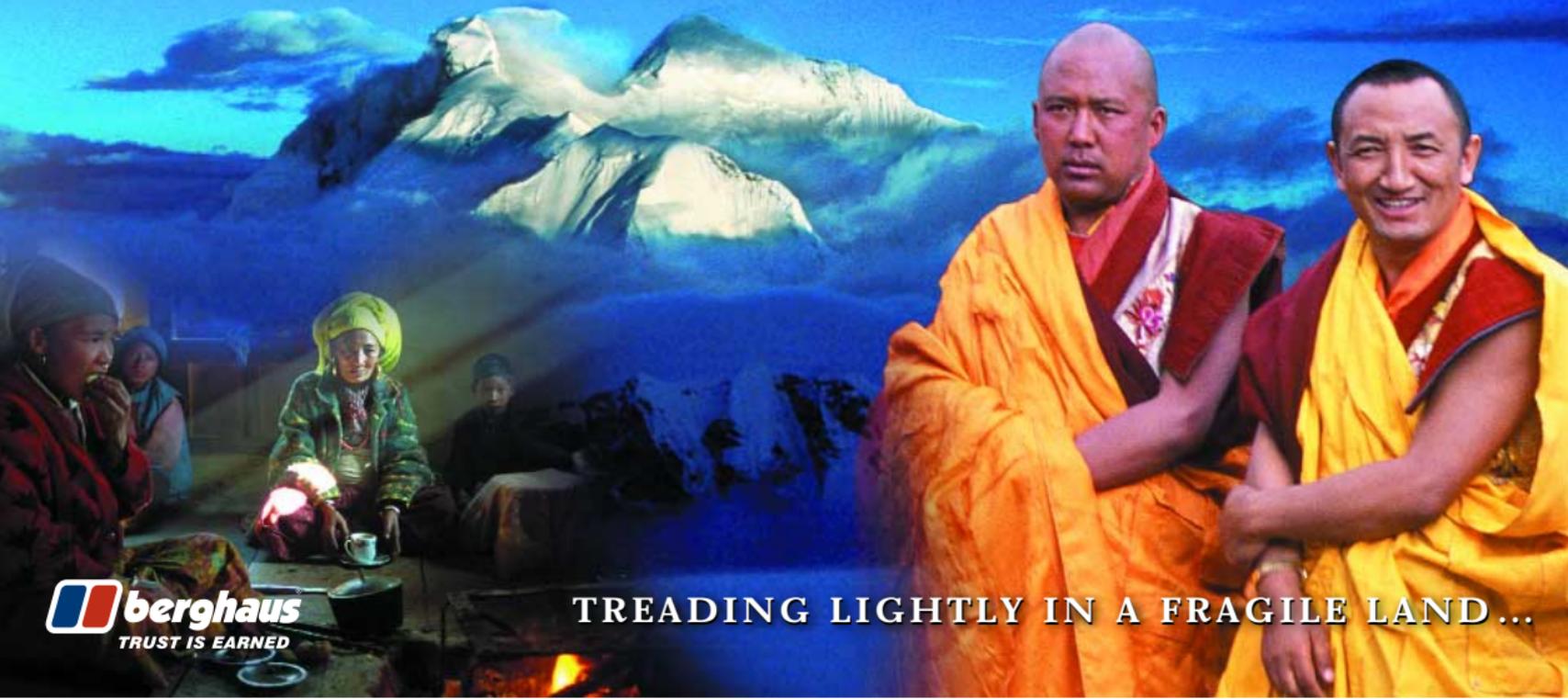


The Trekkers Code



 **berghaus**
TRUST IS EARNED

TREADING LIGHTLY IN A FRAGILE LAND...



Employment Matters

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world, with nearly 50% of the rural population living below the poverty line. The tourism industry is the most important part of the economy for the Nepalese people - so your visit here will help sustain people's livelihoods.

The money Nepalis earn on treks is vital to their survival; it helps support these subsistence farmers and their families.

Portering costs are minimal compared to the overall costs of your holiday, so please don't 'scrimp' or try to save money by carrying your own loads; or haggling with porters to accept a low wage when hiring them. The few pounds you may save - a small percentage of your holiday costs - will be a significant loss to the porter and his / her family.

There are still appalling examples of worker exploitation in the Nepalese trekking industry through low pay and poor conditions of employment. Honour your 'contract' with any porters you hire and check that you or your trekking company have proper rescue procedures and insurance cover in the event of staff needing emergency treatment / evacuation.



Chris Bonington and Doug Scott

*"As patron of **Community Action Nepal**, and as someone who has spent many years in the Solu Khumbu region climbing, organising expeditions and meeting the people living and working there, I encourage you to read this leaflet and think about the positive contribution you can make to the future well-being of this fascinating, captivating and unique area and its communities."*

Sir Chris Bonington CBE



Some companies still expect their porters - who may be lowland farmers no better adapted to altitude or carrying heavy loads than you are - to carry loads exceeding the legal maximum weight limit of 30kg, or use under-age porters. **Please don't ask your porters to carry too much – they won't say no for fear of being dismissed.**

Many trekking companies are not locally based, and much of the income generated will not directly benefit the local economy.

Where possible, use local trekking companies and recognised guides, and ask about the employment conditions, accommodation, experience, insurance cover, equipment, welfare, health care and safety the company provides for its staff.



“Get to know your porters and talk to them - they can help you learn more about local culture; provide you with advice and information; and keep you safe. Talking to them will not only enrich your holiday, but will foster feelings of value and equality.

Staying in tea-houses and lodges on your trek can be an attractive option, but camping will employ more Nepalis, and give you a greater 'wilderness' experience.

**For further information about porter welfare,
visit the International Porter Protection Group
website: www.ippg.net**





People and Culture

Help preserve ancient cultures by ensuring that your visit does not affect the stability and harmony of fragile village life. **Don't spread 'cultural diseases' - when visiting other places, follow their ways instead of 'importing' your own** - e.g. going to discos, drinking bottled alcohol and coke. Exchange rather than impose your own values.



Try to find out about Nepal - understanding and respecting local customs, religious practices and cultures will be appreciated by local people. **Follow dress codes by 'preserving your modesty'; respect religious customs** - e.g. passing to the left of religious shrines and Mani stones, and removing shoes when going into monasteries; don't kiss or hold hands in public.





Learn a few Nepali words - this will greatly enhance your visit. Apart from being respectful and polite, it will be much appreciated by local people and will help to 'break the ice'.

Be aware of the impacts of even seemingly innocent or well meaning gestures you make. Giving sweets to children may seem harmless, but there has been a great increase in tooth decay in recent years. Many villagers cannot afford the cost of treatment, and even if they can, the dentist may be several days walk away!

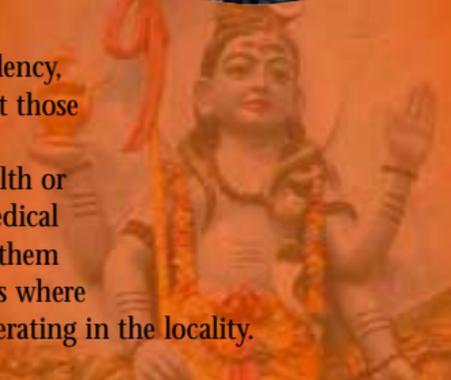
Tourism helps keep local cultures, traditions and craft industries alive, through fostering local pride and providing an economic alternative to subsistence farming.

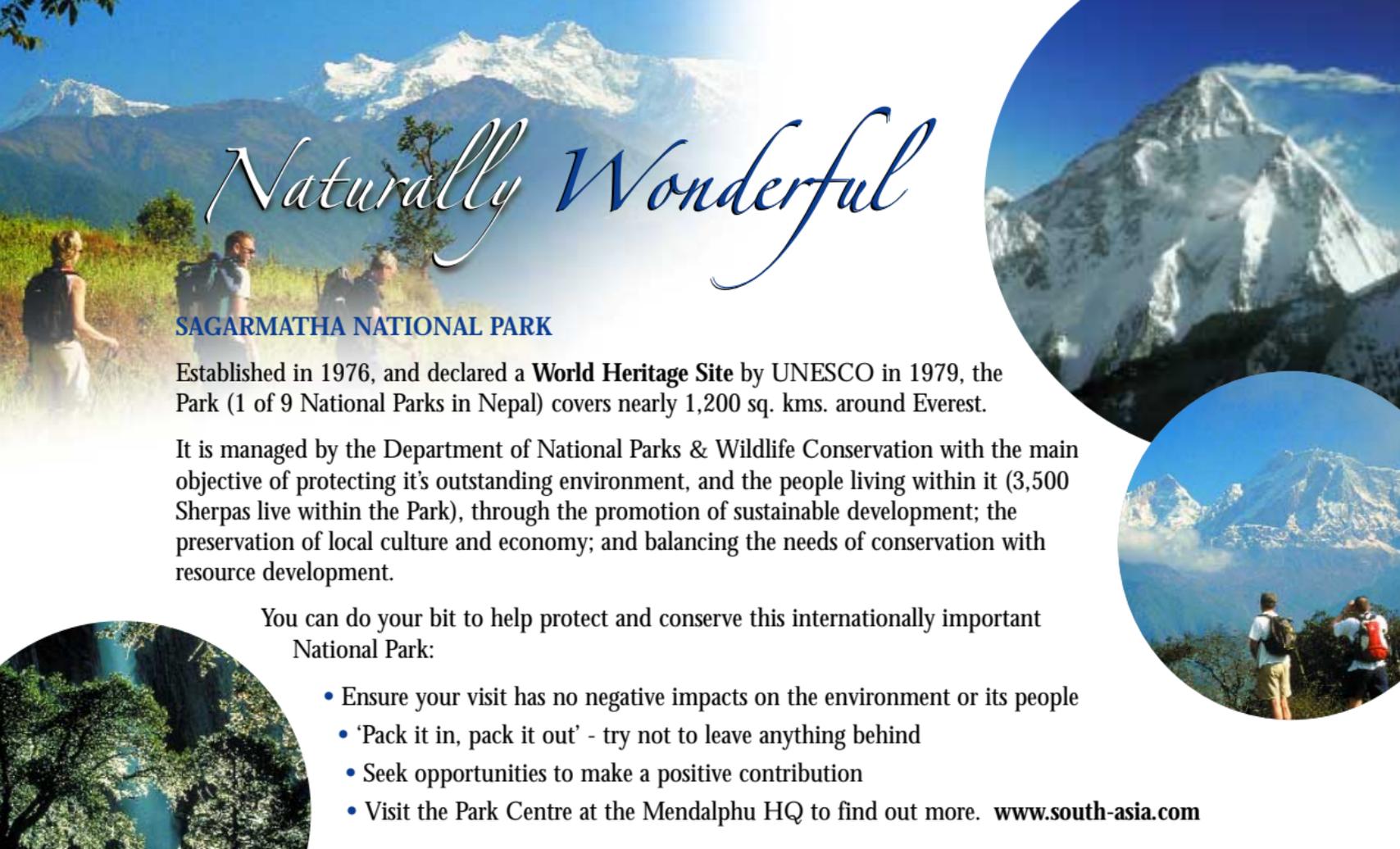
Support local craft and cultural activities, and be open to new cultural experiences - e.g. try local food instead of 'western' food.

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Beware of making donations. They can engender a culture of dependency, encourage abuse, and may generate divisiveness and jealousy amongst those who are not recipients of your generosity.

Ask your Sirdar / guide for advice about supporting local school, health or community projects rather than individuals. Only donate surplus medical supplies to trained staff, or take them home with you. Don't 'dump' them on people who may not know how to use them. Give your donations where possible to a charity or NGO (Non Governmental Organisation) operating in the locality.





Naturally Wonderful

SAGARMATHA NATIONAL PARK

Established in 1976, and declared a **World Heritage Site** by UNESCO in 1979, the Park (1 of 9 National Parks in Nepal) covers nearly 1,200 sq. kms. around Everest.

It is managed by the Department of National Parks & Wildlife Conservation with the main objective of protecting its outstanding environment, and the people living within it (3,500 Sherpas live within the Park), through the promotion of sustainable development; the preservation of local culture and economy; and balancing the needs of conservation with resource development.

You can do your bit to help protect and conserve this internationally important National Park:

- Ensure your visit has no negative impacts on the environment or its people
- 'Pack it in, pack it out' - try not to leave anything behind
- Seek opportunities to make a positive contribution
- Visit the Park Centre at the Mendalphu HQ to find out more. www.south-asia.com

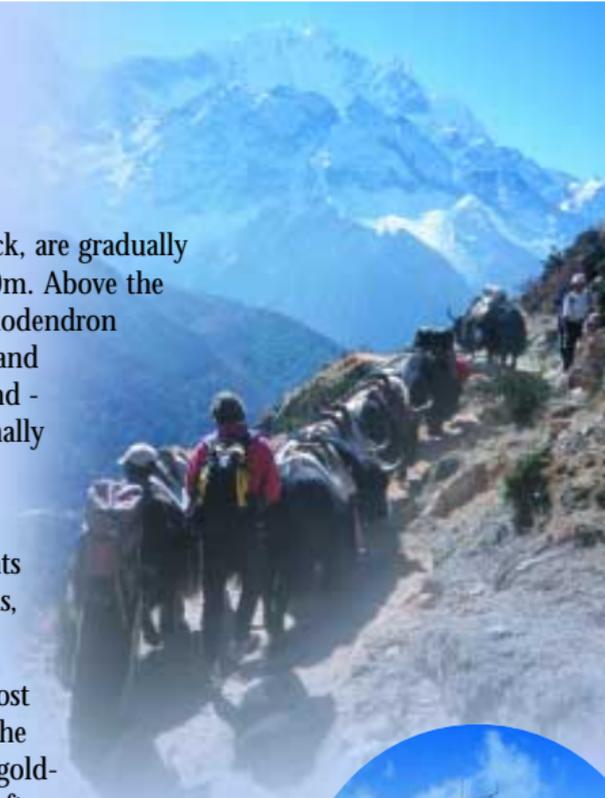
Flora & Fauna

The lower lying forests, dominated by pine, fir and hemlock, are gradually replaced by birch, rhododendron and juniper above 3,500m. Above the tree line (c. 4,500m), birch gives way to juniper and rhododendron scrub, with 'garden favourites' such as pieris, cotoneaster and clematis, changing to dwarf shrubs, and herb-rich grassland - including gentians, edelweiss, lilies and primroses - and finally alpine cushion-plants below the snow line.

Large mammals such as the himalayan tahr and musk deer are often seen in the Park, while other less frequently observed residents include himalayan black bears, grey wolves, common langurs, jackals, muntjacs, lesser pandas, weasels, martens, marmots and hares.

The Park's varied habitats support over 150 species of birds, the most common of which are the impeyan pheasant (the 'national bird'), the blood pheasant, and the red and yellow-billed chough. Spectacular golden eagles and vultures may be seen soaring over the mountain tops, often accompanied by the characteristic 'croak' of the raven ("gorak").

Since National Park designation, numbers of himalayan tahr and musk deer have increased, which may eventually lead to a recovery in numbers of the elusive snow leopard.



Treading lightly...

'Responsible' tourism is about simultaneously promoting tourism whilst conserving the environment; and respecting other people's places and ways of life, whether as tourism operator, trekker or local supplier.

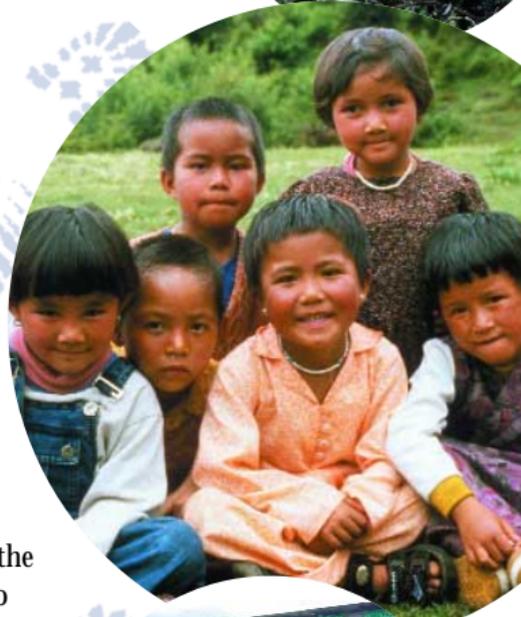
Responsible tourism enables local people to enjoy the benefits of tourism development and helps them to realise that conservation can improve their own living standards.

You can be a 'responsible tourist' by choosing a trekking agency that understands and adheres to these principles. You can also think carefully about how to minimise your own impact on the environment.

On the trail check that environmentally sound measures are being followed by you/your group, and encourage local people to adopt environmentally-friendly

Responsible tourism:

Protects the natural environment;
Respects local cultures and traditions;
Benefits local communities,
economically and socially;
Conserves natural resources; and
Minimises pollution.



Kongde community forestry project

Community Action Nepal Himalayan Trekkers Code

Help preserve the unique environment and ancient cultures of the Himalaya by following these simple guidelines:

Treading lightly

- Deforestation is a serious problem in this area. Don't make fires; use kerosene for cooking for you and your porters; and choose tea houses that use kerosene and/or solar heating.
- Avoid polluting watercourses (e.g. with detergents or toilet waste).
- Carry out all your rubbish.
- Don't buy any drinks in bottles, as there is nowhere to recycle glass or plastic. Use iodine to purify locally sourced water.
- Stick to trails to help to prevent soil erosion and protect fragile habitats.
- Use established campsites where possible.
- Don't pick or damage plants.
- Encourage everyone to adopt conservation measures.

Employment matters

- Avoid lodges that don't allow porters to stay.
- Make sure trekking staff are paid a fair

wage, and that they are not expected to carry more than 30kg.

- Ensure that you or your trekking company have adequate rescue procedures / insurance cover.
- Check out employment and staff welfare conditions of any trekking company you intend to use.

Trekking for tourism

- Eat local produce - help the local economy, and add to your cultural experience.
- Buy local goods and services.
- While bargaining is expected, 'driving a hard bargain' may be at the expense of someone already on a very low income. Pay a 'fair' price.
- Support local community projects (not individuals) through donations.
- Choose a trekking company that employs Nepalese people to keep money in the local economy.

People and culture

- Support local traditions, crafts and cultural activities.

- Wear loose clothing which 'preserves modesty'.
- Learn a few words of the local language.
- Remove your shoes when visiting temples or entering people's homes.
- Pass shrines and Mani stones on the correct (left) side. Never touch or remove religious objects.
- Ask permission before taking photos of people and be sensitive. Don't pay for taking photos - this just encourages another form of begging.
- Don't give sweets to children as it encourages begging and causes tooth decay.
- Only donate surplus medical supplies to trained medical staff.
- Donate unwanted trekking gear to International Porter Protection Group in Kathmandu, or Porters' Progress in Lukla.
- Try adopting local customs and practices.

Above all, USE YOUR SIRDAR / GUIDE FOR ADVICE & INFORMATION, and encourage them to be more aware, and act on the above issues.