

# Portraits of the Himalayas

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Scripsi

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## 4

# Conflict

We'll put force against force, says the citizen.

*Ulysses*, James Joyce

Hail Mary, the headache's gone.

I tell Paul where we can get a hot bath. On the way up yesterday, I passed the following sign:

### SUNNY SOLAR SPRING THE WORLD'S HIGHEST SOLAR HEATED HOT TUB

Feeling buoyant, we trip down the hill to the spot.

At a strategic juncture on the path are two Buddhist nuns blocking it. They are both in the maroon colour favoured by the Buddhist clergy in this part of the world. One is young with a full face and determined look. She has a zipped fleece jacket with a black-and-yellow square pattern at its base; a black letter 'F' appears over the left upper pectoral. A long red skirt and solid brown boots, she has a pen in one hand and what looks like a large pad of yellow raffle tickets in the other. The elder of the two has a narrow face and an equally indomitable look. More traditionally dressed, she wears a loose tunic which criss-crosses over her breast, long red skirt and grey boots. She also carries raffle tickets. Both have dark maroon woolly hats which look like turbans and which top Mongoloid features typical of Tibetans.

They jabber insistently knowing that we'll get the point even if we can't understand the language. Unlike people with questionnaires who accost you in city centres but where there is enough room to get round them, these two are parked on a path flanked by drystone walls, so their ploy is a well-thought-out one. (Didn't a nun invent barbed wire?)

We pay 200 rupees each for our raffle tickets, sign on the dotted lines, and are then allowed to continue. ‘*Namaste.*’

The raffle ticket is written not in the Devanagari script typical of Nepal and India but in Tibetan script, accompanied by the more fashionable Roman script. The number of mine is 08638 – not much chance of winning then!

Dear well wishers,

Sharkum khari dogonGanden Tenphil ling Nunnery was established in 1962 by his eminence khari Rinpoche lobsang Tsultrim, who is the embodiment of love and compassion. Now we are facing difficulties with cracked walls and leaking roof during the monsoon season. In addition every year number of nuns arriving from Tibet increases . . . Therefore we appeal for your kind support. Received with thanks from ..... [sign] the sum of ..... rupees . . . E-mail [kharirinpoche@hotmail.com](mailto:kharirinpoche@hotmail.com).

Definitely not much chance of winning. I’ll have to email Khari Rinpoche to complain.

The nunnery is north west of Namche in Thamo on the road to Thami, which is the location of a small hydroelectric plant supplying power to Namche. Thami itself is on the road to the 5,740m Nangpa La (pass), one of the key trading routes over the Himalayas between Nepal and Tibet as well as an escape route for Tibetans fleeing Chinese rule.

We carry on down to the bath-house passing some yak hybrids on the way up laden with white and yellow packs. I go inside the place with the sign only to be told that the sign is not for the establishment where it’s situated but for another establishment just up from where we’d come. Back we go again to face the nuns, who don’t seem to recognise us at all and want another toll payment. I wave my yellow ticket at them like a Red Guard waving his Little Red Book, which seems to convince them reluctantly I’m on the level. We finally reach the establishment in question and walk round it to find the tubs, which are in a shabby building outside. I try to talk to the proprietor, who has the customer service skills

of a doctor. She mutters a few words which we eventually take to mean there's no hot water. You just can't rely on sun.

Me and Paul part. He's going with some others on a gratuitous climb-high-sleep-low acclimatisation exercise up the hill near the army base, whilst keen bean Sean and his uncle Roger are off to the Japanese-built Everest View Hotel, which is up the hill in the other direction. As the Highest Hotel in the World at 3,860m (nearly 13,000ft), it's also the Daftest Place to Put One. Unwary guests landing at the nearby helicopter strip of Shyangboche pay upwards of \$300 a night for a double room not realising they are soon going to get altitude sickness through not acclimatising properly. The hotel makes an effort to overcome this problem by pumping extra oxygen into their rooms (for an extra fee). There is no guarantee guests will view Everest either: cloud and mist tend to spoil the party.

I head down again towards the centre of Namche brusquely passing the tolling nuns. Suddenly, a huge cloud of dust ascends from a school playground to my left: a helicopter is landing there (hope it isn't playtime). Important-looking people get out with expensive-looking equipment. It then takes off again creating more dust, which catches up and covers some fleeing locals. I divert to investigate, and meet a man called Matt.

'Oh Christ, it's a Man U fan,' he says, noticing the hat I'm wearing – black with red peak, 85% acrylic, 15% wool, 'UNITED' in large capitals on the front with club badge in the centre encapsulating the words 'Manchester United Football Club' plus red devil and sailing vessel going down the Manchester Ship Canal (laden with trophies).

'Who do you support then?'

'Arsenal.'

Surely not that same Arsenal that Manchester United had just pipped to the 2002/2003 Premiership title?

'Arsenal? Ha, ha. What was Wenger saying about the duel between himself and Ferguson? It was 3-2 to Ferguson but he was catching up? It's now 4-2. No, actually, correction, it's 8-2. Fergie's won eight Premiership titles, Wenger two.'

'You'll be crap when Beckham goes.'

'You mean we'd always finish second?'

'Most of your fans are from China.'

'We do have a wide appeal. No-one's heard of you beyond North London.' Or Paris.

'And which part of the world do you come from then?'

'Manchester.' Real supporter, though where you come from is not the acid test: it's whether you can sleep the night following a bad defeat.

Matt and the others are bringing information and communication technology to the mountain as part of an ABC reporting team; there are similar groups everywhere because it's the fiftieth anniversary. They have a producer, reporter, engineer and sound recordist. Also present is Rakesh from Capital Online, who is bringing internet services into the region.

'I met Reinhold Messner flying into Kathmandu. I told him what we were doing and that we intended to fly straight into Namche from Kathmandu,' Matt volunteered.

'What did he say?'

'He said I was an idiot.'

'He knows what he's talking about. How much did the heli-flight cost?'

'£2,500.'

'What's Messner up to?'

'He's attending the celebrations in Kathmandu at the end of May, but he's leading some trekkers to Base Camp first.'

'Any other famous mountaineers in the area?'

'Yeah, Peter Habler.' Habler and Messner were the first to climb Everest without oxygen in 1978.

'Anyone else?'

'Peter Hillary.' Son of Edmund, he and Tenzing Norgay's son summited together in 2002 repeating their fathers' feat of forty-nine years before. 'They're all leading treks as far as I know.'

Leaving Matt behind, with whom I didn't exactly see eye-to-eye, I continue my odyssey down into Namche wondering who I'd meet next.



I talk to a schoolgirl who tells me the nearest secondary school is up the hill an hour's walk at Khumjung; the one here is just a primary school. There's a small cinema next to the Sagar Matha Snooker and Bar, so I ask the owner if I can have a look inside. The cinema has a small covered screen and two sets of eleven rows of red plastic stools with three in each row. Much to my surprise, the cinema plays Nepalese films rather than Indian – a native film industry.

On the main street some locals are playing a dice game with two dice, beads and a brown wooden cup. They slam the cup down with vigour and shout what sounds like 'Hup' to great amusement all round. Down the street is Kirant Art Gallery with some awful idealised pictures including one of the Nepalese Royal Family, most of whom were murdered in 2001 by the Crown Prince himself. Next to this, Club Paradise Pool Bar and Restaurant.

I meet an Italian called Pietro who's obviously on the way down. He looks drained and dirty and has lank brown hair; but tanned and handsome with a cigarette languishing between his stubble-surround lips, he manages to convey a certain amount of 'cool' as Italians tend to. He's from Verona and has just been to Island Peak, a tough trekking peak of 6,189m (20,305ft), which is up near where we are going.

In broken English, Pietro presents me with a verbal jigsaw puzzle – '... Lobuche ... the woman of Benoît Chamoux ... a memorial ... a pyramid ... Devuche ... a foundation'. I can't follow it very well but the gist of it seems to be that he was with the widow of Benoît Chamoux at her husband's memorial *chorten* above Lobuche, where they also called in at an Italian research project nearby called 'Pyramid'. Later, they visited a nunnery at Devuche which the same Italian researchers are involved in restoring in collaboration with a foundation set up by Benoît Chamoux's widow in his memory. (Benoît Chamoux disappeared on the third highest peak in the world, Kanchenjunga, in 1995 aged thirty-four whilst attempting to become the third person to climb all fourteen 8,000m peaks. Kanchenjunga was his fourteenth, but he didn't make the summit.)

*'Ciao.'*

Passing shops with Everest T-shirts, fleece trousers, boots, Kodak Gold, Snickers, Mars bars, toilet rolls, bottled water, I arrive at Tenzin's shop.

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Tenzin's like Telemachus 'cept his cause is Tibet. Twenty, stylish in smart grey jacket and dark blue T-shirt with white trimmings, blue jeans and white trainers, he doesn't have the harsh features of most Tibetans. He could be an average American kid with an American dad and Tibetan mother.

He likes cricket, which rather surprises me, but then one of the best cricket teams in the world isn't that far away. Cricket, in fact, is very popular in Nepal and they have a national team. When the team returned as runners-up from the fourth ACC Trophy held in Singapore in 2002, they were treated as conquering heroes. The Minister of State for Education and Sports Narayan Prasad Saud said, 'Cricket is the only discipline which provides relief in otherwise degrading Nepali sports.' Tibet does not seem to be involved in cricket, though there is a Cricket Association of China. Tibet's traditional games are archery, wrestling, horse and yak racing.

Tenzin likes football too. He's heard of Man United and Real Madrid. The Nepal national team doesn't seem all that good with a world ranking of 171 out of 204. Recent results in the Asian Cup 2004 Qualifying Tournament were a 7-0 home defeat by Oman and a 16-0 drubbing in South Korea. They did beat Afghanistan 4-0 not long ago, but how bad must they be? However, Tenzin's real national team is the unofficial Tibetan Football Team, which consists of exiles living in India, Nepal and Europe. In summer 2001, much to China's annoyance, they played Greenland in Copenhagen. They lost 4-1 but claimed a political victory.

Tenzin is well educated, speaking fluent English. He went to the Dalhousie School in Himachal Pradesh, India, which is one of a number of schools set up at the request of the Dalai Lama by the Government of India following his flight from Tibet in 1959. It is run by the Central Tibetan Schools

Administration, an independent body regulated by the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, to provide free education to the children of Tibetan refugees. There are twenty-eight of these schools in India, six of which, including Dalhousie, are residential. For all Tibetan children, not just those in India but those in Nepal and Bhutan, education is centrally controlled by the Government of Tibet in Exile's Department of Education (DOE) based in Dharamsala, India. The DOE is responsible for supporting over 25,000 schoolchildren in over eighty Tibetan schools at both primary and secondary level through both private and public aid programmes. Education is seen as a priority by the Dalai Lama to meet the challenges of the modern world and develop the people who will be leaders of a future free Tibet.

This certainly seems to have rubbed off on Tenzin as he now tells me he wants to be a Tibetan freedom fighter. Another surprise – are there such things?

Following their imperialist invasion of Tibet in October 1950, an armed resistance movement against the Chinese started in 1955 amongst the people of Kham in Eastern Tibet. (Kham is where Sherpas originate from.) The movement, headed by a group called Four Rivers Six Ranges, received support from the CIA, who made some arms drops and provided training for the Khampas in East Pakistan (Bangladesh as it is today). US policy at the time was to undermine international communism and, in view of the Korean situation, contain China. The CIA also helped to set up a guerrilla base in Mustang in Northern Nepal, which was culturally Tibetan and only loosely controlled by the Nepalese government, who in any case supported their cause. India too, following the humiliating brief border war with the Chinese in 1962, offered support and set up a secret base known as Unit 22 at Chakrata under the control of the Indian Army. They also firmly backed the Dalai Lama's Government in Exile with the intention of using Tibet as a buffer against Chinese aggression. However, in the early 1970s, US policy towards China changed as Nixon saw them as less of a threat now they had fallen out with the Soviet Union. Nepal too

was under a new king, Birendra, who wished to move closer towards China, a position not uninfluenced by an ever-increasing amount of foreign aid he was receiving from them. The guerrilla movement was effectively over in 1974 when the Nepalese Army moved on the Mustang base defeating them and killing their leader Gyatho Wangdu. Meanwhile, the Tibetans under Indian control had become part of the Indian Army fighting effectively for them in the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. Since then, there have been some flag-waving demonstrations led by Buddhist monks – mainly confined to the capital Lhasa and brutally dealt with *à la maoïste* – and isolated bombing incidents. Central Lhasa was reportedly bombed on December 25, 1996.

China's position on Tibet is that it is historically part of China whereas the Tibetans argue that, although China has held sway over Tibet from time to time, under the Mongols and most recently under the Manchu emperors (1642-1911), it has never been an integral part of China. Indeed, in the seventh and eighth centuries, the boot was on the other foot as Tibet developed their own empire which included Chinese territories; they invaded the Chinese capital, Xian, in 763.

The Tibetans see the relationship as *cho-yon* (priest-patron), with Tibet providing spiritual guidance in return for Chinese patronage and protection. *Cho-yon* started with the Mongol ruler Goden Khan in 1240 and continued with Kublai Khan, who embraced Tibetan Buddhism. The nature of the relationship is reflected in Mongol and later Manchu support for the theocratic state that developed under this patronage culminating in the rule of the Dalai Lamas. Tibetans argue that when Manchu forces entered Tibet in 1720 and 1792, this was at their request, in the first instance to restore law and order after a sectarian civil war and in the second instance to protect Tibet against invading Gorkhas from Nepal. The Chinese argue otherwise pointing out that, following the 1720 invasion, the stationing of Manchu troops in Lhasa, their appointment of local officials to run Tibet under a cabinet system (*kashag*), and the presence in the capital of Manchu ambans demonstrated their imperial

control. (An amban is an imperial commissioner or ambassador depending on your viewpoint.) This 'control' was maintained until 1911-12 when, following the overthrow of the Manchus by the Han Chinese nationalists, Tibet ousted the Chinese from the country. In 1913, in company with (Outer) Mongolia, it declared independence, which it enjoyed *de facto* until 1950. The Chinese never recognised Tibet's declaration of independence (Mongolia's was belatedly recognised in 1949) and state that the signing of the 17-Point Agreement between the Tibetan government and themselves in 1951, which agreed to the return of Tibet to the 'motherland' and which was endorsed by both the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, is further proof of their right to sovereignty. The Tibetans argue this was agreed to under duress.

No wonder China has not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 1 of which recognises that all peoples have the right to self determination. In the meantime, it continues a repressive cultural colonisation of Tibet and, perhaps anticipating any plebiscite on self determination, the repopulating of Tibet with Han Chinese – a cute combination of political and ethnic hygiene. The truth is the People's Republic is unlikely to let Tibet become independent because they fear this will encourage other parts of their empire to follow suit, such as the province of Xinjiang, north of Tibet, where the East Turkestan Islamic Movement is fighting for a separate state.

Perhaps Tenzin supports the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), the largest Tibetans-in-exile NGO, one of whose objectives is, 'To struggle for the total independence of Tibet even at the cost of one's life'. He now tells me of two friends beaten up demonstrating for a free Tibet in Kathmandu on March 10, Tibetan National Uprising Day, which marks the anniversary of the uprising in 1959 which led to the Dalai Lama fleeing the country. The TYC organise the yearly march, whilst the Nepalese government is keen to keep it uncontroversial so as not to offend China.

Tenzin has a smart shop selling trekking gear and all the usual knick-knacks and souvenirs: prayer wheels, prayer

books, yak bells, jewellery and trinketry, incense holders, idols, knives (ritual and martial), woollens. His 'granny' has a stall next door with just traditional objects, though she's anything but traditional with her smart gold-rimmed glasses, black leather boots and blue North Face down jacket.

There's a festival he tells me here on May 29 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary with some famous Sherpas and including the Tibetan Snow Lion Dance. The snow lion symbolises the enlightened mind. It seems improbable, but will Tenzin one day go fighting far away?

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More service providers around the main street crossroads: bakeries, banks, money exchange, post office, restaurants, lodges and hotels, herbal medical center, Mountain Madness Equipment Centre, Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee, five or six internet cafés . . .

There are five or six computers in a small room. The young Sherpa proprietor goes to get me a cappuccino. I need to check out my email and see if we won our last game. Not strictly necessary, but we won it anyway 2-1. I can't get into my webmail for some reason; I send one anyway. Before final transmission, I flout normal email protocol by using the spellchecker. I'm online an hour, which costs 1,100 Nepalese rupees (about £10).

I now seek succour – a shower. I've got my toilet bag and go into the Potala Mountaineering Shop, which offers, besides gear and equipment, a satellite phone service and a shower. The young Sherpani with long sleek hair is very helpful and I ask to use the satellite phone first – at 300 rupees a minute – with no luck. Engaged. I'm given clogs for the shower and go down some steps to a small room at the back. The solar-heated shower is set off against blue-patterned wallpaper and a stone floor. It trickles tentatively and uninvitingly at first, but then becomes more effusive as I get to know it. Success, and a poor price to pay (120 rupees).

Outside, I say hello to the man later to be known as Rob the Spy. Then Chris appears, who suggests we pig out on

some doughnuts, which we do: coffee with cinnamon and cinnamon doughnuts at the Namche Bakery. She shows me her new bright orange down jacket and now new blue-and-black daysack; the old one apparently broke. She says she's done the Four Peaks – Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike, Snowdon and Slieve Donard. It was like shopping at IKEA when I climbed Ben Nevis a few years ago, and Snowdon is worse with its café on the summit. Scafell Pike's going the same way: the last time I was there, someone was selling tea at the top.

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There's a huge blue banner outside at the crossroads.

WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR SINCERE  
APPRECIATION AND RESPECT TO ALL  
TREKKERS AND CLIMBERS THOSE WHO  
VISITED AND SUPPORTED THIS REGION EVEN  
UNDER THE VERY DIFFICULT TIME HERE IN  
NEPAL AND ELES WHERE IN THE WORLD  
Hotel Khangri, Holiday Inn, Valley View Lodge, Tashi  
Delekh Lodge

'The very difficult time here' is a reference to the Maoist uprising in Nepal. An area such as this is very sensitive to trouble as it tends to put the tourists off. Namche depends on tourists for its, relatively speaking, high standard of living. Those who call for a moratorium on trekking and climbing to protect the environment forget the people who live here. No way do they want a pause.

One thing the Nepalese didn't think they'd be importing alongside Chinese aid was its ideology. The Maoist uprising began on February 13, 1996 when:

. . . the Communist Party of Nepal . . . broke the dark night of oppression and lit the burning People's War that brightly extended from Rukum, Gorkha, Rolpa, Kathmandu, Sindhupalanchok, Sindhuli . . . with three simultaneous attacks on police stations, confiscation of lands and goods

from semifeudal forces, attacks on an Indian capitalist brewery . . . In other words, the prairie fire has been set, and the People's War now expands from the Andes to the Himalayas . . .

This, according to a communiqué by the Movimiento Popular Peru (MPP), which claims to represent the Partido Comunista de Peru (PCP), also known as Sendero Luminoso (SL or Shining Path). But what's Peru's Shining Path got to do with Nepal's Maoists?

The Nepalese Maoists follow Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, or MLM as they like to call it, and model themselves on SL. They even have a 'strategy' they call Prachanda Path, named after their leader Comrade Prachanda (Fierce One), real name Pushpan Kamal Dahal. Prachanda incongruously calls Prachanda Path:

‘. . . a set of ideas that has . . . not yet developed up to the level of ‘Thought’.’

More comparisons are in their leaders, who are inevitably middle-class ‘intellectuals’. SL's leader is university professor Abimael Guzman. The public face and deputy leader of the Nepalese Maoists is former architect, with a PhD in urban planning, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, whilst Prachanda himself, though peasant born, is a former agricultural graduate. At Narayani High School, Prachanda apparently impressed his teachers so much with his intelligence and conduct that they renamed him from his original birth-name Chabilal to Pushpan *Kamal* after that famous symbol of purity, the lotus. His father says, ‘As a child, he never lied or fought with other children. In fact, he was called to mediate and resolve disputes. I thought he'd grow up and join the civil service.’ The civil service would probably not be the best career move for someone whose analysis of society now consists of, ‘All moderates are opportunist dogs, I detest them. There is no alternative to people's war and the gun is the best tool for social transformation’.



Comrade Prachanda's particular insightful Road to Damascus was when, as a young man, he saw his father being insulted and kicked by a moneylender, a political lesson he says he never forgot. Following, as he sees it, in the footsteps of great Nepalese thinkers in the history of dialectics like Sakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, he intends to utilise 'scientific' socialism (and kicking) to create a New Soviet Federation in South Asia within the context of a global People's War. MLM is the magic formula which will inevitably lead to a utopia he calls 'the golden future of humankind'. ('Utopia' is Thomas More's clever pun on two Greek words: the promising *eutopia* meaning 'good place', and the unfortunately more realistic *outopia* meaning 'no place'.)

Perhaps *outopia* would be a distinct improvement on the current situation. Nepal is as backward politically as it is economically, and with its history of sectional interest, ineptitude and corruption, it's nearer dystopia than eutopia. At one time a series of small rajas, it was unified in the eighteenth century by Prithvi Narayan Shah, who was himself Raja of Gorkha, a hill-state to the west of Kathmandu. The Shahs ruled until 1846 when a family called the Ranas took over as hereditary prime ministers making the king a puppet. This lasted until 1951 when the crown's sovereignty was restored under King Tribhuvan. Finally in 1959, under King Mahendra, democracy was adopted only to be abandoned in favour of monarchy again a year later. Democracy was re-established in 1990 under King Birendra only for parliament to be dissolved in 2002 after twelve chaotic years, eleven different governments and mounting pressure from the Maoists, who had forced King Gyanendra to give his royal assent to a state of emergency declared in November 2001 which led to the Nepalese Army being used against the guerrillas instead of the police.

The Maoists control 40-80% of the countryside depending on who's giving you the figures. Mostly they control remote areas particularly in Western Nepal, though they did attack Lukla airport in February 2002. Some trekkers have been stopped including a Jagged Globe group; however, they seem

very polite merely asking for a ‘contribution’ to the Maoist cause. 1,000 rupees is the going rate but, helpfully, you do get a receipt so you could use it for tax relief. The receipt is also informative directing you to their people’s website at [www.cpnm.org](http://www.cpnm.org).

Fortunately, there is a ceasefire while we are here.

---

I go back along the main street again down a path I haven’t been on. Passing some water-driven prayer wheels where people are washing clothes, I arrive at a large stupa. This is definitely Nepalese rather than Tibetan as it has the Buddha’s eyes painted on the harmika. The eyes rather anthropomorphise it; the spire on top is yellow and looks like a hat, and the dome looks like a meringue. The overall effect is of a giant inverted cone of Buddha ice cream.

There are large prayer wheels inset into the base of the stupa. Prayer wheels are metal cylinders which contain sacred text. By turning them clockwise, you release the power of the prayer as if you had recited it. The ineffable mantra *Om mani padme hum* (‘Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus’) is the commonest prayer, and you may also recite this as you turn the wheel for double effect. The wheel also represents the Wheel of Law (Dharma) and the cycle of reincarnation (*samsara*), which you must continuously go through until, by following the teachings, you achieve liberation – *nirvana*. On the dome are three layers of *mani* (jewel) stones, which are stone tablets also inscribed with *Om mani padme hum*. Viewing the stones releases the benevolence of the mantra.

*Om mani padme hum* is a highly-packed and highly-charged phrase, which has had countless meanings ascribed to it. *Om* may be the primordial sound which penetrates everything, *mani* the ‘jewel’ of enlightenment and compassion for the enlightenment of others, *padme* the ‘lotus’ of wisdom growing from the mud of cyclical existence, *hum* that which is indivisible and unmoving. *Om* may be seen as the beginning of the cosmos, *mani* and *padme* the male and female principles, sexual and spiritual union so central to Tantric Buddhism and

## Conflict

through which the cycle of life and the cosmos continues, but through which, in the end, enlightenment may be achieved, *hum* being *nirvana*, release, finality, amen. In one way or another, therefore, *Om mani padme hum* says and symbolises, indeed *is*, everything – both *samsara* and *nirvana* and the way from one to the other.

ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པདྨེ་ཧཱུྃ།

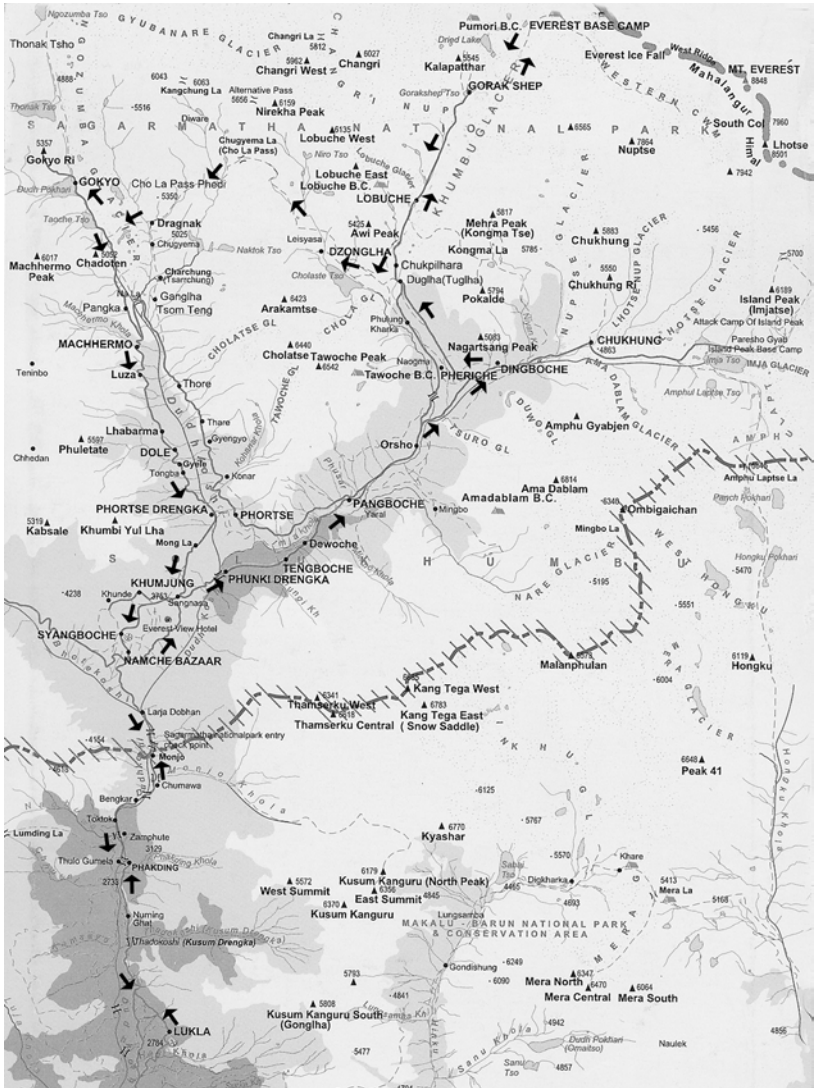
*Om mani padme hum*  
in Tibetan script

Back on the way up to the tents, yet more *Om mani padme hums*: this time, an old man reciting endlessly as he counts them on his 108-bead rosary. The number is significant as it represents the hundred and eight human passions that need to be overcome to achieve *nirvana*. A lazy old dog lies forlorn near some yak dung, but uncynically wags its tail as I wander past (almost like it knew me).

At camp, some of the lads are playing a game of cards called Shithead. Heavy rain at 6 makes them dart for cover.

Ah, men.





Route Map – Khumbu



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