The Real Destination Was Home

My Journey to Everest Base Camp and Back

November 5, 2022 to November 18, 2022

Khumbu Region, Nepal

AUTHOR

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A Personal Note

Everything in this journal reflects my personal experience and the actions I took. Please do not use it as a route guide for the Everest Base Camp trek. Routes and conditions can change. This is not medical advice and should not be relied on for similar symptoms or health conditions.

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Day 1 (Nov 5, 2022)
The Journey Begins: Kathmandu to Monjo

I woke up at around 12:30 AM, having slept for barely an hour. The day I had been waiting for had finally arrived. We were about to begin our trek to Everest Base Camp, one of the biggest adventures I had ever planned.

We had booked a car to take us to Manthali Airport, from where we would catch our flight to Lukla. Shailendra picked up the car from Thamel at around 1:00 AM and then came to collect me. Fortunately, I had packed my backpack the previous day, so I didn't have much left to do. I got ready, said goodbye to my parents and my wife, and waited for him outside my house.

From there, we drove to Koteshwor to pick up Indresh and then continued to Gwarko to collect Fanning. Once everyone was in the car, we finally began our journey at around 2:00 AM.

The drive to Manthali was an adventure in itself. The road was full of twists, sharp corners, and bends that seemed to appear one after another. Having barely slept, I was already feeling exhausted. Somewhere along the way, I began experiencing motion sickness and suddenly vomited. After taking some medicine, I tried to sleep in the car, but it was nearly impossible. Every turn and bump made it difficult to get comfortable.

Eventually, we reached Manthali Airport at around 5:00 AM.

We had booked tickets for the 6:00 AM flight, and we expected to board as planned. However, things didn't go smoothly. The airport staff gave priority to foreign passengers, and our flight was pushed back to 8:00 AM. We were furious and argued with the staff, demanding that they put us on the original 6:00 AM flight. Despite our protests, they refused to listen.

After arguing for some time, we managed to get transferred to a 7:00 AM flight operated by a different airline.
We had originally booked with Sita Air, but we were moved to Summit Air, which was carrying essential supplies to Lukla. The aircraft had only eight passengers on board, with the remaining space occupied by supplies. It was an unusual experience, and I was excited that we were finally going to fly into the mountains.

As the plane took off, I was treated to some incredible views of the Himalayas. Snow-covered peaks stretched across the horizon, and the scenery was unlike anything I had seen from an aircraft before. The views were breathtaking, although the occasional turbulence reminded us that flying in the mountains was not always smooth.

Then came the landing at Lukla.

Lukla Airport is famous for its short, sloping runway and its challenging mountain location. As we approached the airport, I couldn't help feeling nervous. The runway appeared to be carved into the side of a hill, with the mountains rising dramatically around it.

During the landing, I had the unsettling feeling that the plane might not have enough room to stop before reaching the hill at the end of the runway. It was an intense few moments, and I watched anxiously as the aircraft descended towards the runway.

Finally, the wheels touched the ground, and we landed safely.

We got off the plane, and the cold mountain air immediately hit us. We had arrived in Lukla, and our trekking adventure was about to begin.

Lukla itself reminded me of Bhaktapur. The town had paved stone streets, narrow alleys, traditional stone houses, and small shops and restaurants lining the pathways. It had a unique charm, with the rugged Himalayan landscape surrounding the settlement.

We were hungry after the long and exhausting journey, so we looked around for somewhere to eat. However, the restaurants we found seemed quite expensive. Rather than spending too much time and money there, we decided to continue along the trail and find food somewhere farther ahead.

We started trekking, walking through beautiful mountain scenery as we made our way towards Phakding. But our hunger soon became difficult to ignore. We had barely slept, the journey had been tiring, and we needed a proper meal before continuing.

Along the way, we noticed several people from different media organizations. They had come to attend a hospital inauguration in Phakding, which explained why there seemed to be so many people around the trail that day.
Eventually, we came across a Sherpa-run hotel that served dal bhat. We decided to stop and have lunch.

We ordered our meals and waited. While the food was being prepared, we charged our phones and refilled our water bottles. Unfortunately, the wait turned out to be longer than expected because they had only just started cooking.
When the dal bhat finally arrived, I was disappointed. The food wasn't particularly tasty, and the portions were not generous. They didn't even offer much in the way of refills. After waiting so long, we had expected something better.
Still, we ate what we could and continued our journey towards Phakding.

The trail was beautiful. We walked through varying terrain, passing green hills, majestic mountains, and small settlements along the way. The sound of the Dudh Koshi River

accompanied us for much of the journey. Its powerful current roared through the valley, creating a constant soundtrack as we walked beside it.

Despite the beauty of the surroundings, the long day was beginning to catch up with us.

Suddenly, Shailendra began complaining of discomfort. He said his testicles were hurting, and he was having difficulty walking properly. We were concerned, so we continued a little farther until we found a coffee shop where we could take a break.

We ordered some ordinary coffee, although the price was surprisingly high. We stayed there for approximately 45 minutes, giving Shailendra time to rest and recover.

During the break, I called my family to let them know where we were and how the journey was progressing. I also called my grandmother because it was her birthday that day.

I wished her a happy birthday and reassured her that she didn't need to worry too much about me. She had been very concerned when I told her I was going on the Everest Base Camp trek. In fact, she had cried because she was worried about my safety. I wanted her to know that I was doing well and that we had reached the mountains safely.

By the time I finished the call, Shailendra's pain had eased somewhat. We decided to continue walking, hoping that he would feel better as we progressed.

We followed the trail alongside the river and through the hills, enjoying the scenery as we moved farther into the Khumbu region.

However, when we reached the far end of Phakding, Shailendra's pain returned. He insisted that we stop there for the night. We had already travelled a considerable distance, and none of us wanted to abandon the day's plan, but his condition was becoming a concern.

We encouraged him to continue slowly, hoping that he could manage the remaining distance. I also offered to exchange backpacks with him because his bag was heavier than mine.

We switched bags, and thankfully, he felt a little more comfortable. With the lighter load, he was able to continue walking.

Along the trail, we met a government officer who had come to deliver some documents to people at Ama Dablam Base Camp. We chatted with him for a while, and he eventually joined us as we continued our trek.

A little farther along, we encountered a foreign trekker travelling with a guide. During our conversation, we learned that the guide was a cousin of the late Pasang Lhamu Sherpa, the first Nepali woman to summit Mount Everest.

We walked together for some time, talking about trekking and mountaineering. The guide shared her own dream of climbing Everest someday, but explained that her mother was reluctant to let her pursue it because of the tragedy involving Pasang Lhamu.

Her story stayed with me. It was interesting to meet someone whose personal ambitions were so closely connected to Nepal's mountaineering history, and it reminded me that the mountains meant different things to different people.
Eventually, we reached Monjo, where we began looking for a hotel called Mount Kailash.

We had heard about the place earlier that day from a Sherpa gentleman we met at Manthali Airport. He had recommended it to us, and the guide we had walked with also mentioned that they were staying there. With two separate recommendations, it seemed like a good choice.

We found the hotel and booked a room.

By then, we were completely exhausted. We went to our room to freshen up, hoping to relax after a long day of travelling and trekking. But the cold was intense. The temperature had dropped considerably, and we were beginning to understand what spending nights in the mountains would be like.

Dinner was another challenge. The hotel was overcrowded, and we had to wait quite a while before our food arrived. I was so tired that even lifting my food and eating felt like an effort. When the meal finally came, I somehow managed to finish it, although the food wasn't particularly good.

After dinner, we returned to our room. Before going to sleep, I took some paracetamol and massaged my legs, which were already sore from the day's walking.

I was hoping to get a good night's rest before continuing our trek the next morning.

However, sometime during the night, something strange happened.

Shailendra and I suddenly felt as though our body temperatures had risen dramatically. We became so hot that we had to throw off our blankets, despite the freezing conditions outside. I couldn't understand what was happening. We had been shivering in the cold earlier, and now we were so warm that sleeping under the blankets had become unbearable.
I had no idea what had caused it.

It was an unexpected and uncomfortable end to our first day in the mountains.

Looking back, Day 1 had already given us a taste of what the journey would be like. We had dealt with a frustrating flight delay, experienced a nerve-racking landing at Lukla, trekked through beautiful landscapes, dealt with Shailendra's pain, and struggled with exhaustion and the cold.

We had barely begun our adventure, yet the day had felt incredibly long.

As I finally settled down to rest, I knew that the real challenge was still ahead of us. We were only at the beginning of our journey towards Everest Base Camp, and there were many more mountains, trails, and unpredictable experiences waiting for us.

Day 2 (Nov 6, 2022)
The Climb to Namche Bazaar and an Evening in Khemjuma

The morning was bitterly cold. We woke up at around 6:00 AM, freshened up, packed our bags, and headed to the dining area for breakfast. Just like the previous night, the place was crowded, and we had to wait for our turn to get a table.

After breakfast, we prepared to continue our trek. Our plan was to reach Khumjung and have lunch somewhere along the way, preferably around Namche Bazaar. We left the hotel at approximately 8:30 AM and continued along the trail.
After trekking for a few kilometres, we reached the entrance to Sagarmatha National Park. We had to show our identification documents and purchase tickets to enter the national park area. Once we had completed the formalities, we continued our journey into the mountains.

The scenery along the trail was breathtaking. We crossed several suspension bridges, passed beautiful waterfalls, and admired the snow-covered mountains glistening in the sunlight. The landscape seemed to grow more magnificent with every step. However, the trail was far from easy. The terrain was steep, and there seemed to be an endless series of steps climbing higher and higher into the mountains.

The mornings and nights were freezing, but the daytime sun was surprisingly intense. As we continued walking, we gradually removed some layers of clothing to stay comfortable. Every now and then, a cold breeze would sweep through the trail, sending chills through our bodies despite the warm sunshine.

At one point, we came across a natural spring where we decided to refill our water bottles. While filling them, we took a short break and ate some chocolates and dry snacks to replenish our energy before tackling the steep climb ahead.

Shailendra began walking slowly, still concerned that the pain he had experienced the previous day might return. We followed him as the trail continued to climb. With every step, the snow-covered mountains appeared closer, and the views became even more spectacular.

We settled into a steady rhythm, walking uphill, admiring the scenery, and chatting with fellow trekkers along the way. Shailendra and I were walking side by side, while Fanning was a little behind us. Indresh, who was struggling with the uphill climb, had fallen much farther back.

We became so absorbed in our walking and conversations that we completely lost track of how far behind Indresh and Fanning had fallen. We continued moving forward without realizing just how much distance had opened up between us.
Eventually, Fanning caught up with us on the way to Namche Bazaar. Indresh, however, was still some distance behind.
By around 12:30 PM, we finally reached Namche Bazaar.

Namche Bazaar — A Different World

As we approached Namche, we came to a point where the trail split into two routes. One followed a relatively straight, sideways path, while the other led up a series of stairs. We chose the staircase route.

It turned out to be the wrong decision—or at least, it felt that way at the time!

Although both paths led to Namche Bazaar, we missed the main entrance gate by taking the stairs. We had entered the town without passing through the entrance we had expected to see.

Namche Bazaar was unlike anything I had seen during the trek so far. It felt almost as if we had entered a different country. The town did not feel like Nepal as I knew it. Instead, it reminded me of places in Bhutan or Tibet that I had seen in documentaries.

The architecture, the narrow streets, the mountain surroundings, and the overall atmosphere gave the town a unique character. It was hard to believe that such a lively settlement existed so high in the Himalayas.

As we walked through its winding alleys, we came across an ATM. Although we still had sufficient cash, we decided to withdraw some additional money just to be safe. We had already realized that this region was going to be expensive, and we did not want to run short of cash in the mountains.

Around this time, Indresh finally arrived.

He was furious with us for moving ahead without waiting for him. He was genuinely angry, and considering how much he had struggled on the uphill trail, I could understand why. We apologized to him, and after things had settled down, we continued exploring the town together.

By then, we were all hungry and looking forward to a proper meal. We asked some local people where we could find good food, and they recommended a place called Foot Rest Lodge, a little farther along from the ATM.

We headed there and ordered dal bhat. The owner informed us that it would take approximately 30 minutes to prepare.

While waiting, I could not stop thinking about the entrance gate we had missed. I had come all this way, and I wanted to see it for myself. Rather than sit around feeling disappointed, I decided to go back and find it.

I hurried down the stairs, made my way through the narrow alleys, passed the ATM, and retraced our route until I finally reached the main entrance of Namche Bazaar.

It was beautiful.

The entrance featured colourful paintings, prayer wheels, stupas, a statue of the late Pasang Lhamu Sherpa, a fountain, and a decorative bridge. Everything came together to create a welcoming entrance that felt deeply connected to the culture and spirit of the Himalayas.

I took several photographs and recorded some videos, making sure I had captured the place we had accidentally missed earlier. Satisfied, I slowly made my way back to the restaurant.

A Much-Needed Dal Bhat Break

By the time I returned, our food was almost ready.

Thankfully, the wait was worth it. Unlike some of the meals we had eaten during the previous day, this dal bhat was genuinely tasty. After all the walking and climbing, it felt especially satisfying to sit down and enjoy a proper meal.
I was hungry enough to refill my plate three times!

Once we had finished eating, we charged our phones and settled into the chairs on the balcony. We had eaten so much, and we were so exhausted from the morning's climb, that none of us felt like moving.

What was supposed to be a short rest turned into a long nap. Sitting comfortably in the balcony chairs, we gradually dozed off and slept for a few hours.

The combination of a full stomach, physical exhaustion, and the peaceful mountain surroundings was simply too much to resist.

We eventually woke up, gathered our belongings, and left Foot Rest Lodge at around 3:15 PM. Our next destination was Khumjung.

As we continued along the trail, we became confused about which direction to take. Rather than risk going the wrong way, we stopped and asked a local person for directions.

He suggested that we head towards Khemjuma instead of Khumjung.

According to him, the route to Khemjuma was easier, and the altitude was slightly lower. Khumjung was situated at approximately 3,800 metres, while Khemjuma was around 3,650 metres. Both destinations would eventually connect with the route we needed to follow for the rest of our trek.

After considering his advice, we decided to change our plans and head to Khemjuma instead.

The trail offered some incredible views. Among the mountains we could see were Mount Tama-Sherpo and the magnificent Mount Ama Dablam. Tama-Sherpo, in particular, caught my attention because of its two distinct peaks.

As we walked, the scenery continued to unfold around us. The mountains, the rugged hillsides, and the changing light made the journey feel almost unreal. Even though we were tired, it was difficult not to stop and admire the landscape.
However, the afternoon was slipping away, and darkness was approaching.

We knew we needed to find accommodation soon, but we continued walking because there was no suitable place for us to stay along the stretch of trail we were on. We had little choice but to keep moving towards Khemjuma.

At around 5:30 PM, we finally arrived.

We found a hotel called Ama Dablam, and the moment we saw the view from the property, we knew we had found a memorable place to spend the night.

Mount Ama Dablam stood directly in front of the hotel, seemingly positioned perfectly for anyone sitting there to admire it. The view was spectacular. After hours of walking through steep mountain trails, arriving at a hotel with such an incredible view felt like a reward in itself.

We booked our rooms, ordered dinner, and went upstairs to freshen up.

While waiting for the food, we sat together and played UNO. It was a simple way to unwind after another physically demanding day in the mountains. For a while, we could forget about the steep climbs, aching legs, and exhaustion.

After dinner, something unexpected happened.

An elderly woman from America was sitting at the table beside us. She was chatting with the hotel owner, and before long, the conversation expanded to include us as well.

What began as a casual conversation gradually developed into a much deeper discussion. We talked about nature and the development of mountain regions, and the conversation eventually moved into politics, Nepal's civil war, the monarchy, and the upcoming election.

It was fascinating how naturally the discussion moved from one subject to another. We were sitting in a small hotel high in the Himalayas, surrounded by enormous mountains, yet discussing topics that connected our little corner of the world to much broader political and social issues.

For most of the conversation, I listened carefully and occasionally offered a short reply. I did not contribute as much as the others, but I enjoyed listening to their perspectives and following the discussion.

Somewhere during that conversation, another thought crossed my mind.

I thought about writing this journal.

Until then, I had mostly been focused on the trek itself: the distance we needed to cover, the physical challenges, the food, the accommodation, and the spectacular views. But as I listened to the conversation around the table, I began thinking about how many interesting experiences we were collecting along the way.

I realized that the journey was not just about reaching Everest Base Camp. It was also about the people we met, the conversations we had, the places we discovered, and the little moments that might otherwise be forgotten after returning home.

I wanted to preserve those memories, not just the photographs and videos, but the experiences and feelings behind them.
That was when the idea of writing this journal began to take shape.

Eventually, the conversation came to an end. The hotel owner had been friendly and welcoming throughout the evening, and before we retired for the night, he offered us some advice about the next day's trek.

He warned us not to go beyond Dole the following day. The altitude increased significantly over a relatively short distance, he explained, so it would be better to stop at Dole and give our bodies time to acclimatize.

His advice stayed with me. We had already experienced how physically demanding the trek could be, and we knew that altitude was something we could not afford to take lightly.

After the conversation, we headed back to our rooms. We took some medicine for the cold, applied pain-relieving ointment to our tired legs, and prepared to sleep.

Outside, the mountains stood quietly beneath the night sky, with Mount Ama Dablam waiting to greet us again in the morning.

We had covered a considerable distance, reached Namche Bazaar, explored its unique streets, changed our route to Khemjuma, and ended the day in a hotel with one of the most spectacular mountain views we had seen so far.

As I settled into bed, I thought about the owner's warning and the challenges that might await us the next day.

Our journey was still unfolding, one step at a time.

Day 3 (Nov 7, 2022)
The Endless Climb to Dole

It was already around 12:15 AM, but I still couldn't fall asleep. The night was freezing, and even with two layers of blankets covering me, I could feel the cold. I kept tossing and turning until I finally managed to doze off.

Then, sometime between 2:30 and 3:00 AM, the same strange thing happened again.

Suddenly, I felt unbearably hot. I had to take off my jacket and throw the blankets away, even though the room was extremely cold. What made it even stranger was that the same thing happened to Shailendra. We both experienced this sudden feeling of intense heat in the middle of the freezing night.

To this day, I still have no idea what happened to us that night. At the time, I didn't think it was altitude sickness because we were breathing normally and neither of us had a headache or experienced vomiting. Whatever it was, it remained a mystery.

Eventually, morning arrived.

We woke up at around 6:00 AM, freshened up, and got ready for another day of trekking. The water was so cold that washing ourselves was an unpleasant experience. At around 7:00 AM, one of the hotel staff members came to inform us that breakfast was ready. We called the guys staying in the other room, and together we headed down to the dining area.
Breakfast was good and filling, which was exactly what we needed before another demanding day in the mountains.

After breakfast, the hotel owner at Ama Dablam had one final piece of advice for us. He gave us the contact information for a hotel in Dole, our destination for the day. Having a recommendation and contact details for accommodation was reassuring, especially in such a remote region where finding a place to stay could become a challenge.

We packed our belongings and prepared to continue our journey.

At around 8:15 AM, we left the hotel and began the trek towards Dole.

The trail immediately challenged us with another seemingly endless series of uphill steps. We climbed steadily, one step at a time, with the mountains surrounding us and the path continuing to rise ahead.

After approximately two hours of climbing, we reached Mong-La at around 10:20 AM. Situated at an altitude of approximately 3,979 metres, it was a welcome place to stop and catch our breath.

We rested there for about half an hour, refilled our water bottles, and ate some energy bars. We knew we still had a considerable distance to cover, so we needed to make the most of every opportunity to recharge.

After our break, we continued.

From Mong-La, the trail descended into a forested area. The downhill section was extremely steep, with hills rising on our left and steep cliffs dropping away on our right. Walking downhill might sound easier than climbing, but on such terrain, it required constant attention. One careless step could have serious consequences.

We continued descending for approximately an hour before the trail began climbing again.

As we made our way uphill, we encountered streams covered in ice and waterfalls that had frozen in the cold. The sight was fascinating. Water that would normally flow freely had become trapped beneath layers of ice, creating beautiful natural formations along the trail.

We also noticed rescue helicopters flying at an altitude below us. Watching them move through the mountain landscape was a reminder of how challenging and unpredictable the Himalayas could be. Even from where we stood, the terrain looked immense.

After continuing along the trail, we eventually reached the Dole check post.

An army officer recorded our details and informed us that Dole village was still approximately an hour and a half away.
We had already been walking for several hours, but the destination was not yet within reach. We had to keep going.

The Never-Ending Uphill to Dole

The climb that followed felt almost endless.

The higher we climbed, the more the trail seemed to rise in front of us. Every time I thought we were approaching the top, another section of the uphill path appeared.

Shailendra began experiencing discomfort in his stomach, and his pace gradually slowed. Considering the pain he had experienced during the previous days, I was concerned that his condition might worsen again.

Our walking order was different that day. The previous day, I had walked at the front, setting a pace that the others struggled to maintain. This time, I took on the role of the sweeper—the person walking at the back to make sure nobody was left behind.

Fanning was leading the group, followed by Indresh. I walked slowly behind Shailendra, matching his pace as he struggled through the climb.

We continued at a steady pace, stopping whenever necessary to rest.

During one of these breaks, an elderly French woman approached us along the trail. We started chatting with her and learned that she had visited Nepal six times and had already completed numerous treks in the country.

What impressed me most was her walking pace.

Despite her age, she moved through the mountains with remarkable ease. She told us that she had started from Namche Bazaar that morning and was planning to reach Dole.

We were still resting when she walked past us and continued towards her destination.

I remember being amazed by her stamina. Here we were, struggling through the steep climb, while this elderly woman seemed to have no difficulty maintaining her pace. It was a good reminder that trekking was not simply about age or physical appearance. Experience, endurance, and the ability to manage one's pace mattered enormously.
After some time, we resumed our climb.

As we continued upwards, fog gradually began to appear around us. The visibility decreased, and the landscape became increasingly misty. Interestingly, the fog seemed to make breathing feel a little easier, perhaps because the direct heat of the sun was no longer as intense.

We kept moving, step by step, until we finally reached Dole.

It was around 3:00 PM, and we had reached an altitude of approximately 4,200 metres.

After hours of climbing, arriving in Dole felt like a considerable achievement. We were tired, hungry, and ready to find a comfortable place where we could rest for the evening.

Our first task was to find accommodation.

As we searched for a hotel, we suddenly noticed someone waving at us from a window. It was the elderly French woman we had met earlier on the trail.

She was staying at one of the hotels and was signalling to us that it was a good place to stay. We went to the hotel she recommended. As it turned out, it was the very same hotel that the owner of Ama Dablam had suggested to us the previous evening.

It felt reassuring to know that we had arrived at the right place without having to search any further.

We booked our rooms and ordered garlic soup with black pepper for everyone. After the long climb and exposure to the cold, a hot bowl of soup sounded perfect.

While having our soup, we chatted with the French woman again. We also checked our blood oxygen saturation levels, or SpO_2, using an oximeter.

To our relief, everyone's readings were within the normal range for the altitude, according to what we understood at the time.

We were all gathered around the fireplace, warming ourselves and recovering from the day's exertion. The warmth felt wonderful after spending so many hours outside in the cold mountain air.

We ordered dinner and settled into the dining area.

I also continued writing this journal. By then, the idea of recording our experiences had become more than just a passing thought from the previous evening. I wanted to remember the details of our journey while they were still fresh in my mind.

Before long, two men from the United Kingdom arrived at the same hotel with their guide. They had come down from Gokyo, and we began chatting with them.

As often happens on a trek, the conversation quickly turned to our journeys. They started sharing their experiences and stories from the mountains, and we listened with interest.

It was fascinating to meet people from different parts of the world who had travelled to Nepal for the same reason we had: to experience the Himalayas.

Each trekker had a different story, a different reason for being there, and a different set of experiences to share. Yet, in that little dining room, we all had something in common.

We were visitors in the same extraordinary landscape, relying on our bodies, our determination, and the kindness of the people we met along the way.

After spending some time resting at the hotel, we decided to go outside for a short walk around Dole village.

It was already dark, but we wanted to move around a little to help with acclimatization rather than remain seated inside for the entire evening.

As we walked, we were treated to a magnificent sight: Mount Kangtega shining against the darkening sky.

The mountain stood out beautifully in the fading light, its snow-covered slopes catching what little light remained. Even after an exhausting day, the view was enough to make us stop and admire our surroundings.

We took photographs and captured some videos before returning to the hotel to warm ourselves by the fireplace.
Moments like this made the physical challenges of the trek feel worthwhile. No matter how tired we were, there was always another view waiting to remind us why we had undertaken this journey.

Dinner was ready at around 6:30 PM.

We were served dal bhat with vegetable curry and pickles. After a day of trekking without a proper lunch, the food tasted especially good.

Throughout the day, we had survived mainly on chocolates and glucose. We had burned a considerable amount of energy climbing the steep trails, and by dinner, I was extremely hungry.

I refilled my plate three times.

The hotel owner was surprised by how much I ate. I could understand his reaction, but after the distance we had covered and the effort required to reach Dole, I felt that I had earned every mouthful.

Once we had finished eating, we remained in the dining area for a while, sitting near the fireplace and enjoying the warmth.

The atmosphere was peaceful. Outside, the mountain village was already dark and cold, while inside, the fireplace provided a comfortable place to relax and exchange stories.

However, the evening was not entirely comfortable for everyone.

Shailendra began experiencing stomach discomfort again. His gastritis seemed to be getting worse, and I was concerned that he might have another difficult night.

After resting for a while, we decided to return to our room. We took some anti-cold tablets, applied pain-relieving ointment to our tired legs, and prepared for bed.

I tucked Shailendra into his bed, hoping that he would be able to rest after the exhausting day. Unfortunately, he still couldn't sleep.

His stomach had become bloated, and he was clearly uncomfortable.

We decided to call Fanning and ask him to bring some medicine for acidity. A little later, Fanning arrived with Indresh, carrying Pudinhara tablets.

All of us gathered in our room.

We each took one tablet, while Shailendra took two because his discomfort was worse than ours.

Then something rather amusing happened.

After some time, everyone began burping and passing gas. The room that had been occupied by our worried discussions about Shailendra's stomach suddenly became a source of laughter and amusement.

After all the serious challenges we had faced during the trek, this was one of those ridiculous little moments that made the experience memorable in a completely different way.

Eventually, Fanning and Indresh returned to their own room to sleep.

Shailendra and I remained in our room, hoping that his stomach would settle and that we would finally get some proper rest.

It had been another long day: steep climbs, icy streams, frozen waterfalls, fog, and the challenge of reaching Dole at 4,200 metres. Yet, alongside the exhaustion, there had been wonderful encounters with fellow trekkers, incredible mountain views, and stories exchanged beside a warm fireplace.

We had also been reminded once again that the mountains demanded patience. We couldn't rush the climb, and we couldn't ignore the physical difficulties that came with it.

As the night settled over Dole, I hoped we would all sleep better than we had the night before. Tomorrow, the journey would continue deeper into the Himalayas.

Day 4 (Nov 8, 2022)
The Journey to Machhermo and a Story of the Yeti

It was already past midnight, but once again, I couldn't sleep. Perhaps it was because of the coffee I had drunk at breakfast the previous day. I pulled the blanket over my head, closed my eyes, and tried to fall asleep.

Beside me, I could hear Shailendra tossing and turning restlessly. He seemed just as uncomfortable as I was. Eventually, I managed to doze off for a while, but the same strange thing that had happened on the previous two nights happened again.

Suddenly, I felt extremely hot. I had to take off my jacket and throw away the blanket, even though the temperature outside was freezing.

I still couldn't understand why this kept happening to us.

I woke up at around 6:00 AM. Shailendra was still wide awake because he had barely slept the entire night. He was becoming increasingly worried that he might be suffering from altitude sickness. I hadn't slept much either—perhaps only two or three hours.

I got up, freshened up, and started preparing for the day's trek. We had planned to leave early, but Shailendra was feeling so dizzy that he could barely stand.

We were concerned about his condition. Rather than force him to continue immediately, we decided to let him rest for a while and begin our trek a little later.

We ordered dal bhat for breakfast. The hotel owner, whom we affectionately called didi, told us it would take about an hour to prepare.

While waiting for our meal, we sat outside, basking in the sunlight and drinking tea. The sun felt wonderful against our skin, but the wind remained bitterly cold. It was one of those peculiar mountain mornings when the sunshine made the surroundings look warm, even though the air itself was freezing.

Since we were heading farther into the mountains, we also needed to think about communication.

There was no mobile network coverage in the region we were about to enter. We wanted to be able to inform our families about our whereabouts, especially because we were trekking at increasingly higher altitudes.

To solve this problem, I purchased an Everest Link internet package. It would allow us to connect to the internet at places where the service was available and keep our families updated about our locations.

Eventually, our dal bhat was ready, and we gathered in the dining area to eat.

As usual, I had a hearty appetite and ate three plates. Shailendra, however, was still suffering from a bloated stomach and couldn't eat properly. Indresh and Fanning ate their usual portions.

After breakfast, we faced a difficult decision.

Shailendra was still feeling unwell, and he wasn't sure whether he should continue towards our next destination or turn back to Namche Bazaar. We knew that continuing higher into the mountains could make things worse if he was genuinely suffering from altitude sickness.

The hotel owner, didi, listened to his concerns and offered some advice. She suggested that he try going as far as the next camp. If his discomfort increased—or even if it remained the same—he should return to Dole, even if that meant coming back at night.

After discussing it, we agreed to follow her suggestion while keeping a close eye on how he felt.

Before we left, didi handed Shailendra an apple to eat along the way. It was a small gesture, but it showed how caring and thoughtful she was towards her guests.

With that, we packed our belongings and prepared to continue our journey.

Our destination for the day was Machhermo, a village at an altitude of approximately 4,470 metres, about four hours of walking from Dole under suitable conditions.

We hoped the trail would be manageable and that Shailendra would feel better as we progressed.

We started walking, but it didn't take long before we encountered our first little problem.

Somewhere along the way, we lost the correct trail and ended up at the entrance of another resort. We weren't sure how to get back onto the trekking path, but fortunately, the resort owner was kind enough to help us.

He allowed us to use the back gate of the property, which connected to the trail we needed to follow.

We thanked him and continued our journey.

As we climbed uphill, we noticed a rescue helicopter arriving at a hotel near the one where we had stayed in Dole. From our position higher up the hill, we could see what was happening below.

Someone was seriously ill and needed to be evacuated.

Watching the helicopter arrive was a sobering experience. Until then, rescue helicopters had mostly been something we occasionally saw flying across the mountain landscape. Now, we were witnessing one responding to an actual emergency.
It reminded us that trekking in the Himalayas was not simply an adventure filled with beautiful views. The altitude, weather, and remoteness could turn a health problem into a serious situation. Even a seemingly small medical issue could become dangerous when professional help was far away.

Given Shailendra's condition that morning, the sight made us even more conscious of the risks we were taking by continuing our journey.

Nevertheless, we proceeded carefully, keeping our focus on the trail ahead.

As we climbed, we came across a herd of yaks making their way down the mountain. They were carrying LPG gas cylinders, transporting supplies through the rugged terrain.

Yaks are enormous animals, and seeing them up close was impressive. Despite their size, they appeared gentle as they moved steadily along the trail, carrying heavy loads for the people living and working in these remote mountain settlements.

Watching them navigate the narrow paths made me appreciate just how important these animals were to life in the Himalayas. Where roads and vehicles cannot easily reach, yaks help transport essential supplies to villages and lodges.

At the same time, I couldn't help thinking about how much work humans expected these animals to do. They were powerful creatures, yet they were being used to carry heavy loads up and down difficult mountain trails.

We watched them pass before continuing our own climb.

Unlike some of the earlier sections of our trek, much of the trail that day passed through open terrain.
The views were magnificent. Snow-covered mountains surrounded us in every direction, and the landscape seemed to stretch endlessly into the distance. With fewer trees obstructing our view, we could appreciate the vastness of the Himalayan scenery.

The mountains looked different from every angle, and the changing landscape made the trek feel like an ongoing discovery.

Whenever we stopped to rest, we occasionally chatted with porters travelling along the same route. These brief conversations offered little glimpses into the lives of the people who worked in the mountains, carrying supplies and helping trekkers reach their destinations.

After approximately two and a half hours of walking, we reached a place called Luza.

We stopped there for a short break and ate some energy bars to replenish our energy. Although the scenery was beautiful, the increasing altitude and continuous uphill walking were taking their toll.

After resting, we continued towards Machhermo.

We walked for approximately another hour and a half. Eventually, we spotted Machhermo village in the distance.
Seeing our destination ahead of us was encouraging. After hours of walking through the open mountains, we were finally approaching the place where we hoped to spend the night.

As we approached the village, we could see several hotels and lodges scattered around the area.

Our first priority was to find accommodation that offered Everest Link internet access. We wanted to contact our families and let them know that we had arrived safely.

We searched among the available lodges until we came across one called Yeti Lodge.

The owner, another friendly woman whom we called didi, welcomed us and offered us a generous arrangement. She said she would provide us with rooms free of charge, and we would only need to pay for our food.

We were delighted by the offer and immediately agreed.

After the long trek, finding a comfortable place to stay without having to pay for the rooms felt like a blessing.
We settled into our rooms and ordered garlic soup. The warm soup was exactly what we needed after spending hours in the cold mountain air.

Fortunately, the internet worked well.

We connected to Everest Link and contacted our families to inform them of our location. Being able to communicate with them gave us peace of mind, especially after the concerns surrounding Shailendra's health that morning.

With our families updated and our immediate needs taken care of, we could finally relax.

We had initially planned to take a short acclimatization hike around the area, but the weather had other ideas. Clouds began gathering, and visibility gradually decreased.

Rather than head outside in those conditions, we decided to stay in the dining area near the fireplace, warming ourselves and enjoying the company of the other trekkers.

I spent some time posting photographs on social media, sharing glimpses of our journey with friends and family back home.

It felt good to look back at the pictures and remember the places we had passed through that day.

As evening approached, we ordered dal bhat for dinner and spent some time chatting with the other foreigners staying at the lodge.

I also made a video call to my wife. We talked for a while, and it was comforting to see her face and hear her voice despite being so far away from home.

By then, dinner was ready.

The vegetable curry was particularly tasty, and I enjoyed the meal so much that I ate a considerable amount. As usual, I went back for multiple refills.

The lodge owner, didi, seemed genuinely happy to see me eating so well. She watched me refill my plate and made a cheerful remark in Nepali: "Tapai le jasari khayo bhaye ta lekh pani lagdaina, Sagarmatha nai chadna saknu huncha."
In English, her words meant something along the lines of: "If you keep eating like this, you won't even feel the altitude. You'll be able to climb Mount Everest itself!"

We all had a good laugh.

Her comment was humorous, but it was also a lovely moment of warmth and hospitality. After several demanding days of trekking, it felt nice to share a light-hearted conversation with someone who was looking after us.

For me, food has become an essential part of the journey. Walking for hours through steep mountain trails required a tremendous amount of energy, and I was always happy whenever a good meal appeared in front of me.

Didi seemed more than willing to keep refilling my plate, and I was more than willing to keep eating!

After dinner, the lodge owner joined us beside the fireplace.

We began chatting with her, enjoying the warmth and the relaxed atmosphere. Since we were staying at a lodge called Yeti Lodge, I became curious about the name.

I asked her whether she had ever seen a yeti.

She laughed and told us that she had never seen one herself, but her father-in-law claimed to have seen one.

That immediately caught our attention.

She began telling us stories about the mysterious creature, describing its supposed appearance and physical structure. She also shared stories about how cattle behaved when a yeti appeared.

According to her, her father-in-law had encountered the creature in the very same area where the lodge stood. That experience had inspired the name Yeti Lodge.

Sitting beside a fireplace in a remote Himalayan village, listening to stories about the legendary yeti, felt like something straight out of an adventure film.

The yeti is one of the most famous mysteries associated with the Himalayas. I had heard stories about it before, but hearing a local account in such a setting made the experience particularly memorable.

The surrounding mountains, the darkness outside, and the cold wind sweeping through the village created the perfect atmosphere for such a story.

Of course, I couldn't verify what her father-in-law had seen, but the story itself was fascinating. Whether it was a genuine encounter, a misunderstanding, or a tale that had grown over time, it added another layer of mystery to our Himalayan adventure.

It was also one of those conversations that made me appreciate the people we met along the way. The mountains were not just about spectacular scenery; they were also home to generations of stories, beliefs, and traditions.

Advice for the Days Ahead

After listening to the yeti stories, we turned the conversation towards our trek.

We asked Didi how we should proceed from Machhermo and what we could expect along the route ahead.

She offered us some suggestions and guidance about the journey. We listened carefully, knowing that advice from people familiar with the region could be valuable as we continued into the higher mountains.

We were gradually reaching altitudes where the effects of thin air could become more serious, and Shailendra's condition had already made us cautious.

The plan was to continue our trek while paying attention to how we were feeling and taking things one step at a time.

Eventually, the conversation came to an end, and we decided to head back to our rooms.

Before going to bed, I massaged my tired legs and applied some Sancho, hoping it would ease the soreness from another long day of walking.

I then sat down and wrote my journal entry for the day, recording the events while they were still fresh in my memory.

Day four had brought its share of concerns, particularly Shailendra's dizziness and stomach discomfort. Yet it has also given us beautiful mountain views, encounters with helpful strangers, a glimpse of the hardworking yaks that sustain life in the Himalayas, and an unforgettable evening listening to stories about the yeti.

We had reached Machhermo at approximately 4,470 metres and found a welcoming lodge where we could rest and prepare for the next stage of our journey.

As I finally prepared to sleep, I hoped that we would have a better night than the previous one—and that Shailendra would wake up feeling stronger.

The mountains were becoming more imposing, the air thinner, and the challenges greater. But our journey towards Everest Base Camp continued.

Day 5 (Nov 9, 2022)
The First Sight of Mount Everest

For the first couple of hours, I couldn't sleep. Shailendra was restless as well, tossing and turning throughout the night. Eventually, I managed to doze off for about three or four hours.

Then, as on the previous nights, the same strange thing happened again. Suddenly, I felt unbearably hot despite the freezing temperature. I had to take off my jacket, even though I had been struggling with the cold just a few hours earlier.

Shailendra, meanwhile, still hadn't managed to sleep.

At around 4:30 AM, I looked out through the window. The glass was completely frozen. Curious about how cold it was outside, I checked the temperature on my phone.

It was -4°C.

The sight of the frozen window made the temperature feel even more real. We were staying in a remote Himalayan village at an altitude of around 4,470 metres, surrounded by mountains and exposed to the harsh conditions of the high Himalayas.

From that point onwards, I couldn't sleep anymore. I simply lay on the bed, waiting for the morning to arrive.

Shailendra was still awake, having spent almost the entire night without proper sleep. His condition was becoming increasingly concerning, and I wondered how he would manage the next day's trek if he continued feeling this way.

At around 7:00 AM, I finally got up, freshened up, and went to the dining area to order food. We had planned to start early and continue towards Gokyo that day, so we wanted to get breakfast as soon as possible.

Before settling down for the morning, I decided to walk around the hotel grounds. I remembered the story our lodge owner, didi, had told us the previous evening about the yeti and the rock associated with it. I wanted to find that rock for myself.

I wandered around the area, looking for the place she had described, but I couldn't find it.

Instead, I came across a huge yak.

I approached it and tried to pet it, but the animal didn't seem particularly interested in my affection. Perhaps it wasn't in the mood to entertain a curious trekker that early in the morning!

I took a few photographs and returned to the hotel.

When I got back to our room, Indresh and Fanning were getting ready for the day's trek. Shailendra, however, was still unable to get out of bed.

He was feeling dizzy and didn't seem physically capable of continuing the journey.

After struggling through the previous few days, he had reached a difficult decision: he wanted to return to Namche Bazaar and abandon the trek.

It was a disappointing moment for all of us. We had started this journey together, and none of us wanted our group to separate. However, we also knew that his health had to come first.

We went to the dining area for breakfast and had dal bhat. The others couldn't eat much, and Shailendra could barely force himself to eat anything at all.

His condition was clearly affecting his appetite, and the thought of continuing to climb higher into the mountains seemed increasingly unrealistic for him.

After breakfast, the guys began preparing for the day while I went out to look for possible ways to get Shailendra back to Namche.

I didn't want him to have to make the journey alone.

Searching for a Way Back, I walked around the village, asking whether any rescue helicopters or horses were available to transport him.

A helicopter evacuation was an option, but the cost was far beyond what we could afford. We had to look for an alternative.

Eventually, I came across a place where a horse was available. I approached the owner and asked about the price.

The cost was high, but unlike the helicopter, it was something we could manage financially.

I called the others over so that we could discuss the situation together.

When the horse owner saw Shailendra, he offered his opinion about his condition. He said he didn't think Shailendra was suffering from altitude sickness, reasoning that if he were, he wouldn't have been able to make his way to the horse owner's location on his own.

He advised Shailendra to stay another night in Machhermo and see how he felt the following day. If his condition became worse or remained unchanged, the owner himself would take him back to Namche.

Shailendra considered the advice and agreed to stay for another night. He decided to postpone the decision about returning to Namche until the next morning, depending on how he felt.

With that settled, we returned to the hotel.

Although the immediate problem had been put aside, I was still concerned about Shailendra. He had barely slept for several nights, was struggling with stomach discomfort, and was now experiencing dizziness.

We all hoped that another night of rest would help him recover.

After spending some time at the hotel, we decided to go for a hike on a nearby hill beside Mount Machhermo. We knew that we needed to get accustomed to walking at higher altitudes, and we wanted to practise climbing on steep terrain. Rather than remain inside the lodge all day, we thought a short hike would be a good way to spend the afternoon.
Little did we know how challenging that hike would become.

The hill was extremely steep, and we had to climb slowly, taking one step at a time. The wind was incredibly strong. At times, it felt as though our trekking poles and caps might be blown away.

Despite the difficult conditions, we continued climbing.

As we moved higher, we finally came across the rock associated with the yeti story that the lodge owner had mentioned the previous evening. I was excited to find it after having searched for it earlier that morning. I took some photographs on top of the rock, capturing the moment before we continued our hike.

We could have returned to the hotel at that point, but we noticed a series of flags farther up the hill. We decided to climb towards them. When we reached the first set of flags, we spotted another flag farther ahead. Naturally, we decided to continue towards that one as well. Once we reached the next set, we could see what appeared to be the top of the hill.

By then, the hike had turned into a much more serious climb than we had originally planned.

Chasing the Summit, I was walking at the front of the group. The slope became so steep that I had to use the pointed ends of my trekking poles to help push myself upwards.

The others were far behind me. The strong, cold wind made the climb even more challenging. Fanning began experiencing a headache, apparently brought on by the harsh conditions, and decided to stop near the second set of flags. Shailendra and Indresh continued moving forward.

I climbed approximately 80% of the way up the hill, but then I reached a point where I couldn't identify a clear route to the top. The terrain was steep, and I wasn't sure which direction would be safe to follow.

Rather than risk proceeding without knowing the way, I turned back and descended until I met Indresh and Shailendra, who were still making their way upwards.

I explained the situation to them and told them where I thought the route to the top might be.

Shailendra decided that he would not continue any farther. Given how poorly he had been feeling, I understood his decision. He had already pushed himself through several difficult days, and there was no reason to force himself up an increasingly steep slope. Indresh, however, was interested in reaching the top.

After a brief discussion, the two of us decided to continue together.

The final section was difficult. We couldn't simply walk up the slope; we had to use our hands as well, gripping rocks and bushes to pull and push ourselves upwards. Every movement required care and concentration. The wind continued to blow fiercely, and the terrain offered little room for careless steps. Still, we kept climbing. Eventually, we reached the top of the hill.

The view was absolutely incredible.

Mount Machhermo stood right beside us, while snow-covered mountains stretched in every direction. The landscape seemed endless, with enormous peaks rising above the surrounding valleys. We had climbed much higher than we had initially intended, and the view made every difficult step feel worthwhile.

Then, in one corner of the panorama, I noticed a familiar-looking mountain.

I looked more closely.

It was Mount Everest.

My First-Ever Sight of Mount Everest

I had seen photographs and videos of Everest countless times. I had read about it, watched documentaries, and dreamed of visiting the region. But this was different. For the first time in my life, I was looking at Mount Everest with my own eyes.

There it was, standing among the surrounding Himalayan giants, distant yet unmistakable.

I felt an incredible sense of happiness. After travelling all the way from Kathmandu and trekking through the mountains for several days, I had finally seen the world's highest mountain in person.

It was a moment I had imagined many times, but the reality was even more satisfying.

I had not yet reached Everest Base Camp. That goal was still ahead of me. But seeing Everest for the first time felt like a major milestone in itself.

We estimated that we had climbed to an altitude of approximately 5,300 metres.

What surprised us most was that we were breathing relatively comfortably despite being so high up. We were excited, happy, and completely absorbed in the scenery.

The fact that we had managed to reach such a height made the experience even more rewarding.

For a while, we simply enjoyed the view and took in the surroundings. I wanted to remember every detail of that moment: the snow-covered peaks, the steep hill beneath our feet, the fierce wind, and the feeling of standing high above the landscape while looking at Everest for the very first time.

It was one of the most memorable moments of the entire trek so far.

Eventually, we knew it was time to head back. The descent turned out to be just as challenging as the climb, if not more so. The slope was extremely steep, and we had to use the pointed ends of our trekking poles to maintain our balance and prevent ourselves from slipping. Every step required careful placement, and we had to keep our bodies balanced as we made our way down.

To make matters worse, clouds began gathering around the hill. The visibility deteriorated quickly, and before long, parts of the hillside were covered in cloud. The landscape that had been so clear and spectacular from the summit became increasingly difficult to see.

We continued descending carefully, concentrating on the ground in front of us and watching where we placed our feet.

Meanwhile, Shailendra and Fanning had already returned to the hotel.

By the time Indresh and I arrived, Shailendra was sitting in the dining area, drinking hot soup. Fanning's headache had become worse, so he had gone to lie down and rest.

The conditions on the hill had been harsh, and the strong, cold wind seemed to have taken its toll on everyone.

Indresh and I were also ready for some warmth. We ordered garlic soup with black pepper and sat beside the fireplace, warming ourselves as we recovered from the climb.

After a while, I went to freshen up. I applied Sancho and Moov because I was experiencing a slight headache and aching legs. The hike had been much more demanding than we had anticipated. Although reaching the top and seeing Everest had been an incredible experience, the steep climb and descent had left me physically exhausted.

After freshening up, I returned to the dining area and settled beside the fireplace again.

I also ordered dinner for everyone. While waiting for the food, I continued writing in my journal, recording the day's events and the extraordinary experience of seeing Everest for the first time.

Shailendra and Indresh were sitting nearby, listening to music through their earphones. It was a relatively quiet evening after the excitement and physical effort of the afternoon. By then, our stomachs were also feeling a little unsettled. We suspected that the noodles we had eaten for lunch might have been responsible, as everyone seemed to be experiencing some digestive discomfort.

Nevertheless, when dinner arrived, we sat down and finished our meals. Once we were done, we took some Pudinhara tablets, hoping they would help settle our stomachs.

We then returned to our room and prepared for bed.

Day five had turned out very differently from what we had planned. We had originally intended to trek towards Gokyo, but Shailendra's condition forced us to reconsider our plans. Instead, we spent the day in Machhermo, where I went searching for a way to help him return to Namche if necessary.

Yet the day also brought an unexpected adventure. What began as a short acclimatization hike turned into a demanding climb to approximately 5,300 metres, where Indresh and I were rewarded with spectacular views of the Himalayas.
Most importantly, I had seen Mount Everest with my own eyes for the very first time.

That moment alone made the day unforgettable.

As I settled down for another night in the mountains, I hoped that everyone would feel better the next morning. Shailendra's condition remained a concern, and we still had to decide how to proceed with the trek.

The journey was becoming more demanding with every passing day, but the mountains continued to reward us with experiences I would remember for the rest of my life.

Day 6 (Nov 10, 2022)
The Magical Lakes of Gokyo

After the previous day's unexpected adventure to the top of the hill near Machhermo, we all had gone to bed relatively early, at around 8:00 PM. Perhaps that was why everyone woke up early the following morning.

I got up, freshened up, and started getting ready for the day's trek. I also reminded the others to get ready soon, as we wanted to leave early for Gokyo.

After that, I went down to the dining area to order breakfast. The others were still getting ready, so I placed the order and waited for them to join me. We had oats porridge for breakfast. Once we had finished eating, I went to settle our bill with the lodge owner.

Thankfully, Shailendra was feeling better that morning. After the difficulties he had experienced over the previous few days, this was a relief. He told us that he felt well enough to continue the trek.

With everyone ready, we packed our belongings and set off towards Gokyo.

Our destination was approximately three and a half hours away, at an altitude of around 4,790 metres. We were looking forward to seeing the famous Gokyo Lakes, which we had heard so much about.

We began the journey with another uphill climb. Almost everyone felt tired during the first ascent. Perhaps it was the increasing altitude, or perhaps the accumulated exhaustion from the previous days was beginning to catch up with us. Whatever the reason, we had to take things slowly.

We continued walking, taking breaks whenever necessary.

After approximately 50 minutes, we reached Fanga Viewpoint, the last major resting point along the trail towards Gokyo.

We stopped there for a while to catch our breath and prepare ourselves for the journey ahead. By then, it had become clear that we were walking at different speeds. Fanning and I were able to maintain a relatively quick pace, while Shailendra and Indresh preferred to move more slowly.

Rather than make the entire group struggle to maintain the same pace, we decided on a practical arrangement. Fanning and I would walk ahead, reach Gokyo first, find a hotel, and arrange dinner. Shailendra and Indresh could follow at their own pace without feeling pressured to keep up with us.

We agreed on the plan and continued our journey.

Along the way, we encountered the elderly French woman we had met during the previous days. She was also heading towards Gokyo. It was always interesting to see familiar faces on the trail. Although we were all travelling independently, we kept crossing paths with the same trekkers as we moved from one village to another.

We exchanged greetings and continued walking.

The trail took us along the upper reaches of the Dudh Koshi River. The landscape was unlike anything I had experienced before. We walked past rugged mountain slopes, crossed numerous steps and uphill sections, and encountered streams of icy glacier water flowing down from the surrounding mountains to join the river.

The water was unbelievably clear, and the surrounding scenery made the entire route feel otherworldly.

Everywhere I looked, there were mountains, rocks, snow, and water. The trail itself was demanding, but the beauty of the landscape made it easier to forget about the physical effort required to move forward.

After walking for approximately two hours, we reached the first Gokyo Lake.

It was a relatively small lake, but its beauty immediately caught my attention. The clear blue sky reflected against the water, while the snow-covered mountains surrounding it created a magnificent backdrop.

We stopped to take photographs and record videos.

I wanted to capture the scenery as best I could, knowing that photographs and videos would help me remember the journey long after returning home.

We spent some time admiring the lake before continuing along the trail.

A little farther ahead, we came across the second Gokyo Lake. This lake was larger and appeared deeper than the first. The surrounding landscape was spectacular, with water flowing down from the snowy mountains beside it. The combination of the icy water, snow-covered slopes, and clear mountain air made the place feel incredibly peaceful.
I was curious about just how cold the lake water would be. So, I removed my gloves and dipped my hands into it. The water was icy cold! I could feel the chill immediately, and it didn't take long for me to pull my hands out again. It was a simple little experiment, but one that made the freezing conditions of the Himalayas feel very real.

We took more photographs and videos of the lake, trying to capture its beauty from different angles.

After a while, Fanning and the French woman continued ahead of us. Shailendra and Indresh were still somewhere behind, walking at their own pace. I continued along the trail, but as we moved farther ahead, my pace began to slow.
The scenery around the lake was so beautiful that I wanted to take my time and experience it rather than simply walk past it.

At one point, I stopped and closed my eyes. I held my breath and remained completely silent for a few seconds. I could hear the wind blowing through the mountains and the water flowing nearby. There were no conversations, no distractions, and nothing demanding my attention. For those few moments, I was simply present in the surroundings.
It was a different kind of experience from the excitement of climbing a mountain or reaching a destination.
I felt a deep sense of peace, but the feeling was difficult to describe. Some moments are so beautiful that words cannot fully explain them. I stood there for a little longer, taking in the sounds and atmosphere of the place before continuing my journey.

After walking farther along the trail, I reached a viewpoint from where I could see parts of both the second and third lakes. I stopped to record a video of the view. The landscape was becoming increasingly magnificent as we approached the Gokyo Valley.

The third Gokyo Lake was larger than the previous two. Snow-covered mountains rose beside its turquoise waters, while Mount Cho Oyu stood prominently at the other end of the surrounding landscape.

Beyond the lake lay the Gokyo Valley, where several hotels and lodges were situated.

The view was breathtaking.

The lake, the surrounding snow-covered peaks, and the enormous mountains beyond seemed to blend into a single spectacular landscape. The water was strikingly blue, contrasting beautifully with the white snow and rugged mountain terrain.

I stood there admiring the scenery for some time.

After days of walking through steep trails, dealing with cold nights, arriving at such a beautiful place felt incredibly rewarding. The landscape seemed almost unreal. The third Gokyo Lake and the surrounding mountains genuinely felt like heaven on Earth.

I had seen many beautiful places during the trek, but this was something special. The peaceful water, the imposing mountains, and the vastness of the valley created a feeling that was difficult to put into words.

I wanted to stay there longer, simply looking at the view and enjoying the moment.

Eventually, I remembered that Fanning had already reached the hotel area. I continued towards the village, eager to find accommodation and settle in for the evening.

When I arrived at the hotel area, Fanning and I began looking for a suitable place to stay. We first approached a hotel near the lake, but unfortunately, it was fully occupied. The French woman we had encountered along the trail had already gone into the first hotel she came across on the way into the village. We decided to visit the same place.

Fortunately, this hotel had plenty of rooms available.

The owner, whom we called baini, was very friendly and welcoming. We soon discovered that she was a cousin of the owner of Yeti Lodge in Machhermo, where we had stayed the previous night. It was a small world in the Himalayas! Even in these remote mountain villages, we kept discovering connections between the people who looked after us.

We booked our rooms and settled in.

By then, we were extremely hungry. We ordered dal bhat and waited for our meal to be prepared.

While waiting, I video-called my wife. I wanted to share the beauty of Gokyo with her, so I showed her the lake and the surrounding mountains through my phone. I also showed her a herd of yaks passing nearby.

The yaks were another fascinating sight. Watching them move through the village, surrounded by such magnificent scenery, made the place feel even more special.

There was also a beautiful resort nearby that looked quite expensive. I took some photographs of it and sent them to my wife.

Even though she wasn't physically there with me, sharing these little moments helped me feel connected to home. I wanted her to see the places I was visiting and experience at least a small part of the journey through my eyes.

Eventually, our dal bhat was ready. We sat down to eat and, as usual, I made sure to enjoy a generous portion. After several hours of walking through the mountains, a proper meal was exactly what we needed.

Once we had finished eating, we went to our rooms to rest for a while.

After some time, I decided to head outside again and walk towards the lakeside. The atmosphere had changed since our arrival. Clouds were gathering above the water, and a layer of fog was forming just above the surface of the lake.
The view was beautiful in a different way. The clear, bright scenery of the morning was gradually giving way to a misty landscape, making the lake look mysterious and almost dreamlike. It felt like some mystical water creature would rise from the foggy water.

We had originally planned to climb Gokyo Ri, a famous viewpoint overlooking the lakes and surrounding mountains.

However, the weather was becoming increasingly cloudy, and visibility was deteriorating. Considering the conditions, we decided to postpone the climb until the following day. There was little point in attempting the ascent when the clouds might prevent us from enjoying the view.

Instead, I spent some time by the lake. We also encountered some trekkers we had met earlier during our journey. We chatted with them for a while, exchanging stories and discussing our experiences on the trail.

Eventually, the cold became too much, and we returned to the hotel. We headed to the dining area and settled beside the fireplace to warm ourselves. The temperature had dropped considerably, and the warmth from the fire felt wonderful after spending time outdoors.

We ordered dinner and decided to take a short walk outside while waiting for it to be prepared.

However, we didn't stay outside for long. My phone showed a temperature of -6°C.

The cold was intense, and we quickly decided that the dining area beside the fireplace was a much better place to spend the evening.

We returned indoors and joined the other tourists who were gathered around the fire.

Among them were the French woman we had met earlier and a man from Belgium. The Belgian man was interested in learning Nepali and Newari, so we taught him a few words and phrases. It was an enjoyable conversation. He was fluent in several languages, which impressed us, and it was interesting to see someone from another country making an effort to learn the languages spoken in Nepal.

We spent some time chatting, sharing words, and enjoying the company of the other trekkers. These little interactions had become one of my favourite parts of the journey. Every day brought new people, and each conversation added something different to our experience.

We were all strangers who had come to the same remote valley for different reasons, yet we could sit together around a fireplace, share stories, and laugh as if we had known one another for much longer.

After approximately an hour, dinner was served. It was a little earlier than we would normally have eaten, but we were hungry and happy to have a warm meal waiting for us. We ate dinner and spent some more time in the dining area before deciding to return to our rooms.

The day had been long, but it was one of the most rewarding days of the trek so far. We walked along the Dudh Koshi River, crossed icy streams, visited three beautiful Gokyo Lakes, and finally arrived in the valley we had been looking forward to seeing.

The scenery was unlike anything I had experienced before. The blue lakes, the snow-covered mountains, and the peaceful atmosphere made the entire journey feel worthwhile.

I had also experienced a moment of unusual calm beside the second lake, when I closed my eyes and listened to the wind and flowing water. It was a simple experience, but one that stayed with me.

After returning to our room, I continued writing my journal, recording the day's events while they were still fresh in my mind.

Tomorrow, we hope to climb Gokyo Ri. If the weather permitted, we would finally get the panoramic view of the lakes and the surrounding Himalayan peaks that we had been waiting for.

As I prepared for bed, I felt excited about what the next day might bring.

We were now deep in the Himalayas, surrounded by some of the most beautiful landscapes I had ever seen. Despite the cold, the exhaustion, and the challenges of trekking at high altitude, I was grateful to be there.

Gokyo had already captured my heart, and I couldn't wait to see what awaited us the following morning.

Day 7 (Nov 11, 2022)
Conquering Gokyo Ri and the Group Splits

I woke up at around 4:00 AM and tried to wake the guys up, as we had planned the previous night to start our hike to Gokyo Ri at 4:00 AM. However, everyone was still fast asleep, and nobody seemed ready to leave just yet. Eventually, by around 6:00 AM, everyone was awake and prepared for the hike.

It was still dark outside, and the cold was almost unbearable. Even with two pairs of gloves on, my fingers felt as though they were going to freeze off. We gathered our things and started from the lakeside towards the base of Gokyo Ri.

I was carrying a bag containing water and chocolates for the group. Once we reached the base, we began our climb. At first, Fanning and I were able to climb a little faster than the others. Shailendra was bringing up the rear, struggling to keep pace. After climbing about 15% of the way, he shouted that he needed water. None of us wanted to climb back down, so we waited for him to catch up. When he finally reached us, I gave him some water, and we continued.

The climb was incredibly steep. Every step required effort, and the higher we went, the more exhausting it became. At around 50% of the climb, Shailendra asked for water again. I stopped and waited for him while the others continued on. He was walking very slowly, clearly struggling with the climb. Once he reached me, I gave him water, and we started moving again.

By then, my own pace had slowed considerably. I was pushing myself to keep going, fighting the exhaustion in my legs and the difficulty of breathing at that altitude. Somehow, I managed to climb until I had covered around 90% of the route.

Then I simply couldn't continue. I stopped and seriously considered turning back. My body felt completely drained, and the thought of climbing any farther seemed almost impossible. I sat down, drank some water, and ate a few chocolates to regain some energy. I also took some videos of the incredible scenery around me. The view was breathtaking. Gokyo Lake stretched out below us, while Mount Everest, Mount Makalu, and Mount Cho Oyu were clearly visible in the distance. The Himalayan peaks stood majestically against the sky. Even though I was exhausted, I couldn't help admiring the landscape. It was the kind of view that made all the pain and effort seem worthwhile.

After resting for a while, I took a deep breath and stood up. I decided to give it another try.

I slowly started climbing again, pushing myself forward one step at a time. Every step was a struggle. I was already exhausted, and the final stretch seemed to go on forever. Still, I refused to give up completely. Finally, after approximately 29 minutes of struggling through that last stretch, I reached the top of Gokyo Ri, at an altitude of 5,357 metres.

I made it!

At the Summit of Gokyo Ri

Standing at the summit, I felt an incredible sense of accomplishment. From the top, we could see the vast Himalayan mountain range stretching in every direction. The surrounding peaks and valleys created a view that was almost impossible to describe in words.

Among the prayer flags at the summit stood a statue of Lord Buddha. The colourful flags fluttered in the freezing wind, adding something peaceful and spiritual to the magnificent landscape.

Just moments earlier, I had been so exhausted that I was ready to turn around. But now, standing at the top and looking at the mountains, it felt as though all that exhaustion had disappeared. The pain in my legs, the struggle to breathe, and the difficulty of the climb seemed insignificant compared with what I was seeing.

We took plenty of photos and videos to capture the moment. I wanted to preserve the memory of reaching the summit and experiencing that incredible view with my own eyes. However, the wind was brutally cold. After spending around 20 minutes at the top, we decided it was time to descend.

Going downhill turned out to be even more challenging than I had expected. The trail was steep, and maintaining balance was difficult. Every step required concentration, as one wrong movement could cause a fall. We carefully made our way down the mountain. The descent was tiring, and our legs were already sore from the climb. It took us approximately two hours to reach the bottom of Gokyo Ri.

By the time we returned, everyone was exhausted. Shailendra was experiencing altitude sickness, while Fanning had injured his knee during the descent. Both of them were struggling, and it was clear that continuing the trek would be difficult for them.

On our way back to the hotel, we came across a rescue helicopter. Shailendra and Fanning approached the people there to inquire about the cost of being flown to Lukla or Kathmandu. Unfortunately, the price was extremely high. We had little choice but to return to the hotel and discuss what to do next.

Back at the hotel, we had lunch. Everyone was completely drained after the morning's climb, so we ate and returned to our rooms to rest.

After some time, the discussion began.

Shailendra and Fanning wanted to return, while Indresh wanted to continue the trek. My legs were sore too, and I was feeling the effects of the long climb. Honestly, if the helicopter had been affordable, I probably would have returned as well.

But it wasn't an option we could realistically afford.

After discussing our situation, we finally reached a decision: Indresh and I would continue the trek, while Shailendra and Fanning would head back.

It was a difficult decision. We had started this journey together, and none of us had expected to split up. But everyone had to consider their own physical condition and decide what was best for them. With Shailendra suffering from altitude sickness and Fanning dealing with his injured knee, returning was the sensible choice for them.

At around 3:00 PM, Indresh and I left Gokyo and began our journey towards Thagnak, which lay on the opposite side of the glacier. The locals pointed towards a white flag on the opposite side and told us that Thagnak lay in that direction.

The trail was nothing like the paths we had walked earlier in the trek. It was extremely rocky, with slippery sections, steep climbs, and equally steep descents. We had to watch every step carefully while navigating the uneven terrain.

To make matters worse, fog began appearing around us. Visibility gradually decreased, and the surrounding landscape became harder to see clearly. The fog was so thick that I half-expected howling wolves to emerge from the mist, as if we were in a movie. I started feeling a little nervous. We also lost track of the white flag. We were walking through unfamiliar terrain, and I was worried that we might lose the trail in the fog. After everything we had already experienced, getting lost in the mountains was the last thing I wanted.

We decided not to stop unnecessarily. We kept walking continuously, concentrating on the trail ahead of us.
After approximately two hours of walking, we spotted a house in the distance. We headed towards it, hoping it would lead us to our destination.

Fortunately, we had reached Thagnak.

I felt relieved to finally see signs of settlement after the long walk through the rocky terrain and fog. We made it to the next stop without getting lost.

Once we arrived, we started looking for a hotel where we could spend the night. We eventually found a place to stay and arranged our accommodation.

Since we needed to start early the following morning, we ordered both dinner and breakfast in advance. We didn't want to waste time in the morning waiting for food, especially with another challenging day ahead of us.

After settling into our room, we rested for a while. Eventually, dinner was served, and we ate before returning to our room.

We were exhausted from the morning's climb to Gokyo Ri, the difficult descent, and the afternoon's journey to Thagnak. There wasn't much energy left for anything else. We went to bed early, knowing that the trek was far from over.

Reaching the summit of Gokyo Ri had been one of the highlights of the journey so far. But the day had also reminded me that the mountains demanded more than physical strength. They required patience, determination, and the ability to make difficult decisions when circumstances changed.

Tomorrow, Indresh and I would continue towards our next destination, while Shailendra and Fanning would begin their return journey to Namche.

Our group had split in two, and the adventure was entering a new chapter.

Day 8 (Nov 12, 2022)
Lost in the Wilderness: Would We Freeze or Become Food for Wild Animals?

We woke up early in Thagnak, knowing that this was going to be one of the toughest days of our trek. Our plan was to cross Cho La Pass, which sits at an altitude of 5,361 metres, and continue towards Lobuche. After the previous day's climb to Gokyo Ri and the difficult trek to Thagnak, we were already tired, but there was no easy way forward.

We started our trek early and gradually made our way towards Cho La Pass. The trail was demanding, and the high altitude made every step feel harder than usual. We continued climbing slowly, taking one step at a time. At one point, the trail clung to a cliff, with metal ropes fixed along the rock face for support. We finally reached Cho La Pass at 5,361 metres. Reaching the pass felt like a major achievement, but we couldn't celebrate for too long because we still had a long way to go.

We took some photos and videos at the top of the pass.

The trail around the pass was covered in snow, and from there, we had to make our way downhill. Walking down a snow-covered slope was risky because our shoes couldn't get a proper grip on the slippery surface. To avoid slipping, we attached crampons to our shoes. These metal grips helped us get a firm foothold in the snow, allowing us to descend more safely. We carefully made our way down the slope, watching each step as we continued our journey towards Dhongla.

From the pass, we continued towards Dhongla, which lies at an altitude of around 4,810 metres. After hours of walking, we finally reached Dhongla at around 3:30 PM. There were a few hotels and lodges in the area, and we could have easily stopped there for the night. Looking back, that probably would have been the wiser decision.

However, we had lunch there, and after eating, we felt re-energized. The locals also told us that Lobuche was only about one and a half to two hours away. Hearing that gave us the confidence to continue. We thought we could reach Lobuche before it got too late, so we packed our things and resumed the trek.

Unfortunately, things didn't go as planned.

It started getting dark surprisingly quickly. By around 5:00 PM, the trail had become difficult to follow, and before we knew it, we had lost our way. We found ourselves wandering along forest trails, unsure which direction would lead us to Lobuche. We tried to figure out the correct route, but there was one major problem: there was no mobile network, so we couldn't even use Google Maps to find our way.

I checked what supplies we had left. I still had a few energy bars and a bottle of hot water with me. Those were the only things I could think of that might help us if we had to spend the night outside.

As we continued searching for the right trail, we started looking for a huge rock that could provide some shelter. We thought that if we couldn't find our way before nightfall, we might have to spend the entire night there.

That was when the frightening thoughts began to creep into my mind. What if we couldn't find our way out? What if we had to spend the whole night in the freezing cold? Would we freeze to death? Or would we end up becoming food for wild animals?

The more I thought about it, the scarier the situation became. We were at a high altitude, surrounded by darkness, with no network and no clear idea where the trail was taking us. I was genuinely scared, and I knew my trekking companion was scared too. But neither of us showed it to the other. We tried to remain calm, perhaps hoping that the other person would stay confident as long as we didn't reveal our fear.

I remembered that before the trek, my wife had installed an offline map app on my phone. It could show my approximate location even without a network connection. It was not as detailed as Google Maps, but it displayed my location and the names of nearby places. I checked it and realized that we were on a completely different route. According to the app, Lobuche was somewhere to the east of where we were.

We kept wandering through the forest, desperately looking for a way forward. Every passing minute made the situation feel more serious. We had no idea how far we were from Lobuche or whether we were even moving in the right direction.
Then, all of a sudden, we noticed something in the distance.

There was a light shining from somewhere behind a hill.

It was difficult to tell exactly where it was coming from, but at that moment, it felt like a ray of hope. We decided to head in that direction, hoping it would lead us back to the proper trail or, even better, to a settlement where we could find shelter for the night.

We made our way towards the light, carefully following the path as best we could. I don't remember feeling so relieved to see a light in the distance. Just a little earlier, we had been imagining ourselves spending the night in the freezing wilderness, and now we finally had something to guide us.

Eventually, after another three and a half hours of walking from Dhongla, we reached Lobuche, which lies at an altitude of approximately 4,930 metres.

By then, we were completely exhausted. What should have been a straightforward continuation of our trek after lunch had turned into one of the most frightening experiences of the entire journey. We had crossed Cho La Pass, walked for hours at high altitude, lost our way in the dark, and genuinely feared that we might have to spend the night in the wilderness.

Reaching Lobuche safely was an enormous relief. We had made it through the day, and that was all that mattered.
Looking back, we probably should have stayed in Dhongla. The availability of hotels and lodges was a clear opportunity to rest safely, but our renewed energy after lunch and the locals' assurance that Lobuche was only a couple of hours away convinced us to continue. That decision taught me an important lesson about trekking in the Himalayas: never underestimate the mountains or assume that you have more time than you actually do.

Sometimes, a little extra caution can make the difference between an ordinary trekking day and a potentially dangerous situation.

Day 9 (Nov 13, 2022)
Everest Base Camp: A Dream Come True

We woke up in Lobuche and had breakfast at the hotel where we had spent the night. Unlike the previous day, we didn't rush to get started. Our next destination was Gorak Shep, and since it wasn't too far away, we decided to take things slowly that morning.

As we sat there, I couldn't help thinking about what had happened the day before. Getting lost in the forest after crossing Cho La Pass had been one of the most frightening experiences of my life. We had genuinely feared that we might have to spend the night out in the freezing cold, with no idea how to find our way. Looking back, I realized how easily the situation could have turned into a tragedy. We had been fortunate to find our way to Lobuche safely. That experience was still fresh in my mind, and it reminded me that the mountains should never be taken lightly.

After breakfast and some rest, we continued our journey towards Gorak Shep, the small settlement that would serve as our base for visiting Everest Base Camp.

The trail was busy, with many trekkers heading in the same direction. We continued at a steady pace, enjoying the journey without feeling the need to rush. Eventually, we reached Gorak Shep at around 11:30 AM. Situated at an altitude of approximately 5,190 metres, it was one of the highest settlements we had encountered on our trek.
We checked into a hotel, settled into our room, and took some time to relax. After the previous day's exhausting adventure, it felt good to sit down and catch our breath. We also had lunch before preparing for the main event of the day.

One thing that immediately stood out was how expensive everything was in Gorak Shep. Food, accommodation, and other basic necessities cost a lot more than we were used to paying. Given its remote location and extreme altitude, I suppose transporting supplies there was difficult, but the prices were still quite shocking.

After lunch, at around 12:30 PM, we finally set off towards Everest Base Camp—the main destination of our entire trek and one of the biggest items on my bucket list.

This was the place I had dreamed of visiting for so long. After days of trekking through challenging terrain, dealing with altitude, enduring freezing temperatures, and overcoming unexpected difficulties, we were finally going to make our way to the destination we had come all this distance to see.

The trail was crowded. A long line of people was making its way towards Everest Base Camp. Some were walking, while others were riding horses. We could even see people travelling by helicopter. Everyone seemed to have the same destination in mind, although each person had their own reason for being there.

The path was far from easy. We had to navigate rocky terrain, icy sections, and narrow trails running alongside steep cliffs. The high altitude made the journey even more challenging. Every step required effort, and breathing became increasingly difficult as we continued climbing.

Despite the difficulties, we kept moving forward. We had come too far to give up now.

After approximately two to two and a half hours of walking, we finally reached Everest Base Camp, at an altitude of around 5,364 metres.

And then, something happened that I had never expected.

Tears of ecstasy began flowing from my eyes.

I stood there, struggling to believe that I had actually made it. For so long, Everest Base Camp had been a destination I had imagined visiting one day. It had been a dream, a goal, and a place on my bucket list. And now, after all the challenges we had faced along the way, I was standing there in person.

It was an overwhelming feeling. I was filled with happiness, pride, relief, and gratitude all at once. I had pushed myself through difficult days and uncomfortable nights, and there I was, finally standing at the destination that had motivated me throughout the journey.

At the same time, the altitude was making itself felt. At 5,364 metres, the air was thin, and it was difficult to breathe. Even standing still and taking in the surroundings required effort. But in that moment, the physical discomfort seemed insignificant compared to what I was feeling emotionally.

Then came another surprise.

To my amazement, I had a Nepal Telecom mobile network signal right there at Everest Base Camp!

I immediately took the opportunity to call my parents and my wife to share the news. I wanted them to know that I had finally reached the place I had been dreaming of visiting. They were delighted to hear the news, and their happiness made the moment even more special. They congratulated me and reminded me to return home safely.

Hearing their voices from such a remote and extraordinary place made me feel connected to home despite being so far away. I had accomplished something important to me, and I could share that happiness with the people who mattered most.

After the calls, we took photographs and recorded videos to capture the moment. We wanted to preserve the memories and share our achievement on social media. It was one of those

experiences that deserved to be remembered, not just through photographs but through the feelings attached to them.

Eventually, it was time to head back to Gorak Shep. We retraced our steps along the same rocky and icy trail, returning to the hotel where we had checked in earlier that day.

We spent the night in Gorak Shep. After dinner, I was relaxing and browsing Facebook when I came across some wonderful news: one of my best friends had welcomed a baby daughter that very same day.

It felt like a special coincidence. On a day when I had achieved one of my biggest personal dreams, someone close to me had experienced one of life's most beautiful moments. While I was celebrating a milestone in my own journey, my friend and his family were beginning an entirely new chapter of theirs. It was lovely to hear such happy news after an already unforgettable day.

Eventually, it was time to get some sleep. We settled into our room, but the cold was relentless. Even after everything we had experienced that day, we still had to endure another freezing night at high altitude.

As I lay there, I thought about the day's events. That morning, I had been reflecting on how dangerously close the previous day had come to becoming a tragedy. By the afternoon, I had stood at Everest Base Camp, overwhelmed with emotion, calling my family to share the news that I had fulfilled a long-held dream.

It had been a day of extremes—fear and happiness, exhaustion and excitement, physical discomfort and emotional fulfilment.

One of the biggest items on my bucket list was finally checked off. I had made it to Everest Base Camp.

And as I drifted off to sleep in that cold room in Gorak Shep, I felt grateful that we had made it there safely.

Day 10 (Nov 14, 2022)
Kala Patthar: The Most Terrifying Night of My Life

We woke up at around 5:00 AM, preparing for what would become one of the most physically and mentally challenging days of our entire trek.

Our plan was to climb Kala Patthar early in the morning and then descend towards Pheriche on the same day. After finishing our morning routine, we got ready and began our climb at around 6:00 AM.

We were already at an extremely high altitude, but we were about to climb even higher. Kala Patthar stands at approximately 5,545 metres above sea level. Reaching its summit would be another major achievement in our journey, but my body was beginning to struggle with the conditions. The exhaustion from the previous days, the lack of proper rest, and the thin air were taking a serious toll on me.

As we climbed higher, every step became more difficult. I was experiencing shortness of breath, and I could barely focus on anything beyond what was directly in front of me. At the time, I didn't fully understand what was happening. I knew I was exhausted, but I didn't realize how seriously the altitude was affecting me.

My friend Indresh, on the other hand, seemed to be climbing with relative ease. He had gone quite far ahead while I struggled to keep moving. I was completely exhausted and felt incredibly sleepy, but I had only one thing on my mind: I had to reach the top.

As we continued climbing, I could hear what sounded like avalanches falling on the distant mountains. The sounds echoed through the surrounding landscape, but I was so exhausted and disconnected from my surroundings that I didn't really understand what was happening. My mind was focused on one thing—putting one foot in front of the other and somehow making it to the summit.

Eventually, Indresh realized how far behind I had fallen and returned to where I was. He stayed behind me and guided me, encouraging me to keep moving in the right direction. By that point, my condition had deteriorated so much that I could barely see anything beyond my next step. I was moving almost automatically, completely unaware of my surroundings.

Slowly and steadily, I continued climbing at what felt like a snail's pace.

Then, as we approached the summit, something frightening began to happen. I started hallucinating.

I began seeing the faces of my father, my mother, and my wife right in front of me. It felt as though they were physically there with me, even though I knew they weren't. I couldn't fully

understand what was happening to me. My mind seemed to be playing tricks on me, or perhaps, in that moment of extreme exhaustion, it was seeking the comfort of seeing the people I cared about most. I felt as if I might collapse at any moment.

I was struggling to stay awake. I could hear Indresh making random jokes in the background, seemingly trying to keep me alert and prevent me from falling asleep. Even now, when I think about that moment, I feel grateful that he stayed behind me instead of leaving me to struggle alone.

I continued moving forward, one painfully slow step at a time.

Finally, at around 9:30 AM, we reached the summit of Kala Patthar.

We had spent several exhausting hours climbing to the top, but my memory of reaching the summit is surprisingly vague. I can barely remember standing there, surrounded by magnificent snow-covered mountains stretching in every direction. I knew I had reached the top, but I couldn't fully process the moment or appreciate the scenery as I normally would have.

Even today, I cannot clearly remember what happened during those moments at the summit. Apparently, I managed to record a 360-degree video on my phone. That video is one of the few pieces of evidence I have of being there, because my own memory of the experience remains fragmented.

After taking a few photographs and videos, we began our descent towards Gorak Shep.

By then, my body was in terrible condition. I was exhausted, weak, and struggling physically. All I wanted was to get down and rest. We returned to Gorak Shep and had lunch, hoping to recover some energy before continuing our journey.

However, we still had a long way to go.

Our plan was to reach Pheriche, which was at a considerably lower altitude. Given the condition I was in, getting down as quickly as possible seemed important. We asked around to see whether we could arrange a helicopter or find horses to help us descend. Unfortunately, the prices were far beyond what we could afford. We were already running low on cash, and hiring either option wasn't realistic for us.

So, despite my condition, we decided to continue on foot.

It was not an easy decision, but we felt we had little choice. We packed our things and continued walking towards Pheriche.

That day, we covered approximately 21 kilometres in total. We climbed Kala Patthar in the morning, descended to Gorak Shep, and then continued trekking towards Pheriche. It was an

exhausting amount of walking for anyone, let alone someone who had been experiencing severe symptoms at high altitude.

Nevertheless, we kept moving. My priority was to reach a lower altitude, and every step took me closer to that goal.
We finally arrived in Pheriche at around 5:00 PM, just as the sun was setting. After such a long and difficult day, reaching our destination should have brought a sense of relief. We found a hotel, booked a room, and had dinner.
I hoped that after eating and getting some rest, I would begin to feel better.

Unfortunately, the worst part of the day was still ahead of me.

As the night progressed, my condition became increasingly worrying. I was coughing continuously and struggling to breathe. I couldn't get comfortable, and every attempt to rest was interrupted by another bout of coughing or the feeling that I wasn't getting enough air.

Concerned about what was happening, I checked my blood oxygen saturation using my pulse oximeter.

The reading was just 63%.

I stared at the number in disbelief. My oxygen saturation had never dropped that low, not even when I had COVID-19. Seeing that reading while struggling to breathe was genuinely frightening.

I knew something was seriously wrong, but I wasn't sure what to do next.

Meanwhile, Indresh was sleeping peacefully beside me, apparently unaware of what I was going through. While he rested, I was awake, coughing continuously and struggling to breathe. I didn't blame him; he was exhausted too, and he probably had no idea how bad my condition had become.

Fortunately, the hotel had an internet connection. I managed to get online and contact my uncle, who is a doctor. I explained my symptoms and told him about my oxygen saturation reading. I was desperate for guidance, and I followed his advice as best I could.

He advised me to try to stay awake that night. Given the condition I had described, he was concerned that falling asleep could be risky.

Those words made the situation feel even more frightening.

I was already exhausted after climbing Kala Patthar and walking approximately 21 kilometres that day. All I wanted was to close my eyes and sleep. Yet now, I was being told that I had to remain awake.

I spent the night sitting upright, leaning my back against a wall. I placed a pillow behind my neck, tilted my head back, and stared at the ceiling with my mouth wide open, trying to maintain the position my uncle had advised me to keep. I stayed in that position, doing my best to remain awake while continuing to struggle with my breathing.
The hours passed painfully slowly.

I couldn't lie down comfortably, and I couldn't sleep. My body was desperate for rest, but my fear and physical discomfort kept me awake. Every cough reminded me that something was wrong. Every breath felt important.
As I sat there through the freezing night in Pheriche, I thought about how dramatically the day had unfolded. That morning, I had been determined to reach the summit of Kala Patthar. I had pushed myself through exhaustion, breathlessness, and hallucinations just to reach the top. Afterward, I had walked another long stretch because I wanted to get to a lower altitude.

Now, instead of celebrating another achievement, I was struggling simply to get through the night.

Looking back, I realize that I had pushed my body far beyond what it could safely handle. At the time, I was so focused on reaching destinations and completing the trek that I failed to recognize how serious my symptoms had become.

Reaching the summit had felt like a victory that morning. By nightfall, staying alive and getting through the night had become my only concern.

It was one of the most frightening experiences of my entire life, and it would forever change the way I remembered my journey to Everest Base Camp.

Day 11 (Nov 15, 2022)
The Long Descent: A Haven for Returning Trekkers

Indresh woke up at around 6:00 AM. I had barely managed to get through the night, and I was still shaken by what had happened. As soon as he woke up, I told him about my condition during the night, the continuous coughing, the difficulty breathing, and the terrifying oxygen saturation reading of just 60%.

I knew Indresh was exhausted too. We had both been trekking for days, and the previous day had been particularly demanding. Still, I was frustrated, frightened, and desperate to get down to a lower altitude as quickly as possible. Perhaps it was unfair to take my frustration out on him, but at that moment, I couldn't help myself. I got angry and told him to get ready quickly because we needed to leave.

After getting ready, we went to have breakfast. While we ate, I asked the hotel owner once again whether we could arrange a horse to help us descend. Unfortunately, the price was still too high for us, and we couldn't afford it. There was also a health post nearby, but it was closed for some reason—or perhaps it was simply too early for it to open. Either way, we couldn't get the help we had hoped for there.

I also called my uncle to let him know that I was feeling better and that we were preparing to descend. He had advised me during the frightening night when I struggled to breathe, so I wanted to reassure him that I was on my way to a lower altitude. I told him not to worry about me.

We decided to continue on foot.

At around 7:30 AM, we left Pheriche and began our descent. After the frightening experience of the previous night, getting to a lower altitude was my priority. I wanted to put as much distance as possible between myself and the high-altitude conditions that had left me struggling to breathe.

Our route took us through Pangboche, Monling, Deboche, Tengboche, Khemjuma, and eventually Namche Bazaar. It was going to be another long day of walking, but at least this time, we were heading downhill.

The trail stretched on for hours. Although descending was generally easier than climbing uphill, the distance itself was exhausting. My body was already worn out from the previous days, and I hadn't had a proper night's sleep. Nevertheless, we kept moving, knowing that every kilometre brought us closer to lower ground.

Somewhere around Deboche or Tengboche, I began noticing something that lifted my spirits.

There was greenery along the trail.

After spending days surrounded by rocky landscapes, snow-covered mountains, and barren high-altitude terrain, seeing green vegetation again felt wonderful. It was a simple thing, but it made a surprising difference to my mood. The sight of those green plants and trees gave me a sense of comfort, as though I were gradually returning to a more familiar world.

More importantly, I felt that I could breathe more easily.

I don't know whether the improvement in my breathing was entirely due to descending to a lower altitude or whether the sight of greenery had a psychological effect on me. Perhaps there was a placebo effect involved. Whatever the reason, I felt noticeably better, and that feeling gave me the motivation to keep going.

As we continued towards Tengboche, the trail took us past several monasteries. The region had a peaceful atmosphere, and the monasteries stood as reminders of the deep Buddhist traditions of the Khumbu region. Unfortunately, we didn't have much time to stop and explore. We still had a considerable distance to cover before reaching Namche Bazaar.

I also remembered hearing about the annual festival held at Tengboche Monastery. We had missed it by just a few days, which was disappointing. It would have been wonderful to witness the festival and experience the monastery during such an important occasion. However, our trekking schedule hadn't worked out that way, and there was little we could do about it.

The descent near Tengboche seemed never-ending. The trail went downhill for what felt like hours, and although we were moving towards a lower altitude, the constant walking was taking its toll on our legs.

By this point, however, I felt that the worst of my altitude-related breathing difficulties had passed. I could breathe much more comfortably than I had the previous night. The frightening sensation of struggling for every breath had eased, and I no longer felt as though I was fighting simply to get enough air.

The breathing problem seemed to be improving; now, the main thing I was battling was exhaustion.

We continued through Khemjuma and pushed ourselves towards Namche Bazaar. The trail seemed to stretch endlessly, but we kept walking, determined to reach our destination before the day ended.

Finally, at around 6:00 PM, we arrived in Namche Bazaar.

It was already getting dark. By then, we had covered approximately 25 kilometres, most of it downhill. Once again, we had spent nearly the entire day walking through the mountains. My

legs were tired, my body was drained, and all I wanted was a comfortable place where I could finally rest.

After the difficult conditions we had endured at higher altitudes, Namche Bazaar felt like an entirely different world.

The hotels here were much better equipped, with facilities that felt luxurious compared with what we had experienced during the previous nights. There were hot showers, comfortable beds, and thick blankets. These were ordinary comforts in everyday life, but after days of freezing rooms and uncomfortable nights, they felt extraordinary.
I could hardly wait to take a hot shower, get into a comfortable bed, pull a thick blanket over myself, and finally relax without worrying about the freezing cold.

For a trekker returning from the higher reaches of the Himalayas, Namche Bazaar felt like heaven.

It was a place where we could finally enjoy some comfort after days of hardship. The hot shower, the warm bed, and the simple pleasure of resting indoors were things I would have taken for granted before the trek. Now, they felt like rewards for everything we had endured.

More than anything, I was relieved that my breathing had improved and that we had made it safely down from Pheriche.

The previous night had been terrifying. I had spent hours sitting upright, afraid to fall asleep, wondering what might happen if my condition worsened. Now, after another long day of walking, I was finally at a lower altitude, surrounded by better facilities and able to breathe more comfortably.

It was a reminder of how quickly circumstances could change in the mountains. Just a day earlier, I had been struggling to reach the summit of Kala Patthar. That night, I had feared for my life. And now, I was sitting in the comfort of a hotel in Namche Bazaar, grateful for something as simple as a warm bed.

That evening, I didn't need another achievement or another destination to look forward to.

All I wanted was to rest, recover, and appreciate the comfort of being somewhere safe.

Day 12 (Nov 16, 2022)
Back to Lukla: Celebrating the End of the Trek

We woke up later than usual, at around 7:00 AM. After the exhausting days we had spent trekking through the mountains, it felt wonderful not to have to rush out of bed. For the first time in a while, I was feeling fresh and well-rested. My body seemed to have recovered considerably after descending to a lower altitude, and I was finally able to enjoy a comfortable night's sleep.

We freshened up and went for breakfast in a relaxed mood. There was no need to hurry, and we could take our time enjoying the morning. The food was so delicious that we ended up ordering a second round and finished everything. I couldn't remember the last time I had enjoyed breakfast so much!

Our destination for the day was Lukla, and most of the route from Namche Bazaar was downhill. We started our journey at around 9:00 AM, ready to enjoy the final stretch of our trek.

The trail offered some gorgeous scenery. As we descended, we passed beautiful hills, mountain landscapes, and traditional Sherpa homes scattered across the mountainsides. After spending so many days surrounded by rugged terrain and snow-covered landscapes, it was refreshing to see more greenery and signs of everyday life in the mountain villages.

Somewhere along the trail, at a resting point roughly halfway from Namche, we were treated to an incredible view of Mount Everest. The weather was clear, and the mighty mountain stood tall in the distance, looking magnificent against the blue sky. We stopped to admire the view, taking in the sight of the world's highest mountain one more time.
It was a special moment. We had come all this way to visit Everest Base Camp, and now, as we made our way back, we could once again appreciate the grandeur of the mountain from a distance. It was a reminder of the extraordinary journey we had undertaken and everything we had experienced along the way.

However, as we continued descending and reached lower ground, the weather began to worsen. The temperature dropped, and the conditions became noticeably colder. We continued along the trail, eager to reach Lukla and finally put an end to our long trekking adventure.

After hours of walking, we eventually arrived in Lukla.

Compared with the small settlements we had passed through at higher altitudes, Lukla felt like a well-developed town in the middle of the Himalayas. There were cafés, restaurants, pubs, hotels, and plenty of places where trekkers could relax after completing their journeys. Walking through its streets almost reminded me of the lively alleys of Thamel in Kathmandu, except that everything was surrounded by mountains.

After days of trekking, basic meals, freezing rooms, and exhausting walks, the town's lively atmosphere felt refreshing. We had finally completed the trekking portion of our adventure, and it was time to celebrate!

We found a pub where several foreigners were hanging out. We decided to have some beer and play pool with them. What started as a casual celebration soon turned into a series of games and drinks.

We ordered tap beer, and one glass led to another. We played pool against different foreigners in the pub, and, surprisingly, we managed to beat every single person we played against!
That made the evening even more entertaining. We were enjoying ourselves, laughing, drinking, and celebrating the fact that we had completed such a challenging trek. After everything we had endured over the previous days, it felt good to let loose and enjoy ourselves without worrying about the next day's walking distance or the altitude.

Unfortunately, we got carried away.

As the evening progressed, we drank far more than we should have. At one point, I realized that I couldn't find Indresh anywhere. I looked around the pub, wondering where he had disappeared to. Eventually, I checked the restroom.
There I found him vomiting in the pub restroom.

It was clear that he had drunk far too much. I had to help him out and somehow get him back to our hotel. Supporting him as we made our way through the narrow alleys of Lukla was no easy task. After all those days of trekking through the mountains, I now had a completely different challenge on my hands: getting my drunk friend safely back to our room!

By the time we reached the hotel, it was already around 11:00 PM. Unfortunately, the doors were closed.
The hotel owners had previously told us to return by 8:00 PM, so they were understandably angry when we called them so late at night. We had completely ignored the agreed time while enjoying ourselves at the pub. After some effort, we eventually managed to get inside.

We were utterly exhausted. Indresh had already vomited at the pub, and I wasn't feeling much better myself. Once we finally reached our room, I ended up vomiting too, although I managed to do it into a plastic bag.

It was hardly the dignified ending we might have imagined for our final night in Lukla!

After days of struggling against altitude, freezing temperatures, difficult trails, and physical exhaustion, we had somehow managed to create another memorable experience—this time through our own overenthusiastic celebration.
Looking back, the evening was both hilarious and ridiculous. We had survived some genuinely frightening moments during the trek, including the night I struggled to breathe in Pheriche. We

had pushed ourselves to reach Everest Base Camp and Kala Patthar, and we had walked countless kilometres through the mountains.

Yet, on the night we finally had the freedom to relax, we ended up making ourselves miserable by drinking too much.
The trek was over, but our adventure in the Himalayas still had a little more chaos left in it.

That night, we collapsed into our beds, completely drained. There was no more trekking to do, no more mountain passes to cross, and no more kilometres to cover.

We were back in Lukla, ready to leave the mountains behind and return home soon.

For now, though, all I wanted was to sleep.

Day 13 (Nov 17, 2022)
Stuck in Lukla: Waiting for the Weather to Clear

We woke up the next morning still feeling the effects of the previous night's drinking. Both Indresh and I were hungover and tired. Our grand celebration in Lukla had turned into a rather unpleasant morning, and our bodies were reminding us that we had overdone it.

Indresh went to order breakfast, and we ate it along with the dinner we had ordered the previous evening before heading to the pub. This was also one of the reasons the hotel owner had been angry with us the night before. We had ordered dinner for two at around 8:00 PM, promising to return, but instead, we had stayed out drinking until late into the night. By the time we returned, the hotel doors were already closed, and the owners had to deal with us long after they had expected to close up for the night.

At least the food hadn't gone to waste!

After breakfast, we decided to explore the Lukla market and buy some souvenirs to take home. Since we had completed the trek, it felt good to walk around town without our heavy trekking bags or the pressure of reaching another destination before sunset.

I wanted to bring something special back for my family after the journey. I bought yak-wool ponchos for my mother and my wife, some yak cheese, and a bottle of local whiskey for my father. These little purchases were more than just souvenirs; they were reminders of the time we had spent in the Himalayas, and I was happy to have something to share with my family when I returned home.

After exploring the market and buying our souvenirs, we turned our attention to the next challenge: getting back to Kathmandu.

Unfortunately, the weather was still causing problems. Flights from Lukla had been disrupted, and we had no choice but to wait for conditions to improve. Flights finally began operating after around 11:00 AM, so we headed to the airport and waited for our turn.

Our flight was listed as number seven in the queue. We hoped that if the weather remained clear, we would finally be able to leave Lukla and return home.

We waited patiently, watching the time pass as flights came and went. The hours seemed to drag on. We stayed at the airport until around 4:00 PM, but our flight never arrived.

Eventually, we had to accept that we weren't going anywhere that day. We left the airport and returned to our hotel, disappointed that our journey home had been delayed once again. After completing the trek and spending an extra day in Lukla, we were eager to get back to

Kathmandu. However, the weather in the mountains was beyond our control, and there was nothing we could do except wait for another opportunity to fly out.

Back in town, we decided to find somewhere nice to eat. We came across a restaurant with a beautiful view and noticed something interesting on the menu: the Mount Everest Burger.

The name alone caught our attention. After everything we had experienced on our trek to Everest Base Camp, ordering a burger named after the world's highest mountain seemed almost fitting.

So, we ordered it.

When it arrived, we were surprised by its size. It was an enormous, tall burger stacked with multiple patties. It looked impressive, and we were excited to try it. Fortunately, it tasted as good as it looked. However, the portion was so large that finishing it turned out to be a challenge in itself!

After days of eating dal bhat and basic trekking meals, having such a satisfying burger was a welcome change. We enjoyed our meal, took our time, and relaxed while appreciating the view.

By the time we returned to the hotel, the day was drawing to a close. Since we had no flight to catch that evening, there was no need to rush anywhere. We ordered dinner for later and settled down near the fireplace.

The warmth of the fire felt wonderful in the chilly mountain air. We spent the evening chatting with the hotel owner and his wife, sharing stories about our journey. We told them about our experiences along the trail, the challenges we had faced, and the unforgettable moments that had made the trek so special.

It was nice to sit back and talk about everything we had been through. From the breathtaking views and the excitement of reaching Everest Base Camp to the terrifying night when I struggled to breathe in Pheriche, our journey had been full of experiences we would never forget.

As we shared our stories, the trip seemed to come full circle. We had arrived in the mountains with a goal, pushed ourselves through difficult conditions, and finally reached the destination we had dreamed of visiting. Now, we were simply waiting for the weather to cooperate so we could return home.

Although the flight delay was frustrating, the evening turned out to be quite pleasant. Sitting beside the fireplace, enjoying good food, and talking with the hotel owners was a relaxing way to spend our unexpected extra night in Lukla.
We had no control over the weather, but at least we could make the most of our time there.

Our trek was over, but our journey home was not quite finished. All we could do was hope that the weather would clear the following day and that we would finally be able to board our flight back to Kathmandu.

Day 14 (Nov 18, 2022)
The Journey Home: Back to Kathmandu

We woke up early, at around 5:00 AM. After freshening up and packing our belongings, we headed to the airport, arriving at around 6:00 AM. We were hopeful that we would finally be able to fly back to Kathmandu that morning. After spending an extra day in Lukla because of the bad weather, we were eager to get home.

However, the weather was still not favourable, and there were no flights operating when we first arrived. We had been told that our flight would be the first to depart, but somehow, we ended up being placed in the second group instead. We collected our boarding passes and waited patiently, hoping the weather would improve enough for the planes to start operating.

While waiting, we had some tea with yak cheese. It was a simple breakfast, but by then, we had become accustomed to the food and routines of the mountains. We sat around, keeping ourselves occupied as we waited for news about our flight.

Eventually, the weather began to cooperate, and planes started arriving at the airport. At last, it looked like we would finally be leaving Lukla.

Lukla Airport is famous for being one of the world's most challenging airports, with its short runway built into a mountainside and its steeply sloping surface. The takeoff and landing experience is unlike that of an ordinary airport, and flying out of Lukla is an adventure in itself.

This time, I was fortunate enough to get a seat in the first row, just behind the pilot and close to the cockpit. From there, I had a clear view of the takeoff. Watching the pilot prepare the aircraft and seeing the short, sloping runway ahead of us was an unforgettable experience.

As the plane accelerated down the runway, I could see just how dramatic the airport's location was. The aircraft gathered speed, and before long, we were airborne, leaving the mountains behind us.

I had experienced the landing from Lukla when we first arrived, but seeing it from the front row made the experience even more memorable. I recorded a video on my phone, capturing the takeoff as we lifted away from the mountains. It was one of those moments I knew I would want to look back on long after the trek was over.

Soon, we were on our way to Manthali Airport.

After landing at Manthali, we collected our belongings and boarded a microbus for the journey back to Kathmandu. The drive took approximately four hours. After spending two weeks trekking through the Himalayas, it felt strange to be sitting in a vehicle again, watching the landscape pass by instead of walking through it.

During the drive, I called Shailendra and Fanning, the two guys who had initially been part of our trekking group but had parted ways with us earlier in the journey. I told them we were returning to Kathmandu and arranged to meet them once we arrived.

Unfortunately, somewhere along the journey, I realized that I had lost my goggles case. It contained my goggles as well as some charging cables, so losing it was frustrating. I searched around the area and checked the microbus, hoping that I might have left the case inside. However, I couldn't locate it.

It was disappointing to lose some of my belongings at the very end of the trip, but there was little I could do about it. After searching without success, I had to accept the loss and move on.

Eventually, Shailendra and Fanning arrived, and we met up in Kathmandu.

Their reaction when they saw me was priceless.

They were shocked by my appearance. My beard had grown considerably, and I had bruises on my cheeks and lips from the harsh cold I had endured during the trek. I must have looked quite different from the person they had set out with at the beginning of the journey.

We started talking, and I told them about everything that had happened after we had parted ways. I described our experiences at Everest Base Camp and Kala Patthar, the terrifying night in Pheriche when I struggled to breathe, and the other challenges we had faced along the way.

As I recounted the story, they were amazed by what we had gone through. Some of the experiences sounded almost unbelievable when described all at once. They were particularly shocked by the seriousness of my condition and how close things had come to going terribly wrong.

They couldn't believe that, after everything that had happened, I was standing there in front of them, safe and sound.

After catching up, we went to Jimbu Thakali for lunch. I was hungry and ended up eating a lot of rice. After so many days of walking and eating whatever was available along the trail, sitting down for a proper meal in Kathmandu felt wonderful.

They had also arranged a small cake to celebrate the successful completion of our trek. It was a simple gesture, but it meant a lot. We had set out with a goal, faced numerous challenges, and finally returned safely. The cake gave us a chance to celebrate the achievement together.

After lunch and our little celebration, it was time to head home.

But before going home, I made one more stop.

Looking at my appearance, I realized that I desperately needed a haircut and a shave. My beard was unkempt, and after two weeks in the mountains, I was far from looking my best. So, I stopped by Chotu Barber to freshen up.
Getting a haircut and shave felt like another small step towards returning to normal life. After days of trekking in the cold, wearing the same outdoor clothes, and worrying about altitude and weather, it was nice to sit in a barber's chair and take care of myself again.

Once I was done, I finally headed home.

And just like that, my Everest Base Camp trek was over.

Fourteen days earlier, we had set out on an adventure through the Himalayas. We walked through beautiful valleys, crossed challenging mountain passes, saw breathtaking landscapes, and reached Everest Base Camp. We had climbed Kala Patthar, experienced freezing nights, faced unexpected difficulties, and endured moments of genuine fear.

There had been times when I wondered whether we would make it through safely. Getting lost after crossing Cho La Pass had been frightening enough, but the experience in Pheriche, when I struggled to breathe and my oxygen saturation dropped dangerously low, had been something else entirely. It reminded me that the mountains demand respect and that determination alone is not always enough.

Yet, alongside the difficult moments, there had been countless memories worth cherishing: the excitement of reaching Everest Base Camp, the overwhelming emotions at the summit of Kala Patthar, the breathtaking views of Mount Everest, the warmth of friendly people along the trail, and the satisfaction of overcoming challenges I had never imagined facing.

I had also learned to appreciate the little things in life. A warm shower, a comfortable bed, a good meal, a familiar voice on the phone, and the relief of reaching a safe place had all taken on a different meaning during the journey.
When I finally returned home, I was tired, bruised, and carrying plenty of stories to tell. But above all, I was grateful.

I had fulfilled one of my biggest bucket-list dreams, experienced the Himalayas in ways I would never forget, and made it home safely to the people I loved.

The journey had tested my physical strength, challenged my judgment, and pushed me far beyond my comfort zone. It has given me memories of extraordinary beauty and moments of genuine fear. And it had taught me a lesson I would carry long after the trek was over: in the mountains, reaching your destination is an achievement, but returning home safely is the real victory.

My Everest Base Camp adventure had come to an end, but the memories would stay with me for a lifetime.



Route taken

Lukla -> Phakding -> Jorsale -> Namche Bazar -> Phortse -> Dole -> Macchermo -> Gokyo -> Gokyo Peak -> Gokyo -> Chola Pass -> Dughla -> Lobuche -> Gorek Shep -> Everest Base Camp -> Gorek Shep -> Kala Patthar -> Pheriche -> Pangboche -> Tengboche -> Namche Bazar -> Jorsale -> Phakding -> Lukla

The Real Destination Was Home

My Journey to Everest Base Camp and Back





















