

## ANNAPURNA TERAI (GURUNG HERITAGE) TREKKING

Annapurna Terai (Gurung Heritage Trail) Trekking is newly explored trekking routes in the lower part of Annapurna region. This trek provides first-hand experience of Gurung lifestyle and culture. It is popular for short period of being wonderful Gurung Culture, natural scenery, and enthusiastic of Local peoples to develop as tourist destination with the fantastic and superb views of Mt. Dhaulagiri, Mt. Annapurna ranges, Mt. Manaslu ranges, Lamjung Himal and many more mountains. Also explore the densely populated Gurung villages, terraced filled in the hillside, gigantic forests along the route, the natural beauty, flora and fauna so as the varieties of lifestyles, culture and traditions of different ethnic groups living in the Himalayan range and hill belt. The unique blending of beautiful landscapes is in between two beautiful rivers Marshyandi River in the east and Madi River in the south and west. Within the boundary of two beautiful rivers, the area comprises other small river valleys like Khudi river valley, Midim river valley and Rudi river valley which have a number of side tributaries. In every village visited has a mother's group (Ama Samuha). The mothers are active, enthusiastic and dedicated in the developmental of the villages, hospitality, environmental protection, cultural programs, income-generating programs and conflict management in the family and society.

This trekking begins from Pokhara, the second largest touristic destination of Nepal, where one can reach by direct flight or by bus from Kathmandu. The trek begins from Bijayapur and head to Kalikasthan continue to Ghumti Bazar, Mijuri Dada, Pakharikot, Bagar, Pas Gaun, Bhujung, Ghale Gaun and Besisahar. In the trail, we explore the places, the jungles, the scenes of the Rocky Mountains along the Annapurna massif and Manaslu with its natural diversities of the gigantic forest.

### **Fact of The trek:**

Name of the Trek:	Annapurna Terai (Gurung Heritage Trail) Trekking
Major River:	Madi River, Rudi Khola and Midim Khola, Marshyandi River
Climate:	Tropical and Sub-Tropical
Predominant Language:	Gurung, Nepali
Himalayan Peaks:	Mt. Dhaulagiri, Machhapurchre, Annapurna South, Hiunchuli, Mt. Annapurna I, II, Gangapurna, Lamjung Himal, Mt. Manaslu, Ngadi Chuli, Himal Chuli, Boudha Himal etc.
Maximum Altitude:	630m
Minimum Altitude:	2200m
Walking hours in a day:	4-5hours
Duration of Trek:	10 days

### **Outline Itinerary:**

Day 01: Arrive in Kathmandu, transfer to Hotel and welcome dinner

Day 02: Full day sightseeing in Kathmandu valley

### **Day 03: Kathmandu to Bijayapur by bus. Trek to Kalikasthan (1150m, 2 hours)**

We leave Kathmandu early in the morning after a breakfast and drive till Bijayapur on the way to Pokhara along the highway of Prithivi Raj Marga. We will stop at Bijayapur of 6hours driving from Kathmandu. One can do drive till Kalikasthan but we recommend you to do trekking of 2 hours walking from where you will observe the massif views of Mt. Dhaulagiri, Annapurna South, Hiunchuli, Mt. Annapurna I, Machhapurchre, Gangapurna, Mt. Manaslu, Ngadi Chuli, Himal Chuli and many more mountains with Begnas Lake view from the top while walking. From Bijayapur, we climb up to Kalikasthan. In the evening, enjoy nice views of Pokhara city and Begnas Lake.

### **Day 04: Kalikasthan to Ghumti Bazar (630m, 4hours)**

From Kalikasthan, one can drive till Ghumti Bazar by local bus. But road are muddy with lot of dust and not pitched through tropical forest. About 30 minutes, you will walk in a gradual walk with the superb views of Annapurna ranges, Manaslu ranges, Begnas Lake and many more landscapes. Then after, you will walk on the ridge of the hill with the superb views of mountains and landscapes and descend to Ghumti Bazar. On the way to Ghumti Bazar, you will explore different ethnic and communities group on the trail.

**Day 05: Ghumti Bazar to Pakhrikot (1305m, 4hours)**

After breakfast, you will cross the Swing Bridge over Madi River and head to Gahate of 30 minutes' walk. Now, you need to climb up through the Tropical forest till Mijuri Dada of about 2 hours walking with zigzag trails. In the jungle, you can see different species of birds and other reptiles. From the Mijuri dada, the trail is gradual steep but not so difficult. From the top of Mijuri dada, you can see the superb view of Mt. Manaslu, Ngadi Chuli, Himalchuli and Boudha Himal. Overnight at Pakhrikot. Enjoy the sunset in the evening.

**Day 06: Pakhrikot to Rudi Khola (Bagicha) (780m, 4hours)**

Today, we will have little bit difficult day for the walking with descending and ascending. From Pakhrikot, the trails descend down till Pakhrikot Khola cross the swing bridge which takes about 30 minutes from the Pakhrikot through the terraced cultivated lands. From Pakhrikot Khola, one needs to climb up till Singdi Dada of 1 hour through the terraced cultivated lands, patches of forest and river valley. About 15 minutes gradual walk, we descend down till Rudi Khola of 1 hour. With gradual walk, we will stop at Bagicha for the tonight of about 15 minutes. You will no more mountain view today.

**Day 07: Rudi Khola to Pasgaun (1636m, 4hours)**

Today is the hard day for you. After the breakfast, we head to Pasgaun along the straight and leveled steep trail. In about 4 hours, you will be in Pasgaun a beautiful village of Lamjung District. This village has retained its traditional feel, evident in its architecture (e.g. slant-roofed houses), culture, and food. The visitor can observe the unique mount up of stones of various size and shape forming different metaphors. This area can be developed as stone park/garden. Enjoy sunset in the evening.

**Day 08: Pasgaun to Bhujung (1960m, 5hours)**

After breakfast, we will head to Khumeru Danda (2200m) of about 2 hours along the dense sub-tropical forest. From the Khumeru Danda, you can view the massif views of Mt. Manaslu, Ngagi Chuli, Himal Chuli, Boudha Himal and Bhujung Village. From the top, you need to descend down till Midim River of 2 hours walking. You can enjoy seeing the mini hydro power at the Midim Khola. From the Midim Khola, we need to climb up of about 30 minutes. Bhujung contains the largest Gurung population in the area, with over 400 households that pride themselves on their rich cultural heritage. They have even generated their own electricity supply and are considered pioneers in conservation and development in the area.

**Day 09: Bhujung to Ghalegaun (2095m, 4hours)**

After breakfast, we move to Ghalegaun. We ascend up of gradual steep of 30 minutes. After that the trail is straight with the super views of Lamjung Himal, Annapurna II and top of Machhapurchre. On the way to Ghale gaun, you will see hills of 13 districts with Midim Khola view. Till Nayu, we do not have good views of Mountain. We will have good views of Mt. Manaslu, Ngadi Chuli, Himalchuli, Boudha Himal, Annapurna II and Lamjung Himal and enjoy sunset in the evening.

**Day 10: Ghalegaun to Baglungpani (1250m, 4hrs)**

Early in the morning, enjoy sunrise. After the breakfast, we descend down to Baglungpani; which provides best opportunity to see the best scene of Lamjung Himal, Annapurna II and Manaslu Himal range from the lower elevation.

**Day 11: Baglungpani to Besisahar (816m, 3hrs)**

We descend down to Besisahar with the massive views of Lamjung Himal, Mt. Manaslu, Ngadi Chuli, Himalchuli and Boudha Himal. Overnight at Besisahar.

**Day 12: By Bus: Besisahar to Kathmandu and transfer to hotel.**

It's a hot, six hour drive back to Kathmandu, so we'll try to head off early and stop for lunch en route back. It is a different world back in the Nepali hills, and the gentle light sends us on our way back to the bustle of Nepal's capital.

Day 13: Free day in Kathmandu for shopping and other activities

Day 14: Departure

## TSUM VALLEY & MANASLU TREK - 30 DAYS

Manaslu Valley Trek is more remote and spectacular than others trek of Nepal, with rough steep tracks and limited accommodation. It is culturally fascinating with strong continuing links to Tibet in the upper Budi Gandaki (called Nupri 'the western mountains'), Tsum Valley and even has the Larkya La (5100m) as a challenge. The views of Mt Manaslu, eighth highest mountain in the world, are marvellous and close. The trek around Manaslu can be done as a lodge trek (although a tent should be carried in case the simple lodges are full elsewhere) while Tsum requires a tent. If you are planning to do trek in the Manaslu region, one should not miss to do the Tsum Valley Trek which is Absolute highlight, with strong, friendly, hospitable people, a living Buddhist culture and untouched wildlife because of Buddhist prohibitions on hunting.

### FACT OF THE TREKKING:

Name of the Trek: Tsum Valley and Manaslu Trek

Best Season: September to December & March to May

Trekking Type: Camping

Grade: Moderate - Strenuous

Duration: 30 Days

Maximum elevation: 5106m

### Itinerary Outline

**Day 01: Arrive in Kathmandu (1340m) and transfer to Hotel.** You'll be met at the airport by a representative from Ethic Himalaya Treks & Expedition P. Ltd. Our representative will transfer to Hotel and will have welcome drink in the evening at the traditional Nepalese cuisine.

**Day 02: Full day Kathmandu valley Guided tour.** Our Guide will take around Kathmandu to show its back ground and history, visiting temples, monasteries and colorful city itself gives you a picture of Nepal.

**Day 03: Drive to Gorkha. Trek to Kalikasthan 1060m.** After breakfast in Kathmandu, about 5 hour drive from Kathmandu to the historic town of Gorkha, the old capital or kingdom of Nepal, with it's old 'durbar', or King's palace and Gorkha Durbar at the top of the hill of Hindu deities, perched high up in the surrounding hillsides and reached by worn stone steps. After organizing the gear and loads with the porters, we head up to our first night's campsite above the Gorkha Fort, stopping en route to visit this well-maintained site, home of the powerful Gorkha royalty until about a century ago. We can see the crew setting up camp from the top of the fort.

**Day 04: Kalikasthan to Arkul 570m.** After breakfast in the morning; we will head to Arkhul with pass through classic middle hills scenery; rolling, forested hills, snaking rivers with rounded rock strewn on the beaches, local fishermen casting their nets, iridescent rice fields, papaya, lemon and orange trees, water buffalos, thatched huts and local 'bhattis' (Nepali tea-houses). We have a leisurely six to seven hour day for our first real day of trekking; with many locals selling bananas and papayas en route (bring small change). We'll meet many colorful local communities and Hindu local en route and will have time to stop at the many traditional villages along the way. We camp along the beach at a lovely campsite just below the small village of Arkole. Take advantage of a chance for a sun-downer while we're still low in altitude!

**Day 05: Arkhul to Baluwa 800m.** A continuation of yesterday's lovely scenery and another six hour day, we trek though over several swaying suspension bridges spanning the river, past a high waterfall which

tumbles to the trail, and back up just a bit to reach our camp at Baluwa in the early afternoon. Tomorrow we have a steep climb ahead of us, and this is the last campsite before the (large) hill. Head down to the river and perch yourselves on the smooth river rocks next to the wonderful swimming hole for a wash after our hot day if you like, and afterwards chilled beers are available from an enterprising little tea-house next to camp. The staff might even pick up some small fish for dinner.

**Day 06: Baluwa to Barpak 1915m.** Have a big breakfast this morning; we head off early to avoid the afternoon sun for our steep, long climb up to the wonderful village of Barpak, situated perfectly on a green ridge overlooking the misty valley below. It should take us under four hours to get to camp, with several chautaras (rest stops) and the lower village and lively school en route. Barpak is a large village densely populated by Gurung, Ghale (royalty) and Bisokarma, extremely clean, with wide alleys between the houses, grain and vegetables drying outside on the patios, several shops, viewpoints and flowers planted along the decks of these Gurung houses. Many of its men joined the Ghurkha Army, returned to Barpak with new wealth, and have built lovely houses. The villagers often organize 'cultural shows', the proceeds of which go to improving the village, so we might be treated to one in the early evening. We are towered over by Bauddhi Himal, a high, snow-capped peak which makes for wonderful sunrise and sunset photos.

**Day 07: Barpark to Laprak 2200m.** Another early start and a picturesque climb, with Bauddhi Himal providing a spectacular back-drop to the sprawling, scenic Barpak as we ascend the narrow ridge; we take the small, stone trail to the right of the main trail after an hour or so, and a total of three hours later, we reach the ridge, officially a pass, Gupsi Dada (3000m) which separates Laprak and Barpak, and are rewarded with panoramic mountain views along with herds of sheep grazing on the grassy hillsides from the peak. Bauddhi Himal, Shringi Himal, Ganesh Himal and the Langtang range all span the horizon; a truly breath-taking view. The rhododendrons are blooming brilliantly, in many hues of pink and red, around us, providing great photographs with the snow-peaks in back. Another steep down of a hour or two of trekking brings us down to another large Gurung village, Laprak. The villagers often offer some friendly indoctrination. We camp in the only campsite around, at the school in the upper section of the village, with several tea-houses nearby. Again, we have the afternoon free to explore the village; take a walk down the hill and a look into some of the houses, all with symbolic murals on the mud-brick walls. The villagers are friendly, and there are lots to explore in Laprak's winding maze of lanes.

**Day 08: Laprak to Khorlabeshi 875m.** A classic Nepali trekking day of seven to eight hours, all beautiful. We descend through Laprak's maze of village paths and then to the river. After crossing a very rickety suspension bridge, we climb equally steeply back up, past terraced fields of pink sorghum and rice. We contour around several hillsides on a narrow trail, barely visible at times, up to a small chorten just below the village of Singla. From here, the going is easy, and we enjoy the views of the Manaslu Himal, Kutang Himal and Shringi Himal to the north as we walk down through more terraced fields and papaya trees, through the Gurung village of Khorla, and then down along a narrow, winding trail to Korlebesi on the Buri Gandaki River. Take care as the rocky steps just before the long suspension bridge to Khorlabeshi are treacherous. Look out for the local women weaving straw mats in the village. We will probably get a visit in the evening from this village's cultural ambassadors, and perhaps have another show

**Day 09: Khorlabeshi to Jagat 1370m.** A five hour day today, starting with an hour of walking along the river, by tobacco and buckwheat fields, past rocks washed smooth by the river, often climbing up stone steps, to reach the hot springs in the centre of the small, terraced village of Tatopani, where can enjoy for a time to soak our grungy bodies in the gushing hot water, and then perhaps go for a swim in the icy river below, drying off on the wonderful river-side beach. A gentle climb through the woods past with a

spectacular waterfalls, across an old, wooden suspension bridge and through a short section of forest path and we reach Dobhan. Above Dobhan, the Bhudi Gandaki River descends in an impressive series of steep rapids. Here, our trail climbs high above the river to descend through the river calms. We cross the river on a long, new suspension bridge and climb high on stone steps before coming into our camp below Jagat, the entrance to the Manaslu Conservation National Park. It is worth wandering around this beautiful, paved village, where proud villagers have recorded how much they contributed to these paving schemes.

**Day 10: Jagat to Philim 1570m.** After descending a long series of stone steps back down to the river from Jagat, we climb on wonderful stone steps along a terraced hill-side to the small hamlet of Saguleri, from where we can see the impressive Shringi Himal 7187 meters high. We pass through the charming, paved village of Sirdibas. We Cross the river again on a long, high suspension bridge at Ghata Khola, the path splits, with the right-hand branch heading off towards the Ganesh Himal. Our route continues upstream, and again we have a steep climb to reach Philim. In the afternoon free to wash at the dharapani (tap) across the path from camp, explore the interesting upper village and gompa, or sit and enjoy the afternoon at camp.

**Day 11: Philim to Chumling (6-7hrs).** Traverse north out of Philim on the obvious track signposted to the Larkya La, the trail junction going left to Ghap and right to the Tsum Valley. Climb on a well-graded but exposed track through pines, rhododendrons and other trail across the river. The slopes are risk of stonefall from the cliffs above, especially if there are goats grazing. Across the Budi Gandaki is Himalchuli (7893m) above steep cliffs. Walk through a largely intact and peaceful temperate forest into Lokpa (2240m), surrounded by barley fields, where there is a comfortable lodge, toilet and lunch. The hidden valley of Tsum stretches enticingly ahead. Make sure you climb up to Chumling and check out the old gompa, the traditional houses, orchards, clinic and beautiful stone streets. This is Buddhist agriculture, with conical pine needle haystacks among the prayer flags. From here on trails are lined with artistic *chortens* and *mani* walls made of thousands of stone slabs carved with deities and prayers.

**Day 12: Chumling to Chhokangparo (5-6hrs).** Cross the suspension bridge just east of the hotel and traverse through rich farming land of maize and potatoes. The houses are classic Tibetan with barricades of firewood on the roof, but without flat roofs as it rains and snows here. Up the valley to the east are superb views of the Ganesh Himal and its ranges, Chhokangparo (3010m), stone houses nestled under cliffs without a single iron roof. The valley opens here into spacious fields of barley, maize, buckwheat and potato. Herds of *thar* often graze the wild cliffs to the north, coming right down to the fields.

**Day 13: Chhokangparo to Nile (3361m - 5hrs).** Head east through small villages and past a local school, climb over a ridge of *chortens* and past Lamagaon (3202m) through the flat fields, looking across the extensive crops and river to the huge courtyard of the Rachen Gompa (3240m). This nunnery is the female equivalent of the main Kathmandu Kopan Monastery. Climb up and visit Milarepa's Cave (Piren Phu), where the bringer of Buddhism to Tibet is reputed to have meditated. Cross the Shiar Khola, pass through hamlets of Phurbe (3251m) and Pangdun (3258m) and pass an unusual round *stupa* before reaching the larger village of Chhule (3347m) through an impressive entrance gate (*kani*). Head upstream to cross the bridge and climb to Nile (3361m).

**Day 14: Nile to Mu Gompa and Chhokangparo (6-7hrs).** Early in the morning hike to Mu Gompa (3700m) with valley on the west bank, enjoying sunrise on the narrowing valley walls, yaks being put to pasture and a day with just a light pack. Mu Gompa is through dry Tibetan country, with rows of *chortens* and widening mountain vistas. This is a large monastery with over 100 monks and an

ancient *gompa*. If time permits you can also visit Dhephyudoma Gompa (4000m) further west on an obvious track. On three sides, there now are superb views of the border with Tibet, with frequently used passes to the east (Ngula Dhojyang or Mailatasachin Pass, 5093m) and west (Thapla Bhanjyang, 5104m) just out of sight. There are extensive seasonal yak pastures in all directions, the Lungdang Glacier to the east and high peaks in all directions. Return down valley through Chhule, collect your rucksack and continue down as far as Phurbe, but stay on the east bank of the Shiar Khola and cross flat boulder-covered plains to Rachen Gompa (3240m), where it is possible to inspect the ancient gompa if you want. The older part of the nunnery is more interesting. Continue south until a bridge crosses to the west bank then descend again to Chhokangparo.

**Day 15: Chhokangparo to Gumba Lungdang (5-6hrs).** Drop below Chhokangparo on the previous trail for about 2hrs, until a small *gompa* is reached at Gho (2485m). Descend on a narrow trail to the left through the village and drop to a wooden bridge over the Shiar Khola. Cross the bridge to Dhumje (2440m, Tumje) which has a Tibetan herbal medicine clinic and school. Climb very steeply on an indistinct track through pines and rhododendrons until the track starts traversing at a *mani* wall with prayer flags. The track is exposed and narrow. Finally, in the pine forest, take an uphill trail and make a steep zigzag climb through huge silver pines to reach Gumba Lungdang (3200m), perched on a ridge with small cells for the nuns through the beautiful rhododendrons above. This is small *gompa* with nuns which has an intense and engrossing *puja* from 6.00-7.30pm each night. The mountain views in all directions are amazing and being here was the absolute highlight of our nine trips to Nepal.

**Day 16: Day trip to Ganesh Himal Base Camp (7-8hrs).** Cross the Laudang Khola to the west bank on a rickety wooden bridge and climb steeply through pristine pines and rhododendrons on a ridge. There is a hut in a *kharka* about halfway up, with the track continuing behind it, then up a birch-lined dry creekbed and eventually you emerge into grassy flats behind the lateral moraine of the Toro Gompa glacier. Continue climbing past seasonal yak huts and you will find a track on the moraine wall that gives superb views of the cirque of mountains. It takes about 4hrs to reach the Ganesh Himal Base Camp (4200m). Altitude can make this day difficult for some, but the intact forest wilderness and views make it an outstanding trip.

**Day 17: Gumba Lungdang to Lokpa (7-8hrs).** Descend from Gumba Lungdang by the upward track, by crossing the Laudang Khola and stay on the south bank of the Shiar Khola. Climb over some very deep gorges and shaky cantilever bridges to picturesque Ripchet (2470m). Take time to look around at this perched fertile valley of barley and buckwheat with evocative *chortens* in the fields backed by pine forest. Descend on steep stairs to the lone *bhatti* Ghumlong (2130m) on the river, which you passed through six days ago. Climb again through the pristine temperate forest to Lokpa (2240m).

**Day 18: Lokpa to Ghap (7-8hrs).** Enter a very narrow gorge with loose tracks, up and down, up and down, cross to the east bank (true left) at one point and then back again to the west bank on a sloping suspension bridge. Enter Nupri through bamboo forests to Deng (1800m), inhabited by Gurungs who practice Buddhism. The river roars below except one place where a rockfall has created a huge dam. Continue in and out of canyons, cross the Serang Khola coming from the north and climb steeply again before finally circling into Ghap (2160m; Tsak). The *mani* walls here and onwards as far as Bimtang often display intricate quality carvings of various Buddhas in meditation, incised in the hard local stone by a family of carvers from Bihi.

**Day 19: Ghap to Lho 3180m.** Today is a wonderful trekking day; soon after leaving Ghap, we ascend for an hour through a dense, cool forest, crossing the Bhudi Gandaki River once on a wooden bridge, climb on

smooth, stone steps and eventually arrive at Namrung, at 2540 meters at the Tibetan-run lodge. As we gain altitude, we reach alpine territory and are treated to increasingly broad mountain views. Namrung village is the start of Nubri, the region of purely Tibetan inhabitants speaking a dialect of western Tibet. A few hours later, we reach the village of Lihi at 2840 meters, a substantial altitude gain. Lihi houses an old gumpa, and is spread along the trail with its billowing fields of barley, guarded by 'bear watches'. We are climb gently now; soon we cross a large stream flowing down from the Lidanda Glaciers and reach the picturesque Tibetan village of Sho at 3000m, where we stop for lunch. After an hour we reach at Lho, where we are treated to breath-taking views of Manaslu itself. We set up camp in Lho, Sunset and sunrise from the campsite are wonderful, and the small Gumpa.

**Day 20: Lho to Sama Gaon 3525m.** Walking through the upper reaches of Lho, with the snowy peaks of Manaslu ahead of us in the distance, we pass the new gumpa and then ascend through light forests next to a small river to reach the high, idyllic Tibetan settlement of Shayla, where the villagers are often out in the fields. Amazing mountain panoramas from here. Another few hours of trekking through classic alpine scenery leads us past Tibet grazing settlements, the trail to Pung Gyan Gumpa off to the left, and eventually past checkered fields of barley and potato to Sama Gaon. Sama The people settled here from Tibet over 500 years ago. The Tibetan villages in this region of Manaslu have distinctive entrance gates (manes), and they maintain an active trade with their co-religionists in Tibet over several high passes nearby. If the weather is good, you will see the village women weaving wool from Tibet into gowns - which are then traded back to Tibet. Take the afternoon to hike up to the old gumpa settlement above town, and to wander the streets of the fascinating Sama Gaon village.

**Day 21: Samagaon to Samdo 3850m.** Another day of incredible mountain views, past craggy woods of Himalayan Birch, during the walk up to Samdo, an easy three hours away. En route we pass the long mani walls at Kermo Kharka, after which we spot the entrance chorten of Samdo high on a bluff. We descend back to the Bhudi Gandaki and cross a small bridge before another short climb to the 'kane' entrance of Samdo. There is a small home gumpa in a house mid-village which we can visit during our last village, a puja being held by several of the reincarnated lamas living in the Samdo. We're at the high and the wind can be chilling in the evenings, so tuck into the little tea-house next door to our campsite for a cup of salt-butter tea to warm you up!

**Day 22: Acclimatization in Samdo.** Another rest and acclimatization day in this wonderful spot below Manaslu, which towers above us. We recommend a hike up the valley directly in back of Samdo, heading towards one of their passes to Tibet, for amazing mountain panoramas. En route, we'll pass many lovely, slated herding settlements. The prayer flags strung up on a distant hill, sending messages out into the Himalaya make a good stopping point before returning to lively Samdo.

**Day 23: Samdo to Dharamshala (Larkya Phedi) 4460m.** We leave Samdo on the old trade route towards Tibet, cross a bridge, and climb through the ruins of Larkya bazaar, one of the trade markets that flourished years back. After about three hours of climbing past glaciers, with increasingly awe-inspiring panoramas, we come to the campsite at Dharamshala, the high camp for the Larkya La pass, where we have lunch and gaze out at the views. You'll really feel the altitude and the cold here, so enjoy a more leisurely afternoon and keep warm. We'll have an early dinner in preparation for our pass crossing tomorrow.

**Day 24: Dharamshala / Cross Larkya La (4930m) to Bhimtang 3590m.** After a short climb above the campsite, we reach the ablation valley on the North side of the Larkya Glaciers where we have views of Cho Danda and then of Larkya-La. We continue across the moraines of the glacier, often through the snow,

making a gradual ascent which becomes steeper only in the last section to the pass, which should take us about four hours to crest. The views from the top of the pass are wonderful; a mountain panorama of Himlung Himal, Cheo Himal, Kangguru and the huge Annapurna II, equally stunning from both sides. After hanging our Tibetan prayer flags, get ready for a steep, often slippery drop to a trail following the glacial moraine. We'll lunch below the pass on smooth rocks before continuing the descent, still three hours to go to our campsite. A boulder-strewn descent brings us, finally, to Bhimtang. It's all worthwhile now.

**Day 25: Bhimtang to Dharapani 1860m.** A chilly but beautiful morning, as the sun hits the peaks around us long before the campsite. After leaving the grazing fields of Bhimtang, we cross a boulder-strewn river and head down through open forests of brilliantly blooming rhododendron, past the Kharka below Bhimtang. We'll lunch at a small tea-house, and then continue along the rocky river-bed and sliding hill-sides to several small, green villages, a sign that we've reached lower altitudes. Eventually, after a somewhat long but very scenic day, we reach the large village of Tilje village which are a mix of Manangis (of Tibetan descent) and Chettris (Hindus), so have a unique architecture and culture, and eat mix foods - Dal Bhat, buckwheat dhiro, tsampa and Tibetan salt-tea. Overnight in Dharapani.

**Day 26: Dharapani – Jagat (1314m, 6hrs).** Today the trail runs gently downstream of the river passing the village of Chamje and Himal pani We will have overnight stay at Jagat. Overnight at Tented Camp.

**Day 27: Jagat - Bhulbhule.** We climb through terraced fields to the Karche La, and can see ahead a green and heavily forested valley, dropping down to the distant Marsyandi River. At thonje village is our final restricted area checkpoint. Here we cross the Marsyandi River and join the main Annapurna Circuit, and the hoards of trekkers.

**Day 28: Drive to Kathmandu from Bhulbhule**

**Day 29: Free day in Kathmandu for shopping and other activities**

**Day 30: Departure**