

# Himalayan HealthCare Trek Ganesh Himal March-April 2010

<u>Trek Duration:</u>	12-13 days
<u>Trek Destination:</u>	Sherthung and Jharlang Villages in the Dhading (Ganesh Himal) region of Nepal. (Northwest of Kathmandu, close to the Tibet border).
<u>Trek Starting Point:</u>	Parbati Kunda (Gompa), nine to ten hour drive from Kathmandu
<u>Medical Camp:</u>	Sherthung and Jharlang Village
<u>Trek End Point:</u>	Kimdangphedi (3000 ft.)
<u>Highest Point on Trek:</u>	Phangsang Pass (13,500 ft.+)
<u>Mountains Ranges:</u>	Ganesh, Langtang & Manaslu Himal Ranges

## ITINERARY

27 Mar (SAT): Final arrival of all trek participants before midday.

**5:00 PM:** Pick up from hotel for HHC program orientation and trek briefing at the HHC Office (*Phone 5528139 or 5522109*) at Jawalakhel, southern section of the Kathmandu valley.

**7:00 PM:** After the briefing drive to Nepali restaurant for the welcome dinner.

28 Mar (SUN): Possibly Nepal Medical Association interviews for doctors for temporary licenses.  
Or **10:30 AM** pickup at hotel for guided sightseeing tour (optional).

**NOTE:** Please clear bar bills by this evening to save delays in the morning of the trek. The hotel room charges should be paid to HHC.

29 Mar (MON): *The drive is about 9-10 hrs. long (may take longer).*

**7:15 AM sharp**, departure for first campsite, **Parvati Kund** (Ghyang or Gompa). This is a long (9-10 hours) and winding drive on a narrow highway leading out of the northwestern corner of Kathmandu valley. The first hour is a climb out of the valley ending at a police check point at **Kakani** at about 7,000 ft., from where on a clear day the mountain vistas unfold. The *Ganesh Himal* range (our destination) appears straight up north as we drive, flanked by the *Langtang* range and the *Jugal Himal* range on its right and the *Manaslu* and the *Annapurna* ranges on its left. Both the Manaslu and the Annapurna are at a height of above 8,000 meters making them two of the tallest ten mountains in the world. After Kakani, we drop down slowly into the **Trishuli** valley for about three hours to reach the **Trishuli Bazaar**, a tourist permit check point, marking the end of the tarred road. An hour of climb on a gravel road out of the Trishuli valley takes us to our lunch point at **Kalikasthan**, another tourist check point where we stop for about 30-45 minutes. The drive onwards to our campsite is long (about 4-5 hours), slow and tortuous overlooking a steep drop of about 3,000 ft. on the ridge of the Lantang River gorge. An hour drive from lunch point takes us to the boundary of the Langtang National Park at **Ramche**.

After Ramche, we drive to **Dhunche** (7,200 ft.), for about one hour which is the last big town before the trek, where we acquire national park permit to enter. After Dhunche a slow hour long drop with many hairpin turns takes us to the Langtang River Bridge and **Shyabru Besi**, a Tibetan village just two days away from the Tibetan border crossing point of **Rasuwagadi**. At Syabrubesi, three trek routes separate, Lantang to the east, Tibet & Ganesh Himal to the north (soon to become a major highway) and Tipling to the west. We follow the road to climb up the west side of this narrow riverine valley through a series of hairpin turns reaching us to the top of Gompa Hill from where another valley of Golzung unfolds to the north. A further hour of almost flat drive takes us to our camp at **Parvati Kund** at over 9,000ft., overlooking the Tibeto-Tamang village of Gatlang. Parvati Kund is a clump of shacks huddled together around a small Buddhist Monastery. Our preset camp is on a lawn in front of the bungalow of an ex-army general with a view of the Langtang Himal and the narrow forested valley below. The HHC support staff will have hot meals prepared for the evening. Trek briefing will be after dinner.

30 Mar (TUE): *Total duration of trek 6-7 hours.*

7:30Am (Usually), we start the first day of the trek on a wide desolate path

climbing slowly through a forest of rhododendron, oak and evergreens. The Lantang Himals grow behind us as we climb. After about three hours we reach our lunch spot, **Yuri Kharka** at about 12,000ft., where we have a hot lunch prepared by the advance kitchen team. The trek after lunch is a steep climb of just over an hour to our first pass, the **Khurpu Pass** at 13,000 + ft. If clear the Langtang Himals look spectacular. Usually cold strong wind greets us at the pass, as is the case in the mountains in the afternoon. We then drop quickly down all the way to campsite, **Somdang** at 10,500ft., which takes us about two to two and a half hours. Somdang is a narrow riverine valley created by a small mountain stream, running between two mountain spurs, which push out of the Ganesh Himals towards the southern plains of Nepal. There is a small lead and zinc mining center here. A little away from the center our camp is set at a clearing close to the stream where number of huts have sprung up in the last few years.

31 Mar (WED): *Total duration of walk 7-8 hrs.*

After an early breakfast, we go through a series of ups and downs for about five hours through rhododendron or alpine forests and bare steep cliffs and stop for lunch above the tree-line at the **Phangsang Pass** at 14,000 ft + with its line of Mani stones (Buddhist prayer sites). On a clear day the Ganesh Himals and Manaslu are seen to the north of the pass and Lantang to the east. Tipling can be seen as patches of fields interspersed with tiny houses at our feet. A quick steep drop of about two and a half hour through rhododendron and pine forests takes us to **Marmelung**, a small grassy clearing in the middle of the forest at over 9,000ft.

Campfire, drinks & hot meal.

1 APR (THU): *Total duration of walk 7 to 8 hrs.*

Early morning light on the Ganesh Himals can be seen to the north. After breakfast we descend quickly through a rhododendron forest for about one and half hours to reach the outlying fields of **Tipling** village. A vantage point, along the way gives us a wide view of the small valley of Tipling with its fields and houses. Once we reach the outlying fields we walk for another hour and a half through parts of the village to reach the health post where we inspect for about half hour and then head down to the main village.

We walk for about half hour through the main village of Tipling and the outlying fields to reach the **Kami Village** (blacksmiths) where the blacksmiths can be seen beating metal to make farm tools for the Tipling villagers. Then we climb down a steep drop of half an hour to a narrow wooden bridge & across the **Ata Khola**. We will try and find a shaded spot for lunch. After lunch we begin an hour and a half of hiking uphill to **Sherthung** where we camp and **set up clinic**.

## MEDICAL CAMP (CLINIC) SETUP

We will camp at the Sherthung school grounds and begin setting up the medical camp in the school building. Tea, bath, patient examination room assignment, unpacking medicines and setting up pharmacy. Those of us who want to help unpack and sort out medicines and instrument may join the HHC staff.

There will be five medical camp (clinic) days, two in Sherthung and three in Sherthung. During the clinic days, work begins **after 10 AM** to allow the villagers to finish their morning early lunch and chores. The first clinic day may take longer to start as it takes some time to organize the crowd.

Usually after breakfast, each clinic morning time permitting, **an hour long informal class (lecture)** is held by a visiting health professional for the benefit of the Nepali health workers. They choose a topic or subject of relevance to rural health issues in Nepal after discussion with the health staff, village volunteers or the coordinator. Translation for the benefit of the village health workers will be available.

For **medical examination of patients**, the health provider will each be given an examination room to work out of and the help of a Nepali health worker and a Tamang translator. The health workers will take turns to be with different doctors each day to benefit learning from all. This on-the-job training of health workers has proved very effective and therefore is a very important part of this trek. After examination, the patients will receive their medication from the dispensary.

During the medical camp days, the meals will be announced by the cooks. We have an hour long **lunch** break at about **1:00 PM**. Most working days may go till 6:00 or even 7:00 in the evenings and lamps will be provided.

Those of us who would like to visit the village can take turns during the working days. You are most welcome to visit the homes of the villagers.

**SHERTHUNG** is a Tamang village of over 3,200 people (mostly Tamang, some Gurung and kami blacksmith) with a government health post. HHC runs the health posts, supports women empowerment groups, supports fifteen children with stipends and two teachers in school and helps over three hundred women with handicraft business and angora rabbits farming in this village. HHC has a midwifery program at Sherthung to cover the three villages of Tipling, Sherthung and Lapa.

Apr 2(FRI): Medical camp at Sherthung

Apr 3 (SAT): Medical camp at Sherthung

Apr 4 (SUN) *Total duration of walk 7 hrs.*  
After Breakfast, the walk will be small ups and then a long downhill to the village of **Borang** (2 and 1\2 hours). After Borang the trail is gentle to Rangmenan (1\2 hour), then downhill for an hour to **Lisne Khola** (river). After lunch, we walk on relatively flat surface for about an hour and then a last twenty minutes of uphill to **Percho**. Another hour and a half of relatively flat walking reaches us to the **Jharlang** camp. (*Jharlang, a new village site of work therefore the final itinerary to the village will be detailed approximately one month prior to the trek itself*).

Apr 5 (MON): *Medical camp (Clinic) at Jharlang*

Apr 6 (TUE): *Medical camp (Clinic) at Jharlang*

Apr 7 (WED): *Medical camp (Clinic) at Jharlang*

Pack up medicines and finalize inventory. We leave all remaining medicines from the camp for the village health posts.

Apr 8 (THU): *Total duration of walk 7-8 hrs.*  
After breakfast, we walk the *Nepali flat* to **Budu** for about an hour and a half and then go downhill for another hour to **Gajuli Khola** River (Dhuncheney Khola). Then onwards to Chatra and Dharna (one hour) *Nepali flat*, downhill and uphill. Lunch at water-point at **Batashe** or **Ghyansyang**.

After lunch a *Nepali flat* and downhill walk to **Darkhaphedi** (1 & 1/2 hrs). The half hour walk is relatively flat to riverside camp *at Kindangphedi*. It will be warm at this camp.

Apr 9 (FRI): After breakfast, drive to Dhadingbesi (3 hours) on rough road. The track is narrow and will go through villages like **Damgade**, **Todke** and **Jumray Bhanjyang** to reach **Dhadingbesi**.

Lunch at Dhadingbesi.

The waiting vehicles will drive us back to **Kathmandu** (4,500 ft Drive to Kathmandu (4 hours) on paved road.

***NOTE:** In case of rain and the vehicles are not able to reach us at Kimdangpedi, the trek will continue for another half day or full day. In that case, this day will be the hottest on the trek with the temperature in the high 90s or even 100.*

Apr 10 (SAT): Free day for shopping and sightseeing, if we reach a day earlier.

Apr 11 (SUN): Start of final departure of participants from Nepal

## NOTE

For any information on the trek, hotel arrangement, the sightseeing tour, reconfirmation, change or rescheduling of tickets, trekking permits, visa extension, hotel arrangement, car arrangement for airport pickups and departures and any other travel related needs please call Suk, Sudarshan or HHC office. The phone numbers are:

Himalayan HealthCare Office	55228139, 5522109
Sudarshan Kadaria Cell #	9841325859
Suk Ghale Cell #	9841056162
Anil Parajuli Residence #	5555991, 5521098
Anil Cell #	9851085372

2. The itinerary may change because of reasons of political unrest, landslides, trail diversions or logistical issues. The camp spots are chosen keeping in mind the size of the camping space for all tents, water source as well as duration of walk each day.
3. At all times on the trek we suggest you carry your raingear, sunscreen lotion, two water bottles, sun hat, sunglasses in your daypack. We suggest wearing layers of clothing in altitude to accommodate the ever-changing dramatic Himalayan weather. On the days of the high altitude sections of the trek a warm hat, gloves and a warm jacket or similar should go with you in your daypack.
4. Please leave all valuables, credit cards and passport in a safety deposit box at the hotel before we leave on the trek. A copy of your passport is enough for the trek.
5. The high altitude part of the trek may cause acute mountain sickness. Diamox is cheap and freely available at drug stores in Kathmandu and is widely used prophylactically. The second half of the trek will be in low altitude and hot (temperatures as high as 90-

100°F).

6. We are careful with water and food on the treks, yet trekkers are known to have stomach problems. To limit this as much as possible, the kitchen staff are given a course of anti-protozoal medication (tinidazole) and a course of Ciprofloxacin. While in Kathmandu, please drink bottled water and do not eat green uncooked vegetables, salads and fruits and eat at only recommended places (but still at risk).
7. Limited maps and books of the Dhading region are available in most bookstores in Kathmandu. The recommended place is Pilgrim Book House at Kopundole. There is a book by Tom Frieke called Nepali Household, which may be available. This is an ethnographical book written on the Tamangs of Tipling. 'People of Nepal' (by Dor Bdr. Bista) is another book which can give you an insight on the Nepalese people. A book on Birds of Nepal and also Plants of Nepal could be handy.

## TREK KIT

To help you pack for the trek here are some of the essentials:

- SLEEPING BAG – Zero degrees should be enough, preferably fiber-filled
- TROUSERS – Gore-Tex or other comfortable
- T-SHIRTS – three or more
- UNDERGARMENTS
- FLEECE/SWEATER - one
- PULLOVER/WOOL SHIRT/ACRYLIC PILE JACKET – one
- HATS – one with a brim, warm one for the cold
- SHORTS / SKIRTS – one
- SOCKS – several warm and thick ones
- SHOES - Trek boots, well broken in
- SLIPPERS/FLIP-FLOPS/SANDALS – for camp wear
- JACKETS - PARKA/SKI JACKETS/GORE-TEX SHELL – one
- GLOVES – Light (there could be snow)
- TOWEL/TOILETRIES – Only toilet paper provided
- SUN GLASSES/SNOW GOGGLES
- SUN SCREEN LOTION
- INSECT REPELLENT
- RAIN GEAR
- WATER BOTTLES - two 1 QRT/1 Liter each
- FLASH LIGHTS - EXTRA Batteries & bulbs
- POCKET KNIFE
- BAGS – one duffel (pack everything in see-through plastic bags)
- LIGHT DAY PACK – one water proof

Please note: Video cameras may need permits. Prescription drugs for personal use may only be available in Kathmandu prior to the trek.