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Guest-editor Tenzing Gyazu Sherpa: a profile

I was born and raised in the high Himalayan region in a small Sherpa village, Namche Bazar at an elevation of 12000 feet. It is in a shadow of Mount Everest--the highest mountain in the world--29,028 feet.

Even though Namche is in such an inaccessible region, it has become well known throughout the world since Sir Edmund Hillary from New Zealand, and Tenzing Norkay Sherpa from Nepal scaled Everest on May 29,1953. A tremendous number of trekkers and mountaineers sojourn to Namche from throughout the world. The spectacular view of the mountains and peaks, and the Sherpa's diverse culture and architecture make it unique. Owing to the great impacts of tourism in Nepal, Namche has been constantly altering. Indigenous people are becoming more sophisticated and more westernized; young-generation are gradually starting to dwell in different parts of the world. Numerous giant buildings have been constructed for the trekkers' and mountaineers' accommodation. Many western materials have been brought in, and not only the young generation but also the old people seemed enthusiastic about using, learning and experimenting with them. The life of the Sherpas has been dramatically altered.

I was raised by a single parent. I was very fortunate to have a wonderful mother. She had to go through and deal with numerous struggles, such as working awfully hard at other's houses, weaving, knitting, weeding and digging in the field everyday for 12-14 hours a day. Unfortunately, she sometimes never got paid; the wages she got were about 30-40 cents for the whole day. Despite her hardship, she took full family responsibility, put her entire energy in order to raise me and got me an education. My mother used to say, "Go to school, study hard-but not for my sake," regardless of how hard she had to work at other's houses. .

I went to Khumjung High School--established by Sir Edmund Hillary in Mount Everest region. Despite the difficult circumstances, I was able to graduate from the high school in 1989; and joined the Commerce Campus in Kathmandu for a year and half. During those years, from high school to college life, I not only worked as trekking and mountaineering guide, but also accompanied American geographers and anthropologists and worked for them as their field research assistant in different parts of Nepal. In addition, I accompanied American environmentalists, and other students. It has been a magnificent experience and I had a great opportunity to learn many things.

With an enormous amount of help and supports from a number of my good friends, I was given a great opportunity to go to Portland State University; and simultaneously worked in the *Himalayan Research Bulletin* as Dr. Barbara Brower's editorial assistant. It has been a remarkable experience and I learned many things; working experience with Dr. Brower has been a fantastic memory. I have enjoyed the chance for sharing opinions and thoughts about the Khumbu, the Sherpas, and the impact of tourism in Nepal; and serving as Tri-lingual receptionist at the HRB office.

I was born in such a remote region where the life was very simple, but now I have lived in different parts of the world, thousands of miles away from home; I have had to leave my mother by herself. Trying to live between cultures, there have been a tremendous amount of changes in my life. I have felt awfully guilty being such a long way from my mother, although I have been supporting her financially. "She is the most significant person in this world"

I owe an ongoing debt of gratitude to all my American friends who have been extraordinarily generous, kind, benevolence and helpful towards my education; I extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation for their great supports.

Tenzing Gyazu Sherpa