) Also spelled Tengboche.
September 27, 1984
8 p.m.

Ang Doule harvested one of the riki fields today. She owns many fields and so hires people, mostly women, to help her with the riki harvest. Today she got out of her bed, which is in the kitchen, at 6 a.m. (She told me she is lazy and sleeps late!) The room was very cold so her first chore was to start a fire in the stove. Last night, after the evening meal was cooked, the fire was extinguished and a juniper bough was placed on the metal

---

Potato
plate that forms the top of the stove. The residual heat of the stove dried it out so that when a match was put to it this morning it crackled to life almost immediately. Soon a fire was burning and a kettle of water for chia was on the burner. Ang Doule then had a chance to visit the chaarpji in front of the main dwelling and comb and braid her hair. When the water was boiling she made the chia, adding sugar and yak milk, and poured it into chipped enamel mugs. That done she picked up a wooden bucket and hurried to a grass field on the other side of the village, about a five minute walk, to milk the animals and turn them out to graze. She returned with the bucket almost full of milk that looked rich and creamy. Then she again busied herself at the stove, building up the fire and making a hot cereal, called sour porridge because it is heavily laced with a dry cheese that has a very strong flavor, in a big kettle on the stove. At eight some of the village women who were to help Ang Doule harvest her field started to come into the kitchen. Sherpas are not quiet people. Soon the room was full of women, dressed in their traditional angis and untraditional tennis shoes, talking, joking and laughing in loud voices. Some had their children with them, infants in baskets and toddlers dressed in western clothes. Ang Doule served the porridge in Chinese style soup bowls from the large pan which had been placed on the floor. Most kitchen chores are
done on the floor with the cooks kneeling or sitting on their haunches. The women noisily drank two servings from the bowls and then enthusiastically licked them clean, stacked them on the floor next to the dish washing pan and left the kitchen for the field they were going to harvest.

*Riki* are a staple in the Sherpa diet. They are prepared in many different ways, from boiled in their skins to made into thick pancakes. The women are responsible for the *riki* harvest and work in groups, the size of which varies with the size of the field being harvested. They are paid either in services or money. Ang Doule said she gives them 12-15r\(^{35}\) per day, plus meals, depending on the size of the field and the work they are doing. In addition male porters, usually recent immigrants from Tibet, are hired to carry the *dokos*\(^{36}\) full of *riki* from the fields to the house where they are stored. As soon as breakfast was over the workers went out into the field and started to dig the *riki* with *kodaalos*\(^{37}\). Each swing took a bite of earth about a foot deep, uncovering *riki* of various sizes which were raised to the surface of the ground with the hoe. In this manner, in a line across the field, the earth was dug up and the *riki* uncovered. Some of the women were assigned the job of picking up the vegetables and sorting out the very small

---

\(^{35}\)$ .75 or less

\(^{36}\) Carrying baskets

\(^{37}\) Iron hoes
ones which were to be used for animal feed. When the dokos were full they were carried to the house, usually by the male porters but sometimes by the women, and emptied into storage rooms on the ground floor of the house to dry for several days.

Ang Doule stayed behind in the kitchen, cleaned the dishes and started to cook the next meal. The dish washing is normally done by her helpers, but since they were both busy with other activities, Ang Doule did it herself.

Digging riki is hard work and the women do it without a break except for meals. About 10 a.m. Ang Doule and Temba carried lunch to the field. Riki in one form or another are almost always included in a meal and today was no exception. Ang Doule had fixed a spicy shakpa of riki, cabbage and a bit of water buffalo meat. Although Sherpas, as Buddhists, are not allowed to kill they very much enjoy eating meat. The women washed their hands with the water that Ang Doule had taken to them in plastic containers. Large amounts of bhaat were piled onto enamel soup plates and the shakpa was poured over it. The servings were enormous. Ang Doule asked me if I wanted to wash my hands and then handed me the first plate since I, the memsahib, am still considered to be an honored guest. There were no eating utensils, and, since all eyes were on me, I started to eat with my hands as I have seen the Sherpas do. I was delighted to discover that it is a

---

38 Rice
very efficient way to eat. Most women had second helpings, but it was all I could do to finish my first. A woman with a toddler chewed some food and fed it to the girl mouth to mouth as birds do.

After they had finished eating, and licked their bowls clean, the women washed their hands and returned to digging, sorting and carrying *rik*i. Ang Doule and Temba carried the remains of lunch back to the house and washed the dishes. The leftovers were saved for the animals. After this chore was finished Ang Doule returned to the field, ostensibly to do a bit of digging and oversee the work. However, the women need no supervision for they have been doing this all of their lives and they know what is expected, and since she is one of the wealthiest Sherpanis in the area, Ang Doule does not have to engage in this type of manual labor. She was in the field mainly to listen to the gossip that was being exchanged and to socialize.

After an hour or two Ang Doule again returned to the house, re-lit the fire and started to boil *rik*i in a huge spun aluminum pan. The unscrubbed vegetables were boiled in their skins and when they were cooked they were drained and carried out to the field along with a sauce made of yogurt, garlic and *khursaan* and thermos bottles full of *chia*. Again the women stopped work and sat in a circle around the pot and talked and ate the boiled

---

39 Hot peppers
iki. Since the vegetables were not cleaned before boiling, and were grown in animal manure and night soil, the skins were peeled off. This was done in an ingenious way. The women first squeezed the riki all over, and then with one hand they gripped them in such a way that the potatoes literally popped out of their skins. While taking their break they engaged in bawdy sexual conversation and joking. I was able to tell this even though I do not speak Sherpa because of some of the gestures they were making with the riki. I was included in the joking and so felt that they were getting used to my presence and beginning to accept me.

After the break Ang Doule again returned to her kitchen to clean up and the digging and carrying continued until about 5 o'clock at which time the women went to their own homes to take care of their families. By this time it was getting dark and cold but Ang Doule had to milk the animals once again. When she returned from the field it was time to prepare the evening meal. The fire was stirred up again and a small kerosene lamp was lit in the dark kitchen. I was so uncomfortably cold, even though I was wearing many layers of clothing, that I closed the bottom half of the door that leads from the kitchen to the rest of the house. It helped slightly to contain the heat in the kitchen, but the next person to come in left it open again. Sherpas don't seem to notice the cold as much as I do. Since they live with it all year I guess that shouldn't be too surprising. Outside there was a
magnificent sunset with alpenglow on Kangtega and Tamserku, the 22,000 ft. mountains across the valley. I scrubbed at the greasy window pane to clean off an area through which I could look. When I pulled Ang Doule to the window to look at the mountains she humored me by looking at them for a second and then went on about her work. I wondered, if this was my home, if I could take this scenery for granted as she does, indeed as all of the Sherpas seem to do.

For dinner Ang Doule, with Temba's help, fixed riki cour. Raw, peeled riki were grated on a piece of metal that had been perforated many times with a nail to make it rough. Ang Doule has a grater on one of the shelves in her kitchen, but seems to prefer the homemade one. The resulting, almost liquified, vegetables turned brown very quickly. Some of the liquid was drained off and then some tsampa and salt were mixed in. Then a black, flat, cast iron plate was put on the fire, and when it was very hot a spoonful of the mixture was put on it and spread so that it covered the entire plate. When it was partially cooked and brown, Ang Doule lifted an edge of the pancake with a metal spatula just enough to pick it up with her hands and turned it over to cook the other side. The pancakes are about 10 inches across and 1/4 inch thick and very heavy. Sometimes they are

---

40 Potato pancakes
41 Buckwheat flour
not cooked through. Ang Doule made mine thinner since I cannot eat an entire large one, but Temba, who is smaller than I am, ate two of the big ones. A scoop of yak butter was put on the pancake and a sauce much like the one served with the *riki* in the afternoon was also available. The *riki cour* were put on plates, but we all ate them with our hands which was much easier than using a knife and fork, since we were eating off our laps. Ang Doule, as usual, waited until the rest of the family had finished eating before fixing her own dinner.

After dinner we drank *chia* and the dishes were washed and left to drain in a plastic basket. While we were drinking our *chia* I got out some hard candy\(^{42}\) and passed it around to the family. We all enjoyed the treat, especially Ang Doule who has a sweet tooth but justifies it by saying that sucking on the candy helps her ulcer feel better. Many Sherpas have ulcers because of the spicy food they eat. Ang Doule goes to the hospital to have small problems taken care of but I can't convince her to talk to the doctor about her ulcer.

When there was no more cooking to be done, the fire was extinguished and it began to get colder in the room. Ang Doule, having completed her work for the day, took off her *angi* and

\(^{42}\) Dr Joan gets very upset with people who give the Sherpas candy, because they do not practice dental hygiene nor do they have dental care.
crawled into bed saying it was very cold. I came down to my room which was even colder.

September 28, 1984
5:30 p.m.

I have some little bugs on me. They are almost microscopic, but I can feel them crawling at night. I saw one last night and it was no bigger than a pencil dot and much too small for fleas. I wonder what they are. I was sitting in the kitchen wiggling and scratching and wondering why I was the only one in the family who seemed to be bothered by them. Either they don't have them, which isn't very likely, or they are used to having them. At least they only seem to bother me at night.

Sherpas utilize everything. The kerosene lantern I have in my room is a glass jar filled with kerosene, with a slot cut in the metal top through which a paper wick is thrust. It works quite well, except that the paper burns very dirty and a great deal of soot gets into the air and settles on everything in the room. I hope to find a proper wick for the lantern in Namche when I go to market.

My respect for the Sherpanis grows every day. They are strong, competent, independent, and seemingly happy. I enjoy just sitting in the room with them watching their faces. I am even beginning to recognize some of them by their voices before I actually see them.
September 29, 1984
12 noon

I went upstairs for a second cup of chia and Ang Doule was cooking mashed riki, or 'potato mashey' as she calls it, in a wok. First she boils and peels riki. Then Temba mashes them with a large stone with ridges and a flat rolling pin until they get rubbery and stick together. He really puts a lot of energy into the process, works them hard, and twists the rolling pin from one side to the other so that the potato which is stuck to it is folded over and consolidated and thus doesn't get too spread out. He makes four or five loaves of riki that are about 5"x5"x3", and
places them on a basket or tray. Often he does this early in the morning and the tray is set on a shelf until it is time to finish cooking the meal. At mealtime a wok is put on the fire and a small amount of water and one to one and a half cups of tsampa, salt and the riki are put in. The lumps of riki are broken up with a large metal spatula which has a flat round end on it. Some of the water is poured into a saucepan as a thickener for the sauce or gravy that is being made. The other ingredients in the gravy vary from house to house and also from day to day, but they generally contain khursaani, onion, salt and garlic that have been mashed with a mortal and pestle. The gravy is brown, but not extremely thick. When the riki are warm and the water is almost boiling, Ang Doule takes a wooden paddle, beats the riki, mixes them in with the water and works it all back and forth until it is smooth. Then she tips the wok so the edge is level with the top of the stove and she draws the riki up so it almost, but not quite, spills over the side and then moves it back to the center of the wok. When the riki are served the gravy is poured over them. It is a simple but tasty dish.

Today she made a new kind of sauce and said I should taste it because I probably wouldn't like it. I put my hand out, she poured some sauce into it, and I tasted it as I had seen her do. It was too hot and spicy, so we also took the sauce that had been left over yesterday. Even though it was 9:20 a.m. it was lunch time for the women who had been working in the riki field since 8 a.m.
Temba put the food and chipped white enamel plates in a doko and they carried that and some white plastic containers filled with water, to the field where the women were working. There were three women in field. One looked very old, another was in her early twenties, and the third was probably in her mid twenties and had her three year old girl with her. The little girl was very dirty, as are all of the children, and was wearing western style pants and rubber boots that were not buckled. Most of the children dress in this fashion. The boots work well in the muddy fields. Ang Doule sat like a matriarch, back straight and tall, with her legs crossed tailor fashion. I said hello, and sat on the ground. Before she started serving she asked if I wanted to wash my hands and I thought "Oh oh, I am in trouble again." I told her I had already done that, so she handed me a plate of 'potato mashey' with my sauce. The butter in it had coagulated because it was so cold out. I proceeded to eat it with my hand, dipping bits of the riki in the sauce. Everyone licked their plates clean when finished. This is a very efficient way to clean the plates and makes it easier to stack and wash them. The young woman with the child washed my plate and stacked it with the others. While we were eating the little girl had picked up a kodaalo and was mimicking her mother digging riki. Soon they all stood up and went back to work and I went for a walk. In order to leave the field I had to climb over a rock wall. It was only two feet high on one side, but, because the fields are on a slope that has been
terraced, five feet high on the other. While trying to find footholds on the other side I knocked down 8 or 10 rocks. All of the women were watching me, and were polite enough to not laugh at my clumsiness.

7 p.m.

Ang Doule looks tired tonight. Yesterday she was lying down on her bed when I left the kitchen after lunch, but she was soon working outside again. She is hobbling a bit now. She told me she usually has a house boy to help with the chores but that he is with Mingma Tsering on Himalayan Trust business and he will be on vacation after that. I thought she was tired because of the busy time of the year, but it seems that she is also not used to working this hard anymore. Damu does a lot of the heavy work for Ang Doule, and the house seems to be cleaner and tidier since she has returned from the yersa with the animals, but Ang Doule is ultimately responsible for the work that must be done in the house and in the fields.

This afternoon, on my walk to the Everest View Hotel I saw a young woman wearing jeans. Most of the women wear pants under their angis, but this is the first one I have seen without an

---

43 Ang Doule's husband

44 A tourist hotel built on one of the hills close to the village of Khumjung.
angi. By way of contrast, the dress of the children and young girls has been very westernized, with them wearing pants and western style skirts and dresses. The men also wear western clothes most of the time, but they wear their traditional dress on special occasions such as religious festivals and weddings.

Turnips are being harvested now, and the Sherpas are getting them ready for storage. The young woman in jeans was laying the turnips on her leg and cutting the greens off with a *khukuri*\(^{45}\). She then tossed the turnip into a *doko* and left the greens on the ground. They would be dried and stored as fodder for the animals in the winter when the snow covers the ground.

I took a walk with Dr. Joan this afternoon. The yaks and *zopkio* are being brought down for the winter from the high summer pastures, so walking around here is getting exciting. Dr. Joan and I were laughing about how we try to make Sherpa noises to get them off the trails so we can pass safely. *Shooey!* They appear to be docile, but their horns are very long and sharp and the paths in the village are not very wide. I have been nervous about the animals and asked her if they were dangerous. She informed me that she had not treated a person who had been gored, but that is not to say it never happens. Before the Kunde Hospital was built in 1966 the Sherpas had not been exposed to western style doctors and medicine, so even though they are using

\(^{45}\) A large, heavy knife
the hospital more and more, they still do not take all of their medical problems to the western doctors.

Joan said many of the women are concerned about family size and birth control. They don't like the pill because it is too much trouble, and a few use IUDs, but it is difficult to get them to go in periodically to have them checked. Most of the women who practice birth control use Depro Provera which is a shot given
every three months. It is a synthetic hormone that is not approved for contraceptive use in many western countries, including the United States, but is very effective and seems to have a lot of attributes which make it a viable option in developing countries. She said the women are very good about keeping track of the days and going to the hospital when it is time for the next shot. If they wait too long they are not given the shot because of the chance that they might be pregnant. It is unknown at the present time what the effects would be on the fetus.

The women are still delivering their babies at home, unless there are complications, and often times they don't ever acknowledge they are pregnant, or tell any one when they are in labor. Joan thinks most of the women breast feed their babies for two years, and that breast feeding them until they are that old is a matter of economics and not a matter of birth control. In addition, from the time the babies are one day old, if the family can afford it, the mothers also make sen⁴⁶ out of butter, tea, and millet flour or tsampa. The mother chews it, mixes it with her saliva, and puts it into the baby's mouth with hers. They do this three times a day. Those who cannot afford that food give their babies mustard oil instead.

It seems as though the marriage customs have not changed. Mingma Temba who works in the hospital is 23 years old and in

⁴⁶ Even though the ingredients are different, this is made in much the same way as the 'potatoes mashey.'
the second stage of marriage. The couple have two children, but his wife still lives in Thami with her parents and he lives in Kunde with his family. He sneaks out and visits her at night, but it must be difficult. Thami is a three to four hour walk from here.

We had *riki cour* for dinner again tonight, and I couldn't finish it, despite the fact that I hadn't eaten since 9:30 this morning, because it was huge, heavy and rather tastless. I was eating it with my hands and about half way through AD asked me if I wanted a knife and I said no, remember "I am a Sherpa" and we both laughed. Again, Temba ate two of them.

Mingma Tsering returned home today from Solu where he was taking care of Himalayan Trust business. So far he has done nothing but sit in the kitchen drinking *chang*\(^47\) and yelling orders at everyone.

September 30, 1984

4 p.m.

I was excited about going to market today with Ang Doule and her friends. We were scheduled to start on the 1 1/2 hour walk at 7 a.m., but I woke up at 4 just in case. We had *chia* in the kitchen before we left and a young woman was there who was friendly and seemed to know quite a bit of English. Sherpas do not introduce people, so sometimes I introduce myself and sometimes I just sit

\(^{47}\) Rice beer
and watch and listen. This time I did the former and learned that the woman's name is Diangey and she is Ang Doule's niece.

The three of us started for market at about 7:15 a.m. As we approached another house in the maze of paths that run through the village, Ang Doule would start talking in a conversational tone of voice to a woman in the house, and that woman would answer, emerge and join us as we moved along at a fairly rapid pace. It was amusing to me that they had a conversation before the other woman ever left her house. Market day, while it is a time for visiting with friends and taking a break from some of the hard daily work routine, is an important time for the Sherpas who must buy their supplies for the coming week. Most of the villagers hurry to get there while there are still some goods to buy. Today fourteen women, men and children left with us from the village. I was in the lead going up the hill, but only because the others were talking and I was using my energy for hiking. It occurred to me that we must be quite a sight, a memsahib in jeans and bulky sweater followed by a group of chattering Sherpanis in their dark angis, bright blouses and sweaters, and blue high top tennis shoes. All of the way to Namche the size of our group fluctuated as people met, exchanged gossip and hurried on their way.

When we started to descend the bowl in which Namche is built, I fell far behind. The trail is very steep, and in some places slippery as well, and the Sherpas go down taking small quick steps that I call the 'Sherpa Shuffle'. I still have trouble moving
my feet that fast, so I take a bit longer. Part way down the hill I could see the activity of the market and hear the buzz of voices. The market is located on three narrow tiers at the southeast end of town, where the trail from the lower hills enters Namche.

Ang Doule waited for me at the bottom of the hill and we proceeded to the market via a few stops to visit with Sherpa shop keepers, and to talk with women, both Sherpas and Westerners, she met on the way. When we finally arrived at the market, because it is located in a very crowded and confined space, I was worried about being bumped over the side if I did not assume an aggressive and pushy attitude like the Sherpas. I was also a bit overwhelmed by the noise, smell and closeness of the people, but I thought it was wonderful fun and am already looking forward to going back next Saturday.

As I walked up the hill after market people stopped to wait for me so they could have someone new to walk with. The people seem to do this all of the time, especially the school children who like to use the opportunity to practice their English. "Hello, what time it is?" is a sentence that I have heard more than anything else, except, perhaps, for namaste\(^48\).

8 p.m.

\(^{48}\) The traditional greeting
The young people are singing in the fields tonight. They have two things to celebrate, *DasAAI*, a holiday that everyone compares to our Christmas, and the fact that the agricultural cycle is almost completed for another year. This is the first night of revelry in Kunde, but they have been out in Khumjung for several nights already. Because of the holiday, the children are out of school for several days, and tomorrow is the day for animal sacrifices, though not among the Buddhists. I can hear drums, cymbals, and singing from the fields where the young people go to sing and dance all night. There is also a lot of whistling, and the village dogs are barking. Last night the young people sang one song over and over. It was a beautiful melody in a minor key that sounded very Asian.

October 1, 1984
9 a.m.

Listening to the animals (yaks and *zopkios*) walking outside my room last night I imagined that they were destroying all of the buckwheat that is stacked out there and eating all of the lettuce and onions that are growing in the kitchen garden, and that I would be blamed because I did not lock the gate that is supposed to keep them out. It was awful. I inspected the area this morning and the destruction was not as bad as I had imagined, and I am not even sure that anyone has noticed it yet, although Ang Doule
doesn't miss much. A lot of the lettuce plants have been cropped close to the ground, but I expect they will grow back, if slowly.

At 6 a.m. there was a knock on my door and I managed to wake up enough to open it. There was Ang Doule and the young porter who had come back with Mingma. He had left something in my room. Ang Doule asked if I wanted chia and I said I was going to sleep longer. They left and I went back to bed and slept with the sounds of chanting, monastery horns, and animal snufflings tumbling around in my head. About 8, just after I woke up again, there was a quiet knock on the door and when I answered it there was a very worried Ang Doule, wondering if I wanted chia and if I was feeling all right. She had come by earlier and I hadn't answered her knock so she was very concerned.

I just ate a piece of fruit that looks like a pippen apple from the outside but has the texture of a pear. It is called a naaspaati\textsuperscript{49}. It was very sweet and crisp. We have had fruit every day since market. Ang Doule bought many keraa\textsuperscript{50} that are different from the ones we have in America. They are about four inches long, and the fruit is pinkish in color and very creamy. The family had 'potato mashey' again last night, but Ang Doule fixed a different dinner for Mingma and me. She peeled some boiled

\textsuperscript{49} Apple pear

\textsuperscript{50} Bananas
potatoes, cut them like french fries, sautéed them in mustard oil to crisp them a bit, and then mixed in three scrambled eggs. It was good, but I hate the idea of adding to Ang Doule's work.

I asked Ang Doule how old she is and she didn't know, so we asked Mingma. He said she is 51 and he is 55.

Mingma sits around all day drinking chang, sleeping, and shouting orders at Ang Doule, who does almost all of the work, and the rest of the family. Temba is obviously in awe of him. Mingma's attitude makes me feel very uncomfortable. He has to go on another trip next weekend, so hopefully we can relax then and enjoy each other again.

11 a.m.

A while ago a monk came to the other end of the house and sang/chanted a verse. Ang Doule came out of the house, got some riki out of a storage bin and put them in a bag which he held open. Then an old nun carrying a ski pole came up and chanted, and Ang Doule gave her some riki also. Monks and nuns have to provide for themselves and they often beg for food and money. Ang Doule told me that everyone gives what they can, even poor people who give bhaat or riki.

Ang Doule then went off "dung finding," a job that is allocated to the women and children. The animal dung is patted flat on walls and dried for use as fuel. A few minutes after she left I went up to the kitchen to see if there was any more chia. The
chia was gone, but Mingma was there. He yelled at Ang Doule when she got back and she looked over at me. He seemed to be berating her for not leaving chia for me. I left the room because Mingma's attitude disturbed me. Ang Doule just came out to say Temba was making chia and would bring it down.

Yesterday I saw the biggest man I have ever seen here. He was something over 6' I would guess, and he had very gentle hands. He and another man were in the kitchen visiting with Mingma when I went up to the kitchen. I learned that Ang Doule was milking so I started out to find her. As I was leaving the kitchen the belt hook on my jacket caught on the basket where the dishes are put to dry and pulled it over on the floor with a terrible crash. I was very embarrassed and started to pick up the cups and silverware. The big man quickly got up to help me and was talking in a very gentle, soothing voice. I am sure he was telling me not to worry, that it was all right. When we finished picking up he held my hand and the gentleness was astounding. Later, when we were downstairs in the dark bottom floor of the house, he took my hand to guide me to the stairs. His touch, and actually everything about him, was quite wonderful. I would like to see him again. Mingma said he is a Tibetan.

As I was sitting in my room typing I felt someone behind me. It was Damu. She had come into the yard and heard me typing and was looking over my shoulder fascinated. She had never seen a typewriter before, and was showing the same curiosity about
mechanical devices that most Sherpas do. I put a clean piece of paper in the typewriter and told her to sit down, but she said no, no, no. I then showed her how the typewriter worked and she went away. In a few minutes she was back and I finally convinced her to sit down and push one of the keys. It was the most tentative thing I have seen her do. The typewriter moved but nothing printed on the paper, so I told her she had to push harder and showed her how. Even though she is a very bright person, she does not read or write. With my help she typed her name, but after a few minutes she realized she had to get back to work, said she had to go "buckwheat making," and left.

If Damu was growing up in the United States she would probably be in college right now. There isn't a chance of that happening here. All of the young people seem so bright and capable. Unfortunately, if they do get an education there are few opportunities in Khumbu to use what they have learned.

6:15 p.m.

Today, to eat with the riki cour, Ang Doule made a sauce with some wild mushrooms that someone had gathered. She showed me some that she had not used in the sauce and they looked like stereotypes of mushrooms, dark gold and black and not very attractive. Ang Doule didn't think I would like the sauce, but Mingma insisted that she give me a taste, and it was very good. For dessert Ang Doule gave me a naaspaati after she had peeled it
with a western style potato peeler. Temba gave me a *syaaau* and a *kerra* this morning. The *syaaau* looked like a small red pippin, but it was not very tasty.

I was talking to Mingma this morning about his career. He showed me a list of his climbs, and it is very impressive. Now he is the *sirdar*\(^\text{51}\) for the Himalayan Trust. He is in charge of the building projects that the Trust undertakes and so is away from home much of the time.

October 2, 1984

10 a.m.

Ang Doule made butter this morning. She has been saving the yak and *zopkio* milk for a few days. Since it is so cool in the house she does not need a refrigerator to keep the milk from spoiling, but just places it on a shelf in the main room. When she had enough for the large churn she put it, yogurt and hot water in the churn and started to move the paddle up and down. She is so short that in order to get a full stroke she has to stand on a stool. She moved the paddle up and down, and up and down, splattering milk on the floor and on herself. It didn't take long for the butter to separate out and float on top of the rest of the mixture. When I asked if I could take pictures, she wiped the milk off her clothes and straightened her hair and posed. The milk the animals give at

---

\(^{51}\) Foreman or headman
this time of the year is rich and creamy because they have just returned from summering in the high pastures where there is abundant grass for them to eat. She skimmed the butter off into a big (at least 12" across and 3" deep) black wooden pan that had some water covering the bottom. She consolidated the butter with the back of a wooden, hand carved, ladle that was about 5" or 6" across. She washed the butter and poured the water out, and then washed it two more times, patted it into a pleasing shape in the pan and put it on a shelf in the big room. Then she poured the remains of the milk into a large sauce pan, spilling some of it on the floor in the process. She cooked that and made a soft cheese which we have already tasted mixed with sugar and tsampa. It tastes like yogurt. The remains of the milk were poured in the slop bucket to be fed to the animals along with the other kitchen waste.

12 noon

The riki harvest is almost finished, all of the buckwheat is cut, and there is one female I can see from here who is winnowing some kind of grain. It is a very peaceful setting. Ang Doule has been collecting yak dung every day and just walked by with her hands covered with it. Yuck! She washed them in a tub of very stagnant water that is sitting by my room (no soap) and then cheerfully went up to the kitchen to grate the riki for lunch.
There are six yak babies in the yard right now. Temba seems to be the person who worries about them the most.

6 p.m.

Today we went "buckwheat making." Most of the fields in the village are planted in riki, but this year several were used to grow buckwheat, and one of those is owned by Ang Doule. The buckwheat plants are red stalks 2 1/2 to 3 feet tall with green leaves and seeds on them. Cutting them, which was done two days ago, is a very delicate process, taking a great deal of time and care. It appears to be a woman's job and is done while seated. A sharp, curved knife is used to cut the stalks individually at ground level. They are then carefully laid on the ground in stacks or bundles which are either carried to the house and laid on a tarp in the front yard, as Ang Doule did, or thrashed on tarps in the fields where they are grown. The dry seeds fall off the stalks easily, so a great deal of care must be exercised to see that the seeds are not lost by dropping to the ground during harvesting.

The tarp is about 8' by 8' and it was almost completely covered with stalks to a depth of two feet. Occasionally during the last two days, Damu or Ang Doule, or even Temba, would sit for a minute, between their other activities, and strip a few stalks, but today they were serious about the process getting finished. It was a slow and tedious job. The stalks were stripped individually, and the seeds and some of the leaves fell to the
canvas. At first I thought that all of the leaves should be stripped as well as the seeds, but I soon realized that only the seeds were important. Ang Doule said the buckwheat wasn't very good this year because it was planted too late in the spring so the seeds, which were about the size of a very small pea but shaped like a pyramid, were not as dry as they should have been. And indeed the dry ones popped off easily while the ones which were still green required more effort. The stalks were placed in a pile to be dried for animal fodder to be used during the winter when snow covers the ground.

The people who had left the buckwheat on tarps in the fields beat the plants with sticks to take the seeds off the stalks. There were several men doing this job in Kunde.

The three of us-Ang Doule, Damu and myself-sat outside in the sunshine most of the day, with a brief break for lunch of riki cour. Temba joined us during breaks from his painting. In the afternoon Damu made chia which she brought out in a thermos, and we continued to work until all of the stalks were stripped and we were surrounded by little seeds and leaves. As we stirred these with our hands the seeds soon started to separate themselves out and drop to the canvas because they were heavier than the leaves. When we finished we left to do other chores, and the remains of our work were left on the tarp to dry some more.

Before sundown Ang Doule scooped the seeds and leaves into a large canvas bag which I helped her hold open. She is so short,
that she had to stand on a small stone wall in the yard to get the last of them in the bag. As she climbed on the wall she said she was "going topside," and we looked at each other and laughed. She has been around the New Zealand people so much she uses their expressions. The bag was then stored in my room which is close to the area where we were working.

Figure 6 A Sherpani harvesting buckwheat

8 p.m.

When we have special guests they are served chia in one of the two English bone china cups and saucers that Ang Doule owns, while the rest of us use the glasses and chipped enamel mugs and cups. Sherpa hospitality says it is bad luck for a person
to only have one of whatever she/he is drinking, so the hostess and guest often have long arguments with her wanting to serve more of the beverages and the guest refusing and holding his/her hand over the cup until the hostess finally wins the battle.

Temba spends most of his time painting fascinating pictures in thangka style, with the main villages and gompas in Khumbu, as well as whimsical trekkers, climbers, yaks and yetties, depicted. He sits in the cold room for hours at a time drawing and painting. The paintings go through three stages. First he draws the picture in pencil. Then he paints over the outline with black ink, and, finally, he colors the spaces in. He uses water colors and his paintings reflect the different hues of paints that he has acquired in various ways. His prices have gone up by 200r since I have been here to 1,000r, but he still sells all he can produce.

Ang Doule said she was taking a piece of fabric to a Tibetan woman in Namche to have it made into a blouse. She also said the woman could make clothes for me too if I wanted her to, and that she, Ang Doule, would arrange it for me.

When Temba called me for dinner tonight Mingma was asleep in his bed in the kitchen and Ang Doule was cooking noodles in the pressure cooker. Because food cooks more quickly in a pressure cooker, and therefore less wood in needed, they are very

---

52 Buddhist scroll painting

53 $50-59
important implements in Sherpa kitchens. Unfortunately the plastic handles were not meant to be used over open fires, and are usually burned or melted off. Ang Doule's is no exception, so she has to use pieces of wood to take their place. She made a special dinner for me again and when I asked her why she had done it she said the shakpa she had made for the family was too thin. For my dinner she stir fried some meat and cabbage in a little fat cut from an animal bladder\textsuperscript{54} in which it is purchased, and added the noodles. It was spicy and good. The rest of the family had noodles with the shakpa poured over them. Mingma snored the entire time, and Ang Doule filled his chang glass for later and said "All day drink, sleep, drink, sleep." Then she looked at me and said that when he is gone he works hard, and besides it is a holiday.

October 3, 1984
1:30 p.m.

I had a near run in with a yak today, and it scared me. The animals are in the village for the winter and they roam freely through the paths. If I say 'shooey,' they usually, but not always, go off in another direction. The paths are bordered with stone walls that are about 4 feet tall, and are usually wide enough for one of the animals and a person. Sometimes when they see a

\textsuperscript{54} Animal bladders are filled with melted animal fat. Pieces of it are cut off, as needed, for cooking.
person coming they start running toward, rather than away from, her/him, and go on past. I have had that happen often and have almost had a heart spasm in the process, but yesterday was different. There was a big, grey male with huge horns, standing across the path. When I said 'shooey' he started to move his head, and of course his horns, in a very threatening manner and pawed the ground. I looked him in the eye and said it again. "Shooey!" But he just stood there being more and more menacing, so I decided to leave, but was afraid to turn my back on him. They are large animals, and they can move very fast when they want to. There was a boy walking behind me and I asked him what to do. He went up and threw a couple of well placed rocks at the beast and he finally got off the trail. I am not too excited about putting up with those dumb animals from now on whenever I want to take a walk.

I went into a Sherpa house in Khumjung today. I decided, after seeing that house and how it is kept, that there are different levels of sanitation here, and that Ang Doule is not a very tidy person. The other house was neat and clean. I sat in the kitchen and was offered chia, fruit and biscuits. There was one young woman in the kitchen shining the tops of two thermos bottles, and another putting some food stuffs together. The second one told me she was going to their yersa in Gokyo to harvest the riki that had been planted there. She spoke very good English and when I asked her about it she told me that she had
completed school and had passed the English proficiency test. Purba Sonam\textsuperscript{55} had told me that he had recently painted the gompa in this house and I asked if I might see it. It was very beautiful. The painting, done in the five Buddhist colors-red, green, white, yellow, and blue-depict the Buddha as well as other elements of the religion. The venerable abbot from Thyangboche\textsuperscript{56} Monastery had slept there on his way to Kathmandu a few nights ago and the yak butter candles were still lit and food offerings were still out.

October 4, 1988
10:30 a.m.
Ang Doule called me for lunch of shakpa with saag\textsuperscript{57} that looked like kale or Swiss chard, poured over bhaat. It was 9:30 a.m.

Ang Doule's niece Dianje had lunch with us today. Her English is very good because she lives in Kathmandu part of the year. She said she likes to go to the capital, where she lives with friends and works as a maid in one of the big hotels, and have a good time. Also, since she likes being single, she sees no reason to get married.

\textsuperscript{55} A monk at the Thyangboche monastery.

\textsuperscript{56} Also spelled Tengboche

\textsuperscript{57} Greens
Chang is an important part of all Sherpa religious and secular ceremonies and events, but it appears that alcoholism is becoming a prevalent problem here. Mingma, for instance, is probably one of the most important men in the area, but when he is home and not working he drinks all day, and often the family has to put him to bed early.

Two American trekkers came by today, had lunch, and one of them bought a painting from Temba. I told the man he might be able to get the price down if he bargained but he declined saying that he could afford the $60 dollars and Temba could use it. When they were leaving they asked how much the meal was. Ang Doule said whatever they wanted to pay and they figured 8r each, but they gave her 20r. This attitude is affecting the Sherpa economy. I have heard many Sherpas complaining about how expensive everything is, especially during the trekking season.

The agricultural cycle is almost completed for the year. The fields are all harvested, the drying of grains and fodder is almost finished, and now that the animals are back in the village the people are collecting and drying yak dung to burn in their fireplaces.

8 p.m.

Dinner tonight was bhaat with a spicy shakpa made of cabbage and riki. We don't eat bhaat very much because Temba doesn't like it. My portions are getting smaller since Ang Doule is
finally learning that I don't eat as much as Sherpas. We even had desert of yogurt poured over bhaat. Ang Doule makes the best yogurt in the area out of milk and some old yogurt for a starter. She says it only takes a few hours.

I had bought a chocolate bar\(^{58}\) in Namche and I brought it out to share with the family. There were five of us at dinner tonight and the bar was divided into eight squares. I had one, gave two to Ang Doule, Damu had two, and Temba and Nima\(^{59}\) each had one. Then Temba wrapped the last square of chocolate in the foil and opened the window between the rooms and gave it to Damu who had gone into the other room. I thought it was a sweet and generous thing for him to do, especially since they don't get many treats.

Damu said she was going to bed, but she was really getting ready to go out with the other young people in the village. She unbraided her hair, then put some mustard oil in it, and combed it in with her fingers. She looked very different with her hair down. She then braided it again, incorporating yarn of two colors in it starting 3-4 inches from her head and going to the bottom of her

\(^{58}\) It was a Cadberry bar, for which I paid 35r or almost $2.

\(^{59}\) Nima was a poor twelve year old boy from Phortse who Ang Doule hired to work for her and live in her home. He was very unhappy here when he first came to us and ran away several times. His mother always returned with him and Ang Doule took him back. When I returned in 1986 he was still working for Ang Doule and seemed to be happier about his situation.
hair. Many women wear their hair this way. She is a very pretty young woman.

While she was getting ready to go out Temba did the dishes. He had done his puja before dinner tonight. As with most of the kitchen chores, this one is also done on the floor. All day the dishes, which had been licked clean, were placed in a large flatish aluminum pan. Tonight the family used china bowls, like Chinese soup bowls, instead of the usual chipped enamel plates. They are used when dinner is particularly soupy. Temba and Ang Doule licked theirs clean and put them back in the cabinet without washing them. Temba poured hot water, from the kettle which was on the stove, over the rest of the dishes and cups and rinsed things out using his hands. No soap was used. Then he placed the dishes in a plastic basket to dry.

I could hear chanting and drums outside. The young people were gathering again. Ang Doule looked very tired and I was getting ready to go to my room so she could go to bed. When I started to say good night she sat next to me and asked if I was going to sleep or to read and write. She said she never went to school, never learned how to do those things. Then she told me that several times when she was in New Zealand they wanted her to read something and she couldn't. The way she said it indicted that it really bothered her. She is such a bright and strong women I wonder what she would be like if she had more opportunities.
October 5, 1984

1 p.m.

Ang Doule has been putting the buckwheat seeds and leaves out to dry for the last few days. This morning there was a breeze blowing so she winnowed them using a flat basket. When she had finished she had a small pile of seeds that she will take to a mill to be ground into flour. The return from the buckwheat field is so small it is understandable that very few fields are planted in this grain and that most are planted in riki.

4 p.m.

This afternoon Ang Doule and I went to one of her grass fields to make some yak dung patties. I took my camera, but she wouldn't let me take her picture. I gather that this is not one of her favorite activities. She tried not to touch the dung, but instead used her feet to spread the piles out on the ground where they had been deposited. Occasionally it was necessary for her to pick up the dung and pat it flat on a rock, and when she did this she had a very funny look on her face.

8:30 p.m.

Ang Doule wasn't feeling very well tonight because of her ulcer. She was walking around the kitchen saying "water coming up" and spitting water on the floor. Then she said she was going to vomit and walked to the slop bucket on the landing. It is a large
wooden cylinder, about 3 1/2 feet high which holds all of the kitchen garbage-water from rice washing, riki peelings, leftovers from meals, etc.- which is fed to the animals. She threw up in it, so tomorrow the animals will be eating vomit. She said it was an ulcer that hadn't bothered her for years, but that she had been sick all last night too.

In the meantime Nima was washing the dishes. Mingma was teaching him how to do them the other night, with hot water but no soap. I don't think he has washed his hands for a long time.

I decided to come down at about 7:30. Tonight is a holiday like our Halloween where the children and young people go around begging for money. Three groups came at dinner time and Ang Doule gave them some rupees. When I was sitting in my room a large group came into the yard and started to sing and do some Sherpa dancing. I could hear the pounding of their feet from my room. I didn't want to go out but they wouldn't stop so I finally opened my door, stepped out side, and watched and listened. There were ten or twelve young women in a line doing a dance and singing. I did not recognize anyone because the moon was hiding behind a thin layer of clouds and the women all had scarves over their heads. They were starting to go away when I called to one and gave her 6r. It was Damu. That was not much money, but she was really excited and thankful. Ang Doule had said to give 2 or 5r, but if I had known it was Damu I would have given more. The money they collect is used for a party.
This afternoon there was a mouse on the kitchen floor. A Sherpani who was there at the time was about ready to jump up on a bench. I would have joined her. It was amusing to see such a strong, competent woman afraid of such a small creature. She finally picked up a broom and chased the mouse out of the kitchen, but didn't attempt to kill it because of the prohibition against killing in the Buddhist religion. Wow! I think I have found a cross-cultural truth. Both American women and Sherpanis are afraid of mice!

I tried to carry a doko with some riki in it. I had a hard time keeping my head straight after I put the trampa on. It was very hard on my neck muscles even with such a light load. What strong neck muscles Sherpas must have to carry dokos full of wood!

Ang Doule asked me to help with the dinner tonight. She put bhaat in the pressure cooker and put it on the stove and built up the fire. Flames were shooting up and the pot started to hiss. She turned a flashlight on to see what was happening as it was very dark in the kitchen, as usual. She told me that when the "black thing" on top comes up this much, indicating about 3/8 inch on her finger, I was to take it off the fire. I asked her what I should do with it and she said to put it on the back corner of the

60 It is a line that is used for carrying loads. It is put around the load and across the head.
stove to stay warm. Then she left. A few minutes later Domaley\textsuperscript{61} came in and started to build up the fire because it was going out. I didn't know how hot it should be and felt very stupid when she started to help me. Then Mingma came in, bustled about, and started putting pots on and I started to get nervous because I didn't know what he was doing and what I was supposed to be doing. Finally the \textit{bhaat} was done and I pushed it to the back of the stove and put on a big pot of \textit{riki}.

When Ang Doule came in she started to pour \textit{chang}. The Sherpa custom is to drink two glasses quickly, with the host or hostess saying "\textit{shay shay}". After that it is acceptable to go at a slower pace, but glasses tend to be topped off before one can finish their contents. It makes it a bit hard to keep track of how much of the potent rice beer one is consuming.

Ang Doule really hovers when Mingma is around. She doesn't seem to be able to relax and is constantly waiting on him. She puts food in front of him which he doesn't eat, and always keeps his covered \textit{chang} cup filled.

The dramatic changes in the Sherpa culture seem to have affected the men more than the women, especially the men who are involved in the trekking business. The women are still very, very busy with what they have always done. They have to feed their families, harvest the crops, feed the animals, etc., but the

\textsuperscript{61} She is a Sherpani who lives in Kunde and works at the hospital. We became friends during my two visits to Khumbu.
men don't seem to have many jobs. They have lost jobs, but they do not seem to have taken over any of the women's responsibilities. Mingma, because of his position with the Himalayan Trust, is an important man in the community. He seems to work very hard when he is on Trust business, but he does almost nothing at home. He sits in the kitchen and drinks by himself or with people who come by to visit. I have seen some men in the village thrashing buckwheat and helping dry fodder for the animals, but that kind of work might be below Mingma's station now. He did walk up the ridge to find a lost animal one day, and cut some riki into smaller pieces to feed to the beasts. It is interesting to note that those are activities that are related to the animals, which have always been male status symbols in this culture. But when he is gone someone else becomes responsible for the animals. It must be difficult to be very important one minute, and very dispensable the next. There aren't very many middle aged men around the village, but the few that I have seen are helping with the buckwheat harvest by carrying and thrashing, bundling plants and putting them out to dry, and getting turnips ready for storing. Mingma has done nothing with the harvest, and while he is sitting around Ang Doule is cooking, taking care of the house, milking, overseeing the harvest, collecting yak dung, seeing to some of the social obligations for the family, and taking care of guests and trekkers who drop in for meals and/or lodging.
October 6, 1984
8 p.m.

My eraser is soaked with kerosene and is smearing everything I use it on. Sigh! Temba, in his eagerness to please me, overfilled my kerosene lamp, and the heat is making it overflow on to the table. I hope it doesn't blow up.

Mingma left on Himalayan trust business this morning, so things should be a bit more relaxed around here for awhile. I felt more comfortable with the family when he was not here and hope
we can get back to the easy friendship we had established before he returned home.

October 7, 1984
1 p.m.

Ang Doule was going to fix "potato mashey" for lunch, so I was bracing myself for another boring meal. Instead she fixed chapaatis\(^\text{62}\) with strawberry jam imported from India and a fried egg. She made the dough with flour and water and rolled it out on a board, using a piece of metal pipe as a rolling pin. She then cooked the chapaatis in a dry frying pan. When they were almost cooked she removed them from the pan and stood them up on edge in the fire itself to finish the cooking. It was a nice treat.

Ang Doule had a large sliver under her nail and wanted to go to hospital to have it removed. I was going to the town water supply to wash some clothes, so, since the water pipe and the hospital are close we walked there together. I carried my clothes in a wash pan and she took an empty plastic container to fill with water for household use. All of the water used in the house must be carried here from the pipe which is about five minutes away.

One of the Trust projects was to pipe water from a spring on the ridge behind the village, through the hospital, and into a holding reservoir made of timbers lined with black plastic. The black PVC pipe that carries the water runs over the ground so that

\(^{62}\) Unleavened bread
if the sun is shining the water is quite warm when it arrives at
the reservoir. When we arrived at the water Ang Doule left me
with her jug and went on to the hospital. The water reservoir is a
meeting place for villagers. There were several people engaged in
a variety of activities. They were washing clothes, raw wool,
*riki, saag*, and themselves. Many clothes had already been washed
that morning and were laid out to dry on the stone wall nearby. It
was interesting to see the *riki* being washed. The water was
allowed to run through a *doko* filled with *riki* while a long,
smooth stone was plunged in and out, thus rubbing the vegetables
together and with the stone, to remove the dirt. While I was
waiting my turn for water Ang Doule came out and showed me the
extracted sliver which was 1/4 of an inch long. Then she left
again and went to one of her fields to do "yak dung patty making."
When my turn came, I filled her jug, did my washing, and deciding
not to wait for her, walked back to my room to hang out my
clothes. Ang Doule didn't return for a long time, but when she did
she carried the full water container home with her, on her back,
with a *trampa* around it.

October 8, 1984
7:45 a.m.

I saw Ang Doule's arms for the first time a couple of days
ago. They look younger and firmer than mine. I shouldn't have
been surprised. Just the way she cooks gives her more exercise
that I get with all of my activities. Another thing I observed is that her natural skin color is actually very light. Sherpas are only dark on the parts of their bodies that are always exposed to the elements.

We had *mo-mos*\(^63\) again for brunch on Saturday. It seems to be part of the trip for Ang Doule, and she always treats me. The teahouse where we eat is not a place any other Westerners frequent, especially any *memsahibs*. Last week we ate in the kitchen next to the fire. There was a monk there with a wonderful deep voice. I don't know if it is because I can't speak the language or if there really is a difference, but Sherpa voices seem to have a lot of texture to them, both the males and females. This time we were in the big room of the tea house. I was with Ang Doule and two other women, one about her age and one who looked older. *Chia* was brought right away and I knew that the three women were talking about me from some of the words they were using. Then we were served plates with 6 steamed *mo-mos* on them, a spot of chile and chop sticks. They were really good but spicy. I was sucking air in through puckered lips to try to cool my mouth off and looked around and the other three women were doing the same thing. We all started laughing and they said

\(^63\) This is dough wrapped around a filling of meat, vegetables, or a combination of the two, and steamed. They are like Chinese pot stickers or ravioli.
something else about me. The experience gave me a very good feeling.

4 p.m.

Three monks have come by individually today. The last one, who was thin, old, and dirty, did not say anything. He just stood outside looking into my room. Ang Doule said two rupees, which is about 12 cents, is a good amount to give. In comparison, it costs 12r for a roll of toilet paper in Namche.

Yak dung making is a very important activity right now. Most of the walls and rocks in the village are covered with disks of dung. They are patted on the walls when they are fresh, left to dry for a few days and then stored or used in cooking fires. This chore seems to be the responsibility of women and children.

I have observed four ways of dealing with the dung. The first, as I described earlier, is Ang Doule's technique. She deals with it quickly and with the least amount of handling possible.

The second technique was being demonstrated today by a boy who was between 8 and 10 years old. He collected many large turds, stood facing a tall stone wall in the field next to his pungent pile, and threw the objects at the wall, each aimed at a different rock. After a few carefully placed throws he went to the wall and patted the brown stuff into place.

The next technique I observed being used by a young women, probably in her early 20's, in a field to the south of us. This
woman exhibited a great deal of enthusiasm for the activity at hand because most of the walls surrounding her field, as well as the walls of her house, were covered with large, brown disks. Usually the size varies with the size of the turd, but this woman's technique was such that her patties came out in a more or less uniform size of about 10 inches in diameter. This technique probably takes more time than the other two. The woman had collected a great pile of dung next to one of the walls around her field. It is an average rock wall about three to four feet high. She then took some of the dung in her hands, and made patties that were all approximately the same size and thickness, patting them flat on the rock wall. It was similar to the technique we used to make mud pies when we were kids. Definitely a satisfying process.

With the fourth technique a woman was making balls of the dung and stacking them like cannonballs. Then she patted them against the wall around her house.

The patties, when properly dried, make wonderful fuel, and, in an area where wood is scarce and trees grow at a very slow rate, this is a very important by product of pastoralism. It is also very cost effective. Another thing I have noticed, at least with Ang Doule, is that no precious water is wasted washing her hands after she has engaged in this activity, even when she has brown ooze up past her wrists. She simply comes into the kitchen and
starts washing the pots left over from dinner the night before, or the night before that, and gets her hands clean at the same time.

Yesterday Temba went into the kitchen while I was sitting there reading and writing. He built a fire, grated some riki, and put them in a large pot made of spun aluminum that is dented and black from the fire. It has a three quarter inch lip that makes it possible to handle it when it is taken off the fire. He put the pot on the fire, handed me a long metal spatula, told me to take care of it, and left. I didn't know what to do. The fire got hotter and hotter and the *riki* started bubbling, burning and sticking. I tried to adjust the fire and the room filled with smoke. The *riki* were getting very brown and sticking and I was getting nervous. He left me there for quite awhile. Then the fire went out and when I blew on it it became too hot. I was impressed that they trusted me enough after a few of days, to let me cook dinner. As it turned out I was cooking dinner but not for us. It was for the baby yaks! When Temba came back he took the pan off the stove, built up the fire and took the pot downstairs where the animals were tied for the night. Then Ang Doule came in and started grating more *riki* into a huge pan for our dinner.

Thermos bottles are very important to these people. They are made in China and hold half a gallon of liquid. They allow a cup of hot tea to be available throughout the day without having to make fires. The use of thermos bottles has helped reduce the amount of firewood that is used.
The Sherpas know that their firewood is in short supply. They must go great distances now to find any, and when they do they trim the branches off of trees rather than cut the trees down. This seems to be a job that is done mostly by the older children with some help, when required, from the women.

The Sherpas, with the help of the Himalayan Trust and the government of New Zealand, have been focusing their attention on the wood problem. Until the 1950s the forests were successfully regulated by the Sherpas. However, when the country was opened to expeditions and trekkers, huge amounts of firewood were used for cooking and warmth, and the forests started to disappear. With the establishment of Sagarmantha National Park\(^\text{64}\) regulation of this resource was put in the hands of the central government, and as a result of poor management the forests in the area are still being diminished. It is now illegal for people, other than Nepalis, to burn the wood and there is a tree farm in Trashinga where small trees are grown and transplanted throughout the area. Unfortunately, at this altitude plants grow very, very slowly. There is a young Sherpa earning a PhD in forestry in Canada. His education is being paid for by the Himalayan Trust, and it is hoped that when he returns to Khumbu he will work with the Sherpas to try to preserve the trees which remain and increase their number.

\(^{64}\) In 1976 Sagarmantha National Park was established in the Khumbu area.
8 p.m.

Ang Doule's nephew came in just before dinner with a new pair of blue high top Chinese tennis shoes like the ones that many Sherpas wear. These were for Temba and cost 90r. By comparison I was paying my porter 30r a day to carry 60 pounds, so in this area it takes three days of that kind of labor to buy a pair of tennis shoes.

Ang Doule was cooking dinner in the pressure cooker tonight and said I was going to like this dinner. She poured a package and a half of noodles in the pot and put on the top and weight. However, she didn't get the weight on properly and it blew off and
hit the ceiling. It is getting dangerous in the kitchen. When she finally had it on properly she left the room and came back a while later to take the pot off the stove. She then put it in a pan of cold water and poured cold water over it until it stopped hissing. She had also made a *shakpa of khursaani, riki, water, and water buffalo meat* to pour over the noodles.

After dinner Damu swept the kitchen floor with a short handled broom made of twigs, but first she sprinkled it with water to keep the dust down.

This is a busy time in the village. It is important to get enough fodder for the animals and food for the people before winter sets in with its covering of snow. Many things are drying in the village now. There are long weeds all over the walls, roofs, rocks, and on any other available dry spots. Heavy blankets and plastic tarps are covered with buckwheat, corn, *khurassani* and other seeds. Many Sherpas are outside working quietly, bundling long grass and putting it on roofs to dry.

All of the *rika* are harvested, sorted and stored. Ang Doule said they were especially big this year. All of the storage rooms on the first floor of the house are filled to capacity with the vegetable, and we continue to eat them at every meal.

Many people are dealing with turnips, getting them ready to store. One woman was standing up, taking the turnips from a basket, cutting the greens off with a *khukuri*, and tossing them into another basket. If the stalk was not too thick she left it
laying on the ground. If it was too thick she cut all of the leaves off and put the large stalk, which could not be eaten by the animals in another pile. I also saw a man sitting down, holding turnips by the roots and hacking the green part off and throwing the turnip into a basket. This does not seem to be a gender defined job.

I was watching Ang Doule cook dinner tonight, admiring the efficiency of her movements, when she sat down to talk. She said "English people and Americans very lucky because they going going." I asked "Can't you do that?" She said "No, Sherpas very poor. Can't going going." I asked if she would like to be. She said, "Oh yes, Ang Doule would like going going".

The younger women really stare at me. They seem reticent to talk to me on the trail or in the fields, but the older women are very friendly, talkative, happy, and cheerful. Some try to talk English or they say something in Nepalese with big, often toothless, smiles, chuckling laughter, and with a lot of clowning around almost. Men tend to be that way too, very cheerful, happy, and smiling.

October 9, 1984
2:30 p.m.

Sherpas love Tibetan tea, which is tea with butter and salt in it. I was watching Ang Doule making it awhile ago in the Tibetan Tea churn which is a miniature butter churn only very ornate,
black with bands of brass on it. First she puts in the butter and salt and then she pours the hot chia, made with special leaves cut from tea bricks that come from Tibet, over it. After that she churns it with long strokes to emulsify the butter and then does a series of very short strokes. It is amazing that she does it exactly the same way every time. She then pours it into a spun aluminum tea pot to warm up on the stove before it is poured into a thermos. Ang Doule is the only person in the family who I have seen making this kind of chia. She told me she really likes Tibetan tea, but I have a hard time getting it down.

Today the women spent the day in the hills gathering leaves to be used in chaarpis and in the stable. A wooden rake with a short handle is used and the leaves are carried in huge dokos. In the spring the chaarpis and stable are cleaned out and the mixture is used as fertilizer in the fields. The gathering of leaves is another task for which Ang Doule is responsible, and, since she can afford it, she has hired an old woman to do it for her. The woman is taking a break and is sitting in the kitchen with us having something to eat and drinking a glass of chang. Ang Doule is taking the opportunity to chat and gossip while the other woman is eating.

6 p.m.

Late afternoon is not a good time to take a walk around the village. This is the time when the animals are brought down from
the mountains and put in the fields for the night. The paths which are at most six feet wide and often narrower, have these huge, strong, dumb beasts in them. Their horns are very wicked looking and they often stand in the middle of the path looking at me, daring me to pass.

Figure 9 Ang Doule making Tibetan tea by her hearth

8 p.m.

I sense that Ang Doule is not as careful about utilizing things, about waste, as other Sherpas. For example, the buckwheat sat outside neglected for so long that the animals got into it. I think that is the way she does most things, but I don't know if it is her nature or if it is because she can afford to be that way. She
is quite wealthy, has lots of fields and animals and a good life for here, but I sense that if someone put in a grocery story she would not be unhappy to change her life style to get some relief from all of the work.

The Sherpas appear to be happy, pleasant, nice people. They have adapted extremely well to what they have, and have accepted where they are. But life is hard here. Ang Doule hints that she could go someplace else and not miss Kunde too much.

Market was small Saturday, but Ang Doule had to buy food stuffs for Peter's Hillary's expedition. She took a porter with her and also two containers for oil. The grains, sugar, rice and other dry items are measured by maanaa, but for liquids such as oil a Star Beer bottle is used. The oil is dipped out of the large tins and poured into the beer bottles through a funnel. The full bottles are then poured into the customers containers. She also bought flour and sugar. I took the sugar from her and draped it over my arm and her friends came by and started joking about how the memsahib was portering for Ang Doule.

There were two Sherpanis outside one of the Namche lodges with a basket of small cooked riki, pushing them over the blades of a metal slicer. One pass over the four blades sliced the riki.

---

65 He was attempting to climb Mount Everest.

66 Volume of measure (20 ounces, 2 1/2 cups, 0.7 liter)

67 A brand of beer made in Nepal.
They then spread the slices on a tarp to dry. After they are dehydrated they are stored and used for shakpa in the wintertime.

October 10, 1984
10 a.m.

It is a busy day here today. Ang Doule has four women and two men working in the field closest to the house. The women are digging six or seven large holes, about six feet deep and 3 or 4 feet in diameter. The riki that have been stored for drying in the rooms under the house are being carried to the field in dokos and put in the holes. The male porters are carrying the dokos, but all of the other work is being done by women. After the holes are filled with riki, cedar boughs are put on top and dirt is piled on over that so there is a big mound when the work is finished. This storage technique keeps the potatoes from freezing in the winter time.

October 12, 1984
10 a.m.

Peter Hillary is not on an official New Zealand or Australian climb. He applied for the permit as an individual and asked some friends to join him. There was a lot of speculation about what was happening on the climb, and yesterday Ang Doule received a letter from base camp. She has gotten them regularly with lists of needed supplies which she buys at market and sends up to him.
She tucked the letter in her angi, which doubles as a purse, to have someone read it to her later. Then a woman came and sat in the kitchen and started talking and Ang Doule became very agitated and upset. The woman's husband was a porter. He had been to base camp carrying a load and came back with the news that there had been an accident and two of the climbers in Peter's group had been killed, but she didn't know which ones. Ang Doule became very upset because she has known Peter for many years and is very close to him. She was also worried about Bara Sahib losing his only son. Sons are favored over daughters in this culture. After hearing the news, Ang Doule rushed out of the kitchen to find someone to read the letter. When she returned she said that Peter was all right, but that two of the climbers had fallen and the expedition had failed to reach the summit. They also asked her to send porters and yaks for the trip back to Kunde.

Temba and Damu are getting three animals, one yak and 2 zopkio, ready to go to Everest base camp to porter for Peter's expedition. They put on blankets and wooden saddles that are used to carry loads. One of the beasts was giving Damu some trouble, but she soon set him straight. It is obvious that she is in control when she is working with the animals. Damu left with the animals when they were ready.

This morning Ang Doule, Da Tsering, and another woman, who I have seen around the village, were sitting in the kitchen when I went up. The other woman was eating tsampa with her fingers
from a bowl shaped like a Chinese soup bowl. First the *tsampa* is put in, then some sugar, tea and occasionally salt and dry cheese, are added. It is stirred with the fingers or a spoon and can be as runny as one likes. Some people like it very thick like the texture of a very stiff cookie dough, and as they talk they break off bits, play with it for a time, rolling it into a ball or kneading it, and then eat it. Some people like it a bit thinner. I eat it at about the consistency of peanut butter which seems appropriate to me because that is what I think it smells and tastes like. I also use a spoon. It is very filling.

8 p.m.

I am concerned about Damu who left for Everest base camp this morning. The weather has turned bitter cold and she doesn't even have a jacket with her. I suppose she is used to this weather, but still... Peter's climb was not a success, despite rumors to the contrary, but losing two of the six climbers broke the team's spirits and they have given up for this year.

Ang Doule doesn't pay much attention to meals. The food is getting very, very tiresome and monotonous. There is no variety whatsoever. We haven't had meat in a couple of weeks, and there weren't even any green vegetables tonight, just *riki shakpa* over *bhaat*. And no fruit this week.

In addition to all of her other work, Ang Doule takes in most trekkers who come by asking for food and shelter, so she always
cooks for a crowd. The two trekkers who are staying here now hadn't had lunch today and they were hungry. As we were sitting in the cold kitchen with no food, no chia, no fire, and no Ang Doule or Temba, I told them about the store in the village, but I couldn't remember which house it was in. When Temba returned we asked for chia and he got busy fixing it. Then we decided we wanted to go to store to get something to eat. I tried to ask Temba where it was but I couldn't make him understand. I finally took a bottle of rum off the shelf, held that and my wallet and he understood immediately what I was talking about and gave us the directions to the store. It belongs to Per Angi, Mingma's brother's wife, and is in the bottom story of her house. We walked the short distance there, called up to her, and she came down and let us in. She is an attractive woman with a big smile. We were amazed at what we found in the store. There were air mail envelopes, rum, jelly, oil by the bottle, Star beer, lemon squash, fruit juice, sardines from Portugal and many other goods that would tempt trekkers. We bought sardines and two packages of crackers for 40r68. The key to open the sardine can was missing so we tried to open it with a Swiss Army Knife. While we were struggling with it Ang Doule came in and produced an old style can opener. I am constantly amazed at the equipment she has in this

---

68 Just over $2
house. We shared the sardines and crackers with everyone and felt like we were giving ourselves a big treat.

Figure 10 Damu putting a saddle on a zopkio

Ang Doule was telling me that Sherpas don't kiss, and just so I would understand what she meant she kissed my cheek several times.

October 14, 1984
1 p.m.
When I went in the kitchen this morning for another cup of *chia* there was a monk sitting cross-legged in the living room, chanting prayers from a holy book. It is a holy day. I had seen monks walking around the village yesterday and today. They are invited into the Sherpa houses and bless the people, who in turn give them money or food.

Ang Doule was already fixing lunch. She was peeling boiled *riki* and Temba was going to mash them. I glanced out the window and saw three monks outside. I told Ang Doule the monks were here and she became very excited and agitated. I had never seen her so flustered. The monks came in the house. One came into the kitchen and the others went into the big room. I thought there were three or four of them. Ang Doule made *chia* and cleaned everything very well. She has a tray that is usually quite dirty and she washed that off with a very dirty sponge and wiped all of the glasses off with a towel. Then she poured *chia* for all of the monks and took it into the other room. The monks were all quite young, except for the one who was there first, and were wearing maroon robes and Chinese tennis shoes. The monk in the kitchen had a wooden bowl with a leather or cloth cover that was tied to his back. He untied it and reached in and gave everyone, including me, a *syaaau*. When I could get her alone I asked Ang Doule if I should give them something and she started to say yes 100r but changed it to 50r. About $3
my pocket and went back to the kitchen. There is a window between the kitchen and the living room and I looked through it when Ang Doule went into the living room where the monks were sitting on the benches under the windows. A bowl that was so full of rice that it was spilling out onto the table was on the bench in front of one of the monks. There was a large crystal standing on end in the middle of the rice. Ang Doule went in, took off her hat, stood up on edge on top of the rice and then bowed her head and touched her forehead to the bowl. The monk made a gesture of blessing with his hands. She came back into the kitchen and asked if I was going to give anything. I said yes and walked into the room with my money and saw that instead of three or four monks there were seven of them. I felt a bit nervous with all of those eyes on me. I put my money down but wasn't sure if I should touch my head to the bowl because I am not a Buddhist. Ang Doule, who had followed me into the room, indicated that I should. When I had finished they all thanked me very much and I returned to the kitchen feeling like I had had a religious experience. Ang Doule said I had been blessed and it felt good to believe that was true.

One thing that happened during all of this puzzled me. Usually when I am in the house I leave the door to my room open so my

70 An informant said it was salt, but I was unable to verify.
space will heat up a bit. However, this time, when I went to my room for the money, Temba followed me and made sure that I locked my door. I am not sure if he was concerned about other villagers, trekkers, or the monks.

8 p.m.

Nima was watching me while I washed clothes at the water pipe this morning. He started to wash his hands with water, so I put some of my liquid soap on them. They were very dirty, and he has been washing the dishes every night. Then he started to wash his face, so I gave him more soap. He did a fairly good job and then dried it on his dirty sweater.

I cannot believe how much these people eat. They must have huge stomachs. I am finally getting Ang Doule to make my riki cour thinner so it is not quite so heavy.

Ang Doule's 19 year old son Da Tsering came home unexpectedly today. He lives with an aunt while going to school in Kathmandu. He hitched a ride on a helicopter from the capital to Shyangboche. Ang Doule was very surprised and pleased to see him. He is a handsome boy, but seems to be very arrogant like his father. In fact he has many of his father's mannerisms and ways about him, and they are not very flattering. It didn't seem to take him long to get used to living in the city. He was complaining about how cold it was in the same tone of voice that his father would use. When I went into the kitchen for dinner he had lit two
gas lanterns. We usually have two kerosene lamps lit at night that give off about the same amount of light as candles, so it is usually quite dark. With the lanterns lit it was brighter than it is in the middle of the day. He eventually turned one off, saying "Agh, too dark in here."

Ang Doule served his dinner first. It was interesting that he, the citified boy, ate with his hands, while Ang Doule and Temba ate with spoons. After dinner Da Tsering got out a portable radio and demanded some batteries for it. Temba rushed into the other room and returned with them. I was surprised they had any, since they have been borrowing my flashlight after indicating to me that their batteries were worn out. When the radio was working he listened to Nepale and Indian rock all evening.

When someone is going away or coming home it is customary for Sherpanis to take a thermos of chia, chang or rakshi to their house and serve it to members of the household. Ang Doule has done this several times since I have been here. This afternoon, after lunch, I was having chia in the kitchen with Ang Doule, Temba, Da Tsering and another young man when a woman came in with her Chinese thermos. Ang Doule got out some cups while they talked and the other woman poured the chia and acted like the hostess.

For dinner we had bhaat with a riki, cabbage and meat shakpa poured over it. There was a lot of meat in the shakpa this time, and it had been cooked in the pressure cooker, so it was tender.
Ang Doule bought the meat at market Saturday, cut it into thick strips and hung it on clothes lines over the fireplace to dry and smoke. There is still a lot hanging there. I asked her how long it takes to smoke it and she said she uses as she needs it. It is safe to do this since there are no flies in the area. Other foodstuffs are dried in the same manner.

We went to market on Saturday. I followed Ang Doule around and held some things for her as she shopped. I asked if I could take her picture while she was buying the meat but she said no. I think that as a Buddhist she doesn't feel she should eat meat and is embarrassed by the fact that she does. After she bought the meat she put it in a canvas tote bag without being wrapped. When we were finally headed for the tea house I stopped to talk with some people and Ang Doule and I became separated. When I looked for her in the tea house she was not there, but as I went back outside a woman came up to me and signaled me to follow her. Ang Doule was in the tea house next door, sitting in the kitchen. Four of us sat on a short bench at one end of the very small room, and we barely fit. The woman who works there brought us chia and one plate of mo mos. Ang Doule said she and I would share the one plate of food. I had read that Sherpas don't eat off each others plates or drink from the same glass, but that does not seem to be true in our household. We each ate three mo mos filled with vegetables and meat. I thought they were good, but Ang Doule shook her head and said very quietly they they were no good and
we left. I followed her next door to our usual spot where we had lunch of very spicy meat *mo mos* with chili sauce on the side. There are six in a serving and they cost 1r each. Other people in the restaurant were having *chang*, so I asked Ang Doule for a glass. She said I didn't want *chang* and bought me a cup of *chia*. Then she asked if I wanted more to eat and I said yes and had three more *mo mos* which brought my total up to twelve. She liked those *mo mos* better because they only had meat in them.

When we had finished with lunch we split up because we each had things to do, but I ran into her again at the market. She was buying a spice that was loosely wrapped in a piece of paper. We emptied out one of the small outside pockets of my pack and put the spice in it. I had asked her to buy come cabbage and she said there was no good cabbage that day. I did see some, but it was probably too expensive for her. She did buy two dozen eggs, put them in her apron, and went to the tea house where she borrowed a basket in which to carry them. I was amazed that none of the eggs were broken in the crush of people at the market. I don't know who she bought them for, but she left them at her sister-in-law's house when we returned to Kunde. She also bought some dry cheese which she put in her backpack. It was so heavy I could hardly pick it up.

After we had finished at market I looked in some of the shops and then went to a trekkers lodge that has a deck that overlooks the intersection of the two main streets in town. After ordering
lemon tea, I went out on the deck, looked down and saw Ang Doule and three of her friends. She had found a large cabbage at one of the hotels in Namche, and wanted me to carry it up the hill for her. So I went running down to the street for the cabbage and also to invite her and her friends to have chia with me. They were so funny. She asked several times if I was buying, and, when I had finally convinced her that I was, they followed me into the lodge. They were giggling like little girls doing something they shouldn't as they walked through the dormitory. These Sherpanis do not usually frequent the lodges that have been built for the tourists, so I think they felt like they were in forbidden territory. I rearranged the benches and chairs on the deck so we could all sit facing each other and talk, but when they came in they all sat in a line next to each other on a bench at the edge of the patio.

The woman who owns the lodge came out and took our orders, and Ang Doule and her friends looked so terrific I asked if I could take their picture. Their reaction was the same as if they were women from any place in the world. At first they said no, and then Ang Doule said something in Sherpa and they all started to smooth their hair, straighten out their blouses and dust off their angis. It was a very amusing picture. When they were finally ready they even smiled for the photo, a rare occurrence for Sherpas.
After they had their refreshments Ang Doule gave me the large cabbage and they left. I did some more looking in the shops and then started up the hill. At the first rest stop a Sherpa told me that Ang Doule was behind me, so I waited for her. She and her friends had visited the lama in Namche and were walking slowly home, solving all of the problems of the area as they went. Market day functions both as a chore and a recreation for the women. It is a time to do the weekly shopping, but also to relax, hear the current gossip and get together with friends.

Ang Doule and I had talked about buying a bottle of lemon crush with which to make lemon tea, so we stopped at her sister-in-law's to see if she had some in her store. Per Angi invited us into her house and we sat in her large kitchen where we had a
snack. Ang Doule gave me some kerra to eat, and I also had some chia and puru.\textsuperscript{71} Then we went down to the store and bought a bottle of lemon crush for 35r and a small bottle of rum for 60r. The rum cost twice as much as in the stores in Namche. I thought she might lower the price since I was with Ang Doule, but she didn't suggest it and I didn't ask. While we were at her sister-in-law's, Ang Doule was saying "Very richey, very richey." Her brother in law works for Mountain Travel Nepal\textsuperscript{72}, and lives in Kathmandu and Per Angi travels to Kathmandu occasionally to be with him.

The mail runner\textsuperscript{73} had come during the day and Dr. Joan brought my letters to me. I was anxious to read my mail and also needed to get some mail into the bag before morning. Unfortunately Ang Doule, who has been under a lot of pressure the last few weeks, was sick with her ulcer again and I was concerned enough about her to not want to leave her alone. I showed her a card a friend had sent me and we started talking about reading glasses. She said she had been given some in New

\textsuperscript{71} Fried chapaati or unleavened bread.

\textsuperscript{72} A trekking agency based in Kathmandu.

\textsuperscript{73} The hospital has a regular mail runner who travels between Kathmandu and the hospital in Kunde. He can make the 150 mile round trip in as little as ten days. I was fortunate enough to be able to use this service as it is faster and more reliable than the regular mail service to Namche Bazaar.
Zealand and got them out and showed them to me. She uses them when she is doing close work like mending.

October 15, 1984
3 p.m.

Peter Hillary is expected soon so and I will have to move out of my room. I will be sleeping in the main room of the house with Temba, Damu, Da Tsering, Nima and two trekkers. I have thought of finding space in another house, but I am afraid of hurting Ang Doule's feelings by moving out. We have developed a nice relationship and I don't want to spoil it. Last night Da Tsering asked Ang Doule how long I had been here and we decided that it had been about three weeks. I said that was a long time and she said "I likey". It felt like one of the greatest compliments I have ever received. One night, after I had been here a few days, while she was cooking dinner, she was mumbling the blessing Om mani padme hum74, but the last word was different and sounded like 'Sibia'. Another night she was mumbling in the same manner, but she was saying something else that included my name. She said she was saying a prayer for me, and I felt honored.

After I started moving around in my room this morning, Da Tsering brought me a cup of chia. I was surprised to see him. So far he has acted arrogant and impossible and has done very little

---

74 The esoteric mantra recited by Buddhists, which translates to Hail to the jewel in the lotus.
to help Ang Doule. Talk about culture shock. It would certainly be interesting to get into that young man's head.

When I went into the kitchen Ang Doule poured another cup of chia from the thermos which she usually keeps full, and I remained standing in front of the fireplace. There was a woman visiting who was sitting on the bench next to the fireplace. Soon they all made a fuss about me sitting down. The woman moved over and gave me her seat where it was warmer than most other places in the kitchen. Da Tsering was sitting on a low stool in front of the fire. He was listening to the radio again. This time it was a combination of Nepali rock and news. I heard the name Casper Weinberger and wondered what we had done now. Occasionally a song he likes would be played and he would turn up the radio and sing along with it. At one point he also got down a music box in which Ang Doule stores her letters and played that. It plays the song from Love Story which seems very out of place here. He is a very restless, and probably bored, young man. Life is a lot different here than in the big city and there is not that much for an eighteen year old to do in this village. This is his first year in Kathmandu and from what I have seen, I doubt that he will ever be happy living here again. Poor Ang Doule!

8 p.m.

Da Tsering ran into the kitchen shortly before dinner shouting "Peter's back, Peter's back." Da Tsering obviously idolizes Peter.
I was still living in Peter's room, and did not know what this news meant for me. It was dark already and I was not excited about moving all of my equipment at that time. When I went downstairs I saw that Damu was back. She was dragging a large plastic barrel\textsuperscript{75} around and was very excited and agitated about something. Ang Doule was in the field next to the house milking, but I couldn't get her to talk to me, so I didn't know what to do about the room. I finally decided to go inside and read and wait for instructions. Soon a boy came down to get me, so I went up and was told to stay where I was until Peter got here. I said I didn't want to move all of my equipment in the middle of the night, and Ang Doule said "No problem, no problem." Where had I heard that before? We had \textit{shakpa} for dinner and at 7:30 I said I wanted to go to bed. Two of Peter's people had already arrived, but Peter was carrying a big load and was about two hours behind them, which would have gotten him here about nine o'clock. I asked Ang Doule if I should go to bed in my room or in the main house. She said she didn't think Peter would be arriving tonight because it is too late, he is too slow, his load is too heavy, and he is too tired. Da Tsering interrupted our conversation and said he would talk with Peter if he arrived tonight and that I could safely go to bed. With that I said good night and came to my room.

\textsuperscript{75} These containers are used to carry goods to base camp. They are water proof and can be easily strapped on the animals.
By the time I got into bed it was about 8 p.m. I was reading and there was a great deal of excitement outside. Normally all of the village houses are dark by 8 or 9 p.m., but tonight it is different. At the lower end of the village there are two gas lanterns burning outside to light the way and many houses have lights on. There are many people outside talking in loud agitated voices. Everyone is very excited about Peter's return. Or are they really excited about the return of Bara Sahib's son?

October 16, 1984
4 p.m.

Peter did arrive last night. He and some other members of his group were sleeping on the floor in the big room when I went into the house this morning. I am packing my belongings and moving to the house today so that he can have his room.

Tomorrow or the next day I will go to Thyangboche for awhile. When I told Ang Doule I was going she asked why I want to leave and seemed upset that I was going away for awhile. I told her I wanted to go see the mountains.

In some Sherpas' opinion the foundation of the Sherpa wealth was the accidental breeding of the zopkio, a cross between the yak and the water buffalo, in the 1850s. The cross breeds lasted longer, were heartier, gave more milk, were more docile and adapted better to different altitudes. Since Tibetans could not breed them because of their nomadism, much of the trade with
Tibet came from taking zopkio over the border. Before that time, however, they had already established themselves as traders by taking natural dyes and butter to Tibet to trade for salt, jewelry, silver and wool.

Before trekking began there was a very rich trade in butter to Tibet since the cross breeds produced more butter as the result of better climatic conditions in Khumbu for growing grass. The Sherpas prepared the butter by first putting it on big square grooved millstones, which were pressed heavily with wooden plates to squeeze out all of the moisture. It was then put in leather bags and left in the sun to melt well into the leather preserving the leather, and then put in the shade to freeze. That accomplished it was ready to be put on yaks and taken over the 19,000 foot Nangpa La. These days most butter is made in the Solu area, because the grass grows easier there. The butter is put in large square tins and sold by weight at market. Butter is an important item to the Sherpas because it is used in Tibetan tea, which is their favorite drink, and it is important in religious ritual.

October 17, 1984
8 p.m.

The monk is sleeping with us tonight. That makes seven of us in the big room. I asked Ang Doule if she thought it was all right to take his picture and she said to go ahead, but when I started to
point my camera his way he became very agitated and it was obvious that he didn't want to be immortalized in that way. I should have asked him in the first place.

When I came into the room to get ready for bed the monk was standing up on the bench on which he will be sleeping literally disrobing. I went back to the kitchen and waited for a few minutes before going back in the room.

October 19, 1984
12 noon, Thyangboche 12,687 feet

It took just under three hours to hike up here yesterday. I hired Damu, for $2 plus lunch to carry my pack for me. Actually I did not bring my pack, but borrowed an archaic one from Ang Doule. She has equipment that belongs to the Trust that she occasionally rents out to trekkers. When I asked her if she had one I could use she teasingly said she would rent it to me for 100r. Or was she serious? We stopped for lunch in Pungo Tenga and Damu helped the woman in the lodge prepare the riki. When I arrived at the Thyangboche Lodge there were already nineteen people staying in the dormitory where the dining room table is also located. By the time people stopped arriving there were twenty four of us.
I sat in the small kitchen of the lodge all evening with another American woman and one of the Pheriche doctors and his father. Lhakpa, the woman who runs the lodge, was very good at working around us, even though I am sure we were in the way. It was fascinating watching her prepare the food. Cooking many different meals for twenty four people with one burner (hole) fueled by wood is quite a feat. She made one hundred and five *mo*

---

76 The Pheriche doctors work in the Himalayan Rescue Association's hospital in that small village. They are primarily there to help trekkers who are in trouble.
mostonight and said she has made as many as two hundred at a time. She was very impressive and a study in efficiency.

Before she finished for the night she filled her thermos bottles with hot water and chia to be used in the morning, so the trekkers can have something hot to drink as soon as they would like.

October 20, 1984
10 a.m.

The Thyangboche Lodge where I am staying is owned by the National Park and Lhakpa and Pemba lease it from them. It is one of three trekkers lodges in the area. Lhakpa and Pemba are an interesting couple. Pemba speaks very good English and seems to be a very well informed man. He said that Lhakpa is very smart and good with money, and that he loves her very much. They have four daughters and one son. Pemba said that five is too many children if they are going to be able to educate them as they would like, and he definitely didn't want to have any more. Since the contraception they were using wasn't working, he went to Kathmandu after the birth of the fifth child and had a vasectomy.

Their son is the oldest and he is going to school in India. They also have a daughter in high school in Khumjung and the other three are in grammar school. They want to educate all of their children, but seem to be more concerned about the education of their boy than about the girls. The girls all live in Namche in
the family's house, and come here to be with their parents in Thyangboche on weekends. Pemba and Lhakpa work hard because they want their children to have all of the opportunities possible, but it must be difficult for all of them. The smallest girls go to sleep on Lhakpa's lap every night and they all hang on her a lot during the day. These parents, and others, are always looking for sponsors to pay for their children's education. Pemba went to Everest base camp today with sixteen yaks. He and two other men had purchased the food that the Czechoslovakian expedition had left over at the completion of their climb. When he arrived back it was like Christmas. The cartons were opened and inside were canned and packaged foods. We could tell what some of the packages contained from the pictures, but some were a complete mystery. They divided the booty three ways and Lhakpa put some of hers in a locked glass cabinet in the entrance area of her lodge so that trekkers can see it and buy it if they so choose. Some of the packages she took to the kitchen to use in the preparation meals for the trekkers.

When I went for a walk this afternoon I saw some of the young monks flying a kite. When I stopped to talk with them they told me they were working on their studies but they became 'bored' so decided to go outside and fly a kite.

6 p.m.
Sherpas are entrepreneurs. When they see a need, it doesn't take them long to fill it. There is an umbrella tent set up outside the lodge where it is possible to take a bath for 10r. Lhakpa heats water on the stove, puts it in a bucket and takes it to the tent along with a cup for dipping and pouring the water. It is warm in the tent when the sun is on it, and it is amazing how much one can do with one bucket of water!

There was no water coming out of the PVC pipe in the meadow by the monastery that is the village water supply, so people were having to go a lot further for their water. I decided to find out what the problem was so I followed the pipe, which lays on top of the ground, up toward the spring that feeds it. I didn't have to go far to see that an animal had stepped on the pipe and broken it. It was a minor problem and could be fixed in a few minutes. When I returned to Thyangboche I found Purba Sonam and told him what I had learned and said I could fix the pipe if we could find another section of pipe. He didn't seem very interested in helping, so I went to Pemba and again explained what I had learned and he told me not to worry about the broken pipe, because in a few weeks it would be frozen anyway. At this point I stopped worrying about the water problem.

I am sharing a thomba with an American woman tonight. It is very good and something I hadn't tried before. It is a two cup

77 About $.50
size plastic cup filled with millet that has been slightly fermented with yeast. It is drunk through straws, in this case made from hollow tent poles. One keeps adding boiling water and sipping all night, so it lasts a long time.

October 23, 1984
1:15 p.m.

So far the number of people in the dormitory has varied a lot. About twenty people last night, five the night before, and twenty four the first night I was here. So far this has been a slow season because the airport at Lukla is still closed. Many people are going to the Annapurna area instead of trekking in here. It takes less than an hour to fly here from Kathmandu, but about ten days to walk, and most people can't afford that much time to get to the mountains they have come here to see. We sat in the kitchen again last night too, and my new 'little brother' was there. He is the most wonderful little monk with a cute giggle. He bought me several glasses of rakshi and they were all teasing me about getting drunk. It is always fascinating to watch Lhakpa cook for all of those people.

I tried to help Lhakpa change the system she uses for taking orders. She has a notebook, and people write their name and order in it. Then she has to count how much of everything to fix. I made
a new ordering form that I thought would make it easier for her and she seemed to like the system very much\textsuperscript{78}.

There is a nunnery in Deboche, not too far from here, and I was anxious to see the \textit{gompa} which had been painted by the famous Sherpa painter Kapa Kalden. The village looks like a bombed out area that has not been rebuilt. There are many fallen buildings and also a sense of strangeness about the place. We had a hard time finding the person with the key, but it was worth the wait. It was the most beautiful \textit{gompa} I have seen, and the last person to sign the guest book did so in May, so we felt very privileged to be there. The keeper of the key also asked us into her house for \textit{chia} and boiled \textit{riki}, so it was a very special day for me.

October 23, 1984
7:15 p.m.

I have become a member of the family, eating boiled \textit{riki} in the kitchen for breakfast and \textit{bhaat} with \textit{shakpa} poured over it for a second lunch. Lhakpa is a fantastic woman. At dinner time last night she went eighty miles an hour for the longest time, turning out many different meals on her one burner. What these women can accomplish is quite amazing. My admiration grows and grows.

\textsuperscript{78} When I returned to the lodge for Mani-Rimdu, Lhakpa asked me to make some more charts for her.
October 28, 1984
12 noon Kunde

Purba Sonam and three other monks are making a mandala\(^79\) out of colored sand and it is incredibly beautiful. It actually looks three dimensional. They are making it on a board on the floor of the gompa at Thyangboche. It will take four days to make, and at the end of Mani-Rimdu it will be thrown in the water as part of a ceremony.

I have been sharing Bara Sahib's little house with two New Zealand women since we returned from Thyangboche on Saturday. We were just waking up at 7 this morning when we heard a knock at the door. It was Ang Doule with cups of chia for us. After a few greetings she went back into the house. Shortly after Ang Dickey\(^80\), carrying her baby in his basket, and Sherap Zamu knocked. They were both carrying thermoses. We invited them into the room and they sat on one of the beds. About this time Ang Doule, who doesn't let anything get by her, came down from the kitchen to see what we were doing. The two Sherpanis had stopped on their way to work for the tree farm and had brought some chang and rakshi to give Margaret and Jenny a real Sherpa

\(^79\) A kind of Buddhist symbol.

\(^80\) The Sherpanis knew one of my friends when she lived here a few years ago and have kept in touch with her.
farewell as they were leaving the next day. Ang Doule went to the kitchen and returned with glasses and a thermos of chia. We all sat and chatted and proceeded to get a bit tipsy. After we had our party, and Ang Dickey nursed her little boy, they left to go to work. I was ready to go back to bed and sleep off the buzz.

October 29, 1987
7 p.m.

We were all still snuggled in our bags about 8 a.m. when someone started shouting outside our door. Domaley, another friend of Margaret's, had come to say good bye to her and Jenny. Margaret jumped out of bed in her flannel night gown and opened the door and Domaley came in with a pitcher of chang, followed by Ang Doule with three cups of chia. We all groaned at the thought of drinking so early for the second day in a row. Domaley and Ang Doule went up to the kitchen while we dressed, and we joined them there a few minutes later and had several glasses of chang and breakfast of yogurt with tsampa and sugar. We took some pictures and Domaley continued on to her job at the hospital.

Margaret and Jenny rented one of the private rooms at the Khumbu Lodge in Namche. It was small, but nice, with sunlight streaming through the window onto the bed. The Sherpas, realizing that some trekkers like privacy, are starting to build private rooms as a supplement to the dormitories they have been running for many years. Of course the private rooms are more
expensive. It was 23r for the room with three beds in it, as opposed to 1r each for beds in one of the dormitories.

When I arrived back here at four this afternoon the place was in an uproar. Tomorrow is the first anniversary of the death of Mingma Tsering's mother, and the family was getting ready to have a puja. It is a day when monks say prayers from their holy books, people visit the family, and offerings of food are given to all of the households in the village.

This afternoon Temba and two women were kneeling around a big sheet of plastic in the big room kneading huge quantities of cooked bhaat. After the bhaat was kneaded they formed it into cone shapes about 3" across at the bottom and 6-8" high. There were many of these already made. Also sitting on the floor was a monk forming the kneaded rice into other, more elaborate, forms. Those tormas 81 would be used on the alter that was set up in the living room and the plain ones would be given to the villagers. On the bench along the wall was another monk with a large bowl of water in front of him as well as a plastic bag full of butter and a plastic syringe with which he was extruding the butter. He was coloring some of the butter pink and red with red food dye and forming flowers and other shapes with it, which he left floating on the water to cool and harden. He eventually put the butter forms on the tormas and also on thin dowels that were about 8"

81 Ritual figures made for religious services.
long and would be attached to the tormas later. Making these tormas takes an artist of great skill.

Ang Doule was nowhere in sight. I asked the women if I could help and my offer was gratefully accepted. I think if Ang Doule had been there she would have said no because she doesn't feel I should do any work. I was put to work kneading the bhaat, which felt like kneading bread, but I left the forming of the tormas to the others. After that bhaat, as well as another huge pan full was finished, one of the women left, and the other said "Memsahib," and indicated that I was to follow her. We went into the kitchen where she sat me in front of a huge bowl (about 2' across and 6" deep) full of a very runny batter made of rice flour, tsampa, sugar and water. I was, it seemed, supposed to mix it with my hands until it was smooth. I took off my watch, rolled up my sleeves and dove in. It was kind of fun. In the meantime Damu had peeled lots of boiled riki and was in the process of mashing them on the large stone in the middle of the kitchen floor. The other woman put a large wok on the stove and filled it with mustard oil which she heated until it was smoking. Then she poured a circle of the batter, about a cup at a time, in the oil and fried it. Soon she had a woven serving tray filled with circles of fried batter. I ate some of them and they were very good while hot, but quite greasy when they were allowed to get cold. They will be part of the food

82 These were being prepared for our dinner tonight.
offerings given to the villagers tomorrow, so there are a lot of them. In fact she is still cooking them.

The monks are still busy too, and their figures are works of art. When it started getting dark Temba got out two gas lanterns so that the work could continue. Normally only a candle is burning in the big room. Temba had trouble getting one of the lamps to work, so I helped him find the problem and fix it, and now everyone is continuing with her/his work. The monks are setting up an altar in the big room, complete with the tormas, yak butter candles and incense. Tomorrow should be an interesting day, but right now I am drinking chang and waiting for dinner.

Figure 13 The monks forming tormas.
8:30 p.m.

Ang Doule bustled in a few minutes ago. She had been visiting another household with a thermos of chia. She checked to see how the preparations were proceeding, and was evidently satisfied, because she then proceeded to cook "potato mashey" for our dinner.

October 29, 1984
1:30 p.m.

Today is the first anniversary of the death of Mingma's mother and I am sitting in the main room of the house with six chanting monks, drums, cymbals, candles, piles of food and tormas, which I helped make last night. Temba is sitting next to me working on one of his paintings. His work is very fine.

The people who are here, mostly women, are sitting in the kitchen and visiting. Some are helping cook lunch which will consist of mo mos and coleslaw. The dough for the mo mos is being rolled out with a piece or pipe on a board that has been placed on the floor. It is then cut into circles with a glass. Many of the women brought chang for the party.

4 p.m.

Lunch was delicious. The best I have had in this house. Many of the women are still sitting in the kitchen drinking chang. We had a contest going awhile ago, and chang was being consumed at
a very rapid rate. The women were filling the glasses so full that most of us were spilling on ourselves. Three of the older women in the village were sitting on the bench under the window and I tried to match them glass for glass as they said, "Shey, shey memsahib," but I finally had to drop out. I definitely am not a match for them in a chang drinking contest.

A while ago Ang Doule started to put together plates\(^{83}\) of the food that she had bought and/or made. In the center of each was one of the tormas. Temba had painted the top of each with red food coloring. Ang Doule took some of each kind of food, put it on a plate and gave it to people who were here. Then plates were taken to the households that were not represented here today. It must have been a very expensive party to give. All the while the monks were chanting prayers, using their instruments and drinking chang.

This could be the last celebration for Mingma's mother, or there could be others on future anniversaries. This is a way for the Sherpas to display their wealth and status to the community.

October 30, 1984
8:30 p.m.

---

\(^{83}\) Some of the foods included on the plates were tormas, boiled and peeled \textit{riki}, \textit{kerra}, peaches, \textit{syaaau}, wrapped hard candy, Nabico Biscuits, boiled beans, guavas, \textit{puru}, and Mandarin oranges.
That was quite a party yesterday. In addition to lunch, we also fed everyone who was here for dinner. It was mostly a party of women, as there were only one man and a few teen age boys in attendance. Right now this is a society without men. There are a few old men around, but most of the young and middle aged ones are involved in trekking and expedition business and are gone for several months at this time of the year, as this is one of the prime seasons for trekking.

I helped clean up after the party today. We recycled everything. Absolutely nothing was wasted. The rice from the left over tormas is being used to make chang, and the butter will be made into candles.

I watched as Ang Doule made the chang today. Normally rice is cooked and cooled to blood temperature. (Today she heated the torma rice to the proper temperature.) Then it is spread on a plastic tarp, pulverized dry hard yeast is quickly mixed in, and it is returned to the big pot with a tight cover and sealed with plastic bags, dung, or "potato mashey." Then it is surrounded with old clothes and blankets to keep the heat in and it is left to 'sleep' for three days, after which it is transferred to a wooden or plastic barrel and left for a week or more, again with the top sealed. The longer it is left, the better it becomes. Then enough water is added to double the amount in the barrel and it is again left for a few days, at which time the rice floats to the top and it is ready to drink.
There are two kinds of *chang*. *First chang* which is clear and in some cases, if it is left to ferment for a long time, can taste like fine white wine, and *second chang* which can be a thick porridgey drink that one must chew.

The use of plastic is becoming more prevalent as the people in Khumbu become more and more exposed to the outside world. Chang, which used to be served in wooden bottles, is now served in plastic pitchers. The tea stirrer which used to be a wooden carved object is now made of plastic, and the wooden bowls and ladles that were used in the past have been replaced with plastic and metal objects.

The town water system was partially frozen today. It is difficult to do laundry with just a dribble coming out of the pipe, and many people were lined up waiting to fill water containers for home use. Now that it has gotten so cold washing clothes is almost impossible. My hands were frozen when I finished.

Oct. 31, 1984
8:30 p.m.

Two more climbers were killed on Everest. That makes five since I have been here. One of the men was a Sherpa and these people cannot afford to lose any more of their young men. Many people here think mountaineering should be stopped. This society, at least at this time of the year, seems to be run by the women.
I just had dinner at the hospital with Dr. Joan and Mingma Temba who is one of the three Sherpas who works there. We had a wonderful dinner which consisted of an omelet, boiled carrots, chips with catsup and (I still can't believe this) apple pie for dessert. It was the best dinner I have had up here, and the warmest environment too. The kitchen of the hospital has a woodburning stove in it which is used to heat water. It is always stoked because it is necessary to have hot water available for any medical emergencies that might arise. In addition to heating the water it also heats the kitchen, so I was actually able to take off my jacket while I was eating!

November 1, 1985
8:30 a.m.

I am going to Thami for a few days. It is about a three hour walk from here, up the canyon one would follow to go over the Nangpa La into Tibet. It is a quiet little village off the main trekking route. Many Sherpas and Tibetans are still using the pass as a trading route despite reports that the border between the two countries is closed. Wool and salt come this way, while dyes, *riki*, and *zopkio* go the other.

November 1, 1984
5 p.m., Thami, 12,400 feet
I got a later start on my trek than I had hoped. On the way here I stopped for a *chia* break and there were two children in the tea house. I asked the woman if they were hers and she said no, that they belonged to the Sherpa who "went away on Mount Everest". It took a minute for me to realize they were the children of the Sherpa who was killed recently on the Nepalese Police expedition.

I arrived in Thami about 4 p.m. The clouds had moved in early and I was soon walking in the fog. Domaley had given me the name of a woman\(^\text{84}\) who might take me in and approximately where her house was located. I saw a trekking group at the bottom of the village and asked a Sherpa if he knew where Circe lived. He told me where the house was, but also said he was in Namche. He offered to let me stay in the house the trekking group was using and I was tempted to do so because it was a known quantity, but I finally decided to go ahead with my adventure and found the area in which the house was supposed to be located.

Thami is a beautiful village with a stream running through it. I was following the stream, trying to find a place to cross, when I saw two women and three children walking toward me. I asked them if they knew where Circi's house was, that Domaley at Kunde hospital had said I might be able to stay there for a couple of days. One woman looked me over, indicated I was to follow her,

---

\(^{84}\) As it turned out I really had the name of her husband.
and walked off. When we arrived at a house she walked in. It was then that I realized she was the woman I was looking for. She took me upstairs into the main room, showed me a picture of a Sherpa, and said that was Circi. He is her husband and is a cook and sirdar for expeditions. He was the cook on the recent Dutch expedition which just reached the top of Mount Everest. The room was a typical Sherpa room with expedition and copper pots on shelves along one of the long walls. There was a double bed in the corner away from the windows, and benches on the left side with tables in front of them and two pillars in the middle of the room. There was a lot of canned food and equipment around the house from the expedition, including a huge flashlight the likes of which I have never seen before. She indicated that I was to sleep on a bench in the corner of the big room, and I proceeded to unpack my bag. Included in my corner was a table that was covered with aluminum foil, the first I have seen here. The three children of the house watched my every move as I unpacked everything in order to get to my sleeping bag which was on the bottom of the pack. I wanted to get my equipment laid out because after the sun goes down it is almost impossible to light up a Sherpa house enough to see anything. A cup of chia was brought to me, and as soon as I had finished fussing with my things I went into the kitchen.

In this house the stairs lead into a smallish kitchen that doesn't seem to hold as many possessions as Ang Doule's. It
doesn't contain a bed or cabinets, just shelves that are a bit more crude and primitive. Most of the dishes were dirty and were strewn about the room. When a plate or glass was needed it had to be washed. Nang Droma\textsuperscript{85} was there with another woman, and on the stove was a huge pot of \textit{riki}. The pot was over two feet across and a foot deep, and she picked it up occasionally and tossed the \textit{riki}, trying to get the top ones to the bottom so they would cook evenly. When they were cooked she poured the water off and dumped the vegetables into a plastic pan to cool and another batch was started. As soon as they were cool enough the women and the girl started to peel them, with their hands of course, eating a few as they went along. After a few minutes I offered to help, being something of an expert at potato peeling myself at this point, and after some convincing they let me. We continued to do this until about 9 p.m. with a short break for dinner (\textit{bhaat} with a \textit{shakpa} of \textit{saag} and \textit{riki} poured over it). We did an entire \textit{doko} full and part of another. The children went to bed and we continued to peel. They teased me about how clean my potatoes were after I was finished with them as compared to theirs. Nang Droma gave me some warm yak milk to drink. It was very tasty. At about 8 p.m. we started drinking \textit{chang} and went through a couple of pitchers. Nang Droma and I drank most of it with the other woman taking sips and making some very funny

\textsuperscript{85} Circi's wife
faces that indicated that she did not like it at all. Perhaps they should have put some sugar in it, as some of the Sherpanis do, to make it more palatable for her. When she wasn't peeling or drinking, Nang Droma was carding, spinning and knitting sheep and yak wool. She was constantly busy. She did not use a drop spindle as I have seen many men using, but rather one that looked like a top on a long piece of doweling, which she spun with her left hand on a concave piece of tile which she had placed on the floor. She worked the wool with her right hand, spun the doweling with her left, and was working very, very fast. I saw some raw wool go from its original state to a stocking cap in the space of a few hours. Of course I had to buy one from her for 40r86 before I left.

When it was time, we all went to sleep in the big room, the two boys at the other end of the bench I was on, Nang Droma and her daughter on the double bed and the other woman on the floor. The two women talked a lot before they went to sleep, and before I went to sleep Nang Droma got up to go to the chaarpi. I didn't hear the creaky87 door open and it occurred to me that she was relieving herself in the downstairs stable with the animals. This caused a light to go on in my head and I did the same from then on.

86 About $2.25

87 All of the outside doors creaked in the Sherpa houses I was in.
November 2, 1984
5: 45 p.m.

This village is on the trail which leads to the Nangpa La and Tingre in Tibet. It is the one that the Sherpas used for their trading before the takeover of Tibet by China and the subsequent closing of the border. Foreigners are not supposed to go further toward the pass than this village, but I decided to take a walk in that direction anyway to see what it felt like to be a bit closer to my dream of visiting Tibet. But first I helped the women of the house with one of their chores. This morning, by the time I got up, they were already slicing the riki we peeled last night and laying them out on tarps to dry. They dry for three days and then they are put in large sacks and traded with Tibet for salt and wool. All of the books say that trading has stopped, but that doesn't seem to be the case. There appears to still be a lot of merchandise traveling back and forth over the pass.

I walked up the trail for several hours and then took a fork to the south. I passed through several yersas after I left the main trail. Some of the houses were occupied, but most were deserted, the animals having already been taken down to lower elevations for the winter. It was a bit eerie being by myself among the stone houses with their prayer flags blowing in the wind and with the magnificent mountains towering all about me. After I had passed through several yersas, a young Sherpani caught up with me and
offered me a bon bon.\textsuperscript{88} I was amused at the turn around since I was usually the one being asked to provide candy for the children. I asked her if she could fix me a cup of chia and followed her to her yersa, but it was readily apparent that, since the fire was not started, it would be quite awhile before I would actually have a hot drink, so I decided to move on.

On my way back to Thami I encountered a yak train from Tibet that was carrying mostly sheep wool. The Tibetan who was with the animals tried to sell me all of the jewelry he was wearing. I suppose he will be at market tomorrow.

The three little children of the household are standing around me as I am writing this. All of them are very dirty and have runny noses. Both are common conditions here. It is more unusual to see a child who does not have a runny nose than one who does. Adults are not immune to the problem either. Last night when we were peeling riki the other two women had runny noses and were blowing them on the inside of their dress and sweater.

November 3, 1984
8 p.m.
Kunde

This morning, when I was showing signs of being awake at about 6 a.m., I was brought a cup of chia, and then, before I could

\textsuperscript{88} The French word for candy which the children use when they beg.
even get dressed, a plate of fried riki. I have a hard time facing food that early in the day under normal conditions, and breakfast of greasy riki with onions was more than I could handle. I choked down a few bites just to be polite, but it was not a meal that I enjoyed. I put the plate on the stove and told them to leave it, that I would eat the food later, but when I went back it was gone. Nang Droma was scurrying around getting ready to go to market, about a two hour walk for her. I was going to market also, to meet Ang Doule for lunch, but I decided that Nang Droma, who was taking two unloaded zopkio with her, would be moving faster than I wanted to go. We worked out my bill, she left and I finished my packing and started back.

When I arrived in Namche at about 10 a.m., I found Ang Doule and we had lunch in the kitchen of a new lodge, all of the little Sherpa ladies in their dark angis and the memsahib. This lodge caters to Westerners and has the first bar I have seen here. I actually saw a bottle of champagne there, as well as a bottle of Johnny Walker Scotch and some cokes. We had some hot mo mos, and chia and hot lemonade. Then we shopped a little and went to the Khumbu Lodge, where many tourists go, and had chia in the kitchen. All of the little ladies take good care of me, but the language problem is getting frustrating, and I often find myself wishing I could understand what they are talking about. There were seven or eight of us, and I offered to pay for the drinks, but
they were free because the woman who owns the lodge is a friend of Ang Doule's.

The daughter of the lodge keeper speaks very good English. I learned that she wanted to continue her studies away from Khumbu, but her father, who is a very successful business man and frequently travels to Kathmandu, would not allow it and arranged a marriage for her. She now works in his store and has two children.

We split up after leaving the lodge and I stayed in town longer than they did but caught up with them on the trail, as they gossip all the way up the hill. I was suffering with a heavy pack, but I walked part way up with a Tibetan who had drunk too much chang and he provided me with some entertainment. He was very happy and very funny, but he was having a hard time staying on his feet. Ang Doule and her friends teased me about the Tibetan, asking me if I had a new boy friend.

November 4, 1984
12:30 p.m.

The sun just went behind the clouds and a cold wind is blowing. The temperature has been dropping steadily since I have been in Nepal. It now gets well below freezing every night. The town water supply has been frozen on several mornings and it is even harder to get up and get dressed.
I have decided that the reason Sherpas have so little permanent art is not that they are not artistic, but because they destroy all of the beautiful objects they make after they have served their function in religious ritual. A good example of this is the mandala at Thyangboche that is made from sand. It is beautiful and unlike anything I have ever seen and it will be blown away on the last day of Mani-Rimdu. I wish I could take it home with me.

November 5, 1985
4:30 p.m. Phortse, 12,140ft.

I went into the house to tell Ang Doule that I was leaving on my trek today and to ask if she wanted me to clear out my room so she could rent it out while am gone. Ang Doule loves to make money and I don't pay her when I go trekking, even if my gear is still in the room. She told me to move my gear into the gompa and offered to fix me some lunch before I left. I said all right and went back to my room to finish packing. She fried bhaat in mustard oil and I was surprised at how good it tasted.

When the mail arrived today I felt so homesick and lonesome for everyone that I was having a hard time keeping from crying. I probably confused Ang Doule, because I usually give her a hug and a kiss when I leave for a few days, but yesterday I just mumbled something and took off.
I decided I should get out and experience another village. A boy with two unloaded zopkio came up behind me as I was walking and I asked where he was going. He said Phortse. Then I asked him how much he would charge to carry my pack and he said 40r. I countered with 10r, we negotiated and agreed on 15r. It was a dollar well spent! The animals set a nice pace and we enjoyed a pleasant, slow walk. He kept asking me what trekking group I was with and seemed to have a hard time understanding that I was on my own. While we were walking I asked about a lodge in Phortse and he said there isn't one but that I could stay at his house. I asked about his wife. No wife. Hmmm... I finally found out that he lives with his family. When we arrived a little after three he told his mother what I wanted and she indicated where I could sleep.

This house is more traditional. The windows do not have glass in them, but are covered with white rice paper. There is no separate kitchen, and the fireplace is an open hearth with metal stands for the cooking pots. Since the fire is open the room is very smokey. In the far corner are a double bed, and some open shelves where brass plates and other eating utensils are very prominently displayed. Along the back wall are many items that appear to be from expeditions.

I have seen a few children begging in other villages, but in this village all of the children are begging. They stand in front of me, put out their little dirty hands and say "hello bon bon," "hello
school pen," "hello give me." The adults in this village seem to be dressed more poorly too. They appear to be less affluent than the people I have seen in other villages.

Most of the riki have been harvested, but the women of the village are still working hard at burying them. The agriculture cycle seems to be a bit later than it is in Kunde.

Right after we pulled in a German trekking group also arrived and started setting up camp in the front yard.

![The traditional hearth in a Phortse house](image)

Figure 14  The traditional hearth in a Phortse house

November 6, 1984
11:45 a.m.
There was an old, wrinkled woman wearing the pointed hat of a nun and a heavy, gray and very patched angi sitting on the floor next to the fire when I came in yesterday. I was told that she is 80 years old. She was eating yellow stewed riki with her fingers out of a yellow plastic bowl. She looked at me, raised her index finger that was crooked with arthritis and asked if I was alone. I said yes. Then she smiled and chuckled and looked like I was doing something very strange. It is unusual for a woman, especially one my age, to be here alone. Sherpas think a woman who travels alone is a witch. She handed me a riki and I peeled and ate it, and then the woman of the house handed me a plate of them.

When the old woman finished eating she spun her prayer wheel and said her prayer beads, "Om mani padme hum" As she did this she was gaining sonam for her afterlife. Then she gestured that I should warm my hands by the fire. After a while she got up and disappeared through the door to the gompa, and I did not see her again until today. The woman of the house told me her mother, the old woman, is 80 years old.

This house has a south facing patio outside the kitchen, on the second level, and that is also where the chaarpi is located. It is a room with a hole in the floor, and it is filled with leaves. This morning someone put a new supply of leaves in it and

89 Merit
inadvertently covered the hole. If I hadn't known approximately where not to step, I could have had a very disastrous accident!

It was madness around here last night and this morning. Three trekking groups, not just one, were staying in the yard and cooking in the house. It is interesting to note that they were cooking with wood, which is illegal for trekking groups. It surprised me, because I would have thought that all of the Sherpas would be concerned about the firewood problem.

I had just gotten myself settled in the corner of the room farthest from the cooking fire when the crews for the treks invaded us and took over the house. There were people all over, but it was a very efficient operation, and fascinating to watch. The Sherpanis laid a tarp on the floor right next to my bed and on it they put cups, condiments, silverware, etc. They also washed the dishes there by candlelight. I was worried all night about how I would get in and out of bed without stepping on a jar of catsup or jam. There was a large fire going in the house, because both pot racks were being used, as well as one on the outside deck. People were working everywhere in the dark, smoke filled room.

Sherpa women often cook different meals for different people in their households. This evening the trekking groups were fed first. Then the woman of the house prepared soup which was eaten by her son and a young Sherpani and her son. Then she cooked the next meal. One of the trekking groups had given me a curry soup which I thought was my dinner, but I was then
presented with a huge bowl of bhaat with shakpa poured over it. I asked her for a smaller portion because I didn't want to waste it.

After dinner was served and cleaned up chang and rakshi bottles were passed around and soon everyone started getting ready for bed. I was not offered anything to drink last night, but this morning before breakfast someone asked if I wanted some chang.

I slept on a bench in a corner, and the other benches around the room were also full of people. I asked that they leave a path open so I could walk through if I needed to get up in the night. When I did get up at 4 a.m. there were people sleeping all over the floor, and the door to the chaarpi was locked, so I went down where the animals are, as the Sherpas do. When I staggered back up to bed someone else was getting up and didn't have a torch, so I loaned him mine. It was very smokey in the room throughout the night.

When I came back from my walk around the village yesterday three porters, two women and a man, were by the wall in the yard cooking. They had a pot balanced on some burning twigs. As I walked through I said namaste and they greeted me like old friends. The older woman was sitting on a blanket on the ground, and she moved over and pulled me down so I could sit with her. She told me to warm my hands by the fire. They were very friendly and reenforced my feeling that I can identify with them more than with the Western trekkers.
This is supposed to be an unacculturated village, but trekking does seem to be an important part of the economy of some of the families. There also seem to be more poor families in this village than in the others I have visited. There were children standing around the trekking groups today, and I saw a ragged woman send her little boy in to join them in their begging.

There is a school in this village, but it seems that in these poorer villages girls do not attend elementary school in the same numbers as they do in the Khumjung and Namche schools because their work at home is important to the economy of their families. Since Sherpa is the language that most of the people use in their homes, people in the main villages feel that girls should go to school at least long enough to learn how to speak Nepali which is the common language of the people of Nepal.

3 p.m.

The trekkers are gone and the family spent the day cleaning up after them and cooking. They are eating the third meal of the day and are trying to get me to join them, but I am resisting. The Sherpas often eat four meals as they are doing today, and as a result they seem to be cooking all of the time.

They are also using the day to make chang and rakshi. Chang is fermented, but rakshi is distilled and it is quite a process. There is a large very black copper pot put over the fire. It is over 2' across and at least 18" deep. Set in that is a basket of sorts
that is sealed to the pot with yak dung or, in this case, 'potato mashey.' In the large pot is placed the last of the second *chang* from the bottom of the barrel, which in most cases is thick enough to chew. Cut potatoes and water are added to that. A pitcher is placed in the basket and a cone shaped copper pot is put on top, sealed in place, and filled with cold water. The fluid in the bottom is heated, vaporizes, hits the cold copper, condenses and runs to the bottom of the cone and into the pitcher. It makes a rather clever distillery. One nice thing about this process is that there is now a fire in here. It is overcast outside and it was starting to get cold.

This is one of the few places in the world where polyandry\(^90\) is practiced. The woman of this house is married to two brothers, and her daughter told me that she has two fathers and that Sherpa men are lazy. The one father who is here has been in bed since I arrived yesterday afternoon, moaning, coughing, wearing snow goggles, and drinking *chang*. I don't know if he is sick or has been drinking too much.

One of the sons in this household is a cretin like Temba, and he too is able to communicate very effectively with the people around using gestures and grunting sounds. Today he was weaving a *doko* and when I asked him if I could take a photograph he asked me to pay him, which I did. I spent some time watching

\(^{90}\) The practice or the condition of having more than one husband at a time; marriage with several husbands.
him, and later in the day, when he was spinning yak wool with a drop spindle, I again asked if I could photograph him and he said yes. However, when I handed him some money he refused it saying that we were friends now.

November 8, 1984
12:30 p.m.

Thyangboche has been converted from a nice peaceful monastery to a circus. Lots of tents have been set up, and are being used as tea shops and stalls for Tibetans selling wonderful original Tibetan art objects. There are also many trekker's tents. It is a real mess. And the Sherpas are still insisting that the number of trekkers and Sherpas here is smaller than usual because the airstrip at Lukla opened a month later than usual. With fewer trekkers in the area the Sherpas have not made as much money and so do not have as much to spend on religious festivals.

The Thyangboche Lodge is packed with people. All of the beds are full, most of the floor space is being used, and people are even sleeping on the table. Pemba had a reserved sign on my space so I am sleeping in my favorite spot, where I can sit up in the morning and see Sagarmantha.

Lhakpa and Pemba have set up a temporary kitchen outside where they are doing some of the cooking. This is the most important tourist week of the year for them, so they try to
accommodate as many people as they can, both for sleeping and eating. It only costs one rupee a night for sleeping, but there is an implicit understanding that one's meals will be bought in the lodge also. Lhakpa asked me, as soon as I arrived, if I would set up the new way of taking orders for them. With this many people I think it will be a big help to the cooks.

It snowed today for the first, or blessing day, of Mani-Rimdu. The shortened ceremony was held outside and consisted of a blessing, by the reincarnate lama, of the more important people in the community, their gifts of money to the monks, and the blessing of all who wanted to be blessed. This is an important day for the Sherpas who use it to display their wealth and position in the Sherpa community.

November 11, 1984
2 p.m.

Mani-Rimdu was very interesting to see. Of course the dance day was the most colorful and exciting. I was amazed at the professionalism of the monk's performances. Purba Sonam took us into the gompa to see the completed sand mandala. It was exquisite. I wish I could take it home with me. Most Sherpa art is temporary as it is used in religious ritual and then destroyed, usually as part of a ceremony.

Lhakpa is amazing. A trekker staying in a lodge is expected to keep track of everything she/he eats or drinks. On departure day
she/he gets together with the owner of the lodge, and her hand held calculator, and they discuss the bill and decide what is owed. I try to write down everything I consume, but always seem to forget something. But Lhakpa, despite the fact that she has so many people to take care of, always remembers everything. This time she looked at my list and reminded me that on such and such an afternoon I had a cup of lemon tea, and of course she was right. I wonder how she does it.

Figure 15 The author at 18,000 feet in front of Mount Everest
I met Lhakpa's parents who had walked up from Namche Bazaar for the festival. They seem to be important people in the Sherpa society, because they were invited to all of the important parties given during the week, including the one hosted by the reincarnate lama.

November 11, 1984
4:30 p.m., Dole, 13,400 feet

I am sitting in a little Sherpa house freezing. The pull of the mountains was too great, so I decided to trek to Gokyo and climb Gokyo Rei at 18,000 feet to get a close view of Mount Everest. There are ten trekkers staying here, plus the woman who runs the lodge and her little boy. She made shakpa in a pressure cooker for dinner and it was so good I had two helpings.

November 12, 1984
5 p.m., Gokyo, 15,720 feet

In the past this was a yersa with only a few rude stone houses which were inhabited in the summer. However, some have been expanded recently and are trekker's lodges during the spring and fall. The building I am staying in has been doubled in size to make room for some bunk beds. After I was settled I visited another tea house and then climbed the ridge behind the yersas to look at the view. When I returned the man in the lodge said his
wife had gone to market while he took care of the lodge and their children, and she was not back yet. He described her and I said I had seen a woman with three zopkio at Machermo, a yersa I passed through on the way here. She arrived shortly after, having been slowed down by the animals who are clumsy when loaded, and do not travel as fast as people.

November 13, 1984
4 p.m., Machermo, 14,650 feet

I climbed the 18,000 foot ridge in Gokyo this morning and it was perfectly clear and so warm that I didn’t even put my jacket on when I was on top. What a view! I am glad I did it. I was amazed at how easy it was for me. The last time I had a great deal of trouble breathing, but this time I walked straight up without even stopping for a rest. It really felt wonderful.

November 15, 1985
1 p.m.

Kunde (tucked into my sleeping bag)

I returned from a nine day trek yesterday and was really exhausted on my last day’s hike. But I kept pressing on and finally reached the top of a ridge where there is a tea house. A young woman and her daughter live there, but they were not home and the building was locked. I was disappointed because I was very tired and needed something to eat and drink. As I was walking
back to the trail the woman, who was coming from Khumjung with a load or riki, approached me, and I followed her to her house where I had several cups of chia, with lots of sugar, and a packet of biscuits. Her house is very primitive and stands all by itself a long way away from any settlement. It is a single small room with a dirt floor. An area against one wall is separated off from the rest of the room and is covered with leaves, so must be the sleeping area for herself and her little girl. Her stove is an open fire in the other side of the room. She is a very pretty young woman and I feel especially frustrated about the language barrier when I meet someone like her who I would like to talk with and whose story I would like to learn. When I finally felt like I had been revived, I put on my pack and finished my trek, returning here at 5 p.m.

When I arrived back in Kunde I received a warm welcome from Ang Doule, including lots of hugging and kissing. While I was moving my gear back into my room I asked what she was fixing for dinner and she said we hadn't had riki cour for such a long time she thought it was a good night for it. Sigh. As it turned out, I had had so little to eat all day that I ate it very fast and it tasted much better than usual.

November 17, 1984
4 p.m.
Ang Doule and a friend were gossiping in the kitchen today, so they lowered their voices to a whisper. When they talk in their normal voices they can be heard outside the house. Often Ang Doule will open the kitchen window and direct work that is going on outside, or have a conversation with a person who is walking on the paths close to the house. She doesn't miss much of what is going on in this part of the village.

The agricultural cycle has almost come to a close. There are still a few women using kodaalo to dig up the fields which had been planted with buckwheat, and Mingma Temba's father plowed one of his fields with two zopkio. The field was harvested before I arrived here, but it must have been planted in riki, because, while he was guiding the animals, his wife was walking behind him picking up riki the plowing was turning up and putting them in a basket. That is the only plowing I have seen in this village. However, in Khumjung, I did see several fields that had been plowed. Mingma said that in the spring when people are getting ready to plant more people use plows, but only in the fields that are big enough to make their use feasible.

8 p.m.

We started off to market together this morning, but I eventually told Ang Doule I would see her there and slowed down to a more comfortable pace. When I arrived at the market I noticed there was a lot more meat than usual. Then I saw a
Sherpani walk by carrying a water buffalo head. It was so heavy she could hardly carry the bloody thing. I wonder what she was going to do with it.

After we finished shopping I went to visit Lhakpa in her Namche house. She has a traditional house that is one room with an open fireplace. She fixed me some chia and wanted to feed me. In fact she almost insisted that I have an omelet, but I finally convinced her that I was not hungry. She gave me a couple of cans of pate that Pemba had bought from the Czechoslovakian expedition and I decided to buy some crackers to go with it and treat the family tonight.

After I left Lhakpa I went to the bank to cash some travelers checks. I was told that it was closed, but I saw Lhakpa's father in the lobby, explained my problem to him, and he arranged for me to cash the checks. I was fairly sure the man was influential when I first met him.

The Sherpas in Namche are beginning to recognize me and respond to me in a friendly way. They know I am living with Ang Doule and are starting to ask me a lot of questions, like how long I am staying, what I am doing, etc. Today I saw a woman who I spoke with when she was porter in Thyangboche, and it was like meeting an old friend.

I walked up the hill from Namche with a man from Khumjung. He was the cook on the police expedition when they lost the sirdar and the head climber for the police. He said many wives are
telling their husbands they can't climb, that it is too dangerous. They may go trekking and on expeditions, they say, but no high altitude climbing. What will they do if all of the wives say the same thing? Would there be another ethnic group who would, and could, take over from the Sherpas? They certainly don't get paid very much for taking such risks with their lives. A sirdar earns 41r per day which is less than $2.50.

When I got to Kunde I stopped at Domaley's for some chia and finally got back to my room at about 6 p.m. I went up to the kitchen where it was warmer and took the crackers and one can of pate with me. Ang Doule looked out the window and said that Mingma was coming home, and he soon came in with three young people. Two, a young man and a young woman, are from Solu and are going to be trained at the hospital to work in the clinic in Bung. The third young man has been here before and accompanies Mingma on his trips. I opened the pate and everyone enjoyed the treat and then we had shakpa for dinner and the young woman did the dishes. They had boiled a lot of riki to use in the morning and they actually let me help peel them.

Louise Hillary was killed in a plane crash a few years ago, shortly after take off from Kathmandu. So great is the Sherpa's love of the woman, and, of course, of her husband Sir Edmund Hillary, that they erected a monument in her memory on the ridge behind Kunde. I walked to it today and was amazed at the
incredible view from the spot. The Sherpas chose well. Of course
the crystal clear, magnificent day didn't hurt my discovery a bit.

Blood pheasants are the national bird of Nepal and are now
protected here since this has been made into a national park.
Many of the Sherpas are complaining that the birds are
proliferating and are eating their seeds and crops. It is becoming
a difficult problem for them.

November 18, 1984
8 p.m.

Life is a bit tense around here again now that Mingma is back.

I went up to the kitchen for chia this morning and Mingma
was eating what looked like blood sausage. I asked him what it
was and he gave me a taste and sure enough it was blood sausage
made with rice and well seasoned. They gave me a piece and
expressed surprise that I liked it. I had told Domaley I would help
her make dried 'potato mashey' today, but first I went to the
water pipe to do some laundry. Domaley was there washing her
riki since she was going to mash them with their skins on. She
then carried them back to her house and boiled them in a large pot.
When they were cooked she carried them outside, mashed them on
a stone with a flat rolling pin and spread them out on a tarp to dry
in the sun. After they are dry they will be stored and used for
'potato mashey' in the winter.
After I had finished my laundry I walked to the bottom of the village to help with the riki. Domaley was taking four days off from the hospital to do some agricultural chores. She seems to be able to get time off from her job when she needs it. Since she had some trekkers staying in her field, and using her kitchen, she was working in someone else's field. There was a trekking group in that field also. Domaley has a small two story house, but the other dwelling was more like a yersa. It was very small, one story, with a dirt floor, and a traditional one burner open fireplace. There were not very many possessions visible in it.

I helped spread the riki on the tarp as Domaley mashed them. When she finished she said it was too crowded in the house so she would do the rest another day, and that she was going away for a few minutes. I laid back on the grass and enjoyed the beautiful day until I realized I was very hungry, and went to find Domaley to see if she was going to fix lunch for me.

I found her in the next yard grating riki on a very rough stone. This is like a Sherpa Cuisinart as the riki are almost liquified in the process. She then poured off some of the liquid and mixed in some tsampa. It was beginning to look suspiciously like the process one uses to make riki cour. When she went into her neighbor's house, brought out a flat wrought iron plate and put it on the fire I knew I was doomed once again. She gave the first pancake to me, and as she was cooking the second one the man of the house came in. He was with the trekking group in the yard and
they had just come back and hadn't had lunch, so we had to get out of the way so they could be fed. Trekking groups take precedence over everything else here. Domaley went back to her house and I was asked if I would mind eating outside, so I moved out into the sunshine.

Domaley has an interesting history that I have pieced together from bits of information I have learned from various people. She was one of seven children born to a Kunde family. There were 3 girls and four boys. Three of the seven are still living. She became pregnant by a man who was either married or could not marry her for another reason. She bore a boy child and was very poor, but then she managed to get work at the hospital, cooking, cleaning and interpreting. She worked there for four years or so and when one of the new doctors didn't like her she was fired, and was then forced to leave her baby with her sister and go trekking. She said she really enjoyed working as a porter and cook girl, but after the doctor left she was asked to go back to the hospital and she has been there for about three or four years. She now owns a small two story house and a field where she plants *riki* and, her son Pasang, who is twelve or thirteen, is a very bright boy who helps with the chores and is always at the top of his class in school. In order to supplement her income at the hospital she hires out to people, such as Ang Doule, who need help in their fields. She is a nice lady and speaks fairly good English.
The young man training at the hospital fixed dinner tonight. It is not unusual for the young men in this culture to be as comfortable in the kitchen as the young women. The *shakpa* of meat and *riki* was very well seasoned, and he also made small dumplings out of dough which he pinched off into the *shakpa*. Unfortunately, Mingma did not taste the dinner. Two people brought him home quite drunk at about 6:30 and the family put him to bed.

Everyone else went to bed fairly early too, except for Ang Doule and I. We sat in the kitchen for a little while and again she was talking about how other people are rich and can go places, but Sherpas don't have the money so can not go places. She would like to be going and Mingma won't even take her to Kathmandu. They are wealthy by Khumbu standards, but I do not know how that would compare to the wealth of a person in another country. Probably not very well. The country of Nepal has the third lowest per capita income of any country in the world.

I catch these poignant moments of hers every now and then. It makes me sad because I know how eager she is to see the rest of the world. She has a real zest for life, a great sense of humor, and is very curious. I fantasized about how it would be to show her my country. What fun!

Soon it was time for bed so I kissed her goodnight and came down to my room.
November 19, 1984
8 p.m.

The Americans at the Himalayan Rescue Association clinic\(^{91}\) in Pheriche asked me to join them for Thanksgiving dinner. I accepted immediately, despite the fact that it will take two days for me to walk there. I asked Ang Doule a few days ago to find a porter for me, but she forgot, so this afternoon we found a woman about my age to go with me for the four days that I will be trekking. I will pay her \(35\)\(^{92}\) per day and she will pay for her own food and lodging. Ang Doule can't understand what is so important about a dinner that I would walk 4 days to get to it and back.

I had some office supplies- paper, binders, pens, pencils, etc- left over and told Ang Doule I was going to give them to Domaley for Pasang. They don't have much and Pasang can use the supplies in his school work. Ang Doule seemed upset and said that Mingma could use the supplies also, so I divided them up and gave some to Pasang, some to my family and will take some to Purba Sonam to be used by the baby monks in the monastery school in Thyangboche.

\(^{91}\) A trekkers aid post in Pheriche which is staffed by American doctors.

\(^{92}\) About $2
Normally I would leave some of my clothes with the Sherpas also. Many of the clothes they wear have been given to them by trekkers. One day I was walking around with the zipper on my jeans undone and felt embarrassed and worried about who might have seen it. Then it dawned on me that these people wouldn't think any thing about it, since most of the zippers on their clothes don't even work! Unfortunately I will not be able to leave any clothes because I am going on another trek after I leave Khumbu and will need them. The item of clothing that seems to be of particular interest to the Sherpas is my shoes. Lhakpa wanted to buy my running shoes, and Ang Doule asked about my hiking boots. Ang Doule is very conscious about how her shoes are wearing down at the heels. To make them wear evenly she puts them on the wrong feet half of the time.

I had a great lunch today. It was liver from an animal the family had slaughtered. Ang Doule cut it in little pieces and fried it with onions and riki. My red corpuscle count is probably high\textsuperscript{93} from living at this altitude, and now it will probably become sluggish with all of this iron. The rest of the butchered animal is hanging in pieces in the big room. It looks like a cold storage locker in here.

\footnote{Studies have been done that indicate that people who live at higher elevations, with reduced amounts of oxygen in the atmosphere, produce more red blood corpuscles in order to transport the needed amount of oxygen to their bodies.}
The regular doctors are back from their vacation and Dr. Joan has gone back to Canada. I talked with Dr. Elly about the use of Depro Provera. She said it is being used more and more in England and New Zealand where it is legal and she thinks there are about forty women here who are taking the shots. It seems to be the most effective method of birth control that they have found for this area. The pill is too much trouble and the women do not have IUDs checked as they should. She thinks Depro is a very positive form of birth control for this environment. Most of the women who are using it are from the more acculturated villages of Khumjung, Kunde and Namche Bazaar. The women are good about counting the months and going back for their shots when they are supposed to, and so, apparently, they are concerned about family size.

Mingma was telling me today about how poor Sherpas are and how expensive it is to live up here, especially during trekking season when the price of everything goes up. So, even though the Sherpas are making money in the trekking business, it also costs more for them to live here because of trekking. If this is true maybe they are not gaining very much when one looks at the big picture.

There were eight people here for dinner tonight, four members of the household, a young man who works for the Trust, the two young people training at the hospital, and myself. We all gathered around a big basket of boiled riki, all except Mingma.
that is, who was sitting off by himself and looking unapproachable. It was fun. The young people were talking and laughing and Ang Doule was also talking a great deal. It was a nice environment to be in. Somehow it typified Sherpa life for me, seeing a group of congenial people sitting around a basket of boiled *riki* in a dark kitchen, peeling the vegetables with their hands and dipping them in hot chili sauce, talking and teasing and laughing and enjoying each others company. It was an uneventful quiet evening, but a very special one for me.

After dinner Nima got out a deck of cards. He didn't know how to shuffle them as we do, so I showed him. Soon the young woman left. She eats here, but Mingma doesn't think it is right for her to spend the night, so she goes to the hospital to sleep. Mingma went to bed also, taking his pants off in the kitchen, to expose the pajama bottoms he had on under them. Many of the men dress in layers this way for warmth. I teased him about undressing where I could see. The rest of us stayed up later than usual, not wanting a particularly nice evening to end.

When I finally came down the young man from Solu followed me all the way into my room. He had never seen it and was curious about the room and all of my gadgets. He is an extremely bright and eager young man. Given the chance he could probably become a doctor, not just a clinic worker.

November 19, 1984
2 p.m.

One definitive thing one can say about Sherpanis is that they are all, well almost all, very strong and their society could, and indeed almost does, run very well without the presence of men.

Night time temperatures have plummeted to well below freezing, and I have begun to sleep in four layers of clothes. Ang Doule and I were sitting in front of the fire last night after everyone else had gone to bed and she was telling me how much she is going to miss me and how lonesome she will be after I leave. I felt like crying.

November 20, 1984
5 p.m.
Thyangboche

We always stop for lunch at one of my favorite places, the Pungo Tenga Hotel. There is a long printed menu on one of the tables, but I always ask the Sherpani what she has for lunch. She always says "How about fried potatoes?". I always say "Great. Just what I wanted." She is one of the few overweight Sherpanis I have seen and a very cheerful lady. Today I asked if I could take a picture of her kitchen and she said all right and left the room with a frying pan smoking on the stove. I waited for her to come back to be in the picture. When she came back she asked if I was finished and I said I wanted her in the picture, so she started
fussing with her hair and angi, complaining about being dirty, etc. I finally got my picture, but I am sure she was not smiling.

I tried to buy Mingma\textsuperscript{94}, my Sherpani porter, lunch, but all she would have was chia and then all of the way up the hill she was giving me fruit to eat. I am hoping she will have Thanksgiving dinner with us. I would like to share one of my favorite holidays with one of my Sherpa friends.

Figure 16 Two Sherpanis working for a trekking group.

\textsuperscript{94} Many Sherpas, regardless of gender, are named after the day of the week on which they are born. Mingma means Tuesday and is a very common Sherpa name.
Damu is here working as a porter and cook's helper for a trekking group. We met at the lodge and had a cup of chia together. She was very excited and talked a lot about her job and how much she was enjoying it.

8 p.m.

After the activity ended in the lodge tonight, Pemba, Lhakpa and I sat in the kitchen and sipped tombas and talked. Pemba said he thinks it is interesting that even though Lhakpa and I don't speak the same language, we have become good friends. I said there are many ways for people to communicate, and that our friendship was on a different level than most. I am going to miss them very much.

November 22, 1984
11 a.m., Pheriche, 14,000 ft.

Yesterday at about 10 a.m. Mingma and I set out for Pheriche. I had intended to get an earlier start, but she asked if we could delay it for a couple of hours because she needed more time, as she was doing some work for one of the lodges. It is very typical for a Sherpa to find work this way when she/he is all ready in the hire of another person. The walk is a gradual uphill grunt and without a heavy pack it was an easy day for me. Mingma, on the other hand, was carrying a doko which contained my gear and was puffing a bit on the uphill sections of the trail. We stopped for
lunch at 11 a.m. at the Namaste Lodge in Pangboche. I ate two boiled eggs and a chapaati, but Mingma didn’t want anything. At about 2 p.m. Mingma suggested a chang stop. She is a shy, quiet woman so I was surprised at the suggestion, but said yes and we had a couple of glasses each and were on our way again.

We arrived in Pheriche at about 3 p.m. and talked with Carolyn\textsuperscript{95} to get her advice about where to stay. She preferred one lodge over the other because she said the other women took people for everything she could get. So I checked into the lodge she recommended and was pleased to see that the woman who runs it was is Sherpani from Kunde who I have talked with a few times. She runs the lodge during the tourist seasons while her husband is trekking. She has four boys, the oldest being about 10. He stays in Kunde with friends and goes to school and she has the other three with her, including a three month old infant in his basket. Mingma said she was going to stay in the same lodge, but didn’t ever come back. She was constantly saying she was going to do something and then not doing it. This is a typical Sherpa trait, saying what they think the other person wants to hear, whether it is true or not. I was having chia in the kitchen when Carolyn came over to invite me to the hospital for dinner. The Sherpas who work for the hospital had gotten a bit carried away

\textsuperscript{95} Carolyn is a nurse and wife of a doctor who is working at the trekker's hospital.
and made hundreds of mo mos and they needed some help in eating them. It seems as though my reputation had preceded me!

November 22, 1984
8:30 p.m.

We had a friendly and very tasty Thanksgiving dinner of food that all had interesting histories. For example, we had a liver pate that was made in Germany. The Czechoslovakian expedition had bought it and taken it to base camp. It was not eaten by them and was part of the booty that Pemba purchased and took to Thyangboche. From there Lhakpa took it back down to Namche Bazaar and gave it to me as a present. I carried it back up the hill to Kunde and eventually to Pheriche which is very close to Everest Base camp. A very well traveled pate. This is not an unusual sequence of events here, and most of the other food we ate had similar histories. We four Americans shared our Thanksgiving feast with two Swiss climbers and the two Sherpas who work in the hospital. Mingma accepted my invitation for dinner, but didn't appear at the hospital and I decided not to go looking for her.

November 23, 1984
8 p.m., Kunde

When I saw Mingma this morning I asked her why she hadn't joined us for dinner. She told me she worked at one of the lodges last night.
Carolyn examined a man this morning who was exhibiting many of the symptoms of altitude sickness, and I volunteered to walk down toward Thyangboche with him. Mingma was anxious to get home, and since I knew that I would be moving slowly, I put my gear in her doko and sent her on to Kunde.

By the time I reached Thyangboche it was 4 p.m. and getting dark, and I still had a three hour hike ahead of me. I said goodbye to Purba Sonam and my 'little brother' and went to see Lhakpa. She tried to convince me to stay there for the night because of the late hour. However, I was afraid Ang Doule would worry about me if Mingma returned and I didn't, so I decided to keep hiking. Before I left, Lhakpa and I traded katas and I became very emotional and had tears streaming down my face for the first part of the walk.

When I arrived at the river it was dark, so I put on my head lamp, had a couple of cups of chia, said goodbye to the woman who runs the lodge, and kept going. At one of the small settlements along the way I saw one of the porters who has worked for Ang Doule and he tried to convince me to spend the night there and continue on in the morning. But I persisted. I stopped at the Ama Dablam Hotel to change the batteries in my head lamp and have a couple of glasses of warm chang, and my

96 A ceremonial scarf made of white cheesecloth or silk. Sherpas give them to people who are embarking on, or returning from, a journey.
friend there was also concerned about my hiking alone in the dark. But I continued on and arrived here a short while ago.

As I approached the house I could see that there were no lights on. So much for Ang Doule worrying about me. Since I didn't have a key I called out and managed to awaken the boy who is staying with us, and asked him to bring me the key. After I had let myself in Ang Doule came down to see if I wanted something to eat. She had on a long white shift like dress and was pulling her angi on over it. She was also barefoot and it was very cold out. I hadn't had dinner, but did not want to bother her so asked for a glass of chang. It was second chang and managed to fill me up.

November 24, 1984
10 a.m.

Mingma Tsering is leaving for Kathmandu soon, and I have a chance to go back to the capital by helicopter with a small part of my gear. He has made arrangements for a porter to carry most of my gear out for me. He will leave on Monday, so today I am starting to pack.

November 25, 1984
4 p.m.
I just sent almost all of my gear with a porter. Mingma said he would leave on Monday, but somehow he changed his mind and left today, Sunday, instead.

November 26, 1984
8 p.m.

Mingma left for Kathmandu this morning and, as a result, we are all more relaxed. The family had told me they had not tasted peanut butter, so when I was in Namche today I bought some Indian peanut butter and crackers and we had a party. All of the young people were playing the harmonica, singing Nepalese songs and dancing and we took a lot of pictures. Temba put on one of Ang Doule's petticoats and was dancing around the room. We did have a good time.

Earlier I had ordered a pair of Tibetan boots from a friend of Ang Doule's, since the ones she had to sell were too small for me, having been made for Sherpa feet. These are the traditional type of footwear that the Sherpas used before they were exposed to other cultures. They are wonderful pieces of work, with leather soles and felt uppers. Ang Doule bought a pair also, but she told me not to tell Mingma about her purchase. She said he told her she didn't need them but she wanted them anyway.

Ang Doule also told me she was thinking of opening a lodge in her son's vacant house, but she said Mingma doesn't know about
her plan yet. I wondered how she would have time to run a lodge when she is so busy right now.

November 27, 1984
4 p.m.

This is my last day here and I am feeling sad. The two Swiss climbers and one of the Pheriche doctors will be here for dinner tonight. The climbers will sleep in my room and I will sleep in the house. Ang Doule said she wants me to sleep in the kitchen with her. It is sure to be warmer there than in my room.

The helicopter is supposed to be here at 9 a.m. tomorrow. It is coming to take the Swiss men back to Kathmandu, and they said there would be an empty seat and offered to take me with them. Seemed like too good an offer to pass up. If for some reason this plan doesn't work I will still have time to trek to Lukla and catch a plane back to Kathmandu.

8 p.m.

We are settling in for sleep. I am snuggled in my bag on the bench in the kitchen and Ang Doule is in her bed. It was a lively evening. There were ten of us for dinner tonight. As usual Ang Doule fussed and fed people and didn't eat herself until everyone was finished. After dinner Damu and I walked the Pheriche doctor to Khumjung where he is staying tonight. Two French climbers were brought down from base camp, one with cerebral edema and
the other with pulmonary edema, and the Doctor was spending the
night with them in case he was needed. I was shocked when we
walked into the kitchen of the house where they are staying.
There was a huge fire burning in the fireplace and the kitchen was
actually warm. That must be how it was to live here years ago
when firewood was not in such short supply.

November 28, 1984
8 p.m., Some place between Namche Bazaar and Lukla

    Well, the grand plan didn't work. Ang Doule walked with me
to the airstrip in Shyangboche this morning and we waited a long
time. One of the Sherpas waiting with us was clowning and doing
a lot of singing and Sherpa dancing to try to get the helicopter
here. He was having a good time. About 10 a.m. a helicopter \(^{97}\)
came up the canyon, but it went right by us. Ang Doule was
waiting with us, and I told her to go home. I knew she must be
getting worried about all of the work she had to do. Shortly
before 12 another helicopter came in and this time it landed.
Unfortunately there were two people in it, so I was not able to fly
back to Kathmandu on it after all.

    So, I had a problem. I needed to do a long day's walk in half a
day if I had any hope of leaving on a plane tomorrow. I tried to

\(^{97}\) We found out later that it had landed in Khumjung and
picked up the French climbers. There was an empty seat going
back to Kathmandu.
hire a porter in Shyangboche to carry my gear, so I could move faster, but the boy I talked with was asking for too much money. I felt as though I was being held up, so I told him no. Then I went back to Kunde and asked if Damu could porter for me. She was not there at the time, but Ang Doule said she would be back soon, for me to start and she would catch up with me. Ang Doule also wanted me to have some lunch, but I was so agitated I did not want to take the time.

I started walking and Damu caught up with me on Namche Hill. We were moving at a rapid pace, but I was getting weak and thought we should stop for something to eat. About 4 p.m. we started to go in a trekker's lodge and a dog that was standing by the door lunged at Damu and bit her in the ankle. It happened fast and with no provocation and it startled us. Damu, who is a very strong person, fell apart and became hysterical. I finally calmed her down, cleaned her wound with the help of another trekker, and we continued on our way, but it was apparent that we would not make it and that we should stop and spend the night in a lodge and finish our journey in the morning.

We stopped and soon Damu was telling the owners of the lodge what had happened. I tried to get her to go back to Kunde, because the man of the house said he would porter for me, but she was also on an errand for Ang Doule and insisted that she had to go all the way to Lukla. There was a 2 year old boy in the lodge who was playing with burning sticks from the fire. He was
wearing pants that were split from front to back along the seam. When he had to relieve himself he simply squatted on the kitchen floor, and his mother calmly cleaned up after him.

November 29, 1984
3 p.m. Lukla

   Damu and I arrived at the same time as the last plane. Unfortunately I was not able to buy a seat on it today, but I do have a reservation for tomorrow. So, if the weather is good here and in Kathmandu I will be in the capital tomorrow morning. I will miss my Sherpa friends, and I think they will also miss me. It was truly a wonderful two months, and I am sure I will return because I too tied a kata 98 on the appropriate stupa in Kunde.

---

98 There is a legend that says that if one ties a kata on a certain stupa, located between Kunde and Namche Bazaar, she/he will return to Khumbu someday.
In the spring of 1986 I returned to Khumbu to observe the Sherpas during the spring planting phase of the agricultural cycle, arriving at the end of April and staying until the end of May. I again rented living space from Ang Doule, spent most of my time in Kunde, Khumjung, and Namche Bazaar, and a small amount of time in Thyangboche and Phortse. Since a detailed diary, such as I have written for the first trip, would be repetitive, I have chosen to edit this section severely and write only those observations which were not covered in the last section, and which I believe will help to round out the picture of what life is like for the Sherpa women. This trip was especially instructive, not only because I was able to observe the Sherpas at a different time of the year, but also because there was such a short time between trips that I was able to build on the relationships I had formed in 1984.

April 29, 1986
7 p.m., Kunde

There was a tidal wave down the canyon of the Bhote Kosi River last year that washed out a large section of the trail between Jorsale and Namche Bazaar. The new trail over which I traveled is terrible. Most of the trails in this country are built in a straight line because they are the roads over which commerce
travels, and that is the shortest distance between two points. As a result they are very up and down. One section of the new trail is such a steep uphill, and so slippery, the zopkio that was carrying my gear had trouble climbing up. I am not very excited about having to go the other direction on it.

When I reached the end of the new trail I started laughing out loud. There at the very top of the steepest part was a tea house set up in a tent. The Sherpas had done it again! What a brilliant move. Everyone who goes up that trail almost has to stop for some refreshments before moving on. The Sherpas must be making a fortune. Of course we stopped and had something to drink.

The owners of the lodge where I am staying in Namche were complaining about how slow the season has been. There is only one other person staying in the lodge and this is the peak of the spring season. I have heard similar complaints from others. The Sherpas think that with Tibet open people are going there instead of to Nepal. If that is true the Sherpa economy could be badly hurt. On the other hand, the Sherpas are such grand entrepreneurs they would probably find a way to compensate.

We were still talking in the kitchen at 6 p.m. when the electric lights came on. It was an astounding and shocking event. Electricity seems completely out of place here. The hydroelectric plant, a project that was conceived and executed by an American Peace Corps volunteer, was built on the spring at the bottom of
the village. Electricity has been available since late in 1984, shortly after I left the last time\textsuperscript{99}. The Sherpas are pleased with the result. Electricity is on from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m and usage is charged by the 60 watt bulb or the electrical appliance. The lodge has a hot plate that is used for cooking. These lodge owners said it is a lot less expensive to buy electricity than to buy firewood. This could be a big step forward in preserving some of the remaining trees.

April 30, 1986
4 p.m., Kunde

Ang Doule has a new girl, Hakpa, living with her. I asked about Damu and Ang Doule said Damu had told her she was going to visit her mother for a few days, but she never came back. Ang Doule later learned that she was pregnant and is now living in Kathmandu\textsuperscript{100}. Damu left during one of the busy seasons, so Ang Doule was short handed. When I gave Ang Doule a picture of Damu she put it away rather than displaying it with all of the other pictures she has hanging in her house. I was surprised at how angry Ang Doule is at Damu for getting pregnant. It was my

\textsuperscript{99} When we were in Namche in 1982 we were aware that the houses were being wired for electricity.

\textsuperscript{100} I later learned that Damu is married, has two children, and is living in Kathmandu.
understanding that having a baby out of wedlock\textsuperscript{101} is not such terrible thing here.

May 1, 1986
4 p.m.

This is the time of the national election when the people choose who will represent them at the National Panchayat. Everyone is talking about it and there seems to be a great deal of excitement surrounding the voting.

Water seems to be a problem at this time of the year. There is barely a trickle coming out of the pipe in Kunde, so it takes a very long time to fill water containers. There is talk about opening the Everest View Hotel again, but the water shortage is a problem. The hotel uses vast amounts of water because there are flush toilets in the rooms. The water must be portered from Khumjung, which doesn't have an adequate supply of water at this time of the year either.

Ang Doule wanted to open a can of cocktail sausages for my dinner. I told her I preferred the shakpa she had fixed for the family. The Sherpa diet is even more restricted at this time of the year. There is very little in the way of fresh foods at the

\textsuperscript{101} If the woman has a steady male partner, having a child is accepted. However, if she is promiscuous and it is not obvious who fathered the child, she is censured. This seems to be what happened to Damu.
market. All I saw on Saturday were red onions and the tops of spring onions, and no fruit. Meat seems to be in short supply also.

Spring is the time when people build new houses and repair their old ones. There are two new buildings going up in this village and several houses have had additions, and been replastered and painted since I have been here. Mingma Temba, who is twenty five years old, is very excited about the house he is building in the field next to his parents' house. He is in the second stage of marriage and has two children. However, he has a problem. His future wife's parents won't allow their daughter to finalize the marriage. He said they want her to stay at home longer so that she can continue to work for them.

Figure 17  Mingma Temba's house being built
The house he is building is fairly traditional. It is two storied and made of rock with wooden window and door frames. He said it is expensive to build a house. He had the lumber brought up from close to Phac Ding, a day's walk from here, where there is a mill. Then he hired carpenters, who use very primitive hand tools, to build window casings. The second story will be one big room, but the fireplace made of stone and plastered with clay will be enclosed because it is more efficient than the traditional open hearth. He said the plastering must be done three or four times a year. He will use straw mats for the roof. When I asked him why he wasn't putting a tin roof on he laughed and said it would take him twenty years to earn enough money to pay for one. He can't even afford to finish the inside now. Putting up this house seems to be a communal effort. The workmen live with Mingma's family while they are working, and his mother must feed them and provide chang for them to drink. His father is also helping by carrying rock from where it is quarried, on the hill behind the property, to the building site. Neighbors and other relatives participate by bringing gifts of chang or food.

May 5, 1986
4 p.m.
I asked the doctor at the hospital about Depro Provera. He thinks it is a good method of birth control for Nepal, because third world countries demand less perfection from their drugs than western countries. There are about one hundred Sherpanis on it at the present time. That is twice as many as the last doctor said were using the drug.

Ang Doule used packaged food yesterday. She fixed pre-seasoned noodles for lunch and made gravy from packages of soup mix for dinner. I don't remember her ever using a package when I was here the last time.

Purba Sonam and three other monks spent a week painting the gompa in the house, and it is beautiful. Temba still goes in every night to do his puja, but he uses a lamp instead of live coals because he does not want to smoke up the room.

The riki are already in the ground. They are planted much the same way as they are harvested. The seed riki are broadcast over the ground and then the soil is dug up and turned over with a kadaalo. This buries the riki in a random way. Shortly after the riki are planted holes are dug in the same fields at irregular intervals and turnip seeds are dropped in. This is stoop labor done with a small tool with a curved blade. It is an individual activity, as opposed to the group activities of planting riki and buckwheat. Ang Doule has seven fields which are planted in this fashion.

102 This was a different doctor. The western staff in the hospital stays for a period of two years.
In Khumjung I saw some fields plowed with two zopkio and a wooden plow. A man works the animals and steers the plow, and one or two women follow behind and broadcast the buckwheat seed. Ang Doule said the fields are too small in Kunde for plows and animals, so the buckwheat must be planted by the same method used for the riki, except only three to four inches of dirt are turned over.

Today Ang Doule hired some women to plant the one field she is using for buckwheat this year. It is a very hard, all day, job.
Ang Doule said she still pays between 12 and 15r\textsuperscript{103} per day plus meals. As a comparison I am paying my porter 40r plus food a day.

One of the women working for Ang Doule had her 10 month old baby with her. He was very happy sitting on a blanket in the field playing with the simple objects his mother left with him. These were an enamel cup, a set of keys and a plastic bag from packaged noodles. There were also three older children playing outside the rock wall of the field, building what looked like a miniature house out of stones. This is the outer wall of the village where a lot of garbage has been thrown and the children were also playing with old rusty tin cans with jagged edges and other objects they had found among the garbage. They appeared to be playing house. The children have few toys, so they play mostly with things like batteries, cans, and bottles that have been thrown away. They frequently mimic adult activities, such as digging in the fields, washing dishes, or starting a fire.

Gathering leaves seems to be a year around job. This was the chore that Nima and Hakpa were doing in the hills today with short handled rakes and very large dokos.

I stopped by the Ama Dablam hotel today. Sin Droma and Pasang were digging up the field next to their lodge. It was hard, hot work and Sin Droma had slipped off the top of her angi so she would be a bit cooler. They told me they were going to plant

\textsuperscript{103} About $.75 or less
buckwheat there. They too were saying that trekking was very slow this year and they are concerned about the economy.

May 6, 1986
1:30 p.m.

As I returned from my walk this morning a caught up with a very old man who was circumambulating the mani-wall\textsuperscript{104}. He had just gone around the entire village, something he seems to do every day. He was holding his prayer beads and mumbling "Oh mani padme hum." I had talked with him yesterday, so stopped again, said namaste, and shook his hand. He said namaste and held onto my hand and started a conversation in English. We walked around the mani-wall holding hands and talking. Then he asked me to his house for chia.

He lives with his daughter and four grandchildren in his son-in-law's house. The oldest daughter who is twenty years old, just got back from trekking and is planning on going back to school\textsuperscript{105}. The next daughter is seventeen and goes to school in Kathmandu. There are also a boy of fifteen and a girl of thirteen. The twenty year old girl told me her father, who works for a trekking agency,

\textsuperscript{104} A structure made of stone slabs which are carved with religious inscriptions in Tibetan script. Circumambulating the wall gains merit for a person in her/his afterlife.

\textsuperscript{105} The next time I saw her she told me she was enrolled in the Khumjung school.
has a second family in Kathmandu consisting of a wife and two sons. I asked Ang Doule about it and she said he is married to the Kunde woman but lives with the other woman.

Now that I am being invited into more Sherpa houses I realize they are basically similar on the inside, but they all have individual variations as to the location and plan of the kitchens, the location of the double bed, and the design of the fireplace.

May 7, 1986
8 p.m.

I went to Khumjung before school started today. The three hundred and fifty students were lined up in the school yard by class. They are mostly boys. Among the girls many were wearing pants, some were wearing western style skirts and dresses, and a few were wearing the traditional angi with pants under them for warmth.

The principal has been associated with the school for twenty two years. He told me that the school goes through class ten and that most of the older children in the school are boys, since the girls drop out because they are needed to work at home. He said his daughter was the only girl out of nine students to take the English proficiency examination this year. Last year only one girl took the examination also. He would like to send his daughter to

His daughter told me he was in Kathmandu, but Ang Doule said he lives in Lukla.
the United States to school and wanted to know if I could do anything to help him find some money for her education.

We discussed the fact that when children get an education they do not want to come back to Khumbu to live and work. He agreed that it is a big problem. Once they leave Khumbu and go to places where they have more comforts it is very difficult for them to come back to this hard way of life.

Mingma Tsering, Da Tsering, and Rex Hillary\textsuperscript{107} arrived here today along with several New Zealanders who have been helping them on their latest project, and a large group of porters. Mingma doesn't seem to have changed.

Rex Hillary has been coming to Khumbu since 1970 and thinks Sherpas have changed some, but not dramatically, in the intervening years. He admires Sherpas a great deal and still finds them to be friendly, helpful and "happy-go-lucky." He talked about how wonderful it is to see his old friends when he comes here.

I asked him about Mingma, because I am still trying to figure the man out. He said he is a type A workaholic who is very good at organizing Trust projects. For example the project they just finished involved twenty two rock men, two \textit{shingo} men\textsuperscript{108} and many tons of rock, and everything was organized and went

\textsuperscript{107} Rex is Sir Edmund Hillary's brother who also goes to Nepal almost every year to work on projects for the Sherpas.

\textsuperscript{108} Carpenters
smoothly. He also told me that villagers present the Trust with petitions for projects that they would like supported, and that there are always more projects than time and money.

Since Rex is sleeping in the Hillary house I had to move again. This time I was assigned to the gompa which, as I mentioned earlier, had recently been painted. It was a wonderful place to be, but I did give up a lot of my privacy. As I was getting ready for bed tonight Ang Doule came in and did her puja and left a yak butter candle lit during the night.

Ang Doule is still bothered by her ulcer and went to the hospital for some medicine yesterday. She hasn't been eating very much but rather has been drinking warm milk.

May 7, 1986
8 p.m., Thyangboche

I saw Purba Sonam on the trail this morning. He is becoming a very worldly monk. He was returning from three months in Tibet, Butan, Sikkim, and Kathmandu, and he gave me the card of a person who is marketing his art work in the United States.

Ang Dickey had visited me in Kunde and asked me to stop for some chia on my way to Thyangboche. Her house is a cell about 6 feet wide and 8 feet long. There is a bed along one wall, an enclosed fireplace made of plastered stone on the end wall, and a stack of bamboo and scrap wood for the fireplace on the other long wall. She lives in the house with her twenty month old baby,
who was walking around in the house and wearing pants that are split from front to back. She does not have a lot of possessions. She and her friend, who was also there, are still working for the tree farm.

I had seen my 'little brother', the monk, in Namche at market and told him that I was going to Thyangboche for a few days. When I arrived Lhakpa said he was driving her crazy asking if I had arrived yet. Then she presented me with an expensive Coca Cola which he had bought for me. The last time I was there he was buying me rakshi.

As I sat in the kitchen drinking the Coke my 'little brother' came in. He asked me if I had any pictures of my family. I showed him the ones I had with me, and he asked if he could have them. I reluctantly said yes. Then I noticed that he was wearing a new wrist watch and I decided to play a trick on him. I told him it was a beautiful watch and he started to beam. Then I asked him if he would give it to me and the shocked look on his face was priceless. Since I had given him everything he had asked for he thought he would have to give me his wonderful watch. When I started laughing he realized I was teasing him, and he enjoyed the joke too.

May 9, 1986
7 p.m.
Pemba seems to be very involved with the election. There have been many Sherpas entering the lodge and having heated discussions about politics. Pemba told me that people have to vote in their home village, so he and Lhakpa must walk to Namche on Monday.

I went to visit Ang Conche in Devuche today. She is a woman about my age who went to school in Kathmandu. She runs the local medical clinic out of her house with medicine she gets from the Kunde hospital. She said one of the women at the nunnery was acting a little crazy because her religion was not strong enough, and Ang Conche was going to have to give her an injection since they were going to have a special puja there soon and they were afraid the woman would disrupt the ceremony. These comments were evidence of the kind of superstition to which even the educated Sherpas still cling.

I saw that there were three light bulbs wired in her house and I asked her about them. She said she has an electric generator on the stream by her house, but she needs a special kind of wire to finish hooking it up. She said she has a 'sponsor' who is helping her by financing the project.

The abbot of Thyangboche is very proud of the cultural center that he has started in Thyangboche. So far the collection includes some wood block prints, quite a few books, some Sherpa artifacts, photographs and some items used in religious ritual. It is a good start, but they still have a lot to do, and, since the
Sherpas are very contemporary and do not save and preserve articles from their past, they need to move ahead quickly with the project if they are going to preserve articles from their culture.

There is a new lodge in Thyangboche built along the lines of the tourist facilities in Namche. The dormitory is on the bottom floor and the kitchen and dining room on the top. The latter is glassed in and has a magnificent view of Mount Everest and all of the peaks that surround it. The top floor is kept warm with a wood burning stove.

Pemba showed me the site for the lodge he is going to build. It is going to have a dormitory, kitchen and dining area and a glassed-in penthouse where he will serve coffee and snacks. The view will be spectacular. He said construction would begin very soon, and since it is on monastery grounds he will pay rent to the monks for the use of the land, but the building will be his. Since he still has another year to run on his lease on the Thyangboche Lodge he will be running two lodges for a time. He has a daughter who is completing grade ten in the Khumjung school and passed the exams. However, she does not want to go to school anymore, so she will manage the new lodge and Lhakpa will continue to operate the other one. Pemba said Lhakpa doesn't want their daughter to continue her education. She is afraid of losing the girl as they feel they have lost their son who is studying in India to be a doctor.
May 10, 1986
8 p.m.

I spent the day in Phortse visiting the family I stayed with the last time I was here. There is still quite a lot of agricultural work in progress in the village. There were twelve women and several children planting *rik* in one field, and several other fields were being plowed. The plowing is slightly different in Phortse. Where as in Khumjung two *zopkio* are used, in Phortse one yak is used with each plow. In addition here was a person in front of the yak pulling him along, a person guiding the plow, and two people walking behind pulling up grass and broadcasting the buckwheat seeds. In three fields I also saw teams of four men pulling plows in the traditional manner.

The mother and father of the family I visited were sitting in the sun on the second floor patio with their ten month old granddaughter. The mother was having a problem with a tooth and her face was very swollen. The diaperless child was crawling on a tarp that was covered with buckwheat drying in the sun, and she urinated freely on it. When I asked about her mother the woman told me she was on the roof in the sun, so I went up to sit with her. She looked exactly the same as the last time. We used sign language to communicate, she telling me she was old by pointing to her missing teeth and gray hair, and I pointing out that I too have gray hair. She then felt my jeans fabric and said it was
lemu\textsuperscript{109}. After awhile the baby was handed up to her and the old woman held her and talked to her.

When we went inside I noted that the fireplace had been rebuilt and is now enclosed, but it does not have a stove pipe like Ang Doule's so the smoke still goes into the room. There is also glass in the windows now. This family seems to be cooking and eating all of the time. We had lunch and I gave them the pictures I had taken on my last trip. After lunch we went back outside where the grandmother was winnowing the buckwheat and I took pictures of the women and children. When it was time to leave I asked how much I owed them, thinking that they would not charge me for lunch since I had given them some pictures\textsuperscript{110}. They told me how much the meal was, so I paid them and walked back to Thyangboche. On the way I passed many terraces that looked like they are not going to be planted this year. Now that the Sherpas are involved in the tourist business, there is not enough labor to plant all of the fields. Fortunately they now have enough money to purchase the food they need.

When I was almost to the lodge I passed through the Thyangboche garbage dump. I have noticed a great deal of litter in areas close to other villages also. In Namche the stream is

\textsuperscript{109} Nice or beautiful

\textsuperscript{110} In Kunde and Khumjung, people asked me into their homes and gave me food and drink when I presented them with pictures.
littered with thrown away 'stuff'. Sherpas have not had to deal with garbage in the past, but now trekkers are bringing in packaging and unwanted clothing and there is a disposal problem. I asked Pemba why they didn't bury the garbage, and he said he tried to get people to do that, in fact he had even dug a big hole for that purpose, but no one paid attention and the Sherpa are still littering the villages with the junk.

Figure 19  Three generations of Sherpanis

May 12, 1986
3 p.m.

Before we left Thyangboche today, we paid a visit to my monk brother. He had invited us to his house for a cup of chia. He has a
very small house which consists of a room with a fireplace and some cabinets and benches, and a cell like room with a bed and an alter. The house is very spartan, simple, and neat. He took a thermos bottle from a cabinet in the kitchen and poured two cups of hot chocolate. I was delighted, as it was quite a treat for me, and he seemed happy to be doing something that pleased me so much. Then he went into the bedroom and brought out a silk kata and put it around my neck.

This is election day, and I stopped by the Khumjung school to observe the voting process. There were many Sherpas watching people go in to vote. Some of the important men from the villages were the proctors, and chang was flowing freely. I saw Ang Doule there. She had just delivered a bottle of chang to the election officials. When Mingma, who was one of the officials, returned home this afternoon he was put to bed immediately by the family.

Ang Doule and Mingma are building a lodge in the field next to their house. This is the first lodge in Kunde, and it will be interesting to see if it draws more trekkers into the area. There are three shingo men making the window and door frames for the building and seven rock men facing the rocks by chipping off portions of them with hammers. Da Tsering, five male porters and Hakpa and a friend are quarrying the rock on the hill behind the village and carrying it to the building site. It is hard manual labor. They put a sack on their backs to protect their clothes, bend over so their backs are parallel to the ground and someone
loads a rock on and places a rope, with a trampa attached, around it. They then slip the trampa over their forehead, stand up more of less erect, walk to the building sight, bend over again, remove the rope and with a strong quick sideward motion throw the rock onto the growing pile.

I am still learning new things about cooking. Sen is a dish made with tsampa and water, cooked like 'potato mashey,' served with a sauce and eaten with the hands. It is a common meal for porters and Sherpas because it is low in cost and easy to carry and make. Tow is hand made noodles that are put into a spicy soup. Mashed potatoes or dough are rolled between the hands into long ropes and carefully slid into the soup.

There is a lot of physical closeness between parents and children, and also between the women. Whenever she has a few quiet moments, Lhakpa is handling her children's hair. She looks for lice, combs, washes, braids and oils their hair after they wash it. in. She said the mustard oil makes their hair shine, and they put it in once a week. She was very surprised when I told her that we don't do that in my country. Both women and men handle and talk with babies a great deal. However, I have seen some western style baby carriers here recently that separate the child from the adult who is carrying it.

May 13
8 a.m., Kunde
The water at the pipe is running very slowly. People must wait a long time to fill their water containers, and the reservoir is nearly empty. The people are very patient and spend the time chatting or leave their containers in the hopes that someone else will fill them.

Ang Doule is responsible for feeding a lot of people now. The nine rock men are living in Ang Rita's house and doing their own cooking, but Ang Doule must provide the food for them. The three shingo men and the porters are living here and must be fed. It seems as though she is cooking all day. She fixes breakfast at about 8 a.m., lunch at 10 a.m., a snack of boiled riki at 2 p.m. and dinner in the evening. Everyone seems to help with the cooking when they are not involved with their other duties. The three shingo men made the tow for dinner tonight and the porters help with the 'potato mashey' and the peeling of boiled riki. The shingo men have a lot of status and are always fed right after Mingma and certainly before me.

Ang Doule was up early to take a yak to Namche to get the bhaat she had bought at market on Saturday, and returned in time to fix the noon meal. In the meantime Mingma was sitting in the kitchen, looking very important, yelling at people and drinking. Domaley said the more important a man is, the less he has to do, and the more he drinks.

May 14, 1986
5 p.m.

I walked by Domaley's house and she was just returning from circumambulating the mani-wall that is close by. She said now that her riki are planted, she walks around the wall as many times as she can each day to gain sonam for her after life.

May 15, 1986
11 a.m.

Temba came into the gompa at 6 a.m., cleaned everything, and did an extra long puja. I was still in bed about 7 when I heard footsteps approaching my room, and a monk walked in. He had his shoes off, took off his hat and made some very appreciative sounds as he looked at the newly painted gompa. He prostrated himself three times, walked out and then walked back in with Ang Doule. They talked about the paintings on the walls. Then he sat on a bench and Ang Doule brought in a pitcher of chang, and poured three glasses in quick succession for him. He didn't seem to notice me sitting up in bed reading a book.

The monk was here to bless the new building that was being started today. After he left the gompa he went to the building site, sat in front of a table which held a number of ritual objects and proceeded to do a blessing, which lasted thirty to forty five minutes. When he was finished he came into the kitchen and Ang Doule gave him 30r.
I talked with a mother today who said she had two babies in two years and that is not good, so she is taking the injections to stop having babies. She delivered both of her babies in the hospital. As I was talking with her she was feeding her baby sugar tea with milk by mouth.

May 17, 1986
7 p.m.

Ang Doule's services are so necessary here now, that she didn't even go to market, but rather sent Da Tsering. I was very disappointed and said I would miss the mo mos. She said I could bring some back for her, so I ordered thirty eight mo mos from the tea house. When I went back for them I put them in a plastic bag and carried them up the hill. Mo mos to go! When I gave them to Ang Doule I suggested she treat everyone, so she reluctantly shared them with the workers and the family.

May 18, 1986
10 a.m.

Ang Doule has a small area near the house planted in spring onions. A few nights ago an animal topped all of the plants, so today she replanted them. She also planted some red onions. Ang Doule mixed fertilizer from the stable into the soil. She also cut pieces from an animal hide and turned that into the soil.
People are starting to use toilet paper as we would use paper towels. In the Gompa Lodge the cook uses it to help hold hot pots, and Ang Conche blew her little girls nose on a square.

May 19, 1986
4 p.m.
I have learned about Diangi's background from a few people. She was born with a deformed foot that had to be amputated, so she walks with a limp. She will probably never marry because a woman in this culture has to be physically strong to be of value to her family. She lives in Kathmandu now with three other women and pays $20 a month rent. She said she has been doing a lot of traveling to Hong Kong and Singapore to buy clothes to sell in Kathmandu. She also said she spent five months in America and has a sponsor in Southern California. I asked if she thought she would ever return to Khumbu to live and she laughed and said no, she likes Kathmandu. She said her foot was a problem when she was younger but it isn't anymore.

May 20, 1986
4 p.m.
The women are starting to do some spinning and weaving. Conche and her daughter were drying some wool they had washed, and another woman was sitting outside spinning wool and said she was going to make some front aprons out of it. I have also
seen several women working on looms, making the narrow pieces of cloth that are use for aprons.

Some of the school children go to Comi Droma's house for their midday meal. Yesterday thirty two children, seven girls and twenty five boys, ate there. They were all relatively quiet and well behaved, and were all ages from very young ones to one young man who looked to be in his twenties. They helped each other and helped Comi Droma serve the meal. Her husband, Lhakpa Norbu, cleared some of the plates and washed some dishes. Comi Droma also feeds them a snack in the afternoon.

Lhakpa Norbu sits on cushions from a car which are placed on the bench under the window in their home. This is the first time I have seen anyone sitting on something other than rugs.

Now that the agricultural work is over a lot of people are out sitting and sleeping in the sun. There were 5 women in a yard this afternoon, sleeping with their heads in each other's laps.

May 21, 1986
8 p.m.

This morning Da Tsering, in the interest of saving some money, became a monk for the purpose of blessing the windows that are going into the new building. First he and Temba collected the necessary ritual objects. Then he read a prayer, sounding just like a monk, and performed the ceremony, tossing rice and sprinkling chang about. I said he could become a lama because he
sounded just like one. He told me a friend translated the Tibetan into Nepali which he can read.

![Figure 20 Doing Sherpa dancing at the party](image)

We had a party at Domaley’s house this afternoon. I had asked her if she would invite some of her friends if I bought the food. We gathered at 2 p.m. with many of the women singing, dancing and laughing as they came in the door. We drank *chang*, ate some noodles and laughed a lot. They tried to show me how to do
Sherpa dancing, but I was quite hopeless. Conche who I have spent some time with, made up a song for me in Sherpa, about how a few days ago I was living very far away and she didn't know me, but now we are friends. About 5 p.m. the women started drifting back home to take care of their families. The party was a huge success.

May 23, 1986
7 p.m.

I had a conversation with Sin Droma today contrasting my life with hers. She made it sound like Sherpanis are becoming dissatisfied with their lives because of their exposure to other cultures.

Today was the day of the big puja. in Thyangboche. Ang Doule had errands in Khumjung, so she said she would walk that far with me. I was to have breakfast with Sin Droma and Pasang and walk to Thyangboche with them. I tried to talk Ang Doule into going to the puja with me, but, although I could tell she wanted to go, she couldn't leave her responsibilities at home. When we were close to Sin Droma's lodge I took Ang Doule by the hand and led her to Sin Droma's to have a cup of chia with us. Ang Doule was worried about what Mingma would say if she was away from home for too long, so she just stayed for a minute.

111 I have held quite a few Sherpani's hands on this trip. They are hard and rough, and have dirt permanently embedded in them. Their fingernails are large and flat.
After breakfast we walked to Thyangboche. There were seven lamas at the puja. The Sherpa men were dressed in their traditional clothes, and the women were in their good clothes and were wearing all of their jewelry. They were magnificent. The abbot has asked the Himalayan Trust to build a school in Thyangboche. Mingma said they were spending as much money on the puja as they need to build the school.

When I returned home and was telling Ang Doule about my day, Mingma said all of the Sherpas at the puja were lazy people. Religion does not seem to mean much to Mingma, although it is important to Ang Doule.

May 24, 1986
7 p.m. Lukla

I left Khumbu this morning after saying good-bye to all of my Sherpa friends. It was market day, so I bought mo mos for my porters and Comi Droma. Then several people bought me glasses of chang. The Sherpas have a custom of putting a little pile of tsampa on the rim of the glass of an honored guests to wish them good luck. When Pasang handed me a glass of chang he made a big show of putting three piles of tsampa on it. I felt honored and blessed. Soon I was on the trail, katas flying, and vowing never to leave on market day again.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the book *Tourism: Passport to Development?* Emanuel de Kadt said "...it is extremely difficult to isolate the impact of tourism itself, or of tourists as such, from other forces of change" (Kadt 1979:14). However, I believe this is not the case for the Khumbu Sherpas, as tourism has been the major force in the changes which have taken place in the culture. Tourism in Khumbu is different from that in most other places. People from other cultures go to Khumbu and actually live with the Sherpas, interrupting family relations and introducing new customs and material goods directly to the people. Also, the Sherpas who are involved in the tourist business often go to other parts of the country. Thus tourism has another profound effect on the culture, that of taking fathers, and sometimes mothers, away from the family home for extended periods of time. In addition, the Khumbu Sherpas have been especially affected by the climbing expedition which took place in 1953 when Sir Edmund Hillary made a successful ascent of Mount Everest. He and the Himalayan Trust have had a direct effect on the Sherpa people, exposing them to education, and the ideas that engenders, and medical care which is improving and lengthening their lives.

The biggest question about the Sherpa people is one that is extremely difficult to answer: in their eyes do they have better lives now that they have had access to Western cultures, and as a
result have more material goods, or were they better off when the only other cultures with which they interacted were those of Tibet and Solu? In the past the society was self contained and in tune with the natural environment, but the Sherpa culture is still in a state of change, and the potential is there to reach a stable and agreeable state that is beneficial and fair to its people.

During my three months in Khumbu it became evident to me that all areas of Sherpa culture are changing, but not necessarily at the same rate. My two studies were separated by only one and one half years, and I was able to discern changes even in that short amount of time. In this section I would like to discuss those changes, both positive and negative, in the areas of housing, settlement patterns, agriculture, pastoralism, trading, clothing, tourism, political organization, marriage, family life, and quality of life.

In general Sherpa houses are still being built of stone and wood as they have been for countless generations, but there have been some changes to make them more comfortable. Glass window panes have replaced the white rice paper that was used in the traditional houses. This makes them warmer and keeps the rain and snow out. Tin roofing material is now available, but so far its use is limited to the homes of wealthy Sherpas. Many houses now have separate kitchens which provide the owners of the house with more privacy as that is where their bed is located. The fireplaces are now being enclosed and, in some cases have
smoke pipes attached. These enclosed stoves use less firewood so are instrumental in helping preserve the remaining forests. They also make the women's cooking chores easier. Also, with the smoke now being piped out of the house, the women are breathing less polluted air and should enjoy longer lives as a result.

One innovation that promises to have a dramatic effect on the Sherpas' lifestyle is the advent of electricity in Khumbu. The houses in Namche Bazaar have been receiving electricity from a turbine on the village spring since the winter of 1984. Already the lodges are using the power to light their buildings and cook food for the trekkers. It is less expensive for them to use the electric power than to buy wood. Hot plates are used at the present time, and one can imagine the Sherpas in the future using electrical appliances such as rice cookers and frying pans for most of their cooking chores. This will make life somewhat easier for the Sherpanis but they will still have to carry wood and tend the fire which will be needed in the living area for warmth. With light in their homes at night it will be possible for them to engage in many varied activities for their own pleasure and also for profit. Spinning and weaving are two examples of activities they might pursue.

The Swiss have donated a great deal of time and engineering talent to the Nepalese government. One of their designs is for a water system for Kunde, Khumjung and other villages in the area. The project would cost $20,000, a large amount of money for
that area of Nepal. Water piped directly into their houses could result in a major increase in personal hygiene, as the Sherpas do not do daily ablutions at the present time. Of course, socializing around the water pipe would be eliminated, which would be a step toward isolating the women in their homes.

Sherpas are being exposed to many new kinds of food and are even starting to use packaged goods. The availability of these types of foods, and modern kitchen implements, will make for a more varied diet and require less preparation time. For instance, I believe that many households may soon own pasta machines for rolling out the dough for chaapatis and mo mos.

Permanent settlement patterns have remained relatively stable. However, the yersa and gunsa areas are in a state of flux. At the present time many of the terraced fields in the gunsa-settlements are not being planted because, with the men and women off trekking, there is a shortage of labor. Fortunately, Sherpas now have enough income to buy sufficient foodstuffs to make up for the crops they are not growing. Whereas in the past the men were involved in planting and harvesting, I observed that women are responsible for the majority of the agricultural work in the villages. I did see some men plowing, drying animal fodder, and helping with the buckwheat harvest, but it was apparent that most of the activities were the women's responsibility.
Pastoralism is no longer the male status symbol it once was, but animals are still important to the Sherpas for their by-products, and they are needed to carry loads in the trekking business. For these reasons I believe that many Sherpas will continue to raise animals, but herd size will be smaller than it was in the past. Because the men are gone for such long periods of time, the women will eventually take over most of the responsibility for the animals. This will be another task added to an already long list of jobs.

The trading situation will remain relatively static. Very little trading is done at this time in comparison with what was done in the past, and I don't see this situation changing dramatically in the near future, as the emphasis of the Sherpas will continue to be on their involvement with trekking and tourism.

Clothing will continue to be westernized, and as the Sherpas become more and more affluent they will no longer wear hand me downs, but will purchase new clothing. The women are the last to cling to the old style of clothing, but their commitment to it has begun to erode. Now their angis are made of synthetic fabrics and new colors such as brown and gray are being used instead of the traditional black. Children are almost always seen in western dress, and the men are also wearing western clothes. I believe that in the near future the old style Sherpa dress will not be worn
daily and might not even be worn on important ceremonial occasions.

A very positive change has been in education. Whereas in the past the only schools found in the area were in the monasteries, education is now available to everyone. Sherpa women consider education a good thing, but they are concerned that their children are learning Nepali and English in school and not Sherpa. They are afraid that the Sherpa language will die out, and if it does the Sherpa people, and their culture, will be forgotten.

The Sherpa economy has become very dependent on tourism. If, for some reason, tourists stop going to Khumbu, a new economic base would have to be found. It is not clear what that would be. During the spring of 1986, when Tibet was opened, many Sherpas complained about the decrease in tourism. If this shift continues it could significantly reduce the tourist industry. It is already possible that too many facilities have been built to accommodate tourists, as many beds in trekkers lodges remain empty, but building is still underway in Namche Bazaar which, in some ways, is turning into an unlit Las Vegas strip.

While marriages are still conducted as they were in the past, I believe that before long those customs, too, will change because of contact with western societies. Polyandry, which was used to avoid the splitting up of family land, is not being entered into by young Sherpas, and can be classified as an extinct custom. On the other hand, polygyny is becoming more prevalent than it was,

217
which is convenient for the men who must spend large amounts of
time in Kathmandu, but do not want to cut their ties with Khumbu
and the Sherpa lifestyle and customs. This benefits the men to
the detriment of the women. The relationship between wife and
husband is also changing. The men are off working in the tourist
business, going on treks and expeditions, while the women remain
behind with the responsibility of taking care of the home, family,
crops and animals. This is perhaps one of the major factors in
caus- ing the deterioration of the Sherpa way of life.

The family seems to be changing a great deal, as house- holds
are split up for much greater lengths of time than in the past. In
some cases the men who are high altitude porters, are killed,
often leaving women and small children behind. Many Sherpa
women are also making efforts to have fewer children, since they
are no longer important to the economy of the family, in light of
the way the culture has evolved. This should have a positive
effect not only on individual families, but on the culture in
general and the environment.

The Khumbu environment is being adversely affected. It is an
extremely fragile area and will not tolerate an influx of many
more tourists. Garbage is becoming a major problem. In the past
the society did not produce any trash, but with trekkers using
canned goods, and the Sherpas themselves becoming more of a
throw away society, the former pristine environment is being
despoiled.
Chang drinking has become a problem of major proportions. Rice beer is part of all Sherpa ceremonies, both religious and secular, but many men and some women are abusing the beverage on a regular basis. Alcoholism is near the top of the list of medical concerns in Khumbu. The women could control the problem, since they are the ones who make the chang and keep their husbands' glasses full during the day. However, it will be a hard custom to stop, since the drinking of chang has been intertwined with all Sherpa activities in the past.

In conclusion, it appears that life for Sherpa women in Khumbu is becoming easier because of their exposure to new ideas and cultures, and because of the medical care they now enjoy, they are living longer and healthier lives. However, it is not clear whether or not the new innovations and changes in the culture are making the Sherpanis' lives more enjoyable.

The next decade will be critical for the Sherpas. Their economy is now heavily dependent on trekkers. The decline of tourism, or further abuse of the environment, could have drastic effects on the Sherpa culture. In the near future they must decide the direction in which they want their society to move and work toward that goal. The women, who are traditionally the keepers of the culture, should have a major influence on what happens in this crucial period. The Sherpanis of old, in the context of their egalitarian society, would have had a major influence on how the
culture would develop and change. The question now is, will the new Sherpanis be able to do the same?
Bezuchukha (1985:215)
GLOSSARY

angi-long shift-like dress

Bara sahib- the honorific title given to Sir Edmund Hillary, a man who is very important to the Sherpas.

bhaat-rice

Bhote Kosi-one of the two main rivers in Khumbu.

bon bon-the French word for candy.

chaarpi-latrine

chang-rice beer

chapaati-unleavened bread

chia-tea

Chorpen-the guardian of the village temple; he is responsible for the organization of village festivals as well as the upkeep of the temple and the administration of temple funds. This is an honorary office.

chorten-a Buddhist monument.

Chorumba-the guardian of the village temple; he is responsible for the organization of village festivals as well as the upkeep of the temple and the administration of temple funds. This is an honorary office.

DassAAI-Nepal's most important festival.

dem-chang-the second of three phases of marriage.

doko-carrying basket
Dudh Kosi—one of the two main rivers in Khumbu.

Everest View Hotel—this is a modern hotel built on a hill above Khumjung. It has been plagued by problems and has been closed most of the time it has been in existence.

gompa—Buddhist chapel

gunsa—winter settlements

Himalayan Trust—the organization started by Sir Edmund Hillary to improve the lives of the Sherpa people.

kata—ceremonial scarf made of white cheesecloth or silk. Sherpas give them to people who are embarking on, or returning from, a journey.

kerra—banana

khukuri—a large, heavy knife.

khurassani—hot peppers

kodaalo—iron hoe

lemu—nice or beautiful

maanaa—a volume of measure (20 ounces, 2 1/2 cups, or 0.7 liters).

mandala—a kind of Buddhist symbol.

Mani-Rimdu—the Sherpa drama dance.

mani-wall—a structure made of stone slabs which are carved with religious inscriptions in Tibetan script.

memsahib—The "honorific title used by Nepalis for female foreigners". (Bezruchka 1985: 330)
mo-mos-dough wrapped around a filling of meat, vegetables, or a combination of the two, and steamed. It is like a Chinese pot sticker or a ravioli.

naaspaati-apple pear

namaste-the traditional greeting

nomadic-roaming about from place to place aimlessly or without any fixed pattern of movement.

Om mani padme hum-the esoteric mantra recited by Buddhists; it means Hail to the jewel in the lotus.

Osha naua-two men whose appointment coincides with the Osho. They have the duty of enforcing the rules pertaining to the crops during the growing season.

Osho-a rite in early May that protects the village from evil spirits and surrounds the village with magical boundaries.

pastoralists-herdsmen

pembu-a lifetime job, filled through principles of heredity and personal ability, which involved many responsibilities such as exercising control over the extension of the cultivated land in the main villages, collecting fines for breaches in certain customs, and acting as senior kinsman for their clients when that service was needed. A patron of his clients. There were seven pembu.

polyandry-the practice or the condition of having more than one husband at a time; marriage with several husbands.

polygyny-the practice or condition of having more than one wife at a time; marriage of one man to several women.

potato mashey-mashed potatoes

puja-prayer or prayer service
puru-fried *chaapati* or unleavened bread

Rana government—the oligarchy which ruled Nepal from 1846 to 1951.

*riki*-potato

*riki cour*-potato pancake

*saag*-greens

Sagarmantha-Mount Everest

*sen*-tsampa and water cooked like 'potato mashey.' The combination of butter, tea and millet flour or *tsampa.*

*shakpa*-stew

*shingo men*-carpenters

*shingo naua*-three or four men whose duty it was to oversee the community's wood and timber resources.

*sirdar*-foreman or head man

*sodene*-The first of three stages of marriage

*sonam*-merit

*stupa*-a Buddhist monument

*syaaau*-apple

*tea stirrer*-a wooden or plastic dowel with a star shaped end. The doweling is spun by placing it between one's palms and rubbing them together.

*thangka*-Bhuddhist scroll painting.

*torma*-ritual figures made for religious services
tow-hand made noodles of mashed potatoes or dough. These are usually cooked in a spicy soup.

trampa-a line that is used for carrying loads. It is put around the load and across the head or forehead.

transhumance-the seasonal movement of livestock between mountain and lowland pastures, either under the care of herders or accompanied by the whole population of owners.

tsampa-buckwheat flour

yersa-Summer settlements

zendi-wedding rite; the third stage of marriage.

zopkio-a cross between a yak and a cow.

This is a very comprehensive book covering many aspects of the country of Nepal, from history to mountain climbing, from the Terai to Mt. Everest. The text is illustrated with many excellent photographs.


A history of the Sherpas of the Solu district of Nepal is presented in this book, but the main emphasis is on the Buddhist religion and how it is practiced in that area.


Short cultural descriptions of many of the ethnic groups that are found in Nepal are contained in this book.


This book is about the adventures of a Scottish family, parents and two teen age daughters, who drove from their home to Kathmandu and back, and trekked to Everest base camp while they were in Nepal. Some actual journal entries written by the mother and girls are used throughout the book to supplement the narrative.


This is a superficial article based on a trek to Khumbu after a seven year hiatus. The author feels that the changes that have taken place have had a positive effect on Khumbu and its people.

This is an amusing account of Nima, a Sherpa boy from Nepal, who is in failing health and is brought to America by Fuller and her husband.


This is an anthropological study of culture change of many of the ethnic groups who live at high altitudes in the Himalayan mountains.


This article deals with tormas made by Sherpa monks for use in Buddhist ceremonies.


This ethnography discusses many aspects of Sherpa culture as observed during field studies done in 1953 and 1957, before the Sherpas had much contact with outsiders.


Furer-Haimendorf describes the culture changes that have taken place among the Khumbu Sherpas since his first field study in 1953. He also gives the reasons for the changes.

This book contains a good description of Khumbu Sherpa culture as it existed in 1963, as well as discussions of geology, formation and exploration of Mt. Everest.


Books and articles written about many aspects of Nepal, from agriculture through mountaineering and travel, are found in this bibliography.


This is a description of a trip taken in December of 1971 by the Hillary family to the Khumbu area of Nepal. Hillary talks about the social life of the Sherpas, work done by the Himalayan Trust on schools and monastaries, and the Mani-Rimdu Festival at the village of Thami.


Hillary relates some of his many adventures in New Zealand, the Alps, the South Pole and the Himalayas. He also discusses some of the building activities of the Himalayan trust and changes in the Sherpa culture.


Sir Edmund Hillary recounts the work of the Himalayan Schoolhouse Expedition in the Khumbu area of Nepal in 1963, whose goals were to build schools and water systems for some of the Sherpa villages, treat diseases, and climb previously unclimbed Taweche and Kantega. Descriptions of many aspects of Sherpa culture are included.

This is the account of the expedition to the Himalayas to verify or disprove the existence of yeti, and to do research on exposure to high altitudes on the human body.


The Mani-Rimdu drama dance is discussed in detail in this volume. It also contains a description of Sherpa culture.


Maillart conveys a great deal of cultural information about the Sherpas as a result of observations she made while trekking in Nepal.


This is the autobiography of the Sherpa Tenzing Norgay who successfully climbed Mount Everest with Sir. Edmund


This study is about Sherpas of the Solu area of Nepal, but also has a good description of the entire Solu-Khumbu area. Ortner focuses on problems of marriage, family and asceticism, hospitality, exorcisms.

Rowell explores the effects of recent tourism and government intervention on the cultures that have existed in the Himalayas for hundreds of years. He uses quotes, by such people as Sir Edmund Hillary, and outstanding photographs. He believes that the changes that are taking place are not necessarily good for the people involved and indeed may be harmful.


Religious and secular architecture are described and illustrated in this book. The authors also explain how the environment has influenced Sherpa building styles.


This is a short booklet written to be given out to tourists who visit Sagarmantha National Park in Nepal. It has descriptions of many Sherpa festivals as well as discussions of some religious and cultural aspects of Sherpa life.


Short cultural descriptions of many of the ethnic groups of Nepal are presented in this volume.


This short pamphlet mixes facts about Sherpas and their lives with mythology. It tells about the life of the reincarnate Lama of Tengboche and also gives a history of

The art of thangka paintings is described in detail in this beautifully illustrated book.

NEPAL


This government sponsored study of women in Nepal was undertaken to better understand the role that rural women play in the economy, family and community and use the information to aid with the integration of women into the redevelopment program that is underway in the country. This ethnic group lives in the eastern Terai.


Phases one and two of this study were put together, and guidelines written for, a national plan of action to increase the productivity and status of Nepalese women.


Nine articles, written from historical and anthropological perspectives, about various aspects of women's lives in India and Nepal are contained in this book. Most of the focus is on Hindu women.

This is a study of the ways in which the social and symbolic role of high cast Nepali women combine to define their position in patrilinear Hindu societies.


In this series the roles of women were studied from secondary sources in order to better understand how to draw women into the new economic plan being developed in Nepal. This part deals with the legal aspects of women's


This government sponsored study of women in Nepal was undertaken to better understand the role that rural women play in the economy, family and community and use the information to aid with the integration of women into the redevelopment program that is underway in the country. This ethnic group lives in the central middle hills.


Bernstein imparts a lot of information about Nepal in this short book. Some of the subjects touched on are government, customs, religion, tourism and trekking.

This comprehensive guide to Nepal provides a great deal of useful information for trekkers and climbers, as well as other visitors to the country.


An old woman of the Gurung Tribe in central Nepal talks about her life and the changes she has seen in her community. Some marriage customs are explored, as well as the general way of life of her people.


Books and articles written about many aspects of Nepal, from agriculture through mountaineering and travel, are found in this bibliography.


The Jonses describe how and why Limbu women of eastern Nepal are moving steadily closer to full-scale equality with Limbu men.


This book gives a detailed account of the political history of Nepal.


Judy Lomax describes two treks taken in Nepal, one in the Annapurna area and one in Helambu, with her husband and three small children. She is a keen observer and gives many excellent descriptions of the various cultures with whom
she and her family interact during their travels. She also includes sections from David Snellgrove’s *Himalayan Pilgrimage*. Oxford: Cassirer, 1961.


This is a comprehensive report on the lives of women in


This government sponsored study of women in Nepal was undertaken to better understand the role that rural women play in the economy, family and community and use the information to aid with the integration of women into the redevelopment program that is underway in the country. This ethnic group lives in the far western middle hills.


This government sponsored study of women in Nepal was undertaken to better understand the role that rural women play in the economy, family and community and use the information to aid with the integration of women into the redevelopment program that is underway in the country. This ethnic group lives in the Kathmandu Valley.


This government sponsored study of women in Nepal was undertaken to better understand the role that rural women play in the economy, family and community and use the
information to aid with the integration of women into the redevelopment program that is underway in the country. This ethnic group lives in the far western inner Terai.


This bibliography includes sources from all over the world, but some of the material may be difficult to locate because some authors are mistakenly alphabetized by their first names.


This government sponsored study of women in Nepal was undertaken to better understand the role that rural women play in the economy, family and community and use the information to aid with the integration of women into the redevelopment program that is underway in the country. This ethnic group lives in the western high mountains.


Short cultural descriptions of many of the ethnic groups of Nepal are presented in this volume.


This is a compilation of the available literature about women of Nepal. The subjects covered are the economy, education, anthropology, law, health, population and general

This book contains good information about many aspects of trekking in the Himalaya and Karakoram.


This is an attempt to create a statistical profile of Nepalese women. The author admits that this is a difficult task as there are many different ethnic groups in the country and few studies have been done on them.

OTHERS


The effects of tourism, both positive and negative, on a number of diverse cultures are described in this volume.