

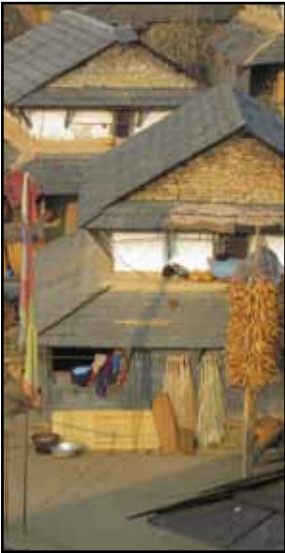
# **Trek** **in** **Nepal**

**I. Lower or Cultural GHT (Central Section)**

**James Baxter**

**January 2013**

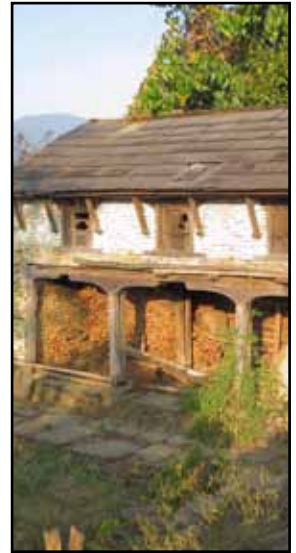
# Lower GHT



A modern Gurung house in Pasgaon village. It has a overhanging roof and a verandah for storage



The round homesteads are generally over 100 years old are survivors from an historic era, when many of the Gurung village houses had a round design. They also have verandahs



A Gurung barn would once have housed animals downstairs and the harvest upstairs

This is a summary of the central section of the Lower Great Himalaya Trail which goes across Nepal from the east to the west. The total Lower GHT is around 1500 km, of which 380 km is described here. There is much ascent and descent as it is across the direction of the valleys. Nearly all of the Lower GHT is on good paths or on tractor tracks. In general this central section of the route takes less than a month to complete.

The optimum time of year to do the trek is in the autumn through to the spring. It is best to avoid the monsoon months from late June to mid September. The autumn months will be greener, with crystal clear views, while in the spring the fields are brown and the sky hazy. As you are seldom going above 2500 metres it is not very cold and night frosts are infrequent - even in December or January.

Accommodation is a mixture. The few towns have simple hotels and the villages have very

rustic lodges which cater more for local porters, rather than rare tourists. Occasionally there are no lodges and one must be invited into a family home for board and lodging where you are expected to pay - and large tip should also be given as they are very cheap.

Food is available at the lodges and homestays. While it is simple and healthy, the variety is small with just Dahl Bhat (rice and lentils) or noodles on offer. The water may be drunk direct from the standpipes in the villages and hamlets but some might prefer to treat it.

There are no permits needed for this central section and just the occasional entry fee to pay. It is easy to do alone but a Nepali porter/guide helps with route finding and enables you to interact with people you meet on the trail and in the villages, and will arrange homestays. These benefits easily outweigh the wages and meals you provide for him, especially if you cannot speak any Nepali - as English is rare.



Day 1. Once you climb up onto the ridge beyond the village of Batase there is a great view which opens up. The photo shows the view looking to the NE to the Gurishankar Himal on the Nepal Tibet border to the north of the Rowaling region



Day 2. Looking SW from the ridge just above the hamlet of Sano Okhreni, whose frost-covered fields and few houses below are emerging from the mist. Just beyond is the cloud-filled Jhyari Khola valley. Tulo Okhreni is in the saddle on the very right of the photo and the path to it contours round the edge of this bowl beyond the right edge of the picture



Map of the Lower GHT route from Bokse at the eastern edge of the Helambu area to the village of Lahachok north of Pokhara. The route goes through the southern foothills of the Himalayas in the shadow of the around 8000m mountains of Langtang, Ganesh, Manaslu and Annapurna Himals on the Tibetan border. To view page in the correct alignment rotate 90 degrees anticlockwise in Adobe Acrobat



Day 2. Stupas, or Chortens as they are called by most of the Buddhist groups in Nepal like Sherpa or Bhotia, are common all over the Hill Region or *pahad* in Nepal. They are nearly always found in Buddhist villages and also mark the peaceful transitions on passes or trails between Buddhist and Hindu areas



Day 2. Most farm animals are kept tethered near the homesteads when crops are planted in the neighbouring fields. Occasionally they are taken into the forest to graze, but more often fodder is collected from the surrounding area. *Terminalia* trees are especially valued for fodder and are regularly coppiced by teenagers climbing up them lopping branches off with their *khukuri* knives



Day 1. Having left the small town of Bokse and crossed the swing bridge over the Balephi Khola one immediately enters rural homesteads surrounded by terraced fields which might be used just for rice once a year, or be used for a couple of different crops during different seasons



Day 1. Looking down onto the small town of Bokse which is encircled by the Balephi Khola river. This viewpoint is an hour up the ridge and is just half way to the hamlet of Batase which sits astride this sharp ridge. Many villages are built out of harm's way on ridges where landslides are rare



Day 2. After Tulo Okhrene there are views north through the montane jungle to the snow-clad peaks of the Langtang Himal which boasts mountains around the 7000m mark.



Day 3. At the cluster of homesteads which is the extensive Kyaurani village many of the fields were now planted with a crop of corn, *gahun*, having recently just been harvested for millet or *kodo*



Day 4. The village of Labagaon was spread out across the headwaters of Gyalthung khola valley and contained some 200 homesteads like this one with tethered animals and millet being threshed



Day 6. During the cold dry months of December and January poinsettias *Euphorbia pulcherrima* are in full flower. They are frequently found around homesteads between 1000 and 1500m



Day 3. Manure of collected dry leaves from animal's bedding and these animals dung is carried from the homesteads to the surrounding fields to increase the fertility of them. It is only in the last decade that artificial fertilizers have become available to the villages in the *pahad* and they have to be bought



Day 6. Once the millet, or *kodo*, is harvested the heads of the cereal are carried back to the homestead. Here they are dried in the sun and then they are threshed by beating the heads with a stick so the grains detach from the head. The grains are either used for bread, *roti*, or made into much loved wine, *raksi*



Day 7. All grains like wheat, millet, and maize are milled. Nearly every house has a hand mill with revolving stones, but there is nearly always a water mill like this one in each village, where the grains can be made into flour



Day 7. *Raksi* is a mild distilled drink, about 15% alcohol, made from wine. The wine can be fermented from rice, maize; or best of all millet. It is a much loved drink in Nepal where its health giving properties are always extolled



Day 7. The trackside hamlets from Narjamandap to Bohare Bhanjyang all belong to the Lachyang VDC. The VDC is the smallest socio-political unit in Nepal with a main village and some hamlets



Day 8. These Tamang villagers are hollowing out logs to use as beehives. The logs will be hung on cliffs or on trees near present hives to encourage a colony to establish itself



Day 9. The largely Tamang village of Ghalegaon is very friendly and has a small shop and homestay possibilities. It is also well placed to cross the pass to Kimtan the next day



Day 11. The hilly *Pahad* between the flat lands of the *Terai* and the mountains of the *Himalaya* are very much in the orange belt of Nepal and towns like Gorkha are right in the middle of it





Day 9. A typical Tamang homestead below Kimtan. It is surrounded by recently harvested terraced fields and the millet is drying beside the house. Behind are fodder trees for the tethered buffalo



Day 10. After leaving Kimtanbesi you follow the Anku Khola downstream for 4 km until you have waded the river to the small village of Baguwabesi, where you start to climb to Belen Bhanjyang pass



Day 11. Along the ridge to the north of the Kaste Khola are numerous hamlets of homesteads like this one at Ramichaur. Here the houses use large stone slates, *dunga*, as cladding but these are slowly being renewed with corrugated sheets



Day 13. At Ahale, which sits on a track and astride a pass there are a few local cafes, *bhatti*, and even a simple lodge. Here is the cafe owner returning after chasing a neighbour's goat of her nearby vegetable patch just across the street



Day 13. There is a temple at the summer palace at Gorkha. Like many temples there is a bull deity for fertility rituals. From the palace there are great views of the Ganesh (pictured), Manaslu and the Annapurna Himal



Day 13. The town of Gorkha is divided into an upper and lower half. The upper half is full of older houses and is generally free of traffic, while the lower half is newer and busier and is where most of the hotels are located



Day 13. The massive prow of Himal Chuli, 7893m, dominates the northern horizon for a week as you walk from Belen Bhanjyang to Bhujung. Although not the highest mountain in the Manaslu Himal range, it is the most southerly and rises so steeply to its lofty height, it overpowers the higher Manaslu, 8163m, behind it



Day 14. The winter palace of the Gorkha kings who had already ruled Gorkha for 210 years, before the 11th king of the dynasty, Prithibi Narayan Bir Bikram Shah, finally unified all the kingdoms of Nepal under his rule. This Shah dynasty continued to rule Nepal, with varying degrees of power, for another 240 years until 2008, when 7 years after the death of the much-loved King Birendra, the monarchy was abolished



Day 14. The terraced rice fields are too small for mechanical rotavators and the age old technique of ploughing with a pair of oxen to turn the earth over, and then turn it into a soup prior to the planting of the rice seedlings is the best method



Day 16. Sometimes streams, and even rivers, are spanned with rickety bamboo bridges made with many stems lashed together. They are surprisingly strong but are usually temporary as the monsoon rains often wash them away in July or August



Day 16. This homestead beside the Marsyangdi Nadi river is not unusual in that it is 3 storeys high. The top floor and loft above it is normally used for storage of processed foods after harvest



Day 17. Himal Chuli, 7893m, is probably seen at it's finest from the village of Nayum after the long climb up from Khudi in the Marsyangdi Nadi valley some 5 hours below to the east



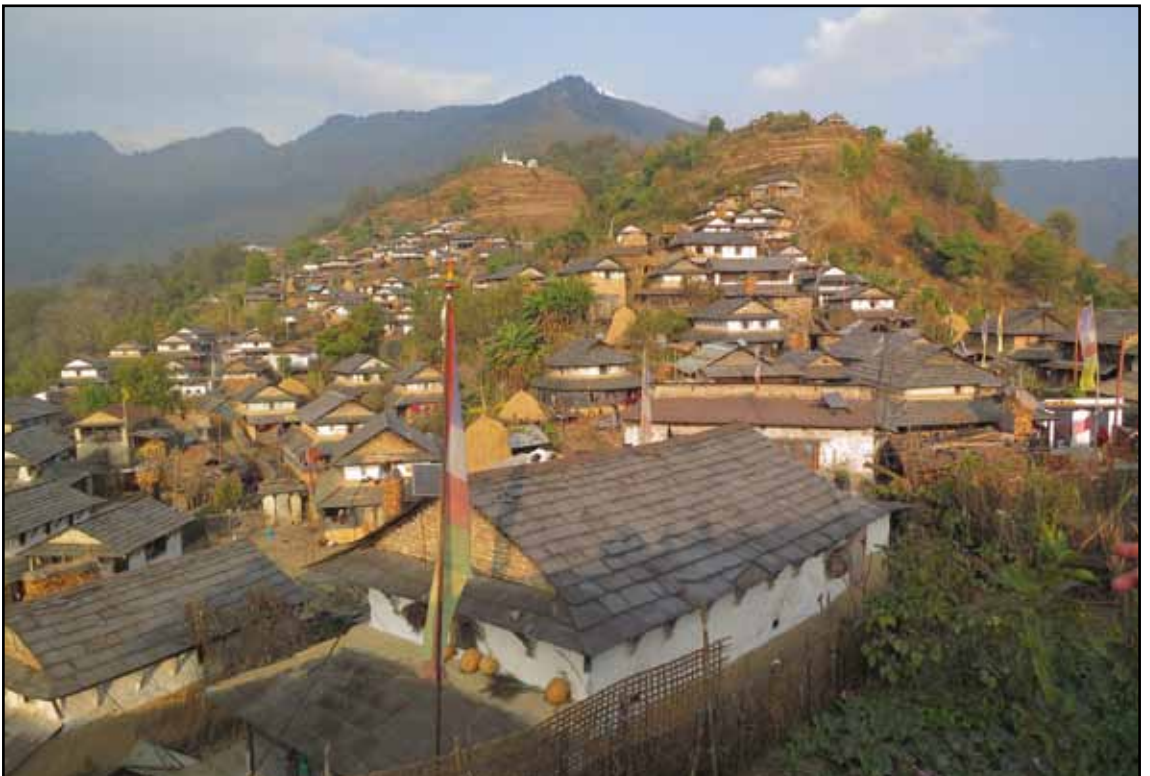
Day 18. In every district of Nepal maize is stored in a unique characteristic way. Here in the Gurung village of Bhujung it is stacked in a round pile on stilts and covered with woven bamboo mats



Day 19. From the Gurung village of Pasgaon, sited high on the ridge at about 1650m, there are wonderful views across the jungle-covered lower hills each side of the mist-filled Rudi Khola valley



Day 17. The Manaslu Himal range is 50 km long and is entirely in Nepal. From the south (right) is Baudha Himal 6672m, then the imposing Himal Chuli 7893m. To the north of Himal Chuli the ridge rises to Nadi Chuli, 7871m and to the north of this is Manaslu 8163m. In the north of the range is Larkya Peak 6416m.



Day 18. Pasgaon village is one of about 15 Gurung villages encountered between Khudi and Lahachok. Like the others, Pasgaon is full of heritage and is clean, well-organized and friendly. It is built on a ridge with its terraced fields on the flanks of the ridge. These villages are generally surrounded by jungle which provide some essentials, but not without dangers. Just a month prior to my visit a woman was killed by a bear on the edge of this village while collecting leaves for fodder, and there are leopard in the forest.



Day 18. My host in Pasgaon was a village elder called Padam, who besides farming also helps to maintain the gompa



Day 18. A *silauta* is a pair of stones used for crushing chillies, ginger and other spices like a pestle and mortar would be used. They differ in shape and design, but there is one in every household



Day 18. Another of the Elders of Pasgaon village was this man who was 86 years old and had recently retired from farming



Day 21. The photo shows the large Gurung village of Siklis on the hillside surrounded by terraced fields for growing corn, wheat, barley and vegetables and beyond that is the extensive forest. Behind the village looms the massive bulk of Annapurna II, 7937m, which towers some 6000m over it. Siklis is one of the most important and largest of the Gurung villages with a population of about 3500



Day 19. Once the rice is harvested the straw is piled up on stilts and is a source of food for ox and buffalo in the winter months when the fields are otherwise empty



Day 20. If the buffalo are not in the fallow fields then they are tethered around the homestead and it is necessary to carry the fodder straw to them on a daily basis



Day 20. In Gurung areas to the west of the Marsyangdi Nadi river there are many cliffs where the large Himalayan cliff honey bee *Apis dorsata laboriosa* builds nests on cliffs. These are harvested by locals using twine ladders and smoke



Day 20. The villages and their surrounding fields occupy relatively little land in the *Pahad*, perhaps only 40%. The rest is jungle or scrub which might be used for occasional grazing or harvested for wood or fodder but it is generally wild and dense



Day 21. The village of Tanting is a large Gurung village on the slopes high above the Madi Nadi river opposite Siklis. It is surrounded by wheat, millet and rice fields to feed the 2000 inhabitants



Day 22. A chorten announces the arrival of Ghalekharka, which is a mixed village with Gurung, Tamang and Magar castes, all sharing Buddhism. In the distance is Annapurna South, 7219m

# NEPAL: Lower or Cultural GHT ( Central section)

Day	Start	Finish	Km	Up	Down	Time	General
1	Bokse	Sano Ohkreni	14	1400	270	7.5	Leave Bokse at 800m and head north across the Bokse Khola and on for another 10 min to reach the bridge over the main Balephi Khopa. On the west side follow the path through paddy's for 10 min to the foot of the ridge. Now begin a relentless climb up ridge. 2 hours after Bokse pass through the pretty Batase. Continue up for another 1½ hours to reach a Tamang village with muddy streets and prayer flags. Here the path eases slightly for an hour as it skirts the jungle at the rim of the bowl. At 1900m, well under the summit the path crosses a saddle and enters a new bowl. Now skirt this bowl for a short hour making a climbing traverse to reach a small hamlet 2100m. Continue to traverse up west for another km climbing up to reach the abandoned road at 2200m and the end of the days climbing. Follow the road west along the top of the forested ridge for 5km. From this ridge there is reward for the hot relentless climb with good views to the south over the foothill villages and to the north there are great views to the snowy Himals. At the end of this easy flat 4km the path leaves the road and descends to the mixed village of Sano Ohkreni at 2100m where you can find a homestay with great views.
2	Sano Ohkreni	Tipeni	22	570	1710	10	From Sano Ohkreni you can see Tulo Okhreni across the bowl. Head up to the pines and gain the road near the hamlet of Phusre passing great views on each side of the crest, especially east to the Jugal Himal. After Phusre the route follows the abandoned track up to 2400m before descending steeply to the Sherpa village of Tulo Okhreni on a saddle covered in chortens. The route heads west for 2km to reach a junction at 2250m. The main track bears left and contours the hillside but another track descends the ridge. Take the latter down the crest of the ridge slightly to the south. Cutting hairpins as necessary as you pass through jungle to reach the larger Nangadanda with it's rustic school on the crest of the ridge. From here the descent steepens as you try and follow a myriad of paths and tracks. In general keep to the crest of the ridge as you descend past the large Tamang village of Ange to the north of the Khalde Khola. Down and down the route goes for some 1000m passing homestead after homestead on the confusing paths through the large spread out village of Langachi. Eventually the route arrives at the hamlet of Khalde Khola in the main Indrawati Nadi valley at 900m There is nowhere to stay here so you must walk a good half hour up stream to Tipeni where there is a rustic hotel beside the Lapse Khola stream.
3	Tipeni	Chanaute	16	840	830	8	Head back down the track for 3 km to Khalde Khola. Just beyond it is a bridge over the Indrawati Nadi. Cross it and climb through jungle, paddy fields and past hamlets as you traverse up the steep hillside. After 2 hours the path eases and climbs with a ruined track as it gains a shallow shoulder and then climbs it to reach the village of Kyaurani, which is mostly Giri caste. Skirt round the head of the valley in which this pretty village sits, crossing many becks as you traverse up through paddy fields and jungle to the village at Pokari Bhanjyang saddle on the main ridge. This is the day's high point at 1650m and it takes 5 hours to reach. The direct path to Sera goes down from here but it is better to contour round the hillside for an hour to the Hindu shrine at Palchowk, which is a number of small temples hidden in the trees below the path. Beyond the shrine the track continues 400m to a school. A path descends from here for some 550 vertical metres through paddys, homesteads and jungle as it bisects a rough track. You often have to feel your way down the myriad of paths. A long hour after leaving Palchowk the path, which is often in a deep grove, eventually spills onto the valley floor. Pick up the track again and follow it north along the floor of the Melamchi Khola valley past paddys to reach the bridge at Chanaute. Just before the bridge is a hotel.
4	Chanaute	Golphu Bhanjyang	13	1290	280	7.5	Cross the bridge and head south to the village of Sera. After a km and before Sera there is a track to the west heading up through fields. Resist all directions from locals to continue another km to the Gyalthung Khola where there is a dusty road to Golphu Bhanjyang. Take this track for 1½ hours cutting many hairpins to reach the Tamang village of Meramchi high on the ridge. Walk through this village and continue up this ridge for another hour to reach the foot of a steep nose and the end of the homesteads of Meramchi. The path now contours round the steep hillside on the south of this nose for an hour until you reach a spur. Cross the spur to reach the Tamang village of Labagaon. From Labagaon the Golphu Bhanjyang is visible, but between here and the pass the ill defined path has to contour round at least 5 side valleys. It is a long contour on the hot slope but you pass many small rural hamlets and descend into shaded valleys with small becks, woods and bamboo thickets. Eventually you reach the head of the valley and continue to traverse up past another Tamang hamlet to reach the aforementioned track. Now follow the track for half an hour with great views over the riven hillside you have just contoured round to reach the top of the pass of Golphu Bhanjyang. Here there is a busy hamlet with a few trekking lodges, as it is on the Langtang trek.
5	Golphu Bhanjyang	Samundratar	19	230	1450	6.5	It will be difficult to avoid tracks today, however they are seldom used. Head north for a good km to the first village. Here a track descends into the cluster of houses while the main track continues. Take this track down rather than continue (as I did). The track goes through the village and then descends further to meet another track. The combined track continues down on the hot south side of the ridge to reach the valley floor and then the bridge to Jagare. If you miss this continue down the crest of the ridge to descend on a mixture of paths and tracks to Jagare. If you go to the north of the ridge (as I did) you will reach the tightly clustered Tamang village of Chupar and then you will have to do a big U into the valley to the north before reaching Jagare bridge adding at least an hour. From Jagare swing bridge now join the main road down the valley on the north side of the river. After an hour reach the village of Raubesi, where there is a surprising and empty hospital. From here continue down the track for 1½ hours through jungle and high above the river until you reach the large village of Samundratar. There is some very rustic accommodation here, and the best is just before the swing bridge over the Tadi Khola.

6	Samundrar	Narjmandap	18	830	430	6.5	Cross the bridge and start down the road. After 1 1/2 hours you will have passed through a few uninviting roadside hamlets and have reached the larger village of Satbesi where there is a lodge and many small shops. Pass through and walk for another 1 1/2 hours, now on a metalled road, albeit quite quiet, to reach the small town of Kharanitar with many shops, health clinic etc. Continue for another 1/2 hour to reach the bridge over the Darkhu Khola. Now at last you can leave the valley road and climb back into rural life again. The steep path goes up right after the bridge. Initially it climbs steeply for a short hour to gain the main ridge. Then it follows the ridge north past a string of large chauteri trees and homesteads. After a good 400m climb, the path on the sharp ridge meets a dusty track. Take it for an hour passing wealthier homesteads until you reach the village of Narjmandap. Apparently the accommodation here is very rustic so it is best to continue for a good 1/2 hour to Bhanjyang. The route is part path and part track largely along the ridge crest. Halfway between Narjmandap and Lachyang villages you reach Bhanjyang which is a collection of some 10 houses, half of which sell food and a few offer very rustic lodging.
7	Narjmandap	Betrawati	16	320	1130	6.5	From Narjmandap Bhanjyang take the easy grassy track contouring NW round the hillside between 1300 and 1400m for 2 hours passing above small hamlets to reach Bohare Bhanjyang pass with its colourful temple. Here the track forks with one branch descending north into the Phalaku Khola valley and one continuing to contour west round the hillside for an hour to the village of Chokade, with its 20 shops. At the track junction by the bottom of this village head right over the ridge into a quiet rural valley and the village of Gerku. Before you reach Gerku there is a path to Dhoka Bhanjyang, an hour after Chokade. Cross the ridge and descend for 1/2 hour through pine forest to Chhaptar hamlet with its large chauteri trees. After the village the path continues to gently descent through a lovely pine forest for 1/2 hour before the steeper descent starts. This takes 1 1/2 hours. Half way down you pass a village before you go into jungle again with a network of paths and tracks. As long as you descend you will reach the valley floor which is then followed west to the small town of Betrawati, which is where the Phalaku Khola valley meets the large Trusuli Nadi River. There are a few hotels here on this main road from Kathmandu to Langtang.
8	Betrawati	Ghalegaon	16	1380	280	8.5	Cross the swing bridge over the Trisuli Nadi river and walk north for 2 km to reach the Salauku Khola valley. Diverge from the suggested route and head up this valley on a track. After an hour the track passes a village and reverts to a path for an hour to the confluence of the Salauku and Gatiya Kholas. Continue on the north side of the former for an hour, passing jungle to reach the next confluence. Cross both streams here on simple bridges and walk through jungle to reach the friendly Tamang village of Barchet. The route now becomes small as it follows an irrigation channel for 1/2 hour to reach another swing bridge. Continue on the west of this stream for a short jungle filled km to round the base of a big west protruding buttress to the confluence, of the Nadang and Suptang Kholas. Between these streams rises a very steep and jungle clad ridge with the faintest of paths. If you can't find the path force your way up through the jungle for a good 1/2 hour. Eventually the ridge eases at some pines and a path begins to form on the crest. Follow it for a good hour to reach the friendly village of Salme. Continue for another hour climbing to 1800m and the village of Ghalegaon where there is a small shop and homestay possibilities.
9	Ghalegaon	Kimtanbesi	17	730	1980	10	Head west out of the top of the village traversing up through forest. The path crosses abandoned fields before eventually reaching the pass after 2 hours with grand views over the Ganesh, Manaslu and Annapurna Himal. At the pass is small, often-dry, lake. The path descends from its west side through scrub. After an hour it descends down to the stream on the south side, crosses it and traverses down to a saddle between the hillside and a knoll. The path continues to traverse down the hillside contouring to the south and reaching the Tamang village of Kimtan. Now descend a steep merciless path for 2 hours down the crest of the ridge to the confluence of the Kimtan and Kunda Kholas. The path threads a line through many homesteads. At the bottom of this knee jarring descent follow a path down the south side of the river. It keeps slightly above the river threading a route across bowls of paddy fields and occasional hamlets and climbing the jungle clad ridges between bowls. After 2 hours the path reaches a mostly Tamang caste village. Then it crosses yet another bowl and reaches a well kept Brahmin caste village, called Dhokapur. An hour later it drops to the long bridge, which is crossed to reach simple lodges at Kimtanbesi at 650m.
10	Kimtanbesi	Belen Bhanjyang	12	760	130	6	Recross the bridge over the Kimtang Khola and just after drop down to the south bank of the larger Anku Khola river. Follow the river past an area with many hot springs oozing from the bank. After a good hour the hamlet of Baguwabesi appears on the opposite north bank. Cross the Anku Khola where it is braided, wading its cool knee deep waters to reach the Baguwabesi. If the river is in spate you will have to follow the road and cross at the dam below Baguwabesi. Climb up the track to the west of the Baluwa Khola as it traverses up onto the ridge and the village of Dawahiswora. Once there continue up the ridge to the next and picturesque village of Althok high above the Baluwa Khola. From here it is possible to see Belen which lies further up the ridge in a bowl just below a pass. Continue to climb through homesteads and across terraces until you reach Belen at about 1200m. Above Belen is the pass, Belen Bhanjyang, at 1250m. There is a road here and some rough lodgings. On the map this place is erroneously marked as Atigoan which seems further to the south. From Belen Bhanjyang there is a great view westwards down the middle of the Kaste Khola valley.
11	Belen Bhanjyang	Arughat Bazar	14	210	860	4.5	From Belen Bhanjyang head north round the rim of the valley on the track. Soon the track bears NW as it climbs up and over the first knoll which is covered in pines. There are good views over the hamlets and thousands of small terraced fields in the Kaste Khola valley to the south. There are also distant views to the Manaslu and Annapurna Himal. The track continues along the top of the ridge to reach the village of Ramichaur after an hour. The route follows the track atop the ridge passing numerous other pretty hamlets until it reaches the west end and the hamlet of Kubinder. Here the track starts to zig-zag extensively and it is better to take a steep path which descends down the SW side of the crest of the shoulder towards Arughat Bazar, which is now visible in the valley. This steep descent passes numerous ancient chauteri resting places with the female Peepal tree and the counterpart male Bar tree. Eventually the path spills onto the Kaste Khola valley floor and crosses this stream on a high swing bridge. Walk down the track and into the main Budhi Gandaki valley. Cross the first bridge to the west side of this large river. The town is divided by the Budhi Gandaki river and the best accommodation is on the west side.



12	Arughat Bazar	Khanchowk	15	670	160	6.5	Avoid the road from Arughat to Ghorka and head up the Mukti Khola. Head down to where the Isthu and Mukti Kholas enter the large Budhi Ghandaki, cross the small bridge over the former and climb some rocky steps before it levels out. Continue on the south side of the Mukti Khola (ignoring a bridge after 20 minutes) and then cross and recross the streambed numerous times as you pass jungle. A good hour after leaving Arughat you come hamlet and after another hour you reach a small Ganesh temple. Continue up the stream bed for an hour, taking the south branch where the stream divides until it narrows into a small gorge spanned by a small stone bridge. Climb out of the gorge and up to the chauteri. From here continue up the side of the stream towards Koyapani village and pass. It takes 4 hours to reach this pass, called Koyapani Bhanjyang. Relax before continueing to Khanchowk. From the pass walk west some 300m on the road until a path heads down to the south past some homesteads. For the next 1½ hours the path contours round the rim of the bowl at the head of the Khanchowk Khola valley before it climbs to the busy village of Khanchowk, also on a pass. There are rough lodgings and some shops here.
13	Khanchowk	Gorkha	19	790	730	8	Head SW up steps on the crest of the shoulder to reach Baguwa. Once on the crest head west passing many small hamlets and enjoying views to the Annapurna, Manaslu and Ganesh Himals. To the north is the terraced Masel Khola valley and to the south is the best avoided road. This delightful undulating 2 hour ridge walk passes Taple Bazar and a few other hamlets before it descends to the busier village of Ahale, with its small shack cafes (bhatti) and simple lodge. From Ahale there is a track which continues up the crest of the hill for a good half hour to the Muselman (Islamic) village of Mel Bisauno. Here a track contours round the north side of hill for an hour passing hamlets to reach the village of Manepani. A small track traverses up the hillside here for ½ hour rising above the main track until it reaches the highpoint of the day which is the old Gorkha palace of Prithibi Narayan Bir Bikram Shah, the king who unified the smaller kingdoms of Nepal about 250 years ago. This summer palace has superb views. After the palace descend steep steps for ½ hour to the town of Gorkha. The upper half is traffic free and very tranquil, and has the aforementioned king's winter palace. There are a few hotels in Gorkha mostly in the lower half.
14	Gorkha	Luitel Bhanjyang	17	490	790	6.5	Head up to the bus station (just below the palace gardens). Here a track descends down the south flank of a west ridge. Descend past chauteris and jungle on a mix of track and path, until a quick 2 hours after Gorkha you reach the town of Chhepetar in the Daraudi Khola valley. Chhepetar is busy with frequent buses and tractors and is not a pleasant place to linger. Head for the swing bridge, beside the new road bridge, cross it and leave the bustle of Chhepetar behind. There is a busy path to climb for 15 minutes to reach the quiet village of Satbobati, lying in an valley parallel to the main Daraudi Khola valley. The route now goes up this parallel valley on the east side, and then north side of the stream for almost 3 hours to the Luitel Bhanjyang. Unfortunately there is a road being built on top of this path all the way between Chhepetar and Turture in the Marsyangdi Nadi river valley. In 2013 it was quiet and unfinished but later a new route will be needed to avoid it. The route up this new road climbs gently up this valley, passing numerous hamlets and terraces beneath steep jungle-clad slopes. Only at the end does the road climb steeply to reach the Luitel Bhanjyang pass, at just 700m, where there are some simple, rustic lodges.
15	Luitel Bhanjyang	Belgahri	23	660	570	7.5	Follow the road for 1½ hours to Thanti Pokhari village. Beyond a path descends to a swing bridge over the large Chepe Khola. On the north side of the bridge the path climbs quite steeply up to Garambesi, whose main square is shaded by huge trees. From here the path follows the crest of a ridge between the Chepe Khola and the larger Marsyangdi Nadi as it make its way through hamlets of relatively rich farmhouses with well organized irrigation for an hour to reach Dhamilkuwa. At the large school the track forks with a branch heading NW down through fields and shaded areas with huge trees. The track continues down to the Marsyangdi Nadi river and Tarkughat which is a clean village with a bridge over the river. Continue on small paths up through the terraced fields nearby to reach the forest and track again. Follow the track north through pretty hamlets and the villages of Naubise and Harabot until the path divides with a fork descending to a swing bridge over the Tardi Khola stream. Climb up the other side, through a hamlet and then up to a track again. Follow this track north for ½ hour until there is a path descending to the dirty riverside village of Belgahri which has rustic lodges and a bridge over the Marsyangdi
16	Belgahri	Khudi	28	950	650	9	Head north along the track for an hour, climbing up to Alaichi. There are great views along this stretch to the Annapurna and Manaslu Himals. Here you can either continue on the track in a big circuit to Ramchowkbesi hamlet, or descend to the confluence of the Marsyangdi Nadi and Dordi Khola and cross the latter on a very rickety bamboo bridge to reach lovely homesteads just below Ramchowkbesi. From this hamlet head north through peaceful hamlets and fields interspersed by jungle to reach a dam which forces you to climb. Once you reach the level again saunter through more hamlets above the small dammed lake until it ends. Continue along the grassy track past tranquil hamlets. Across the Marsyangdi the town of Besishar soon appears and you can hear the busy road leading to it. Resist all temptation to cross the big river and continue to the village of Banjokhet. Here the track climbs again and crosses the Bhachowk Khola stream. After this it climbs further and enters jungle for a good hour before descending to the village of Simalchaur where a path leads to a bridge over the Marsyangdi Nadi. Cross this bridge and head north for a km to reach the Khudi Khola stream and Khudi village with a wealth of accommodation.
17	Khudi	Bhujung	15	1370	520	7	Follow the track on the south side of the Khudi Khola stream gently climbing to reach Roplephat village. Just before the Ghimrung Khola start to climb a series of steps on a well made path. The path climbs past many small Gurung hamlets and areas of forest. After you have climbed a good 500m from Roplephat the path intersects a track. Continue climbing on the track for another 500m, mostly through jungle traversing the headwaters of the Ghimrung Khola. Behind you the Manaslu Himal unfolds it's awesome 50km ridge. You reach the pass on the sharp ridge at Nayum 5 hours after Khudi. From this highpoint head north past the gumpa where there track forks. The upper branch goes Ghan Pokhara. Take the lower branch which contours round the hillside into the steep Sundi Khola valley and then onto the ridge in the NVW. It takes an hour to reach the Sundi Khola and another to reach the ridge - much of it through scrub. Just after the ridge the paved track starts to descend into Bhujung. Initially it goes past some tea gardens and then it drops down to the upper part of this large Gurung village which is full of heritage and has a few lodges.

18	Bhujung	Pasgaon	11	850	860	5	After a look round Bhujung with its Gurung culture start the descent to the Midim Khola some 400m below. The path is well paved as it descends down to the large rice fields in the valley below with the snows of the 7000m Lamjung Himal beyond. In the valley pass a micro hydroplant and then head down below the rice paddy fields towards a tall waterfall. Just beyond its stream at about 1300m start the long climb up to the pass before Pasgaon. The 800m climb takes you through some paddys up to the small village of Kamagaon. The steep path continues beyond but soon enters jungle. Climb up the stepped path through the jungle. As you gain height the jungle becomes lush until soon many of the trees are dripping with moss. At 2100m the climb reaches the pass and there is another view of the Manaslu range of 8000m peaks. Ahead a new vista of valleys and jungle clad hills opens up. As you descend the village of Pasgaon appears on a ridge in the forested region. It takes an hour to reach this well settled and beautifully preserved Gurung village which is similar in character to Bhujung but smaller and friendlier, and with some homestay options.
19	Pasgaon	Bhachok	12	1020	1240	7	The 2-day route over Namarjung Danda to Tanting has reverted to jungle and is impassable now. Instead head west from Pasgaon down the steep ridge to Rudi Khola 800m below where lies the hamlet of Pasgaonbesi. Cross the swing bridge here and start to climb up past paddy fields then jungle. It takes 1½ hours to climb the 500m up the hillside and contour round the top of some cliffs to reach a small well kept village on the pass. It is an hour round the headwaters of the Sine Khola to reach the Gurung village of Nagidhar, where there is a small shop. From this village you can now see Bhachok on the other side of the Bardi Khola valley. Descend the path through forest slowly traversing down across the hillsde heading NVW, until it turns west and makes a lunge for the valley floor. Cross the Bardi Khola below the idyllic hamlet of Chijudanda, then climb the path to the next ridge through paddy fields with small stone huts and large piles of hay on stilts. Once you reach the ridge there is still a small climb to the village of Bhachok. The traditional Gurung village of Bhachok is rich in cultural heritage and offers some homestay possibilities.
20	Bhachok	Setikhola-gaon	18	900	1170	7.5	From Bhachok contour round the steep jungle-clad hillside for 2 hours to reach Warchok; another Gurung village. After Warchok descend through paddy field and jungle to reach the Bhujung Khola, which is crossed on a swing bridge. Then start the ascent up initially steep jungle for 250m then gently across paddy fields for 150m to the tidy village of Yangjakot, 2 hours after Warchok. Yangjakot has a few homestay possibilities. Now turn north towards Siklis and start a diagonal descent down into the Madi Nadi valley. After ½ hour you pass a scruffy village, then plunge down to the large river. The Chinese are making a hydropower station on the west side. As you near the valley floor the path meets an abandoned track riven by landslides. Follow the track on the east side of the river for 6 km north passing jungle from which clear streams tumble. On some of the steep outcrops are hives of honey for which this area is famous. On the other side is the scar of a recent and enormous landslide. The mixed caste village of Setikhola-gaon is opposite this landslide on the east side and offers some rustic homestay accommodation if it is too far to continue to Tanting another 3 hours away.
21	Setikhola-gaon	Siklis	10	1420	490	6	From Setikhola-gaon at 1050m and head up the abandoned jungle track past a derelict village by a swing bridge. The route now leaves the track and begins to climb a stepped path for ½ hour to reach a flat area with terraced fields and small shelters. Across on the other side of the valley you can make out the large Gurung villages of Khilang, Parche and Siklis, all lying beneath the towering peaks of Annapurna. The way beyond seems blocked with a huge cliff, but the path skirts the base of it and then starts to climb steeply. 3 hours after Setikhola-gaon you reach the well organized village of Tanting at 1650m. After Tanting the path contours across the Ghate Khola valley crossing the ravine on a high wire bridge. It then skirts the bottom of more cliffs and starts a steep decent across terraces and forest to reach the Madi Nadi river again, where the Kalbandi Khola tumbles of of the lofty wild jungles of the Dharmashala hills. Cross the swing bridge above the Madi Nadi and begin a 700m climb straight up the hillside to Siklis. Initially you pass through jungle then paddy terraces and finally, managed forest, to reach Siklis village at 2000m, where there is ample accommodation.
22	Siklis	Ghalekharka	18	900	1160	7.5	Leave Siklis, head along the track for 300m, then turn north on the path passing above the campsite at Parche village. Continue into a huge bowl beneath Tara Hilltop and contour round gently climbing for an hour until the path divides. Take the lower fork and immediately cross a slab with a guard rail. Soon the path leaves scrub and enters lush jungle. After another hour you reach a junction and signpost to Nyaulikharka. Continue for 1½ hours to contour the jungle-clad south side of the Harbu Danda ridge at 2500m passing huge 30m high rhododendron trees to reach the campsite at Nyaulikharka. The path then re-enters the forest and continues to contour the hillside for another 1½ hours before finally climbing to the ridge at 2650m, some 6 hours after Siklis. There are great views here to the Annapurna Himal. Now begin a steep 1000m descent to Ghalekharka village in the Sardi Khola valley. Initially the path passes through lush forest but soon it enters hot scrub land. At last you reach the mixed Gurung, Tamang and Magar caste village of Ghalekharka, which is Bhuddist with a chorten at each end. There is a friendly simple lodge here.
23	Ghalekharka	Lahachok	17	350	930	7	Head down to the school and find the path down the hill to the swing bridge over the Sardi Khola by Meprang hamlet. Cross it and head down the seldom used track past a few trout fish farms for 2 hours. Climb a short deep gully up a near vertical escarpment to reach the large, wealthy village of Chaur above the Seti Nadi. Head upstream for 2 km to a swing bridge, cross it, climb the escarpment on the west side and head south for a km to the lovely village of Dhiprang. Continue south across the Dhiprang Khola, walk along a barely used track for a km of jungle and 2 km of paddy field to reach Ghachok. This large village is a few km long and as you pass through make sure you don't take any paths to the east which lead down off the escarpment, but keep west along the base of the hills so you can go into the side valley of Lasti Khola where it starts to carve a slot in the paddy field covered plateau. On the south side of the Lasti Khola an irrigation channel contours round the side of the hill for a good hour to reach Lahachok. Walk south through this long village to find local lodgings. To the south of the village is the Mardi Khola river and local transport to Pokhara also.
			380	18930	18620	166	