

Himalayan HealthCare Trek Ganesh Himal November 2008

<u>Trek Duration:</u>	12-13 days
<u>Trek Destination:</u>	Lapa Village in the Ganesh Himal (Dhading) region of Nepal. (Northwest of Kathmandu, close to the Tibet border).
<u>Trek Starting Point:</u>	Parbati Kunda (Gompa), nine to ten hours drive from Kathmandu
<u>Medical Camp:</u>	Lapa Village (<u>possibly village of Sherthung or Tipling as well if more than five medical volunteers sign up</u>)
<u>Trek End Point:</u>	Dhadingbesi (2700 ft.)
<u>Highest Point on Trek:</u>	Phangsang Pass (14,000 ft.+)
<u>Mountains Ranges:</u>	Ganesh, Langtang & Manaslu Himal Ranges

Names of Participants:

The volunteers will be supported by the Nepali staff:

Anil (Sharad) Parajuli (Coordinator)
Kamal Lama (HHC, dental tech)
Chhabi Lal (HHC, field coordinator)
Pemba Sherpa (HHC)
Ram Rai (Cook) and other kitchen staff
Other translators & volunteers from Kathmandu
40-50 porters (to help carry medicines, food and camping gear)

Introduction

The name Ganesh Himal comes from the elephant-headed Hindu God of good fortune who is one of the most popular Hindu deities in the world. Images of Ganesh, sitting astride a shrew (his vehicle) can be seen all over the valley of Kathmandu. Since he is also the God of Initiation and can cast aside obstacles, his help is invoked whenever a difficult task is to be undertaken. A Hindu will begin a journey, a task, a trade, or other

important things in life with the words, *Shree Ganeshaya Nama*, or in the name of Lord Ganesh.

The Ganesh Himal is a quiet mountain region rarely visited by trekkers, making it possible for one to savor the real Himalaya here. The Trishuli River or one of its tributaries is our reference line almost throughout our trek. The trek starts on the Trishuli River, which runs the foothills of the Ganesh Himal and Langtang Himal Ranges. Bound on the east by the Trishuli River and on the west by the Burhi Gandaki River, this region includes Ganesh Himal Peak I (7429m) to Peak VII. It is the Nepal Himalayas on a small scale. Peak I was the first to be conquered in 1955 by a Swiss-French Team, which ascended from Sang Jung Glacier at the head of the Chilime Khola. Following a long ban on climbing, Peak IV was conquered in 1978 by a Japan-Nepal team, Peak II (7111m) in 1979 by a Japan-Nepal team again and Peak III (7110m) in 1981 by a West German-Nepal team. Another important peak is Paldor (5928m/19450 ft) which lies at the south-east end of the Ganesh Himal marking the junction of the Tiru and Khurpu Dandas (hills) at the head of the Mailung Khola, a tributary of the Trishuli River. It was first, climbed by Bill Tilman, Peter Lloyd, Tenzing Sherpa and Da Namgyal during the monsoon of 1949 by the North-East ridge. HHC also organized a successful Paldor Expedition in 1993 for four Explorer's Club members.

On a clear day, the Ganesh Himal, with the icy fangs of Pabil (7101m / 23,300ft.), Lobsang Karpo (7150m/23,458ft), Ganesh I (7406m/24,298ft) and Ganesh IV (6950m/22,802ft.) can be seen forming an imposing backdrop to the north-west of Kathmandu.

ITINERARY

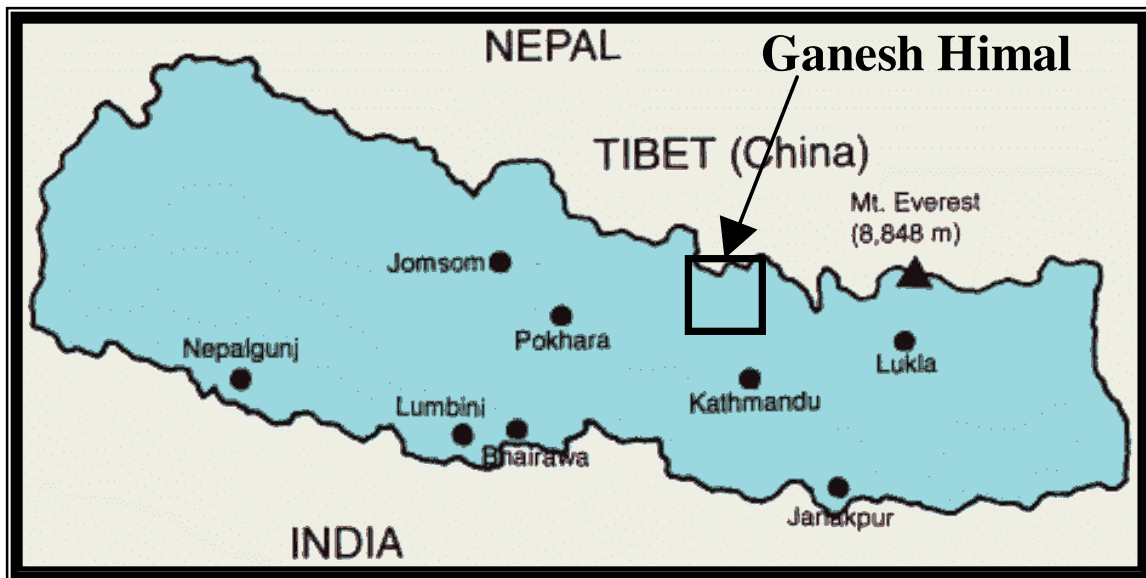
All Arrivals will be picked up and escorted by HHC staff to Hotel. Two photos, copies of passport and visa to HHC staff for documentation will be collected on arrival.

Nov 3 (MON): **5:00 PM:** Pick up from hotel for HHC program orientation and trek briefing at the HHC Office. **7:00 PM:** Welcome dinner

Nov. 4 (TUE): **10:30 AM** pickup at hotel for guided sightseeing tour of Kathmandu Valley (optional).

Nov 5 (WED): *The drive could be 9-10 hrs. long.*

7:15 AM sharp, departure for first campsite, **Parvati Kund** (Ghyang or Gompa). This is a long (9-10 hours) and winding drive on a narrow highway leading out of the northwestern corner of Kathmandu valley. The first hour is a climb out of the valley ending at a police check point at **Kakani** at about 7,000 ft., from where on a clear day the mountain vistas unfold. The *Ganesh Himal* range (our destination) appears straight up north as we drive, flanked by the *Langtang* range and the *Jugal Himal* range on its right and the *Manaslu* and the *Annapurna* ranges on its left. Both the



Manaslu and the Annapurna are at a height of above 8,000 meters making them two of the tallest ten mountains in the world. After Kakani, we drop down slowly into the **Trishuli** valley for about three hours to reach the **Trishuli Bazaar**, a tourist permit check point, marking the end of the tarred road. An hour of climb on a gravel road out of the Trishuli valley takes us to our lunch point at **Kalikaasthan**, another tourist check point where we stop for about 30-45 minutes. The drive onwards to our campsite is long (about 4-5 hours), slow and tortuous overlooking a steep drop of about 3,000 ft. on the ridge of the Lantang River gorge. An hour drive from lunch point takes us to the boundary of the Langtang National Park at **Ramche**.

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

Nov 6 (THU): *Total duration of trek 6-7 hours.*

Wake-up call with bed tea (usually at 6:30AM) and washbowl of warm water followed

by breakfast (usually at 7:00AM). *Water to drink and to fill water bottles is boiled and set at the dining table at all meals (Large steel keg).* Kindly pack your bags before breakfast and leave them outside the tents once you're done with them. The trek staff will then assign porters to carry them. A backpack with all the essentials for the day should go with you because your main bag or duffel will go with the porters and you may not have access to them till the next campsite. The details of the essentials in your backpack can vary each day and therefore will be discussed during the evening meals.

7:30Am (Usually), we start the first day of the trek on a wide desolate path climbing slowly through a forest of rhododendron, oak and evergreens. The Lantang Himals grow behind us as we climb. After about three hours we reach our lunch spot, **Yuri Kharka** at about 12,000ft., where we have a hot lunch prepared by the advance kitchen team. The trek after lunch is a steep climb of just over an hour to our first pass, the **Khurpu Pass** at 13,000 + ft. If clear the Langtang Himals look spectacular. Usually cold strong wind greets us at the pass, as is the case in the mountains in the afternoon. We then drop quickly down all the way to campsite, **Somdang** at 10,500ft., which takes us about two to two and a half hours. Somdang is a narrow riverine valley created by a small mountain stream, running between two mountain spurs, which push out of the Ganesh Himals towards the southern plains of Nepal. There is a small lead and zinc mining center here. A little away from the center our camp is set at a clearing in the forest close to the stream. HHC has a medicinal plants garden here, where a few high altitude medicinal plants are experimentally.

Nov 7 (FRI): *Total duration of walk 7-8 hrs.*

After an early breakfast, we go through a series of ups and downs for about five hours through rhododendron or alpine forests and bare steep cliffs and stop for lunch above the tree-line at the **Phangsang Pass** at 14,000 ft + with its line of Mani stones (Buddhist prayer sites). On a clear day the Ganesh Himals and Manaslu are seen to the north of the pass and Lantang to the east. Tipling can be seen as patches of fields interspersed with tiny houses at our feet. A quick steep drop of about two and a half hour through rhododendron and pine forests takes us to **Marmelung**, a small grassy clearing in the middle of the forest at over 9,000ft. We may camp at Marmelung (the usual campsite) or push another forty-five minutes to an hour to another grassy clearing, if time and energy permits. This option we have mentioned to help plan the next two days of walking. Campfire, drinks & hot meal.

Nov 8 (SAT): *Total duration of walk 7 to 8 hrs.*

Early morning view of the Ganesh Himals is to the north. After breakfast we descend quickly through a rhododendron forest for about one and half hours to reach the outlying fields of **Tipling** village. A vantage point, along the way gives us a wide view of the small valley of Tipling with its fields and houses in the distance. Once we reach

the outlying fields we walk for another hour and a half through parts of the village to reach the main village.

We then walk down about half an hour through Tipling Village Proper to reach the **Kami Village** (blacksmiths) where the blacksmiths can be seen beating metal to make farm tools for the villagers. Then we climb down a steep drop of half an hour to a narrow wooden bridge & across the **Ata Khola**. We will have lunch here.

After lunch we begin a two hour long hike to **Awee**, a part of the village of **Shertung**, on the outskirts. Shertung is a Tamang village of over 3,200 people with a government health post. HHC runs the health posts, adult literacy classes in six centers, supports about twenty children with stipends in school and helps over three hundred women with handicraft business and angora rabbits farming in this village. We camp at **Awee**.

Nov 9 (SUN): *Total duration of walk 6 to 7 hrs.*

After Breakfast, the walk will be small ups and then a long downhill to the village of **Borang** (1- 1½ hours). Then we take the path slowly leading downhill for one & half hours until we reach the main Ankhu Khola Bridge and another 15 minutes later we will reach the second Bridge crossing. We will climb uphill for an hour to find a lunch point.

After lunch we will climb a slow and long uphill for two to two & half hours to reach our destination, **Lapa**.

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

Note: *If we have more than five medical volunteers on the trek then there will be two work days in either Tipling or Sherthung villages and three days in Lapa village. If less than five volunteers, we will work four days straight only in Lapa village.*

During our days at Lapa, work begins after 10 AM because the villagers will come to the healthpost only after their morning meals. Time permitting, after breakfast, an hour long informal class is held by a visiting doctor for the benefit of the Nepali health workers each morning. Each doctor chooses a topic or subject of relevance to rural health issues in Nepal. The staff or the coordinator can help with the choice of topic and also with the translation for the benefit of the village health workers.

For medical examination of patients, the doctors will each be given an examination room to work out of and the help of a Nepali health worker and a Tamang translator. The health workers will take turns to be with different doctors each day to benefit learning from all. This on-the-job training of health workers has proved very effective

and therefore is a big part of our program. After examination, the patients will receive their medication from the dispensary.

During the medical camp days, the meals will be announced by the cooks. We have an hour long lunch break at about 1:00 PM. Most working days may go till 6:00 or even 7:00 in the evenings and lamps will be provided. Those of us who would like to visit the village can take turns during the working days. You are most welcome to visit the homes of the villagers.

Nov 10 (MON): *Medical camp at Lapa.*

Nov 11 (TUE): *Medical camp at Lapa.*

Nov 12 (WED): *Medical camp at Lapa.*

Nov 13 (THU): *Medical camp at Lapa.*

We finish up on the last day by packing all medicines, equipment and finalizing the inventory. We leave all remaining medicines from the camp for the village healthposts.

Nov 14 (FRI): *Total duration of walk 7 hrs.*

As in the previous trekking days, after bed tea and wash we pack our duffels and leave them outside the tents for the porters before breakfast.

The return trek till camp endpoint is through villages and terraced fields with views of the Ganesh Himal from various vantage points. The trail meanders through the Ankhu Khola Valley with several ups and downs, well above the winding Ankhu River which runs south to the plains of Nepal. All the villages that we pass on the first two days of the return trek are supported by HHC development programs.

After breakfast, we walk down about one and half hours through and out of the Lapa Hill to reach the Ankhu Bridge. A slow climb for another one and half hours will take us back to Borang. After Borang the trail is gentle to Rangmenan (1½ hour), then downhill for an hour to **Lisne Khola** (river). We stop at the Rangmenan where we will have lunch. After lunch, we walk on relatively flat surface for about an hour and then a last twenty minutes of uphill to **Percho**. Another hour and a half of relatively flat walking to the **Jharlang** camp (beyond the landslide). A panoramic view of Ganesh Himal over the Ankhu Khola Valley begins as we reach the widely scattered village of **Jharlang** (over 3,500 Tamang).

Nov 15 (SAT): *Total duration of walk 6-7 hrs. Temps. in the 90s (Fahrenheit) in the sun.*

After breakfast, we walk the *Nepali flat* to **Budu** for about an hour and a half and then go downhill for another hour to **Gajuli Khola** River (Dhuncheney Khola). Then

onwards to Chatra and Dharna (one hour) *Nepali flat*, downhill and uphill. Lunch at water-point at **Sharna**.

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

The walk gets hotter as we have lost altitude (temp. in the 80-90s).

Note: If the dirt road is intact after the monsoon rains, we drive to Dhadingbesi (five hours, if not then the trek continues for another day or so)

Nov 16 (SUN): *Total duration of walk 4 hrs., drive about 2 to 2 & 1\2 hrs.*

This is the hottest day on the trek with the temperature in the high 90s or even 100. The relatively flat walk of about two hours in the morning leads through terraced fields and tiny villages of mixed ethnicity like **Nemar Chok & Ringne** to reach the village of **Lapang**. Then an hour and a half of climbing will reach us to the lunch point beyond **Bihar Thok**. All along we get glimpses of the Ganesh Himal and the Manaslu ranges to the north.

After lunch we walk for about an hour to reach **Charange**, a small stop with a few shops where we hope to get a ride to Dhadingbesi (if no rains and muddy tracks). The track is narrow and will go through villages like **Damgade, Todke** and **Jumray Bhanjyang** to reach **Dhadingbesi**, in about two to two and half hours. The waiting van will drive us back to **Kathmandu** (4,500 ft). The drive is about four hours long.

*Note: (In case we are unable to drive, we will walk three hours to camp at **Jumre Bhanjyang** and walk another four hours the following morning to reach Dhadingbesi. We will only reach Kathmandu at about 4:00 to 5:00 PM on the 17th of Nov.)*

Overnight at hotel in Kathmandu.

Following couple of days, escort to airport for final departure from Nepal.

Please Note:

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

Shashant Cell #	9841642663
Himalayan HealthCare Office	55228139, 5522109
Anil Parajuli Residence #	521098
Anil Cell #	9851085372

2. The itinerary may change because of reasons of political unrest, landslides, trail diversions or logistical issues. The camp spots are chosen keeping in mind the size of the camping space for all tents, water source as well as duration of walk each day.
3. At all times on the trek we suggest you carry your raingear, sunscreen lotion, two water bottles, sun hat, sunglasses in your **daypack**. We suggest wearing layers of clothing in altitude to accommodate the ever-changing dramatic Himalayan weather. On the days of the high altitude sections of the trek a warm hat, gloves and a warm jacket or similar should go with you in your daypack.
4. Please leave all valuables, credit cards and passport in a safety deposit box at the hotel before we leave on the trek. A copy of your passport is enough for the trek.
5. The high altitude part of the trek may cause altitude problems in some of the trekkers. We have had only one bad case, though many complain of headache and light-headedness. Diamox is cheap and freely available at drug stores in Kathmandu and is widely used prophylactically. The second half of the trek will be in low altitude and hot (temperatures as high as 90-100°F).
6. We are careful with water and food on the treks, yet trekkers are known to have stomach problems. To limit this as much as possible, the kitchen staff are given a course of anti-protozoal medication (tinidazole) and a course of Ciprofloxacin. While in Kathmandu, please drink bottled water and do not eat green uncooked vegetables, salads and fruits and eat at only recommended places. Trekkers are known to take Cipro, 500mg a day prophylactically.
7. Maps and books are available in most bookstores in Kathmandu. The recommended place is Pilgrim Book House at Kopundole or Thamel. There is a book by Tom Frieke called Nepali Household, which may be available. This is an ethnographical book written on the Tamangs of Tipling. 'People of Nepal' (by Dor Bdr. Bista) is another book which can give you an insight on the Nepalese people. A book on Birds of Nepal and also Plants of Nepal could be handy.

TREK KIT: To help you pack for the trek here are some of the essentials to bring:

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

Please note: Video cameras need permits. Prescription drugs (last minute) for personal use should be bought in Kathmandu prior to the trek.