

Mountain Trail 2013

The annual publication of
Mountain Spirit



PHOTO GALLERY OF MOUNTAIN SPIRIT ACTIVITIES



Executive Board members (2012-2014)



Speakers at the sharing program on federalism, inclusion & rights of the indigenous minorities



Thamo village of Namche VDC, Solukhumbu where Mountain Spirit's field office is located



Participant at the sharing and interaction program



Prof. Robert Chamber visits Mountain Spirit's stall during the gallery presentation by NEPAN



Acharya Norbu Sherpa speaking at the Eco-Walk 2013 program at Nagarjun

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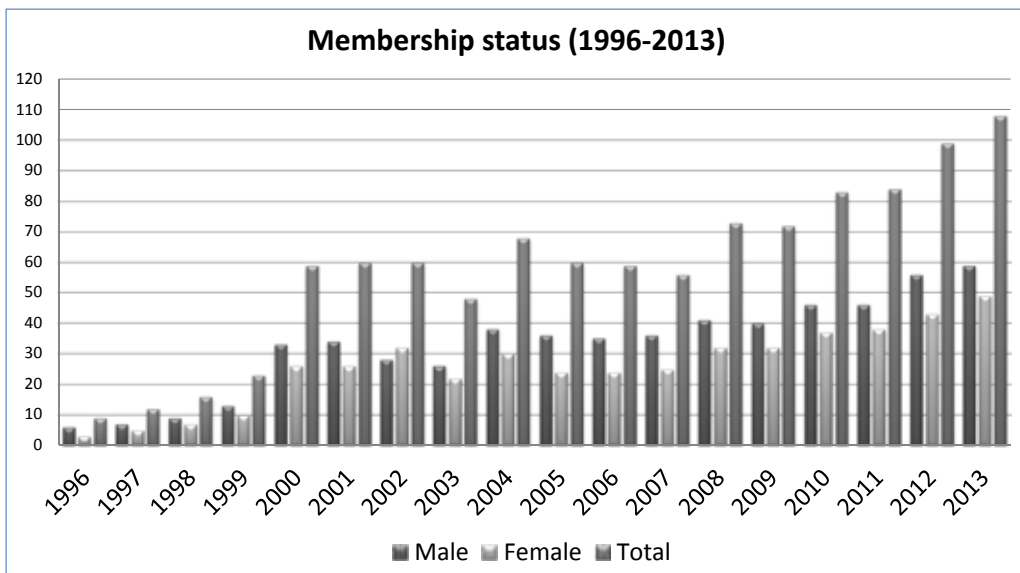
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About Mountain Spirit

Mountain Spirit is a non-government and non-profit organization registered in 1996 under the laws of Nepal. The organization was formed by a group of like-minded people from different mountain communities. The organization aims to improve livelihoods, protect environment and conserve mountain cultures through capacity building, empowerment, awareness and sustainable development initiatives with the participation of local communities.

This organization has focused its work on issues related to health, education, eco-tourism, gender sensitization, social mobilization, participatory planning, conflict resolution, social empowerment and institutional capacity strengthening in different mountains regions of Nepal. The strength of this organization lies in its members; in total, Mountain Spirit has more than hundred members representing 16 different mountain districts of Nepal.



Message from the Advisor



Dear friends,

NGOs in Nepal are often perceived as existing solely to implement projects or programs. Mountain Spirit has been an exception in that over the last 17 years, it has served as a forum for our members to connect, learn and share ideas and knowledge.

The widening of the *Mountain Trail 2013* to provide space for articles and write-ups is a welcome change that will serve the needs of the membership in future. In addition to presenting reports of annual program activities, I hope this publication will continue to serve as a platform for sharing ideas, observations and experiences through creative writing.

Tashi Deleg!

Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa
Advisor and Former President

Message from the President



Dear members and friends,

It is a great pleasure to present our annual publication, *Mountain Trail 2013*. This publication highlights all of Mountain Spirit's annual activities and includes various articles related to environmental conservation and social development in mountain communities. Our activities this year wouldn't have been possible without the support of our dedicated and passionate members, advisors and supporters. Thank you all!

Mountain Spirit's biggest asset is our members. Today we are very fortunate to have more than 100 members spread across 16 mountain districts who are working hard to make their communities better places to live. Our members' roles and responsibilities have become increasingly important in the context of Nepal's changing socio-political scene. Our small efforts will have a bigger impact on the nation's development as a whole.

Mountain Spirit's executive team strives to serve our members with improved communication and provide up-to-date information on our activities as well as thought-provoking articles in our publication *Mountain Trail*. We hope that this medium will help our members, who are scattered around Nepal and abroad, share ideas and stay in touch. Your feedback and suggestions are highly appreciated, so please do let us know how we can improve our communication with you.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all (advisor, partners, supporters, friends and our amazing members) for the trust you have shown in the current executive team and for the honor of allowing me to act as president of this prestigious organization.

Happy Reading!

Thank you,

Nima Lama Hyolmo
President

Message from General Secretary/Executive Director



Dear members, partners, friends and well-wishers,
Greetings from Mountain Spirit!

It is our pleasure to share Mountain Spirit's annual report and publication, *Mountain Trail 2013*. This issue includes our organization's activities and achievements from the past year as well as articles from our members. We also publish a quarterly e-newsletter version of *Mountain Trail* to share more frequent updates from Mountain Spirit. We hope this publication will be useful for our members and other associates. We welcome, appreciate and encourage any suggestions you may have as to how we can improve these publications.

For this issue, we would like to thank Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, Mr. Ang Rita Sherpa, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Mr. Gelu Sherpa, Ms. Jemima Diki Sherpa, Ms. Yangji Doma Sherpa, Mr. Lakpa Sherpa, Ms. Tshering Yodin Sherpa and Ms. Chhiring Dolma Sherpa for their contributions. We are also thankful to Ms. Jemima Diki Sherpa and Ms. Emma Finney for providing editing support. Similarly, we appreciate the efforts made by publication committee members Mr. Lakpa Sherpa, Mr. Chhewang N. Lama and Ms. Tuka Cheki Sherpa.

Mountain Spirit believes in sustainable mountain development where the rights of local people, equitable resource distribution, capacity building and economic opportunities are the basic requirements for bringing change that ensures both the development of mountain communities and conservation of the mountain ecosystem. In this regard, our members, who represent various mountain communities, are the strength of this organization and provide great resources to achieve Mountain Spirit's goals. We appreciate all our members who are affiliated with this organization and thank all our friends, partners and well-wishers for their continuous support. Let's keep this spirit high!

Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)
General Secretary/Executive Director

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF CURRENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, President

Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, new president of Mountain Spirit, is originally from Shermathang village of Kiul VDC, Sindhupalchowk. He joined MS in 1999 and became an executive member in 2008. He was elected as general secretary of MS from 2010 to 2012. He also served as secretary of Foreign Affairs for the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). Professionally, he is a tourism entrepreneur and is actively involved in various community and social organizations such as the Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN) and Yangrima Trust.



Mr. Lakpa Sherpa, Vice-President

Mr. Lakpa Sherpa, from Bhojpur Bazar of Bhojpur district, is the new vice-president of Mountain Spirit. He became a MS member in 2005 and was also an executive member of the outgoing committee. His educational background is in political science and economics, and he has extensive teaching experience. Currently, he is principal of the Laboratory Higher Secondary School in Kirtipur. He has also actively been involved in various education-related committees with the Sherpa Association of Nepal.



Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa), General Secretary

Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) is originally from Tumbuk village of Beni VDC, Solukhumbu district. He is one of Mountain Spirit's founding members and has previously served the organization in various roles including executive member, general secretary and president. Mr. Lama has an academic background in community development and planning in tourism management and has worked with various national and international organizations on community development using appreciative and participatory approaches.



Ms. Tuka Cheki Sherpa, Secretary

Ms. Tuka Cheki Sherpa, originally from Chuhade of Triyuga Municipality, Udayapur, has been appointed secretary of Mountain Spirit. She holds a Masters in Rural Development. She joined Mountain Spirit in 2000 as a volunteer and then became a general member. She served two years as a program co-ordinator for Mountain Spirit from 2009. She has gained experience working with various national and international organizations on programs including socioeconomic surveys and community participatory planning.



Ms. Mingma Sherpa, Treasurer

Ms. Mingma Sherpa became a general member of Mountain Spirit in 1997 and also served as an executive member on the outgoing committee. She has now been appointed as treasurer of new executive committee. Ms. Sherpa is originally from Gumdel of Ramechhap district. Her educational background is in business administration and she now runs her own business.



Mr. Ang Tenjing Sherpa, Executive Member

Mr. Ang Tenjing Sherpa, executive member, is a permanent resident of Chitretham in Nametar VDC of Udayapur. He joined Mountain Spirit in 1997 as a general member. He has extensive experience in agriculture development, especially organic seed production. In 2000, Mr. Sherpa worked as an agricultural expert in Namche VDC's Thame Valley for a Mountain Spirit program funded by Eco Himal. He is currently working as a technical officer with the Agriculture Research Centre in Sunsari.



Mr. Chhewang N. Lama, Executive Member

Executive Member Mr. Chhewang N. Lama is originally from Bargaun of Humla district and has an educational background in information technology. He became a MS general member in 2007 and was a co-ordinator for the 2012 Eco-Walk program. He is a tourism entrepreneur and is managing director of a trekking company called Responsible Treks.



Mr. Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa, Executive Member

Mr. Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa, from Chhulemu, Salleri VDC of Solukhumbu, is now an executive member of Mountain Spirit. He holds a Masters of Philosophy in Management and is currently senior faculty and program co-ordinator at Kathmandu College of Management (KCM). He is also affiliated with various organizations such as Pasang Lhamu Sherpa Memorial College, the Management Association of Nepal and the Sherpa Association of Nepal.



Ms. Praju Gurung, Executive Member

Ms. Praju Gurung first became affiliated with Mountain Spirit in 2007 and became a general member in 2009. She is currently pursuing a Masters in Environmental Science. Ms. Gurung was a member of the MS team that conducted the Dudh-Koshi Sub-Basin socioeconomic baseline survey in Solukhumbu and Khotang for World Wildlife Fund in 2008. She is also affiliated with STEP Nepal-Mustang and the Nepal Red Cross Society.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF ADVISORS



Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa

Dr. Lhakpa Sherpa has been involved with Mountain Spirit from its formative stages and served as president of the organization from 2008-2012. His expertise is in conservation of mountain environments, preservation of mountain cultures and sustainable livelihood of mountain communities. Dr. Sherpa received his Ph.D. in Forest Resources from the University of Washington in 1999 and became the first person from the Sherpa community to earn a doctorate. Dr. Sherpa was employed by the Nepal Government from 1980 to 1999. He served as warden of a number of national parks, and was also actively involved in the planning and creation of Sagarmatha National Park, Makalu-Barun National Park and Kanchanjunga Conservation Area.

In 2000, he joined The Mountain Institute and became an international expert and manager of the Qomolangma Conservation Project in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China. In 2004, he became co-director of TMI's Himalayan Program and worked extensively on cultural conservation. He is now a senior fellow with TMI and also serves as the president of the Khumjung School Alumni Association. In 2009, Dr. Sherpa received a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to join Yale University where he was appointed as a research scientist. He is currently involved in conducting a research project on sustainable tourism in the Khumbu Region.



Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa

Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa was a founding member of Mountain Spirit and is now an advisor for the organization. Ms. Sherpa, originally from Finjoling, Tatne of Nametar VDC in Udayapur, has an educational background in Rural Extension and Women from the United Kingdom. Since Mountain Spirit's formation, she has served in various roles and has played an important leadership role in the organization's overall program design and policy development. She acted as the first president of Mountain Spirit, and later also served as vice president as well as a volunteer executive director for three months. She is currently the chairperson of the Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN). In addition, she has experience in participatory

development and has worked with various national and international organizations including the Ministry of Local Development, Action Aid-Nepal, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Plan International (Nepal).



Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa

Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa, a founding member of Mountain Spirit, is originally from Namche Bazar in Solukhumbu. Mr. Sherpa was appointed as executive director of Mountain Spirit in 2009 and played a significant role in the implementation of the MS-CESVI project in Sagarmatha National Park. In the past he has also served as an executive member and as general secretary. Mr. Sherpa is currently country director for EcoHimal, an Austrian international NGO. He is also actively involved in various social and community-based organizations.



Ms. Ram Maya Thakali

Ms. Ram Maya Thakali is from Jomsom in Mustang district and first joined Mountain Spirit in 1999. She has been involved in Mountain Spirit in a range of roles and responsibilities including president, treasurer, executive member and co-ordinator. Her educational background is in Sociology and she has worked with communities in the mountain region using participatory and appreciative approaches to planning, socioeconomic surveys and institutional capacity building.



Dr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa

Dr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa, originally from Monju in Chaurikharka VDC, Solukhumbu, received his education in conservation governance, sustainable development and tourism. Dr. Sherpa first became affiliated with Mountain Spirit in 2000, became an executive member in 2006, and was appointed president of the organization in 2008. As president, he contributed significantly to Mountain Spirit's organizational development. He has recently completed his PhD study at the University of Massachusetts, USA. He has held various roles with organizations including the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC), Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP) and IUCN Nepal.

Mountain Spirit's Activities and Achievements (2012-2013)

16th Annual General Meeting completed successfully

Mountain Spirit's 16th Annual General Meeting was held successfully on 19 August 2012 under the chairmanship of Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa at Hotel Seto Gurans, Baluwatar in Kathmandu. A new nine-member executive committee was elected, with Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo as president. The AGM also endorsed the progress report presented by General Secretary Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, the financial report presented by Treasurer Mr. Nono Lama Hyolmo and the annual plan for the coming year presented by board member Mr. Lakpa Sherpa. During the meeting, 12 new associate members were welcomed and endorsed, while six existing associate members were promoted to general member status.



Workshop and training program

On the occasion of the 16th Annual General Meeting, Mountain Spirit organized a one-day workshop and training program on 18 August 2012 in Kathmandu. The first half of the day was a workshop on 'Federalism, Inclusion and Rights of the Indigenous Minorities'. Various scholars and leaders highlighted issues of federalism, indigenous rights and related practices in Nepal and other countries. Mr. Pasang Sherpa, a former member of the Constituent Assembly, noted that the indigenous movement in Nepal is not intended to ignite ethnic conflict but rather aims to establish social justice for all. Dr. Mahendra Lawoti, Professor of Political Science at Western Michigan University, shed light on the myths and realities of federalism by sharing various examples of the federal system in different countries. He said that Nepal is moving against a global movement towards federalism, and that the media has played a key role in creating the myth that federalism will result in problems for Nepali society. Dr. Sara Shneiderman, Associate Professor at Yale University, gave a presentation on 'Inequality and Affirmative Action', focusing on practices in India and the United States during their respective state restructuring processes. Mr. Chhakka Bahadur (Chhewang) Lama, a scholar from Humla, made a slide presentation on tourist attractions in Humla

and the Mt. Kailash region of Tibet Autonomous Region. During the program Ms. Yangkila Sherpa, a former Mountain Spirit advisor, expressed her good wishes for the successful completion of the AGM. The program chairperson and Mountain Spirit President Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa highlighted the objectives of the organization and thanked all the presenters.

The second half of the day was allocated for a training session on participatory communication and Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) Analysis. Mr. Kamal Phuyal, an experienced participatory communication trainer, shared his knowledge of development theories and participatory approaches by involving attendees in various exercises. The training also focused on the role of facilitators and the importance of participatory communication while working in different contexts. Mountain Spirit's Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) facilitated a brief training session on SWOT analysis.



Appointment of executive director

On 19 August 2012, Mountain Spirit appointed Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) as executive director to oversee various MS activities including the MS-CESVI project in Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone. Mr. Lama was a founding member of Mountain Spirit and is current general secretary. He has an academic background in community planning and development in tourism management with working experience in appreciative and participatory approach.

Appointment of new office assistant

Following Ms. Mingma Sherpa's resignation, a selection committee formed by the executive board appointed Ms. Sonam Dolma Lama as Mountain Spirit's new office assistant. Ms. Lama is from Bargaun Village Development Committee of Humla district and is currently doing a Bachelor in Social Work. We welcome Ms. Sonam to the team and thank Ms. Mingma for her work with Mountain Spirit.

Basic Management Skills workshop for lodge businesses

A one-day workshop on Basic Lodge Management Skills was organized for lodge owners in Lukla on 14 December 2012. MS member Mr. Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa volunteered as a facilitator for the event, which was organized by the Himalayan Club Lukla in collaboration with Mountain Spirit. Twenty local lodge operators attended the workshop.

Project closing program

A program was organized at Villa Everest Korean Restaurant in Thamel on 5th January 2013 to thank all those who had been involved in and supported the forestry project in the Sagarmatha National Park (project details given in next section). In the program, Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo offered *khada* to Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa for his support in completing the project. Later, Dr. Lhakpa offered *khada* to Mr. Giovanni Malavasi, Project Manager of CESVI, Mr. Subash Karki, former administrator of CESVI, SNP Chief Warden Mr. Ram Chandra Kandel, MS advisor Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa, former treasurer Mr. Nono Lama, and the project's Senior Field Coordinator Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) for their roles in the successful completion of the project.



Orientation and interaction program

A half-day Orientation and Interaction program for new Mountain Spirit members was conducted in Kathmandu on 19th January 2013. The first session began with an overview of the program by Vice President Mr. Lakpa Sherpa. Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, MS advisor and the program's chief guest, talked about the historical background and scope of Mountain Spirit and the role of NGOs in national development. Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, MS president and chairperson of the program, made a presentation on Mountain Spirit's vision, mission, objectives, activities and achievements to date. Similarly, Founding Member Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa shared her recollections about how Mountain Spirit was formed.

The second session of the program was a brief introduction to the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Approach. Mountain Spirit has used AI since its

establishment. Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa), Mountain Spirit's Executive Director and General Secretary, made a presentation on the historical background of AI, its applications and the 4-D AI model. Finally, Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, president of Mountain Spirit concluded the program with vote of thanks to all participants.



Sharing and interaction program

A Sharing and Interaction program was organized on 22 February 2013 at Hotel Seto Gurans, Baluwatar, Kathmandu. This is a regular Mountain Spirit event, aiming to promote the sharing of findings from various types of research conducted by Mountain Spirit members. Mountain Spirit advisor Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa presented preliminary findings from the Khumbu tourism study he has conducted as a research scientist for Yale University. Dr. Sherpa highlighted the perceptions of tourism stakeholders regarding tourism sustainability and community resiliency in the Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone.

MS Member Ms. Yangji Doma Sherpa made a presentation on public participation in tourism development based on her case study of the proposed Himalayan Ski Village Project in Manali, India. She conducted this research while pursuing her Master's degree in Natural Resource Management at the University of Manitoba, Canada. Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa), Executive Director and General Secretary of Mountain Spirit, shared his research outcomes on the application of appreciative inquiry in pro-poor tourism planning and development. Mr. Lama conducted his fieldwork in the Junbesi and Pattale villages of Solukhumbu district as part of his Master's in Tourism Management at Lincoln University, New Zealand.



Similarly, another sharing and interaction program was organized on Saturday, 29 June 2013. Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa shared findings from her PhD research on Sherpa perceptions of climate change in Pharak, Everest region of Nepal. Dr. Tshering Lama Hyolmo, Country Director of Childreach Nepal, made a presentation on telemedicine-supported community health care delivery in Nepal. He completed his PhD in telemedicine from Northumbria University, UK and is currently involved in promoting telemedicine support systems in remote areas of Nepal. Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa, advisor to Mountain Spirit and President of Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN), spoke about older people's social status and issues related to the elderly from the perspective of human right and social justice. Ms. Sherpa raised the important issue of caring for older people in the family. Finally, Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, President of Mountain Spirit thanked all presenters for their wonderful presentations and the participants for attending the program.



Office equipment support from CESVI

After completing the project in Sagarmatha National Park, Mountain Spirit's implementing partner CESVI ended operations in Nepal and donated its Kathmandu office equipment (furniture, printer, inverter etc.) to Mountain Spirit. This has helped Mountain Spirit upgrade its office facilities.



Gallery presentation at NEPAN workshop

Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN) organized an Action-Aid Nepal supported workshop titled 'Reflection over participatory practices and innovations in Nepal' on the special occasion of Prof. Robert Chambers' visit to Nepal on 2 March 2013 at Staff College, Jawalakhel. During the workshop, 10 different organizations, including Mountain Spirit, made gallery presentations about the application of the participatory approach in their work, lessons learnt, challenges and achievements. Mountain Spirit has been practicing participatory approaches in different programs since its establishment in 1996. A team consisting of Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa, Ms. Sonam Dolma Sherpa, Mr. Rinzin Phunjok Lama and Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) attended the workshop. Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa and Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) shared Mountain Spirit's experiences and practices with Prof. Chambers and other workshop participants. Prof. Chambers, also known as the father of PRA (participatory rural appraisal), shared his own experiences of participatory practices in different countries around the globe.

Field visit to Beyul Hyolmo

A Mountain Spirit team went on a field visit to the Helambu region from 22-24 March 2013. The main objectives of the trip were to generate ideas for potential Mountain Spirit programs and to provide an opportunity for members to explore the Helambu region. The team, led by MS president Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, visited Shermathang, Tarkeghyang and Melamchigyang villages. The group included Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa, Mr. Ang Rita Sherpa, Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa, Mr. Lhakpa

Tenji Lama (Sherpa), Mr. Chhewang N. Lama, Mr. Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa, Mr. Tashi Lama, Mr. Surendra Lama, Ms. Yangji Doma Sherpa and Ms. Jemima Diki Sherpa. Mountain Spirit members in Shermathang Mr. Nono Lama, Mr. Dhindup Lama and Ms. Sonam Dolma Lama provided a warm welcome to the area.

The Helambu region is known as Beyul Hyolmo in Nyingma Buddhist tradition and is considered to be a sacred landscape blessed by Guru Padmasambhava. The team first went to Shermathang where they visited Yangrima School, the monasteries in Kesari and Shermathang and the Folk School. The Yangrima School students and the local mothers' group organized a cultural program in the evening to welcome the Mountain Spirit team to Shermathang, and the occasion provided an opportunity for the group to meet members of the local community. The next morning the team walked from Shermathang to Tarkeghyang, before spending the night in Nakote village. On the third day, the team visited Melamchigyang village. There are various sacred pilgrimage sites connected with Guru Padmasambhava in this area; the group visited the *Drakphuk Nginda Rangjen* meditation cave and *Urgen Penshyu*, where there is a mark of Guru Padmasambhava's hat. On the journey back to Kathmandu, the group also visited Milarepa's meditation cave and the Melamchi drinking water project site.



Meeting with MSD President

A brief meeting between Mountain Spirit Nepal and Mountain Spirit Deutschland was held in Kathmandu on 6 June 2013. President of Mountain Spirit Nepal, Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo and General Secretary and Executive Director Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) met with Mr. Wolfgang Henzler, President of Mountain Spirit Deutschland. Strategies for developing a better understanding on both sides and enhancing partnership for future programs were discussed.

Eco-Walk Program 2013

As a regular Mountain Spirit event, the Eco Walk Program was organized on 15th June 2013. The walk took place at Nagarjun hill located in the Shivapuri-

Nagarjun National Park. The occasion coincided with World Environment Day and the activity slogan was, "Eat local food, save the environment". The 5 km trail to the top of Nagarjun hill took about 2.5 hours to complete from the Nagarjun gate near Balaju Bypass. Nagarjun, also known as Jamacho, is at an elevation of 2128m in the Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park and is a well known Buddhist religious site. The Jamacho viewpoint is the best place to see incredible Himalayan views of Jugal, Ganesh Himal, the Langtang region and Kathmandu valley. The program included environmental talks, games and entertainment. Mountain Spirit advisor Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa briefly shared information about the Shivapuri-Nagarjun National at the park gate before beginning the walk. After reaching the top, General Secretary and Executive Director Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) spoke briefly about Mountain Spirit and the Eco-Walk program. Mr. Acharya Norbu Sherpa, treasurer of the Nepal Buddhist Federation and Principal of Manjushri Community School,



explained about the importance of Nagarjun hill and the meaning of the prayer flags. Speaking about this year's Eco-Walk slogan, Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa explained the importance of consuming local food to contribute to saving the environment. Similarly, Dr. Ghana Gurung, Director of World Wildlife Fund, shared his experiences in environmental conservation, and Mountain Spirit advisor Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa, advisor of Mountain Spirit, explained the importance of maintaining a good social environment alongside a healthy natural environment.

During the program, Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, President of Mountain Spirit, felicitated member Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa by offering *khada* for her recently completed PhD from Washington State University. Altogether 100 participants including Mountain Spirit members, representatives from various organizations, and members' friends and family attended the program. The participants also all enjoyed various group games. MS President Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo concluded the program with a vote of thanks to all participants for making the event a grand success. While returning to the park gate, participants collected rubbish along the trail and brought it down to the gate. The major portion of the rubbish collected was mineral water bottles. The members of the Eco-Walk organizing committee were Mr. Phurba Sherpa (coordinator), Mr. Chhewang N. Lama, Ms. Praju Gurung, Ms. Sonam Choti Sherpa, Ms. Sonam Dolma Sherpa, Mr. Tshering Tenjing Sherpa, Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa), Ms. Indira Lama and Ms. Sonam Dolma Lama.



Publication and distribution of E-newsletters

As a regular publication of Mountain Spirit, three issues of the e-newsletter, *Mountain Trail*, were published in the year 2012 and 2013. Issues 1 and 2 were published in September and December 2012 respectively while Issue 3 was published in March 2013. The e-newsletters included updates on Mountain Spirit's activities and articles on a range of topics contributed by members.

Mountain Spirit Deutschland forms new committee

Mountain Spirit Deutschland (MSD) held an Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 10 June 2013 in Lichtenstein, Germany. The AGM re-formed the committee under the leadership of Mr. Wolfgang Henzler as President. The new committee members are Ms. Annegret Claußnitzner (vice president), Ms. Irene Rauch (treasurer) and Ms. Waltraud Glock (secretary). MSD was established in 1999 and currently has 153 general members from different parts of Germany.

Members' achievements

We have good news to share! Our honorary member Dr. Shailendra Thakali, advisor Dr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa and member Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa have all recently completed their PhD studies. The Mountain Spirit family would like to congratulate Dr. Shailendra, Dr. Mingma and Dr. Pasang on their achievements. Dr. Shailendra is from Jomsom in Mustang district and obtained his PhD from Lincoln University, New Zealand. Dr. Mingma is originally from Monjo in Solukhumbu district and completed his degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA. Similarly, Dr. Pasang Yangjee from Monjo, Solukhumbu conducted her study at Washington State University, USA.

COMMUNITY-BASED Land and Forest Management Project in Sagarmatha

Mountain Spirit collaborated with Italian NGO CESVI to implement the European Union-funded 'Community-based land and forest management project' in Sagarmatha National Park. The project started in February 2010 and was phased out by the end of December 2012. Although the project was originally intended to finish in March 2012, due to a variety of circumstances the EU granted no-cost extensions until 31 December 2012 to complete the project activities. This project aimed to support the community-based component of the Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone Management Plan and contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources in the Himalayan region.

The project launched small re-granting programs in nine different user groups in Chaurikharka, Namche and Khumjung VDCs. The programs include plantation and fencing, landscape restoration, multi-purpose greenhouse and nursery development, fire control systems development, metal bridge construction and establishing gas and kerosene depots. Besides this, various capacity building trainings such as fire control, business skills and marketing, sustainable tourism and non-timber forest product management were conducted. Since Mr. Damber Thapa resigned from the post of Senior Field Coordinator, MS Executive Director Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) took over from August 2012. He was accompanied by social mobilisers Mr. Sonam Dorji Sherpa from Khunde and Mr. Lhakpa Chhiri Sherpa from Lukla. Project activities conducted in the year 2012 include:

Survey of Non-Timber Forest Products

Due to the diversity of forest ecosystems in Nepal, sustainable harvesting and use of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) has great potential to improve local incomes and livelihoods. The project included a scientific study of NTFPs in the Sagarmatha National Park and its Buffer Zone. A team documented NTFPs found in the region, and assessed their status, ecological habitat, flowering time, life form and abundance. They also recorded local indigenous knowledge about these plant resources and information about how they have been traditionally collected, processed and used. At the end of the survey, training workshops were organized in the villages of Khumjung (8 September 2012), Thamo (10 September 2012), and Chheplung (12 September 2012). The objective of these workshops was to share the findings of the study with local people and to encourage sustainable methods of using NTFPs.



Distribution of firefighting equipment to Buffer Zone User Committees

In order to enhance the capacity of local communities to control fire, comprehensive Fire Control Kits were distributed to the Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs) of the Chaurikharka, Namche and Khumjung VDCs. The kits are valued at a total of about Rs. 4.2 million, and included water pumps, back pack water pumps, fire suits, axes, rakes, drip torches, pruning saws, GPS systems and first aid kits. Handover functions were held on 30 September 2012 for Chaurikharka BZUC and on 2 October for the Namche and Khumjung BZUCs.



'Lesson learned' workshop

A one-day national-level workshop was organized in Kathmandu on 2 October 2012 to share the lessons learned from the project. Representatives from Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, the Federation of Community Forest Association Nepal, User Groups, and other partner organizations attended the workshop.

International exposure visits

A team of six Nepali delegates visited Malaysia's Kina Balu National Park in October. The visit aimed to foster an exchange of knowledge around topics of tourism, community participation and biodiversity conservation. The team included Mr. Ramji Shivakoti from the Ministry of Forests, Mr. Barna Bahadur Thapa from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Mr. Ram Chandra Kandel from Sagarmatha National Park, Mr. Sonam Gyalzen Sherpa from the SNP Buffer Zone Management Committee, and Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo from Mountain Spirit.



Re-granting scheme projects

The project implemented nine re-granting schemes based on the proposals received from local user groups and community based organizations. Out of an initial total of 20 proposals, 14 passed the first screening and were admitted for grant evaluation. In a two-day meeting between CESVI, Mountain Spirit and Sagarmatha National Park representatives, these proposals were evaluated against a scoring sheet with criteria which aimed to determine which projects were most suitable to receive funding. Nine of the proposals passed this final screening process, and were granted approximately € 10,000 each to accomplish the proposed activities. Each group provided 10 percent local contributions to the project in order to ensure their participation and ownership in the project. Proposals included activities such as establishing nurseries and kerosene depots, constructing a metal bridge, and reforestation and tree plantation. The nine final projects were:

1. Chhutawi Lo Tree Plantation, Khumjung

Implementing group: Khumbi Yulha Buffer Zone User Group, Khumjung VDC

Project activities:

- Planted 6,000 trees of diverse species in the area covering 3,000 sq meters.
- Plantation fencing completed using metal poles and wires

2. Ghang-lha Landscaping, Namche

Implementing group: Namche Youth Group, Namche VDC

Project activities:

- Ghang-La ground levelled/landscaped after extensive stone mining for Namche construction
- Mani wall painting
- Fencing around the landscaped area

3. Plantation project in Ghang-La, Namche

Implementing group: Namche Women's Group, Namche VDC

Project activities:

- Plantation of pine trees
- 3,500 seedlings produced for plantation
- Maintenance of Phurte nursery staff quarters

4. Alternative Energy for Conservation, Namche

Implementing group: Khumbu Multipurpose Cooperative Limited, Namche VDC

Project activities:

- Kerosene depot established
- 40 stoves purchased for distribution to financially disadvantaged families
- 3,000 litres of kerosene purchased

5. Restoration of High Elevation Ecosystem, Thameteng

Implementing group: Himalayan Buffer Zone User Group, Namche VDC

Project activities:

- Plantation of 4,500 trees covering approximately 4 hectares in Nasam Tshiri-La, Thameteng
- Plantation fencing using wire and metal poles completed

6. Forest Management, Ghat

Implementing group: Dudhkunda Buffer Zone Community Forest User Group, Chaurikharka VDC

Project activities:

- Planting, pruning and fencing conducted
- Fire control water supply system built with water tanks and supply points located around the settlement
- 20 metal flag poles distributed to local residents to reduce wood use

7. Multipurpose Nursery Establishment and Seedling Production, Chhuserma

Implementing group: Chaurikharka Buffer Zone User Committee, Chaurikharka VDC

Project activities:

- Established nursery beds
- Green house plastic purchased but not replaced & the multipurpose nursery was not established until the end of the project

8. Metal Bridge Construction, Musey

Implementing group: Musey Buffer Zone Community Forest User Group, Chaurikharka VDC

Project activities:

- Two metal bridges constructed

9. Use of Alternative Energy (Gas and Kerosene)

Implementing UG: Lukla Buffer Zone Community Forest User Group, Chaurikharka VDC

Project activities:

- Gas and kerosene depot established
- 100 gas cylinders and 2,000 litre of kerosene purchased

Business plan workshop for community-based organizations

Mountain Spirit member and business lecturer Mr. Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa facilitated business plan writing workshops on 11 and 13 December 2012. The main objective was to help the kerosene and gas depots established as part of the re-granting scheme by the Lukla BZCFUG and the Khumbu Multipurpose Cooperative in Namche becomes viable business operations with a strong social responsibility component. During the workshops these two groups prepared business plans to help them achieve their goals.

National-level workshop in Lukla

Mountain Spirit in collaboration with CESVI and the Sagarmatha National Park organised a national-level workshop in Lukla on 14 December 2012. The workshop focused on community-based natural resource management in Sagarmatha National Park.

Mr. Tika Ram Adhikari, Chief Warden of Bardiya National Park discussed practices of non-timber forest product use in high altitude areas; Mr. Manij

Upadhyay, District Forest Officer of Solukhumbu, made a presentation about the status of forests in Solukhumbu district; and Mr. Pashupati Nath Koirala, Forest Management Officer of the Department of Forest, talked about community forest development in Nepal. Mr. Sonam Gyalzen Sherpa, Chairperson of Sagarmatha National Park Buffer Zone Management Committee (SNP BZMC), and Mr. Nima Dorjee Sherpa, Chairperson of Chaurikharka Buffer Zone User Committee shared their thoughts on the experiences, achievements and challenges of Buffer Zone management. Chairpersons of various Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) shared their experiences, practices and challenges. Mr. Giovanni Malavasi, Project Manager of CESVI gave a talk about the major achievement and lessons learned from the Community-based Land and Forest Management Project. Mountain Spirit advisor Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa was the chairperson of the workshop and he provided closing summary remarks and also shared his experiences regarding Buffer Zone and Community Forestry User Group management in Sagarmatha National Park.

Training for user groups

A two-day capacity building training was organized in Ghat, Chaurikharka on 17 and 18 December 2012. The major objective was to improve the capacity of local community forest user groups (CFUGs) in areas including accounting, bookkeeping, leadership and participatory planning. Twenty-five participants from various CFUGs attended the training. Senior officials of the Sagarmatha National Park – Mr. Bhumi Raj Upadhyaya (Assistant Conservation Officer), Mr. Ram Ekbal Das (Park Ranger) and Mr. Khem Biswokarma (Park Ranger) – facilitated the training sessions. During the closing session, Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa), Senior Field Coordinator and Executive Director of Mountain Spirit, thanked all the resource persons for their support and the participants for their involvement in the training.

Development of operational plans

In collaboration with Sagarmatha National Park, the project developed draft operational plans for the Red Panda and Muse Buffer Zone Community Forest User



Groups (CFUGs) in Chaurikharka VDC. A technical team led by a Sagarmatha National Park Ranger conducted forest inventory using GPS technology, while a team from Mountain Spirit conducted participatory workshops to collect the baseline information required for operational plans. The team also facilitated the revision of the constitutions and the reformation of the new executive committees of the two CFUGs. The series of community consultations and participatory workshops were organized during the process of developing the operational plans. Though the majority of work on the operational plan development was completed, the team could not finalize the draft plans due to lack of time.





Metal bridge project in Muse



Ghang-la landscape restoration in Namche



Fire control system built in Ghat



Nursery support in Phurte



Thameteng plantation fencing installation



Chhutawi Lo Plantation project in Khumjung

Revitalizing Sherpa Folk Songs and Dances

- Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa

Like many other ethnic communities of Nepal, Sherpas have a rich tradition of folk songs and dances. These songs and dances are the heart and soul of community festivities. Singing folk songs bonds people together, uplifts their spirits and provides recreation and rejuvenation. They are also an important part of cultural identity.

Traditionally, songs and dances are passed down from generation to generation through group performances. Young people learn from the elders and often organize informal practice programs known as *chhangdu* to sharpen their skills. As ways of life and priorities change rapidly, traditional ways of learning and transmitting knowledge are becoming increasingly ineffective. There is growing concern within the community that traditional Sherpa folk songs and dances are at risk of vanishing.

Observation in the Khumbu region suggest that Sherpa folk songs and dances are not in immediate danger. However, influence of dominant cultures, migration, state policies, identity politics and modernization have all had heavy impact on people's ability to retain and advance their folk culture. Over the years, Sherpa songs and dances have gone through a series of different phases due to changing social, economic and political influences.

Growth Phase: Historically, when Sherpas lived in intact communities in the relative isolation of mountain villages, songs and dances were performed at all community celebrations. Singing and dancing took place in groups and people of all ages were encouraged to participate. Knowing how to dance and sing was considered an important social skill. Various annual festivities and social occasions provided the opportunity for younger generations to learn from their elders.

Songs and dances were also commonly exchanged with adjacent communities with similar cultures. These conditions were suitable for the advancement and preservation of folk songs and dances.

Decline Phase: The time between 1960 and 1990 proved to be an unfavorable period for Sherpa songs and dances. Formal schooling was established and non-Sherpa speaking teachers only taught language and songs in Nepali and English. The state enforced the policy of "one language, one culture and one nation" and did not provide space for the cultures of minority ethnic groups. State-controlled radio and television barred the songs and dances of minority groups from being aired. Parents developed an inferiority complex, making them undervalue their own language and culture and encourage children to seek the values, languages and cultural practices of others. Children were sent to city boarding schools, which severed their connection to their cultural roots. They began to lose their mother tongue along with the opportunity to learn songs and dances. Young people began to travel and emigrate in search of opportunities. These factors led to a period of cultural stagnation, including the decline of mother tongue and folk cultures. This trend still continues today in many areas.

Revival: After the 1990 democratic movement, marginalized groups became aware of the cultural discrimination they had suffered. The subsequent struggles for greater recognition and the rights of marginalized communities led to a change in state policies towards minority cultures. Radio and television stations began to provide some airtime for indigenous language and songs. Indigenous groups, including Sherpas, began to regain their cultural pride. Interest in learning mother tongues and folk songs and dances began to grow. Formal and informal

training and learning opportunities are now being created to re-learn songs and dances. A revitalization process has begun, albeit slowly.

The Change: In the process of relearning and retraining, innovative and creative methods are being introduced. New musical instruments, modern styles of dress and jewelry and modified dance steps have been integrated to make performances more attractive and appealing. These are positive changes that add to the appeal of performances. Change is unavoidable and often necessary. For example, new songs need to be composed to reflect the changing times and environment. The challenge is that doing

so requires high levels of linguistic fluency in Sherpa, which may not be present in younger generations. The Sherpa community also places a special value on old songs and styles of dancing, which change inevitably threatens. Once the old styles of singing and dancing are lost, the revitalization efforts cannot guarantee that these original forms will be revived. Therefore documenting, recording and archiving old songs and dances are a priority to ensure that old ways are preserved and available for future references.

(The author is a founding member and current advisor of Mountain Spirit)

Making Seabuckthorn Juice in Khumbu

- Ang Rita Sherpa



Seabuckthorn (*Hippophaerhamnoides*) is a kind of wild bush that is resistant to both drought and severe cold, and has strong eco-adaptability that allows it to survive in otherwise barren landscapes. It is emerging as a multi-purpose plant with great ecological, economic and nutritional importance. Within Nepal, this species is found in high mountain areas, such as Mugu, Dolpo, Humla, Jumla, Mustang, Manang, Rasuwa, Solukhumbu and Taplejung.

Seabuckthorn is an important component of high alpine ecosystems because of its ability to control soil

erosion. Its berries also provide significant quantities of Vitamin C. About ten kinds of medicines have been developed from seabuckthorn in the areas of the former USSR. There are also many other potential seabuckthorn products. Worldwide, seabuckthorn enterprises are becoming more and more common. Projects in Northwestern Himalayan districts like Mustang and Manang have already shown seabuckthorn to be an effective off-farm income generating resource for high mountain people. Seabuckthorn juice, mainly produced for sale to tourists, is currently the popular in those districts.

The Khumbu region is one of the potential areas to promote and develop a seabuckthorn program. While the net area of the natural habitat for the species is only 0.45% of the total area of the National Park, its occurrence is typically not far from the trekking routes in the region, making its collection and processing conveniently close to its target tourist market. In 2007, the Khumbu Alpine Conservation Council (KACC) conducted a two-day awareness and juice making training in Dingboche village with financial and technical support from The Mountain Institute, United Nation Development Project (UNDP) Small





Grant Project (SGP), and Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone.

Due to a lack of adequate information regarding the diverse uses and benefits of seabuckthorn and its products, locals only previously thought of this small thorny plant with sour red berries as food for crows and large birds. During the training, they learnt more about the plant, and how to harvest the berries and extract juice hygienically and effectively, and how to make pickle and jam from it. They also discussed seabuckthorn's conservation value and ways it can be treated as a valuable resource and cultivated and managed properly.

There is tremendous potential for seabuckthorn to help improve incomes of the poor farmers who were previously dependent solely on agriculture such as potatoes and barley. The ecological benefits of seabuckthorn will also help ensure that natural ecosystems within the National Park and Buffer Zone are protected.

You can support the local seabuckthorn industry by buying seabuckthorn juice, which is available at lodges and tea shops. By consuming this locally produced fruit, you will be supporting local livelihoods and encouraging conservation of fragile alpine ecosystems.



Photos: Bheem Raj Rai and Youba Raj Pokhrel

(The author is a founder member of Mountain Spirit)

Understanding Climate Change in the Everest Region

- Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa

Climate Change is described as the greatest challenge to humankind in the twenty first century by world leaders. It is a global issue without economic or political boundaries. An assessment of climate change perceptions in and of the Everest region is presented in this essay. It demonstrates that the effects of climate change stretch far beyond ecological territories. The essay begins by following discourses and perspectives at a global, national and local level. Then, it presents how Sherpas in the Everest region perceive climate change.

Climate Change: A global understanding

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in its Article 1, defines climate change as “a change of climate, which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.” This definition makes a distinction between climate change attributable to human activities altering the atmospheric composition, and climate variability attributable to natural causes.

Kirstin Dow and Thomas Downing (2006) point out that “While a single extreme weather event does not prove that the climate is changing, observed changes in temperature, and in the composition of the atmosphere, have led scientists to conclude that global weather patterns are likely to be affected by climate change.” Based on the observation of trends and events, from the 1990s to 2005 that are consistent with theories of climate change, Dow and Downing (2006) identified four different changes. These changes are



local temperature rise, extreme heat and/ or drought, extreme precipitation and/ or wind, and changing animal and plant behavior.

In 1992, the Union of Concerned Scientists issued the *World Scientists' Warning to Humanity*, where they wrote, “If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know.” The warning highlighted the need for a new ethic - a new attitude towards discharging our responsibility for caring for ourselves and for the earth, recognizing the earth's fragility and its limited capacity to provide for us.

In *The Economics of Climate Change* (2007), Nicholas Stern concluded that climate change could have very serious impacts on growth and development, and that there is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate

change, if we take strong action now. Stern (2007) shows that the costs of stabilizing the climate are significant but manageable, and delay in stabilizing would be dangerous and much more costly. Stern's report further shows that an international response, based on a shared understanding of long-term goals and agreement on frameworks for action is needed. Such an international response can only be encouraged and sustained through widespread public understanding and support (Stern 2007).

Climate Change gained attention and entered public discourse through international meetings beginning in the 1970s (Fisher, D. 2004) resulting in the formation of intergovernmental organizations to guide global responses to climate change. At present, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are the two leading intergovernmental organizations concerned primarily with worldwide climate change research and negotiations.

Climate Change: a national perspective

The government of Nepal recognizes that Nepal will be affected disproportionately, especially from increasing atmospheric temperature despite being responsible for only 0.025 percent of total GHG emissions in the world (Climate Change Policy 2011). The government also recognizes the scientific finding that there will be an increase in river flows until 2030 and a significant decrease following that by the end of this century. The Ministry of Environment (2011) has reported that changes in the annual rainfall cycle, intense rainfall and longer droughts, retreat of glaciers and the subsequent formation of glacial lakes, and warmer days and nights have already all been observed in Nepal. Therefore, climate adaptation is a part of the national agenda and the government has taken initiatives for implementing risk reduction programs.

By mitigating and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change, the government of Nepal aims to improve upon the livelihoods of its people, "adopt a low-carbon emissions socio-economic development

path, supporting and collaborating in the spirit of this country's commitments to national and international climate change agreements" (Climate Change Policy 2011). For Nepal, listed as a Least Developed Country (LDC) by the UNFCCC, responding to the inevitable effects of climate change requires taking into consideration poverty alleviation and the country's development goals.

Specifying Climate Change Vulnerability for Everest Region

The Ministry of Environment recognizes the change in temperature and rainfall and associated natural disasters such as landslides, floods and drought including glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) as climate change risks for Nepal. "GLOF Monitoring and Disaster Risk Reduction" is listed as a prioritized activity for climate change adaptation by the government of Nepal (MoE 2010). Solukhumbu District falls under the "High (0.601-0.786)" category on the overall Climate Change Vulnerability Index and under the "Low (0.337-0.520)" category on the Climate Change Adaptation Capability Index (MoE 2010).

In Nepal, twenty-one lakes are identified as potentially critical glacial lakes based on their area, distance to glacier, moraine, surroundings and the risks to socioeconomic systems (ICIMOD 2011). Tsho Rolpa (Dolakha District), Imja Tsho (Solukhumbu District) and Thulagi Lake (Manang District) are the three lakes considered to be the most critical requiring immediate attention. Bajracharya et. al. (2001) examined potentially dangerous glacial lakes in Nepal and showed that twelve are in Solukhumbu District. Imja Tsho, the most critical glacial lake, has attracted almost worldwide attention due to its assumed extreme danger (ICIMOD 2011). Comparative analysis of photographs and maps has shown the growth of Imja Glacial Lake. According to Watanabe et al (1994), there were five small ponds in the 1950s and by 1975 a single lake with islands had formed. A small island that existed in 1978 had disappeared by 1980 and the lake area of 0.54 sq. km in 1984 had become slightly larger by 1991.

Sherpa Perceptions of the Changing Climate and “Climate Change”

Discussing climate change in the Everest region requires an exploration of local perceptions of the phrase “Climate Change.” Introduced by institutions through their activities in as early as 2004, the phrase “Climate Change” has come to refer to extreme events especially glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). Past GLOF especially the disastrous Dig Tsho GLOF of 1985 and the rising water levels of Dudh Koshi during monsoon appears to heighten local residents’ sensitivity to discussions of extreme events and potential GLOFs.

An assessment of institutional activities organized as responses to the effects of climate change from 2004 till 2011 show that they have mostly focused on glacial retreats with objectives to “increase awareness” and “strengthen capacity” of local residents to potential Imja GLOF. It was also found that when information-sharing workshops take place, they are organized in a few selected villages and attended by the same group of people. Such information dissemination practice is ineffective due to its inability to reach a wider public. In this case, perhaps the most vulnerable and directly affected community members such as herders, farmers and females who take care of the households are excluded by current information dissemination practices.

On the other hand, when exploring how the climate is changing, it was found that Sherpas are aware of changes in weather patterns, plant and animal behaviors, the arrival of insects and extreme events and they are adapting to them. Yak herders have observed differences in the flowering times of crops in villages. They have also realized the need to move upland and lowland at different times compared to previous decades. Villagers have noticed mosquitoes in their villages and new crop diseases. Snowfall is perceived to have reduced and rainfall is perceived as unpredictable. Scientific assessment of these observations to deduce climate change impact is necessary, however, it is clear that Sherpas whose agro-pastoralist livelihood directly depends on the environment have been affected by the changing climate and they have closely monitored these changes.

Conclusion

When we follow these discussions of climate change at different levels, it becomes clear that while they are all interconnected, in different contexts, climate change discussions take different forms. At the global level, it is an issue of serious environmental concern for the humankind that requires immediate attention and action. At the national level, climate change discussions also become a challenge faced by an LDC, where climate change adaptation measures also require taking poverty alleviation into consideration. Climate change programs and priority activities are identified in Kathmandu with virtually no community participation in the process. At the local level, institutional responses are guided by institutional agenda rather than local needs. Discussions of climate change revolve around a narrowly specified climate change effect leaving behind an understanding of broader effects and their wider impacts. While monitoring and adapting to the changing climate has always been a part of their livelihood, Sherpas’ vulnerability to long-term effects of climate change is unknown.

(The author is a member of Mountain Spirit)



Transformation of Knowledge in Mountain Communities

- Lakpa Sherpa

Nepal has an abundance of natural resources, such as rivers, mountains, flora and fauna. Most often, it is implied that the country is not developed due to a lack of natural resources, but the countries which have enough natural resources also remain under developed due to a lack of human resources. On the other hand, countries which have no recognizable natural resources have been able to develop due to human resources.

Our country is no less beautiful than these other countries. However, social indicators remain low for the vast majority of the people, and are especially low for the marginal mountain farmers. Access to social services such as health, education and drinking water is much more limited for mountain communities compared to their counterparts living in the Terai. On the other hand, the human poverty index is the highest in the mountains followed by the hills. There are still several districts that face food scarcity and most of these are in the hill and mountain regions.

Topographically Nepal is divided into three regions as mountain (15%), hill (68%) and Terai (17%). Further difficult terrain, rugged topography, lack of transportation facilities, limited cultivable land and unfavorable climatic conditions are major problems in the mountains of Nepal. It is noteworthy to mention that a few districts of the hill and mountain regions have yet to be linked by road, for example Humla and Dolpa. In addition, due to poverty and disparities, mountain people are becoming dissatisfied with the state. At present, around 82% of these activities in the world are operated from mountain and hills. For example Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru in south America, Canada in North America, Afghanistan, Pakistan and

India in Asia. Nevertheless, Nepal's mountains and hills need not be problematic.

There are also several opportunities hidden within the problems of the mountains. Herbal plants found in the mountains and hills have a direct positive impact on the economic life of mountain people. People living in the mountains have traditional skills and knowledge in various sectors but these have not been addressed by the state. There are several types of herbs which can be found in Nepal and almost 100 have commercial value. These herbal plants are found up to a height of 8,000 meters.

Our country can earn national revenue from the development of tourism. Mountain areas have become a travel destination for tourists. There are many rivers, lakes, deep gorges, falls, valleys, forests, as well as an abundance of culture, temples, monasteries, hills and scenic beauty within Nepal. The tourism industry is the second largest resource to collect national revenue. Not only this, Nepal is known to the world because it is home to the largest mountain on the planet, Mount Everest.

Gradually Nepal is becoming a hub for education, information and technology, engineering, medicine, forestry, agriculture and other sectors. Mountain people can begin to benefit from improved infrastructure as ideas and knowledge transform into action.

To develop all of the above, we need to invest in the quality of our education. Education is the backbone of development in any country. We cannot truly develop in other areas unless we first develop our systems of

education. The overall development of a country is dependent on education. When there is a favorable situation for educational development, human resources are produced. It is through this human resource that the country itself can grow, manifest and flourish.

Generally, education is concentrated in the urban and Terai regions rather than in the hills and mountains. State budget has not reached the mountains and/or hills compared to urban and Terai regions due to a lack of infrastructure. Schools, teachers and textbooks are not widely available there. School days are often not completed due to weather and climate as most of the schools have no roofs to protect the children from the rain and snow. There are some language barriers too. Children can understand their local languages but teachers from other regions and communities may not understand the local dialect. This creates a difficult learning environment.

There are two types of schools in Nepal, institutional schools and public schools. Institutional schools are established in the more urban and city areas. The location of schools established by the government is also not fit for people to travel to in order to provide an education to the children. There are very few bridges over the rivers, which is particularly problematic during the rainy season. Due to events such as landslides, rain and heavy snowfall, the child's education is unavoidably disrupted. Competent teachers are not always available to teach in schools in the remote regions. There is a significant shortage of skilled and competent teachers. Students are therefore found to be very weak in Science, Mathematics and English in public schools.

Students from well to do families are admitted into private boarding schools in urban districts. They have good facilities and therefore perform better when compared to children from public schools. The teachers in public schools are less specialized and are usually involved in multiple fields including politics and business. The Government does not monitor schools; it does not control teachers or head teachers, meaning the educational standards are not maximized. Parents do not visit the schools or challenge the level or standard of education. Generally

parents of private school attendees frequently monitor the schools and interact with the teachers about the studies of their children; this maybe in part due to the expense of school fees and wanting value for money.

The Government has invested a significant part of its budget (17%) on public schools but the return has not recouped its expected level. 11% to 13% of children are still behind at school though there have been programs such as education for all and millennium goal 2015. Education is the future. With this human resource our country will have the potential to produce innovators, new thinkers, expert engineers to generate hydropower from the thousands of rivers in Nepal. Education can produce dynamic leaders to lead us into becoming more progressive, compassionate; they can guide us into becoming a more socially, morally and environmentally aware society.

With this in mind, Mountain Spirit has been trying its best to help support the people of the mountain communities. Mountain Spirit has contributed a lot in the field of knowledge transformation like AI (Appreciative Inquiry) which is based on positive attitudes, values and norms. This approach is to transform peoples' attitude and behavior. We get positive answers if the question is rephrased in a positive manner. This approach has been followed by several institutions. It is known to have transformed positive thoughts, visions and attitudes in people.

Mountain Spirit has worked in the field of agricultural development within different districts of the mountain regions. MS have worked with agricultural experts to produce organic vegetables in a sustainable manner. In the past MS has played a significant role by adopting systematic methodological tools to conduct field surveys, monitoring and numerous proposals focusing on the documentation of development projects.

Mountain Spirit was established by people who care about their communities. It has a clear objective and that is to improve the life style of individuals and families in mountain communities. People from diverse areas are becoming members of MS; a symbol of a progressive future whereby communities work together to develop a better and more sustainable way of life on a community, regional and national level.

MS has collected experiences from a series of working partnerships, for example Mountain Spirit Deutschland (MSD) in the field of education in Udayapur and Solukhumbu district and agriculture in Taplejung district. The communities themselves are starting to benefit from Mountain Spirit. In the days to come MS needs to develop more educational programs.

Mountain Spirit brings together a diverse and growing number of people who represent various political, social, economic, educational and environmental fields. It is the sharing of our collective knowledge that has the capacity to improve upon the life currently experienced within our communities, regions and nation. One of Mountain Spirits' key

aims is to disseminate trainings to its members at a very early stage. Mountain Spirit members are always updated/involved in field surveys, monitoring, report writing and feasibility studies. We have many experts in different sectors and as a result Mountain Spirit members will benefit from a cross-functional knowledge base.

We have many hopes for the future and one such hope is to develop Mountain Spirit into a leading organization in the field of planning and development. Together we can make our Nepal a better environment for all.

(The author is a current vice president of Mountain Spirit)

Marginalization of Indigenous Languages in Nepal

- Gelu Sherpa

Language is the medium of communication. It is the not only the faculty which differentiates humans from the rest of the living beings, but it also facilitates in our thinking, imagination, and world view. Language relates to education, socio-economics, politics, ecology, culture, and technology. Many countries have been divided due to the culture and languages related issues. For instance, many countries separated from the greater Soviet Union in the early 1990s due to cultural and language issues. Most importantly, language heritage is the main vehicle for the transmission of culture and ingrained endemic knowledge and skills to future generations.

There is no monolingual country where only one language is spoken, especially in today's era of globalization. Multilingualism, or at least bilingualism, is inevitable in most countries around the world. Whenever more than one language exists in a community or country there will be issues of languages policy and planning. Decisions made by governments and institutions play a role in the preservation and promotion of particular languages and the marginalization of others. In this context, Nepal is a multilingual country with 123 languages spoken as mother tongues. Unfortunately, no systematic Language Policy and Planning has ever been made to preserve and promote the indigenous languages of Nepal. On the contrary, policies were formulated and implemented to marginalize and eliminate many of Nepal's indigenous languages.

Historically, the marginalization of Nepali indigenous languages started after King Prithvi Narayan Shah's unification of Nepal around the mid-seventeenth century. Prior to the unification in 1768/69 many

of these states were the homeland of indigenous people with self-rule. The Shah rulers had imposed Khas Nepali language, Hindu culture, and religion on indigenous communities, ignoring their existing distinct language, culture, religion and value systems. There was absolute Shah royal rule from 1768 to 1846, and then the autocratic Rana regime took power from 1846 to 1951. The first Rana Prime Minister Jangnga Bahadur Rana issued an order barring the use of languages other than Khas Nepali in government service in 1854. In 1921 Chandra Shamsar, another Rana Prime Minister, declared that documents written in non-Khas languages could not be submitted as evidence in courts. Similarly, after the formation of the 'Gorkha Language Publication Committee' in 1913, genealogies, inscriptions, and about 30,000 manuscripts related indigenous peoples' religion, culture and language were completely destroyed by the rulers. Many poets such as Chitradhar Hridaya, Siddhicharan Shrestha, Phatte Bahadur Singh and other language activists were imprisoned for life and had their property confiscated for composing poems and publishing books in indigenous languages and raising voices for linguistic rights in the 1940s. Nepal's first experience of democracy came between 1951 to 1960. Even during this period of transitional democracy The National Education planning Commission, formed in 1955, recommended the teaching of the Khas Nepali language from primary level in order to promote that language over other indigenous languages. Similarly, the Ministry of Education issued an order to implement the directives to use Khas Nepali language as the medium of instruction in schools on 12 October 1957. Later the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1959 stated that the Khas Nepali language written in the Devnagari

script would be the national language of the country. Then King Mahendra seized the power from elected government in 1960 and introduced the Political Partyless Panchayat System which extended until 1989. Many minority and indigenous languages disappeared during this period because under the Panchayat System, the doctrine of 'one nation, one costume, and one language' was enforced stringently as a nation-building mission. This suppressed and eliminated other languages, causing immense humiliation, indignity, and intangible heritage loss to different indigenous communities. Those rulers just promoted the Khas Nepali language and were very intolerant towards minority and indigenous languages. This nation-building mission of the rulers was enforced through the formation of different commissions. For instance, the Royal Higher Education Commission formed in 1981 recommended for the establishment of separate university for Sanskrit language, despite the language having no native speakers of its own. Based on the recommendation of the commission, Mahendra Sanskrit University was established in 1982 in order to revitalize and develop the Khas Nepali language.

The preservation, promotion and development of languages mainly depend on favourable political system in the nation. The data in the following table shows the impact of politics on the indigenous languages:

Mother tongues and Ethnic languages

Census	Mother tongues	Ethnic languages	Political system
1952/54	44	29	Transitional democracy
1961	33	26	Panchayat system
1971	17	12	Panchayat system
1981	17	13	Panchayat system
1991	20	15	Constitutional monarchy
2001	92+	70+	Constitutional monarchy
2011	123+	Democracy

(Source: Population census 1952-2011)

The first population census was conducted during 1952 to 1954 in Nepal in order to find out about the social-economic structure of the country. More systematic census has been conducted every ten years since then. This data shows the due to more favorable political system after 1990s the identity of more indigenous communities and their languages were recognized in the country. Even after the restoration of democracy in 1990, the constitutional bodies have made very unpleasant decisions regarding indigenous languages. For instance, based on the provisions stipulated in the constitution 1991, the local bodies of Kathmandu municipality, Dhanusha district, Rajbiraj and Janakpur municipalities made decisions to use Nepal Bhasa (Newari) and Maithili Language as an official language in addition to Khas Nepali in these regions respectively in 1999. But those decisions were challenged legally and cases were filed in court. The Supreme Court of Nepal gave its final verdict on those cases on June 1, 1999 stating that the decisions made by the local bodies were illegal and unconstitutional. That decision not only created great resentment and negative attitude against the Khas Nepali language among the indigenous communities, but also raised serious questions about the governments' sincerity and commitment to preserve, promote, and develop indigenous languages as per the provisions in the constitution. Therefore, indigenous communities remember June 1 as 'black day' in the history of indigenous nationalities in Nepal.

Mountain communities in Nepal are almost always small minority groups with their own language and linguistic history. Official policies regarding language in Nepal have a great impact on our language and on our culture. Therefore it is important to make the effort to save our languages within our own communities and also understand and act on a policy level so that we can create a positive environment for minority and indigenous languages.

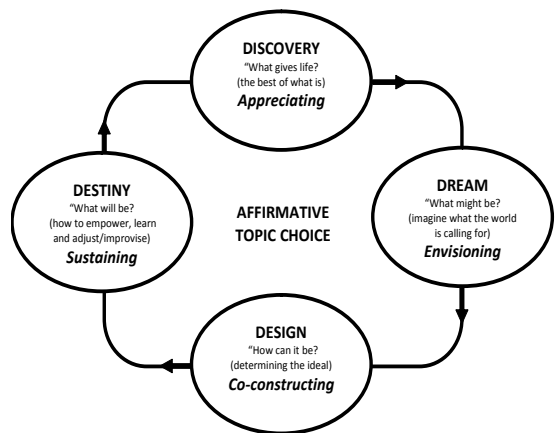
(The author is a member of Mountain Spirit and currently a PhD Student at Department of Linguistics, Stony Brook University, State University of New York)

Appreciative Inquiry in Pro-poor Tourism Planning and Development

- Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is one of the recent approaches used in tourism planning at the community level in many countries, including Nepal. AI was first introduced by David Cooperrider in 1986 as a method for organizational management and development. Raymond and Hall (2008) state that AI is perceived to be a significant development for the fields of action research, organisational management and community planning, as well as providing a new evaluation technique for field research. AI is an approach which emerged as a counter to traditional problem-solving approaches, and focuses on the strengths and successes of individuals, organizations and communities. It is believed that conducting an AI allows participants to approach difficulties in a more positive manner by focusing on how the situation could be improved, rather than on the problem itself. AI does not necessarily ignore negative or difficult experiences, but reframes problems in a more positive light. According to Cooperrider and Srivastva (1999), the problem-solving approach focuses too much on problems, which hinder social innovation and change. The main aim of this approach is to seek the root cause of success and identify the existing resources, skills and capacity of individuals, organizations and communities. AI exercises allow people to identify the reality, the vision and the organizational plan of both the community and individuals (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003). In brief, this concept is based on the principle of appreciation and positive thinking, and believes in creating a relaxed and comfortable environment to share ideas and experiences about the organization or community even in unstable situations.

AI comprises of a '4-D' cycle, which begins with Discovery (appreciating and valuing), Dream (envisioning), Design (co-constructing the future) and Destiny (learning, empowering and improvising to sustain the future). AI was first introduced in Nepal during the 1990s and many organizations have used this method in different sectors for the purpose of baseline information collection, needs identification, planning, monitoring and evaluation of programs. Mountain Spirit in Nepal has been using this method since the organization was formed in 1996, and has also used this approach in different sectors within Nepal, India and the Tibet Autonomous Region. By integrating AI into Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Mountain Spirit has used Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) in various organizational and community development programs.



4-D cycle in AI (adapted from Cooperrider et al., 2003)

As a partial requirement of my Masters in Tourism Management at Lincoln University, New Zealand, I had an opportunity to conduct research on the effectiveness of Appreciative Inquiry in pro-poor tourism (PPT) Planning and development at the community level. Though the approach has been used in Nepal for more than a decade in different sectors including tourism planning and development, previous to this research no empirical studies had been conducted to assess AI's effectiveness in pro-poor tourism planning and development. The research applied qualitative approaches to reveal the experiences of local residents and both district and national-level experts in tourism planning and development processes. This research explored the relevance of the AI process in PPT in Nepal, and examined the contribution of AI to local people's participation in PPT planning and development in rural areas. Two communities (Junbesi and Pattale), at different stages of tourism development in Nepal's Solukhumbu district, were used as case study sites where the AI approach was implemented as part of a pro-poor tourism project by Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP). TRPAP was a multi-national funded pro-poor tourism project implemented in six districts of Nepal, including Solukhumbu, from 2001 to 2006. APPA methodology was used in all the VDCs, and settlements to identify core activities and future expectations of communities, provide a strategy to achieve these expectations, as well as to monitor project activities. APPAs conducted at the village level resulted in the drafting of five-year rural tourism development and management plans in the TRPAP districts, and supported the development of tourist facilities. APPA exercises included identifying different social groups and their issues, prioritizing development programs, assessing community well-being (social, political, economic, natural, cultural, environmental, infrastructure and human resources), and exploring development opportunities and external sources for their implementation.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reported that total international tourist arrivals have increased by more

than 40 fold, from 25 million in 1950 to 1,035 million in 2012 (UNWTO, 2013). UNWTO has predicted that there will be more than 1,800 million international arrivals by 2030. Tourism is an important sector in many developing countries because of its potential to assist in poverty reduction. People whose income is less than one US dollar a day are considered as extremely poor. The United Nations came up with Millennium Development Goals to reduce world extreme poverty levels by half between 1990 and 2015. Tourism is believed to be one of the largest global economic drivers that can play an active role in achieving this ambitious goal (Zhao and Ritchie, 2007).

Various tourism concepts have been developed to manage the impacts of tourism for the benefits of visitors, host communities and the environment. PPT is one of the approaches which has emerged in the tourism industry that emphasizes generating net benefits for the poor, not only economically, but also socially, environmentally and culturally (Ashley et al., 2001). PPT involves a range of stakeholders operating at different levels, from the micro to macro scale. These stakeholders include the government, the private sector and civil society, as well as the poor themselves who act as both service providers and decision makers in the process.

The difference between AI and other approaches is the way it deals with problems. AI focuses on the communities' strengths and successes, which tends to create hope among the local people. Some experts claim that AI is suitable in Nepali society because it is compatible with local values and belief systems (Chapagain, 2009; Tamang, 2002). This research reveals that the concept has potential in PPT planning in rural areas, because AI encourages poor people to participate in the planning process. While AI may not make a direct contribution to poverty alleviation, it can create an environment for people to participate in PPT planning and development processes in rural areas. However, there are various challenges in rural communities which may have greater influence on the success or failure of any planning initiative. These include political instability, social inequalities, difficulties in acceptance of the concept, lack of resources and the role of facilitators and donors. The

local people's perception in the two case study villages I researched indicates that the poorest people in the communities are likely to benefit less from tourism due to a lack of skills and capital. However, despite this finding, the study also shows that AI has the potential to become an effective planning tool to promote PPT, provided there are adequate strategies and means in place to address existing challenges such as political instability, socio-cultural stratification and resource scarcity. Since AI encourages local people to find their strengths and build on them, the likelihood of overcoming challenges to achieve sustainable PPT outcomes is higher compared to traditional approaches. Therefore it can be concluded that AI might be better suited to achieve PPT goals in developing countries

like Nepal. It is vital that the AI process needs to be cognisant of the local socio-economic context, to ensure that all potential risks are minimised, and that local people are empowered to design and deliver their own plans to pursue their dreams for sustainable and equitable tourism development.

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(The author a founding member and current general secretary/executive director of Mountain Spirit)

Sherpa culture: Who writes it?

- Jemima Diki Sherpa

In the final year of my Anthropology undergraduate degree I took a class in which there was only one assignment: to design, research, prepare and write a 10,000-word mini-thesis on a topic of your choice.

Until that point, I had never focused any assignment on Sherpa culture. Historically, the Anthropology discipline had developed with the idea that only someone who came from outside a culture could truly see it with fresh, unbiased and scientific eyes and study it seriously. It was assumed that if you studied a culture you were part of, you would fail to see many things because they seemed so normal or even natural to you. For a long time, this idea of only studying other peoples' cultures was central to all Anthropological work. However, in recent years this idea has been challenged a lot. People began to realize that not allowing people to speak academically about their own cultures meant that interpreting and representing that culture is left to an outsider. This means that the most respected source of information about many cultures, particularly small non-European minorities like Sherpas and other ethnic groups in Nepal, are written by scholars who come from outside. Most outside scholars do their best to make fair, well-informed observations, but at the end of the day the final decisions of how to present a culture is in their hands. The resulting books and papers and articles are always in English or another globally dominant language, and usually do not reach back to the communities they talk about. This takes the power of having a voice on that level away from the communities being studied. As a result, there is now a movement to let Anthropologists study and write about their own cultures, but it is still not very common.

Because I was so far away from Nepal, conducting first-hand research for a small undergraduate paper was out of the question. I decided instead to do a review of published academic literature on Sherpa culture, and analyze them against the major Anthropological theories that had dominated at the time when they were written. I began collecting all the books and papers I could find on Sherpa culture. Furer-Haimendorf, Oppitz, Ortner, Brower, Adams – the last names of all the foreign academics who had produced major works about Sherpas were already familiar because I had seen their books on my parents' bookshelves for most of my life. I had picked up most of them at one time or another, but usually only read a few paragraphs before stopping because I didn't really understand what the authors were talking about. However, after several years of Anthropology study finally I could understand the language that they used, the theories that they quoted and the ideas behind their pages. I added in some of the more popular-style books and magazine articles about Sherpas, piled them up in a huge stack on a table, and began to read.

One thing I really didn't expect was to find reading these books an intensely emotionally challenging process. Furer-Haimendorf's *The Sherpas of Nepal* is the very first book published on Sherpa people and is considered to be the cornerstone of all social science-type academic research into our culture. In it, I immediately found a description of my grandparents from the 1950s, where aspects of their way of life were presented in a similar tone to the one you hear in National Geographic documentaries describing a particularly strange sea-dwelling creature. I could almost picture Furer-Haimendorf's excitement as he 'discovered' them and wrote them into his book as

just another example of the strange Nepali natives that people in Europe could read about for education or entertainment. Throughout the reading material I found references to other family members, or pictures of people I knew. People who I knew as living, breathing individuals became disturbingly nameless and fixed in time forever.

Even more disturbing was that each of these authors, none of whom were actually from the Sherpa community, seemed convinced (or at least tried to sound convincing) that their book or article was *the* definitive truth about Khumbu Sherpa life and culture. There was confidence and arrogance in the way that they wrote, because there is no market for an academic or author who is unsure of what they are saying. Often, these authors drew long, complex conclusions based on a single incident they had witnessed or a phrase that someone said to them - usually a phrase that had to be passed through at least one interpreter. At times, their observations and conclusions directly contradicted each other. In most of them there was the assumption, either hidden or stated clearly, that writing these books and documenting our existence is important because Sherpas, our language, our identity and our culture are destined to disappear completely into the waves of modern, globalised life.

I disagreed, of course, but I also began to question myself intensely. My father is Sherpa, but my mother is not; I was born in the mountains, but grew up mostly in Kathmandu. I understood only a little Sherpa language and spoke even less; I had gone to festivals and ceremonies but never bothered to learn much about what they really meant. Was I any more qualified to say anything about Sherpa people than a foreign researcher? Did I really have the right to feel offended, even violated by the way that some author wrote about our community and history when I had never made the effort to learn and write about it myself? After all, I was a perfect example of the 'destruction' of Sherpa life that Furer-Haimendorf wrote about in his second book about us.

All of this personal connection to the material made the process of writing the mini-thesis extra challenging, but I managed to turn it in and fortunately my professor liked the final product. However, unlike every other assignment, I didn't forget about it as soon as I received my grades. Even now, I still think

about the questions that came up; I don't have any real answers, but I do have a collection of some thoughts:

The academic work that exists is valuable, but only up to a certain point. As with the documentaries and articles and countless other documents that have been made about us in the last five decades, we need to be aware of what they say but cannot simply let them tell us who we are. We need to write, both informally and academically, and talk and make films and take photographs ourselves, because our cultural narrative is too important to leave to other people who may or may not get it right.

A culture is like a movie, not like a single photograph. One of the key ideas in Buddhism is that of accepting impermanence. Because everything always changes, from frame to frame the movie of our culture is different and no two moments are exactly the same. However, we are a culture because we share and trace a common history, a common story. The idea that our culture is 'dead' if we wear pants, use smart phones and travel around the world is not true. However, our story *will* be dead if we stop telling it, or tell it as if it is already finished.

The key to being able to continue telling our story is to use the language that stores our history, our environment and our values. My biggest regret is not being able to speak the Sherpa language. I am trying to learn it now, but as an adult it is difficult and I will never be able to have the ease and understanding of a native speaker.

I am fortunate that even though it is late in life, I have the chance to listen to my dad and aunts and other Sherpa relatives and friends, to watch them and learn and ask questions if I need to. However, we all need to learn and remember as much as we can, and cannot assume that these opportunities to know ourselves will be around forever. If I have children, I fear my grandchildren won't have anyone who still knows what it means to be Sherpa to teach them. My greatest worry is that if they have a question about their great-great-grandparents and want to know about our history and lives, the only thing they'll be able to find will be that passage in Haimendorf's book.

(The author is a member of Mountain Spirit)

Local Participation in Community-Based Projects: Experience from The High Altitude Restoration Project in Thameteng, Khumbu

- Yangji Doma Sherpa

Local participation is an essential component for the successful implementation of community-based resource management projects, as it ensures transparency, builds trust and local capacities, incorporates local knowledge and increases community acceptance of the project. Mountain Spirit and CESVI were joint partners in implementing the European Union-funded Community-based Land and Forest Management Project in the Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone. Under this initiative, several community-based resource management projects were designed and implemented with the direct participation of local organizations and communities.

The High Altitude Restoration Project in Thameteng was one successful example of such community-based projects. The project proposal was designed by a local expert in direct consultation with the local people, and aimed to restore the high altitude ecosystem and increase its carrying capacity for the benefit of the people and the Sagarmatha National Park. It involved planting and fencing 4,500 tree saplings to restore a degraded hillside landscape near the Thameteng village. It also included a vegetation survey of the site, which collected baseline data that will be useful for future studies of the area and for developing a deeper understanding of alpine landscapes.

The local Himalayan Buffer Zone User Group (HBZUG) worked in partnership with the Khumbu

Mountain Center (KMC) and the Thamichho Youth Group (TYG) to lead the implementation of the project, while representatives of the Mountain Spirit and CESVI provided full assistance and monitoring.

Local people participated in this project at all different level, including consultation meetings, the project design and planning phase, surveying and carrying out plantation and fencing work. I was also involved as part of the local team in the project implementation phase, particularly in assisting the local organizations with reporting and handling financial expenses. As a team member, I had an opportunity to have a hands-on experience managing the budget, keeping records, and preparing financial and project progress reports.

From the project developer and donor perspective, this project has been successful in creating ways to devolve responsibility to the local communities to design, implement and manage their own community-driven projects. The local community has also benefited in many direct and indirect ways. Participation in the project has helped increase local capacities and developed confidence and a sense of ownership, all of which will be crucial for the long-term management of this project. Despite the many unexpected challenges we faced during the project implementation, the lessons we learned from these experiences will definitely motivate and help us design and implement other community projects in the future.

In my opinion, this project has been a good exercise in teamwork for the local organizations and individuals. The task of involving the local communities in any project might be challenging and time consuming. However, donors, the government and I/NGOs should prioritize it as a major component of their projects, as it is a good platform for sharing knowledge, building trust and providing valuable learning experiences for both the project developers and the local communities. From my perspective, the

success of any community-based project depends on local interest, initiative and participation. However, initially the local communities might not have the required knowledge, skills and expertise. Therefore, the project developers and experts must provide training and assist the local communities to design, implement and manage community-based projects as it has been done in the case of this project.

(The author is a member of Mountain Spirit)

Enough is Enough: A Movement for Change

- TsheringYodin Sherpa



On 14 February, a day which symbolizes love, I participated in the One Billion Rising campaign. According to a report from the United Nations, one in three women around the world will be raped or beaten in her lifetime. This means that globally one billion women have experienced or will experience violence and

violation. The One Billion Rising campaign was held worldwide, with women dancing in the streets calling for freedom from all sorts of violence against women.

The cases of Damini in India and Sita Rai in Nepal have fuelled outrage about how women are treated in our country, and the Occupy Baluwatar movement started with the goal of getting justice for Sita Rai and reducing violence against women. Like for many other people, the recent flow of news relating to rape cases made me think a lot about violence against women. Anyone who takes this issue seriously needs to ask themselves some questions- why rape and this kind of violence happens, how, and who does it to whom.

In our anger, we often call those who rape and abuse women 'animals'. In reality, this is unfair to animals – these things actually happen because of our society, which nurtures dominating attitudes and aggressiveness in men, associating masculinity with strength and femininity with submissive, passive attitudes. Sexual objectification of women is also cultivated socially. When asking why some men rape, people often answer that it is because they are 'abnormal'. The idea that rape is a result of abnormality

is actually a myth. In fact, most of them think it as a normal act. This is because of how society teaches them to regard women. Feminists Worell and Remer stated that both sexual harassment and rape have been linked to the traditional gender-role socialization of women and men in society. It encourages men to be powerful, controlling and dominant; to view sex as conquest, and to see women as sex objects and as property. In this context, is it any wonder that this results in violence against women?

People often think that this happens only because men are physically stronger than women. However, emphasizing that there is also a psychological aspect along with the physical. Susan Brownmiller, an American feminist, journalist, author and activist writes "...worse than the difference in size is the lifelong difference in mental attitude toward strength." When a girl child is born, she is expected to behave beautifully, act fragile and never fight or use force. According to psychologists Fredrickson and Roberts, "Living in a culture that sexually objectifies the female body creates a steady stream of anxiety – provoking events that force women to keep constant vigilance over both their physical safety and their appearance..."

A study by Griffin and Sanday revealed that rape is rare in cultures that value women and feminine qualities and that have ideologies that promote harmonious interdependence among humans and between them and the natural world. They found that rape is most common in countries that have ideologies of male supremacy and dominance and a disrespect of women and nature. Once I started thinking about these issues, a realization hit me really hard – if rape and violence against women are a result of social norms, aren't we



Dancing and Rising together to stop violence against women.

all responsible for normalizing these acts when we hold attitudes and values that legitimize aggression against women?

In her landmark publication *Against Our Will: men, women and rape*, Brownmiller encouraged women to come together and engage in efforts to redress these imbalances and rid ourselves and men of the ideology that supports rape. Brownmiller believes that with a long-term and cooperative approach, and the understanding and goodwill of many men as well as women, rape can be eradicated.

So with this goal in mind, it is time that we come together at every level and make efforts in our families, in education, politics, media, law and all other forms of social activity to say “Enough is Enough”. Let's all be the part of this movement toward true change – PARIWARTAN. Make a resolution and step up!!

(The author is a member of Mountain Spirit)

ऐतिहासिक महत्व बोकेको दिक्खिलिङ गुम्बा

- छिरिङ डेमा शेर्पा



प्रकृतिका अनुपम सृजनाहरूको संगमस्थलहरूले घेरिएर रहेको अठ्ठ भन्ने प्रकृतिको एक अमूल्य उपहार भै लाग्ने सुदुर पूर्वमा अवस्थित ओलङचुङगोला नेपालको हिमाली संस्कृति, रहनसहन बौद्ध धर्म संस्कृति र प्राचीन सम्पदाको एउटा सुन्दर भुगोल हो । जैविक विविधता, ऐतिहासिकता बोकेको यो वस्तीमा करिब चारसय ५० वर्ष पुरानो दिक्खिलिङ गुम्बा रहेको छ । यो बौद्धमार्गीहरूको एक प्राचीन सम्पदाको रूपमा रहेको छ । ऐतिहासिक र प्राचीन सम्पदा भए पनि राज्य र दुनियाँको नजर यो क्षेत्रमा पर्न सकेको छैन । नेपाल सरकारको सूचीकरणमा परेको सीमान्तकृत भवम अल्पसंख्याक आदिवासी जनजाती वालुङ समुदायको एकल बसोबास रहेको यो क्षेत्र सरकार र दुनियाँको नजरमा

उपेक्षित, बहिष्कृत र निषेधित क्षेत्र जस्तै बनेको छ र बेसबर पनि छ । हुन पनि किन यस्तो नहोस् तालेजुङ सदरमुकाम फुङलिङबाट ४ दिनको पैदाल अर्थात २६ कोष टाढा रहेको छ । नेपाल र चीनको स्वासशासित क्षेत्र तिब्बतको सीमा क्षेत्रमा रहेको यो वस्तीले दुई देशको सम्बन्ध जोड्ने पुलको काम गरिरहेको छ । अठ्ठ भन्ने धार्मिक, साँस्कृतिक र बैवाहिक सम्बन्धका कारण यो वस्तीले नेपालको असल छिमेकीको नातालाई व्यावहारिक रूपमा पालना गरी राज्यलाई गुण लगाएको छ । तैपनि यो क्षेत्रमा सरकारको नजर पर्न सकेको छैन । विश्व सम्पदा सूचीमा सूचीकृत गर्न सकिने यो क्षेत्रका सम्पदाहरूलाई सरकारको दृष्टि पुगे यहाँ धार्मिक पर्यटनको विकास गर्न सकिने अवस्था छ ।

सरकारी वेवास्ता र उचित प्रचार प्रसारको अभावमा नै पुरातात्विक महत्वको यहाँको दिक्की ख्योलिङ गुम्बा ओभेलमा परेको मात्र छैन अस्तित्व नै संकटमा परेको छ । राज्यको सूचीमा बेखबर बनेको गुम्बा नेपालमा बनेका गुम्बा मध्ये सबैभन्दा पुरानो हुन सक्ने गुम्बा व्यवस्था तथा बिकास समितिले आफ्नो प्रकासनहरुमा उल्लेख गरेका छन् ।

एक सय २९ फिट लामो, ३६ फिट चौडा र ४० फिट उचाईको तिनतले यो गुम्बामा बौद्ध धर्मशास्त्रका प्राचीन हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थहरु र बुद्धका प्रतिमा तथा मूर्तिहरु अहिले नष्ट हुने अवस्थामा पुगेको छ । यस गुम्बामा सेतो च्याउमा बौद्धमन्त्र ॐ मनि पद्मे हूँ भन्ने अंकुरीत रहेको छ भने स्थापनाकाल देखि नै अटुट रुपमा प्रज्वलित बत्ती छ जसलाई स्थानीयले अहिलेसम्म जेनतेन बाली रहेका छन् । सुविधा खोज्दै जानेक्रममा मानिसहरु बसोई सर्न थाले पछि अहिले यो बत्ती बाल्न समस्या सिर्जना हुने अवस्था आएको छ । प्राचीन हस्तलिखित बौद्ध ग्रन्थहरु अहिले दुर्लभ हुदै गएको परिप्रेक्ष्यमा यसको संरक्षण आवश्यक नै सकेको छ । यहाँ रहेको जस्तो हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थहरु भन्दा पुरानो अहिले सम्म अन्य स्थानमा नभएको स्थानीयको दावी रहेको छ । दिक्कीख्योलिङ गुम्बा भित्र स्थापनाकाल देखि अटुटरुपमा प्रज्वलित बत्तीको पनि आफ्नो छुट्टै महत्व रहेको छ । स्थानीयका अनुसार यो दीप बल्न छोडे समुदायमा अशुभ हुने कथन रहेको छ । यहाँ रहेको एक अदभुत वस्तु सेतो च्याउमा बौद्ध मन्त्र अंकुरीत रहेको छ । यो पनि करिब तिन सय वर्ष पुरानो मानिन्छ । यस्ता मध्ययुगीन सम्पदाको ऐतिहासिक महत्वलाई संरक्षण तथा संवर्द्धन गर्नका लागि सरकारले चासो दिई यसलाई विश्वसम्पदा सूचीमा सूचीकृत गर्नका लागि पहल र प्रक्रिया अगाडी बढाउनु पर्ने आवश्यकता देखिन्छ ।

गुम्बाको जिर्णोद्धार गर्ने अवस्थामा २०६८ सालमा आएको भुकम्पले गुम्बालाई अझ संकटमा पारेको छ । सुदुर पूर्वको सीमान्त क्षेत्रमा रहेको यो गुम्बामा सरकारले चासो नदिइपछि



स्थानीयले समुदायको सामाजिक सरकारसँगको सम्बन्धका कारण संरक्षण व्यवस्थापनका लागि पछिल्लो समय गुम्बा व्यवस्थापन समिति गठन गरेका छन् । उनीहरुले अहिले यसक्षेत्रलाई धार्मिक पर्यटन प्रवर्द्धन गर्नका लागि पहल गर्ने र त्यसका लागि सरकारले बाटोघाटो र पूर्वाधार निर्माण गर्नु पर्ने माग समितिको रहेको छ । उनीहरुको अभियानलाई सरकारले साथ दिने हो यसको संरक्षण र विकास हुने निश्चित छ ।

सीमान्त उत्तरीक्षेत्रको यो प्राचीन सम्पदालाई संरक्षण र व्यवस्थापनमा सरकारले चासो दिने हो भने धार्मिक पर्यटकहरुको ध्यान यसक्षेत्रमा आकर्षित गरी ताप्लेजुङ र ओलङचुङगोलाको बृहतर बिकास गर्न प्रचुर संभावना रहेको छ ।

(लेखक माउन्टेन स्पिरिटका सदस्य हुनुहुन्छ ।)

FOUNDING MEMBERS

Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa
Namche-7, Solukhumbu
E-mail: lhakpa.norbu@gmail.com

Chhing Lamu Sherpa
Triyuga-13, Udayapur
E-mail: sms@wlink.com.np

Ang Phinjo Sherpa
Namche-2, Solukhumbu
Email: office.ktm@ecohimal.org

Ang Dali Sherpa
Salleri-5, Solukhumbu
E-mail: sherpaads@yahoo.com

Ang Diku Sherpa
Taptung-6, Solukhumbu
E-mail: angdiku@hotmail.com

Ang Rita Sherpa
Khumjung-5, Solukhumbu
E-mail: angrita@mountain.org

Late Ngima Dawa (ND) Sherpa
Garma -8, Solukhumbu

Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)
Beni-3, Solukhumbu
E-mail: ltlama@gmail.com

Tshering Sherpa
Solukhumbu

Kaji Sherpa
Tamakhani-8, Solukhumbu

Tshering Tenjing Sherpa
Bhamti Bhandar-3, Ramechhap

HONORARY MEMBERS

Wendy Lama
CA, 94019, USA,
E-mail: wendylama@coastside.net

Dr. Shailendra Bahadur Thakali
Jomsom-6, Mustang
Email: sthakali@gmail.com

Dawa Thapa
Bansbari, Kathmandu

Kanak Mani Dixit
Lalitpur, Nepal
E-mail: kanakd@himal.mag.com

Yangkila Sherpa
Naxal, Kathmandu
Email: snowlprd@trek.wlink.com.np

Robert Elliot Fairley
Scotland, UK,
E-mail: rob.fairley@btinternet.com

Sara Louise Parker
England, UK
E-mail: sarabobjaniemaya@hotmail.com

Katie FM Marwick
Scotland, UK
Email: ktkath@altovista.com

GENERAL MEMBERS

Mingma Sherpa
Gumdel-3, Ramechhap,
E-mail: sherpama@yahoo.com

Ang Tenji Sherpa
Nametar-3, Udayapur
E-mail: sherpa.tenjing2@gmail.com

Khandu Lama
Kiul-7, Sindhupalchok,
Email : khandu73@hotmail.com

Chenga Sherpa
Salleri-7, Solukhumbu,
E-mail: chenga@multiadventure.com

Kalpana Sherpa
Dharan-17, Sunsari

Ram Maya Thakali
Jomsom-6, Mustang
E-mail: rmthakali@gmail.com

Dr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa
Chaurikharka-1, Solukhumbu
E-mail: m.sherpa.2008@gmail.com

Anita Lama (Gurung)
Surkhang-1, Mustang

Nima Lama Hyolmo
Kiul-7, Sindupalchok
E-mail: nima.lama@gmail.com

Gelu Sherpa
Kanku-9, Solukhumbu
E-mail: mrgelusherpa@gmail.com

Temba Dongba Yholmo
Kiul-7, Sindupalchok
E-mail: temba@yolmo.com.np

Tuka Cheki Sherpa
Triyuga-13, Udayapur
E-mail: sherpacheiki@gmail.com

Tsewang Tashi Lama
Kiul-7, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: tsewanghyolmo@hotmail.com

Kanchhi Maya Sherpa
Sallary-5, Solukhumbu
E-mail: kanchhim@hotmail.com

Mingmay Sherpa
Taptung, Solukhumbu
E-mail: mangmay2006@yahoo.com

Mingmar Sherpa
Taptung -7, Solukhumbu,

Kunjang Chhoti Sherpa
Chaurikharka-1, Solukhumbu
E-mail: kcshepa2@hotmail.com

Nono Lama
Kiul-7, Sindupalchok
E-mail: ndlyhlolmu@hotmail.com

Lakpa Nuri Sherpa
Triyuga-13, Udayapur
E-mail: nuri@aippnet.org

Jimmy Lama
Kiul -6, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: jimmylama@gmail.com

Lakpa Sherpa
Bhojpur-3, Bhojpur
E-mail: lakp.sherpa@yahoo.com

Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa
Sallary-7, Solukhumbu
E-mail: lgsherpa@hotmail.com

Phuri Lama Sherpa
Kanku-9, Solukhumbu
E-mail: phuri_sherpa@yahoo.com

Lhadorchi Sherpa
Tatne-3, Udayapur
E-mail: lhadorchi@yahoo.com

Nima Lama Yolmo
Kiul-7, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: yolmonima@yahoo.com

Pabirta Gurung
Jomsom-6, Mustang
E-mail: dcgrg@yahoo.com

Praju Gurung
Jomsom-6, Mustang
E-mail: prajugrg@yahoo.com

Tashi Lama
Kiul-7, Sermanthang
E-mail: tasho@yolmo.com.np

Surendra Lama
Simikot-7, Humla
E-mail: info@firante.com

Chhewang Lama
Bargaun-4, Humla
E-mail: nyinba@gmail.com

Sarmila Gurung
Jomsom-6, Mustang
E-mail: sarmilagrg@hotmail.com

Tshering Yodin Sherpa
Sallary-8, Solukhumbu
E-mail: tsheringyoudin@yahoo.com

Dhindup Lama
Kiul-7, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: dhindupyolmo@hotmail.com

Shyam Lama
Banskharka-8, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: shyamlama2003@yahoo.com

Nima Lama Yolmo
Kiul -7, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: nlama18@hotmail.com

Sangita Lama Negi
Nijgadh- 9, Bara
E-mail: sangam_lama@yahoo.com

Lakpa Sherpa
Lukla-8, Solukhumbu
E-mail: lakpa_shrp@yahoo.com

Yangji Sherpa
Kathmandu-7, Kathmandu
E-mail: meyanglla@hotmail.com

Tashi Yang Chung Sherpa (Gurung)
Jomsom-6, Mustang,
E-mail: taseedeale@hotmail.com

Jangmu Sherpa
Beni-9, Solukhumbu

Kishor Sherpa
Dhunge-Sanghu-4, Taplejung
E-mail: Kishor_Sherpa@hotmail.com

Ngima Doma Sherpa
Garma-8, Solukhumbu
E-mail: pema.multi@yahoo.com

Sonam Dolma Lama
Kiul -7, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: mails.sonam@gmail.com

Phurba Sherpa
Goli-8, Solukhumbu
E-mail: pfurba@gmail.com

Karma Gyaljen Sherpa
Kanku-9, Solukhumbu
E-mail: kgylazensherpa@gmail.com

Tshering Lama
Kiul-7, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: nlamatshering@hotmail.com

Yangdu Sherpa
Khandbari-1, Sangkhuwasabha

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa

Salleri -4, Solukhumbu
E-mail: lhakpa2gelu@hotmail.com

Pemba Lama Sherpa

Sallary-1, Solukhumbu

Mingmar Kaji Sherpa

Beni-5, Solukhumbu
Email : kaji_sherpa46@hotmail.com

Sagar Lama

Kermi -7, Humla

Laxmi Gurung

Kagbeni-7, Mustang

Tshering Ongmu Sherpa

Khumjung-9, Solukhumbu

Linda Mary Sherpa

United Kingdom
Email: hghar@wllink.com.np

Dr. Pasang Yangji Sherpa

Chaurikharka-1, Solukhumbu
E-mail: pysherpa@gmail.com

Pemba Lama

Sikharbesi-8, Nuwakot
E-mail: nepalipemba_lama1989@yahoo.com

Bibek Lama Sherpa

Nametar-3, Udayapur

Mingmar Sherpa Lama

Nametar-3, Udayapur

Tshering Sherpa

Khumjung-2, Solukhumbu

Jikme Tshering Sherpa

Nametar-3, Udayapur
E-mail: jikme121@gmail.com

Phu Doma Sherpa

Gumdel -3, Ramechhap
E-mail: phudoma_s@yahoo.com
Chhiring Sherpa
Bhojpur

Indira Lama Negi

Bharatpur-10, Chitawan
E-mail: indiralama712@hotmail.com

Pemba Sherpa

Kathmandu-7, Kathmandu
E-mail: txering@live.com

Sonam Dolma Sherpa

Chyalsa -8, Solukhumbu
E-mail: sonam.dsherpa@yahoo.com

Kelsang Dolma Lama

Kiul -4, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: kessun5@yahoo.com

Mendo Lama

Jorpati -2, Kathmandu
E-mail: tse-me123@hotmail.com

Sange Ngetup Lama

Kiul -7, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: itmansangay@gmail.com

Rinzin Phunjok Lama

Bargaun -4, Humla
E-mail: bargau4@gmail.com

Tshering Doma Sherpa

Olangchung Gola -1, Taplejung
E-mail: chringdoma@yahoo.com

Jemima Diki Sherpa

Namche -5, Solukhumbu
E-mail: jemima.sherpa@gmail.com

Phurba Chheten Pradhan

Khumjung -3, Solukhumbu
E-mail: phurbapradhan02@gmail.com

Indira Yonzon

Lisangkhu-3, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: yonjanindira@hotmail.com

Gyalmu Diki Sherpa

Sallery -7, Solukhumbu
E-mail: dikigyalmu@gmail.com

Jiban Kumar Yonzan

Lisankhu -3, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: sailung8@hotmail.com

Sonam Choti Sherpa

Sallery -7, Solukhumbu
E-mail: 33csonam@gmail.com

Tshering Tenzing Sherpa

Namche -5, Solukhumbu
E-mail: tshering.900@gmail.com

Tashi Lama

Kiul -7, Sindhupalchok
E-mail: tashi_delek82@hotmail.com

Sonam Dorjee Sherpa

Chaurikharka -1, Solukhumbu
E-mail: sonamsan@gmail.com

Yangji Doma Sherpa

Thame -7, Solukhumbu
E-mail: ydshepa@gmail.com

Tsering Yingkhith Lama

Limatang-8, Humla
Email: yenkik-57@hotmail.com

PHOTO GALLERY OF MOUNTAIN SPIRIT ACTIVITIES



Project closing program



Eco-Walk organising team with advisors



Mountain Spirit field visit team in Helambu



Participant at the sharing and interaction program



Participants of participatory communication training



Shermathang village in Helambu, Sindhupalchok



हिमाली जोश
Mountain Spirit

P.O. Box No. 10185, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4422390

Email: mountainspirit@wlink.com.np

Webpage: www.mountainspirit.org.np